

NHS

Somerset, Wiltshire,
Avon and Gloucestershire
Cancer Alliance



Annual Impact Report

2023-2024

Connecting and Empowering the Delivery of Cancer Care Across SWAG Communities

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Foreword

Maria Kane, Joint CEO of North Bristol NHS Trust and University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust; Dr Helen Winter, Clinical Director; Dr Amelia Randle, Clinical Director; Dr Andrew Hollowood, Operational lead; Ruth Carr, Managing Director



Welcome to our first end of year report for SWAG Cancer Alliance for 2023-2024. With immense gratitude to our NHS workforce and patients with lived experience for their dedication, we are extremely proud to share the progress made across the SWAG Cancer Alliance over the past year.

The SWAG Cancer Alliance vision is to improve outcomes and experience of care for the cancer patients and populations of SWAG. Despite significant pressures, more people started NHS treatment for cancer compared to before the pandemic and more people than ever were offered and took up potentially lifesaving cancer checks. During the last year we began to see a significant step change in the number of patients being diagnosed at stage one and two with the expansion of our SWAG Targeted Lung Health Checks.

We reconnected and built on relationships with our stakeholders and key network partners to be able to take an outward looking and collaborative approach to solving current operational and workforce challenges, addressing inequalities and embracing innovation. Many more bespoke and personalised cancer treatments have become available to our patients in the past year and we successfully established and opened sites to the Cancer Vaccines launchpad across all systems in the Cancer Alliance.

We continued to build and deliver on our workforce strategy recommendations, through our commitment to supporting and developing our cancer workforce, providing multi-professional education and training, celebrating successes and sharing best practice.

We hope you enjoy reading about the SWAG Cancer Alliance achievements over the year and the difference that we collectively make to the lives of cancer patients and their loved ones. However, as we send this update, we are cognisant of Lord Darzi's report and the highlights on the cancer outcomes experienced by many our patients and families in the UK. With more people being diagnosed and living longer with cancer, we remain committed to improving cancer outcomes and experience.

About Us

Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon & Gloucestershire Cancer Alliance (commonly referred to as SWAG CA) is the primary vehicle for delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan ambitions for cancer and improvements in cancer performance.

By collaborating across organisational boundaries, we put the patient at the heart of what we do. In other words, we create the culture and systems which empower and enable people to do the right thing.

Cancer survival in England is at an all-time high due to the speed and scale of advances in diagnosis and treatment across the NHS.

Our work on cancer really matters to people. As we live longer, more of us will develop cancer ourselves, or will have family or friends who are affected by cancer. We want more people to be cured of their cancer or supported to find a way of living their life well with it.

There are two ambitions for cancer, which set the aims for the NHS Cancer Programme:

- **By 2028, 75% of cancers will be diagnosed at stage 1 or 2 (an increase from 50%).**
- **Achieving this will mean that, from 2028, 55,000 more people each year will survive their cancer for at least five years after diagnosis.**

Delivering on these big ambitions means developing new and innovative ways to increase earlier diagnosis across the system. We want to create more capacity and help people to understand what signs to look out for and encourage them to get checked promptly.

This report provides an overview of SWAGs progress in 2023/24 towards the delivery of the cancer ambitions.

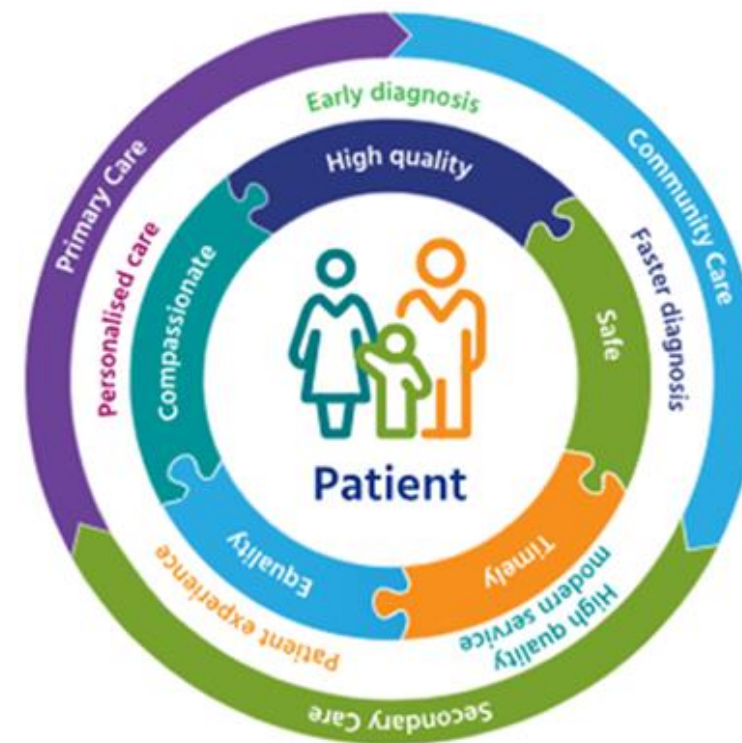
Connecting and Empowering the Delivery of Cancer Care Across SWAG Communities



Somerset, Wiltshire,
Avon and Gloucestershire
Cancer Alliance



Our Priorities





Andy Holness - Patient and Public Voice Partner, SWAG

2023/24 was a successful year for SWAG in demonstrating their increased commitment to working with people with lived experience of cancer – either as patients or loved ones – as equals and experts in the design and delivery of cancer care and support services.

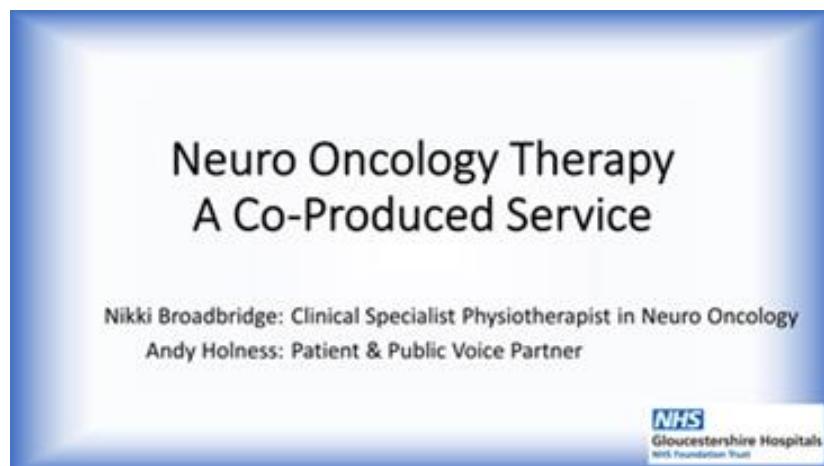
The main successes for me were

- The Alliance-wide commitment to, and progress with, personalised care initiatives and in particular "What Matters To You?"
- The significant growth in meaningful co-production in every Trust in the Alliance
- The co-produced Personalised Care and Support (PCS) Strategy on a page and delivery plan.
- The number of people that have heard Jo's presentation 'The Big Impact of Brief Encounters'
- The start of greater lived experience involvement. For example: including Gina in the PCS Steering Group.

My personal highlight was working with the Personalised Care Steering Group – a collaborative, high performing team – which delivered the PCS strategy and action plan in just 100 days.

My focus for 2024/25 will be on supporting the delivery of the PCS Strategy and continuing to grow the involvement of those with lived experience.

Looking Back: Patient and Public Voice (PPV)



SWAG Cancer Alliance is committed to ensuring that the voices of people affected by cancer are at the heart of service improvements

This year, we have...

- Continued to strengthen the voice of those with lived experience - whether as patients, carers or loved ones - since the launch of the SWAG Patient and Public Voices (PPV) Forum in 2022. The PPV Forum is an opportunity for a 2-way exchange of ideas and information between PPV Partners and Professionals and is the vehicle for promoting best practice approaches in ensuring experts by experience are included in service improvement and research.
- Strived to make sure we work with, listen to and include people with lived experience in all our programmes of work.



Our PPV partners have been actively involved in:

- Co-production of the SWAG Personalised Care Strategy.
- Providing insights into the following projects: Non-specific Symptom Pathway, Radiotherapy Late Effects, Rare Cancers, Genomics, Psychological Wellbeing, Research, grant applications, Task and Finish Groups, and more.
- Participating and contributing at events, including Primary Care Networks, Care Coordinators and Pathway Navigators, and the Work Well Conference.
- Collaborative development of the Cancer Patient Experience Survey dashboard (ongoing) and disseminating findings.
- Co-produced content for the SWAG website, including the development of the Health and Wellbeing Resource Hub to improve access to information. Resources Archive - SWAG Cancer Alliance.
- Showcasing co-production approaches through the SWAG annual conference.



Sadly, 2 of our PPV Partners passed away last year; but their contribution and legacy lives on. Their passing highlighted that there is a gap in provision of support for our PPV Partners and staff, locally and nationally, when a colleague dies. This led to the set-up of the Looking After Each Other Task and Finish Group, which is co-chaired by the SWAG PPV Lead and the national PPV Lead. The important work of this group is due to be completed in late summer / early autumn 2024.

In 2024/25 we will continue to work alongside our PPV Partners to ensure the lived experience voice is heard in all our work.

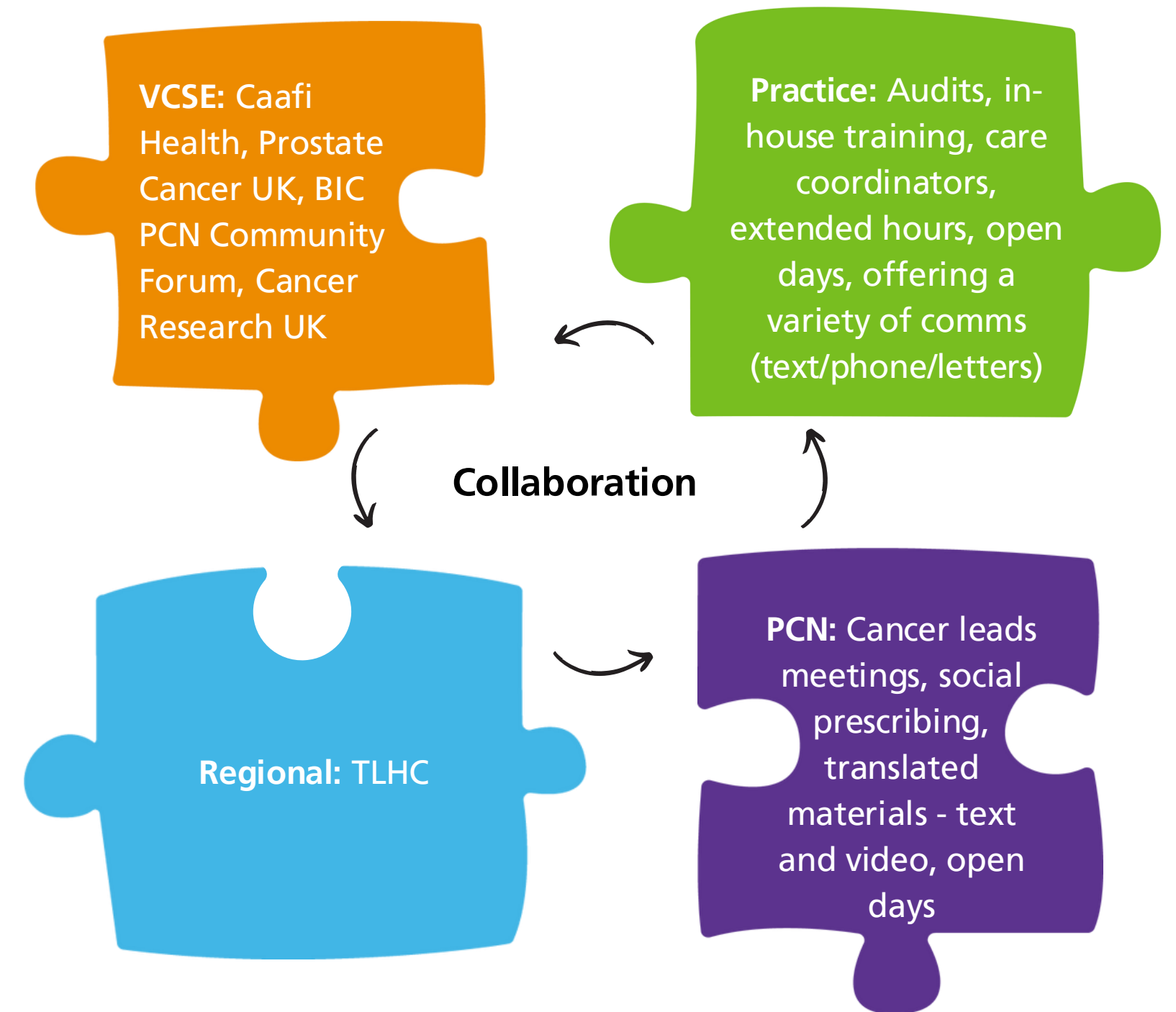


Looking Back: Health Inequalities

SWAG has a strategic ambition to reduce health inequalities, with the aim of demonstrating that it has made a difference to improving access, experience and outcomes for those population groups most in need.

This year, we have...

- **Embedded Health Inequalities and raised awareness** of [CORE20PLUS5](#) across all our workstreams.
- **Used data to identify the most deprived 20%** of our population, who are at risk of poorer outcomes, find out which PCNs they are in and review their cancer outcomes. We then identified which PCNs were achieving the best outcomes and worked with them as exemplars to support other PCNs.
- **Developed resources and materials** to enable and empower PCNs to better support people from the most deprived areas.
- **Used data to identify and address treatment variation** in prostate cancer, which found that men who are older, from more deprived areas, have co-morbidities and are of non-white ethnicity are less likely to be offered radical treatment. The demographics collected in the South-West Prostate Dashboard have been amended to include this data, strengthen the evidence base and inform future decision-making.
- **Delivered cancer awareness outreach sessions** within seldom heard communities, farming communities, military organisations and for those with learning disabilities.
- Supported **cervical screening clinics for homeless women** who would not normally attend screening appointments at GP practices, in their own place of dwelling. This has enabled women who would not routinely participate to receive both education and screening.





Looking Back: Faster Diagnosis & Operational Performance

Achieving faster diagnosis is fundamental to the delivery of the long-term plan ambitions for cancer.

Creating efficient, patient-centred pathways that can identify those with the highest priority needs - and effectively rule out those without cancer - will become ever more important to achieve an early-stage diagnosis and better treatment outcomes.

In the early phase of the pandemic, there was a sharp reduction in the number of urgent cancer referrals by GPs. While referrals returned to normal levels by September 2020, the legacy was pent up demand for cancer diagnostic and treatment services. Since March 2021, referrals have been at record levels, with twice as many people receiving checks in April 2023 than in April 2013.

While this is exactly what the NHS wants to see, it has also led to sustained pressure on services, meaning some people have had to wait longer than we would want. SWAG has led efforts to reduce the backlog created by the pandemic and manage increased demand more effectively.

During the year significant performance challenges were experienced with marked peaks in demand. Early in the year in colorectal, gynaecological and skin cancer referrals and later in the year in urological demand. These peaks were associated with societal and seasonal drivers such as: the 'bowel babe' and 'Davina effect', a larger and later rise in suspected skin cancer presentations, and NHS industrial action.

Despite the challenges SWAG performance was stronger throughout the second part of the year than 22/23. Partnership working has been key to the performance recovery and sustainable improvements realised in 23/24.



Looking Back: Faster Diagnosis & Operational Performance

This year, we have...

- Worked together with our ICBs and providers to ensure that the **Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS) and Best Practice Timed Pathways (BPTP) were implemented.**
- **Achieved the 28-day standard** (75% national target) for faster diagnosis by the end of 2023/24.
- **Met the SWAG treatment waiting list backlog recovery target.**
- **Increased the roll out of straight to test pathways;** this benefits patients by reducing anxiety and uncertainty of a possible cancer diagnosis, with less time between referral and receiving the outcome of diagnostic tests. For providers this allow resources to be targeted at patients with cancer by removing non-cancer patients earlier in the pathway.
- **Optimised new diagnostic FIT tests** within the colorectal pathway reducing the number of urgent suspected cancer referrals and releasing colonoscopy capacity for those at risk of cancer.
 - SWAG has been hailed nationally for implementation of FIT in primary care prior to Urgent cancer referral.
 - By March 2024 national reporting confirmed that Cancer Alliances with the lowest proportion of FIT <10 patients at triage included Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon & Gloucestershire (10%), in line with DG56 demonstrating excellent embedding of FIT prior to referral across our region.
 - This has been made possible by the collaborative working across primary care and secondary care and in particular our pathology laboratory colleagues, and the excellent clinical leadership of Dr Amelia Randle.

It is important to every person who is referred for checks for cancer that they get a timely and definitive diagnosis – whether cancer is confirmed or excluded. For those people who are diagnosed with cancer, it can be important to start treatment promptly.



Looking Back: Faster Diagnosis & Operational Performance

“Thank you to all our workforce who work tirelessly to achieve the cancer waiting times standards.”

- **Confirmed funding arrangements for the non-specific symptoms (NSS) services** for 2024/25. NSS pathways provide a streamlined route to diagnostics for patients who don't fit clearly into a single 'urgent suspected cancer' pathway but who are at high risk of being diagnosed with cancer. The NSS suspected cancer pathway was rolled out to 70% of the SWAG population.
- **Implemented the new post-menopausal bleeding pathway** to reduce unnecessary referrals and enable management outside an urgent suspected cancer referral where clinically appropriate.
- **Delivered cancer masterclasses**, including tele-dermatology, prostate cancer referral quality and managing postmenopausal bleeding on HRT.
- **Outreach cancer awareness events and projects** including reaching out to farming communities, military organisations and those with learning disabilities, running cervical screening clinics for homeless population, Prostate cancer case finding in primary care, and launching self-referral pilots for widening the range of access to cancer pathways for patients.
- **Implemented and supported a range of workforce initiatives:**
 - Nurse-led triage protocols in urology, colorectal and gynaecological pathways
 - Nurses undertaking advanced history taking training in dermatology
 - Increased nurse endoscopists
 - Roll out of nurse-led prostate biopsies
 - Increased support for navigation roles across cancer pathways and including radiology and pathology and urology, supported by the Cancer Alliance Navigator Forum.
- **Recognised that cancer administrative staff are amongst the most specialist within the NHS**, with recruitment and retention vital to improved performance.
 - SWAG undertook a scoping exercise and have run discovery sessions with each provider to design an intelligent automation pilot programme for 2024/25 with an objective of improving the experience of our cancer administrators through automation of the more mundane aspects of their role enabling them to focus on the more rewarding aspects of their work.

Targeted improvement plans are in place building on this work to deliver sustained performance recovery throughout 2024/25.



Looking Back: Early Diagnosis

This year, we have...

- **Considered the viewpoint of the community.** We have collaborated with primary care networks to engage with local communities, understanding cancer awareness and barriers to early diagnosis, empowering them to find community-based solutions.
- **Sent 19,370 invitations for Targeted Lung Health Checks (TLHC)** and completed 10,658. Undertaken 5,683 CT scans and detected 59 lung cancers, with around 80% of these found in the early stages. [Read Dave's story.](#)
- **Been finalists in the Health Service Journal awards** for Best Healthcare Provider Partnership for our TLHC programme with InHealth.
- **Established pathways for people with an inherited risk of pancreatic cancer** to be referred onto the national EUROPAC study. Pancreatic cancer is the tenth most common cancer in England, and one of the least survivable due to its often-late diagnosis.
- **Strengthened the Faecal Immunochemical Testing (FIT) Delivery Oversight Group**, linking primary care and pathology laboratories to ensure a coordinated approach, regular communication and focused improvement initiatives. We are recognised by NHS England for our sustained improvement and high uptake of FIT testing in primary care prior to Urgent Suspected Cancer referral for colorectal cancer.
- Continued to **fund and support testing for Lynch Syndrome**, to embed the optimal pathway within all trusts and audits completed in 2023/24 have shown >90% compliance rates. The Lynch Regional Expert Network is now in place and supported by SWAG and the Regional Genomics Network.
- **Supported the Community Liver Health Checks Pilot "Alright My Liver"** as part of our case finding programme, identifying people at risk of advanced fibrosis/cirrhosis and ensuring they are enrolled into surveillance programmes to enable earlier stage diagnosis of hepatocellular carcinomas (HCC) and greater opportunities for curative intent.
- We have collaborated with Friends of Caswell Thompson to gain insights into their perspectives on early prostate cancer diagnosis and to address barriers to PSA testing. [HOME \(foct.uk\)](#)
- **Been early adopters of the national multi-cancer blood test (MCBT) programme** – which has since been paused.
- **Developed an Early Diagnosis toolkit** and improved the content in the Early Diagnosis section of our website to support PCNs to improve detection rates.

Earlier diagnosis of cancer will save or extend more lives and improve quality of life for people affected by cancer. SWAG Cancer Alliance is committed to improving outcomes through prevention and earlier detection of cancer.



Increasing engagement and tackling
inequalities in population cancer screening
Presentation to SWAG cancer alliance early diagnosis group

Dr Emma Kain
Consultant in Public Health, Screening and Immunisations Lead
NHSE SW Vaccinations and Screening Team

December 2023



Targeted Lung Health Programme



Overview

- Launched in July 2022, utilising accessible non-clinical locations in areas of the highest need within SWAG geography.
- End-to-end service delivery by InHealth
- Every smoker between the age of 55-74 years old is invited to attend a face-to-face lung health check (LHC) in a local venue.

Locations

To date has delivered in 5 PCN across 3 of 4 ICB regions:

1. Bath (BSW)
2. Bridgwater (Somerset)
3. Northern Arc (BNSSG)
4. Bristol Inner City (BNSSG)
5. SWIFT (BNSSG)

Preparing to launch in Trowbridge (BSW) and Yeovil (Somerset) PCNs, followed by Pier Health (BNSSG) PCN, scanning simultaneously.

Lung Health Check activity

April 23 – Jan 24

- **19370** participants invited to telephone TLHC
- **10801** LHC completed – Uptake rate of **60% (since start)**, well above national uptake of **44%**
- **5618** Scans completed

Impact to end March 24

- 171 smokers quit smoking
- 55 lung cancers diagnosed
- 80% at Stage 1 or 2
- Pre-screening, SWAG stage rates were:
 - 2020 – 20% stage 1, 6% stage 2
 - 2021 – 19% stage 1, 6% stage 2

Spotlight: Targeted Lung Health Checks

Finalists in Health Service Journal awards for Best Healthcare Provider Partnership (TLHC/InHealth)

Success Story: An ex-smoker who had a tumour removed from his lung said he is relieved that a health check caught the tumour early.

Dave Rolfe, 69, from Bath was invited by his GP to take part in the [Targeted Lung Health Check Programme](#). The programme aims to find lung cancer at an early stage in former smokers aged 55-74.

More than 3,758 people have had a scan in the South West in less than a year – and 17 tumours were detected. Of these, 82% were caught at an early stage.

“It would never ever have been picked up,” said Mr Rolfe, who also overcame [Hodgkin’s lymphoma](#) 35 years ago. He went for a lung check-up at a mobile unit parked at St Martin’s Hospital last October.

See the full article here: [Somerset ex-smoker’s lung cancer detected early through health check – BBC News](#)

Spotlight: Liver Case Finding

Liver cancer rates have more than doubled over the past decade and are continuing to rise.

We have worked collaboratively with the Bristol and Severn Community Liver Health Checks pilot to support and champion their work to improve liver disease case finding through the 'Alright My Liver?' outreach programme.

- Liver disease can be present without any symptoms for many years.
- Identifying people at risk of advanced fibrosis or cirrhosis and ensuring they are enrolled into surveillance programmes will help diagnose more hepatocellular carcinomas (HCC) at an earlier stage.
- We want to diagnose liver disease as early as possible to give people with liver disease the best chance of recovery.



Whilst the 'Alright My Liver?' sessions are open to everyone, we are trying to get the service out to communities who most need it.

The 'Alright My Liver?' team are working alongside many different organisations, including local addiction services and Caafi Health to improve our reach and support us in overcoming barriers to engagement.

There is a strong link between liver disease and deprivation, and we are committed to offering an inclusive and flexible service.

[www. Alright My Liver? \(uhbristol.nhs.uk\)](http://www.Alright My Liver? (uhbristol.nhs.uk))
uhbristol.nhs.uk

Spotlight: Pancreatic Cancer

Pancreatic cancer is the tenth most common cancer in England and one of the least survivable due to its often-late diagnosis, with 77.3% of staged Pancreatic cancers being diagnosed at stage 3 or 4 in 2019.

- 1 in 10 cases of pancreatic cancer have a familial link, and new onset diabetes combined with weight loss is likely a strong indicator of early pancreatic cancer.
- Currently most patients at high risk of developing pancreatic cancer are not aware of their risk and are not receiving surveillance services in line with NICE guidance (NG85).
- In 2023/24, SWAG established a process to identify and triage people who meet NG85 criteria and refer them through to the regional pancreatic cancer surveillance coordinator for assessment and enrolment into the [EUROPAC study](#).
- EUROPAC is the European registry of familial pancreatic cancer and hereditary pancreatitis.
- SWAG continues to have strong working relationships with the central EUROPAC team and is one of the highest referrers to the programme.
- This programme will help improve early diagnosis rates for one the least survivable cancers.
- We have developed dedicated content on our website for the [EUROPAC Pancreatic Cancer study](#).



The trial is based at The Royal Liverpool University Hospital, where all recruitment takes place. Once recruited, there are 8 screening centres around Britain, with one at Bristol Royal Infirmary.

Looking Back: Innovation

Achieving the ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan will require us to explore opportunities for improvement in early diagnosis.

By identifying more people who are at greater risk of cancer, increasing the speed of diagnosis, improving access to best practice treatment pathways, optimising our workforce, and keeping the needs of those with cancer at the heart of all we do, we will be able to achieve this.

We know that demand for services is increasing and that there are numerous challenges ahead, as such we need to work collaboratively and creatively to identify new solutions and innovations.

This year, we have...

- Supported the set up and launch of the [Cancer Vaccine Launchpad \(CVLP\)](#) in Bristol, Gloucestershire, Bath and Somerset. The CVLP is a platform that will speed up access for people with cancer onto vaccine clinical trials.
- Recruited to a joint SWAG Cancer Alliance and Health Innovation Network programme manager role.
- Supported national guidelines on post menopausal bleeding and self-referral post-menopausal bleeding pathway launched in Somerset.
- Explored opportunities for intelligent automation to support clinical decision-making in both bladder and breast pathways which has which has received national interest.
- Supported 3 [Colon Capsule Endoscopy \(CCE\)](#) pilot sites in Bristol, Bath and Somerset, which have contributed to the national evaluation data collection. Proving CCE is a valuable tool in the lower GI diagnostic pathway, enabling greater patient choice and resulted in less invasive colonoscopy procedures in 70% of patients who received it. All 3 of the SWAG pilot sites have expressed an interest in continuing the services and SWAG has agreed to continue funding for 2024/25.
- Supported Gloucestershire Hospitals Foundation Trust (GHFT) to participate in the national [Cytosponge \(capsule sponge\)](#) evaluation. Cytosponge is effective in reducing the demand for more invasive endoscopy, is well tolerated by patients, and is cost-effective. We will now be rolling this service out across other sites in SWAG.
- Partnered with the NHS England urgent care transformation team to offer direct access to **Somerset's urgent suspected cancer breast clinic through 111 online.**
- On Thursday 09 November at the [Macmillan Professionals](#) awards in Glasgow we had 2 teams from SWAG who both won the Innovations Excellence Awards!

Somerset leads the way with new service to detect womb cancer



MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT

Cancer Haematology and Palliative Care
Psychology Service

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



Spotlight: Radiotherapy Late Effects Service

While radiotherapy is a life-saving cancer treatment, the patients who receive it can develop late side effects that can be life-long, life-changing, and sometimes life-limiting.

These symptoms often present long after any formal hospital follow-up period and, historically, it's been unclear where the responsibility for treating them lie.

To address this, eight therapeutic radiographers in cancer centres across the SouthWest came together to form a radiotherapy late effects service that provides crucial patient-centred support.

Not only has this innovative collaboration brought equity of care across the region, but it has also embedded pathways that respond to patient needs earlier.

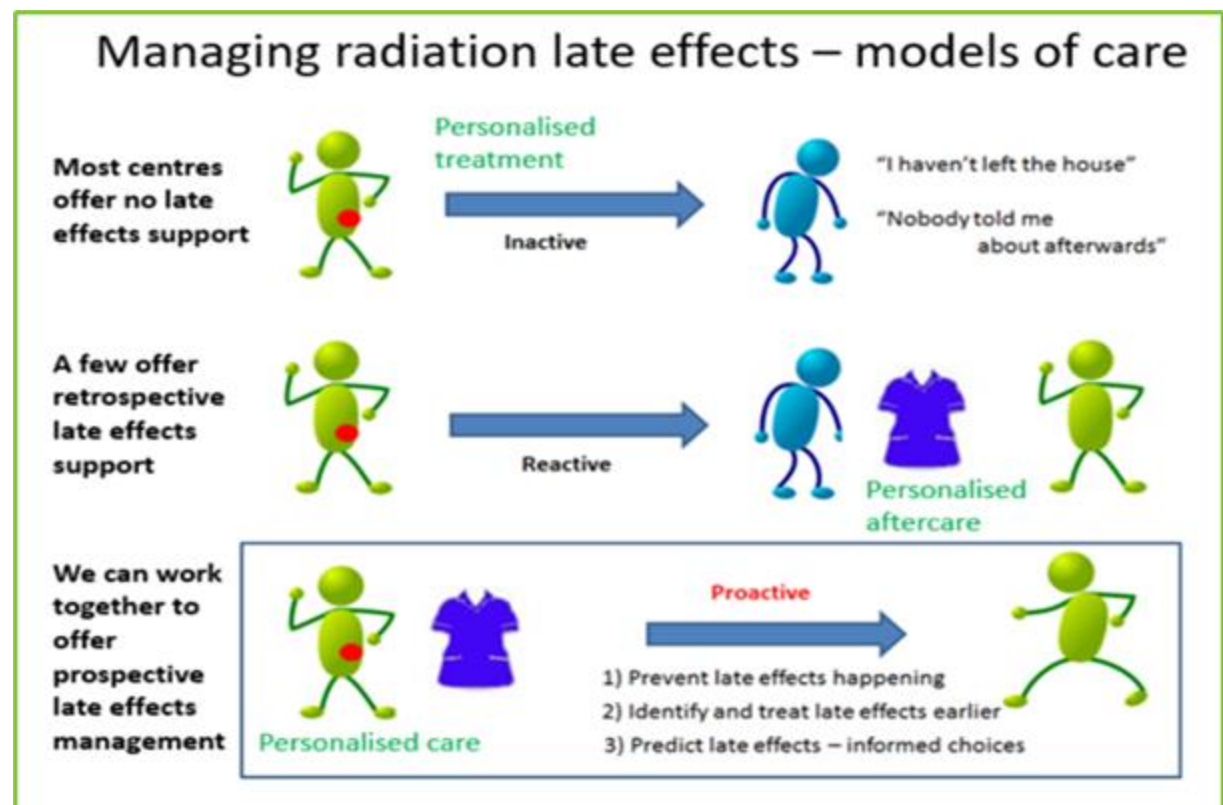


"Previously, patients with late effects had to circle services trying to get help while constantly repeating their story.

Now that we're here, we offer a holistic service that joins the dots.

Many patients express their relief during consultations because they feel it's the first time they've been properly listened to."

Lisa Durrant, Macmillan Consultant Therapeutic Radiographer



Looking Back: Personalised Care & Support

SWAG Cancer Alliance recognises that living a good quality of life is as important to people as survival, and receiving care that is tailored to a person's needs can have a significant impact on their experience and quality of life.

This year, we have...

- **Launched 'Your Cancer, Your Care, Your Way'**, the co-produced Personalised Care and Support (PCS) Strategy
- **Increased clinical engagement** across the region aligning SWAG programmes with clinical advisory group work programmes.
- **Co-produced updated information and resources** on
 - The [Prehabilitation](#) section of our website, to help people at the start of their cancer journey.
 - The [Fatigue](#) section of our website, to help people manage their energy levels more effectively.
 - The online [Health & Wellbeing Resources Hub](#), which was led by the late Jo Chambers.

These are all important resources to support both people with cancer, their families and networks, and health professionals and we have received positive feedback from other Cancer Alliances.

- Worked hard to support the **increased use and recording of Holistic Needs Assessments (HNA) and Personalised Care & Support Plans (PSCP)**.
- Championed the role of **Cancer Support Workers and Cancer Care Coordinators** to support improvements in personalised care.
- Funded the **SWAG Radiotherapy Late Effects Evaluation**, which is showcasing the benefits of personalised care.
- Provided **funding and support for remote monitoring systems** to enable the safe and effective delivery of Personalised Stratified Follow-up (PSFU) across all Trusts in the SWAG area.
- Started work on the **Psychosocial Support** programme.



Spotlight: Your Cancer, Your Care, Your Way

We held a face-to-face Personalised care and Support (PCS) Strategy Delivery Group event in July 2023.

The day brought together teams from across SWAG, with a view to explore what a good PCS strategy would look like and how we could work collaboratively to develop it. The agenda was co-produced with Andy, our PPV Lead.

A key part of the day was discussing how to take forward the work that had been done on 'What Matters to You?' (WMTY). As part of this, Andy told us 'Jo's Story'. Jo was a SWAG PPV member who worked tirelessly to raise the importance of personalised care, and especially WMTY, following her own experiences. Sadly, Jo passed away before she could see her hard work come to fruition. However, Andy felt Jo would have been thrilled to see her legacy live on and her story was a timely reminder for us all about why we were there, and what we were trying to achieve.

The PCS strategy is called 'Your Cancer, Your Care, Your Way'.

During 2023/24, SWAG committed to the adoption and spread of 'WMTY' by working with PPV Partners, Trusts and Macmillan Cancer Care. Key outputs this year included:

- The inclusion of protected characteristics and patient preferences into the national Macmillan electronic Holistic Needs Assessment, which enabled people to personalise elements of their care.
- The co-production of the new SWAG PCS Strategy and implementation guide, which has been ratified by the SWAG Board. We will be partnering again with SCW to support the implementation of the strategy across the SWAG region throughout 2024/25.



Looking Back: Workforce



SWAG is working in collaboration with integrated care systems, GP practices and hospitals, regional screening teams, Health Innovation West of England, charities and the wider NHS to support and develop the whole cancer workforce across Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon and Gloucestershire.

This year, we have...

- Begun to **implement the SWAG workforce strategy** recommendations, including the creation of a vision for the future.
- Developed the Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development programme “**SWAG ACCEND with Excellence**” (draft) framework and recruited to an ACCEND Implementation Lead.
- Supported and **championed the staff cervical screening programme** in University Hospitals Bristol and Weston and Gloucestershire.
- Enabled **workforce development and co-production** through a range of training, workshops and project-based opportunities.
- Focused on enabling, empowering and supporting our workforce through the **SWAG Work Well Conference**.
- Showcased the importance of – and provided support and development of - new and emerging roles within the cancer workforce, including the **Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS)** postholders and Cancer Care Coordinators.

Spotlight: Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development Programme (ACCEND)

The ACCEND (Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development) Programme within SWAG exemplifies a transformative approach to cancer care, aligning with the NHS Long Term Plan for cancer. This holistic framework integrates the complexity of cancer pathways from prevention to palliation, enhancing care delivery across a continuum that includes screening, diagnosis, treatment, genomics and end-of-life care.

Central to ACCEND is its innovative structure, comprised of three core components: Career Pathways, Core Cancer-Specific Capabilities in Practice (CiPs), and the Education Framework. Each component is designed to foster professional growth and adapt to the dynamic needs of the healthcare landscape.

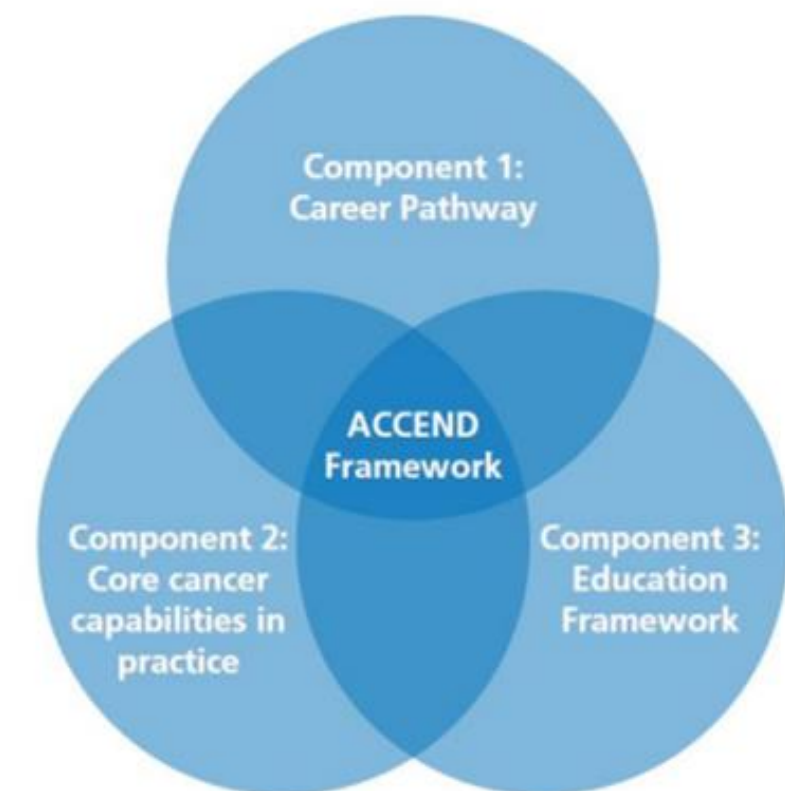
- Career Pathways offers structured progression from supportive roles to consultant levels, emphasising flexibility and meritocratic advancement.
- The CiPs component addresses the need for adaptability and proficiency in complex clinical situations across eight domains, ensuring comprehensive skill development.
- The Education Framework supports these capabilities with tailored educational modules that promote lifelong learning and practical application in diverse clinical settings.

Implementation of ACCEND across SWAG Cancer Alliance involves a phased integration strategy, requiring robust stakeholder engagement, tailored training programmes and continuous evaluation to adapt to evolving healthcare needs and innovations.

This strategic adoption promises not only to enhance the capabilities of the healthcare workforce but also to improve patient outcomes by ensuring high-quality, patient-centred care.

By embedding ACCEND's principles into daily operations, the Cancer Alliance fosters an environment of continuous improvement and interdisciplinary collaboration, aiming to set a regional benchmark for excellence in cancer care.

The commitment to the ACCEND Programme is a testament to the SWAG Cancer Alliance's dedication to exceeding the standards of cancer treatment and patient care, shaping a future where cancer care is defined by its excellence in innovation, compassion, and unwavering support for both patients and healthcare professionals.



Spotlight: Work Well Conference

On the 30th April, almost 70 colleagues from across the SWAG region travelled to Bristol for our first annual "Work Well" conference.

The themes of the day were supporting the workforce and enabling personalised care – 2 golden threads within SWAG's own programme of work.

Our intention was for people to connect, reflect and be inspired - and feedback from the day shows we achieved that!

Attendees were treated to 9 incredible speakers and 15 poster submissions, which included personal experiences, innovations and best practice approaches.

There was also an interactive World Café, where delegates explored the topics of new ways of working, building a resilient workforce and trust.

The energy, enthusiasm and commitment to improvement was palpable throughout the day, and we hope to build on this over the next 12 months.

"It was the best SWAG event yet for that feeling of an 'Alliance'. There seemed to be more 'gelling' and a real appetite to share."



"I wanted to say thank you for organising such a thoughtful and informative day."

The quality of the speakers, the tone of care they expressed for their colleagues and patients, and their commitment to service improvement was an exemplar for us all to follow."



Looking Forward to 2024/2025



Continuous Improvement	Continue to deliver continuous improvements in all our priority areas across the cancer pathway.
Leadership	Agree our clinical leadership strategy and continue to advocate for robust system cancer leadership during the ICB restructuring.
Personalised Care	Support the implementation of the Personalised Care and Support Strategy across SWAG – Your Cancer, Your Care, Your Way or What Matters To Me?
Early Diagnosis	Optimise data to continue towards the 75% Stage 1 & 2 Long Term Plan ambition.
Faster Diagnosis	Continue working to ensuring our patients receive diagnosis and treatment in a timely way.
ACCEND	Support the implementation of the ACCEND programme and continue to support the development of ARRS roles.
Workforce	Continue to support and develop our workforce, across the whole cancer pathway, to improve resilience, recruitment and retention
Networks	Build on the momentum and energy from 2023/24, to grow and sustain our networks.