Thames Valley Cancer Alliance

Issue 134: 26 June 2026

Alongside a look back at news in June, we focus on what's coming up in July across the Thames Valley and nationally.

As ever, your feedback and articles are very welcome: **bobicb-bw.tvca.bulletin@nhs.net**

- June recap
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June recap

Innovation Open Call 4: Could your idea improve cancer care?



Every day, teams across our system are finding new ways to improve cancer pathways, reduce waiting times and support earlier diagnosis. The NHS Cancer Programme's Innovation Open Call Round 4 is now open and is looking for innovations that can:

- Improve productivity and flow across cancer pathways
- Support earlier cancer diagnosis
- Reduce variation and inequalities in access and outcomes

Whether you're improving referral and triage processes, making better use of diagnostics, identifying people at higher risk, or developing new approaches to earlier detection, funding may be available to help take your idea further.

The NHS is particularly keen to hear from organisations already delivering promising approaches that could benefit more patients if implemented at scale.

This is also an opportunity to bring together partners from across healthcare, academia, innovation and the voluntary sector to develop collaborative proposals.

If you have an idea, pilot, service improvement or proven innovation that could help transform cancer care, now is the time to start the conversation.

Find out more and explore the funding opportunities here: SBRI Healthcare - NHS Cancer Programme - Innovation Open Call 4

HPV vaccination linked to dramatic reduction in cervical cancer deaths

New research published in The Lancet has shown that women who received the HPV vaccine at ages 12-13 have an almost zero risk of dying from cervical cancer before the age of 30. Researchers estimate that HPV vaccination has already prevented around 200 cervical cancer deaths in England, highlighting the long-term impact of vaccination programmes in cancer prevention. Read more: https://www.qmul.ac.uk/wiph/news/latest-news/items/hpv-vaccination-programme-leads-to-plummeting-cervical-cancer-deaths-in-england.html

- Find out more about the programme here: NHS Cervical Cancer Screening Programme - thamesvalleycanceralliance.nhs.uk
- We have also created a toolkit for increasing cervical screening on our Primary and Community care webpages here: Primary and Community Care Toolkits - thamesvalleycanceralliance.nhs.uk

£18 million boost for major prostate cancer screening trial

The Government has announced more than £18 million to support prostate cancer research and treatment, including expanding the TRANSFORM trial and improving access for Black men who are at higher risk of developing prostate cancer. The investment will help strengthen the evidence base for future screening approaches and support earlier diagnosis.

Find out more: HP NSC Announcement | Prostate Cancer UK

New precision radiotherapy option for prostate cancer patients

A new national commissioning policy has been published supporting the use of stereotactic ablative radiotherapy (SABR) for people with low and intermediate risk localised prostate cancer.

SABR is a highly targeted form of radiotherapy that can reduce the number of treatment sessions required while helping to minimise side effects. Many radiotherapy centres across England are already equipped to deliver the treatment, with wider rollout expected over the coming months.

Read more about the new policy and treatment approach on the NHS England website: NHS England » NHS to offer 'multi-beam' precision radiotherapy to thousands with prostate cancer

NHS rolls out first new ovarian cancer treatment in more than 20 years

Hundreds of women with hard-to-treat ovarian cancer could benefit from a new targeted treatment now available on the NHS. Mirvetuximab soravtansine is designed to target cancer cells directly while limiting damage to healthy tissue, offering new hope for patients whose disease has stopped responding to standard chemotherapy.

Find out more: NHS England » NHS rolls out life-extending drug for hundreds of women with ovarian cancer

AI technology to support faster cancer diagnosis

NHS England has announced investment to expand AI technology across all NHS trusts, helping clinicians identify cancer more quickly and supporting earlier diagnosis for patients. The funding will support the rollout of proven AI tools while also testing the next generation of digital innovations to improve cancer care.

Find out more on the NHS England website: AI to speed up cancer diagnosis for millions of NHS patients - GOV.UK

New at-home bladder cancer test adopted by NHS hospitals

NHS hospitals are beginning to introduce a new urine-based test that could help diagnose bladder cancer more quickly and less invasively than traditional methods.

Early trial data suggests the test may improve diagnostic accuracy while reducing the need for uncomfortable procedures, potentially helping patients access treatment sooner. Find out more: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/jun/07/nhs-hospitals-adopt-faster-accurate-bladder-cancer-test

Coming up in July

National updates

NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme expands digital invitations



The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme has completed the rollout of digital pre-invitations across England for eligible participants who have previously taken part in screening.

Since August 2025, around one million pre-invitations have been issued, with many being successfully delivered through the NHS App. The change supports faster communication with participants and forms part of the NHS's wider move towards digital-first services.

Find out more about bowel cancer screening and the NHS App.

Informing the Mental Health Strategy for England

The Government is seeking views to help shape a new Mental Health Strategy for England. This is an opportunity to highlight the mental health and psychosocial needs of people affected by cancer, including support pathways, early intervention, inequalities, and the role of digital tools in improving access to care.

The call for evidence survey is open until midnight on 10 July 2026. Contributions can be submitted via the online survey.

Alliance news

Lung Cancer Screening Programme featured on That's TV



We're delighted to share that Dr Fiona MacLeod, Programme Director for Lung Cancer Screening in Oxfordshire, recently discussed the Lung Cancer Screening Programme across the Thames Valley on That's TV. Watch her interview here: Dr Fiona McLeod

Lung cancer screening can help detect lung cancer at an earlier stage, when treatment is more likely to be successful.

Thank you to all our clinical and support colleagues who continue to champion this important programme, helping to raise awareness and encourage participation across our communities.

Award-finalist cancer course now open for September applications



A university-accredited cancer education programme delivered by Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust has been recognised as a finalist in the Student Nursing Times Awards 2026 in the Outstanding Postgraduate Course Provider of the Year category.

Following excellent feedback from previous learners, applications are now open for the September 2026 cohort of the Care of the Patient with Cancer module.

Designed for nurses and allied health professionals (AHPs), the blended learning programme combines face-to-face and virtual teaching delivered by expert clinicians across a range of cancer specialties. The module is mapped to the ACCEND framework, supporting enhanced, advanced, consultant and medical workforce development.

The course begins on 21 September 2026. Find out more and register your interest: Care of the patient with cancer: Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

Raising awareness of head and neck cancer across the Thames Valley

A new awareness video highlighting the signs and symptoms of head and neck cancer has been launched to encourage people to seek help early if they have concerns. The project was funded through Thames Valley Cancer Alliance's Early Diagnosis programme and developed by Wyvern Primary Care Network.

The video aims to increase awareness of symptoms that should not be ignored, helping people access assessment and treatment earlier. Earlier diagnosis can improve treatment options and outcomes for people affected by head and neck cancer.

Watch the video and find out more on the Thames Valley Cancer Alliance website: Head and neck cancer awareness video launched.

Have your say on plans for a new Frimley Park Hospital



Residents, patients, staff and partners are being invited to share their views on proposals for a new Frimley Park Hospital. The new hospital forms part of the national New Hospital Programme and will replace the existing hospital, which is affected by reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC).

The proposed site is located on land currently occupied by Pine Ridge Golf Club and follows an extensive site selection process. A programme of public engagement is now underway, including events, surveys, and community discussions, giving local people the opportunity to help shape plans for the future of healthcare services in the area.

Find out more about the proposals and how to get involved: New Frimley Park Hospital :: Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

Training

New learning resource to support cancer care for people with a learning disability

The South East London Cancer Alliance has developed an educational module to help primary care and healthcare professionals improve cancer care and screening for people with a learning disability. View module here: Cancer care and screening for people with a learning disability

People with a learning disability are less likely to attend cancer screening programmes and are more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage. The resource aims to support earlier diagnosis, improve access to screening and help reduce inequalities in cancer outcomes.

For more information, contact the South East London Cancer Alliance team: Chris Wanstall (chris.wanstall1@nhs.net) and Jannike Nordlund (jannike.nordlund1@nhs.net)

New national ACCEND Course Explorer launched

The ACCEND Course Explorer is a new national resource designed to support learning and career development across the cancer workforce. The platform brings together education, training and development opportunities linked to the ACCEND framework, helping staff identify learning relevant to their role and career progression.

Find out more: ACCEND Course Explorer

GIRFT webinar: improving breast cancer diagnosis

Join GIRFT's webinar on 9 July (12.30-1.30pm) to explore practical approaches to improving breast cancer diagnosis and implementing the Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS). The session will highlight best practice from across the NHS, provide an update on FDS performance, and offer the opportunity to put questions to a panel of clinical and operational experts. Join here: GIRFT webinar: Improving breast cancer diagnosis | NHS England Events

Events

Genomics in Primary Care education events



Wessex Cancer Alliance and Central & South Genomics are offering a series of face-to-face Genomics in Primary Care education events during Autumn 2026.

Designed for GPs, trainee GPs, practice nurses, nurse practitioners and pharmacists, the sessions will explore the growing role of genomics in healthcare, including cancer genomics, hereditary conditions, pharmacogenomics, polygenic risk scores and personalised medicine.

Delivered by primary care and clinical genetics experts, alongside patients with lived experience, the events aim to increase confidence and understanding of genomic medicine in everyday practice.

For more information and to book visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/genomics-in-primary-care-4850500

Bowel Cancer UK webinar: emergency bowel cancer diagnoses

Around one in four people with bowel cancer are diagnosed as an emergency, often through A&E. Join Bowel Cancer UK's online panel discussion on 8 July (12-1pm), where clinicians and experts will explore the causes of emergency diagnosis and discuss findings from a new clinical insight report.

Find out more and register: Behind the emergency - Clinical Insight Report webinar | Emergency diagnosis | Bowel Cancer UK

Research aims to improve prostate cancer awareness among Black men

Researchers at Hull York Medical School have launched the DESTIGMATISE study, which is exploring how stigma influences awareness, help-seeking and early diagnosis of prostate cancer among Black men in the UK.

The study will work with Black communities to better understand barriers to seeking help and co-develop culturally appropriate resources to support earlier diagnosis and improve outcomes. Black men are at higher risk of developing prostate cancer, making targeted awareness and engagement particularly important.

Find out more about the DESTIGMATISE study and opportunities to get involved: DESTIGMATISE: Understanding and Addressing Prostate Cancer Stigma in Black Men | Hull York Medical School

Funding opportunity: Neighbourhood Health Trailblazer Programme

Macmillan Cancer Support has announced a new neighbourhood health investment programme to support integrated, preventative and community-based models of care.

Expressions of interest are open until 17 July 2026. While not cancer-specific, the programme aligns with priorities around prevention, reducing inequalities, personalised care and supporting people to live well in their communities.

Find out more about eligibility and how to apply: Trailblazer programme | Social Finance

Patient communications



Sarcoma Awareness Month / Sarcoma & Bone Cancer Awareness Month

July is Sarcoma Awareness Month. Sarcoma is a rare type of cancer that can develop in the bones or soft tissues. Knowing the signs, including a lump that is growing, painful or unusual, could help lead to an earlier diagnosis. Find out more: Sarcoma Awareness Month

UV Safety Month

July is UV Safety Month. While sunshine helps our bodies produce vitamin D, sunburn increases the risk of skin cancer. Enjoy the sunshine safely by avoiding burning and protecting your skin during periods of high UV exposure. Find out more: Sunscreen and sun safety - NHS

World Head and Neck Cancer Day 27 July

World Head and Neck Cancer Day takes place on 27 July. Persistent mouth ulcers, difficulty swallowing, unexplained lumps in the neck and ongoing hoarseness can all be signs that should be checked by a healthcare professional. Find out more: Head and neck cancer | Cancer Research UK

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