

Cross Party Group on Cancer: Inequalities Inquiry – Evidence Session 2

Key details

- **What:** Cross Party Group on Cancer, launch of cancer and inequalities inquiry and AGM
- **When:** 14.00 – 15.30, Thursday 8th December 2022
- **Where:** Teams meeting.
- **Purpose of the session:** To present evidence to members on inequalities in cancer.

Topic

This session is focussed on presenting evidence surrounding access to services, treatment & support for people in deprived communities. With speakers Kate Brain – Cardiff University, Tracey Burke – Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil, Jon Antoniazzi – Marie Curie and Gerard McMahon – Bowel Cancer UK.

Agenda

- 1. Opening the Inquiry of the CPG into inequalities 14.05-15.20**
 - a. Talk from Kate Brain, Cardiff University.
 - b. Questions for Kate from members and attendees.
 - c. Talk from Tracey Burke, Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil.
 - d. Questions for Tracey from members and attendees.
 - e. Talk from Gerard McMahon, Bowel Cancer UK.
 - f. Questions for Gerard from members and attendees.
 - g. Talk from Jon Antoniazzi, Marie Curie.
 - h. Questions for Jon from members and attendees.
- 2. AOB 15.20-15.30**

Attendees

1. Katie Till
2. Tracey Burke
3. Megan Cole
4. Katherine Brain
5. Jon Antoniazzi
6. Gerard McMahon
7. Rees, David (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd)
8. Dawn Casey (CTM UHB - Patient Care & Safety)
9. Hedges, Mike (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd)
10. Heather Lewis (Public Health Wales, Magden Park)
11. Davies, Anthony (HSS - Quality & Nursing Directorate)
12. Sikha de Souza (Public Health Wales - No. 2 Capital Quarter)
13. Bellin, Ioan (Staff Cymorth yr Aelod | Member Support Staff)

14. Benedict Lejac
15. Llinos Price
16. Madelaine Phillips

17. Jenni Macdougall

18. Paul McGlinchey
19. Maddy Young
20. Greg Pycroft
21. Hussain, Altaf (Swyddfa Altaf Hussain | Office of Altaf Hussain)
22. Dr Peter Henley
23. Dr Lee Campbell
24. Emma Stevenson
25. Judi Rhys
26. Joanne Ferris
27. Jones, Nicholas
28. Richards, Ellie (Staff Cymorth Aelod y'r Senedd | Senedd Member Support Staff)
29. Rose, Graeme
30. Doyle, Ryland (Staff Cymorth yr Aelod | Member Support Staff)
31. HUGHES-MORRIS Trefor (First Hydro - Dinorwig)

Introductions

Chair David Rees introduces the session and the speakers outlining the session's focus on access to services in deprived communities.

David introduces Kate who will be discussing health seeking behaviours and participation in cancer screening programmes in Wales.

Talk from Kate Brain

Kate introduces her presentation and outlines she will be discussing cancer diagnosis and current challenges services are facing.

She discusses the barriers to cancer diagnosis, including certain groups facing stigma being less likely to get screened and inequalities playing a significant role in people's interactions with the NHS and its services.

Kate then talks about the work she and her team at Cardiff University have done to identify and seek to eliminate these barriers. Including understanding the barriers to health and why they exist. She cites capability, opportunity and motivation as the core health behaviours for understanding people's motivations.

She expands upon capability to discuss lower awareness of symptoms comes under this and is a key tenet of vulnerable groups not seeking medical help when they may need it. For example, those in lower socioeconomic groups may misattribute vague symptoms.

In terms of opportunity Kate cites the role of communities and their support structures as a key barrier. Social influences in communities can have both positive and negative effects.

Re motivation people's beliefs about cancer diagnosis and the benefits of treatment are important, with confidence about acting on symptoms being key.

Kate then cites the research conducted by a member of her team and highlights quotes from focus groups that outline the link between deprivation and higher risk factors of cancer.

David Rees introduces the next speaker Tracey Burkey – Cancer Aid Merthyr Tydfil

Talk from Tracey Burke

Tracey outlines the topics she will be discussing of community transport for those living with cancer in deprived and rural areas in Wales.

Tracey begins by discussing the stigma many individuals feel for having to rely on the charity sector to assist them. Individuals feel shame that they need to ask for help. She also highlights that the cost of living crisis has meant that those not just in poverty are asking for help but also groups who wouldn't traditionally require help such as working-middle classes.

She highlights the importance of destigmatising help from the charity sector and the need for individuals to feel comfortable and able to seek help when they need it.

She goes on to discuss the problems with literacy in many deprived communities in Wales. As such, resources and assist may not always be done via email and many individuals require face-to-face or telephone conversations to discuss the help they need. She also highlights the financial barriers to single provision of services with many individuals not being able to afford laptops or iPads to speak to charities or research the options out there to help them.

Tracey then discussed the impacts the pandemic had on service provision with many individuals requiring treatment being high risk of serious COVID implications meaning services had to adapt and volunteers needed to implement measures to ensure the safety of high risk patients.

Questions to Tracey

Q. David Rees MS asks Tracey about the quality of life of patients during treatment

Tracey discusses that many individuals do not have a high quality of life during treatment and the pandemic worsened many individuals lives as they couldn't access support structures or meet up with friends and family.

David Rees introduces Gerard McMahon – Bowel Cancer UK

Talk from Gerard

Gerard outlines his topic of bowel cancer in Wales and the problems individuals face re screening.

Gerard then discusses the importance of getting diagnosed earlier and the ways in which we can normalise screening for bowel cancer so individuals see a screening as something they should do.

Gerard then discusses the stats for early diagnosis and survival versus those who get diagnosed at a later stage and face higher chance or mortality.

He goes on to discuss the implementation of new screening measures by Welsh Government and the lowering of the screening age for bowel cancer to 55. He identifies that this is an important step in getting individuals diagnosed earlier and the importance of seeing bowel screening as a routine check.

Gerard then began to highlight the differences in screening uptake by gender, ethnicity and socio economic group. Concluding that those who experience marginalisation external to their health are likely to see consequences because of it.

David Rees introduces next speaker Jon Antoniazzi – Marie Curie

Talk from Jon

Jon outlines the topic for his talk of hospice and end of life care and inequalities.

He begins by sharing anecdotes of the important of end of life care and the vital work that Marie Curie and other charities do in providing this for patients.

He continues by discussing the demographics and makeup of cancer patients, identifying the varying needs that individuals have. For example a retired 70 year old man with cancer has differing need to a 20 year old woman.

Jon then begins to discuss the impacts of deprivation and economic inequalities on the lives of those living with cancer. In particular Jon discusses the impacts of the cost of living crisis on those who have cancer and require support from machines and can't be left in cold homes.

David Rees closes the session