

Macmillan Professional awards winners 2019 – Integration Category Award

Acute oncology services (AOS) are vital in providing rapid assessment and triage for people with cancer attending hospitals in emergencies. In Northern Ireland only one out of five Health and Social Care Trusts provided such a service, meaning many patients weren't receiving the specialist and timely management they needed. To address this inequity of care, Macmillan funded 1.5 WTE Acute Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) in each Trust. As a result, AOS became fully operational across Northern Ireland by March 2016.

Since its inception, the Macmillan Acute Oncology nursing team has enhanced the patient experience in numerous ways, including reducing the length of hospital stays and avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions. The team share their knowledge, practice and passion through a regional Community of Practice. This has fostered a common team spirit across all of the different Trusts and strengthened collaborative working and sustainability.

'One of our great strengths is that we work regionally with common aims, objectives and regular communication,' says Macmillan Acute Oncology CNS Kerrie Sweeney. 'If one of my patients needs to go to another Trust, I know that they are going to be taken in and given the same level of service as I would give.'

'It's all about ensuring patients get the expertise in the right place, at the right time,' adds Macmillan Acute Oncology CNS Celia Diver-Hall. 'We're bringing oncology to the bedside.'

