

Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance rolls out the Cancer Research and Innovation Funding Scheme 2025/26

Following the successful launch of the Cancer Innovation Grants in 2024, Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance is pleased to announce a further round of funding opportunities – subject to the approval of funding from NHS England.

The renamed **Cancer Research and Innovation Award Funding Scheme** widens the scope of funding to include research projects in 2025/26. This means the Cancer Alliance can help with the funding of research or innovation projects that promote early cancer diagnosis, treatment, recovery and/or patient experience in the Humber and North Yorkshire area.

Dr Kartikae Grover, Clinical Director of Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance, said: “We are delighted to announce not only another opportunity to help fund our local culture of cancer innovation, but we may now also discover some fascinating research concepts that could be utilised to improve cancer services.”

The Cancer Research and Innovation Award Funding Scheme forms part of the Cancer Alliance’s aim to build a culture of cutting-edge cancer innovations and research, essential to improving early diagnosis, treatment, recovery and patient experience.

This programme has been created in collaboration with local partners:

- Health Innovation Yorkshire & Humber
- Innovation, Research and Improvement System (IRIS)
- NHS Humber Health Partnership
- York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Voluntary and community sector
- Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance Patient and Public Representative Group
- Academic partners

The Cancer Alliance encourages all system stakeholders to initiate, identify and develop proposals for research and innovation, and to adopt evidence-based innovative approaches that can help earlier and faster diagnosis and assist those living with cancer. All applications should particularly target local priorities for improvement.

In April 2024, the Cancer Alliance launched its first-ever Cancer Innovation Grants programme, setting aside £400,000 to fund a wide variety of projects to improve early cancer detection or improve treatment or recovery for cancer patients in Humber and North Yorkshire. Winners included A cancer café at The Summit in Selby (pictured), an at-home chemotherapy service and a project which uses virtual reality (VR) to reduce anxiety in young cancer patients.

Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance welcomes applications from primary and secondary care organisations, patients, voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs), academic institutions and wider system stakeholders, such as social care organisations. Collaboration is being encouraged across organisations and sectors.

The Cancer Research and Innovation Award Funding Scheme is a non-recurring revenue financial scheme that promotes research and innovation in cancer care, to improve earlier and faster diagnosis and patient experience, in line with the NHS Long Term Plan.

The Cancer Alliance is particularly keen to receive applications that are in line with NHS Cancer National Planning Guidance, that have a focus on (but are not exclusive to) tumour sites with the highest volume of late-stage diagnoses in the Humber and North Yorkshire region, and which target the 20% most deprived populations (Core 20plus) who experience health inequalities, including inclusion health groups.

Individual awards will be funded to a maximum of £50,000, and the application process opened on 17 March 2025, closing on 9 May 2025.

Lucy Turner, Managing Director of Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance, said: “Last year’s Cancer Innovation Grants really showed how many great ideas there are to improve cancer treatment across our region. Now we’re casting our net even wider, we can’t wait to see what great innovation and research projects are out there.”



Cancer Alliance raises awareness for prostate and bowel cancer



Awareness and Early Diagnosis

Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance is to hit the road this April with its latest secret weapon – a giant inflatable bowel.

April is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month, and as always, the Cancer Alliance is teaming up with partners to educate and entertain members of the public about the disease.

The approach will see volunteers take the bowel to community spaces including North Point Shopping Centre in Hull, Bridlington Spa and Scunthorpe's Central Community Centre. Once set up, they will use the bowel to spark conversation about bowel cancer and raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of the disease.

Last November, the Cancer Alliance turned heads with a giant inflatable lung for Lung Cancer Awareness Month, earning TV coverage on BBC Look North when the inflatable made an appearance at Grimsby's Freeman Street Market.

Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK, but is treatable and curable, especially if diagnosed early.

The best way to reduce the risk of bowel cancer is to complete a bowel screening test when invited to do so.

This year, the starting age at which people receive the test kit – called a faecal immunochemical test (FIT) – has been lowered to 50. People continue to receive FIT kits in the post every two years, until they reach 74.

The Cancer Alliance always works with cancer patients who have fascinating stories of their cancer experiences, and April is no exception. This time, they include Gill Dickinson, 62, from Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire, who was diagnosed with bowel cancer after receiving a FIT kit in the post. Gill hadn't had any bowel cancer symptoms, so she is keen to spread the word that people shouldn't avoid taking the test.

In March, the Cancer Alliance took part in Prostate Cancer Awareness Month by teaming up with Prostate Cancer UK to create a beer mat which featured a QR code that linked to the charity's risk checker webpage.

The beer mats were distributed to 30 pubs located in areas of Hull and Scunthorpe where people are diagnosed later with the disease than other regions in Humber and North Yorkshire.

Coverage of this well-received campaign made it the BBC News website, Hull Daily Mail, Grimsby Telegraph and Greatest Hits Radio.

Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance pays tribute to Nicola Dean

Everyone at Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance was deeply saddened to learn that Nicola Dean, a patient and public representative for the Cancer Alliance, had passed away due to breast cancer in February, aged 53.

Nicola, who lived in Hull, had been a member of the Patient and Public Representative Group since 2023. She was heavily involved in the work of the Cancer Alliance's Treatment, Pathways and Personalised Care programme, particularly the work to understand the information and support given to people with metastatic cancer.

In addition to her work with the Cancer Alliance, Nicola spent many years working in social care and safeguarding, supporting young people with a learning disability. She was also heavily involved in HER Breast Friends secondary breast cancer support group and was an avid Hull City fan.

Since her primary diagnosis she had been a member and administrator for Younger Breast Cancer Network, an online support group for younger breast cancer patients, supporting women across the country through their breast cancer diagnosis, treatment and in living well with and beyond, until it folded last year. She also worked at Barnardo's.

The eulogy at Nicola's funeral spoke about her commitment to fighting for people's rights and her commitment as a voice for the voiceless.

The Cancer Alliance sends love to Nicola's family and friends.

Cancer Alliance News

Cancer Alliance staff spotlight



Cancer Alliance News

In this edition, we shine the staff spotlight on Michelle Park, Immunology Clinical Nurse Specialist for York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, in a role funded by the Cancer Alliance.

Michelle's career in the NHS started in 1997. Her passion for oncology started during her time as a student nurse on an oncology/haematology inpatient ward. She then became a qualified nurse in surgery, specifically breast reconstruction.

Time spent working on the inpatient Haematology/Oncology ward provided her with the foundations to progress into a more specialist role, and in 2017 she became an Acute Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist. After seven years working in the role, she joined the Cancer Alliance in 2024 when York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust received funding from the Cancer Alliance for an Immuno-Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist.

What is your new Cancer Alliance role, and what does it entail?

My role involves working across the Oncology and Haematology teams at both York and Scarborough Hospitals. With increasing patient numbers receiving immunotherapy, there was also an increasing need for specialist support for patients and health professionals.

My role involves supporting patients and their families through their immunotherapy. I run an IO clinic twice weekly to support and educate patients who are experiencing toxicities related to their immunotherapy.

What attracted you to the role?

I have been in cancer services for most of my nursing career and when the opportunity arose to be part of groundbreaking advancement in cancer care, I could not let the opportunity pass by.

The role would enable me to stay in a speciality that I am passionate about but also give new opportunities to learn something new, whilst remaining patient-focussed. Combining this with the improvement of patient care has always been a passion of mine and I believe this role ticks all those boxes and more.

What do you see as the main challenges?

The NHS is facing many challenges, so setting up a new service in these times could be seen as quite restricted. Especially when trying to obtain support from other specialities who are under pressure. It is essential to the delivery of safe and high-quality care that I receive the engagement from wider multidisciplinary teams, and I support these teams where possible.

What are you looking forward to most?

I am looking forward to challenging myself and collaborating, not only within my Cancer Alliance patch, but the wider world of immunotherapy. My goal is to make a difference to cancer patients and close the health inequality gap.

NHS Targeted Lung Health Checks become Lung Cancer Screening



Lung Cancer Screening

The NHS Targeted Lung Health Check service has undergone a rebrand. The name change, to Lung Cancer Screening, came into effect as of 1 February.

While the name and logo are different, nothing else has changed. The aims of the Lung Cancer Screening programme are still to help diagnose lung cancer and other respiratory diseases earlier, when treatment may be simpler and more successful.

When the new name was rigorously tested alongside other new suggestions (as well as the previous name), 'Lung Cancer Screening' consistently outperformed the rest. Suggested names that included the word 'cancer' were best at facilitating understanding of what the programme was for. In addition to this, NHSE found that people were more likely to want to take part when they felt that they had a clearer understanding of what the programme entailed.

With that in mind, the previous name may have acted as a barrier to uptake, as it was less clear at communicating the purpose of the programme.

New branding was developed to implement the name change, with updated materials, including invitation letters, leaflets, booklets and banners. In addition, Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance updated the Lung Cancer Screening website and associated comms materials.

Please contact the Lung Cancer Screening team at hnyicb-ery.lunghealth@nhs.net for more information.



A-Z of cancer

Find out about the different types of cancer from A to Z, including their risk factors, symptoms, tests and treatments.

Cancer Alliance News

Check out the latest addition to the new Cancer Alliance website

In December, the Cancer Alliance proudly unveiled its [new website](#). Brand new sections and pages have been created, including the [A-Z of cancer](#) section.

Here, you can find out about the different types of cancer from A to Z, including their risk factors, symptoms, tests and treatments.

Keep an eye on future editions of the newsletter to stay abreast of all the latest Cancer Alliance website news.

Cancer Alliance Cancer Innovation Grant winner to improve quality of life for female cancer survivors

One of the Cancer Alliance’s Cancer Innovation Grant winners in 2024 has begun offering help to women who are suffering from vulvovaginal atrophy also known as VVA.

The introduction of a specialised clinic at Castle Hill Hospital – the first of its kind in England – will help lead the way for female cancer survivors affected by VVA to access effective treatments and care within an NHS setting.

VVA is a common post-treatment side effect for women who are suffering from breast, gynaecological and some colorectal cancers.

This can be as a result of pelvic radiotherapy, pelvic surgery, systemic chemotherapy and/or hormone therapy (e.g. anti-oestrogen for breast cancer) causing oestrogen deprivation.

Treatments induce early menopause, causing severe vaginal dryness, painful intercourse, repeated vaginal/urinary infections, urinary incontinence and cardiac/skeletal complications, which can significantly shorten survival.

International Menopause Society indicates that 70-90% of breast/gynaecological cancer survivors suffer from VVA, which affects their day-to-day quality of life and sexual health. Less than 50% seek medical help; and 90% of those attending are dismissed without adequate outcomes, causing repeated presentation to GPs.

Nabil El-Mahdawi, Consultant in Clinical Oncology at Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, said about his team’s winning grant: “We hope this clinic provides female cancer survivors in our region, affected by VVA as a result of their cancer treatments, easier access to the expertise they require to improve their quality of life.”



The Cancer Alliance Patient and Public Representative Group continues to expand



Patient and Public Engagement

Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance’s active recruitment campaign for its Patient and Public Representative Group continues to bear fruit, with the current tally standing at 30.

The Patient and Public Representative Group consists of people with lived experience of cancer. This can mean a representative either is or has been a patient or the carer of someone with a cancer diagnosis.

Patient or public representatives share experiences of cancer to help improve cancer services. Their main role is to use their unique individual knowledge and experience to offer feedback on and advise about the impact on patients of work developed and undertaken by the Cancer Alliance.

Members of the group can use their voices in order to challenge the approach and thinking of those making decisions, while remaining respectful and open to a wide range of different opinions and thought processes.

There are a multitude of ways in which representatives can be involved. They include sitting on Cancer Alliance working groups, programme boards and steering committees. Members can also represent the Cancer Alliance at community engagement events.

Richard Attack, a current patient representative who also took part in the Cancer Alliance’s recent Prostate Cancer Awareness Month campaign in March, said: “The Cancer Alliance wants to work with us to get it right for people with a diagnosis in our area. We help to make a difference, our opinions are always considered, and I really enjoy taking part in engagement events, getting among the public and spreading awareness.”

To become a patient or public representative, potential candidates complete an [expression of interest form](#), share their experience of cancer and explain why they want to get involved.

For more information, take a look at [the recruitment pack](#).