

Terms of Reference

Network Site Specific Groups (NSSGs)

Role and Purpose

The Cancer Alliance in Lancashire & South Cumbria aims to support the transformation of cancer services across the footprint to deliver the recommendations within “Achieving world class cancer outcomes- A strategy for England 2015-20”

The Network Site Specific Groups (NSSGs) are the prime focus of the Cancer Clinical activity and are the source of “expert” clinical opinion from which advice is sought on a wide range of clinical service issues including best practice clinical guidelines, optimum treatment pathways and patient focused care. NSSGs adopt an evidence-based approach and regard the National Institute for Healthcare and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance as their reference for determining common standards and pathways for cancer patients. Across Lancashire & South Cumbria NSSGs are established for the main tumour sites and cross cutting groups

The role of the NSSG is to ensure co-ordination of the cancer pathway, consistency of clinical practice and to achieve the best possible outcomes and experience for patients, irrespective of where their treatment and care is provided. The role of the NSSG includes:

- Identifying and raising awareness of population needs
- Service improvement including implementing best practice clinical pathways and guidelines
- Monitoring performance of clinical outcomes through national and local audits
- Workforce development
- Participating in audit, research and use of clinical trials

These will form the basis of a work programme for the NSSG.

The NSSG should have active engagement of all MDT/nominated service leads from the constituent organisations in the cancer alliance. Cross cutting clinical groups should have nominated representation from all organisations.

The NSSG should include specialist nursing representation and demonstrate active patient engagement either through representation on the group or using the Cancer Alliance resource “The People’s Voice “

Decision making process and frequency

NSSG meetings will be held at intervals agreed by the Medical Director for the Cancer Alliance and the Chair of the NSSG. Additional meetings may be necessary for short term task and finish projects. The meeting will be quorate when 50% of the MDTs or organisations for cross cutting groups are represented at the meeting.

Key Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the NSSG are to:

- Consider how to adopt national guidelines/standards published by NICE, Department of Health, Royal Colleges and other professional bodies/committees setting out best practice.
- Review clinical outcome and performance data identifying and addressing variation using national audits and COSD
- Agree referral and clinical guidelines and review these on a regular basis
- Review approved clinical trials and other research & development initiatives, and encourage patient entry with its constituent MDTs.
- Undertake network wide audit and provide a forum for the wider discussion of local audits as part of its role in education and development.
- Ensure there is a process for obtaining patient and carer advice and involvement in service issues and in the development of plans related to the NSSG

NSSG Chair

- The Chair provides steer and leadership to NSSG members and associated organisations
- The term of the role for NSSG chair is 3 years
- The role of the NSSG chair and the process for appointing is detailed in annex1
- The Chair will have an annual review with the Cancer Alliance Medical Director.
- The Chair will provide feedback to the Lead Clinicians Clinical Forum and present key areas of work as required
- The Chair will represent the Cancer Alliance appropriately, including at a regional and national level.
- The Chair will ensure that an annual summary report from the NSSG is produced providing an over view of work completed and a forward view

Process for appointing NSSG Chair

Call for expressions of interest will be forwarded by the Cancer Alliance to Trust Cancer lead Clinicians with a request to distribute to all relevant staff within the Trust involved in MDTs for that tumour site in their organisation – this should include both medical and non-medical staff. The request from the Cancer Alliance will include a closing date, the mechanism of lodging an expression of interest, the required documents to be supplied, and the recruitment process following this.

Documents typically required for an application should include a written (or e-mail) expression of interest which includes a description of relevant experience and what that individual feels they can contribute to the NSSG and Cancer Alliance along with an up to date CV which includes information relevant to their application.

Colleagues who express an interest will be invited to an interview with the Cancer Alliance Medical Director and other appropriate cancer alliance personnel