

NCSI Work and Finance Workstream projects March 2010 Summary

The Workstream's objectives are: to ensure that people living with cancer receive the information, advice and rehabilitation support they need to help them return to work; and that they do not suffer unnecessary financial hardship and are routinely offered information and advice about benefits.

Vocational rehabilitation

We have developed a model of vocational rehabilitation in cancer (see paper) and will be testing the model at a number of pilot sites over this year. Fifteen proposals were received in January, site visits have been made to ten shortlisted projects during February, and seven final pilot sites have been selected.

Key to the selection process was that the proposals should build upon existing services and partnerships, rather than starting from scratch. Some examples of successful proposals include a steering group with representation from a Chief Executive of an employers' network and a partnership between health and the local authority social services. Specific projects provide opportunities to draw upon work already conducted in long term conditions, including an MS Model.

It is anticipated that pilots will commence in April, with an initial review in September, and a final evaluation in March 2011.

Information for Employers

Macmillan's *Working Through Cancer* project has developed and is piloting a Toolkit of resources to support both employers and employees. We are working alongside the project team to explore approaches to dissemination of this toolkit to employers. Many employers, line managers and HR professionals simply don't know that resources such as Macmillan's are available to support them.

We organised an expert seminar on 18 February to bring together representatives of large and small employers, charities, government departments (BIS, Jobcentre Plus, DWP, DH) and specialists in occupational health, communications and marketing, to discuss how best to raise employer awareness that people with cancer may be able to get back to work and that resources exist to help with this. The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, and the seminar generated plenty of really useful ideas.

We will be looking at what the expert participants told us and producing a report for the NCSI with recommendations for promoting work and cancer information to employers and encouraging adoption of best practice. We aim to have the final report ready for publication in April.

Other information products.

We are developing a resource for people who are self employed and affected by cancer. There are specific issues they may face which are additional to those faced by employees, not least keeping their business going when they are having treatment. We anticipate that the publication will be available from late April.

Macmillan's Learning & Development department are developing an online Trade Union learning resource, funded by the Workstream, in partnership with the TUC's educational arm Union Learn. This will target trade union officials and will be made up of an online training course and workbook. The resources include interviews with

trade union reps from six different sectors, talking about their experiences in supporting employees. The final version is on schedule for early May.

Pathways to Work

A key plank of the Government's welfare reform agenda is the Pathways to Work programme for people claiming the new Employment and Support Allowance. Pathways to Work provides personal adviser support and access to a range of employment programmes, including the NHS-run Condition Management Programme to help people with health conditions or disabilities, including those resulting from cancer, to get back into paid employment.

Macmillan commissioned an independent research agency, Matrix Insight, to evaluate whether the Pathways to Work scheme and the Condition Management Programme are suitable for people with cancer. The research collected the views of staff working on the programme, as well as people with cancer who had been through the programme. Matrix is currently evaluating the findings and a research report with key recommendations will be published later in the Spring.

Triage Tools.

The aim of this work is to provide a tool to be used from diagnosis onwards, to support health professionals in referring and signposting more effectively regarding work and financial matters. A scoping paper has been completed and we now plan to develop basic screening tools, to help health professionals identify who needs help and who doesn't.

For example, do they require the support of an OT, physiotherapist or other rehabilitation service or simply need signposting to relevant information resources? We expect that the tool will be used by health professionals alongside care assessments and information prescriptions.

We anticipate that the tool will be developed using an iterative process, within our Vocational Rehabilitation pilot communities.

Information Prescription

We will be liaising with the NHS National Cancer Action Team to review the work and finance web content currently being developed for cancer information prescriptions and to make recommendations for new or revised content.

We will be asking members of the Workstream project board to work with a project lead to identify gaps, with the aim being to ensure that relevant information regarding return to work and financial issues is included. This work will commence in April, following the launch of the NHS Choices Information Prescription delivery channel.