

## **Cancer – New practical support from Macmillan for parishioners within Paisley Diocese**

Paisley Diocese's Caritas Commission is working with Macmillan Cancer Support's new '**Improving the Cancer Journey**' Service to provide a range of practical supports for your parishioners and their families to help deal with the impact of cancer.

Cancer can strike at any age but, most commonly impacts your older parishioners, some of whom may live alone or have difficulties in finding out the full range of excellent support services available locally to them and their families. Recognising that most people with cancer or their carers simply don't know who to turn to in that moment of panic when they receive a cancer diagnosis, Macmillan is working with our local authorities to help provide a '*one-stop-shop*' to lead and guide them on this most difficult journey.

Even highly successful modern treatments can leave people too exhausted to work or care for dependents, in pain, frightened and lonely, with poor mobility or in financial hardship. The '**Improving the Cancer Journey**' Service helps on all these issues and more. The service is already operating in the Renfrewshire Council area and will be available in East Renfrewshire & Inverclyde in 2022 (*Other Macmillan staff are already working in East Renfrewshire & Inverclyde and will provide support until the full 'ICJ' service is up and running – see below*).

Supports may include help with financial issues (***the service helps obtain clients an average of over £1,000 of extra benefits***), housing, shopping, cooking, overcoming mobility problems, emotional care, end-of-life planning and bereavement support. No two people affected by cancer are ever the same and our local staff will always strive to find a solution to a problem, no matter how obscure; from finding someone to look after a beloved dog during hospital stays to comforting a dying mother write birthday cards to the children she will never see grow up.

In the first year of operation in the Renfrewshire Council area, 338 families affected by cancer have been supported, helping them to access over £342,000 of extra benefits and grants. Better housing has been secured for people whose living conditions were unsuitable. Shopping or 'meals-on-wheels' services for those unable to leave their homes have been provided. Help has been given to those with life-limiting conditions to write wills and assistance given to facilitate future care arrangements for children. People in distress have been helped to get counselling, befriending and mental health care. The Macmillan team have been there to listen to people's fears and have offered a hand of friendship and care in their darkest hour.

That's all well and good but, Macmillan want to do more, especially to help men with cancer. Men are only half as likely as women to seek support after a cancer diagnosis. This is an area where our churches may be uniquely placed to help men in their parishes access the financial, practical and emotional support they need. Can you be there to help encourage a man to benefit from this service; a man whose natural reaction may be to suffer in silence?

If you have a parishioner with cancer or know someone who is caring for someone with cancer, please encourage them to make use of the services now provided locally by Macmillan. They can contact the service direct themselves or, with their permission, you can contact the service on their behalf as shown below:

For parishes in the **Renfrewshire Council** area, please contact:

- Karen Spencer & Caroline Kyle-Chittick – Improving the Cancer Journey Service  
Telephone: 0300 300 1380 (Option 1)

Email: [adultservicesreferral.sw@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:adultservicesreferral.sw@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

For parishes in the **East Renfrewshire Council** area, please contact:

- Lisa MacLeod - East Renfrewshire Macmillan Money Advice Team  
Telephone: 0141 577 8420  
Email: [lisa.macleod@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.macleod@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

For parishes in the **Inverclyde Council** area, please contact:

- Jacqueline Coyle - Inverclyde Macmillan Money Advice Team  
Telephone: 01475 715 365 (Option 3 or 6)  
Email: [jacqueline.coyle@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:jacqueline.coyle@inverclyde.gov.uk)