For health professionals
Together we will beat cancer

Delivering the PCN specification on the early diagnosis of cancer

Getting started: case study

Sowe Valley North and South PCNs, Coventry.

11 GP Practices, approx 80,000 population

Background

The PCN clinical director contacted the West Midlands CRUK GP and local CRUK facilitators, as well as the STP cancer lead to discuss how best to take the Cancer Early Diagnosis PCN specification forward. Building on a history of supporting primary care cancer GP education and support across Coventry, it was agreed to use PMS funding for a dedicated Cancer Clinical Champion who could help lead the PCN’s work on cancer early diagnosis. This Clinical champion would undertake reviews with each practice and offer support and encouragement, review cancer data, review audit data and liaise with CRUK and the West Midlands Cancer Alliance.

Process

A small collaborative working group involving the PCN Clinical Director, PCN Cancer Clinical Champion, CRUK GP, CRUK facilitator and the STP Cancer System Lead met in June to review available PCN level data and to identify best practice actions that could realistically be undertaken by PCN practices. The cancer PCN data and a draft SMART action plan was then shared with PCN practices at a Protected Learning Time meeting in July to gain their buy-in.

Critical success factors

It is still early days in terms of delivering the PCN specification, however, critical success factors include a shared sense of urgency, a single minded focus on patient outcomes, and support being provided to all member practices.

PCN Action plan

This action plan identified support for all practices to improve their overall performance based on trends, and was not only focusing on outliers. Examples from the action plan include:

- 3x planning and shared learning events to be held between July 2020 and March 2021
- Using PCN funding to cover time for practice clinical champions and non-clinical champions
- Taking part in the National Cancer Diagnosis Audit
- Other 2ww audits looking at bowel and lung cancer (especially those diagnosed via emergency presentations) with formal review of findings facilitated by PCN Cancer Lead
- Improving the completeness and quality of 2ww referral forms
- Use of a standardised EMIS safety netting template by all practices
- PCN wide standardisation of screening messages (invitation letters, and text messages) to encourage patients to participate in cervical and bowel screening, along with targeted actions for non responders

September 2020