

## Visit to Macmillan Cancer Support, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Selina Corkery welcomed us to Macmillan Cancer Support based at 89 Albert Embankment, London. With more than 100 different types of cancer and those affected by cancer having different information needs and varying levels of literacy, Selina explained how Macmillan endeavour to make their information accessible to all.

### Macmillan information

#### What we produce

- Clinical and non-clinical cancer information for people affected by cancer
- The *primary* function of our content is to provide information on:
  - cancer types, their diagnosis and treatment and aspects of care
  - key cancer treatments, their side effects and ways to help relieve and reduce these
  - wide range of issues related to living with cancer, including managing symptoms, relationships, and practical issues such as employment and finances.

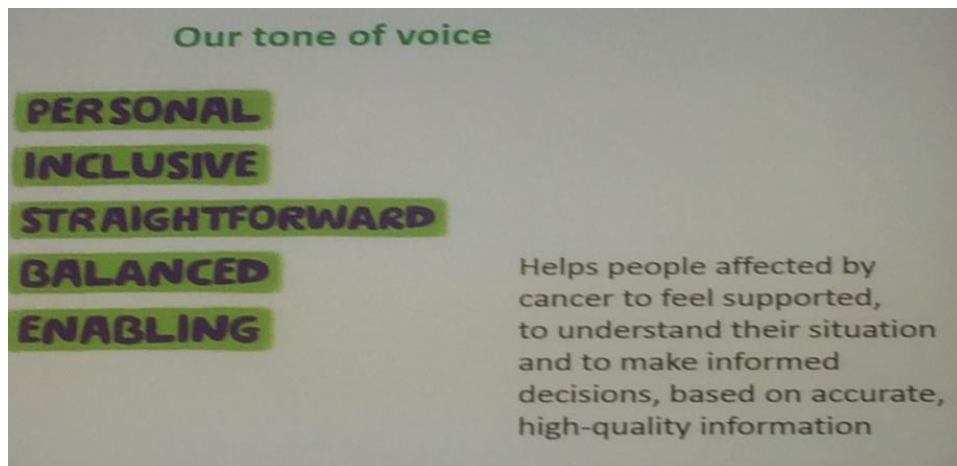
Source: Macmillan presentation

### Format

- Macmillan information is produced in a variety of formats, some of which depend on the context in which it is used. For example, information on brain cancer diagnosis is available in audio as reading can be particularly tiring for those with brain cancer.
- Macmillan are increasing the video content on their website to support the written format. This will focus on real stories featuring real people.
- Printed resources: 'help with cost of cancer' is the most popular printed resource.

### Language

- Macmillan was involved in the piloting of the Information Standard and their information is Information Standard Certified. [The [Information Standard](#) is a certification scheme for health and social care information. It was established by the Department of Health to help patients and the public make informed choices about their lifestyle, their condition and their options for treatment and care].
- Macmillan uses the active rather than passive voice and a consistent tone of voice.
- Macmillan produces information accessible to those with a reading age of 14+. They are working towards making their information accessible to those with a reading age of 11+ in order to reach 85% of the population.
- Some of Macmillan's information is translated into 8 languages, and they are looking at increasing this.



Source: Macmillan presentation

### Collaboration

- Macmillan work with other organisations to produce information resources, such as Diabetes UK and Winston’s Wish (e.g. [Preparing a child for loss](#)). This enables Macmillan to increase their reach, share resources and improve quality.

### Testing

- Macmillan have patient reviewers who review their information and an online community who also provide feedback. This enables Macmillan to obtain new ideas and respond to clearly documented needs. Grabbing the attention of the male population with information relating to cancer requires creative thinking so when Macmillan tested their pictorial Z card ‘Signs and symptoms of cancer’ with their IT department, male colleagues suggested that they were more likely to read the card if the ‘male’ side was presented first.



### Macmillan mobile service

Tracy Neill talked about the work of the mobile service used to help reach marginalised rural communities

- Macmillan have four mobile libraries to help reach marginalised rural communities. Many people welcome on the buses which have private rooms. In response to feedback they have cut down on the number of leaflets on display as people felt visually bombarded with too much information. Now the buses have posters on display in preference to leaflets.
- Macmillan also has indoor information pods which ‘pop-up’ in shopping centres for a week.



Source: Macmillan

## **Macmillan Support Line**

Chris Catchpole talked about the Macmillan Support Line which answered 146,000 calls and responded to 4,000 emails in 2016.

The Support Line provides; practical; clinical; financial and emotional support. The clinical support is provided by cancer nurse specialists. Emotional support takes the form of 'good active listening' and allows people time and space to talk. Financial support includes the facility to provide benefits assessment over the phone and helps people access schemes to help with energy bills. Macmillan work with npower, who fund Energy Advisers, which is particularly important as more than one in three people diagnosed with cancer say they feel the cold more.

Unfortunately Ed Wallace, Information Specialist, was unable to present his talk on knowledge mapping the Macmillan Support Line but did provide us with a copy of his detailed report. If you are interested in the mapping knowledge exercise he carried out, you may like to contact him at Macmillan.

**On a personal note**, having been one of the 4.6 million users of the website earlier in the year, the visit enabled me to see 'behind the scenes' and discover the efforts Macmillan make to ensure that their information is accessible in both format and language.

Many thanks to Selina, Tracy and Chris for an informative presentation, and to Ed for providing a written report.

## **Kerry Seelhoff**

Assistant Librarian, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals