

Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centre
at the Berkshire Cancer Centre

NEWSLETTER

June 2020

Opening Hours:

Monday to Thursdays 9am to 4pm

Fridays 9am to 2pm

Telephone Number: 0118 322 8700

Email: macmillan.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Address: North block, Royal Berkshire NHS, London Road,
Reading, RG1 5AN



Macmillan's response to coronavirus



Photo credit: [Belt and Road news](#) 2020

We are here for you!

Macmillan has received an unprecedented number of calls over the past few weeks and we've been working tirelessly to help cancer patients find the best way forward in this difficult situation. **Lynda Thomas, CEO**, gave the following update through the Macmillan Volunteer Webinar on 3 June 2020.

Macmillan's National Stats

An estimated 3 million people are currently living with cancer

Approx. ¼ million cancer patients are shielding

An estimated 90,000 people should have been diagnosed with cancer, but fewer people are going to the doctor and services have been reduced. People have been anxious, worried and concerned.

Macmillan referrals reduced by 75%.

Staff are back now

Some nurses were redeployed to COVID-19 wards and the good news is that nurses have returned to their normal jobs. Your local support centre here at Royal Berkshire Hospital has remained open throughout the pandemic. However you're feeling or whatever your query, we're here to help you so you don't face cancer alone. Please call 0118 322 8700 or email macmillan.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk.

Macmillan Support Line is open

The support line has been open to help before, during and after the pandemic. Trained staff are able to support with a variety of questions, from 'Should I be shielding?' to 'Will I be able to travel?' and 'What can I do about my finances?' They can also help with emotional support at this testing time. Please call **0808 808 0000 (Freephone)** between 8am and 8pm to speak to one of our advisors.

New! Telephone Buddy Service

A cancer diagnosis can be an isolating time for anyone, never mind at a time when we are asked to social distance or shield. Macmillan want you to feel supported. The Telephone Buddy service matches you with a volunteer buddy who can be a listening ear, discuss how you're feeling and find ways to support your needs during this tough time. Advisors can match you with someone who understands what you're going through, and they'll give you a weekly call for up to 12 weeks to make sure you're alright. If you'd like this kind of support, please get in touch by clicking [here](#) or visiting www.macmillan.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/telephone-buddies.

New! SafeFit

Would you like some help to maintain your physical and mental wellbeing? If so, you could try SafeFit. It's a free remote service for anyone in the UK with suspicion of or confirmed diagnosis of cancer. Our cancer exercise specialists offer you advice, support and resources to maintain and improve physical and mental well-being. This includes information about preparing for and going through cancer treatment during the [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) crisis](#). You can sign-up online and see if one of our group sessions or individual telephone consultations is right for you. Please visit <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/get-help/physical-help/safefit> for more information.



New! Wellbeing coaching

Macmillan wellbeing coaches are around to help you if you have been affected by cancer. Trained volunteers offer six free, remote coaching sessions. They all have coaching qualifications from trustworthy institutions.

Coaches can:

- Help you to understand and manage your own thoughts and emotions at a difficult time
- Give you the courage and confidence to communicate with loved ones and other people around you
- Develop coping strategies for challenging situations that you find yourself in
- ...and more!

You can sign up online by [clicking here](#) or email wellbeingcoach@macmillan.org.uk

*Info from Macmillan Volunteer Webinar on 3 June 2020 and Macmillan website 2020

Macmillan's Local Stats

Visits to the Macmillan Information and Support Centre in 2020

	2 nd Jan – 31 st March 2020	1 st Apr to 12 th June 2020
Total Visits	361	301
Female	220	221
Male	141	80
Face to Face	259	48
Non Face to Face (phone/email)	102	253
Service User:-		
Patient	206	205
Family/Carer	62	31
Health Care Professional	56	29
Other	37	36
Referred for Benefits	34	23
Referred to Complimentary Therapies	18	0
Referred to Other	81	65
Complexity Level 1 and 2	285	244
Complexity Level 3 and 4	76	57

hello my name is...

Shirley

Cancer Information and Support Facilitator



Hello. I want to provide a little bit of context around these stats from visitors to our Macmillan Information and Support Centre at the Royal Berkshire Hospital from January to 12th June 2020 on our core data.

It was decided that the Royal Berkshire Information and Support centre would remain open, albeit we knew that we would have a hugely reduced footfall of patients, family and carers passing our door due to Chemotherapy going offsite, inpatients (non-covid positive) treated offsite, no hospital visitors and the majority of Oncology appointments done via the telephone or video call.

I have been surprised by the continuing number of contacts we have had during the Covid-19 pandemic period. The two and half months' data



from 1st April to the 12th June 2020 reflects the change in emphasis from face-to-face to non-face-to-face – mainly via the telephone and some emails. This is almost a direct switch around from the data reported for January till the end of March 2020.

We were sorry that we had to suspend our great volunteering team due to the risks of Covid-19 and to keep everyone safe and well. Our volunteers are an immense support to our Information and Support Centre's day-to-day work and contact with patients, family and clinical staff. We do hope to welcome them back as soon as we have Senior Management's green light to do so.

Referral to complimentary therapies through our partner charity 'My Cancer, My Choices' had ceased taking referrals whilst piloting an online project. The great news is that MCMC team now have virtual support, as you can see from the newsletter article.

Likewise, the same applies for our 'Look Good Feel Better' charity partner and a virtual service is available for patients to self-refer into.

Looking at the stats, the 'Referred to Other' numbers are high as we have been referring increasing mainly for:

- Macmillan Grants – we do this directly with the patient through the very effective online service we have at The RBH support centre. Since January 2020, we have submitted 32 requests with a total of £9440 granted.
- Macmillan Helpline via the 0808 808 0000 free-phone service required for work, financial and Covid-19 questions and support.
- Local partners for Blue Badge application and also Adult Social Care or community support.
- Carers' referrals to Reading and West Berkshire Carers' Hub
- Referral to the cancer site specific Clinical Nurse Specialist for clinical advice and support.

Complexity 1 and 2 is where the service and support required is a single topic and no further action and sorted on the day or soon after.

Complexity 3 and 4 is where the service and support required is often multiple topics and requires emotional support and contact with other services.



Berkshire Cancer Centre's response to coronavirus

Updates from **Chris Lowrie**, Directorate Manager of Berkshire Cancer Centre (BCC)

May 2020 update:

- Our very own Oncology Consultant Dr Ruth Davis made an appearance on ITV's Good Morning Britain on the Friday 24th April. Ruth was representing all BCC staff who have been involved in the care of a patient who was diagnosed with breast cancer when she was seven months pregnant and went on to contract Covid-19 one month after starting chemotherapy. The patient paid tribute to the extraordinary care she received at the BCC and praised the dedicated staff who went above and beyond to look after her and her baby. You can watch the interview [here](#). Huge well done to Ruth and everyone else involved!
- The BCC Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) team have been doing brilliant work helping out on the wards liaising with patients' relatives about their treatment. The CNS team are now back in the BCC, with a view to support as much cancer work as possible. Thank you to all our CNS's who are doing vital work to help keep patients at home during this pandemic.
- Huge well done to all staff who have been working at Adelaide at Spire Dunedin and on the relocated Redlands ward, your commitment and adaptability has been fantastic. Spire Dunedin have been really accommodating and we are continuing to work very closely with them on this.
- The BCC Outpatients team have also been supporting Redlands ward where their assistance has been really valuable. Again, your commitment and adaptability have been fantastic and we're glad to have you back with us in BCC Outpatients again.
- Thank you to everyone involved moving chemotherapy out to Bracknell.

June 2020 update:

- Adelaide Ward have been back at RBH on Hurley Ward for the last couple of weeks. We are working to get back to (the original) Adelaide Ward as soon as possible, thank you to everyone involved for your continued commitment and patience.
- We are planning to restart chemo 3 days a week at RBH, with the chemotherapy team coming back on 1st June to open up capacity on King Edward Ward in the very near future.
- Radiotherapy are treating all patients
- The mobile PET-CT scanner is up and running every Friday on site.





Register for priority water supply

As a provider of life essential supplies, Thames Water work hard to ensure water never stops flowing but from time to time, things can go wrong. In these events, we try to deliver bottled water to people with water-dependent medical conditions (i.e. at-home dialysis) and to those with mobility issues, first of all. As key workers, we support the NHS, the councils, our carers and charities in order meet the needs of our customers in vulnerable circumstances.



You can benefit from our free priority services: get in touch by emailing Tania.christie@thameswater.co.uk (or ask a friend to email for you and we can call you back). Alternatively, contact your local Macmillan Support Team, who can help you with registering.

We would like to know that we can add that extra layer of support to help increase your feeling of wellbeing and independence at home knowing that we are here for you when you need us.

If you have online access, you can find more about becoming a priority customer and register at [thameswater.co.uk/extrasupport](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/extrasupport).

[If you have no internet access, we can register you over the phone \(0800 009 3652 option 3\) or send you a paper application form in the post with a free return envelope.](#)

If you need help with paying your water bills, find out more at <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/my-account/billing-and-payment/help-paying-your-bill>

And last but not least, we developed some fun water testing games to pass the time: <https://youtu.be/oJ5DIE-3SKI> I hope you enjoy them.

Tania Christie

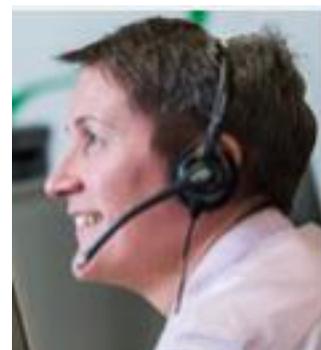
Partnerships Coordinator for Thames Water



Cancer Patient Partnership – Online meetings

Working together to improve the quality of care for cancer patients in the Royal Berkshire Hospital and influencing future cancer services through a strong collective voice.

If you have recently used our cancer services, we invite you to work in partnership with us; to represent and share a strong patient voice; and take an active part in continuously improving the cancer treatment experience.



What we do:

1. Represent the views of cancer patients.
2. Input into NHS healthcare trusts, Macmillan & other patient networks.
3. Help develop services for other patients who receive a cancer diagnosis.
4. Provide working parties for specific projects.
5. Meet four times a year.

Topics covered at last meeting:

- Cancer Services and Support during Covid-19 pandemic
- Review of subgroup project progress
- Presentation on Macmillan's Patient Voice project

Attendees at last meeting:

- Patients (past and present)
- Frontline medical staff, like nurses and a radiotherapist
- Matron and senior management of Berkshire Cancer Centre
- Macmillan representatives
- Thames Valley Cancer Alliance
- Cancer Champions
- Berkshire West CCG

If you are interested in taking part, or would like to know more about the group, contact: CPP@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Next meeting: 22nd September 2020, 1.30pm to 3.30pm, on Microsoft Teams



Fancy some indoor fun?



Macmillan have come up with some great ideas to entertain you during the lockdown. Each activity involves a small donation to help support the charity throughout the pandemic. Fancy some indoor fun? Try one of these online:

Whodunnit?

Can you solve the mind-boggling murder mystery online? You can get all the characters, scripts and clues by signing up in order to host your Whodunnit virtually.

Board Games Night

Looking to have some virtual fun with friends and family? We'll send you everything you need to host a board games night online that makes a real difference.

Quiz Night

Easy and fun online quiz night to entertain your family and help raise some money for the charity.

Online games available from:

<https://gamesnight.macmillan.org.uk/?origin=fundraisingsafely>

*Text on this page taken from Macmillan website 2020



Raise some money

Macmillan receives 100% of funding from donations. There has been no government help through the coronavirus pandemic yet. £200 million is likely to have been lost, but due to some fantastic new initiatives, we can still keep raising money safely during the pandemic.

Can you help from home? Here's one idea....



How it works....

- 1) Sign up on <https://gameheroes.macmillan.org.uk/about/> and create a fundraising page
- 2) Set a date for your gaming marathon
- 3) Gather your virtual squad or go solo
- 4) Stream your gaming marathon and get sponsored

*Info from Macmillan Volunteer Webinar on 3 June 2020 and Macmillan website 2020



'Look Good Feel Better' has gone online!



skincare and make-up Virtual Workshops

Cancer support charity Look Good Feel Better is continuing its support by offering a new virtual service for people undergoing cancer treatment. Join us for a group chat and enjoy a fun and informative online workshop

Confidence-boosting sessions are led by beauty-trained professionals who will provide make-up & skincare advice to help manage the issues caused by treatment such as skin changes and possible loss of brows and lashes.



- Learn to look after your skin and apply make-up using your own cosmetic items in the safety of your home.
- A chance to chat to each other and with the expert Look Good Feel Better make-up artist hosting the session
- Enjoy an individual review of your make-up bag! *P.S you'll need a computer or tablet with a working microphone and camera to take part!*

Join us for an online workshop!

If you'd like to find out more please email info@lgfb.co.uk or call us on 07545 551531 Alternatively, we have some really informative and detailed tutorials on our website. Please visit www.lgfb.co.uk



Complementary Therapy in the comfort of your home



Connecting with Complementary Therapy service.

What the service is offering:

30-minute consultations with one of our qualified therapists so that they can provide practical guidance on things you can do at home to manage your wellbeing. You can choose from acupuncture, massage techniques or hand reflexology. We are also running virtual Mindfulness courses.

Who can use the service:

Like our 'face to face' service, any cancer patients in Berkshire at the start of diagnosis, whilst they are undergoing active treatment, or at any time within 6 months of finishing treatment.

How the service works:

Patients can contact us via the following methods:

- Call us on 01344 662906
- Email us on bookings@mycancermychoices.org
- Fill in a form on our website www.mycancermychoices.org

One of the team will contact the patient to register them and we will then book them in for a phone or video conference appointment with a therapist or will book them onto a virtual Mindfulness course.

Feedback

"The new techniques I have learned have helped me to feel empowered to provide self-administered relief from insomnia and pain which I can incorporate into my daily life or as necessary."

"It has been so nice during the pandemic, as an alternative to see other people and try new things. It has given me a focus to look forward to"

"Gives you such a moral lift and sense of belonging"

Victoria Latchford

Operations Director of My Cancer, My Choices





Connecting with Complementary Therapy

Simple tips from us for you to do at home

Would you like a **virtual session** with one of our qualified therapists to provide some practical guidance on things you can do at home to manage your wellbeing?

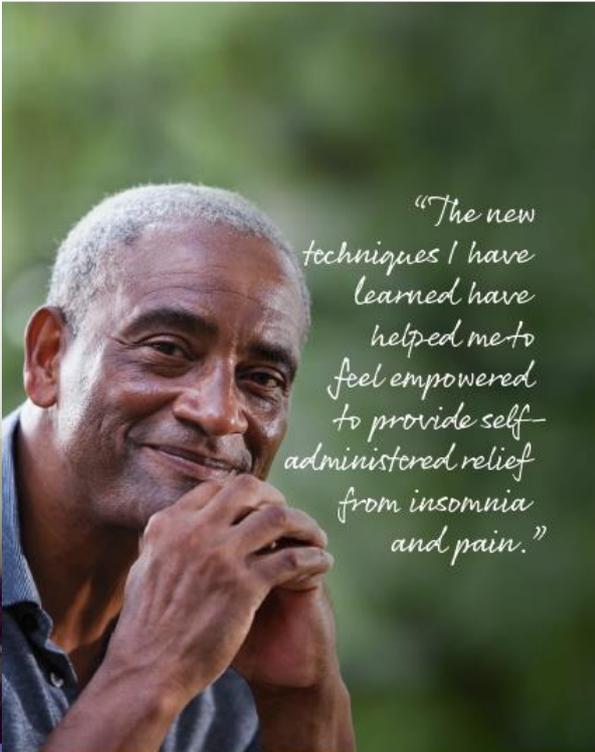
If you are a cancer patient in Berkshire at the start of diagnosis, undergoing active treatment, or at any time within 6 months of finishing treatment, My Cancer My Choices is offering you **one-to-one therapy** sessions.

Our therapists will use their expertise to give you **practical demonstrations** of hand massage, hand reflexology or acupressure, that you can do at home to help manage symptoms such as anxiety, pain, insomnia and hot flushes and signpost you to other services that may help.

We have been providing complementary therapies in Berkshire since 2015, giving support to over 1000 cancer patients to work alongside their conventional treatment.



"Keeping calm was easier with support"



"The new techniques I have learned have helped me to feel empowered to provide self-administered relief from insomnia and pain."

Please get in touch to book a phone or video conference appointment:

There is no charge to use the service, you can make a donation if you would like to, after your treatment.

Phone us: 01344 662906

Email us: bookings@mycancermychoices.org

Book a treatment online at: www.mycancermychoices.org

www.mycancermychoices.org

My Cancer My Choices registered charity 1162165



Have a Hug

'Muma Bear' discovered knitting helped her with numb fingers after chemotherapy. She knitted two scarves for her daughters, who were at university, to give them a 'Muma hug' whilst she was so far away. Who knew this little bit of love would become a national project to comfort cancer patients in the UK?

When her daughters loved the scarves, it dawned on her that the scarves could give immense comfort and security to people undergoing cancer treatment and others touched by cancer. The scarves were just like someone giving you a hug.

One by one, kind 'Muma Bear' started approaching hospitals in the UK to offer scarves to patients to give them 'aHug'. Since then, more and more kind and generous knitters have been donating scarves and she's even been approached by people from abroad!

If you know of a cancer patient who would like to receive 'aHug' scarf for free, please go to www.aHug.co.uk (postal cost only).

If you'd like to become a volunteer knitter, or your knitting group would like to contribute, please email admin@aHug.co.uk

Facing Cancer And Need aHUG?

What is aHUG?

It's a beautiful comforter scarf created by our merry band of volunteer crochet/knitters for those undergoing cancer treatment and just simply need aHUG



What's so great about aHUGs?

Muma Bear took great comfort from receiving aHUGs during her own cancer journey especially during treatment and in the dark days. Knitting also helped with the neuropathy caused by her chemo

How to get aHUG

Visit our website

<https://www.aHUG.co.uk/store/>

Let's stay connected

 www.facebook.com/aHUGUK/

 www.twitter.com/aHUGMuma

 www.instagram.com/aHUG__

Help Us To Spread aHUGs And Become A Volunteer Knitter

Join us as a knitter

aHUGs are created by our merry band of volunteer crochet/knitters. The more volunteers we have, the more aHUGs we can share. Register on our website www.aHUG.co.uk



How can you support us?

- Register as a volunteer crochet/knitter
- Yarn donations
- Raise funds to purchase more yarn for the volunteer crochet/knitters
- Gift an aHUG starter kit to a non cancer patient
- WOW Bands (with or without hair)
- Corporate Donations to enable FREEPOST to get aHUGs from volunteers to aHUG Central
- Spread the word
- Set up your own support groups e.g. Knit and Matter
- Become an ambassador in your local area



Let's stay connected

Website: www.aHUG.co.uk

Email: admin@aHUG.co.uk



Farewell to a much-loved Macmillan Manager



Liz Riddle retires from the trust after a career in nursing since qualifying in 1983

Many thanks from all at Macmillan, you have led the Macmillan Cancer Information service with great skill and care. You have developed it into a support service with fantastic staff and volunteers delivering wonderful support, advice and information to people affected by cancer at all stages of their cancer journey. You have worked hard to expand the scope and reach of the service and you leave a great team, that despite difficult circumstances currently, is still delivering great support. Please accept our very best wishes for all you do in the future and our heartfelt thanks for all that you have done under the Macmillan banner.

Julian Backhouse Macmillan Partnership Manager for Berkshire & Wiltshire
Helen Petley Macmillan Partnership Quality Lead for Berkshire and Wiltshire
Chris Cowap Macmillan Engagement Lead, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire

Warm Welcome to New Macmillan Manager

#hello my name is... **Anna** Macmillan Outpatient Sister

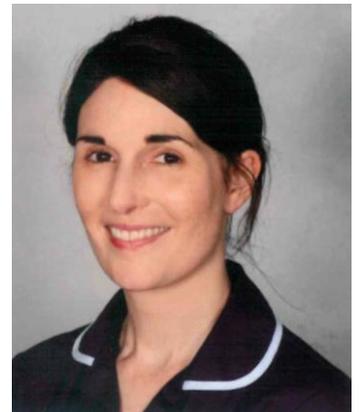
Hello! My name is Anna, and I am really excited to join the Macmillan Information and Support Team.

My role is the Berkshire Cancer Centre, Macmillan Outpatient Sister and a large part of this role is to support the team in the Information Centre. I've been part of the team in the Berkshire Cancer Centre clinic for the last 7 years and worked closely with the former Sister Liz Riddle and seen all the amazing work as it has developed in the Information Centre.

I have been a nurse for 11 years, starting my nursing career in an inpatient ward in London at the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust. I was born in the Royal Berkshire Hospital and it was therefore a natural move to return home and I was lucky enough to be able to join the Berkshire Cancer Centre clinic team in 2013.

In my spare time, I love to crochet and spend as much time out with my dog as possible or digging in the garden growing my fruits and veggies.

I was so pleased to take on this exciting role and am really keen to work alongside the wonderful information staff to help to continue to develop and deliver the services needed. We aim to help you with emotional, financial and physical support, whether you're a patient, family member, friend or carer, we are here to help and I look forward to meeting you!

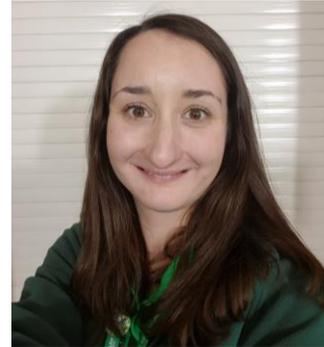


Meet the Team

hello my name is...

Sarah

**Cancer Information
and Support Facilitator**



Hello! My name is Sarah, and I am thrilled to join the Macmillan Information and Support Team. I've been super impressed by the centre and all the work the fantastic volunteers have done so far, from organising big projects like 'Look Good Feel Better' to day-to-day running of the centre.

My role is to help you with emotional, financial and physical support as much as I can, whether you're a patient, family, friend or carer. I'll usually sit in the Macmillan Information and Support Centre, but I might be at a support group meeting or doing 'outreach' in Bracknell or Newbury. The volunteers can always contact me.

I've happily worked in the hospital for the past three years and I've lived in Berkshire for about thirty years (except for a 'Study abroad' year) so I'd be happy to help you with all sorts of local information. I report to Shirley Jackson, Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Co-Ordinator.

In my spare time, I enjoy Park Run, watching Michael McIntyre and learning to wakeboard (even if it often ends with a splash!).

If you happen to pass the Information and Support Centre, stop by at the desk and say 'Hello'. I'd like to meet you and help you with anything I can.

What's coming up?

The future is a bit uncertain at the moment, but these are planned:

**AWARENESS
MONTHS**

**WORLD'S BIGGEST
COFFEE MORNING**

July

September

 Sarcoma/ Bone
Cancer

 Childhood Cancer
Uterine Cancer
Leukemia
Lymphoma
Ovarian Cancer
Prostate Cancer
Thyroid Cancer

