



Helping people have  
life-saving conversations

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Talk Cancer:  
Cancer Awareness  
Training Programme



CANCER  
RESEARCH UK  
TALK CANCER

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# Why is talking about cancer important?

1 in 2 people will get cancer in their lifetime<sup>1</sup>, but around 4 in 10 cases of cancer in the UK could be prevented<sup>2</sup>.

Increasing cancer awareness, improving the early diagnosis of cancer, and addressing health inequalities all play a critical role in helping to beat cancer.



## Improving understanding and awareness

Cancer Research UK has been delivering public cancer awareness activity for decades, and one thing we've learnt in that time, is how prevalent fear and fatalistic beliefs are when it comes to cancer. This can be a major barrier to improving cancer outcomes. Some things heard are: "there's nothing I can do about getting cancer - it's completely out of my control" or "I'm too scared to go to the doctors about this problem in case it's cancer".

Talk Cancer is Cancer Research UK's answer to this problem with over 10 years' experience in steering these conversations to positive messaging. Our experienced health professionals train participants to talk about cancer with others in their community in a conversational and encouraging way. Trainees are equipped to help shift attitudes around cancer and provide information on how people can reduce cancer risk, helping to encourage more people to take positive action for their health.



I was able to take a very difficult subject and really help others to understand it, explaining what cancer is and how to talk about it.



**Josh**

Talk Cancer workshop trainee

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad AS et al. British Journal of Cancer, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Cancer Research UK, [www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics-for-the-uk](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics-for-the-uk) [accessed September 2022]

# Reducing cancer deaths

Diagnosing cancer earlier is one of the most powerful ways to improve cancer survival. The chances of successful treatment are much higher for almost all types of cancer if found early. For example, more than 9 in 10 people diagnosed with the earliest stage of bowel cancer will survive their disease for at least five years, compared with 1 in 10 patients when diagnosed at the latest stage<sup>3</sup>.

Through Talk Cancer, trainees are provided with the skills to share key messages about signs and symptoms, cancer screening, and how to break down barriers to seeking help. It can be as simple as asking someone 'what does your doctor say about that?'



The training sticks in your head and raises alarms. For example, just the other week I had a conversation with a lady who was complaining of arm pain. I asked her if it was normal for her to have this pain and she said it wasn't, so I encouraged her to go see her doctor. I know she has since been diagnosed with breast cancer, so hopefully this was caught early.



**Christina**

Pharmacist and Talk Cancer workshop trainee



<sup>3</sup> Public Health England, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cancer-survival-in-england-for-patients-diagnosed-between-2014-and-2018-and-followed-up-until-2019> [accessed September 2022]





## Addressing health inequalities

Some people are more likely to get and die from cancer due to factors outside of their control, in a way that is profoundly unfair. Health, access to care, and healthcare quality all vary between groups of people (such as people of different ethnicity, sexual orientation, or occupational group).

For example, it's estimated that across the UK there are more than 30,000 extra cases of cancer linked to socio-economic deprivation each year. Generally, people living in more deprived areas have higher prevalence of cancer risk factors, are less aware of cancer symptoms, report more barriers to seeking help and participation in screening programmes is lower<sup>4</sup>. But it doesn't have to be this way.

The Talk Cancer programme aims to help address health inequalities by prioritising training in locations where people are most affected by cancer. To improve cancer outcomes, we work with a variety of organisations who, through the training, build the knowledge and confidence to have life-saving conversations about cancer in their local community. Helping us reach those who need it the most.



Thank you for a great workshop. Great presentation style with lots of opportunities to take part and learn. It was not only interactive but also thought provoking. I took away lots of things that I can quickly and easily apply within the community groups that we plan to reach.



**Supriya**  
CEO at More Horizons  
Talk Cancer workshop trainee

<sup>4</sup> Cancer Research UK (2020), Cancer in the UK 2020: Socio-economic deprivation, Cancer Research UK

# Talk Cancer training programme

Talking can help breakdown the fear and barriers to seeking help, but we know that talking about cancer isn't easy.

Talk Cancer is a cancer awareness training programme from Cancer Research UK. It gives participants the knowledge and confidence to have conversations in their community about cancer prevention and early diagnosis. By equipping them with the skills to have conversations and share simple messages, Talk Cancer can enable positive changes that can save lives.

Developed and delivered by experienced health professionals, with content grounded in the latest evidence, the Talk Cancer training programme includes:



Face-to-face workshops



Live online workshops



Interpreted workshops



Health communications



It was really worth going to find out real facts and it gave me loads of confidence to speak to people much more openly about cancer and cancer screening. It really changed my view about cancer and how much difference it can make if you find it early.



**Ingrid**

Bradford Women's Forum  
Talk Cancer workshop trainee

Participants are provided with resources and ongoing support to help them have effective conversations on reducing cancer risk and the importance of spotting cancer early.

On completion of a workshop, all trainees are provided with:

- A certificate of attendance
- A Talk Cancer trainee booklet which summarises information from the workshop and signposts to useful services and resources
- An invitation to sign up to Talk Cancer's quarterly newsletter
- An invitation to join Talk Cancer's **Facebook Community Group** and connect on **Twitter**

# Workshop options

Talk Cancer is positive, practical, and interactive, with workshop options to suit various audiences, needs and accessibility.

The training programme features four workshop options available for groups (people within the same organisation or community) and an option for individuals.

The workshop options are:

- **Talk Cancer**

This is our standard cancer awareness training, available as an online or face-to-face workshop. Content covers how to reduce the risk of cancer, the importance of early diagnosis and the national screening programmes.

- **Talk Cancer for Pharmacy**

This is our Talk Cancer workshop, but with added content that is tailored for pharmacists and their teams. This workshop is available online or face-to-face.

- **Talk Cancer: Train the Presenter**

This is an extension of our Talk Cancer workshop where we train participants face-to-face in how to deliver a scripted presentation focussing on cancer awareness and how to manage audience questions and discussion. This workshop enables participants to present this information to local groups within their area.

- **Talk Cancer in Any Language**

This is our Talk Cancer workshop interpreted into any language, including British Sign Language. We can work with you to tailor the workshop content to be relevant and culturally sensitive to your community. This workshop aims to reduce health inequalities by reaching groups who face extra barriers in accessing accurate health information.

We'll provide the cancer awareness training in a face-to-face setting; you'll provide the interpreters; and together we'll make information about cancer and health more accessible and inclusive.

- **Talk Cancer for individuals**

If people don't have a group to book a workshop with, we also offer our Talk Cancer workshop, online, to individuals. Dates for this are featured on our website.

For more information on the training options and how to book, visit the Talk Cancer website: [cruk.org/talkcancer](https://cruk.org/talkcancer)



## Check your eligibility for a free workshop!

To help make the training accessible, there is a bursary scheme to offer free workshops to eligible groups, such as voluntary groups and the NHS.

To check your eligibility visit our website: [cruk.org/talkcancer](https://cruk.org/talkcancer)



# Programme benefits

When booking a Talk Cancer workshop, you get a dedicated team who will take the time to understand your needs and those of your audience to ensure that your team can get the most from the training.

Trainees will benefit from learning how to:

- Discuss general cancer awareness information and separate cancer myths from facts
- Guide people on how they can reduce their risk of developing cancer
- Help people understand the importance of spotting cancer early and the national cancer screening programmes available
- Encourage people to be aware of what's normal for their body, and to take action if they notice anything unusual
- Address the fears and barriers faced by people when talking about cancer
- Understand the impact health inequalities can have on cancer outcomes
- Have effective, supportive conversations about health in general

Over 6,000 people have been trained through the Talk Cancer programme since it began in 2012. Before and after workshop surveys show the positive impact the training has. Previous two-month follow-up research also demonstrates that these positive impacts are sustained for months after the training has ended.<sup>5</sup>

**98%** of trainees are satisfied with the Talk Cancer workshop overall\*

\*394 out of 405 trainees in 2021-2022 selected satisfied/very satisfied



Really interesting workshop, amazing how perceptions of cancer changed from negative to positive through the workshop – cancer is a challenge but there are ways we can reduce our risk but even if we have cancer, the hope is there when before there was none.



Jim

Talk Cancer workshop trainee

<sup>5</sup> Europe PMC, Two-month follow up evaluation of a cancer awareness training workshop, <https://europepmc.org/article/med/30568867> [accessed September 2022]





## Trainees are more confident to talk about cancer

Over the course of a Talk Cancer workshop, we see trainees' confidence increase and their beliefs about cancer become more positive. These shifts in knowledge and attitude allow trainees to make every conversation count. Helping others in their community to reduce their risk of cancer and take positive action for their health.

**99%**  
of trainees felt  
confident\* to talk  
about cancer  
in general\*\*

**97%**  
of trainees felt  
confident\* discussing  
the national NHS  
cancer screening  
programmes\*\*\*

**95%**  
of trainees felt  
confident\* discussing  
the fears people  
may have towards  
cancer\*\*\*\*

\*trainees selecting fairly/very confident

\*\*402 out of 405 trainees selected this answer to this question in the after workshop survey in 2021-2022

\*\*\*393 out of 406 trainees selected this answer to this question in the after workshop survey in 2021-2022

\*\*\*\*384 out of 406 trainees selected this answer to this question in the after workshop survey in 2021-2022

# Trainees can identify cancer risk factors and myths

Access to information has become easier, but when talking about cancer, it's important to be communicating the right information. Stories about potential causes of cancer are reported widely in the media and it isn't always clear what's supported by good evidence. Trainees are equipped with evidence-based information about cancer myths and risk factors, so that they can sort fact from fiction. This helps trainees inform others in their community on how they can make impactful changes to their behaviour and reduce worry.

After the workshop

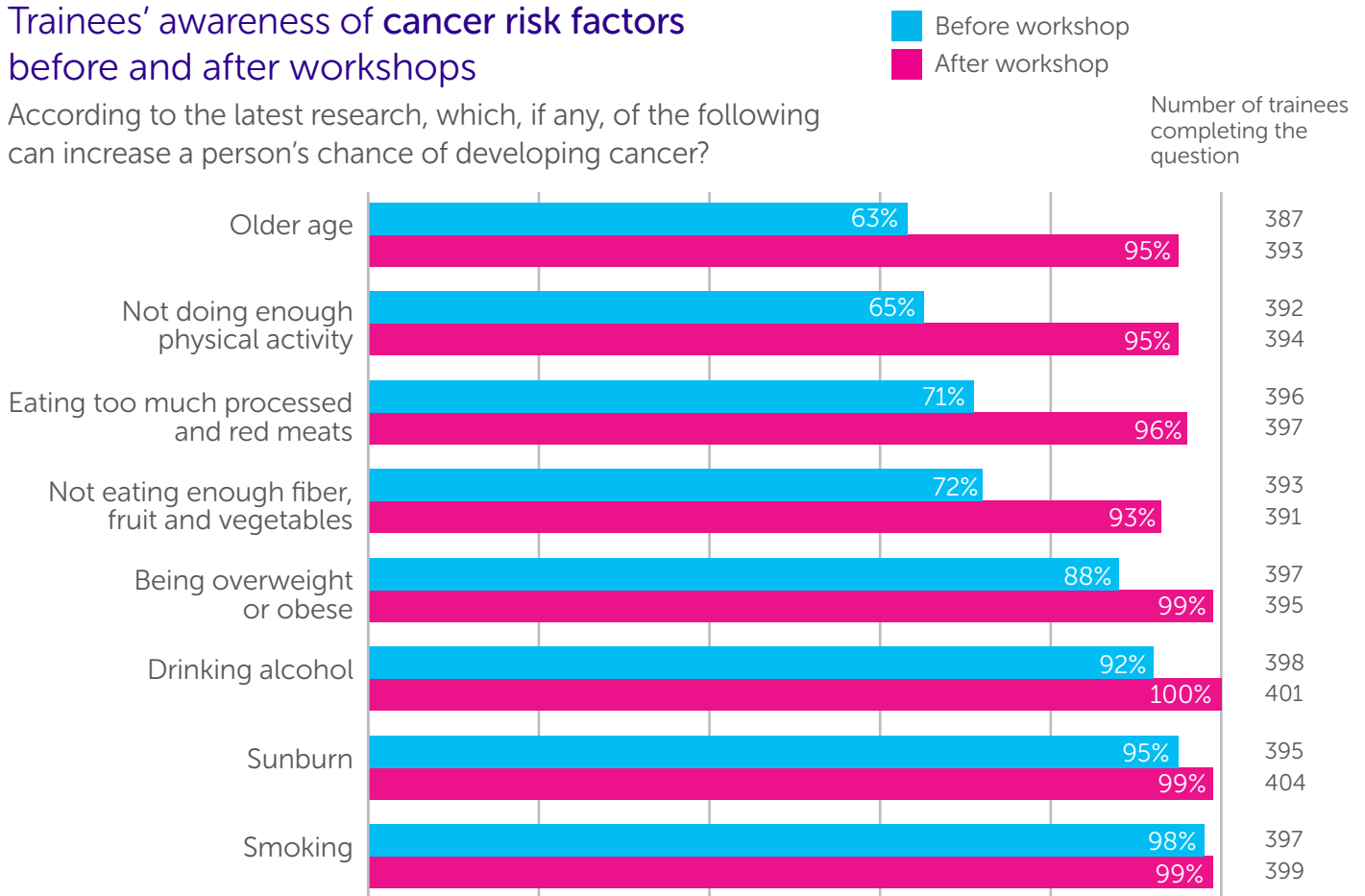
# 99%

of trainees felt confident discussing things that can reduce the risk of cancer\*

\*400 out of 404 trainees in 2021-2022 selected fairly/very confident

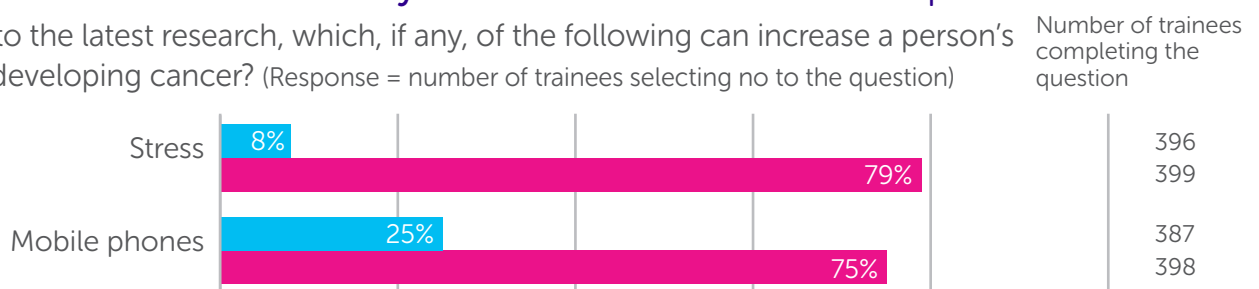
## Trainees' awareness of cancer risk factors before and after workshops

According to the latest research, which, if any, of the following can increase a person's chance of developing cancer?



## Trainees' awareness of cancer myths before and after workshops

According to the latest research, which, if any, of the following can increase a person's chance of developing cancer? (Response = number of trainees selecting no to the question)



Source: evaluation is from the Talk Cancer 2021-2022 before and after workshop surveys. 699 trainees completed the before workshop survey and 753 trainees completed the after workshop survey.



# Is Talk Cancer training for you?

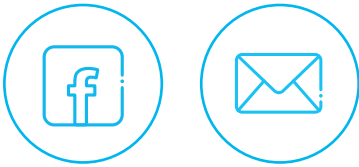
Talk Cancer is for anyone who can play a role in improving the health or wellbeing of others in their community.

Participants come from a broad range of roles, so they can make every contact count and raise awareness of cancer in communities across the UK.



- Health improvement
- Community health
- Pharmacy
- Community volunteering
- Social prescribing
- Faith leaders
- Nursing
- Mental health
- Occupational therapy
- Sexual health
- GP practice staff
- Social care
- Health professionals
- Allied health professionals
- Care home workers
- Community leaders

# Talk Cancer communications



Helping to create positive, sustainable change in how people talk and think about cancer and health, the cancer awareness journey doesn't stop after the training. As well as the workshops, there is a newsletter and access to a Facebook Community Group.

Both provide regular information from the Talk Cancer team on how to talk about cancer prevention and early diagnosis. This helps participants keep their knowledge up-to-date and informs their conversations about cancer now and in the future.

The group and newsletter are great resources which provide people with bitesize content that they can share with the public. The Facebook Community Group also gives people a platform to interact with fellow cancer awareness champions.

The newsletter and Facebook Community Group are also ideal for people with an interest in being able to talk about how to reduce cancer risk and the importance of early diagnosis, such as teachers, research students, volunteers, people affected by cancer, or anyone who wants to learn how to make a difference.

You can see the group and request access here: [facebook.com/groups/cruktalkcancer](https://facebook.com/groups/cruktalkcancer)

You can sign up to the newsletter here: [forms.office.com/r/ktKXYRTeAj](https://forms.office.com/r/ktKXYRTeAj)



Being able to scroll through the Facebook feed and see cancer information and conversation tips is great as it reminds me to spot opportunities to talk about cancer, as well as encourages me to take positive action for my health and how to inform others.



Sophie

Facebook Community Group member





# Hear from organisations Talk Cancer have partnered with

## Bradford City Clinical Commissioning Group

In 2018, Bradford City Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commissioned 21 Talk Cancer workshops to help improve their comparatively low cancer screening uptake and late cancer presentations.

The workshops were delivered to frontline health staff and community engagement workers/volunteers.

An evaluation conducted by Bradford City CCG with Health Focus explored the longer-term outcomes and impact of the workshops two to 12 months after delivery, to inform future activity for Bradford City CCG\*. It was found that:

# 97%

of Bradford trainees reported that they are talking to others about cancer more as a result of attending the training

# 70%

of Bradford trainees had undertaken cancer awareness initiatives within their community or workplace since the training



Commissioner Victoria Simmons, Senior Head of Communications and Engagement for NHS Bradford District and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group said:



Talk Cancer was one tool that we could use in our approach to improve cancer outcomes. This helped us to sort of unlock the power of conversations and get people in the community feeling engaged and talking about cancer in a different way in order to promote positive actions.



\*Evaluation was organised by Bradford City CCG with 56 (100%) trainees answering questions

# Suffolk Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC)

Suffolk LPC commissioned a series of Talk Cancer pharmacy workshops to help achieve their Healthy Living Pharmacy 2 accreditation. This accreditation shows that pharmacies proactively engage with patients and the public to offer them advice and support and to signpost them to other providers of services in the community. This helps to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population and reduce health inequalities.

We've currently delivered five Talk Cancer for Pharmacy face-to-face workshops, reaching 147 people across 43 pharmacies, with another three workshops planned in the future.

After the Talk Cancer workshops, the Suffolk LPC team's cancer related knowledge, ability to identify cancer myths and confidence to discuss cancer related topics increased. Trainees' beliefs and attitudes around cancer also became more positive after the training. For example:

# 100%

of trainees felt confident\*  
talking about the national  
cancer screening programmes  
(an increase of 70% from 30%) \*\*

# 100%

of trainees felt confident\* in  
their ability to talk about the fear  
people may have towards cancer  
(an increase of 41% from 59%) \*\*

Myra Battle, Service Support Office  
at Suffolk LPC said:



The Talk Cancer training is a great way for people to understand more about identifying cancer, how it presents and importantly, how many cancers can now be cured with the right interventions early on.

The Talk Cancer workshops support our pharmacy teams to connect with their communities to enable them to self-care. Following conversations about changes to what is normal for individuals, our teams can now be comfortable with addressing the concerns of customers and are confident in signposting individuals to the right places.

Having had such great feedback from staff who have attended the training about the growth in their understanding following the training, we feel the workshops are valuable both to staff members and to their communities.



\*fairly/very confident

\*\* 114 (100%) trainees answered this question



## The Clare Foundation

To help people within Buckinghamshire who work directly with the community to raise cancer awareness as part of their role, Talk Cancer hosted an online workshop in partnership with The Clare Foundation in June 2021. This was timed to coincide with Men's Health Awareness Month as men's health was identified as a key priority for the local authority as well as engagement with primary care and healthy living, including physical activity.

The Clare Foundation is a charity that brings key stakeholders, partners, businesses and charitable organisations together to facilitate and create positive change across society in Buckinghamshire. Growing people's cancer awareness knowledge and helping people feel confident to talk about cancer and health with others in the community is a way to help create positive change. 14 charity employees and volunteers attended the Talk Cancer online workshop, from a variety of organisations that work with diverse communities, homeless people and vulnerable adults.

Before and after workshop surveys showed an increase in participant's awareness of cancer risk factors as well as an increase in confidence to talk about cancer with others.

After the workshop:

# 100%

of trainees felt confident\* discussing with others what to do if someone notices any unusual or persistent changes to their body (a percentage point increase of 22% from 78%)\*\*

# 100%

of trainees felt confident\* signposting people to information and services to help make healthy changes (a percentage point increase of 33% from 67%)\*\*



Helen Mee, Head of Charity Operations at The Clare Foundation said:



The Talk Cancer training gave attendees the opportunity to talk openly about how people can reduce their risk of cancer, dispel common cancer myths and the key take-away was that spotting cancer early could help save thousands of lives.



\*fairly/very confident

\*\* 11 (100%) trainees answered this question

## NUR Fitness and the Northern Cancer Alliance

The Northern Cancer Alliance (NCA) identified a fitness centre called NUR Fitness (NUR) in Middlesbrough, run by Shazia. NUR is an award-winning community initiative that is dedicated to helping women and children become healthier, both physically and mentally, improving self-esteem and confidence. This is achieved through educational courses, fitness classes, practical classes and building a safe environment where all cultural and religious needs can be catered for. NUR specialise in working with women from an ethnic minority background. A lot of the women they work with do not speak English as their first language.

The women had identified gaps in their community around cancer awareness. It wasn't something that was discussed in their culture, and they wanted to change this narrative. NUR wanted to teach and empower the women they work with so they could pass on information to family and eventually become cancer champions for the wider community.

Working with the Alliance and NUR to plan how best to deliver and support this, we delivered a variety of engagement activities. Our Cancer Awareness Roadshow nurses delivered bespoke health stands initially to build confidence and a relationship with the women. This was then followed by a Talk Cancer workshop delivered to 14 women who were starting their roles as cancer champions in the community as well as other community public-facing roles.

To be more inclusive, we also delivered two Talk Cancer interpreted workshops to the other 32 women who were interested in raising cancer awareness within their community. The workshops were interpreted in Arabic and Urdu.

This project has been successful in increasing cancer awareness in a community where English isn't some people's first language and access to health information can be difficult.

Shazia, Community Centre Manager at NUR Fitness said:



The training helped our community group understand that talking about cancer is not taboo and has helped us learn facts from myths. It's given us skills to discuss cancer risk and screening with people in the community.



# 93%

of trainees felt very confident in their ability to discuss cancer with others after the workshop (an increase of 31% from 62%)\*

\*32 (100%) trainees from the interpreted workshop answered this question



# How to get in touch

Cancer Research UK is the world's leading independent cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research, influence and information. Cancer Research UK's vision is to improve cancer awareness and outcomes across the UK; to see more cancers prevented or diagnosed earlier when treatment is more likely to be successful. The Talk Cancer training programme helps Cancer Research UK to achieve this and to engage more people in how to improve their health. Together we will beat cancer.

If you've got questions, or would like any further information, please don't hesitate to contact us.



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Cancer Research UK: Talk Cancer –  
prevention & early diagnosis



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