



07 September 2020

## Wessex Cancer Alliance Update Bulletin 20.

Please find below, details of the most recent communications and guidance issued for Cancer.

### Wessex Cancer Alliance

#### **A message from Sally Rickard, Director of Wessex Cancer Alliance**

I make no apology for opening this update with huge pride and congratulations to the Alliance team involved in the WESFIT programme, and in all those working towards the improvement of personalised care for people with cancer. As many of you will have heard the WESFIT and SAFEFIT programme won the HSJ Award for Cancer Care Initiative of the Year.

WesFit is a pre cancer surgery exercise programme, designed to improve the patient's physical fitness before they have their surgery. Clinically robust evidence has proven that the less physically fit a person is before cancer surgery, the higher their risk of poorer outcomes and morbidity. If you had chemo and surgery – then you had 50% more chance of mortality at 12 months. WesFit was developed to reverse this impact of treatment and surgery, offering a minimum 2 weeks and a maximum 15 week tailored programme. The personalised training that WesFit develops and plans for a patient, not only leads to better outcomes, reduced length of stay post-surgery and lower risk of complications, but the trial has also shown that by improving your physical and emotional wellbeing, a tumour can be downgraded in just 14 weeks. SafeFit was implemented at the beginning of lockdown and is a virtual version of the WesFit programme but has been extended to allow all cancer patients to take part, regardless of where they are on their pathway. SafeFit means they can carry out the exercises in their own home, via video links with personal trainers.

The national personalised care team are looking to our nursing, AHP and personalised care teams to lead the way in terms of the ground-breaking innovations and really demonstrable improvements being felt by our patients. Whilst we all are focused on recovery of services, highly concerned for those few patients still waiting over 104 days for treatment and ongoing pressures in endoscopy and other services, it is important to remember that the care patients are receiving continues to get better and better and, with initiatives like this and all the other nursing and AHP led work across Dorset and HIOW now in train, will continue to improve and change both patient experience and outcomes from cancer treatments.

In terms of recovery the picture is increasingly positive, but still work to do. The National Cancer Programme shared their recovery programme with Alliance leads which is focused on the areas of:

1. Restoration of urgent cancer referrals to at least pre-pandemic levels.
2. Reduce the backlog at least to pre-pandemic levels (on both 62 & 31 day pathway)
3. Ensure sufficient capacity to manage increased demand moving forwards

Recovery is focused around communication – with our public and patients, ensuring confidence to return to health care services, and ensuring messaging is heard particularly in seldom heard communities for whom the impact of COVID-19 has been greatest. Around communication of new and changing clinical pathways, infection prevention guidance, and emerging innovations to make



best use of our limited capacity and workforce and understanding how best we can support and develop our workforce to provide sustainable and supported clinical and non clinical teams for the future.

It has been clear that communication has been key throughout the pandemic. Direct helplines for patients staffed by nurses was critical for patients suddenly unable to come into hospital for treatment. Translation between trusts via Cancer Site Specific Groups sharing new innovation and best practice quickly and tackling challenges together. Across Primary Care and between primary and secondary care, returning to direct GP/Consultant dialogue with frequency and ease not seen in recent years. Tools like Consultant Connect and GP Connect are just some of the innovations the alliance is now keen to explore to ensure these benefits are sustained.

On the topic of innovation and recognising the mountain we still have to climb to achieve 75% of all new cancer diagnosis across Wessex being stage 1 or 2 cancer, we are working in partnership with the Wessex AHSN and are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Anu Dhir and Anna Wykes to the posts of clinical lead and programme manager for innovation, working jointly to bring together the expertise of the cancer alliance and AHSN. Once fully in post, Anu and Anna will be working to accelerate the uptake of innovations which enable earlier diagnosis.

Performance across Wessex continues to improve, with trusts achieving 62 days in parts and others moving much nearer to the target than expected, which is testimony to the hard work of all the teams across our primary and secondary care providers, but more work still remains. There are still patients waiting over 104 days for treatment, and still patients we know are not accessing services at all and ongoing challenges in pathways such as urology and endoscopy capacity for which we continue to work to find solutions.

Thank you for your ongoing (award winning) work and dedication in all you do to continue to improve services for our whole population.

- Pre/rehab workshop part 4, A Focus on Research: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#) on Tuesday 29th September, 1-2pm.

### Regional Information

- The Valley Leisure Ltd and I Can Therapy Centre teams are back in action; you can read more in their newsletter "*Emerging from COVID-19 hibernation*" [here](#)

### National Information

- **The Quality of Life survey 2020** is now live, with the first cohort of patients due to receive their letter asking them to login and complete the online survey, this month. The website also has a healthcare professional section, with useful information about the survey. Please familiarise yourself with this website and share the link with all your colleagues and frontline staff, so we can all help and support anyone who may have a question about completing this survey: <http://www.cancerqol.england.nhs.uk/>
- **Specialty guidance for cancer** is being published here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/secondary-care/other-resources/specialty-guides/>

### Contact us

If you need to contact Wessex Cancer Alliance please email: [england.wessexcanceralliance@nhs.net](mailto:england.wessexcanceralliance@nhs.net)

