

Community Pharmacy
Living Well
Campaign

**Spotting cancer early
could save your life**

www.becancerawareni.info



The 'Be cancer aware' campaign aimed to promote early cancer diagnosis by raising awareness of the signs and symptoms of cancer through advice in the community pharmacy, and to encourage people experiencing symptoms to speak to their GPs without delay. It also aimed to promote healthy changes to help reduce risk and to encourage people to talk to their pharmacist for advice and further support.

The campaign ran throughout April and May 2025.

The information used to develop this report is from our submissions of pharmacy team evaluation surveys from 95% of Living Well contracted community pharmacies.

Evaluation figures are an estimation provided by contracted community pharmacies.

Campaign overview



504 pharmacies participated in the campaign



467 pharmacies felt campaign resources helped them answer queries and signpost patients



432 pharmacies felt that the campaign supported the health and wellbeing of the pharmacy team



397 pharmacies reported the public's feedback to be positive or very positive



128 pharmacies referred patients into the community pharmacy Stop Smoking service



Campaign overview



The main queries were in relation to **cancer signs and symptoms, care in the sun, stop smoking and age eligibility for cancer screening.**

Number of pharmacies that provided information to the following groups:

- ◆ **428 older people**
- ◆ **355 people with long-term conditions or their carers**
- ◆ **271 young families**
- ◆ **195 socially isolated people**
- ◆ **191 people experiencing drug or alcohol dependence**
- ◆ **188 people of ethnic minorities**
- ◆ **181 housebound individuals**

Patient stories

“We run a mole scanning service in the pharmacy. One lady who saw the Living Well ‘Be cancer aware’ poster, asked us to assist with mole scanning. We scanned her mole through the screen cancer service and she came back to us a few weeks later to tell us it was a basal cell carcinoma and that she had had it removed with a good margin. This lady did not see our mole scanning service signs, she saw the Living Well posters and was delighted she sought advice, guidance and a scan!”

“We had a patient with breast cancer who saw our poster and leaflet. She became emotional and thanked us for raising awareness, saying she wished she had known about breast cancer screening earlier.”

“During the ‘Be Cancer Aware’” campaign, a middle-aged customer came in for advice about persistent indigestion. I tactfully asked if they were aware of how certain symptoms like ongoing indigestion could be linked to upper GI cancers. They took an information leaflet and were encouraged to book a GP appointment. A few weeks later, they returned to thank us. They had undergone further tests and were diagnosed with a treatable condition that could have worsened without intervention. This interaction highlighted how a simple conversation, supported by the campaign resources, helped raise awareness and encouraged timely action. It reinforced the important role pharmacies play in early detection and public health education.”

“The Be cancer aware’ campaign was very well received by our patients. It gave the staff an easy way to start a conversation about a sometimes sensitive subject.”



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“A man in his late 50's wanted advice on Tena incontinence products. I asked was he having any issues and told me he had a problem with the volume, flow and frequency of his urine. These are classic prostate cancer markers. He explained that he was reluctant to have an intimate physical examination. I was able to reassure him that it is a simple blood test now and if there is a problem it is better to get it early. I gave him a Living Well ‘Be cancer aware’ leaflet. About a month later he returned and told me he had got a test done at a private clinic and his PSA levels were raised and he was having further investigations.”

“We had some emotional conversations with patients who had personally been affected by cancer who thanked us for raising awareness in the community.”

“We had a patient who was a heavy smoker approach us to ask about the risks of cancer associated with smoking. Using the campaign leaflet prompted a consultation which resulted in her signing up to the Stop Smoking service to help reduce her risk of cancer.”

“I intervened in the sale of sunscreen to a young woman who was excitedly talking about her first holiday to Spain. She was chatting to counter staff about how excited she was to get a tan. This caught my attention and when I looked out at the counter it was obvious she was very pale skinned. I noticed that she was purchasing a factor 15 sun cream. I struck up a conversation with her about the inability of such a low SPF to provide her any protection from sun burn and the associated risk of skin cancers. This discussion led to her purchasing a factor 50 sun cream instead of factor 15, to ensure maximum protection.”



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Feedback from Cancer Research UK

'Talk cancer' webinar

32 pharmacy staff

attended a bespoke webinar

'Talk cancer'

Delivered by Cancer Research UK

Facilitated by NICPLD

"This was a very interesting and informative session."

"I really enjoyed the webinar and feel more positive towards dealing with people who may need my support."

"It was really useful to update my knowledge regarding cancer survival and the available resources for patients."

"There was lots of information offered in an interactive and informative way."