

Summary Report for Penzance Community Outreach Participants – March 2025

1. Introduction

In March 2025 a Community Outreach event was held in Penzance attended by the Cancer Theme of the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences (NDPCHS), Oxford University, in partnership with local organisations, GPs and individuals.

The aim of the event was to explore the views and experiences of the public about cancer testing in NHS General Practice.

This report provides a summary of the event, the views participants shared and our planned future work with local communities.

2. Partnership Building

Local partners included NIHR Regional Research Delivery Network South West Peninsula (RRDN SWP), Volunteer Cornwall, Atlantic Health Group and Whole Again Communities. The event was hosted by Whole Again Communities at their Treneere Community hub.

The event started with a welcome from Whole Again Communities, who shared their belief in healthy living, healthy eating and strong communities. Partners from RRDN SWP, highlighted the impact of research trials by showing a video of a local Cornwall patient receiving a cancer diagnosis, as a result of being involved in a research trial. A patient from the Atlantic Health Group, spoke about her personal experience of cancer treatment and early diagnosis. Research GP Brian Nicholson spoke about the role of general practice in the early detection of cancer. This led to participants sharing their experiences. These were captured by a sketch artist:



The participants were able to see how the Mobile Research Unit enabled people from Cornwall to engage in research:



3. Findings from Participants

The participants talked enthusiastically about their experiences of accessing general practise for care and the challenges they face. This included people who had previously received a cancer diagnosis. Participants supported the idea of early detection of cancer through non-invasive tests, but questioned how this would be possible in general practice, when it is already struggling to meet patient need. Key issues identified were:

- Difficult to get testing for cancer, especially at younger ages, despite having symptoms.
- Struggle to be taken seriously by GPs, which results in people losing confidence and trust in health professionals.
- Having to travel to distant hospitals from home. This is uncomfortable for anyone with cancer because of Cornwall's infrastructure and distances.
- Seeing different GPs each time erodes confidence.
- Suggestion for patients to receive training on how to use specific language and words so that GPs take concerns seriously.
- Some improvement in provision of health services identified across Cornwall over time and especially over 10 years.

4. Next Steps from the Cancer Theme

By reviewing the feed-back we gathered from Penzance and the other locations we have committed to the following actions to try and address some of the concerns expressed above:

- Producing a video explaining what cancer is, what metastases is and why it spreads.
 - Engage with local GPs to attend our future events, to advise patients of commonly used terms to communicate effectively with health professionals.
 - Producing a glossary of commonly used terms in cancer testing i.e. positive, negative test results, and on health body literacy (being aware of own body and any changes).
 - Arrange future events in each location to promote ongoing research studies, such as the ARMADILLO study (study of effectiveness of multi-cancer tests in primary care).
- These follow up events will take place between October 2025 – April 2026.

For further information or for a copy of the full report, please contact Haleema Aslam (Cancer Theme, Community Liaison Manager, Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences (NDPCHS), Oxford University) via: haleema.aslam@phc.ox.ac.uk