

# Spotlight

FREE - ISSUE 15 / 2023/24



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- 🌿 Brave and Courage on the Catwalk return
- 🌿 Our latest services and support
- 🌿 The power of your pounds

Friends of  
**ANCHOR**  
Charity No. SC025332



# HOW FRIENDS OF ANCHOR CAN SUPPORT YOU

Throughout your treatment, our wellbeing team is close by with practical and emotional support, which you can access from hospital or at home.

 **SCAN ME!**

For up-to-the minute information, scan the QR code.

To make a service request or to speak to a member of the wellbeing team please contact

 [wellbeing@friendsofanchor.org](mailto:wellbeing@friendsofanchor.org)

 **01224 859222**



## SUPPORT IN THE ANCHOR UNIT

### Wellbeing support

Our team is on hand to provide non-clinical support in whatever way they can, including:

- ☺ A listening ear to support you emotionally
- ☺ Practical support while you are an inpatient or receiving treatment
- ☺ Advice on support from the wealth of third-sector and community organisations available

### Complementary therapies

Our chair and bedside therapies include massage, reflexology and nail treatments. They are free for all ANCHOR patients.

### Podiatry

Our podiatrist Kay is on hand to ease discomfort for patients experiencing problems with their feet or lower limbs.

### Volunteer-led services

Our volunteer team extends a warm welcome and way finding support to day patients and visitors, with a daily treat trolley and juice rounds too.

Our volunteer drivers are on hand for patients requiring transport to Glasgow for stem cell transplant treatment and for urgent NHS-referral transport requests.

Our Listening Service offers independent, confidential, face-to-face support to patients as they go through the emotions and challenges of diagnosis and treatment.

## PRACTICAL SUPPORT

### Care packs

Our packs include carefully selected items to bring additional comfort and practical support for various stages of your treatment, including:

- ☺ Packs for starting chemotherapy
- ☺ Inpatient care packs
- ☺ Post-surgery care packs
- ☺ End of radiotherapy packs
- ☺ Wig care packs

### Provisions

Our complimentary provisions to help combat the side-effects of treatment are available within the ANCHOR Unit and can be posted to you at home, and we offer daily newspapers and magazines.

### iPads and connectivity

Our free WiFi is available throughout the ANCHOR Unit and iPads are on offer within the inpatient wards, for keeping in touch with family and friends.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

### Mindfulness course

Guided by our tutor Louise via Zoom, our free 8-week course aims to provide tips and exercises to alleviate feelings of stress or anxiety. Advanced sessions for course graduates are also on offer quarterly.

### Wellbeing Retreat Days

A chance to meet fellow ANCHOR patients, past and present, sample our wellbeing programme and enjoy a complimentary lunch.

### Treat Tickets

Look out for our regular draws for sporting and social events, which are completely free to enter.

# LET'S GET SPECIFIC

HOW WE'VE SUPPORTED PATIENTS IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, THANKS TO YOUR BACKING

## Volunteer-led services

**23,484**  
warm greetings from our Welcome Team volunteers

**9,087**  
miles covered by our Patient Transport drivers

**426**  
hours of driving

## Patient support

**3,720** newspapers hand delivered with a warm hello each day

**1,764** care packs gifted to patients at different points in their treatment

**358** complementary therapies delivered

**207** podiatry appointments

**145** listening service appointments

**80** mindfulness attendees

**36** treat ticket experiences

## Impact made

“ Thank you to all at Friends of ANCHOR for the help and support you gave me when I was in Aberdeen getting radiotherapy. When I arrived I did not know what to expect, but the fact that I had my own apartment through the charity's Home from Home scheme made the whole stay worry free.

“ All the drivers were so considerate, and nothing was a problem. The work Friends of ANCHOR undertakes is incredible and takes off a lot of the pressure you have at a very traumatic time. Thank you all so much.

“ Thank you so much for the beautifully sewn mastectomy cushion, which I clutch most of the time. It has made a physical and more importantly an emotional difference to me. It is so comforting.



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# JIM MILNE

## HELLO AND WELCOME TO EDITION 15 OF SPOTLIGHT MAGAZINE

Welcome to our latest edition, designed to keep you in the loop with news from the team as well as hearing first-hand accounts of the direct impact of your support.

It's your generous backing that is the launchpad for aspirations and ambitions within Friends of ANCHOR; both for the funding support we switch on and the fundraising we strive for.

That aspiration will see us take our annual events, Brave and Courage on the

Catwalk, to an even bigger stage in 2024 as they settle into a new venue at P&J Live. A fitting move for the 10th anniversary of Courage on the Catwalk.

These special events are a highlight for me personally, as I'm sure they are for many readers. It's a great ticket for an evening out with friends, family or colleagues, with a back-to-back programme of live entertainment and hospitality. Whether you have someone in mind to nominate for the catwalk or you'd like tickets for show weekend, you can find all the information on pages 8 and 9.

We continue to work hand-in-hand with our NHS colleagues to deliver the difference as Judy Grant shares on page 10. It is with great anticipation that we look forward to the day The ANCHOR Centre doors open.

What a day it'll be when we can celebrate and recognise the efforts of those who helped Friends of ANCHOR hit the £2m milestone and those that continue to fundraise towards the future operational costs of the Centre.

In the meantime, we're delighted to see our wellbeing team up to full strength, with

complementary therapies now available in the ANCHOR Unit five days a week. Massage therapist Coreen Gillespie knows only too well how much these sessions can help, as she explains on page 14.

We continue to be indebted to our Red Army of volunteers, our fundraisers and donors, and our corporate partners for all they do right through the year for us. As ever, it's wonderful to see the spotlight shone on them in this issue.

People are the heartbeat of what we do. And I thank you greatly for the part you play in positively impacting the lives of those affected by a diagnosis.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Spotlight - we have much to shout about.

Thank you.



SCAN ME!

Scan here or search 'Friends of ANCHOR' on any podcast platform to listen and subscribe.

# CORPORATE PARTNERS

READ WHAT TWO OF OUR RECENT YEAR-LONG PARTNERS HAVE BEEN UP TO. WE'RE INCREDIBLY GRATEFUL TO ROVOP AND WORLEY, WHO SELECTED FRIENDS OF ANCHOR TO SUPPORT AFTER A CONSULTATION WITH STAFF.



## ROVOP £5,469.19 raised in 12 months

The team at ROVOP hasn't been afraid of getting hands-on in their fundraising for Friends of ANCHOR. Signing up to a year of efforts, staff have run, walked, and even tackled obstacles in gallons of mud at the Banchory Beast Race.

A team of 10 found their stride during an 18-mile route along Deeside railway line for the Aberdeen Kiltwalk, and two colleagues trained for months to prepare for Edinburgh's half marathon and marathon distances in 2023.

With an impressive physical effort from so many of the staff, refuelling was key too and the workforce organised office bake-offs and a summer BBQ.

They also got into the festive spirit with a Christmas Jumper Day.

A team from ROVOP took part in our ever-popular Gala Golf Event, and sponsored a hole for the tournament. Reflecting a true spirit of giving, the company also supported Courage on the Catwalk and Brave models with the gift of 'pay it forward' sponsorship.

"Friends of ANCHOR is a vital charity and our team was so pleased to support the fundraising efforts, participating in numerous activities throughout the year. Everyone really got into the spirit and it was a hugely worthwhile experience."

## Worley £8,000 raised so far in 2023

A staff poll crowned Friends of ANCHOR as Worley's chosen charity at the start of 2023, and the Aberdeen office has since backed the cause at all our events.

With an incredible turnout from the workforce, Worley was our largest group at the Aberdeen Kiltwalk, with 57 employees taking on various distances, racking up a collective 741 miles and raising £8,000 in the process - an impressive feat all round.

A team of golfers took to the fairways for our Gala Golf Event and enjoyed the glitz of the gala dinner that followed,

and we were delighted to host an online 'lunch and learn' with staff, bringing them up to speed on the impact of their fundraising right here in the North-east.

Much like our friends at ROVOP, Worley have displayed such generosity in their support, sponsoring a 'pay it forward' package for our post-event film premiere of Brave and Courage on the Catwalk.

As we go to print with this edition, the year isn't quite over yet, but the support we've received from Worley so far has been truly fantastic.



Become one of our corporate partners to enable us to keep supporting the 65,000 people who walk through the doors of the ANCHOR Unit every year.

Every penny of your fundraising efforts will stay local.



## Become a corporate partner

### Perks



**A true partnership:** You'll have a dedicated member of the fundraising team to support your CSR ambitions and strategic objectives.



**Far-reaching promotion:** We'll shout about your support on all our channels, our magazine and to the press.



**Bespoke resources:** We'll provide a bespoke toolkit, with inspiration, support and tips for your efforts



**Feel good:** Tap into our wellbeing resource as you strive towards your ESG goals with health and wellbeing support from our team



**Challenge Events:** Enter a team of colleagues for one of our in-house or affiliated events in 2024 - the full line-up is on P22.



**Volunteer:** Join the red army at our events throughout the year. Pull on a red tee to cheer on and support our fundraisers or shake a bucket at one of our public collections.



**Do It Your Way:** Organise your own in-house fundraiser that gets colleagues, clients and suppliers involved. This could be a quiz night, bake sale or your own sponsored activity.



**Set up a 'percentage proceeds' initiative:** Your company could donate a % of sales to the charity. It could be stock, services or a waived consultation fee.



THE SEARCH IS ON

# COULD YOU BE OUR NEXT CATWALK STAR?

THE SEARCH IS ON FOR LOCAL MEN AND WOMEN TO TAKE PART IN OUR ANNUAL CATWALK EVENTS

Courage on the Catwalk and Brave will move to their new home at P&J Live in 2024, from May 16 to 19.

Applications to take part in the shows are now open, and we're looking for 24 men and 24 women who have faced a cancer or haematology diagnosis, past or present, to strut their stuff on the stage.

Participants will be fully prepared for their catwalk debuts, with professional choreography training across five rehearsals, as well as personal styling, pamper appointments and social evenings with fellow models.

The next show marks the tenth Courage on the Catwalk and sixth Brave event. Collectively, 336 local people have taken part through the years, helping raise a staggering sum of £1,768,000 across the board.

As the events move into their next chapter in a new venue, applications are welcome from across the Grampian region, including Orkney and Shetland, from people over the age of 16.

Scan one of the QR codes on the opposite page to visit our website, where you can find out more, watch our highlight videos and download an application and guidance on completing your form. To request an application form by post, please email [info@friendsofanchor.org](mailto:info@friendsofanchor.org). The deadline for applications is Friday, January 26.

Table bookings for Brave are now open! Use the QR code on the opposite page to visit our website for full details and to reserve your tickets for a spectacular show.

Book A TABLE

At present we're operating a waiting list for Courage on the Catwalk. Full details are on our website.



SCAN ME FOR COTC INFO!



"It's difficult to put into words what an amazing experience this has been. We all felt so well looked after from day one, and over the weekend it was overwhelming to have so many people giving up their time to look after us. At the start you told us we would form special friendships but I didn't expect such a close bond with each and every one of the group."

Betty Murray  
2023 COTC model

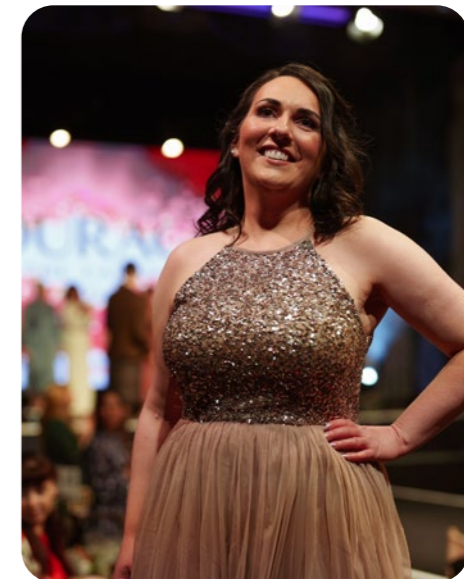


"My, oh my, what a roller coaster ride that was! Like so many of the lads in our group I have had many memorable experiences in my life but I must confess these past few months have surpassed everything. From that first meeting in the Beach Ballroom when none of us knew what lay ahead to that emotional finale last Friday, it has certainly been one journey that I will never ever forget."

George Annand  
2023 Brave model



SCAN ME FOR BRAVE INFO!



# JUDY GRANT

AS ONE OF OUR COMMITTEE MEMBERS, DR GRANT SEES FIRST-HAND THE DIFFERENCE MADE BY FRIENDS OF ANCHOR'S SUPPORT.

## Tell us a bit about your career to date and what steered you towards oncology?

I've been a consultant in the Unit for 11 years, having also trained in the department as a specialist registrar. I had an interest in oncology from the very start of my medical career, recognising the speciality as an exciting, rewarding and rapidly evolving branch of medicine.

Clinical oncology training exposed me not only to the cutting-edge radiotherapy technology and ever evolving systemic therapies we use in treatment, but importantly put these in the context of person-centred patient care. It's truly a privilege to work as a consultant in such a stimulating and fulfilling speciality.

## Two years ago, you joined the committee board of Friends of ANCHOR. Has that given you a new perspective of the charity?

The support provided from Friends of ANCHOR is visible throughout the ANCHOR Unit. However, what struck me when I joined the committee was the sheer breadth and depth of the charity's reach.

The support extends from something as simple as a chilled bottle of water in a clinic waiting room or a morning delivery of a newspaper to an inpatient, right up to the funding of leading technology and equipment used in diagnosis and treatment. This support runs alongside laboratory-based research projects which enhance our understanding of disease biology and pave the way for the development of new diagnostic measures and therapeutics.

"Despite the extensive range of services and funding already in place, Friends of ANCHOR is constantly striving to bring the best for patients, always seeking new and innovative ways to expand its support - the enthusiasm from the team is unwavering... and infectious!"

## You are on the Making Memories panel at Friends of ANCHOR. What is your personal take on that service?

It's an honour to be part of the Making Memories panel. The dedicated funding allows for the arrangement of bespoke experiences for patients and their families, often during the most difficult of times, to create a lasting memory.

Once applications are accepted, it is clear to me that the team swing into action, pulling out all the stops to create an experience to the highest of standards, going above and beyond to make the memory as special as possible. It is humbling to see the feedback from patients, relatives and staff and hear of the impact that they have made.

## We are getting ever closer to the opening of The ANCHOR Centre. What will this mean for patients?

At present, outpatient oncology and haematology care is delivered in various sites across the hospital. Having the different aspects of care unified in the

new Centre will undoubtedly provide a more accessible and welcoming environment for our patients. To have all the clinical and non-clinical support services readily available under one roof will make a tremendous difference to our patients' experience.

Friends of ANCHOR's funding will allow for further enhancements to the Centre which would otherwise not have been possible - like upgraded equipment and furnishings, a refreshment area and a dedicated complementary therapy room, run and staffed by the charity. It will be wonderful to see Friends of ANCHOR's daily presence enhanced even further when we're in the Centre, with their welcome team and wellbeing staff providing an added layer of support.

## As a committee member and NHS staff member, what is your message to all those who support the cause?

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you all Friends of ANCHOR's supporters for the dedication shown over the last 26 years, and for the opportunities that have been provided to patients and staff alike thanks to your donations and fundraising efforts.

As the charity continues to go from strength to strength and with the opening of our new ANCHOR Centre just around the corner, please continue your generous support. Every penny goes towards the cause and I can see on a daily basis the difference it makes.



# Mindfulness Course



Mindfulness can be a great resource to help you feel better equipped to deal with feelings of stress or anxiety. Our free, eight-week course is designed specially with ANCHOR patients in mind, to arm you with tips and exercises that can help alleviate those feelings.

The friendly weekly sessions are delivered on Zoom every Wednesday evening, so you can take part from the comfort of your own living room, with our mindfulness coach Louise guiding you through each step.

Once you've completed the course, graduates are invited to attend our in-person mindfulness deep dive, which is on offer at our Wellbeing Retreat Days (read on overleaf for details).

Here's what our most recent mindfulness course graduates say:

- 100%**  
feel they deal better with difficult emotions
- 100%**  
noticed an improvement in their sleep
- 100%**  
said their feelings of contentment had improved

“  
Thanks to the course I learned I can bring myself back in to the moment, in spite of everything else that may be going on for me.”

Coach Louise hosting a recent mindfulness deep dive.

# Wellbeing Retreat Days

Our wellbeing retreat days offer an opportunity for people receiving treatment in the ANCHOR Unit, and their relatives, to meet our wellbeing team and sample our array of complementary therapies and services, which are freely available to them in the ANCHOR Unit throughout their treatment.

**Our on-the-day programme includes:**

- Mindfulness taster sessions and deep-dives with our coach, Louise Martin
- Mini treatments in our wellness area, including massage and manicures
- Deep relaxation sessions with Ali from Align Wellness
- Music + Movement that's guaranteed to raise a smile
- A delicious lunch for all attendees

For a feel of what to expect, scan the QR code to watch a video from one of our recent retreats.

We hold our wellbeing retreat days three times a year, in January, June and November. For upcoming dates and to book a place, please email [info@friendsofanchor.org](mailto:info@friendsofanchor.org)

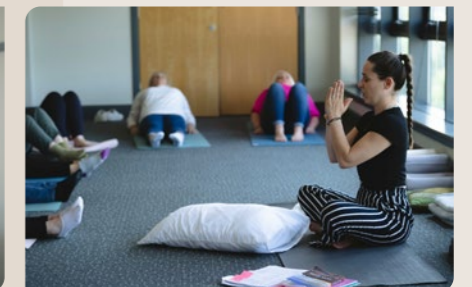


SCAN ME!



*“These wellbeing retreats are great - you meet so many people, who are going through something similar to your own experience - and it makes you realise you are definitely not alone. The mindfulness course on offer is also fantastic. If you or a loved one are looking for support during or after a cancer diagnosis, please, turn to Friends of ANCHOR.”*

**Debbie Oldman**



# COREEN GILLESPIE

MEET COREEN, ONE OF OUR THERAPISTS OFFERING MASSAGE AND REFLEXOLOGY TO ANCHOR PATIENTS.

"There's nothing quite like a massage to leave you feeling more relaxed," says Coreen, who joined Friends of ANCHOR's wellbeing team in 2022.

With several oncology-trained therapists funded by the charity, massage is freely available five days a week for patients.

"The two days a week I work in the ANCHOR Unit are always favourites for me," says Coreen. "It's a wonderful service to be able to provide."

A massage therapist for 24 years, Coreen lists foot massage as one of the top-requested services in the Unit.

She says: "For some people the thought of their feet being touched might make them squirm, but it can be incredibly relaxing and when there's a canula fitted in someone's arm or hand, the feet are easily accessible - and they're a part of our bodies we don't often think to pamper."

Coreen also offers reflexology, applying systematic pressure to reflex points on the hands and feet - something her patients often describe as giving them a feeling of "whole-body decompression".

Coreen explains that massage and conversation often go hand in hand at the ANCHOR Unit. "Most people really enjoy the chat, perhaps even sharing things they feel they don't want to worry friends or family with," she says. "The time I spend with patients is completely confidential and non-judgmental - and to have a safe listening space accompanying a relaxing massage can be quite therapeutic," she says.

The emotional support Coreen offers is mirrored by our wider wellbeing team, which in turn is bolstered by our in-person Listening Service, available weekly from our dedicated volunteer Ashlyn.

The charity's full range of support is on offer throughout the ANCHOR Unit, and also in periphery departments like surgical wards, where oncology patients recuperate after theatre.

"Whenever I visit a patient in one of the outlying departments, I'll take an ice lolly with me," says Coreen. "It's a good ice breaker and although it's a small gesture, it's one that's really appreciated."

Having been on the receiving end of a cancer diagnosis herself, Coreen recognises that it's often little gestures - like an ice lolly - and additional therapies like massage, that can provide a much-needed boost.

"In 2010, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and had chemotherapy and radiotherapy. During that time I sought massage treatments but I found a lot of places had to turn me away because they didn't have oncology-trained therapists. I felt that massage would have been such a valuable tool for me in that situation, so I decided to go through the oncology training course personally," she says.

Friends of ANCHOR's massage offering will expand further when The ANCHOR Centre opens. The new facility, which will house all day and outpatient treatment facilities for cancer and haematology conditions, will also play host to a complementary therapy suite

staffed and run by the charity.

"Many people can't visit a spa during treatment, so to be able to offer services in a truly restful, calming environment will be very important," says Coreen. "We'll be able to offer longer appointments and specialist services, like massage for scar tissue and cording management, which can help with range of movement after surgery."

"These options can make a valuable difference for patients and it's only thanks to the support from donors that we're able to offer them."

Outwith the complementary therapy suite, Coreen says there's another Friends of ANCHOR-funded upgrade that will bring a welcome boost - new treatment chairs. "The current chairs are rigid, with high backs that restrict movement for a neck and shoulder massage. The new treatment chairs will not only be really comfy and suitable from a clinical perspective - the adjustable backrest will also make the universally-loved shoulder massage that little bit easier - offering patients another welcome option for relaxation and distraction during their treatment appointments."

**Friends of ANCHOR's massage service is available in the ANCHOR Unit Monday to Friday. To request a visit from one of our therapists, please email [wellbeing@friendsofanchor.org](mailto:wellbeing@friendsofanchor.org)**





# DANA'S STORY

MEET DANA HALLEY, WHO AFTER A YEAR OF GRUELLING TREATMENT FOR A RARE CANCER, IS LOOKING AHEAD TO BRIGHTER DAYS.



It's not uncommon to feel off colour after a night out, and when Dana felt unwell after an evening with friends in 2022, that's what she initially put it down to. Her flu-like symptoms persisted though, and a bruise-coloured mark appeared on her arm, growing into a visible bump measuring 6cm.

A scan flagged something was out of the ordinary, and in the countdown to Christmas, Dana found herself in Woodend hospital for biopsies. That day, the news came that the lump on her arm was more than likely cancerous.

"I knew something hadn't been right, but hearing 'cancer' was a huge shock," says Dana, who was just 21 at the time. Christmas passed in a surreal blur and although the official diagnosis wouldn't come until January, another scan showed that the cancerous cells were confined to the tumour in Dana's arm and hadn't spread.

"On January 9th, I was told it was a synovial sarcoma which is a relatively rare cancer that occurs in soft tissue. The good news was it hadn't attached to the bone, and my doctors were confident they could deal with it well. That gave us a lot of hope," says Dana, who's been supported throughout by her mum Diane, dad Grant and sister Rhea.

Dana's family rallied round her and they went to the ANCHOR Unit to meet her consultant, Dr Trevor McGoldrick.

"There was so much to take in, so it was really useful to have my family there," she

says. "The enormity of it hadn't sunk in yet, but when we began talking about chemo and the reality of losing my hair, it hit home hard.

"Being young, I was given options for fertility preservation. That's something I probably wouldn't have thought about but Dr McGoldrick, and my clinical nurse specialist Rachel Hall, were excellent at guiding me through everything at every stage.

"I would encourage anyone who has received a diagnosis to make the most of the expert advice from your CNS."

Dana's first inpatient chemotherapy began in February, coinciding with her birthday.

"I was really poorly that day, but the staff brought in cake and a card, and sang happy birthday. They were so thoughtful and made the day bearable, even enjoyable," she remembers.

After the first treatment Dana headed back to the family home in Keith, but she quickly became unwell with neutropenic sepsis and had to spend five nights in her local hospital, Dr Gray's in Elgin.

Neutropenic sepsis became something of a repeat pattern for Dana, and it was during long spells in the ANCHOR Unit that the support from Friends of ANCHOR came to the fore.

"Friends of ANCHOR's ward assistant Leanne was wonderful. She looked out for me and my mum and would bring me ice lollies, which were one of the few foods I'd want to eat as

I'd lost my appetite. Leanne always noticed the little things, even when there were 30 other people in the ward," said Dana.

Dana had treatments from Friends of ANCHOR's complementary therapist Coreen, who offered hand and foot massages and a friendly chat.

"It was a slice of normality that was so welcome," says Dana. "I watched films on the TV provided by Friends of ANCHOR, and I was given a care pack at each point in my treatment too which was so nice, as you really felt someone was looking out for you," she adds.

Treatment wasn't smooth sailing and Dana was rushed to hospital on another occasion with a serious and life-threatening infection, necrotising fasciitis. Same-day surgery saved her arm, and after recovering, Dana was once again prepped for theatre, this time to remove the tumour, which chemotherapy and radiotherapy had successfully shrunk. Recuperating in one of the surgical wards, Dana was visited by Coreen, who would always be armed with an ice lolly to raise her spirits.

Now in recovery, Dana has regular post-surgery appointments, and she's looking ahead to the future. She says: "When I was diagnosed, I was just about to get started on my last semester of uni. I've deferred my place and hopefully next year I'll be able to graduate. I can't wait to wear that gown!"

# AT THE HEART OF IT

AS ONE OF OUR WELCOME TEAM VOLUNTEERS, SUSAN SUTHERLAND CAN REGULARLY BE FOUND IN THE ANCHOR UNIT, WELCOMING PATIENTS OR DOING THE ROUNDS ON THE TREATMENT FLOOR WITH THE JUICE TROLLEY. NO STRANGER TO BEING GENEROUS WITH HER TIME, SUSAN ALSO VOLUNTEERS AT OUR EVENTS, AND SHE'S RAISED £1000 THROUGH SALES OF HER LOVINGLY HANDMADE CRAFTS.

**You wear many hats for Friends of ANCHOR. How did you first get involved and how has your support developed over the years?**

I was working in ARI as a Macmillan nurse and then as the Centre Head at Maggie's before retiring, so I was well aware of the help Friends of ANCHOR can provide for patients and families in the North-east. As we began to come out of lockdown in 2020, I felt it was time for me to gift support to a charity that I truly felt does wonderful work.

Since February 2022, I've volunteered in the day and outpatient department every Thursday morning as part of Friends of ANCHOR's welcome team, picking up extra shifts when I can. I also really enjoy supporting the fundraising team with the charity's calendar of events which are always great fun. I do like to take on a bit of fundraising, and my friend Catherine and I make and sell crafts to bring a contribution through our fundraising efforts too.

**Knitting is a favourite pastime of yours. Even with that, you find ways to support the cause - tell us about that.** A couple of years back, I signed up to knit festive chocolate orange covers to help another fundraiser, Gemma Cameron, with her Christmas fundraising appeal for Friends

of ANCHOR. I managed to get my mum involved too. She's 84!

I'll often have my knitting needles with me when I'm on shift in the ANCHOR Unit, for the quieter periods. The knitting often sparks conversation with patients and their visitors, which opens a door for letting them know about the services that are available for them – or chatting about ways they could get involved with the charity.

I think it's important to be able to do that because many people might not know the full extent of what Friends of ANCHOR can provide. They see the red tees and the charity branding around the Unit, but there's so much they can't see, that they can tap into. I try to spread the word when I can, so patients and their loved ones know what is readily available for them.

**As we prepare for The ANCHOR Centre opening, we'll need to double our volunteer numbers. What are the most appealing elements of a volunteer role with the charity?** The NHS is fantastic, but there are reasonable limits to what can be done by the health service alone. Being able to play a part in delivering Friends of ANCHOR's over-and-above support feels valuable. When you hear directly from

people who are going through treatment, it becomes really clear the difference that the charity's wellbeing support and services make for them.

When you sign up to give your time, there are so many opportunities - whether it's regular or ad-hoc, hospital-based or at fundraising events - there's bound to be something you're well suited to. From very early on in my volunteering experience, there was a feeling of family - everybody is so supportive within the red tee brigade.

Knowing The ANCHOR Centre will open in the not-too-distant future is undoubtedly encouraging and there's going to be a real need for additional volunteers once the doors are open. I'm looking forward to being part of the charity's support service and it will be wonderful to see the benefits The ANCHOR Centre brings for cancer and haematology care locally.

To sign up to volunteer, fill out our online form today!



SCAN ME!



# TOENAIL CLIPPINGS COULD HELP DETERMINE CAUSES OF BLOOD CANCER

FRIENDS OF ANCHOR HAS PROVIDED MORE THAN £11,000 FUNDING FOR THE STUDY INTO MYELOPROLIFERATIVE NEOPLASMS (MPNs).



Since 2010, Friends of ANCHOR has funded 84 pilot research projects, each one taking place in laboratories right here on our doorstep. This year, we have committed to funding five more.

These pioneering studies play a critical role in the future of cancer management, allowing scientists to build compelling cases for major funding. Projects like these can form the building blocks of future breakthroughs in diagnosis and treatment.

Five new studies will get under way this year at the University of Aberdeen, at a total cost of £65,969.

We're pleased to be continuing our longstanding partnership with the university to improve our understanding of the causes of cancers and haematology illnesses, to develop the care and to discover treatment breakthroughs.

It's only thanks to the support of our donors and fundraisers that we're able to back these important research projects.

## Meet one of this year's funded research teams, and learn how toenails could help in the fight against a type of blood cancer.

**The team:** Professor Lesley Anderson, research assistant Emma Tarburn and from Queen's University Belfast, Dr Charlene McShane and Professor Mary Frances McMullin.

**The funding:** £11,193

**The background:** Myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPNs) are a type of blood cancer, but their cause is unknown. Research has shown most cancers are caused by genetic traits, or things that people are exposed to during their lifetime – such as where they live and work – which cause changes in DNA over the years.

About eight people in every 100,000 are diagnosed with an MPN. Many suffer from life limiting symptoms such as extreme fatigue. While treatments have improved, some patients progress to other cancers, such as acute myeloid leukaemia, or suffer cardiovascular complications.

**The study:** Using a control group (people without MPN) and cases (people with MPN), the research team will use toenails – you read that right! – to assess the risk of MPNs. The team has collected information on lifestyle, medical, occupational and environmental risk factors, along with toenail samples from both big toes, of all 231 participants.

The big toenail takes about a year to grow, and by analysing ground-down samples, researchers will look for signs a person has been exposed to elements that increase their cancer risk.

**The benefits:** By understanding the origins and cause of MPNs, researchers will be able to develop preventative strategies, screening tools and ultimately improve patient prognosis and care. It could also lead to new treatments.

Friends of ANCHOR's funding will allow Prof Anderson's team to build on a pilot study (MOSAICC) she launched at Queen's University Belfast.

The findings from this early research will be used to inform the assessment of the ongoing collection of toenails as part of a UK and Ireland-wide case-control study. This pilot analysis will help determine the sample size needed for the main study, allowing for the further exploration of causes of MPN patients. We've previously awarded the MOSAICC study £22,064 to ensure the North-east was represented in the UK-wide research, enabling unmet patient needs to be addressed.

- Prof Anderson urged anyone who has been invited to take part in the study to do so.



To read more about our other funded studies, scan the QR code.



# SAVE THE DATE IN 2024

BROWSE OUR SUGGESTED EVENTS AND GET IN TOUCH TODAY FOR TAILORED SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT THROUGHOUT YOUR FUNDRAISING JOURNEY. FANCY A SOCIAL OCCASION INSTEAD? BRAVE, OUR ANNUAL EVENT IN MAY, IS JUST THE TICKET!

## JANUARY

Loch Morlich Running Festival  
The Full Winter MacTuff running event

## FEBRUARY

X Border 19K Carlisle to Gretna

## MARCH

Inverness Half Marathon

## APRIL

Etape Loch Ness  
Run Balmoral  
Kilomathon Scotland  
Glasgow Kiltwalk

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## MAY

Friends of ANCHOR skydive



Brave



Courage on the Catwalk



Edinburgh Marathon Festival  
Run Garioch  
Etape Caledonia

## JUNE

Aberdeen Kiltwalk



Isle of Skye Half Marathon  
The Speyside Triathlon  
Tough Mudder

## JULY

Dram and Half Dram running events

## AUGUST

Ride the North



# HEARTFELT THANKS

HEAR FROM THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED THE EXCELLENT CARE AND TREATMENT WITHIN THE ANCHOR UNIT AND SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS OF ANCHOR. THANKS TO YOUR BACKING, WE CAN ENSURE PATIENTS CAN CALL UPON OUR SERVICES WHEN THEY NEED THEM.



Louise  
Friends of ANCHOR  
mindfulness tutor



Angie & Marion  
Friends of ANCHOR  
volunteers



Ashlyn  
Friends of ANCHOR  
listening service



Friends of ANCHOR  
wellbeing team

*"Friends of ANCHOR is a charity I benefitted from during my cancer treatment and that I still have support from. I attend the wellness days and have completed the mindfulness course a few times. The work the staff and volunteers do is fantastic."*

*"Friends of ANCHOR were there in any way they could be for me. Their team make you feel at ease with what you are about to go through."*

*"I have had treatment for breast cancer in the last year and cannot praise my care enough. The Friends of ANCHOR volunteers played a huge part in making me feel comfortable through chemo and all my other treatment."*

*"I would like to thank all the staff in Ward 114 and Friends of ANCHOR for the amazing care given to my dad. The support we received as a family was extraordinary. From the toiletry bags provided to us girls, to allowing us to stay with dad and getting him moved to a room where he had that special view of the city, everything was done in a very caring, professional and dignified manner and we will be forever grateful. Nothing was ever a problem."*

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT



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