

## INFORMATION SHEET

### **What the Cancer, Older People and Advocacy Programme involves.**

During 2012 -2013 OPAAL successfully piloted a new programme of work to provide advocacy support older people affected by cancer 2012 – 2013 in five areas across England.

Between May 2014 and March 2017 Big Lottery and Macmillan have provided £2,912,284 enabling us to extend our reach to OPABC (Older People Affected by Cancer) in twelve locations and one in Wales. We aim to embed and augment the good practice gains so far delivered in our pilot project, and establish independent advocacy as an accepted part of the cancer pathway for older people.

### **What we do.**

We recruit and train Peer Volunteers who themselves have been touched by cancer to become trained Independent Advocates. A professional staff team of Advocates supports and supervises our volunteers who work on a One to One basis supporting people over fifty along the cancer pathway.

These in turn are supported and guided by Local Cancer Champions Boards, also made up of volunteers who have some knowledge and understanding of cancer and an interest in older people's services.

Nationally the programme is supported by two separate boards, one of National Cancer Champions and one made up of Health Professionals.

We are currently delivering this service in **Bristol; Sandwell; Southport; Oxfordshire; Preston, Chorley, South Ribble & West Lancashire; Knowsley; Cardiff and the Vale; Staffordshire & Wolverhampton; Dorset; Brighton & Hove; Northumberland and Barnet** in London.

### **Our five main strategic aims are:**

1. To increase the resilience of OPABCs, including those from the LGBT community, in managing their cancer pathway through the delivery of peer advocacy. To date 1114 OPABC have been or are being supported by 165 Peer Advocates and 24 professional advocates. To involve and learn from older LGBT OPABC creating new tools and training materials raising awareness of their needs with project partners and health professionals.

2. To increase the number of delivery partners, supporting this by developing partners' capacity through implementing national standards and delivering new leadership and mentoring and training programmes.
3. To create a shared and lasting strategic understanding with health agencies both locally and nationally, enabling efficient and effective referral and communication pathways, thus sustaining the optimum accessibility and effectiveness of peer advocacy.
4. Our new National Health Professionals Board supported by our network of 13 Local and 1 National Cancer Champion Boards will be key to delivery of this aim.
5. To increase the capacity of partners to deliver through developing coaching/advisory and LGBT programmes and to expand the development of impact measurement tools and the continuous improvement of our new System of Advocacy Management SAM database.

Nine other OPAAL member organisations act as Resource and Development partners. These partners are consulted on all project outputs e.g. films, publications, tools, strategies and training programmes.

We are developing a single national impact reporting procedure, publishing (with user consent) up to 210 stories of OPABC and 10 films.

We also aim to create a template for a multi-agency advocacy operational protocol to guide integrated working between health and social care that will benefit commissioners of advocacy nationally.

We published "Every Step of the Way: 13 [stories](#) illustrating the difference independent advocacy support makes to older people affected by cancer" on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014 and are using this in a variety of ways to raise awareness and increase engagement with our work.

We recently published our first suite of films each targeted at different audiences with the overall aim of raising awareness of our work and increasing both Peer Volunteer numbers and OPABC referrals. The films can be accessed [here](#).

Our project blog has over 416 posts (short articles) that illustrate our journey and features many stories of both volunteer advocates and those they have helped. The blog has followers and to date has received over 31,849 visits. To learn more of our work supporting older people living with cancer please visit us [here](#)