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**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

**CYMORTH CANCER
MACMILLAN**

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Sepsis: Invitation for written evidence

Thank you for this opportunity for Macmillan Cancer Support to provide written evidence to Committee's inquiry into Sepsis.

Macmillan Cancer Support in Wales

More than 19,000 people are diagnosed with cancer every year in Wales, a 10% rise over the past decade and a figure that continues to rise due to rising incidence. There are over 130,000 people living with and beyond cancer (4.5% of the population) and this number is expected to rise to 250,000 by 2030 (8% of the population).

Macmillan aspires to reduce the incidence of potentially life-threatening conditions such as sepsis, and with it, the pressures placed on the Welsh NHS throughout the year. We believe that in the case of people with cancer this is effectively achieved through well informed, planned, co-produce care that is person-centred and responsive to people's holistic needs.

Our interventions and tools – see below, concerning information for patients and carers, acute oncology services, have these objectives in mind.

Cancer and Sepsis

Having cancer and some cancer treatments can increase a person's risk of developing an infection and sepsis. Sepsis (also called blood poisoning) happens when the body reacts to an infection and attacks its own organs and tissues. It is a serious and potentially life-threatening condition.

White blood cells called neutrophils help people fight infections. Some cancer treatments temporarily reduce the number of neutrophils in the blood. This is most common if you have chemotherapy. It is less common with targeted therapies and immunotherapy.

Having a lower number of neutrophils means a minor infection can become very serious. It could become life-threatening within hours - neutropenic sepsis.

Information for People Receiving Cancer Treatments

People with cancer tell us that they need high quality patient information and support, to help them make sense of what they are going through and to support them to make the right decisions about their treatment and care. This will help them to know what to expect, know what to look out for, and give them and their loved ones the best chance of looking after themselves.

Prior to their treatment, people with cancer receive information concerning the possible side effects and complications, depending upon the type of treatment they're about to receive. Doing so ensures that they are cognisant of and able to monitor the signs and symptoms of sepsis.

However, we know – based upon the 2016 Wales Cancer Patient Experience Survey – more than a quarter (27%) of people who wanted information about their cancer, treatment options and complications did not receive any. Macmillan Wales wants every person diagnosed with cancer to receive timely, high quality information to inform decisions about their treatment and care. It should be an area of targeted improvement and we have called on the Welsh Government to implement the findings of the Macmillan/Public Health Wales Cancer Information Strategy project. That project, in 2013, explored the need for cancer patient information and the services and systems currently in place to meet these needs. The project has revealed major issues with regards to the co-ordination and delivery of patient information in Wales and suggests that Wales is lagging behind other UK nations on this key area.

Acute Oncology Services (AOS)

Acute oncology services provide people with timely access to specialist advice, reassurance and urgent treatment when presenting at health care settings (both Primary and Secondary) with problems relating to newly presenting cancers; complications of cancer and the toxicities to the treatment of cancer.

AOS is an emerging speciality, combining skills from acute and emergency nursing with specific knowledge and expertise from oncology and haematology. The role of the specialist acute oncology nurse is multifaceted. It demands that nurses demonstrate many skills including leadership, innovation, negotiation, teaching and, importantly, expert clinical skills.

Macmillan's investment in Acute Oncology Services:

Across Wales	£2,992,684
Cardiff & Vale UHB	£651,209
Velindre NHS Trust	£503,407
	(2014 – 2018 figs)

While we have developed and invested in AOS services across Wales since 2014, coverage is not universal, nor is it necessarily accessible 7-days a week in those areas with an AOS service.

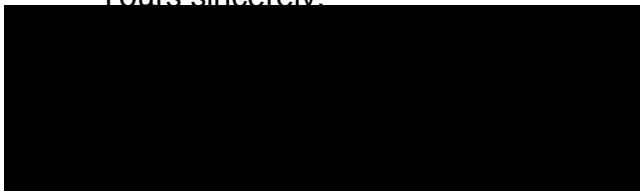
The parallel role of primary care - in identifying health needs in relation to acute oncology interventions - is also critical. For example, GPs who are fully aware of newly issued standards relating to neutropenic sepsis will know the importance of urgent referral and should refer directly into the nearest acute oncology service, bypassing A&E and avoiding a life-threatening delay in treatment.

We hope that the Committee gives due consideration to the important holistic role played by AOS services in informing, identifying and swiftly treating neutropenic sepsis. We recommend a resourced, 7-day a week, multidisciplinary service that people with cancer can access when their cancer treatment presents complications.

I hope you have found the insights and evidence we have submitted of use to the Committee's thinking. Macmillan would be delighted to continue contributing in a constructive way to your ongoing work.

Should the Committee have any further questions at this stage, please do not hesitate to get back in contact.

Yours sincerely,



Policy & Public Affairs Officer, Wales