



Cancer United Impact Assessment 2025 Summary

Transforming the lives of those living with and beyond cancer

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Report written by:

Dr Gesine Hermann, *Trustee of Cancer United*

Jan Sheward BEM, *Founder and Chair of Cancer United*

Erica Sheward FHEA FIFST FRSPH, *Trustee of Cancer United*

Executive Summary

During September 2024 and February 2025, Cancer United (CU) undertook a comprehensive review by survey to assess the organisation's impact for its members – individuals living with and beyond cancer.

Cancer United is a support charity in West Sussex for those whose lives have been affected by a cancer diagnosis.

The survey gathered feedback from members regarding the effectiveness of its programs, which include:

- **CUFitter** – A cancer-specific exercise program.
- **OutSingCancer** – A choir for people affected by cancer.
- **Regular support group meetings** – held in Littlehampton and other locations.

The survey was completed by 89 members (22% of the total membership) who provided powerful evidence of CU's unique and transformative role in supporting cancer patients' emotional, physical, and social wellbeing.



CU helped me face and accept I had cancer. I was finally able to talk, (read) cancer information. Stop being a hermit, socialise and live again.

Key Survey Highlights

- Respondents represented a broad range of cancer types (notably breast, prostate, and bowel cancers), with 75% retired and most living with a cancer diagnosis for over three years.
- 74% received a prompt diagnosis, only 41% reported receiving meaningful GP involvement, exposing a potential gap in primary care support.
- 15% were aware of or offered pre-habilitation, and just 27% accessed rehabilitation, highlighting an urgent need for better education and integration of these critical recovery services.

Cancer United impact

The most prominent finding from the survey responses is the transformational effect on members' lives – a level of impact rarely matched by formal healthcare pathways, suggesting the power of community-based support.

Emotional uplift:

71% of respondents reported becoming more hopeful and positive after joining CU. With 69% feeling better supported and understood.

Improved resilience:

Respondents reported enhanced ability to manage stress, cope with the challenges of cancer, and regain a sense of control over their health.

Physical benefits:

96% of CUFITTER gym users felt their fitness and general wellbeing improved due to CU's tailored exercise programmes.

Social connection:

85% valued the friendships and community they found at CU, and 76% found peer-sharing highly beneficial – key to reducing isolation.

Overall excellence:

84% rated CU's services as 'excellent,' and notably, no respondent rated them poorly.



I have a more positive attitude and focus on what I can do.

There is a cohort of people in the same situation sharing experiences.

Strategic Insights and Opportunities

While some respondents reported learning about CU through hospital leaflets or encouragement from nurses. There is no formal referral pathways through GPs or primary care.

This represents a major opportunity for CU to build stronger partnerships, increase referrals, and expand its reach.

Looking Ahead

The findings reinforce the case for bold expansion: CU plans to develop a dedicated Cancer Centre in Angmering, extend their exercise offering to better serve younger patients, and train more cancer-specialist instructors.

As by amplifying CU voice within the healthcare community and advocating for wider recognition, CU can continue to transform the cancer journey for even more people across Sussex and beyond.

Importantly, CU commits to repeating this survey on an annual basis to build a longitudinal evidence base and track progress over time.

Additionally, the CU will explore more focused research projects linked to key findings – such as the impacts of peer support, exercise interventions, or emotional resilience – to strengthen CU evidence base and shape future service development.

Full report

Our full report is available from our website

www.cancerunited.org.uk

Thank you

We would like to 'thank' all members who completed the survey and shared their thoughts to support this important work.

Cancer United

Cancer United is a unique cancer support charity for all those whose lives have been affected by a cancer diagnosis.

We aim to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of those with cancer from diagnosis onwards, inspiring them to embrace the things they can do and to refuse to be defined by what they can't whilst also giving support to those close to them.



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We are welcoming, caring and fun to be with so please do not hesitate to get in touch with us and see how we can help and support you and your loved ones.

Jan Shewood, Founder

Contact details

Telephone: 01903 779880

Website: www.cancerunited.org.uk

Healthwatch West Sussex

Healthwatch West Sussex is proud to support Cancer United in their endeavour to collect, review, and consolidate data, recognising the vital importance of amplifying the voices of people living with and beyond cancer.

We are pleased to have freely contributed our support in creating a summary of the report, helping ensure that members' experiences and insights are at the heart of future improvements.

Website: healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

Call: **0300 012 0122**

Email: helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk