

Alliance Newsletter

Connecting and empowering the delivery of cancer care across our communities.

Issued Monday 4 August 2025

Our latest Annual Report for 2024/25



Welcome to our latest SWAG Newsletter. The last few months have seen some big announcements for healthcare, with the launch of the new 10 Year NHS Plan 'Fit for the Future', which sets a bold direction for NHS care over the next decade, with a focus on three main priorities:

Sickness ➡ Prevention
Hospital ➡ Community
Analogue ➡ Digital

The new plan sets about a clear focus for cancer care on early diagnosis, increasing uptake in screening, and prevention. You can read the full plan [here](#).

This brings me on nicely to introduce our latest Annual Impact Report for 2024 - 25, in which I am proud to say much of the work we are celebrating already aligns with these priorities.

This report highlights the incredible progress we have made together - from expanding early diagnosis initiatives and reducing treatment wait times, to investing in innovation and our workforce.


Key achievements include:

- A 6% increase in early-stage cancer diagnoses
- Expansion of the Lung Cancer Screening Programme across all ICBs
- Successfully met the 75% Faster Diagnosis Standard
- Significantly reduced the number of patients waiting more than 62 days to begin treatment
- Launched an Innovation Funding call, selecting seven pioneering projects to test and evaluate new approaches in cancer care

[Read the Annual Report](#)

As we look ahead, we remain committed to delivering equitable, personalised, and high-quality cancer care across our communities. We look forward to the upcoming 10-Year Cancer Plan later this year for more detail in how we can deliver this ambitious plan to improve outcomes for cancer patients.

I want to extend my thank you to everyone who has helped deliver this incredible work, and continues to strive forward in making real, tangible improvements for cancer patients in our region. We should all be very proud of our achievements together, and I look forward to seeing what we achieve over this coming year.



Ruth Carr
Managing Director, SWAG Cancer Alliance



World Lung Cancer Day: Liz's Story



The 1st August marked World Lung Cancer Day.

When Liz received her invitation for a lung cancer screening, she didn't hesitate to attend. That decision changed her life. In this powerful video, Liz shares her journey - from attending her screening appointment to receiving a lung cancer diagnosis - and how early detection made all the difference.

Her story highlights the importance of taking up your screening invitation. Lung cancer caught early can be treated more effectively.

So far, we have invited over 100,000 people across SWAG to a lung cancer screening appointment but our mission is to reach every person eligible - helping to detect cancer earlier.

[Watch Liz's Story.](#)







Patients rate SWAG cancer care 9 out of 10 in national survey

We were proud to see that cancer patients across SWAG rated their care 9 out of 10 in the latest National Cancer Patient Experience Survey.

With no scores below the expected range and nine areas rated above the national benchmarks, these results reflect the dedication of staff across the region and SWAG's ongoing commitment to improving cancer care for everyone.

These are not just statistical wins, they represent real improvements in the lives of people navigating cancer.

Some key highlights where we performed above the national expected average were:

-  95% received information on available support
-  86% said their family or carers were involved in treatment decisions
-  85% felt the waiting time for treatment was appropriate
-  80% felt their cancer diagnosis was clearly communicated

We are pleased to say that SWAG had no scores below the expected range – meaning SWAG met or exceeded expectations based on our population. However, we know there are still areas where we can improve, and we remain committed to focusing on areas where scores were lower.

A huge thank you to all the staff across SWAG who deliver cancer care with dedication and compassion every day.

[See the full SWAG results here](#)

Days Matter: Driving rapid transformation in cancer pathways



Days Matter is a 100-day cancer improvement programme launched by SWAG Cancer Alliance in response to a call from Professor Tim Briggs, National Director for Clinical Improvement and Elective Recovery. The initiative aims to deliver rapid

transformation in high-priority cancer pathways - specifically urology and colorectal - to improve patient outcomes and reduce waiting times.

Led by the SWAG Cancer Alliance in partnership with NHS England's Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) team, the project brings together clinical leaders, operational teams, and system partners to tackle unwarranted variation and reduce delays in cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Over the course of 100 days, participating Trusts are challenged to identify and implement practical changes that will help more patients meet the Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS) and receive timely treatment.

[Read more](#)



FIT Testing exceeds national target

We are proud to share the outcomes of the BNSSG FIT Test Task & Finish Group, which recently wrapped up with a remarkable 86.2% completion rate – exceeding the national target of 80%.

The introduction of a new pre-referral step for diagnosing bowel cancer saw the introduction of faecal immunochemical test (FIT), a self-testing kit to look for blood poo – a vital move in the early detection of bowel cancer. However, challenges quickly emerged around timeliness and test completion, which posed a risk of missed or delayed diagnoses.

To tackle this, a dedicated Task & Finish Group was formed to understand the barriers and co-design solutions with practices across the region.

This work was well received by practices, and we've already seen improved completion rates. A great example of how simple changes and shared learning can make a big difference.



Other Stories

National Cancer Team visit SWAG



On 31 June we welcomed David Fitzgerald, Director of Policy and Strategy, and Louise Collins, Programme Manager, from the NHS England National Cancer Programme to meet with our SWAG team and hear about the impactful work we're doing across early diagnosis, health inequalities, innovation and research, priority pathways, and treatment and care.

David said: "A fantastic day in Bristol hearing about the excellent work of the Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon and Gloucestershire Cancer Alliance. It is exciting to see SWAG taking a national lead in so many areas of cancer care including proactively identifying people with symptoms which could indicate pancreatic cancer, and in understanding more about the late effects of cancer treatment."

New Genomics Cancer Nurse



Together, with the Genomic Medicine Service Alliance (GMSA), we have appointed a new Inherited Cancer Nurse Lead, Siobhan John, to support local cancer teams in delivering inherited cancer testing and support to affected patients and families.

Siobhan said: "Having worked as a cancer nurse specialist at RUH Bath for nearly 25 years, in 2022 I caught the genomics bug and started working on the Lynch Transformation project and studying for a PG Cert in Genomics. I recently graduated with distinction, ready to start my new role as Inherited Cancer Nurse Lead.

I will be based in the SWAG geographical area for the next 2 years looking at inherited cancer pathways, particularly focusing on the common cancer predisposition genes and integrating mainstreaming services across tumour sites."

Farewell and Thank You to Dr Amelia Randle



As Dr. Amelia Randle moves on to an exciting new role with NHS England, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for her outstanding contribution to the Cancer Alliance since its inception.

Amelia has been a dedicated and passionate advocate for improving cancer services, and her leadership and insight have played a vital role in shaping the Alliance's development and impact. Her commitment to innovation and forward-thinking has left a lasting legacy that will continue to benefit patients and colleagues alike.

We wish Amelia every success in her new position and look forward to seeing the positive influence she will undoubtedly bring to her new role



Events and Resources

Lung Cancer Screening Awareness

Our Lung Cancer Screening team will be making an appearance at this year's Bristol International Balloon Fiesta on Friday 8th August - find them along with InHealth to find out more about the lung cancer screening programme. [Find out more.](#)

Don't miss out! Cancer Demystified - FREE Admin Oncology Training for SWAG Cancer Workforce

SWAG Cancer Alliance have funded oncology training webinars delivered by O'Halloran Consultancy. A range of webinars suitable to learn all you need in your role about cancer, from those new to cancer and those with more experience, there is something for everyone.

To register please email SWAGCA@nbt.nhs.uk, and we will send you the instructions. In your email, please include your name, role and organisation.

Please do not distribute registration details out of the SWAG region as this could terminate the contract. [Sign up here.](#)

Cancer Research E-learning resource guide

Cancer Research UK have produced a handy guide to all their e-learning for primary care professionals, with quick links to access a range of online webinars and resources. [See more.](#)



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