

The impact of cancer



A diagnosis of Leukaemia can rock your world. While the NHS will provide the medical treatment, LINC is proudly on hand in Gloucestershire to provide all the extra support that our patients need. As well as providing comfortable surroundings in the newly refurbished isolation rooms and giving financial grants, LINC is entirely responsible for funding the work of our clinical psychologists.

The provision of the clinical psychologists is a vital lifeline for our patients. The medical team do their best to treat the cancer but to enable these patients to go on and cope with the rest of their lives, they may need emotional help. Many find coming to terms with what is happening to them and their families, hard to come to terms with.

Isolation and intensive chemotherapy is gruelling. Imagine having to spend weeks, even months in a single room. Gareth writes,

"The clinical psychologist's sessions helped me talk through my fears and concerns. She allowed me space to think, to cry, to shout and scream and she understood."

For families too, this is a very frightening time. Not only is your loved one extremely ill in hospital but you have to cope with the pressures of trying to juggle life and its normal demands. Our LINC support extends to families.

"Following months of being unwell, my husband was diagnosed with Acute Myloid Leukaemia. The fact G might die was a distinct possibility. In the days following diagnosis I couldn't sleep, fearful that I might miss a call from the hospital. My life became trying to keep things as normal as possible for my girls and visiting G in hospital. I was exhausted, anxious and afraid. I met with the clinical psychologist and I can still remember the relief after my first session with her. I was hugely impressed and grateful. I cannot underestimate the positive impact that this support has had on our family."

The LINC patients, who have faced treatment for months in isolation, can then find it incredibly difficult and stressful to re-enter the outside world. It is so important to continue supporting these people long after they have left the confines of the hospital. One young lady spent most of last year in an isolation room fighting leukaemia. She faced her treatment with tenacity and strength but then found it hard mentally to come to terms with her ordeal once she was at home and had time to process what had happened to her. LINC has funded specialist treatment to help her to try to live her life to the fullest.

To be able to heal a patient mentally, as well as physically, is the greatest gift we can give them.

A donation of £25 could fund an hour with one of our clinical psychologists for a patient like Gareth.

£500 could contribute to the cost of funding our emotional support service for six months.

Thank you



"Life is amazing. And then it's awful. And then it's amazing again. And in between the amazing and awful, it's ordinary and mundane and routine. Breathe in the amazing, hold on through the awful and relax and exhale during the ordinary. That's just living heartbreaking, soul-healing, amazing, awful, ordinary life. And it's breathtakingly beautiful."

L.R.Knost

Meet Nick

“My name is Nick Sharpe, a 52 year old firefighter at Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service where I have served for the last 26 years as an operational firefighter. Prior to this I had served in the Royal Marines for over four years. My life before diagnosis, revolved around health, fitness and being active. I was also a fitness advisor as one of my roles within the Fire Service. A keen cyclist riding between 100-150 miles a week, social riding and commuting.

However on July 2nd last year I was diagnosed with a lymphatic blood cancer. In one day my life had changed, a life threatening disease and being told I would not be returning to work (fortunately I was in my last year of service). What I am trying to put over is that cancer does not discriminate between previous medical history, fitness, age, diet, lifestyle, wealth, gender, race.

The diagnosis of suffering from a rare Lymphoma, Mantle Cell, which affects 1 in 250,000 was quite devastating to me, my wife Julie and three daughters, Kelly, Dani and Leah. However from the outset my Consultant Phil Robson was positive that because I was relatively young and in good shape that he could offer the strongest course of treatment available which would stand me in the best position of a long remission, at this time the condition is not curable. We took all the information on board and took the position that there was only one option, stay positive and look forward. I think my old Royal Marine spirit of enduring under adverse conditions kicked in. Total faith in the Oncology team, the drugs and my positive spirit would see me through this journey.

My birthday fell a week after my first Chemotherapy treatment and whilst at the Edward Jenner Unit Julie and I became aware of the work the LINC fund carried out on behalf of cancer sufferers. We decided to have an afternoon tea at our house and raise funds for LINC. It was a really successful social event the weather was glorious and we raised over £350. Julie started a Facebook just giving page during my treatment phase and this has raised over £400 from friends and colleagues.

During the first two months of treatment I felt and coped well. I carried on with my passion, cycling, not doing long distances but just enjoying going out in the fantastic Summer weather we were experiencing for an hour or so. Also with a friend from work in September we climbed Pen Y Fan which was inspiring to others. In September Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service were doing a sponsored bed push around every Fire Station in the County to raise money for the Oncology department in Cheltenham. I felt well enough to take part on the last two days of the event which was fantastic as I someone who was personally involved with



the department. The event raised more than £20,000 but was a massive logistical and physical effort on behalf of the organisers and those who took part.

Julie and her Slimming World colleagues organised a cake sale in all the Stroud groups her friend Lisa Bennett ran, raising £600 for LINC. Also a friend Fiona Hudd did an alcohol free 'stop-tober' and raised £100.

Friends Matt and Claire Powell were in touch to say that their son George wanted to take part in a sponsored head shave to raise money for LINC. George and I are avid Forest Green Rovers fans and the idea was to have the event at an actual game. As I have to avoid crowds due to infection risks this didn't take place at a game, but the head shave did with George exceeding his £150 target by raising £1140.

My treatment has been a rollercoaster, picking up a couple of infections in the last two months with unplanned hospital stays. However I have bounced back from these setbacks, finished all the Chemotherapy cycles, and am now in a position where the Lymphoma has been removed from my bone marrow. All positive news, now I am in the hands of the transplant team which is the next phase. A stem cell transplant which involves a month long stay in hospital, but it's all part of the journey. Onwards and upwards."



Sanctuary Garden

The work on the LINC Sanctuary Garden is well on its way. We are so grateful to everyone who has made this possible. As well as receiving donations from our LINC supporters, we have received £10,000 from the Cheltenham Borough Council's Growing Our Communities Fund, £5,000 from the Postcode Lottery Fund and £1,000 from Persimmon. The groundworks and planting should be completed by the beginning of April so please try to visit the garden which is situated in Sandford Park, opposite the Fire Station. As well as the garden, the two existing tree trunks are in the process of being carved into beautiful benches in memory of a LINC patient who died last year. We are still hoping to raise money for the curved benches that will be placed within the garden itself so we would be grateful for any donations. We will also need help later on in maintaining the flower beds. **Thank you to all the volunteers who have given up their time to help us plant including the team from GE Aviation and to Mark Sheldon, Pauline Hartree and Klara Sudbury from Cheltenham Borough Council who have been instrumental in bringing this garden to life. We hope that you all enjoy it and that it provides a place of beauty and peace for our LINC families.**

Cinderella Couture

How many of us love a new outfit? The idea of finding a perfect dress in a charity shop might come as a surprise to some of you but with the help of fashion designer, Melissa Antonious and stylist, Sophie from My Stylish Friend, we held a fashion evening and catwalk show demonstrating how donated charity shop dresses can be upcycled into something spectacular. **Many thanks to Melissa who has spent so much time redesigning dresses and supporting this event, Stuart Holmes and Charlotte Tilbury make-up artists, the models and all the talented seamstresses who have helped us, Jan Knibbs at Altelier19, Sarah Carter at byDesign, Kathy Richardson and Tuxedo Junction. The dresses were kindly auctioned at the end of the evening by Phil Allwood from Moore Allen.**



Team Linc

We are so appreciative of everyone who takes on a challenge to raise funds for LINC.

Good luck to **Cheryl** who is running her second marathon for LINC after her remarkable come back from major surgery.

Kathy Lewis is cycling this year's Ride London for LINC

We always have places for various sporting events and we would love you to be part of #TeamLINC. Would you like to run in this year's London Vitality 10k on May 27? We have charity places for this fantastic event that takes you around the major sights of London so please contact the team if you are interested.

Summer Solstice Skydive – Take the Leap from 10,000ft in the ultimate summer skydive. This will take place on 23rd June from Swindon Airfield. We'd love to send you a Parachute Pack.



Golf Day

We are very much looking forward to welcoming our golfers to the LINC Golf Day on July 3rd being held at Cotswold Hills. If you would like to enter a team, the cost is £240 for a team of four.. **You can register your entry online at www.lincfund.org.**



Sign up for the 100 Club

Every month one of our lucky winners receives a cheque for £75. Our LINC 100 Club is a fantastic way to support the charity as well as giving you the chance to be a winner. Of course, the more numbers that are played, the more the month winners will receive. **If you would like to sign up for a number, please contact the LINC team ghn.tr-linc@nhs.net or call 0300 422 4422 and we will send you a 100 Club pack. You have to be in it to win it!**

Cycle Ride

Our annual 3 Counties Cycle Ride will be taking place this year on June 9th. This is always such a beautiful route to cycle and would love as many teams or individuals to take part as possible this year to make it the best yet! The route starts and finishes at Tewkesbury Rugby Club with the option of cycling 64km or 32km. It's cheaper to pre- register so please come and join #TeamLINC and get cycling to raise much needed funds for our local blood cancer patients. Sponsorship forms are available. **Thank you to Creeds Foodservices and Thomson & Bancks Solicitors for sponsoring this event.**



A big thank you to...

PJ Crook donated a magnificent £3,200 from the sale of her miniature paintings at Christmas.

Alan Whitby ran in the Rhayader, Round the Lakes, 30k Race on 2nd March. He raised £275 excluding Gift Aid. Despite a hilly course and strong winds, the rain just about held off and he finished in 2 hours, 24 mins and 24 secs which is an absolute brilliant achievement.

Bovis Homes raised £3,003.50 from their annual Dinner Dance raffle.

LINC received £1,000 from **John Lewis and Partners** as part of their green token scheme. Thank you to everyone who put their tokens into the LINC box.

BMW Motorcycle Club presented LINC with £522 in support of their members who sadly lost his leukaemia battle last year. The club very kindly hosted Claire and Gavin Charlton at their Burns celebrations close to Monmouth.

Almost Athletes supported LINC as one of their charities of the year and kindly gave LINC £1,000 whilst **CLC Striders** donated £300 from the Staverton Race.

LINC would like to thank all of the volunteers who work so hard in the **LINC Shop** on the Bath Road. Special thanks to Cynthia who has been busy painting the shop, keeping it looking as smart as ever and Mo who has stood in regularly to cover sickness leave.

Di Coates who works so tirelessly organizes the cake sales in the Oncology Department.

Julie Corbett did a raffle with a bucket collection at Tesco's, Tewkesbury and raised £755.

Chris Bain of Bain's Window Cleaning decorated his house with Christmas lights to raise money for LINC and raised £137.28.

Jody Hung continues to raise money from her Cheltenham Half run with a further £50 donation.

Wide Valley Singers £231.26 was raised by singing in Gloucester Royal Hospital Atrium.



Photos L- R: John Lewis, Almost Athletes, BMW Club, Shop Volunteers

Reply Slip

I would like to donate to fund the Clinical Psychologists

I would like to make a donation for The Sanctuary Garden

Please send me a Parachute Pack

I would like to enter the 3 Counties Cycle Ride

I would like to be added to the volunteers' list

I enclose total payment of £

Return to: LINC, Cheltenham General Hospital, Sandford Road, Cheltenham. GL53 7AN

If you wish to unsubscribe from LINCLINES please tick here



I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008. Please tick the box