

Date: 26 July 2013

Communications Department

Tel: 01225 82 5849/5799/6230

Media Release

RUHcommunications@nhs.net

www.ruh.nhs.uk

Cancer services volunteer at the RUH named as Cancer Champion

David Jacobs, one of our cancer services volunteers, has been named Cancer Champion by Macmillan Cancer Support, in recognition of all his work and commitment to improving the lives of people affected by cancer.

David is a member of Macmillan's Spiritual Support Taskforce, and he has been working with them on a nationwide project to introduce specially trained volunteers into hospitals, to provide ongoing spiritual support to people who have, or had, cancer.

This work dovetails with the National Cancer Survivorship Initiative, a partnership between the Department of Health and Macmillan Cancer Support, which aims to ensure that those living with and beyond cancer get the care and support they need to lead as healthy and active a life as possible, for as long as possible.

David was working as a solicitor in London, when he was diagnosed with throat cancer four years ago. Thankfully he is currently in remission, but he says he would have greatly valued someone independent to turn to for emotional and spiritual support during that time:

"It is a shocking and life-changing event, being told that you have cancer. In my experience, although I received first class, timely and thorough medical treatment, I felt very alone and as if there was something missing. I really would have benefited from having a person who could help by simply being there for me, and providing one-to-one support when I needed it.

"That's why I am so enthusiastic about working with Macmillan to see what we can do for patients in Bath. It is not about seeing a psychiatrist or a chaplain, its lower key than that; a bit like a buddying system with individuals who have gone through the mill themselves and who can help people through. Everyone is different, and an individual's support needs change as they go through their cancer journey, but it would be great to be able to offer them emotional and spiritual support if they need it."

Vibha Sharma, Patient Experience Coordinator at Macmillan, nominated David for the Cancer Champion award, in recognition of his passion to support people affected by cancer. She said: "David is actively involved in every aspect of the work of our Spiritual Support Taskforce. He has spoken about the work of the taskforce at various events; including Samantha Cameron's Parliamentary Reception at Number 10 Downing Street and the Macmillan Cancer Services Innovation Away Day for staff. He has also written a number of documents on the work of the taskforce and his cancer experience.

"Thank you, David, for all of your hard work and commitment to improving the lives of people affected by cancer."

Ends

