

Name of the project	Living With & Beyond Cancer (LWBC) – Tees Valley.
Aim of the project	<p>“Maximising the role of the voluntary/community sector in holistic Cancer care”</p> <p>The project aims to ensure patients receive consistent support and advice for any concerns they might have relating to finance/welfare, mental health, physical wellbeing, housing, loneliness and practical issues – which may be delivered through 1-1 or group support/activities, assisted signposting/referrals, health & wellbeing/information events and peer support groups.</p>
Who was involved	Macmillan Cancer Support, Primary and Secondary Care, Voluntary/Community Group and organisations, Foundation Trusts, CRUK, Patients with lived experience, their carers and families.
Project approach	<p>Catalyst are developing a ‘VCSE Cancer Links’ network which will be upskilled in Talk Cancer training, take part in Health & Wellbeing/Information Events, attend sector-wide networking sessions and promote their services to NHS Cancer Teams/GP staff. Information on the Northern Cancer Voices project has been routinely shared with the ‘VCSE Cancer Links’ network to ensure patient involvement is a key part of our LWBC project locally.</p> <p>We have a ‘LWBC Tees Valley Partner Meeting’ every 2 months to share learning and plan/deliver LWBC activities across the 3 foundation trust areas – this group includes two patients with lived experience to help guide all of our work and project outputs.</p> <p>Five LWBC Information Events have been delivered across Tees Valley – all of which included a Patient Story from Michelle Thompson, who is a national ambassador for Macmillan – talking about her younger sister’s journey and the impact on the family, her own experience of thyroid cancer, the importance of physical activity/keeping fit (and small challenges), Macmillan Cancer Support and her massive fundraising efforts resulting in receipt of a British Empire Medal (BEM).</p> <p>The events have also included an interactive workshop from a joint Macmillan/MIND project. This means patients with mental health issues have had the opportunity to influence a new ‘passport scheme’ to improve the support given to them when diagnosed with Cancer.</p>

<p>The impact of having people involved in this project</p>	<p>A shared Communications Plan was developed ensuring that the project’s key messages would be sensitive, relevant and motivational to Cancer patients, their carers and families. Input from the patient reps were crucial in designing this document - alongside posters, press releases and patient invite letters relating to the 5 Tees Valley LWBC Information Events.</p> <p>Below is a direct quote with feedback from one of the Patient Stories:</p> <p><i>“Hi Michelle, I attended the living beyond event at Darlington and sat and listened to your heart felt and emotional story as I fought back the tears. I wanted to come over and have a chat but kept filling up. I just wanted to say how inspiring you are and that you’ve given me a booster in continuing to find the best way I can use my cancer journey to help and inspire others. I know I want to do it but don’t know how. I spoke to ‘Jxxxx Axxxx’ and plan to message her soon. After chemo and surgery had finished for breast cancer I wanted to run as far away as possible from it. In a sense put it behind me but I’ve come to realise. This is my life now and I have to deal with it and accept life beyond cancer is still a life and even though it’s not the same, I’m not the same. I have grown in so many positive ways and gained so much compared to what the cancer has taken away. I just need focus like you, small challenges to strive for and listening to you made me realize this. So thank you. I grew up in Northallerton and so instantly related to you anyway haha! I plan to find out what my purpose is and run with it as fast as I can xxx”</i></p> <p>The Project Manager from Macmillan/MIND also verbally stated that the events have given her a massive amount of patient insight, suggestions, ideas and other things to consider for their proposed passport scheme which they had not already thought of. As a community/patient engagement exercise to help co-design services, the information events were “the best event we’ve been to”.</p>
<p>For further information about this project</p>	<p>Nathan Duff – Catalyst Health & Wellbeing Project Officer 01642 733906 Nathan.duff@catalyststockton.org</p> <p>To view the tips and recommendations developed by the volunteers for other health services looking to use or implement a similar model please click here.</p>