
West of Scotland Primary Care Cancer Network Regional Newsletter

Summer 2021 Edition

This network newsletter is intended to summarise current primary care cancer issues at national and regional levels. Previous editions are available on the [WoSCAN](http://www.woscan.scot.nhs.uk) website.

“Cancer Recovery Plan”

This national [“Recovery and redesign: cancer services – action plan”](#) was published in December. Our previous [newsletter](#) highlighted the main points relevant to primary care.

Lung Cancer

A lung cancer awareness campaign was launched in May. Referrals for suspected lung cancer remain lower than pre-covid rates across the country. Referrals for other cancer types have recovered and now exceed pre-covid levels. [Clinical guidance](#) on the management of urgent suspicion of lung cancer referrals during Covid-19 was published in July. For further public and professionals information about this, and other cancer campaigns, go to: www.getcheckedearly.org/

USoC Referrals

[Scottish referral guidelines](#) remain in place with exception of some local variations. Enhanced vetting and [Active Clinical Referral Triage](#) are used along with principles of realistic medicine. It is useful to include [PERFORMANCE STATUS](#) with referrals to help this. In addition, ensuring patient contact details and practice e-mail address are included is also helpful. Practice email address will auto-populate all SCI referrals when practices add to their location details (with address and phone numbers etc) in their GP IT system (use Location Manager in EMIS).

Pharmacy Communications

Following the WoSCAN Lung Cancer webinar, we have been looking at formalising communication between community pharmacy and practices where there is a concern regarding significant symptoms. For example, patient recurrently attending for “cough bottle”. This has been escalated to Scottish Government and a pilot in North Cancer Alliance will be implemented before national roll out. We would encourage practices to try to develop formal communication routes with their local pharmacies in meantime.

Detection and Diagnosis

A phased introduction of Early Cancer Diagnostic Centres has begun. The pilot site in the West of Scotland is based in NHS Ayrshire and Arran. These create single diagnostics pathways for patients where there is a strong clinical suspicion for cancer but do not fit with site specific pathways E.g. those who have vague symptoms such as weight loss and fatigue. In other areas, additional radiology capacity will be supported to increase GP access to diagnostic tests.

Endoscopy waiting times are being addressed with innovative solutions such as Colon Capsule Endoscopy. The role of qFIT is vital for risk stratification.

The National Cancer Diagnosis Audit is now complete. The report will be [available here](#).

Cancer Treatments

There are several changes to cancer management guidelines (CMGs) that may impact on primary care.

DEGARELIX is an LHRH antagonist licensed for use in men with advanced prostate cancer especially where there is risk from tumour flare using alternatives. It will now also be considered in patients with high risk of cardiovascular events as a safer alternative to LHRH agonists such as leuprorelin. Full CMG is [available here](#).

PROSTAP (leuprorelin) has been approved by SMC for use in breast cancer. This requires 3 monthly monitoring of ovarian suppression. Mechanisms for administration and monitoring are to be decided locally.

Cancer screening programmes

Breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening programmes have all restarted. We encourage practices to restart any pre-covid procedures to follow-up non-engagers and opportunistic screening wherever possible.

Cancer Waiting Times

Weekly monitoring of patients moving through cancer pathways continues in each health board. A firm focus will remain on Cancer Waiting Times performance and ensuring cancer patients are seen and treated as a priority.

MDT Improvement Programme

The MDT process is widely accepted standard in management of cancer patients. WoSCAN has been working on improvements to their organization and process. This includes IT improvements to cancer reporting

and communications. This is being tested in Gynaecological oncology patients with roll out to other specialties thereafter. Once implemented, this will provide GPs with access to their patient's provisional treatment plan on the day of the cancer MDT. This should help to better inform consultations GPs may have with patients in their practice.

Cancer Treatment Summaries

Work continues to develop technical solutions for cancer treatment summaries at specific key points in patient treatment journey including at diagnosis and end of treatment. This is progressing to clinical testing stage in August.

Cancer Prehabilitation

Prehab helps patients prepare for treatment to optimise outcomes. Development of support services and a digital resource for public and professionals is being progressed by an implementation steering group.

Beatson WoSCC website

The useful new [website](#) for the Beatson has been launched with both patient and cancer professional's area. This includes details of cancer treatment helpline.

CRUK Facilitators

The facilitator team has undergone significant changes due to the pandemic. However, they remain able to support practices and clusters focusing on early diagnosis of cancer. Contact your local facilitator for information at: scotlandfacilitators@cancer.org.uk

The [CRUK website](#) also has a very useful health professionals section and resources including advice about safety netting during the pandemic.

If you have any concerns about primary care cancer issues, please contact us:

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