

Co-ordinating an integrated approach to post-treatment cancer care in the west of Scotland

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Background

Launched in 2013 "Transforming Care After Treatment" (TCAT) aims to support and enable cancer survivors to live as healthy a life as possible for as long as possible.¹

TCAT is a partnership between the Scottish Government, Macmillan Cancer Support, regional cancer networks, NHS Boards, and local authorities.

Integration of cross-sector services is vital to its success.¹

Method

Delivered through the regional cancer networks, TCAT supports health and social care services to review, redesign, and test approaches within an agreed framework.

Within the west of Scotland eleven projects have been funded. The West of Scotland Cancer Network (WoSCAN) provides each project with support, expertise, guidance, and a forum for peer support and shared learning. Through internal processes and annual education events, WoSCAN also ensures the learning from each project is communicated through the relevant managed clinical networks (MCNs). This methodology maximises the potential for integrated approaches and regional roll-out of successful testing; whilst reducing unwanted variation.

Aim/Objectives

Six projects are health-led and five are local authority-led. Each project has service user involvement and voluntary organisations are key partners in some. Many projects focus on transition points in the cancer pathway, aiming to improve cross-sector communication to better support individuals during these times.

Each project is evaluated individually but results are collectively reviewed to ensure future approaches in cancer care are high quality.

Success is measured against the following:

- Initiating and embedding an integrated and sustainable approach to the provision of care whilst driving a shift in focus from treating the disease toward holistic health and wellbeing
- Creating a culture of confidence which supports people to regain control, facilitates self-management and eliminates unnecessary follow-up
- Facilitating shared decision-making.

Results/Outcomes

Each of the 3 projects completed to date have demonstrated a significant positive impact on the lives of people affected by cancer (See Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Patient Impact

"Usually I would keep this to myself but completing the checklist brought it out into the fore and up for discussion. It was really nice that the Nurse listened to me."
(Patient comment from Forth Valley Project Evaluation)*

"It was good to have the opportunity to write down my concerns so they won't be forgotten. I felt that they were recognised by the health team, discussed and action taken. It showed an understanding of what you were going through."
(Patient comment from Stobhill Project Evaluation)*

"[The Health and Well-being Clinic] Offered good opportunity to talk about concerns as felt low at end of treatment period after high level of contact with professionals. Helped me to take steps to use help available"
(Patient comment from Ayrshire and Arran Project Evaluation)*

The positive impact of the regional methodology is visible through the transfer of approach across projects, increased cross-sector communication and referrals, and stronger working relationships (See Fig. 2). The forthcoming revised WoSCAN Breast Cancer Follow-up Guidance also incorporates recommendations which are direct outputs of two WoSCAN TCAT projects.

Figure 2: Impact on Integration

TCAT can be viewed as a catalyst for partnership working and the development of cancer service integration/coordination. As such, TCAT is having a direct, positive impact on increasing partnership working in the field of cancer care.²

"working with our colleagues in social care ... has been extremely positive. I can see that the collaboration will extend beyond the TCAT project and could be a great example of 'integration in action' (Wider stakeholder)²

The national evaluation asked wider stakeholders for their views on how this regional role was adding value to improving integration between health and social care. 20% viewed the networks role as adding value to a great extent in this area, with 45% responding 'somewhat'.²

"Working with the TCAT project and the breast team in Stobhill has been an incredibly positive experience. The working relationship that has been forged and nurtured with our charity has shown real benefit to patients in increased access to services. I believe the project will be a catalyst for change in how the NHS and third sector work together going forward with improved benefits for all parties"
(BCC Director)*

*Unpublished report available directly from project team.

References

1. Scottish Government (2016) Transforming Care After Treatment <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Services/Cancer/TCAT> accessed 23/02/2017
2. Edinburgh Napier University (2016) Transforming Care After Treatment National Programme Evaluation Interim Report: 1 June 2016 <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Services/Cancer/TCAT/Intrpt> accessed 23/04/2017