

25th July 2013

Press Release

RNHRD DELIVERING CANCER SURVIVORSHIP SERVICES TO ADDRESS THE LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES OF CANCER

The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS Foundation Trust (RNHRD) has developed new services to address some of the long-term debilitating conditions caused by cancer and its treatment.

A recent report by Macmillan Cancer Support – ‘Cured, but at what cost?’ looked at long-term consequences of cancer and its treatment and showed that survivors of the disease have an increased risk of other serious conditions, including chronic fatigue, lymphoedema and pain after radiotherapy.

The Bath based RNHRD, known locally as the ‘Min’, specialises in caring for people with long term conditions and has used its expertise in specialist rehabilitation to develop unique services that meet the needs of cancer survivors. It is estimated that there are two million people who are living with and beyond cancer in the United Kingdom today and for many people, the impact of having cancer does not end after their treatment finishes.

The Macmillan Step Up service for Cancer Survivors, based at the Min, is the first of its kind in the country.

Step Up joint service lead Nikie Catchpool explains “Some cancer survivors will experience fatigue that has a significant impact on their ability to perform everyday tasks or return to work, even a long time after active treatment.”

CONT...

Nikie continues “The Step Up service aims to address the effects of living with fatigue by providing practical support to help people self-manage their symptoms and engage in meaningful activities, improving their quality of life.”

Step Up has been running for almost a year and patients have praised the service, for the practical difference it has made to their lives as well as the opportunity to meet with other individuals facing similar problems.

Garth Evans, diagnosed with bowel cancer in 2009, explains “Other people were experiencing the same as I, all with varying post cancer treatments, but all suffering the same kind of fatigue that I was experiencing”. Sarah Meaking, diagnosed with Follicular Lymphoma in 2008, adds “It has been a great relief to talk to someone who recognises the condition and is able to help. I now have a plan to improve my quality of life.”

The Min is also leading a national Breast Radiotherapy Injury Service (BRIRS) for people who have suffered radiation-induced injuries including continuous pain and a loss of arm movement, breathing difficulties and damage to bone or soft tissue following breast cancer treatment in the past.

Professor Candy McCabe, Consultant Nurse and BRIRS service lead at the RNHRD says “This unique service brings together a highly specialist multi-disciplinary and multi-speciality team to help people cope with the long-term consequences of radiation damage that was delivered prior to the use of modern treatment protocols.”

Candy continues “The benefits we have seen to date in people attending our service have been excellent and really strengthened our view that it is never too late to consider rehabilitation for persistent pain and functional disabilities.”

CONT...

“We are working closely with the leading Cancer charities to see how this service can help inform the care for people who have received treatments for other cancers.”

Jan Millington has been a BRIRS inpatient at the RNHRD and says “This dedicated rehabilitation service has been invaluable for me and others suffering similarly who have waited years for recognition and appropriate specialised therapy. I hope this service will be extended and made available at an early stage for others.”

Patients should recognise that they are not alone if they are experiencing long-term effects following cancer treatment, and speak to their healthcare team for advice and support.

ENDS

Press contacts:

Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS FT:
Marketing and Communications
01225 465 941 ext 278

Notes to Editors

- The RNHRD NHS FT is a national specialist rehabilitation and rheumatology hospital based in Bath. Offering services to adults, children and young people, the trust has expertise in general and complex:
 - Rheumatological and musculoskeletal conditions
 - Chronic pain management
 - Fatigue Management (CFS/ME and cancer survivorship fatigue)
 - www.rnhrd.nhs.uk

Macmillan Step Up Service

- Patients can be referred to the Macmillan Step Up Service for Cancer Survivors by their GP or specialist cancer team.
- The service includes specialist assessment clinics and work and vocational rehabilitation

- Further information is available here <http://www.rnhrd.nhs.uk/174>

Breast Radiation Rehabilitation Injury Service (BRIRS)

- Referrals should be sent to Professor Candy McCabe, candymccabe@rnhrd.nhs.uk
- The RNHRD leads the BRIRS service and works in conjunction with the Royal United Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Bath, Bart's Health NHS Trust, London and The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, Manchester.
- Upon receipt of referral, all individuals are assessed by a specialist nurse, usually by telephone. After assessment individuals are invited to attend a two day clinic at one of our three specialist centres – Bath, Manchester or London.
- The service is endorsed by the National Cancer Action Team and Macmillan Cancer Support.
- Further information is available here <http://www.rnhrd.nhs.uk/175>

Macmillan Cancer Support

- The *Cured – but at what cost?* Report is available here www.macmillan.org.uk/consequencesoftreatment
- More information about Macmillan Cancer Support is available here www.macmillan.org.uk