PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
11th November, 2026

Age UK Sutton awarded £142,000 by Macmillan Cancer Support to help improve care for people living with both dementia and cancer.

- Age UK Sutton has received a vital £142,000 grant from Macmillan Cancer Support to help improve local cancer care and support services.
- The grant is part of a £7.4 million investment from Macmillan into community organisations across the UK who want to have a lasting impact on UK cancer care.
- Macmillan Cancer Support is warning of a 'hidden' cancer crisis, with almost 2 million people struggling with the impact cancer is having on their day-to-day lives, and two in three of those affected desperately needing more support.
- Age UK Sutton's two-year pilot aims to help tackle this crisis by providing a specialist service in Sutton to help people manage the challenges that living with both cancer and dementia can bring.

Age UK Sutton has been awarded a £142,000 CARE grant from Macmillan Cancer Support to help deliver lasting improvements to local cancer care and support services.

Macmillan CARE grants are a new initiative by the national cancer charity, as they work to make cancer care better and fairer for everyone, no matter who they are or where they live.

The charity warns that the number of people living with cancer is on the rise, with as many as 5.4 million people expected to be living with cancer in the UK by 2045 - a 58 per cent rise on where we are today[1].

At the same time there is growing concern over how the UK cancer care system is not just struggling to cope, but also leaving people behind because of who they are, where they live, what they earn or how they communicate.

Age UK Sutton is one of 65 community organisations chosen from across the UK to help improve care and support for people living with cancer today, while also contributing to wider and long-lasting improvements in UK cancer care for the future.

The Dementia and Cancer Connect project will be funded for two years to provide specialist support for local people living with both cancer and dementia and their carers.

Macmillan says the need for such community-led action is clear, with more than 1.7 million people across the UK - at least half of all people currently living with cancer - struggling with the impact of their cancer diagnosis on their day-to-day lives[2], with support often being hard to find or too far away.

Previous research by the charity has also shown that two in three people with cancer who are struggling with 'everyday' needs (66%) urgently need more support to help them cope[3].

Macmillan CARE grants are being awarded to projects that can offer support and care where it is needed the most, and which are targeted at three main areas. This includes improving services for people with cancer and dementia, making sure people are offered a fuller say in decisions about their care, and improving support for those who all too often have poorer outcomes, such as people from ethnically diverse communities, people who are LGBTQ+, those with a disability or those living in the UK's most economically vulnerable areas.

Age UK Sutton's Dementia and Cancer Connect Project.

People living with both dementia and cancer can face additional challenges navigating cancer care. Dementia can make it harder to understand complex information, attend appointments and participate in treatment decisions, while family members and carers can find themselves taking on much of the responsibility for navigating care and services.

Dementia and Cancer Connect will provide personalised, one-to-one support from a dedicated Dementia and Cancer Specialist Adviser, helping people understand information, prepare for appointments, access practical and financial support and remain involved in decisions about their care. Support will be available in people's homes and familiar community settings.

Alongside this, a Participatory Learning Group will bring together people with lived experience, carers and professionals to identify barriers and help make cancer services more dementia inclusive. With The Royal Marsden and the London Cancer Hub based in Sutton, the borough provides a strong setting for the pilot.

Michelle Blagrove, Director of Community Services at Age UK Sutton, said:
"A cancer diagnosis can be difficult enough to navigate. For someone also living with dementia, appointments, information and treatment decisions can become even more overwhelming, both for them and for the people supporting them. Dementia and Cancer Connect is about making sure people don't have to navigate that journey alone. Having a dedicated Adviser alongside them throughout their cancer journey will provide continuity and practical support, while the Participatory Learning Group will make sure we learn directly from people's experiences about where barriers exist and what could work better. We're incredibly grateful for Macmillan Cancer Support's investment in this work and excited about what we can achieve here in Sutton."

Heather McLean, Director of Communities & System Partnerships for Macmillan Cancer Support said:
"Cancer isn't fair, but at Macmillan, we believe cancer care and support should be. Real change in cancer care starts with those who know the challenges they face the best, and that is communities themselves. That is why every local project we are supporting has been shaped by the views of people living with cancer and their loved ones.
We are so excited to be working with Age UK Sutton, and community organisations right across the UK, to address some of the gaps we know exist, to deliver lasting change in local cancer care and to help make things just that little bit better for everyone affected by cancer. Together, we want to help make sure that people with cancer can get the personalised support they need, whoever and wherever they are."

If you or someone you care for is living with both cancer and dementia in Sutton, Dementia and Cancer Connect is here to help. To find out more about the support available, visit Age UK Sutton | Dementia Cancer Connect or contact Age UK Sutton on 020 8078 0002.

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[1] Macmillan Cancer Support. Cancer prevalence. Estimates produced in partnership with Scottish Widows
[2] Macmillan Cancer Support/YouGov survey of 2,107 adults in the UK who have had a cancer diagnosis. Fieldwork was undertaken between 2nd Jan to 27th Jan 2026. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of people living with cancer in the UK (aged 18+). Survey questions were as follows: Have you had any concerns about any of the following issues in the last few weeks, which were caused or have been made worse by your experience of cancer? 51% of respondents selected 4-5 on a 5-point scale for one or more issues from a specified list representing day-to-day or 'everyday' needs and concerns. 'More than 1.7 million' estimated by applying the 51% to the 3.4 million

people living with cancer in the UK, sourced from: Macmillan Cancer Support. Cancer prevalence. Accessed April 2026.

[3] Macmillan Cancer Support/YouGov survey of 2,059 adults in the UK who have had a cancer diagnosis. Fieldwork was undertaken between 3rd - 27th January 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of people living with cancer in the UK (aged 18+). Survey questions were as follows: Thinking about the issues that have caused you concern recently, to what extent would you like more support with each of these? Among those who had selected 4-5 on a 5-point scale for the same list of 'everyday' needs and concerns as per ref 2, 66% had then also selected 4-5 on a 5-point scale for how much more support they needed with these needs and concerns.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Contact

For more information contact Michelle Blagrove, Director of Community Services - michelle.blagrove@ageuksutton.org.uk

Age UK Sutton | Dementia Cancer Connect

About Age UK Sutton

Age UK Sutton is an independent local charity dedicated to supporting older people across the London Borough of Sutton. The organisation provides information, advice, wellbeing services, community support and specialist programmes that help older people remain informed, connected and independent.

About Dementia and Cancer Connect

- A two-year pilot led by Age UK Sutton, funded by a Macmillan Cancer Support CARE grant.
- Supports people living with both dementia and cancer, as well as their carers and families.
- Provides personalised support from a dedicated Dementia and Cancer Specialist Adviser.
- Includes a Participatory Learning Group bringing together people with lived experience, carers, healthcare professionals and voluntary sector partners.
- Expected to support 70 - 80 individuals and carers per year.
- Includes independent evaluation to inform future service development.

Attachments:

Dementia and Cancer Connect Logo