



An update from the **West Midlands Cancer Alliance**



July 2025

Our monthly newsletter is designed to keep you up to date with the latest cancer events, updates and projects happening throughout the West Midlands. Please feel free to share this newsletter within your teams. If you would like to submit an article for a future newsletter, please contact angela.gould1@nhs.net.

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In the spotlight

Improving prostate cancer diagnosis and detection

We're proud to have worked alongside Health Innovation West Midlands to secure funding which will support the early detection and diagnosis of prostate cancer in the Midlands and beyond.

Quibim has been awarded £2.6 million through the NHS Cancer Programme's Innovation Open Call, supported by SBRI Healthcare and the Accelerated Access Collaborative. QP-Prostate, Quibim's AI-based software, supports radiologists by automatically identifying suspicious areas in prostate MRI scans. Early clinical data shows it can help detect 10.6% more early-stage prostate cancers, potentially saving lives and reducing the burden on the healthcare system.

Read the full story [here](#).



Latest news

Breast cancer patients benefitting from WMCA funded Pilates classes

Breast cancer surgery patients are benefitting from Pilates sessions to boost their recovery thanks to funding from the West Midlands Cancer Alliance (WMCA).

Pioneered by physiotherapists at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) NHS Trust, the sessions consist of a one-off education class followed by a four-week timetable of Pilates. The project's funding also covers pre-screening with patients who are more likely to develop shoulder stiffness after surgery. [Find out more](#).



West Midlands Cancer Alliance selected to roll out pioneering health inequalities project

Following collaborative efforts and best practice in addressing the late diagnosis of prostate cancer among black men, WMCA will help roll out the Black Health Equity pilot delivery model in partnership with Prostate Cancer UK.

The pilot aims to address the disproportionate impact of prostate cancer on Black men; while fostering a culturally inclusive healthcare system where Black men receive equitable, timely, and high-quality prostate cancer care. [Read the full story](#).



GP insights needed for evaluation of Non-Specific Symptoms (NSS) services across the West Midlands

The University of Birmingham have been commissioned by the WMCA to conduct a service evaluation of the NSS services across the West Midlands. This evaluation will help improve the NSS pathway. To inform this work, the research team are gathering information from the perspectives of GPs that are referring patients to the NSS services in their area. As part of this, there is an online GP specific questionnaire. [Please click here to access the form](#).

We would be grateful if you could complete the form by **3 October 2025**. If you have any questions about this work, please contact r.tamilio@bham.ac.uk. Please can you also share this with your GP networks in the West Midlands.



Midlands cancer patients pampered at wellbeing fair

Over 300 cancer patients and carers from the Midlands enjoyed a day of positivity, peer support and pampering at an NHS trust's 10th Cancer Wellbeing Fair. The event, organised by the Cancer Services team at Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, gave local people living with a cancer diagnosis the chance to experience a range of relaxation therapies to support their physical and mental wellbeing.

Representatives from WMCA attended the event to help encourage patients and members of the public to become 'Patient Advocates', offering them the chance to shape local services for cancer patients by sharing their views and personal experiences. Read the full story [here](#).



Learning Disability (LD) health checks and cancer screening survey

We are seeking your input to better understand how annual health checks for patients with learning disabilities (LD) are being delivered, particularly in relation to cancer screening. We kindly ask your support in sharing the [following survey](#) with GP Practices and Primary Care colleagues for completion.

This survey aims to support our ongoing work around reducing health inequalities for patients with learning disability and autism. Your feedback will help inform future resources and support from the WMCA. The survey will close **Monday 11 August**. For any queries, please contact Kassie Styche on kassandra.styche@nhs.net.



What's happening?

Home testing kits for lifesaving checks against cervical cancer

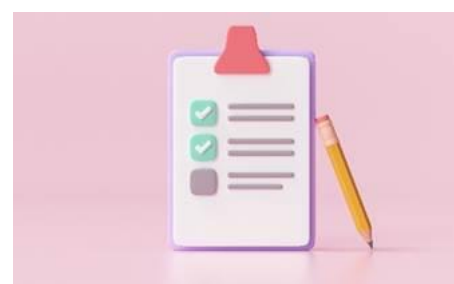
Women and people with a cervix across England who haven't come forward for vital health checks will be offered home testing kits as part of the cervical screening programme under the upcoming 10 Year Health Plan. Find out more [here](#).



Cancer Improvement Collaborative (CIC) 7 – Improving experiences of cancer care together

The CIC provides a quality improvement and coaching framework to support teams with improving the experiences of cancer care for people affected by cancer, as well as their families/unpaid carers who use their services.

CIC 7 will run from September 2025 - May 2026 and will be delivered using a hybrid model. Most of the content will be hosted online, but there will also be two face-to-face elements, a launch, and a celebration. Expressions of interest are now open, and should be submitted to Su Young, Programme Support Manager, by 12 noon on **Friday 8 August** via su.young@nhs.net.



To access the EOI form, or if you have any queries, please contact carolyn.parker3@nhs.net.

Cancer Research UK Health Systems update

The latest Cancer Research UK (CRUK) update includes:

- the recently published [Cancer in the UK: Overview 2025](#) report
- the full [UK Cancer Awareness Measure Plus \(CAM+\) report](#)
- a [GP guide to the recognition and referral of prostate cancer \(NG12\)](#).



OUTpatients – Taking pride in screening report

OUTpatients, the UK's only LGBTIQ+ cancer charity, are pleased to announce the release of their latest report "Taking Pride in Screening". This insight report explores the current provision of cervical screening in sexual health clinics (SHCs) and how involved Cancer Alliances are in monitoring this service. Find out more and download the report [here](#).



Sarcoma spotlight

Sarcoma Awareness Month runs each year throughout July, and aims to spread awareness about sarcoma, a rare form of cancer that affects the bones and soft tissues.

Meet the Sarcoma Clinical Nurse Specialist transforming the lives of Sarcoma patients

Working as part of the Montgomery Unit at The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (RJA), Elaine Richardson has been supporting patients with bone and soft tissue sarcomas since 2021.

Elaine has gone above and beyond her role and has worked diligently to establish a local sarcoma support group demonstrating her dedication to patient care beyond the clinical setting. She also frequently fundraises for Sarcoma UK, and last year took part in the Ultra Trail Wales for the Bone Cancer Research Trust – running an incredible 57 miles and raising £1,097 in the process. Read Elaine's story [here](#).



Blog: My sarcoma story – Alan Hill

Three years ago, Alan Hill was diagnosed with leiomyosarcoma - a rare cancer that begins in smooth muscle tissue. Alan has recently joined us as a Patient Representative where he hopes to use his experiences to support patients and improve education around sarcoma. Read Alan's story [here](#).



Tumour team's virtual 5k for Sarcoma Awareness Month

The Bone and Soft Tissue team at Shropshire's specialist orthopaedic hospital encouraged everyone to lace up their trainers and take part in a virtual 5k – in support of Sarcoma Awareness Month. Colleagues from the Montgomery Unit at RJA hosted the event to raise awareness of sarcomas, a rare cancer that affects soft tissue and bones. All funds raised went directly to Sarcoma UK, a national charity that funds vital research, provides support for those affected, and campaigns for better treatments and earlier diagnoses. Well done all!



Upcoming events

Upcoming Expert Advisory Group (EAG) meetings

Expert Advisory Groups (EAGs) provide specialist advice and guidance to the WMCA board on the standards of cancer care for patient, reflecting 'Improving Outcomes Guidance' recommendations, current best practice and opportunities for development.

Please see the below details of upcoming EAG meetings for August:

8 August	Metastatic Spinal Cord Compression (MSCC), Acute Oncology (AO) Services and Cancer of Unknown Primary (CUP)
4 September	Children and Young People (CYP)
9 September	Urology
10 September	Primary Care
11 September	Teenage and Young Adults
12 September	Brain and Central Nervous System (CNS) – In person
12 September	Head and Neck
17 September	Lower Gastrointestinal (GI) Colorectal
18 September	Upper Gastrointestinal (GI)
19 September	Radiotherapy
23 September	Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy (SACT)
24 September	Haematology
25 September	Psychosocial AGM



Please note that these meetings are for EAG Members only. For more information about joining these meetings, please email: rwh-tr.wmcanceralliance@nhs.net.

*Please note that dates are correct at time of publication

Development opportunities and additional learning

Check out our Cancer Careers and Education programme

Have you signed up to our free Cancer Careers and Education Programme yet? The self-directed learning programme has been designed to support and empower all areas of our cancer workforce, including those working in clinical settings right through to administrative roles.

The programme consists of seven main modules covering topics such as personalised care and support interventions, cancer reviews and clinical supervision. Sign up for your free account by clicking [here](#).



Vacancies

WMCA Expert Advisory Group Recruitment:

WMCA Expert Advisory Group Recruitment:

The West Midlands Cancer Alliance are currently in the process of recruiting to vacancies for the following Expert Advisory Groups (EAG's):

- **Chair** – Colorectal
- **Chair** – Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy (SACT)
- **Deputy Chair** – Hepatobiliary (HPB)
- **Deputy Chair** – Haematology
- **Deputy Chair** – MCCC AO & CUP
- **Deputy Chair** – Head and Neck
- **Deputy Chair** – Gynaecology
-

We are looking for candidates based on the following criteria:

- Ability to deliver national and regional work programme obligations.
- Demonstrable collaborative working with West Midlands Cancer Alliance.
- Experience with service change at scale.
- Credibility as a Cancer specialist in the West Midlands region.
- Regular attendance at EAGs or member of a Task and Finish group.
- Must be a current member of the West Midlands EAG group.

Candidates are asked to send their [expressions of interest forms](#) via email with accompanying CVs, stating why you would like to apply for this post, what you can bring to the post and your relevant experience for the role of Chair / Deputy Chair for the EAG to the following email: angela.gould1@nhs.net by **Friday 15 August 2025**.

LGBTQIA+ Patient Advocate recruitment

The West Midlands Cancer Alliance (WMCA) are looking for LGBTQIA+ identifying patients who have lived experience of a cancer journey to join our expanding group of patient advocates. This could be their own experience of cancer or being there for a friend or a loved one on their cancer journey. A patient advocate participates in one of our cancer site Expert Advisory Groups (EAGs) and will be asked to express their views and opinions to help change, improve and shape the future of cancer care for the patient population of the West Midlands.

If you have any patients who may be interested in becoming a patient advocate or would like to find out further information, please contact the WMCA on rwh-tr.wmcapmo@nhs.net.



Primary Care update

Primary Care Cancer Focus – Dr Jim McMorran

How does the use of cooking oils affect the risk of development of lung cancer?

A systematic review found that higher lifetime exposure to cooking oil fumes was associated with an increased risk for lung cancer in never-smoking women in high-income countries (1).

- indoor air contains distinct pollutants which derive directly from household activities such as cooking, heating, cleaning and sweeping, or volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from household furnishing
 - VOCs which are generated by cooking oils have been shown to be mutagenic, containing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PACs), aldehydes, carbonyl compounds and other mutagens
- three papers were included, with a total of 3734 participants
 - all studies were conducted in Taiwan or Hong Kong, focusing on Chinese women using traditional Chinese cooking methods
 - all three found a dose/response correlation between exposure to cooking fumes and the risk of developing lung cancer in never-smokers (LCINS)
- Chen *et al* assessed the risk of lung cancer risk by 'cooking time-years', measuring exposure to cooking fumes over a participant's lifetime, citing OR 3.17 (95% CI 1.34 to 7.68) for the highest levels of exposure
- Yu *et al* used 'cooking dish-years' as a measure of exposure to cooking fumes, with OR 8.09 (95% CI 2.57 to 25.45) for the highest exposure levels
- Ko *et al* found that the number of dishes cooked daily was a greater indicator of risk than the number of cooking years, citing a threefold increased risk of lung cancer among women who cooked three meals per day compared with those who cooked one (OR 3.1, 95% CI 1.6 to 6.2)

- ventilation hoods were found to have a protective effect against LCINS with adjusted ORs of 0.49 (95% CI 0.32 to 0.76)
- study authors state "Exposure to cooking fumes is linked to lung cancer due to the levels of carcinogens that can be produced during the heating of oils to high temperatures. VOCs [volatile organic compounds] which are generated by cooking oils have been shown to be mutagenic, containing PACs [polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons], aldehydes, carbonyl compounds and other mutagens,"

Reference:

1. McAllister BJ, Malhotra Mukhtyar R, Cai S, et al. Relationship between household air pollution and lung cancer in never smokers in high-income countries: a systematic review. *BMJ Open* 2025;15:e093870.

External newsletters

Please find a list of external newsletters you may be interested in accessing:

- Read the latest East Midlands Cancer Alliance (EMCA) newsletter [here](#)
- Request to join the Midlands Outpatient Transformation Programme workspace [here](#)
- Sign up to the West Midlands Radiotherapy Network's quarterly newsletter [here](#)
- Sign up to Cancer Research UK's Health Systems email updates [here](#).