

# Alliance Newsletter

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

**Issued Wednesday 8 October 2025**

## Welcome to the latest SWAG Newsletter!

It's been a busy and productive few months across SWAG, with some major milestones and exciting new initiatives. Since our last update, we've:

- Rolled out Lung Cancer Screening in Salisbury – completing delivery across all six SWAG trusts
- Accelerated our Days Matter 100-day challenge to improve cancer pathways and reduce waiting times
- Launched two new funding calls for primary care and community-led early diagnosis projects
- Opened a survey to better understand people's experiences and barriers in accessing cancer care
- Highlighted the results of the CO21 Challenge research trial that showed that colon cancer patients who are supported to do regular exercise, are more likely to survive the disease. Watch our video with Clinical Director Dr Helen Winter and Consultant Clinical Oncologist Dr Thomas Strawson-Smith [here](#).
- Published our new [Cancer Innovation Strategy](#), in partnership with the Health Innovation Network West of England



We're also excited to introduce [SWAG Innovates Together](#) – a new quarterly forum to connect and inspire our regional workforce around cancer innovation. The first session takes place on Thursday 13 November, 1–2pm via Teams, and is open to anyone with an interest in cancer innovation.

[Read our Innovation Strategy](#)

[Sign up to SWAG Innovates Together](#)

These achievements reflect the incredible dedication of our SWAG team and partners. We hope you enjoy reading about our latest work – if there is anything you would like to see in our coming newsletters, please do let us know by getting in touch with us at [swagca@nbt.nhs.uk](mailto:swagca@nbt.nhs.uk).

**Ruth Carr**  
Managing Director, SWAG Cancer Alliance



## New funding opportunities open!

### New Case Finding Pilot launched

We are inviting GPs and Primary Care Networks to apply for funding to run case finding projects aimed at improving early cancer diagnosis in high-risk groups or specific tumour sites.

Case finding is the proactive identification of individuals who may have cancer, often before symptoms appear, followed by referral for further testing. This approach can significantly improve outcomes by catching cancer earlier.

- **Funding available:** £50,000 total (split between a maximum of 4 case finding pilots)
- **Deadline:** 28 November

[Find out more](#)

### New small grants scheme



We have also launched a new Small Grants Scheme to support **community-led projects that improve access to cancer care** and tackle health inequalities. We are particularly keen to hear from voluntary, community, faith or social enterprise groups, as well as primary care networks and local authorities.

Projects can **apply for up to £15,000** and should focus on some of our underserved populations, or those who may have difficulties accessing cancer care, such as people living in areas of deprivation, LGBTQ+ communities, people with disabilities, rural

communities, refugees, sex workers, etc.

Please do share this opportunity across your networks – we are hosting a **webinar this Wednesday at 12:30** for anyone who wishes to join and find out more.

[Find out more](#)



## Salisbury expands early detection services

Salisbury has launched the national **Lung Cancer Screening programme** in partnership with InHealth and local GPs. As of September, people aged 55 to 74 who are previous or current smokers, are now being invited for a Lung Health Check – a vital opportunity to detect lung cancer early.

Last month, they also ran a second round of photography training for HCAs and GP Assistants on the use of the dermoscopic cameras, with the rollout of teledermatology to remotely assess skin lesions for possible cancer due to launch imminently - watch this space!

[Find out more about the Lung Screening Programme](#)



## Days Matter update



We have continued to progress our 100-day improvement challenge, Days Matter, with engagement in the process across our entire SWAG region. We are nearing the 90-day mark, and look forward to being able to give an update about the

great work and successes that have happened as a result. A huge thank you to all the teams and individuals who have taken part and for your commitment in driving forward improvements to our most challenged urgent suspected cancer pathways to reduce waiting times.

We have been working closely with the National Cancer Programme and the Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) team nationally, showcasing best practice pathways for the key tumour groups for other regions and cancer alliances to consider. We will be looking to expand the work into skin and breast cancer pathways as other challenged pathways in SWAG. Watch this space for more information coming soon.

[Read more](#)



## Healthwatch Survey launched to address barriers to cancer care

We have launched a new project in partnership with Healthwatch BNSSG, B&NES, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire aimed at uncovering inequalities and barriers to accessing cancer care for some of our most vulnerable communities and people across SWAG.

**Breaking Barriers: Improving Access to Cancer Services – Including Screening** will help ensure that our cancer pathways reflect the diverse needs of the population, particularly those who may face additional barriers due to language, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or other factors.

We have launched a survey inviting anyone who has experienced cancer services to share their experiences. If you have experienced cancer care, or work with those who do, please do share the survey and help us better understand the needs of our SWAG population.

[Find out more](#)



## Other Stories

### Welcome to new members of SWAG!



Dr Rachel Brown (left) joined us as our new Clinical Lead for Primary Care Case Finding. With 33 years in the NHS, Rachel brings a wealth of expertise and is a passionate advocate for improving cancer outcomes. Rachel will be working to embed new case finding projects into primary care settings across the region.

Divya Bassi (center) has joined us as a new Senior Project Manager in Early Diagnosis & Health Inequalities, having worked in cancer survivorship and public health, Divya has already brought valuable skills and experience to the team, supporting on the launch of the new Small Grants Scheme and the Healthwatch survey.

Hannah Brain (right) has joined as our newest Project Support Coordinator. Hannah will be supporting our Early Diagnosis, Health Inequalities, and Personalised Care and Treatment programmes. She brings experience of project support in the NHS, having come to us from the Continuous Improvement and Learning Team for Women and Children's Health.

## Improving outpatient care for children with cancer



We are proud to announce that we are funding a new partnership with Bristol Royal Hospital for Children focused on improving care for children with cancer across the South West – exploring how treatments, particularly chemotherapy, can be delivered on an outpatient or ambulatory basis. This will reduce the need for prolonged hospital stays, easing emotional and logistical burdens on families and children facing cancer.

[Read more](#)

## SWAG launches new innovation network



SWAG Innovates Together is a new open forum designed to connect and inspire our workforce across the region.

Whether clinical or administrative, members will gain insights into real-world evaluation, health equity, and the steps needed to bring impactful ideas to life.

The first session will be held on Teams on Thursday 13 November from 1pm to 2pm.

[Register here](#)



## October Awareness Days

October marks multiple awareness days:

- Liver Cancer Awareness Month
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Black History Month
- Stoptober
- World Mental Health Day – 10 October
- National Mammography Day – 17 October
- World Menopause Day – 18 October

If you have anything you would like to share with SWAG in relation to these awareness months, please do email it to [swagca@nbt.nhs.uk](mailto:swagca@nbt.nhs.uk).



## Get involved



[Visit our website](#)



[Contact us by email](#)



[Follow us on LinkedIn](#)