

‘Men Like Us’

A cancer support group for men

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The who, the what, the why, the where

Who

- Gap identified by the Personalised Care Team (PCT)
- Developed with a dedicated and supportive core team of patient volunteers

What

- We asked the core team:
 - What they wanted from the group?
 - Who they wanted to lead it?
 - How did they want to be involved?

Why

- Follow on from the successful Living Well Sessions
- Identified that men were not attending
- Identified that the support wanted from men looked different
- Men want and need support too!

Where

- Not at the hospital setting
- Three locations... at the moment...
- Community spaces
- Collaborative working

Understanding the need

- Lack of support being accepted by men
- Identifying gaps and barriers to developing a new cancer support group
- Developing the brilliant core team of dedicated volunteers
- Founding volunteers: Mark, Graham and Martin
- Focus groups
 - Outlining the details of the where, what and why
 - Sharing their lived experiences to develop this service
 - Identifying that needs may change with the increasing number of men attending
 - Identifying other services that could support any men attending



Planning

- Steered by male volunteers
- The who, what, why and where
- Engagement with patients and professionals
- Loose framework for the sessions; decided by those attending
- Development of group in the first three months
- The three groups have different approaches:
 - **Shrewsbury**
 - Keen for speakers
 - Want to know what is available for them to access
 - **Ludlow**
 - Did not want speakers
 - More peer support conversations
 - **Telford**
 - Keen for speakers
 - Looking for peer support but also a space to get away from the diagnosis



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WE WANT YOU

Are you a man that has had a cancer diagnosis?

Do you have a voice that wants to share new ideas with us, review and comment on a new innovative idea or be involved to help shape something new and exciting?

We are looking for men to join a task and steer group, working with the Personalised Care Team as part of the Living With and Beyond Cancer Programme, to help us create a focused session for men.

What would you want from a support session?
What would help persuade you to come along?
How can we, as a programme, support men living with a cancer diagnosis?

We are looking for anybody to be involved as much or little as they would like: whether this be just giving comments and feedbacks or getting more involved and joining the task and steer group to help shape the session

If you would like more information or to get involved, contact the team on 01743 492424 or email sath.lwbc@nhs.net

Promotion

- Public engagement events
- Radiotherapy waiting room
- Oncology and Haematology ward
- GP surgeries
- Cancer Care Navigators
- Social media
- Cancer care coordinators in GP surgeries
- Other community organisations/services
- Word of mouth
- Patient support groups.



'Men Like Us'

A Cancer Support Group, run by men for men.

'Men Like Us', run by Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH) and volunteers welcome's any man that is affected by cancer to join them for Practical and emotional support.



BBC Midlands Today



On MLU's first birthday we were visited by veteran BBC Midlands today presenter Bob Hockenhull.

The men took immense pride in being interviewed by the BBC; talking about their experiences and what the support group means to them.



- Huge online presence
- New enquiries
- Opportunity to expand
- New community contacts



Why It works



A cancer support group supporting men can:

- Address the unique emotional, psychological, and social needs that men often face when dealing with cancer
- Share experiences which builds trust; opening up to others who “just get it”
- Enables them to seek emotional support with the understanding that it will be done quietly, directly, and without pretence
- Offer a space that provides practical advice and tools
- Show that asking for help, being vulnerable, and talking through emotions can be acts of strength – not weakness
- Offer a shared vulnerability, in a shared silence, mutual understanding, or a conversation about life after treatment that begins with sports or cars



- Simplicity is key
- Understanding the needs
- Grounded in authenticity
- Formed bonds
- Conversation to connection

What the members say

"I think Men Like Us (MLU) is a very important part of the jigsaw of support for men who are living with cancer. MLU provides the sort of support which the NHS is not resourced to give. Whereas the NHS can provide excellent support for the body in treating the disease, MLU focusses much more on the mental, emotional and even spiritual challenges that cancer brings to our lives. In my experience of being a part of MLU, our get togethers gives us all the opportunity to share our fears and worries, whilst also having a great big laugh, which is therapeutic in itself. I believe that all men living with cancer, either directly or indirectly, should have access to a local MLU and be encouraged to join."

"For me, MLU had become an important addition to my cancer journey.

It allows men to sit and chat or discuss a whole range of subjects associated with cancer, caring and support armed with tea, coffee and biscuits!

Graham and Katey have implemented a, friendly environment in which to do so, regardless of how cancer affects you.

"Since joining the MLU at the beginning of 2025 and only on hormone injections at the time, speaking with the main members of the group gave me confidence to make the choice of which treatment path to take, hence weighing up the pros and cons I decided to go ahead down the prostate surgery avenue, missing out on some months while in recovery, I came back and also supported the start-up of the Telford MLU as well, I find it good to have support from like wise men. More recently the possibility of being out of my comfort zone with tai chi, I wouldn't have thought this nearly a year ago. I also can't wait for the T shirts to promote MLU further."

The " Men Like Us" initiative has provided me with the opportunity of sharing my own experiences, good and bad, with others who are either looking for support or just need to talk to someone outside of their immediate family or friends.

MLU is available as and when required with no firm commitment needed, but with a friendly community who have a common interest.

Where it started and where it is now



We plan to carry on building on the model with big plans for the future.....

What next...



More volunteers;
expanding group to
other areas

Increase meeting to
every fortnight; led by
those attending

WHAT NEXT

Attend more
community events to
continue promotion

Gather data to
evidence the impact
of the group



**For any further information,
please contact
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