

Cancer & LGBTQ+

In Cornwall

Age UK Cornwall | Macmillan



Anyone can be affected by cancer.

Cancer Research UK says that 1 in 2 UK people will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. The other 50% may be family, friends, neighbours, colleagues or helpers (professionals or voluntary): so, it is probable that we will all be affected by cancer at some time in our lives.



Age UK Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly have put together a list of websites and contacts that you may find helpful if you are affected by cancer. The information may be helpful to you, or to someone you know, so please pass it on.

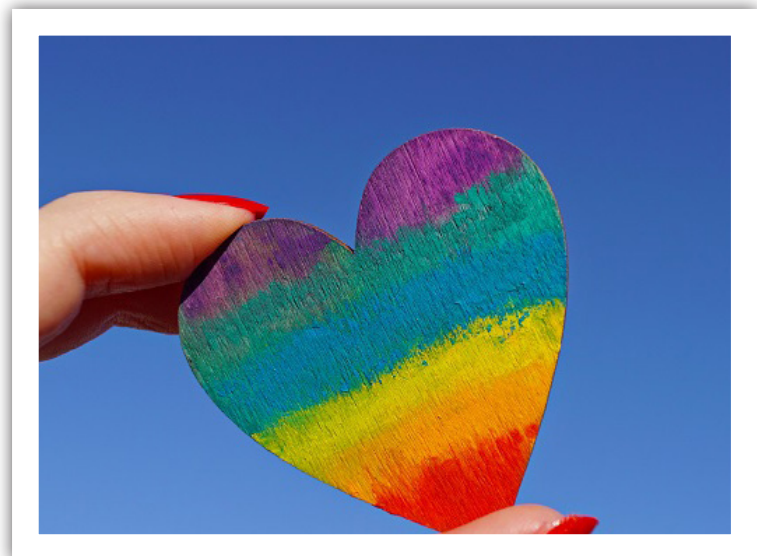
All-round support for LGBTQ+ people affected by cancer and their family and friends

Live Through This recognises that being an LGBTQ+ person with cancer can feel isolating so are here with you along the way.

Your FAQ's answered: Does my healthcare team need to know that I'm LGBTQ+? Will I be treated differently because I'm LGBTQ+? Cancer, sex and fertility; LGBTQ+ cancer support groups; information for trans and non-binary people; tips for a positive cervical screening experience; chest changes during transition.

There are links to a range of cancer organisation pages specific for LGBTQ+ people with cancer including **Ovacome**; **Prostate Cancer UK**; **Eve Appeal**; **Jo's Cervical Cancer**. There are links to videos on cervical screening and patients talking about their cancer treatment experiences and online communities.

Live Through This work with cancer specialists such as **Macmillan Cancer Support** and **CoppaFeel** to ensure you have the most up to date information in a way that relates to you.



'There can be complex barriers to cancer screening for individuals from LGBTQ+ communities, including lack of information around who is eligible, and gender dysphoria. There are also some common misconceptions out there, for example you do not need to go for cervical screening if you are a lesbian. It is important to know that all individuals with a cervix should go for regular cervical screening - so, if you are a trans man or non-binary person and have a cervix, you should attend. Talk to your GP, practice nurse or local sexual health service if you have any questions; they can help arrange screening for you. It is also very important to go for breast checks; according to research, certain aspects of gender-affirming care, such as hormone therapy or surgery, can actually increase a person's breast cancer risk.'

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Lowering your cancer risks

Not all cancers can be prevented: age is a big risk factor and you may have a family history of cancer. [Cancer Research UK](#) says: 38% of cancer cases are preventable, through lifestyle changes.

In a nutshell:

- Don't smoke
- Keeping a healthy weight
- Eat a balanced diet
- Enjoy the sun safely
- Cut back on alcohol
- Get moving

We are probably all familiar with this advice as it is recommended to lower the risks of many long-term conditions (such as diabetes, heart disease; obesity). We may have at one time or another tried to follow it.

What Stops us?

Barriers are individual – but typically include:

- Knowing the risks, but feeling they are far enough in the future to not worry about now.
- Having other priorities and concerns: finding it hard to make the time to change or feel that the habit, no matter how unhealthy, is necessary for managing stress.
- Not having support from family and friends. Having social pressures not to change.
- Concerns over the financial cost of a change.
- Not sure how to get started.

What Might Help?

Being with like-minded people: Being a runner, dancer, volunteer, musician may be inclusive pursuits and a way to connect irrespective of gender and sexual orientation. There are LGBTQ+ groups across Cornwall such as, the Gay Outdoors Club and Lesbians' Ambling.

Why not take a look on [Cornwall Link](#) or [Pride Sports](#). [The Intercom Trust](#) also has a list of LGBTQ+ social clubs in Cornwall. Use Facebook pages to link up, such as [Cornwall Pride](#). [Healthy Cornwall](#) has support programmes that help with smoking, alcohol and healthy weight.

Macmillan's LGBTQ+ cancer forum is a welcoming and supportive space for sharing your cancer experiences and chatting anonymously to others affected by cancer. This community is available 24/7 and is a safe space to ask anything you might be thinking or worrying about related to cancer. Talk to people who understand at [LGBTQIA+ cancer forum - Macmillan Online Community](#). Macmillan also have lots more information for trans and non-binary people for you to check out, including information about having tests, treatment and receiving support - [find out more here](#).

Contact your GP surgery to speak to a Social Prescriber: Social Prescribing is a service that links people with non-clinical sources of support within the community. It's available at most GP surgeries across Cornwall. Some Social Prescribers hold their appointments in community settings.

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Self-Checking

You know your body, so you are the best person to check for changes. Get the checks for the bits you have. If you have concerns, talk to your GP.



Macmillan say: There may be parts of your body that you are less comfortable with or feel upset about. Thinking about any symptoms in these areas may be very difficult. Try not to let this stop you from getting checked if you have any changes or symptoms.

Symptoms may be:

- ongoing (more than 3 weeks)
- unexplained
- unusual – not normal for you

CoppaFeel have produced information on chest checking for trans and non-binary people. You can sign up for their [monthly text reminders](#)

Movember: You don't have to have a moustache to use their info... have a look at their 'Know thy Nuts' section.

Cancer Screening

Cervical Screening: In England, cervical screening currently prevents 70% of cervical cancer deaths. If everyone attended screening regularly, 83% could be prevented.

*As long as you are aged 25 to 64 and you have a cervix, then you are eligible for screening
Worried about the screening test?*

Jo's Cervical Trust offers advice to lessen the challenges for trans men and/or non-binary people.

Breast/Chest Screening: All individuals from 50 up to their 71st birthday who are registered as female with their GP are automatically invited to breast screening. If you are registered with your GP as male, you will not be invited.

Speak to your GP to ensure you get an invite. Appointments can be made at the beginning or end of a screening session if this is more convenient for you.

Prostate cancer isn't more common in gay or bisexual men, or in men who have anal sex, and it's treated in the same way. But if you're gay, bisexual or a man who has sex with men, you might have some specific questions or concerns.



Prostate Cancer UK

Did you know?

That you can join us in Creating Cancer Caring Communities across Cornwall. Visit our campaign pages to get involved, share information and learn more about cancer
www.ageuk.org.uk/cornwall/get-involved/creating-cancer-caring-communities/