

  **EARLY SPRING NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2025**

CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE



As we look forward to 2025, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all our members who make OGCancerNI a source of hope and resilience for those impacted by oesophageal and stomach cancer. I am excited to announce some important developments and initiatives on the horizon for our charity. This quarter, we have relocated our office from the Patrick G Johnston Centre for Cancer Research (PGJCCR) to Ward 4 North at Belfast City Hospital. Since our move to PGJCCR in 2017, under the leadership of Professor Waugh and Dr Richard Turkington, we have grown into the well-respected charity we are today. We are deeply thankful to the PGJCCR staff for their unwavering support during our early years. As we settle into our new environment, our dedication to supporting patients, raising awareness, and advocating for improved outcomes in oesophagogastric cancers remains steadfast. We have an exciting array of events lined up for the upcoming year, which you can find detailed in this edition of the magazine. We welcome your ideas for additional events, and we are seeking more volunteers to help ensure their success. If you are able to lend a hand, please reach out! One important date to keep in mind is our Spring Wellbeing Meeting on March 8th at The Great Hall, Queen's University, Belfast. The Wellbeing meetings offer valuable support, connection, and information-sharing opportunities, and we look forward to meeting you there. Our current fundraising campaign, 'A Cuppa Tea for OG,' is a great way to support our cause. We encourage you to host gatherings with friends over tea or coffee, turning these events into fundraising opportunities for OGCancerNI. For assistance in organising your event, please get in touch with Louise at comms@ogcancer.org. Stay tuned for more exciting events on the horizon! This year, we are championing the 'Right to be Forgotten' campaign, which seeks to protect cancer survivors from discrimination. The initiative aims to ensure that, after a defined period of remission, individuals do not have to disclose their cancer history when accessing financial services such as loans, mortgages, or insurance. We are collaborating with the Health Committee at Stormont, the Cancer Coalition Group, and our partners at Big + Bold to advocate for this vital cause. You will also see in the magazine that we had a positive meeting with the Health Minister, Mr Mike Nesbitt, during which we raised concerns over long waiting times, CNS and dietitian provision and the importance of early diagnosis. We look forward to an impactful year ahead. Working together, we can achieve so much and make a meaningful difference.

Spring Wellbeing Meetings 2025

Join us for the Spring Wellbeing Meeting on Saturday, March 8, 2025, at the Great Hall, Queen's University, Belfast. It is vital to register! If you wish to attend, please reach out via email at info@ogcancer.org or call 07568 157450!

**Save
The
Date**

Brain Teaser!

Curious and clumsy, I tumble around the farmyard on wobbly legs. What am I?

Receive your newsletter by email

If you would like to receive your newsletter via email please let us know. Email info@ogcancer.org to update your contact details

Fundraising Events 2024

In 2024, Director Craig Walker of Wilson Auctions raised £2,107 by taking part in the Mourne Seven Sevens Challenge to pay tribute to his late colleague David Pennick.

On Christmas Eve, festive music at the Belfast City Hospital Information Desk was performed by Lucy, Emily, and Megan McCain, who were fundraising for OGCancerNI. Their wonderful performance was enjoyed by all, raising an impressive £408.74 for the charity.



The CELTIC Study

The Western Health & Social Care Trust and Belfast Health & Social Care Trust are concluding a pilot program for a new capsule evaluation tool for Barrett's esophagus and reflux patients. The test, conducted during a 30-minute outpatient appointment, takes about ten minutes and involves using a small sponge to collect esophageal cells for lab analysis. Results are typically available within a few weeks. Patients are screened prior to attending. For further details, please contact Sandra.mccrea@westerntrust.hscni.net or 02871611156

Events & Promotions 2025

2025 has already been a busy year for OGCancerNI. With Paul Marshall participating in Less Survivable Cancers Awareness Week in January and OGCancerNI engaging Councils and local communities to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of Oesophageal Cancer in February, we have a full year of events planned. Please see a list below of events that OGCancerNI will be hosting or attending in 2025. More events will be added during the year, so please keep an eye out on the events section of our website for more information.

- Saturday, 8th March 2025 - OGCancerNI Spring Well Being Meeting, Queen's University, Belfast
- Saturday, 15th March 2025 - Model Train and Toy Fair, Cooke Memorial, Belfast
- Saturday, 26th April 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Kirkistown Motor Racing
- Saturday, 31st May 2025 - OGCancerNI Celebrating Volunteers BBQ, Ardnahally
- Friday 6th & Saturday 7th June 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Ballymoney Show
- Saturday, 7th June 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Lurgan Show
- Saturday, 14th June 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Armagh Show
- Saturday, 21st June 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Saintfield Show
- Saturday, 28th June 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Newry Show
- Saturday, 28th June 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Kirkistown Motor Racing
- Friday 4th & Saturday 5th July 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Omagh Show
- Saturday, 19th July 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Limavady Show
- Saturday, 26th July 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Antrim Show
- Saturday, 26th July 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Kirkistown Motor Racing
- Wednesday, 30th July 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Clogher Valley Show
- Saturday, 30th August 2025 - OGCancerNI Information Stand @ Kirkistown Motor Racing
- Saturday, 27th September 2025 - OGCancerNI Autumn Well Being Meeting, Queen's University, Belfast

Volunteering for OGCancerNI A key part of our success comes from the generosity of volunteers who give their time and energy to support our mission. Volunteering is not just beneficial to those we help - it also brings immense personal rewards, from gaining new skills to forming connections and making a real difference in people's lives. Whether you can offer your time at events, provide peer support, or help raise awareness, every effort contributes to positive change. If you can assist with any of the events listed above, please let us know!

LSCT Awareness Week January 2025



January 2025 was the beginning of LSCT Awareness Week. Oesophageal and Gastric cancers are two of the six recognised less survivable cancers, meaning that someone diagnosed with them only has a 16% chance of living for 5 years after diagnosis if caught at a late stage. OGCancerNI worked along with the LSCT during Awareness Week to help spread the word and raise awareness! Paul Marshall, a gastric cancer patient and an OGCancerNI supporter, provided a presentation on his cancer journey also Stewart Dickson, MLA and OGCancerNI Trustee, raised awareness during an Assembly session in Stormont. You can hear Stewart's speech by clicking [here](#) and access Paul's interview [here](#)!

OGCancerNI Meeting with the Health Minister Mike Nesbitt

Representatives from OGCancerNI had the opportunity to meet with Health Minister Mike Nesbitt to discuss key issues surrounding oesophageal and gastric cancer care. Our conversation focused on:

- The current diagnosis pathway
- Waiting lists and their impact on early detection
- Existing diagnostic tools and those currently under trial
- Inequalities in the provision of Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) teams and dietitians



It was a productive and worthwhile discussion, with the Minister expressing interest in further engagement. He has requested a follow-up meeting to continue exploring these critical issues.

Oesophageal Cancer Awareness Month - February 2025

As part of our initiative to increase awareness of the signs and symptoms of Oesophageal Cancer during February 2025, which is Oesophageal Cancer Awareness Month, OGCancerNI has partnered with several local councils to light up Council Buildings. Additionally, we have supplied these councils with Signs and Symptoms posters to be showcased throughout Council facilities across Northern Ireland. Our dedicated OGCancerNI volunteers continue to play a crucial role in spreading awareness. Throughout this month, they have distributed signs and symptoms posters for display in local GP practices, community centers, libraries, and more. Be sure to look out for one of our posters!

North West Social Gathering

Building on the success of the 2024 Winter Well Being meeting at Altnagelvin Hospital in October, local OGCancerNI representatives organised a Social Gathering on Saturday, February 8, 2025, for patients, caregivers, and individuals impacted by Oesophageal and Gastric Cancers. Attendee feedback was overwhelmingly positive, emphasising the significance of social gatherings and connections during the cancer journey. If you're interested in hosting a similar event, please reach out to us.

Leek and Potato Soup

Serves 5 - Approx. 305kcal and 14g protein per serving

Method

- Melt butter in a pan and add the onions and leeks, cook for 10 minutes.
- Add potatoes and stock, bring to the boil.
- Turn down to a gentle simmer and cover, cook for 30 minutes.
- Whisk together milk, cream and skimmed milk powder. Add to the soup and blend until smooth. A sieve can be used to remove lumps.
- Add more liquid as required to achieve desired consistency.



Ingredients:

- 50g butter
- 1 large onion peeled and finely chopped
- 1 large leek washed and chopped
- 2 large potatoes peeled and finely chopped (400g)
- 750mls vegetable stock,
- 300mls whole milk,
- 100mls double cream
- 120g skimmed milk powder

Introducing the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust OG Dietetic & CNS Team

The Regional OG Cancer Service is in Belfast City Hospital and the OG Specialist Surgical Dietetic Team consists of Sharon Caldwell, Caroline McMinn, Niamh McGahon and Judith Moutray (Maternity leave). We also have an extensive Oncology dietetic team in the Northern Ireland Cancer Centre. Our OG Clinical Nurses Specialists are Louise Collins, Karen Graham and Maureen Toner.



The Consumer Council - Start 2025 with a Financial Plan

If you have overspent during the holidays, then make it your New Year's resolution to prepare a budget. Creating a budget will help you get a clear picture of your finances. You can then decide if you have any spare money to pay off debts sooner or to put into savings. For further information and advice, please visit the Consumer Council [website](#) or call them on 0800 121 6022

Brain Teaser Answer!

A baby calf!

Thanks to www.ahariddles.com for the riddle

Contact the Make the Call service to check if you're getting all the benefits, services and supports you're entitled to!

make the call



#makethecall to

0800 232 1271

or go to nidirect.gov.uk/makethecall

Northern Ireland only. Calls are free from landlines and mobiles when calling from within the UK.