

# INVITATION TO A HOLISTIC CANCER NEEDS ASSESSMENT APPOINTMENT

## **Living with cancer**

Research shows that most people living with cancer have various concerns, e.g., needing information about their disease or treatment, having uncontrolled symptoms including anxiety or depression, experiencing difficulties in managing everyday activities or work, money worries, family worries, and concerns for the future.

We know it is hard for people living with cancer, and those family or friends who help support them, to know what concerns they should tell their GP surgery practitioner about. People know how busy their GP surgery is and tend not to volunteer all the things they need help with, focussing only on the most pressing problem. It is also hard for people to know what help might be available and may be reluctant to ask.

## **Invitation to attend a cancer needs assessment appointment**

A recent large trial in GP practices (the CANAssess trial)<sup>1</sup> showed that attending an appointment where the practitioner uses a consultation guide (the Needs Assessment Tool-Cancer [NAT-C]) helped to identify all the patient's concerns. It also helped to work out the best plan of care, whether by arranging treatment in the GP practice, or referring to other services such as the cancer services, psychology services, citizen's advice or palliative care services. By 3 months, study participants attending a NAT-C appointment at their GP surgery (or home visit) had fewer unaddressed problems than those receiving usual care only – although this was only a small difference. However, by 6 months, this difference was larger, with improvements in the severity of unaddressed problems, better symptom control and quality of life, and less time as a hospital in-patient.

## **You are therefore invited to attend an appointment:**

Please allow up to 30 minutes of your time. You will be asked about the impact of living with cancer including uncontrolled symptoms, impact on your mental health, daily living activities, money worries, family worries etc. We know that some areas of inquiry may seem personal and not relevant to you, however it is important that we check the same areas for everybody. Please bear with us if some issues are not pertinent to your situation.

### **What happens after the appointment?**

If any issues found need action, the practitioner will explain what they will do help. This may involve managing the situation within the GP practice or referring you to another source of expertise. This will be agreed with you.

**Please contact us on  
to confirm attendance or ask for more information**

*The CANAssess trial was supported  
by Yorkshire Cancer Research, grant  
number: H423, and conducted by a team  
led by the University of Hull.*



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