

Spotlight

Issue 17 2024/25
FREE



Latest services
& support

Get involved
in 2025!

Read about
our research



How Friends of ANCHOR can support you

Our wellbeing team is based in the ANCHOR Unit – the Aberdeen and North Centre for Haematology, Oncology and Radiotherapy.

SUPPORT IN THE ANCHOR UNIT

Wellbeing support

Available Monday to Friday, our team offers a listening ear, practical support and signposting services. Look out for them in their red polo shirts.

Complementary therapies

Our free chair and bedside therapies include massage, reflexology and mini manicures. We also offer barbering, physio, and podiatry.

Volunteer-led services

Look out for our volunteers in red tees, who extend a warm welcome and way-finding support to day patients and visitors, with daily rounds of our refreshment trolley too.

Our drivers provide transport for stem cell transplants, while our Listening Service is a lifeline within the inpatient setting - where our therapist volunteer Stephanie and her pup Harvey visit oncology patients once a week too.

Ward assistants

Recognisable by their green polo shirts, our ward assistants are there to offer non-clinical aid to patients and their loved ones, as well as staff.

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Free packs + provisions

We offer provisions to bring comfort and practical support at various stages of treatment, including practical aid to help alleviate side effects.

Our free WiFi is available throughout the ANCHOR Unit and we can loan you an iPad if you'd like to stay in touch with loved ones.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Making memories

Available for people receiving end of life care. Applications are reviewed by a clinical panel and once approved, our wellbeing team facilitates all elements to make possible a memory that can be treasured.

Treat tickets

Look out for our regular draws for sporting and social events, which are free to enter in the ANCHOR Unit.

Retreat days

Connect with others and sample our wellbeing offering at our regular retreats.

2025 retreat days:
Feb 1, Jun 28, Nov 8

Confident YOU

Our Confident YOU series is specially designed to help you regain your confidence through or after a diagnosis, with singing, movement and mindfulness on offer. See page 20 for the details.



For up-to-the-minute information on all our free support, scan the QR code.

To make a service request or speak to the wellbeing team, please contact:
wellbeing@friendsofanchor.org
01224 859222



Welcome to Spotlight Issue 17



Hello readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of Spotlight, which we've filled with the latest news from the team and first-hand accounts of the direct impact of your support.

We're proud to be standing shoulder to shoulder with UCAN to bring a rapid diagnostic centre to Aberdeen – a facility that will change the story for people with a suspected urological cancer. Our partnership SURE Appeal is a unique collaboration, borne out of years of shared respect between the two charities and our common goal to serve as best we can in bringing treatment and care over and above the core NHS funding in Grampian. From the perspective of the charity board, we count ourselves immensely

fortunate that we can continue to make bold funding decisions, like the shared £2.5million SURE Appeal, thanks to the generosity and loyal support of our donors and fundraisers.

In 2024, we experienced a record year of fundraising, with ever-increasing numbers of supporters taking part in events like the Kiltwalk and Beast Race for us. The number of people coming up with their own ways to raise funds for the cause never ceases to inspire us.

Looking ahead to the coming months, we know we'll meet many more inspiring people with a story to tell. Courage on the Catwalk and Brave return in May, and we look forward to meeting our new models and sharing their journey as they get catwalk ready – making friends and unforgettable memories along the way.

As you turn these pages, you'll learn how we've put some of this fundraising to good use. We continue to invest in equipment and pioneering research,

carried out here right in the north-east, and have committed £100,000 to our clinical excellence programme. This fund is designed to encourage staff to continue their learning and development and share that new-found knowledge with their colleagues. We're grateful to the dedicated staff who put themselves forward for these opportunities and who are determined to further enhance the care of their patients.

My sincere thanks to everyone who plays a part in making all these commitments possible – from the hard-working teams in the hospital, our staff team, volunteers, fundraisers and supporters like you.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Spotlight - we have so much to share with you.

Sir James Milne

– Sir James Milne, Chairman

Partnership promises faster diagnosis

Back the SURE Appeal to help tackle urological cancer diagnosis times in the north of Scotland.



Urological cancer patients will soon be diagnosed faster thanks to a new partnership between Friends of ANCHOR and urological cancer charity UCAN. We've teamed up with fellow local charity UCAN to raise £2.5million for a one-stop diagnostic centre within Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. The Swift Urological Response and Evaluation (SURE) Unit is due to open in early 2025, and once fully up and running will double the number of urological patients seen in a year to 10,000. Crucially, it will reduce lengthy waiting times for men and women with a suspected urological cancer from around four to six months to just three weeks. Not only will this ease the worry for patients, but it will also reduce the stress and anxiety of making four or five

journeys – often from as far as Moray, Orkney and Shetland – for tests. Our chief executive Sarah-Jane Hogg said: “One in three people receiving oncology treatment in the ANCHOR Unit has a urological cancer, so this disease type makes a large portion of the caseload for ANCHOR.

“Partnering with UCAN to enable the SURE Unit to become a reality is a real priority for us – enabling crucial early detection, while offering a place of support and holistic care for patients. Once the unit opens, we’ll be able to offer our daily practical and emotional support services to complement the exemplary care and support given by UCAN’s specialist nurses.”

Plans for the SURE Unit include a fit-out, diagnostic equipment, new services and extra staffing. A new laser treatment will also be introduced, improving surgery capacity. The TULA procedure, which can be done using local anaesthetic, takes 15 minutes and patients can go home the same day.

UCAN chair and urological consultant Justine Royle added: “There has been a 50% increase in the number of people referred with a suspected urological cancer in the last five years, and the current service provision is not equipped to deal with the demand. “The SURE Unit will further enhance Aberdeen Royal Infirmary as a hub of excellence for the diagnosis and treatment of urological cancers, while making more effective use of clinicians’ time and helping attract the best medical practitioners to our region.” One in every five men will be diagnosed with a urological cancer, which includes prostate, penis and testicular cancer as well as kidney and bladder. One in 50 women will face a diagnosis.



The joint commitment by the charities will stand for the first three years of the SURE Unit’s operation, after which NHS Grampian will take on the running costs.



In numbers: Why you should support the SURE Appeal

1,500

Around 1,500 people in our region are diagnosed with a urological cancer every year.

1/8

One in eight of us will be diagnosed with a urological cancer in our lifetime.

1/3

One in three men in Scotland are diagnosed with prostate cancer too late – that’s double the rate in England.

3x

You are three times more likely to survive cancer if it is detected early.



To read more or make a donation, scan the QR code.



◀ L-R: UCAN specialist nurse Katie Gunn, UCAN chief executive Kenny Anderson, FoA chief exec Sarah-Jane Hogg, UCAN office manager Gayle Stephen & FoA chairman Sir James Milne.

'It just makes sense'

Meet Lewis Walker, who has hailed the fundraising partnership between Friends of ANCHOR and UCAN after receiving support from both while going through treatment.



When Lewis Walker was diagnosed with testicular cancer in late 2022, everything stopped.

Then 27, Lewis was always busy – juggling his job at a local pre-school with his Open University primary teaching degree and leading two dance classes.

He turned to urological cancer charity UCAN for support, and later benefitted from the wellbeing services on offer from Friends of ANCHOR – encouraging him to switch off and relax.

A keen supporter of both charities, he is now backing the SURE Appeal and believes it will be a game-changer for those with a suspected urological cancer.

The Swift Urological Response and Evaluation (SURE) Unit will open in early 2025, dramatically reducing diagnosis waiting times.

It will be a one-stop clinic, with many patients able to undergo all their scans and tests in the same place – on the same day. UCAN's specialist nurses will be on-hand for patients, while Friends of ANCHOR's emotional and practical support will also be available on a daily basis.

Lewis Walker



Lewis was diagnosed just weeks after first going to the doctor about a sharp pain in his testicle, which had become constant.

Initially his GP thought he had an infection and he was given antibiotics, but when a bump at work left Lewis in so much pain he had to sit down for five minutes, he knew something wasn't right and went back.

After an examination, he was referred to hospital for an ultrasound and tests and he was warned it was likely testicular cancer.

Lewis, who is grateful for his own quick diagnosis, described the collaboration as “good news” and believes the two charities will become a “powerhouse” for cancer care in the north-east.

Lewis said: “That was my first interaction with UCAN – I was in the UCAN Centre when I got that news. They were really supportive, and gave me reassurance and leaflets about my surgery.

“The surgeon gave me all the details there and then about my surgery, which really helped.

“It was such a calming atmosphere and very positively reassuring.”

In November 2022, just weeks after first going to the doctor, Lewis underwent surgery to have his testicle removed.

Tests confirmed it was cancer, and five days before Christmas, doctors broke the news it had spread to his lungs. They advised he would need chemotherapy.

Full of questions, Lewis nervously arrived in the ANCHOR outpatient department for his first chemo session early in January 2023.

“When I walked into the ANCHOR Unit for the first time I had no idea what to expect,” he said. “But the nurse was

absolutely brilliant – for the first while it was just me and her as it was an early appointment, and she patiently answered every question I had. That made me feel much better.

“As I was finishing my treatment, Friends of ANCHOR's reflexology and other complementary therapies were re-starting after the pandemic. I took a lot from those sessions – it gave me a chance to relax and feel good, and take a little time for myself.”

Lewis, who took part in Brave 2024, added: “When I saw that Friends of ANCHOR was teaming up with UCAN for the SURE Unit, it just made sense – it's a powerhouse.

“You hear a lot about collaboration and partnership working, but it's brilliant to see two charities so close to a lot of peoples' hearts coming together like this. Streamlining the diagnosis process can only be a good thing – this is great news for the area.”

What an effort!

What an exhilarating year we've had cheering on our amazing fundraisers at events.

From Kiltwalks across the four major cities in Scotland, to Ride the North and the Beast Race in Banchory, it's been brilliant to see so many of you pulling on your red tees. Check out our gallery for a flavour of the fun from this fundraising season. Feeling inspired to get involved in 2025? We'd love to hear from you.



A special shout out to Lyndsey Morris, who completed four of our Challenge Events this year!

Lyndsey ticked off Run Garioch, Aberdeen Kiltwalk, Ride the North and the Beast Race, raising a fantastic £6,362.76 in memory of her dad Stuart Davidson. Sadly Stuart died shortly before he was due to take part in Brave 2024. Lyndsey pushed herself to complete her challenges in his name and we're so grateful for her inspirational efforts.



2025 EVENTS

Keep your eyes peeled for the dates of next year's Challenge Events.

- These are the dates announced so far:**
- May 25/26 Edinburgh Marathon Festival
 - Jun 1 Aberdeen Kiltwalk
 - Jun 8 Friends of ANCHOR Skydive
 - Aug 17 Dundee Kiltwalk
 - Aug 26/27 Glasgow Kiltwalk
 - Sep 14 Edinburgh Kiltwalk
 - Sep 20 Beast Race
 - Sep 28 Loch Ness Marathon

Got your own fundraising idea? We'll support you every step of the way.

Email us: info@friendsofanchor.org





Up to £100,000 available to help staff be at 'top of their game'

Retired chief nurse Yvonne Wright explains what our clinical excellence fund can do for staff.

As a nurse for more than 40 years, Yvonne Wright has seen many changes – from treatments to the everyday support patients are offered.

She recently retired from her role as chief nurse for Aberdeen Royal Infirmary's clinical support team, but is certainly not sitting back relaxing at home.

Yvonne is already back working in the hospital as a bank nurse, and remains an active member of the Friends of ANCHOR committee.

She also chairs the charity's clinical excellence advisory committee.

Up to £100,000 a year is available for nurses and allied health professionals working in the ANCHOR Unit who are keen to develop their skills and knowledge.

Clinical excellence grants can be used for attending conferences and training courses, further education or equipment for training purposes.

Yvonne said: "We funded nearly a dozen applications in the first month or so after publicising this new fund - and that number will continue to grow. It's always exciting to see a new application come through - and it's great that staff want to take up these opportunities to be at the top of their game."

"One of our recent applications is from haematology clinical nurse specialist Laura Malarkey, who has a new post as CarT cell CNS. She is going to go to Edinburgh and shadow her equivalent there — she'll then bring all that expertise back to Aberdeen."

"The NHS can only support attendance at core education events, so it's brilliant that Friends of ANCHOR has this fund available for staff to attend conferences and the like and then take those learnings back to their colleagues."

Yvonne has worked in various disciplines over the years, such as community nursing and time in the maternity unit, and spent the last decade before her retirement in the acute sector – with her remit as chief nurse including the ANCHOR Unit.

"These grants aren't just for nurses," she said. "They're for allied healthcare professionals, like dieticians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, podiatrists – anyone who works in the ANCHOR Unit."



"Being open to new opportunities and striving to learn and be the best is key."

Clinical excellence is one of Friends of ANCHOR's four key pillars of support and has been in place since the charity's founding day. Funding over the years has included sending staff to conferences, funding training equipment and development opportunities.

With this new advisory group now mobilised, with quick and easy application forms, our clinical excellence funding is expected to significantly increase - benefitting patient care throughout our region and retaining top talent in the ANCHOR Unit.

Fundraiser focus

Shining a light on some of the fantastic efforts of our fundraisers. Our sincere thanks to all those who fundraise for the cause!



COLIN SLESSOR

Auctioneer Colin is a long-time supporter and was one of our very first Brave models in 2017. He's hosted many an auction at our events, significantly bolstering the amount we raise each and every time!

In May 2024, he swapped his auctioneer hammer for his running trainers to take on the Edinburgh Marathon.

With two London Marathons under his belt from the 1990s, Colin had his eyes on the finisher medal, training rigorously and adapting his nutrition, alongside his fundraising. As well as the support that flooded in from family and friends, colleagues at Thainstone Mart in Aberdeen lent a hand - with proceeds from some sheep and cattle sales being donated too. Colin crossed the finish line with £27,281 raised!



LEE DONALD

Personal trainer Lee Donald scaled new heights with her support for Friends of ANCHOR – right to the top of Mount Everest!

The mum-of-two has been fascinated by Everest since she was young, and pushed herself to her limit to conquer the world's highest mountain in May 2024, overcoming her fear of heights and asthma along the way. Lee is the second woman in the north-east – and one of just seven in Scotland – to reach the summit.

What an inspiration to see Lee fly the flag from the summit, with her phenomenal effort raising £7,053.66 for us in memory of her Grumpa.



GARRY COWE

From quiz nights and golf days to the Edinburgh Marathon and Beast Race, Garry has certainly had a busy year raising money for FoA.

Garry's mum Moira was a big supporter of Friends of ANCHOR, and it was in her loving memory that he decided to pull on his red tee - and running trainers!

Thanks to the support of his family, colleagues and friends – many of whom he roped into his challenges – Garry raised £32,322.99. Wow!

It's a sum that takes the Cowe family's overall fundraising total to £59,469.98. What a legacy for Moira!



COURTENEY MCGAVIN

Dancer Courteney organised a 12-hour danceathon in June 2024, raising a brilliant £3,359.66 in memory of her mum Lorraine.

With a non-stop day of dancing at The Academy Street Dance Studio in Aberdeen, there were also beginner-friendly classes on offer, as well as a bake sale, raffles and face painting.

Courteney wanted to organise the fundraiser in recognition of the care her mum received in the ANCHOR Unit.

Courteney's friend Nicole Brown helped organise the event, which proved such a hit it might even become an annual event – watch this space!



THE ROBERTSON FAMILY

You might recognise Carly from our fundraising team. Always a champion for the cause, she's regularly at events highlighting the work of FoA and the difference your donations make.

Never one to shy away from a challenge, and always one to lead by doing, this summer Carly and her family took on a special fundraiser. To mark the 10th anniversary of her mum Karen's death, Carly, brother Russell, dad Graeme and fiancé

Davie embarked on a 54km walk on what would have been Karen's birthday. Their dedicated and heartfelt support raised a fantastic £5,443.84 – contributing to the Robertson family's new overall total of £66,251.18.

They truly deserved to put their feet up after this one – not least Carly, Russell and Davie, who took on the Aberdeen Kiltwalk as 'training' – and closed out their summer of challenges by completing the Beast Race!



FIONA RUSSELL & LUCY GERRIE

Fiona Russell and Lucy Gerrie have been fundraising for nearly two decades, and as this edition goes to print, they're fresh from their final official event – a music and fun day at the 22 Club in Aberdeen, which has been the home of their annual events for many years.

Fiona has been a patient of the ANCHOR Unit for more than 20 years, and has always found the passion, energy and inclination to keep her fundraising at the forefront. With each year that's passed, the fundraising figure has sailed past a new milestone.

Now, as Fiona and Lucy step down from their incredible effort, they'll be retiring from fundraising with an astonishing figure of more than £75,000 raised since 2005.

To Fiona, Lucy, their family and their fantastic community of supporters – thank you!

Fancy fundraising?
We'd love to hear from you.

Pop us an email today and let us know your plans:
info@friendsofanchor.org

'It's my chance to play a small part in helping others'

Lynne McAndie tells us why she's been volunteering for the last decade – and how it's become a family affair.



When Lynne McAndie looked around the Beach Ballroom at the very first Courage on the Catwalk in 2013, she was struck by the number of volunteers in their red tees.

Watching as they welcomed guests, sold raffle tickets and helped the event go smoothly, she quickly saw what an important role they had to play and decided right there and then she wanted to get involved.

Initially, Lynne began helping out at events like Courage, cheering on from the sidelines at charity runs and volunteering at local fundraising dinner dances.

But when she and her husband Derek retired from running County Garage Repairs in Ellon three years ago, the mother-of-two knew she wanted to do more for Friends of ANCHOR.

"I was at one of the charity's Christmas wrapping nights, helping wrap gifts for patients and staff, when I heard that they

were looking for volunteers to go into the hospital to welcome patients," she said.

"This was as we were coming out of Covid. The welcome service was actually switched on during the pandemic, as the NHS teams were looking for support from volunteers who could help patients get safely to their radiotherapy and chemotherapy appointments. It's fantastic that Friends of ANCHOR was able to call on its supporter network to make that possible."

Lynne now volunteers in the ANCHOR Unit two mornings a week, at the radiotherapy department and Ward 310.

"I enjoy being able to give something back, I know how many people benefit from Friends of ANCHOR, and being able to chat to them when they're feeling a bit anxious and unsure about what to expect, is my chance to play a small part in that."

"My daughter Claire's best friend Rosie was diagnosed with acute leukemia when she was just 18, and Friends of ANCHOR was always there for her and her family."

One of Lynne's duties on her hospital shift is going round the unit with the hydrate trolley, offering juice and treats – from ice lollies and fruit to a sweetie, depending on the season. Over the summer, the trolley was themed around the major sporting events, including the Euros and Wimbledon.

She said: "It's nice to go round with the treat trolley, and see the patients get a wee pick-me-up. We offered strawberries and cream for Wimbledon, and it was lovely to see how it was appreciated."

"At Christmas, we go round with selection boxes – and being in the unit for Santa's visit is always really special. The patients really do get overwhelmed when they realise he's got a gift for them – they're really not expecting it."

Lynne also makes up care packs for patients, with each one containing practical items such as fans, anti-sickness aids and sleep masks. She helps the fundraising team in the run-up to annual events too, and regularly cheers on fundraisers at challenge events.

"Sometimes when my husband Derek sees me in my red tee, he says 'oh is that you away again?'" laughs Lynne. "So I've roped him into helping too – we were both at RunFest 2024 at P&J Live cheering on the runners."

Despite Derek's teasing, Friends of ANCHOR is a charity close to the whole McAndie family's heart.

Lynne's oldest daughter Claire recently climbed Ben Nevis for the cause, while her youngest Chloe did Loch Ness Marathon in 2023.

They completed their challenges in memory of Rosie, who sadly died in 2022 aged just 26.

Lynne added: "What Friends of ANCHOR does is amazing – from the support in the hospital to investing in research, with all the projects being carried out locally."

"Most people know someone who has gone through the ANCHOR Unit, or been supported by the charity."

"Rosie did Courage on the Catwalk in 2015 and it was so good for her – we were all so proud. Friends of ANCHOR supported her throughout her treatment, and when my cousin Colin Slessor was diagnosed they were there for his young family too. He became one of the first Brave models – it's just fantastic what these experiences can do for someone."

"Volunteering is a great way to give some time back. Whether it's helping at the hospital or at an event, or even handing out Spotlight in your local area, there's so many different things you can do to help make a difference."

Lynne McAndie →



New study could help slow prostate cancer progression

Meet one of this year’s funded research teams and learn how their study could help fight aggressive prostate cancer.

We’ve been funding pilot research projects since 2010, and each one takes place in a lab right here in the north-east.

This year, we’re funding six more, taking the total number of projects supported to 89.

These pioneering studies play a critical role in the future of cancer management, allowing scientists to build compelling cases for major funding.

Recently, studies supported by Friends of ANCHOR have gone on to be published and secure significant external funding from the likes of Cancer Research UK and the Chief Scientist Office.

The six new studies are currently under way at the University of Aberdeen, RGU and ARI at a total cost of £84,954.06.

It’s only thanks to the support of our donors and fundraisers that we’re able to back these important research projects, paving the way for a better understanding of the causes of cancers and blood disorders and the development of care and treatment breakthroughs.

The team

Senior lecturer **Fiona Murray** and Professor **Iain J McEwan**

The funding
£14,967

The background

Prostate cancer is the second most common cause of cancer-related deaths in men, with cases expected to double by 2040.

It can be slowed through androgen deprivation therapy (ADT), a treatment that involves slowing or stopping the body from making testosterone. ADT can shrink prostate tumours or slow their growth.

However, aggressive forms of the disease develop resistance to ADT.

Discovering new drug targets for effective treatment and uncovering diagnostic markers to identify aggressive prostate cancer are essential.

The study

The team is looking at a specific G-protein receptor, known as GPR75, to understand how it contributes to prostate cancer progression.

The lab has uncovered that genetic changes in GPR75 are associated with prostate cancer. They are investigating its expression, regulation and function in prostate cancer cells and its role in promoting resistance to ADT. It is believed this study will validate GPR75 as a new biomarker and drug target for the disease.

The benefits

By understanding the role of GPR75 in prostate cancer, the team would be able to provide evidence for its use as a novel biomarker and/or drug target. Ultimately this research could uncover new treatments to prevent the progression of prostate cancer.



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

As well as pilot research, we’re supporting careers in cancer science.

Our funded summer placements give science, medicine and nursing students the chance to gain invaluable hands-on experience of a research project, while also giving academics and clinicians an extra pair of hands to develop their study and share their knowledge.

Pharmaceutical student **Cameron Whyte** worked on the GPR75 study with **Fiona Murray**.



Cameron, who is dedicated to a career in cancer research, spent the summer in the Murray lab carrying out experiments and learning methodology skills from the team.

He said: “I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Dr Murray’s lab, where I gained a valuable variety of transferable laboratory and analytical skills.

“I am very thankful to Friends of ANCHOR for the opportunity as it has definitely fuelled my desire to pursue a career in the field. It’s allowed me to bring what I’ve learned so far at university into a real-life lab setting, experiencing what that’s like day-to-day.”

Fiona Murray

Could you be our next catwalk star?

Our search for Brave and Courage on the Catwalk models is open until Friday January 24.



“Brave is the most exciting, wonderful, emotional, life-changing thing I’ve ever done. I’d encourage anyone to apply – you’ll make some wonderful memories.”

Brian Noble, Brave 2024 alumni



Our flagship shows return to P&J Live on May 8-11, and applications to take part are now open.

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 six professionally choreographed rehearsals and styling sessions.

Applications are welcome from across Grampian, Orkney and Shetland from people aged over 16.

Scan the QR codes below to find out more, watch our highlight videos or to download an application form.



Brave

Courage on the Catwalk



To request an application by post, email info@friendsofanchor.org



Get involved

Pay it Forward

Help create a truly special experience for one of our models and their families with our Pay it Forward package.

For £500, you can cover the cost of a table of 10 for one of our 2025 models, ensuring their loved ones are in the crowd to cheer them on.

Sponsorship

Be part of the Courage & Brave 2025 story by becoming one of our sponsors.

We have a range of packages available depending on your corporate budget. Your support will directly inform the model experience and help ensure the success of the event. You’ll also benefit from:

- Tables at the shows
- Publicity
- Exclusive chance to meet the models you’re supporting

Book a table

Table bookings for Brave are now open! Visit our website for full details and to reserve your tickets. At present we’re operating a waiting list for Courage on the Catwalk.



To find out more about any of these opportunities, email info@friendsofanchor.org



Confident YOU

Connect with fellow patients in our sessions designed to help you regain your confidence through or after a diagnosis.

Blocks are on offer throughout the year. They are free to attend, but prebooking required for each of the services listed here.

Email wellbeing@friendsofanchor.org to find out more. Remember to let us know which service or services you're interested in!



Fancy a dance?

with Laura Booth
Thursdays, 1pm
Get active @ Westburn

Enjoy the science-backed benefits of music and movement in our moodboosting, stress-reducing classes.



Find your voice

with Laura Pike
Thursdays, 6pm
Get active @ Westburn
Whether you've sung on stage or only ever sung in the shower, you're warmly invited to take part in our sessions for all levels.



Try mindfulness

with Louise Martin
Wednesdays, 6pm
Online sessions
Join us for an eight-week course to help build your confidence by improving self-awareness, resilience and reducing stress.

Funding boost helps Aberdeen lead the way in radiotherapy treatment

Read how your donations are funding tech that helps keep Aberdeen at the forefront of patient care.

Aberdeen's radiotherapy department is leading the way in the UK by adopting new technology that allows the team to more accurately target tumours. It is one of only a handful of centres in the UK – and the first in Scotland – to deliver online adaptative radiotherapy (oART). Currently oART is delivered to head, neck, bladder and cervical cancer patients. But thanks to £22,340 funding from Friends of ANCHOR (matched by the NHS Charity), the team is looking to expand that offering through use of an Ethos Emulator. Meet clinical physicist Polly Darby, who tells us more about what this innovative software will mean for patients.

Tell us about your role in the radiotherapy department.
I'm a clinical scientist and have been a fully registered scientist in the department for five and a half years. In October 2024 I started my PhD, supported by the Chief Scientist's Office as part of the Innovation Academic Fellowship.

My research will support the development of oART, looking at the accuracy of treatments and margins to minimize side effects from radiotherapy.

Before this funding award, were you aware of Friends of ANCHOR's work?
Absolutely. Friends of ANCHOR do so much to support the radiotherapy department; we see the benefits to patients and staff daily. The charity's volunteers are there to welcome patients to their appointments and the team takes care of the little things like care packs

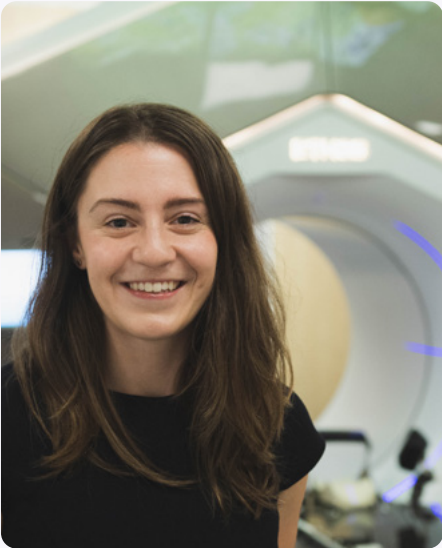
and complementary therapies for our patients too. We've also had significant support through the years for equipment and services - the radiotherapy department has benefitted greatly from Friends of ANCHOR's funding.

Friends of ANCHOR has invested more than £22,000 in the Ethos Emulator – tell us what it does.

Using the Emulator, we're able to use past data to simulate patient outcomes without actually administering any treatments to a person. This allows us to test new treatments and strategies safely without affecting patients. It's an excellent training tool and will help shape how we're able to deliver the best possible treatment going forward. Recently, we worked with an Ethos Emulator on loan for six weeks, and we accomplished a lot during that time. Now, with a two-year license thanks to this funding, we have the opportunity to explore so much more — we've got a big list!

What does this mean for patients?
oART allows us to be more targeted when focused on the tumour. We can dynamically adjust the treatment to account for changes, such as a tumour reducing in size through the duration of a course of treatment. This all reduces the chance of damaging healthy tissue with radiation – reducing the toxicity for patients.

The idea is that patients will suffer fewer side effects from treatment or at least milder ones.



At the moment, we deliver oART for head and neck, bladder and cervical cancer. Our goal is to increase the number of patients who can receive oART and expand the service to other cancer types. Ultimately, it will ensure the highest-quality care for patients.

Do you have a final message for our readers?
I want to say an enormous thank you to Friends of ANCHOR, their donors and volunteers. We are at the forefront of radiotherapy technology in Aberdeen, doing world-leading work thanks to Friends of ANCHOR's support in facilitating our funding requests.

Corporate supporters

In every edition, we shine the spotlight on the efforts of some of our corporate partners.

A photograph of Craig Wilson and Lindsay Wilson, the owners of Eat on the Green, smiling in front of a floral backdrop. An orange banner at the bottom contains the text: £113,903.80 Since 2014.

EAT ON THE GREEN

The acclaimed Eat on the Green shut its doors for the final time in September, and we couldn't possibly let the team's brilliant support over the last decade go unheralded.

Since 2014, Kilted Chef Craig Wilson and his wife Lindsay have thrown themselves into supporting Friends of ANCHOR. Proving that sometimes the simple ideas are the most effective, the couple raised more than £30,500 by giving customers the option of adding a £1 bill donation to their bill.

Craig and Lindsay went big too – organising a Festival of Hope, complete with a concert starring Fiona Kennedy and Susan Boyle, and even installing their very own anchor above the restaurant entrance.

Eat on the Green's infamous Ladies Days – an afternoon of good food and drink – also became an instant fundraising success. One of our Brave alumni models would always be invited along too, giving us an invaluable opportunity to raise awareness about our work.

Craig, who has recently been diagnosed with a type of blood cancer, also regularly accompanied Santa to the ANCHOR Unit at Christmas to spread some cheer with handmade goodies.

Although Eat on the Green has now closed, Craig and Lindsay remain committed to supporting Friends of ANCHOR through their Kilted Chef Dine at Home service.

A group photograph of the staff at Aberdein Considine standing in front of their building. A blue balloon with the number '20' is visible. An orange banner at the bottom contains the text: £28,512.85 In summer 2024.

ABERDEIN CONSIDINE

After the death of a beloved colleague and partner in the firm in March 2024, staff at Aberdein Considine took it upon themselves to start fundraising.

In memory of Fiona Wildgoose, they pledged to raise '20 for Fiona' - £20,000 in recognition of what would have been Fiona's 20th anniversary at the firm in March 2024.

In the space of just four months, the team's fundraising well surpassed their goal, with the whole workforce getting behind the effort.

Their summer of fundraising was packed with activities from all of the offices across the country, including a Euros sweepstake with specially printed Euros T-shirts, bake sales, a footie match, a knitting challenge and a pet palooza – a virtual vote for the firm's favourite staff pet, with over 100 entries!

There were sponsored hikes, marathons and walks, including a 20km hike in Germany and another in Aberdeen, a 3 Munros challenge, an inflatable 5km obstacle course, and even a 24-hour walking effort.

Paying tribute to Fiona, the team at Aberdein Considine shared this message:

"Fiona was much more than just a partner with the firm. She was an expert in her field, a mentor, and an invaluable part of the success and growth of the firm."

Let's get specific

How we've supported patients in the last six months, thanks to you:

A photograph of a volunteer driver in a red shirt sitting in the driver's seat of a car. A large white number '6,475' is overlaid on the image.

Miles covered by our volunteer drivers

A close-up photograph of hands holding a newspaper. A large white number '7,860' is overlaid on the image.

Newspapers delivered daily with a warm hello

A photograph of a woman in a red shirt smiling. A large white number '3,365' is overlaid on the image.

Care packs gifted across the treatment pathway

A photograph of a woman in a red shirt receiving a massage. A large white number '1,030' is overlaid on the image.

Massage, nail, podiatry and reflexology appointments

A photograph of a woman in a red shirt smiling. A large white number '34' is overlaid on the image.

Mindfulness course sign-ups

A photograph of a group of people sitting on the floor in a room, participating in a retreat. A large white number '60' is overlaid on the image.

Guests enjoyed our retreat days

Here's what that support means to patients...

"I was very touched when I received my care pack prior to my surgery. I give money to charities but I have never actually received anything before. When my treatment took place I was very impressed at just how visible Friends of ANCHOR were within ARI – I could see the small things like newspapers and the offer of a cuppa was uplifting to people. Another pack received once I'd completed radiotherapy was very much appreciated."

"No one needs to be going through cancer alone as you're there for everyone."

"I have loved my chats in the Friends of ANCHOR car with Ian, Jim and the rest of the amazing volunteer drivers. I will actually really miss putting the world to rights with them on my way to appointments."

"I was very fortunate that my cancer was found early and was very treatable, which made the whole experience more manageable. I had a radio frequency tracker inserted in my tumour to make it easier to locate for the surgeon and when I Googled this – as you do – I discovered that Friends of ANCHOR had paid for it. Amazing how things are improving all the time!"

Help us make a positive difference
every day with compassion,
care and hope.

Thank you.



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