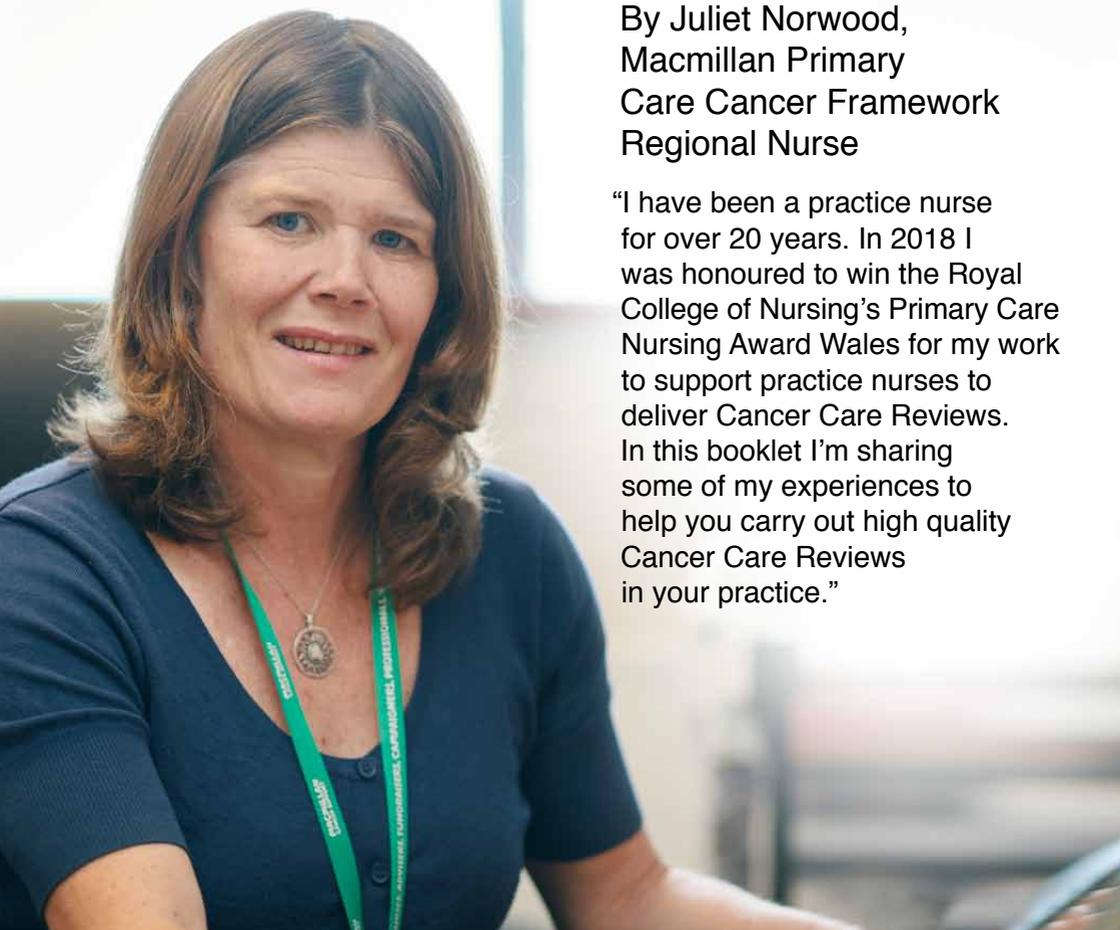


# A Practice Nurse's Guide to **CANCER CARE REVIEWS**



By Juliet Norwood,  
Macmillan Primary  
Care Cancer Framework  
Regional Nurse

“I have been a practice nurse for over 20 years. In 2018 I was honoured to win the Royal College of Nursing’s Primary Care Nursing Award Wales for my work to support practice nurses to deliver Cancer Care Reviews. In this booklet I’m sharing some of my experiences to help you carry out high quality Cancer Care Reviews in your practice.”

## Cancer Care Reviews

One in two people will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, and the rate is increasing. This will have an effect on your role in primary care. Practice nurses can make a big difference to the lives of people living with cancer by carrying out a Cancer Care Review to help them deal with the consequences and side effects of cancer and its treatment.

As practice nurses we are in a great position to carry out Cancer Care Reviews because we are already involved in chronic disease management, and in many ways cancer can now be seen as a chronic disease.

More and more people are surviving and living with cancer as a chronic disease. Seventy per cent of people with cancer also have concurrent co-morbidities, so we probably already know many of the patients. Long term effects of cancer and its treatment include things that we as practice nurses are used to dealing with such as emotional or sexual difficulties.

You don't have to have a great deal of knowledge about cancer to carry out a Cancer Care Review. The important thing is to get the conversation started so that people living with cancer don't suffer in silence, and that you know where to sign post for further support.



*“Carrying out Cancer Care Reviews has opened up a completely new aspect to my work. Compared with the GPs we have more time to spend with the patients and my experience has been that our patients have been 100 per cent appreciative of us contacting them to talk through the care we can offer them.”*

**KIRSTY MILES**

**Practice Nurse, Morlais Medical Centre, Dowlais**

## What does a Cancer Care Review involve?

A Cancer Care Review is a discussion between the person living with cancer and the practice nurse about any concerns they may have during, and after, their cancer treatment. Appointments usually take around 20 minutes and are designed to help people to open up about their cancer experience and understand what information and support is available.

The Review covers a range of holistic topics including the social, psychological and practical aspects of cancer, and not just the medical and physical conditions. As a practice nurse, you'll be used to dealing with a lot of these chronic disease side effects and you'll be able to put the person living with cancer at ease so they feel comfortable enough to share their concerns with you.

Together you can go through any concerns they may have and jointly agree a plan that supports self-management, signposting to other places for any conditions that you're not able to deal with yourself, this might be the GP or to a local or national charity service.



## Securing the support of your GP

In my experience the success of the Cancer Care Review process is down to the enthusiasm of the practice nurses themselves, but it's important for you to secure the support of your GPs too.

I've had a lot of positive feedback from the GPs about how practice nurses are providing a valuable cancer service and helping to free up GP appointment time.

*“Our practice nurses now have the confidence to take on the provision of Cancer Care Reviews, only getting one of the GPs involved when needed. They are a useful contact in the practice for patients at any stage of cancer diagnosis, treatment or survivorship. Previously I tried to fit Cancer Care Reviews into the two days when I am in Practice. Now patients have contact with their GP, and with two full time practice nurses.”*

**DR HANNAH WILLOUGHBY**  
GP, Morlais Medical Centre, Dowlais



# Before inviting people living with cancer for a cancer care review

## Identifying and inviting people living with cancer to a Cancer Care Review

We are not talking large numbers when it comes to Cancer Care Reviews. It's estimated that for every 1,000 patients on a GP list, between four and five will be diagnosed with cancer each year. Ideally, you'll be able to offer a Cancer Care Review within six months of their diagnosis.

You could work with your admin team to identify all the patients diagnosed with cancer within the last six months. If you can, it's a good idea to review each of the patient's notes to check if it would be better to defer the invite to a later date. Remember, the numbers will be small.

Your admin team could be in charge of this list and could send you a regular list of any new cancer diagnoses, and work with you to ensure the reviews are carried out.

I'd suggest allowing appointment slots of 20 minutes for each Cancer Care Review, which could be face to face or over the phone. It's ok to invite by letter, phone call or text.



## Decide which Cancer Care Review template you will use.

There isn't one correct way to carry out a Cancer Care Review and I recommend that you decide on a process that works best for you and your practice. The important thing is to open up the conversation.

The Macmillan Cancer Care Review template has been embedded within both VISION and EMIS systems. Use of this template will ensure that the review is correctly read-coded.

Another way to carry out a Cancer Care Review is to carry out a holistic needs assessment using the National Cancer Survivorship Initiative's 'concerns checklist' and 'care plan'. You would need to ensure that the information recorded on these forms is read-coded on the patient record.

A guide to carrying out a holistic needs assessment can be found at: [www.macmillanhna.co.uk](http://www.macmillanhna.co.uk)

You can find templates for the concerns checklist and care plan at: [www.primarycareone.wales.nhs.uk/nurses](http://www.primarycareone.wales.nhs.uk/nurses)



## Know where to signpost.

Knowing what support services are available locally is an important part of what you can offer. You can find starter Signposting Packs and links to useful leaflets and information from national charities on our webpages: [www.primarycareone.wales.nhs.uk/nurses](http://www.primarycareone.wales.nhs.uk/nurses)

## Brush up on your cancer knowledge.

You don't need a great deal of knowledge to start talking about cancer. The important thing is to get people who are living with cancer to talk about their concerns and to know where to signpost them.

You may wish to attend the free Macmillan Practice Nurse course. This course has several benefits including increased knowledge of cancer and its treatment, awareness of services and support and confidence to manage cancer as a chronic condition.

There are also some excellent and free short courses available online, including:

- Macmillan Cancer Awareness
- Macmillan Cancer in Primary Care
- Macmillan Advanced Care Planning
- Macmillan Introduction to the Recovery Package



You'll find links to all courses at:

[www.primarycareone.wales.nhs.uk/nurses](http://www.primarycareone.wales.nhs.uk/nurses)



## During the cancer care review?

Using whichever Cancer Care Review template you've chosen to give you structure, have a discussion with the person who is living with cancer to find out about their concerns.

These can be physical, psychological, spiritual, practical, social or environmental concerns. In other words, you're looking at how cancer is affecting all aspects of their life so that you can signpost them to support services or arrange care from your practice, from yourself or the GP.

Discuss all the concerns raised and create a Care Plan together to deal with the concerns, referring to your Signposting Pack for information.

### Possible areas of concern could include:

- Physical symptoms such as weight loss, problems with appetite or eating, and fatigue
- Treatment issues such as side effects and the risks and benefits of treatment
- Emotional concerns such as worries about the future, relationships and family matters
- Sexual concerns such as erectile dysfunction or loss of sex drive
- Job, money or housing worries such as balancing work and treatment, and benefits or financial advice
- Practical issues such as sorting out housework, and where to get equipment that can help
- Spirituality such as faith or beliefs, and any impact this may have on treatment

You may wish to make a follow up appointment before they leave the Review.

## And finally...

I hope this booklet has inspired you with the confidence and motivation to start a Cancer Care Review process in your practice.

The benefits are far reaching and often life changing and practice nurses are perfectly placed to offer this care and support.

