Improving Access to Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists and Key Workers
Background

• Access to a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) has a positive impact on experience of cancer care, however there is a national shortage.

• Cancer nursing teams must address capacity issues in the context of advances in molecular diagnostics, genomics, treatment and technology – all factors shaping the future CNS role.

• Policy makers have recommended testing new service models incorporating the introduction of cancer key workers (AfC band 3 or above) to improve patient access to specialist nursing support.
The 2018 National Cancer Patient Experience Survey\(^1\) reported 9% of respondents were not given the name of a CNS, and nearly 15% reported it was not easy to contact their CNS.

\(^1\) 73,708 responses
The project introduced two full time Cancer Support Workers to the GI specialist cancer nursing team at UHSFT.
Clinical Nurse Specialist

- Specialist site-specific knowledge
- Complex psycho-social care of patient
- Treatment—including multimodality, genomics, immunotherapy, personalised medicine
- Investigations/tests/specific specialist knowledge relating to the pathway from diagnosis to discharge
- Assessment of complex specialist need
- Complex pathway management across boundaries and organisations
- Supporting complex treatment decisions
- Symptom and toxicity management
- Identification and management consequences of treatment
- Research, Education, Service development, Audit
- Clinical leadership

Cancer Support Worker

- Interventions to support behaviour change including: Health coaching, Goal setting, MECC*
- Identification and building links with local support services and agencies. Care navigation, signposting and referral to agencies
- Health and wellbeing advice:
  - Healthy eating
  - Exercise/physical activity
  - Stress management
  - Emotional wellbeing
  - (including signposting to “stop smoking”/alcohol support services gyms/complementary therapists/befriending services/support groups)
- Practical support: re: finance/benefits/travel insurance, transport, housing
- Carer support
- My Medical Record

Assessment and screening
Collaborative care planning
Promoting supported self-management
Multi-agency | Multi-professional liaison
Provision of information resources (online/printed)
Referral to rehab services (e.g. Wesfit)
Evaluation findings

• Introducing CSWs to the specialist nursing team resulted in a positive impact on access to: assessment and care planning; community support services; practical and financial support; and health and wellbeing advice and support.

• Following the introduction of the CSW role, patients were more likely to report they were given contact details of a key worker and that the wider healthcare team worked well together.