

# Alliance Newsletter

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

**Wednesday 5 November 2025**



## Welcome to our November Newsletter!

As we move into November, I am proud to reflect on the powerful patient stories, impactful innovations and collaborative efforts that continue to shape cancer care across SWAG Cancer Alliance.

Last month, we marked Liver Cancer Awareness Month by sharing two patient videos from Gary and Sarah. Their experiences highlight the critical importance of early detection and the value of liver surveillance programmes such as 'Alright My Liver?'. These stories remind us why we do what we do – discovering if you are at risk at an early stage means you can make lifestyle changes and get support before serious problems occur, and spotting cancer early means treatment is more likely to be successful.

We are also excited to spotlight the work happening through our Days Matter programme, where we bring together clinical leaders, operational teams, and system partners to tackle unwarranted variation and reduce delays in cancer diagnosis and treatment.

We have also had the publication of the Medium Term Planning Framework, which sets out operational priorities for the next three years. It reaffirms the national ambition to meet Cancer Waiting Times Standards by March 2029, and highlights the continued need to improve early diagnosis, prioritise diagnostic and treatment capacity, and manage growing demand. The Framework also recognises the vital role of Cancer Alliances in driving performance improvement and supporting system-wide transformation.

Looking ahead, I encourage you to join us for our first SWAG Innovates Together Forum on 13 November – a new space to connect, learn, and share best practice across the region. Please also help us amplify the voices of underserved communities by sharing our Healthwatch Survey: Cancer Care Survey.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

**Ruth Carr**  
**Managing Director**

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## Patients share their stories for Liver Cancer Awareness Month



October marked Liver Cancer Awareness Month. Liver Cancer is the 18th most common cancer in the UK but the 8th most common cause of cancer death. Around 6,200 people are diagnosed with liver cancer each year, yet only 3 in 10 are diagnosed at an early stage.

90% of liver cancer develops in people with liver cirrhosis, a condition that often has no symptoms until it is advanced. Cirrhosis is long-term scarring of the liver caused by liver disease.

Last month, we shared two powerful patient stories that highlighted the importance of early detection and liver surveillance programmes. Gary and Sarah both bravely shared their stories of liver cancer and liver disease and highlighted the various pathways that have been open to support them across SWAG, including the liver surveillance programme and 'Alright My Liver?'.

[Watch the videos](#)



## Showcasing SWAG at first Ethnic Inequality Conference



We attended the first '[Inclusive Research Cultures: Addressing Ethnic Inequality Through Collaboration](#)' event on Tuesday 4 November 2025 at UWE Bristol.

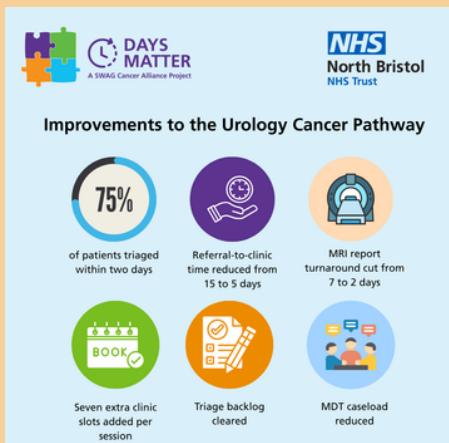
The aim of this conference was to create collaborative and inclusive research environments to combat ethnic disparities and to bridge the gap between researchers and community partners, providing a platform to share, learn, knowledge exchange and establish collaborative research environment.

We were pleased to have been selected to showcase our work on tackling health inequalities across SWAG - including our partnership with Healthwatch and the launch of our Small Grants Scheme - empowering our communities to co-produce solutions that make access to cancer care fairer for everyone.

Be it research, commissioning, or delivery of care, collaboration with community partners and community empowerment are fundamental to reducing health inequalities across the board.



## Days Matter: Improving the Urology Cancer Pathway



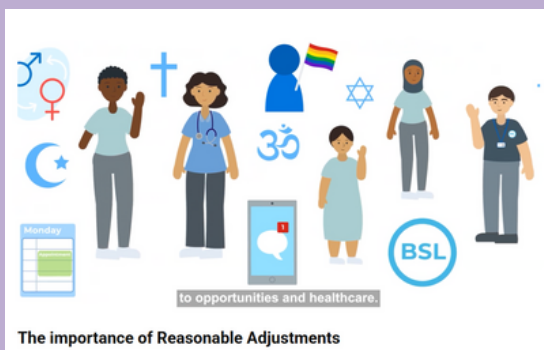
As part of our 100-day improvement programme 'Days Matter', we are supporting NHS trusts across SWAG to deliver rapid, meaningful change in high-priority cancer pathways. Over the coming weeks we will be spotlighting some of the fantastic work happening across our partner trusts on our website and LinkedIn page.

From embedding more efficient systems and ways of working, such as improved MRI access, training up non-medical practitioners to run diagnostics, and expanding capacity, Trusts are reducing waiting times and improving patient experience.

[Read more](#)



## Reasonable adjustments in cancer care - new video resources



A short series of new videos have been produced that introduce what reasonable adjustments in cancer care are, why they are important, and how they can be applied in practice. The Equality Act 2010 mandates that health and social care organisations take steps to remove barriers individuals face because of disability.

Co-designed by North Bristol NHS Trust, University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) ICB and SWAG - along with people who have received cancer care within BNSSG - the videos draw on insights from focus groups involving 45 patients and carers. Their experiences help highlight how reasonable adjustments can significantly improve the quality and equity of cancer care.

[Watch the videos](#)



## Ongoing funding opportunities



**Small Grants Scheme:** designed for small projects that reach and support marginalised communities who may struggle to access cancer services, or who are at risk of health inequalities. Open to voluntary or charity organisations, community groups, faith groups, social enterprises, not-for-profit organisations, primary care networks (including GP practices and pharmacies).

**Deadline:** 3 December 2025

**Service Development Fund:** designed for larger projects that align to one of the four early diagnosis pillars, or that reduce health inequalities throughout the cancer pathway. Also open to applications that help improve personalised treatment and care for cancer patients. Open to all partners across SWAG including ICBs, Hospital Trusts, and VCSFE organisations.

**Deadline:** 30 November 2025

**Case Finding Pilot:** designed for primary care partners to run case finding projects that actively search for suspected cancer cases within known high-risk groups or tumour sites. Open to all Primary Care Networks, GP practices, pharmacies across SWAG.

**Deadline:** 28 November 2025

[Find out more](#)



## Events and Resources

### SWAG Innovates Together

A reminder that our very first SWAG Innovates Together Forum is taking place on Thursday 13 November online from 1pm – 2pm. The new forum is designed to connect and inspire our workforce across the region, exploring cutting-edge cancer innovation projects and sharing best practice and outcomes across the region.

Whether you are clinical or administrative, members will gain insights into real-world evaluation, health equity, and steps needed to bring innovation to life. Open to anyone interested – sign up here: [SWAG Innovates Together - SWAG Cancer Alliance](#)



## **Prostate Cancer Awareness event - Wednesday 12 November**

Around 150 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer every day. It is the most common cancer among men, with 1 in 8 men developing it – and this is doubled for Black men.

Caafi Health and Macmillan Cancer Support are running an online prostate cancer awareness event from 6pm – 8pm on Wednesday 12 November, with Dr Jonathan Aning, Urology Consultant from North Bristol Trust.

The session will cover risk factors associated with prostate cancer, signs and symptoms, and screening and diagnosis and provides a safe space for questions. Please do share among your networks and communities: [Online Prostate Cancer Awareness Session — Caafi Health](#)

## **Clinical Leadership Forum - Friday 21 November**

On 21 November we will be hosting our second Clinical Leadership Forum, bringing together those who lead in complex environments and strive to make a difference, not just in what gets done but in how it feels to work and lead in cancer care.

At the heart of the SWAG Clinical Leadership Forum are three dynamic themes designed to inspire, challenge and empower:

1. Maximising Our Impact
2. Compassionate and Inclusive Leadership
3. Sharing Your Vision

We look forward to having some valuable discussion and will provide an update on the event and any outcomes in next month's newsletter.

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## **Do you work with underserved communities?**

We are seeking people from underserved communities to complete our new survey and help us understand what inequalities and barriers exist to accessing cancer care across our communities. In collaboration with Healthwatch, we have launched the survey and are inviting anyone who has experience of cancer services to fill it out, but we are particularly keen to hear from underserved or marginalised communities, such as people from areas of deprivation, people with disabilities, refugees, LGBTQ+ communities, rural communities and black communities

Please do help us share this across your networks and help us gain a better understanding on how we can ensure cancer care is accessible for all.

[\*\*Share our Survey.\*\*](#)



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