

#PCUKStudyDay



# Part 1: Psychological support for pancreatic cancer patients

27<sup>th</sup> March 2025

9:00 – 11:00am

Via Zoom Webinar

# **A UK-wide Optimal Care Pathway for pancreatic cancer**

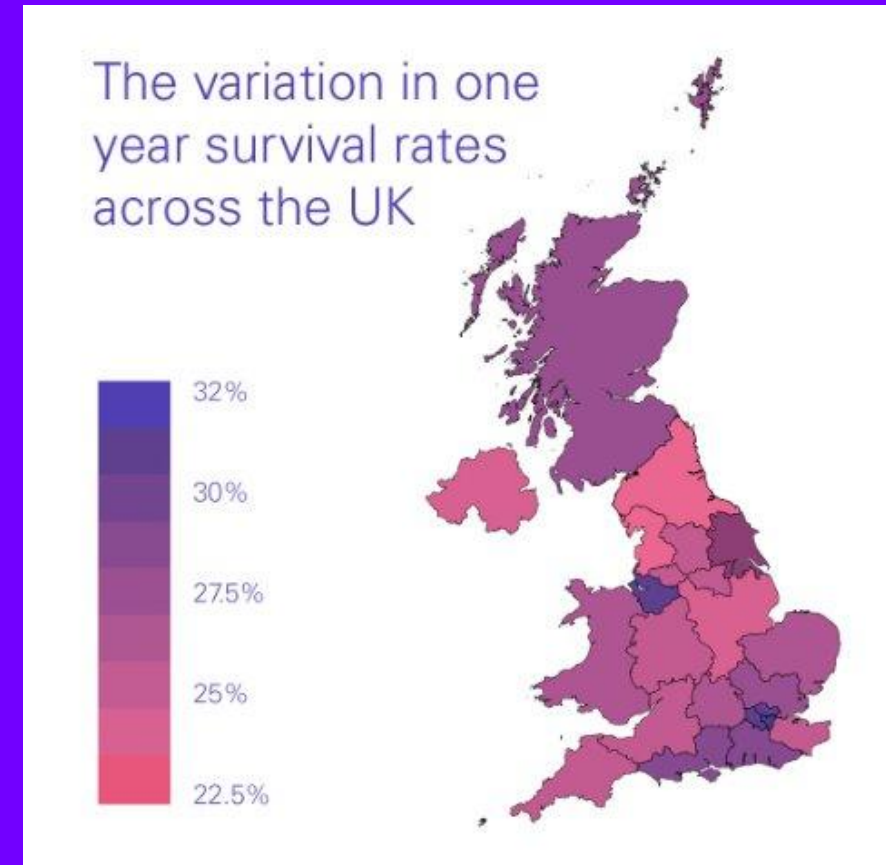
# Our Optimal Care Pathway for pancreatic cancer

## Why it's needed:

- Variations in patient outcomes
- Lack of consensus on what better and fairer standards of care should be and how to implement them

## Objectives:

- Standardise and drive improvements in diagnosis, treatment and care
- Ultimately, ensuring that everyone with pancreatic cancer can live well and for as long as possible



# Optimal Care Pathway for pancreatic cancer

## The current problems in accessing care

In a 2022 survey, we found that people affected by pancreatic cancer:

- Felt like they were ‘fighting the system’ e.g. having to chase test results/follow up, facing long delays to diagnosis due to misdiagnosis or inconclusive investigations
- Experienced a lack of joined up care including poor communication between different departments and/or no one taking ‘ownership’ of care plans
- Experiences a lack of emotional support for people with pancreatic cancer and their families

## Recommendation 1

NHS systems should ensure that from the point of diagnosis and throughout a patient's care, everyone with pancreatic cancer should be pro-actively offered support and care tailored to their needs. This includes ensuring:

- Access to **prehabilitation and rehabilitation services**
- Access to **better nutritional management** and specialist dietetic services
- Access to **better psycho-social support services**
- Access to **better post-resection follow up care** for people living beyond pancreatic cancer

# Optimal Care Pathway for pancreatic cancer

## **Delivering psychosocial support:**

- **Level 1 Universal support**
- **Level 2 Enhanced support**
- **Level 3 Specialist support**

# Optimal Care Pathway for pancreatic cancer

## Level 1 Universal support

### Who?

- All people affected by cancer will have access to universal support.
- Whole healthcare team should be trained to deliver universal support to people with pancreatic cancer and their loved ones

### What?

- Compassionate care and patient-centred communication
- Processes, inputs, and structures that are designed in a psychologically-minded way to:
  - prevent distress
  - address psychosocial needs
  - promote self-management, and
  - identify vulnerabilities, for patients & carers.

# Optimal Care Pathway for pancreatic cancer

## Level 2 Enhanced support

### Who?

- A substantial proportion will require enhanced support episodically or throughout their cancer experience.
- Delivered by a palliative/enhanced supportive care team, a counsellor, community mental health teams, the charity sector and / or hospice support

### What?

- Keyworkers to:
  - Conduct first-line psychological assessments
  - Provide first-line interventions
  - Attend specific Level 2 clinical skills training and have regular supervision and direct access to advice from specialist Level 3/4 psycho-oncology
  - Be able to refer to level 3 support without barriers or delays
- Information shared at specialist MDT to inform clinical plan
- Enhanced support and proactive care coordination
- Support to carers
- Sufficient administrative and support staff to allow CNSs to prioritise psychological welfare

# Optimal Care Pathway for pancreatic cancer

## Level 3 Specialist support

### Who?

- A smaller proportion will require specialist support at one or more time points.
- Delivered by a psycho-oncologist

### What?

- Highly personalised assessment and management of complex and persistent psychological distress and mental health problems

# Optimal Care Pathway for pancreatic cancer

## **Further detail about delivering psychosocial support:**

- Information about psychosocial support and signposting to support groups should be provided at the point of diagnosis
- Psychosocial support should be monitored by everyone in a person's healthcare team but overall responsibility for coordinating this aspect of care should lie with a HPB/UGI CNS with the support of a cancer care coordinator

# Find out more about our Optimal Care Pathway for pancreatic cancer



Visit our Optimal Care Pathway Hub:  
[pancreaticcancer.org.uk/health-professionals/optimal-care-pathway-hub/](https://pancreaticcancer.org.uk/health-professionals/optimal-care-pathway-hub/)

