



Macmillan @ West Lothian

Annual Report 2016/17



**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**



West Lothian
Council

Welcome

Welcome to Macmillan @ West Lothian's first Annual Report.

This has been an exciting year for the project: recruiting staff and volunteers; installing two new information and support hubs; beginning the task of refreshing Macmillan @ Carmondean Connected (and laying the foundations for two further hubs opening in 2017/18 at Fauldhouse and Blackburn Partnership Centres) promoting the service, working with partner organisations and most importantly welcoming service users to our hubs. We have been overwhelmed by the response to the service from people who want to volunteer with us, partners and local organisations who want to work with us and service users who have visited the service. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in helping us to get the project off the ground over the past year.

Aims and Objectives

Our aim is to ensure that anyone affected by cancer in West Lothian has access within their local community to quality cancer information and emotional and practical support.

We do this by:

- Providing a comfortable and welcoming environment within our Information and Support hubs which offer service users informal support regarding the non - clinical aspects of living with cancer.
- Recruiting, training and supporting a team of volunteers who deliver the service.
- Offering high quality information to anyone affected by cancer, signposting and referring to relevant services where appropriate.
- Producing and maintaining an information resource.
- Establishing a network of partnerships which offer additional resources to clients.



***“Giving your time
to make life better
for other people is
the best reward.”***

Our Service

The service began in August 2015, when the first member of staff came into post. Followed soon after by the appointment of the Development Worker, with the first support hub opening in Bathgate Partnership Centre.

Our support hubs are located at:

Bathgate Partnership Centre

- Opened 30 May 2016
- Opening times Monday 10am – 1pm, Thursday 1pm – 3pm
- Working in partnership with Cancer Support Scotland and Macmillan Benefits team offering weekly counselling and benefits advice



Strathbrock Partnership Centre

- Opened 18 January 2017
- Opening times Wednesday 1pm – 3pm, Friday 10am – 12.30pm
- Working in partnership with Cancer Support Scotland and Macmillan Benefits team offering weekly counselling and benefits advice

Carmondean Connected

- West Lothian Cancer Information and Support Centre came under the auspices of Macmillan @ West Lothian in January 2017.
- Opening times Wednesday 11am – 1pm, Thursday 10am – 12pm
- Working in partnership with Cancer Support Scotland and Macmillan Benefits team offering weekly counselling and benefits advice



Volunteers

Our volunteers provide the day to day running of the service.

This year we have recruited 13 volunteers and provided Macmillan core training to 15 people. Our wonderful volunteers have worked in excess of 700 hours and delivered 112 support service sessions.

In preparation for their role, all volunteers attend two days of accredited core training before commencing volunteering in our support hubs. In addition to core Macmillan training, our volunteers have accessed Macmillan and West Lothian Council ongoing training and attend monthly team meetings.

Guest speakers are present at each team meeting and presentations have been delivered by some of our partners including, Cancer Support Scotland, Macmillan Helping Matters, Carers of West Lothian, West Lothian Macmillan Benefits Team and WLC Council Information Service.

Some volunteers have also had the opportunity to visit the Macmillan Support Line office in Glasgow to hear about the national telephone support service available to anyone affected by cancer.



Volunteer stories

Aldyth's story

“ When I retired I was wanting to find a volunteering opportunity that I would find worthwhile, both for my own benefit and that of the local community. I hadn't got round to looking at what opportunities were available, when I saw an article in the local paper about a new Macmillan support service being set up in West Lothian. As I had cancer 10 years ago, I immediately thought that this would be of interest to me and that my own experience would help me to understand some of what others might be going through and enable me to provide support.



I started training with the second phase of the project at the end of November 2016. The training was excellent, I really enjoyed meeting the other volunteers and Joanne and Rosie, who were setting the service up.

I started in January 2017, wondering how much of my training I might remember. It is normally busy on the day I volunteer in Bathgate and the 3 hour session flew by. It is really satisfying being able to refer people onto services that they have real need of, especially benefits advice and counselling services. Sometimes they pop back to see us after their referral and it is great to see the difference in the service users after they have received the help they need. Sometimes you can see that a great weight has lifted for them. They still have a lot of troubles, but their journey has been made a bit easier. Many of our service users appreciate being able to drop by for a cup of tea and a chat and it is lovely to be able to see how they are from time to time and help them along. Overall it is a very rewarding experience.”

Jean's story

“ I came to Macmillan Volunteering in Spring 2016 following my husband's death the previous summer from prostate cancer. I have also had many relatives and friends who have had cancer, some of whom have survived and others who did not. I also worked as Care Manager in the Palliative Care Unit in Aberdeen so knew the value of the Macmillan Service and how people feel better when they receive good information and support.

Our brilliant project staff at Bathgate Partnership Centre have built up a great team with their enthusiasm and commitment to the service and the volunteers. We always have access to excellent training. It is lovely to also meet other local service providers and hear about their work so we can signpost people who visit our drop-in sessions. It has also been good to meet the other volunteers in our team, making new friends in the community.

The people who use our service give me great satisfaction with their obvious appreciation of our help. They often arrive appearing apprehensive and upset but generally leave feeling relieved, smiling and appreciative of our support. Knowledge plus a listening ear is Power!”



Analysing our reach

Attendances



266
attendances
from people affected by cancer
between April 2016 and March 2017



50%
of those attendances were by people
who describe themselves as a
person with cancer



Almost 45%
described themselves as a family
member or carer of a person with
cancer

Reason for attending



42%
of those who visited the service
came for someone to talk to



38%
wanted help with benefits
and welfare advice



43%
wanted to find out about
other local services

Help given



120 visitors
were signposted to or referred for
benefits advice



46 visitors
were referred/signposted to other
Macmillan services



66 visitors
were referred/signposted to local
agencies and partners, including
Cancer Support Scotland

How visitors found out about the service

Used before 76
Just passing 20

Family/friend/colleagues 32
Healthcare professional 18
Online 21

Other 75
Unknown 24

Service User Stories

Elaine's Story

“ In May 2015 I got diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. I had no clue what to do, who to talk to what I could claim; my husband was doing everything for me. He came home from shopping one day and said he had seen the Macmillan sign in the window of Bathgate Partnership Centre and he suggested I pop in to see what help I could get. I was really withdrawn and isolated at this point; no confidence to talk, rarely went outside with my husband doing most things for me, I used to worry about everything.



My husband and I walked down to the Macmillan drop-in and after a brief chat and a cup of tea the volunteers made a referral to the benefits team as most of my benefits including disability benefits had been affected, with the worst loss being my mobility car. Over the course of the next year the benefit team member was able to secure all the benefits including an increase and back payments but most of all, my lifeline which was getting my mobility car back.

You can tell the volunteers what you can't sit and talk to family about as you don't want to worry your family and it is all private. I am now more positive and worry less. I still need support so will continue to come. Every time I am down the street I think, I wish the Macmillan was open so I could pop in.

During visits for my benefits to be sorted out my confidence increased and a referral to counselling was made to Cancer Support Scotland. The Counsellor Service was brilliant, really, really good; I received six sessions initially, extended to another six, which are ongoing. The counselling really helped with personal stuff. I still pop in to the drop in after counselling for a coffee and a chat; you can chat about anything I want to talk about. They are all really nice and they go out of their way to help and listen to what I am saying.

My family has also been supported and the information provided in the form of leaflets, books and website information has allowed them to feel less anxious, and as a result we are a lot closer than we've ever been. We are now as a family able to talk about my cancer openly.

If I was to sum up the service it would be "Life saving".



Heather's Story

“ My husband had just been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. I had got a house move within the same week. I came to the partnership centre to speak about the house move. I told them about my position as well, and they told me about the Macmillan service. I came in, not knowing what to expect but I thought I've got nothing to lose.

When I came in, it was like just being able to speak freely to someone; they gave so much help. I had forms to deal with because our situation financially had changed. We had to claim benefits - it was a nightmare when I looked at the forms and I got a lot of help with that. I was offered counselling, which I felt I needed and it's definitely helped me and also, complementary therapies which has been a great bonus.

I've got the number for the Macmillan Support Line that you can phone up, which I have done when I've not known where to go and I spoke to the support workers who put me on to a nurse and got a lot of help; they were excellent and helped me put my mind at ease.

Whenever you don't want to put things on your family you know that the Macmillan volunteers at the partnership centre are here. You can come down twice a week and speak to them and just air your views. They make you feel so welcome, give you a cup of coffee and you can relax and chill, tell them your worries, you can even have a laugh and different things. That all makes a difference and I can't thank them enough for the help that I've been given. In all, I could never have got through what I've got through without the Macmillan help.



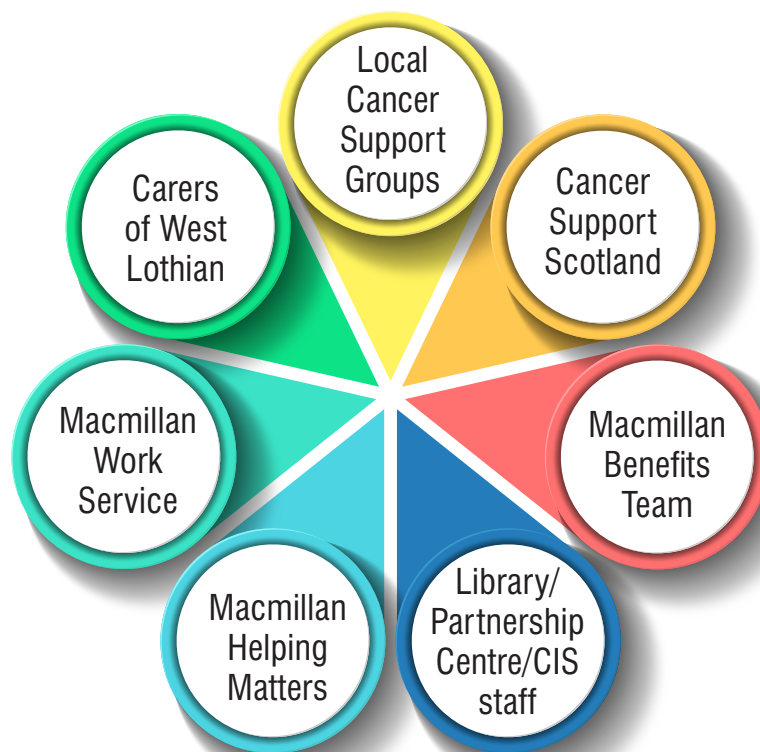
Learning and development for volunteers.

We want our volunteers to make the most of their time with us which is why we provide various learning and development opportunities.

Partnership Working

The Macmillan @ West Lothian Advisory Group provides valuable support and advice to the project. Members include Macmillan Cancer Support, West Lothian Council staff, Marie Curie, Carers of West Lothian and Cancer Support Scotland. We also work closely with other Macmillan and Council services. Partners attend our monthly team meetings to give a talk on the services they offer as part of our ongoing development programme for volunteers.

Partnership working is key to providing signposting, referrals and local support to service users. We have developed partnerships with:



Cancer Support Scotland, Madaline Alexander, Operations and Service Manager

Extending our partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support and now with West Lothian Council, has been incredibly positive for Cancer Support Scotland. The team of staff and volunteers are extremely dedicated to providing the best possible service for people affected by cancer. This has enabled us to provide our counselling and complementary therapies in West Lothian. We are excited to continue with this partnership and be a part of this fantastic work in the coming years.”

Anne-Marie Vance, Neighbourhood Manager, Bathgate Partnership Centre

West Lothian Libraries are delighted to be working in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support to provide information & support services in 3 out of our 14 Libraries. Both partners

are keen for this partnership to grow and by the end of 2017 the Macmillan spaces will have increased to include a further 2 Libraries within West Lothian. The aim of the partnership is to provide information in a non-clinical, informal setting to anyone affected by cancer. Finding out you or a loved one has cancer can be a difficult time and the service is there to support people in the community. It provides information, emotional support and access to other services including complementary therapies, counselling and benefits advice. The partnership is working well and is being well received by the community. It also promotes the libraries as a place to source information on health and wellbeing and the hope is that it will increase library membership within the community.

Denise Arbiter, Senior Adviser, Age & Illness Team, Advice Shop

Since May 2016 the Macmillan Benefits Team has covered sessions in Bathgate Partnership Centre and this has proven really successful for the customers. Out of 51 seen at the drop in hub, 35 have been referred to the benefit team, and 16 signposted. Benefits advice is now also available at all drop in sites. Clients have been returning to use both drop in and benefits services and get one to one help with any issues that may arise, no matter how often. This joined up service helps streamline the advice available for people who are in a distressing situation. In many cases customers big worries include 'how will I cope financially?'. One service user commented recently that she had hardly slept for worry before visiting Macmillan. When the Benefits Team assisted her to resolve issues with her claim for Employment Support Allowance she told us she would not have known how to take on the DWP and that Macmillan had provided a fast resolution to her problem.





Raising Awareness in the Community

- 63 raising awareness events from stalls to talks and awareness sessions for staff have been held this year.
- It has been a priority to engage with staff in our drop in venues and have completed 13 awareness sessions for staff in Bathgate Partnership Centre and Strathbrock Partnership Centre.
- We have provided information stalls within GP practices and at St John's Hospital, and aim to build on and develop further links with health staff in coming years.
- We have had a presence in supermarkets, shopping centres, sports centres and community venues.
- We have attended a wide range of community events from the Memory Walk to Silver Sunday, West Lothian Milan group and West Lothian College Health Fair.
- We have worked with a local Breast Cancer Care volunteer to deliver Breast Aware Sessions to council staff during Breast Cancer month in October and provided promotional material during West Lothian Council Healthy Working Lives Week.

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