

# ovacome..

## ovarian cancer

SUMMER • 2025 •

### **ALL THINGS TRAVEL**

GET EXPERT TRAVEL ADVICE  
AND MAKE YOUR NEXT  
HOLIDAY COUNT!

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### **PUTTING PATIENT CARE FIRST**

READ UP ON THE GRACEFUL STUDY

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### **ULTRA PROCESSED FOODS - FACTS AND MYTHS**

WITH SPECIALIST ONCOLOGY  
DIETITIAN RACHEL WHITE

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### **CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

REFLECTING ON OUR  
LUNCH AND LEARN DAYS

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**Supportive caring  
community**

Freephone support line:

**0800 008 7054**



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The theme of this edition is **Community**. This is something we saw in action throughout OCAM 2025.

Thanks to your incredible energy and commitment, we didn't just reach our £75,000 goal...we smashed it! Raising an amazing total of **£92,369**. Every year during OCAM, you come together to raise awareness of ovarian cancer symptoms, and we're always so grateful.

As a small charity, we keep our costs low. There's no plush office or big team - everyone, no matter their role, gets stuck in to deliver our services and support.

When we launched our new website in April, we built it ourselves using a cost-effective platform and asked our community to help test and refine it. That same spirit of collaboration shaped our May AGM, where staff, trustees, and members came together to celebrate achievements and tackle future challenges.

**Community is at the heart of everything we do** - from running events across the UK, to campaigning for policy change. If you're already a member, you'll receive chances to get involved - and we always welcome your ideas.

Not a member yet? Join us today by visiting:  
[www.ovacom.org.uk/join-our-community](http://www.ovacom.org.uk/join-our-community)

Together, we're creating real change for **everyone** affected by ovarian cancer, now and in the future.

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**BEAT  
CANCER**

Thanks to Beat:Cancer for funding our support line.

If there are any topics that you would like us to cover in the magazine, please contact [media@ovacom.org.uk](mailto:media@ovacom.org.uk)

Registered charity number 1159682. To register as a member of Ovacom please visit our website [www.ovacom.org.uk/become-a-member](http://www.ovacom.org.uk/become-a-member), call our office team on 0207 299 6654, or send your details to 55 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8RT. © 2023 Ovacom

Ovacom is a voluntary organisation and relies on donations. The information gathered in this magazine is from many sources and is provided for guidance only. Ovacom has made every effort to ensure that it is accurate but, can make no undertakings as to its accuracy or completeness.

All medical information should be used in conjunction with advice from medical professionals.

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Ovacom was founded in 1996 by the late Sarah Dickinson. Her husband, Adrian Dickinson, is a trustee of the charity. Other trustees of the charity are: Cathy Hughes (Chair), Paul McKew (Treasurer), Sean Kehoe (Medical Adviser), Marta Wojcik, Lesley Sage, Victoria von Wachter, Samira Shah, Michelle Hill and Richard Riley. Ovacom's patron is Jenny Agutter.

**Supportive, caring community**

Freephone support line (weekdays 10am - 5pm):

0800 008 7054  
or phone the support team on 07503 682 311



@Ovacomcharity



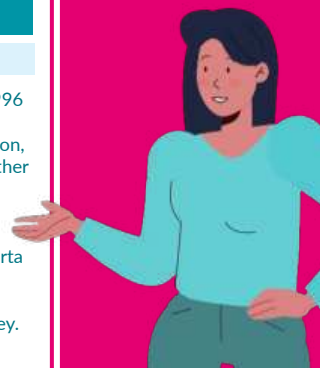
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**Become a member**  
It's free and you'll receive regular email updates.

To find out more and to become a member email [ovacom@ovacom.org.uk](mailto:ovacom@ovacom.org.uk) or call 020 7299 6654



# Reflecting on Members Day 2025

I always find this a great, fun, day. I think Ovacome is a great charity. I signpost a lot of my patients to it. The environment is very relaxed, it's very inclusive, everybody is very friendly. It's about interacting with other people, seeing their experiences.

*- Dr Rowan Miller*

**We were delighted to host another fantastic Members Day this year on a lovely sunny Saturday back in March. This is the only event of its kind in the UK, bringing together those affected by the disease with leading experts.**

**Dr Rowan Miller** presented updates in ovarian cancer, **Professor Christina Fotopoulou** shared a presentation on surgery for recurrent ovarian cancer, **Professor Gordon Jayson** joined us to discuss how anti-vascular drugs should be used to treat ovarian cancer, and **Dr Jacqueline Filshie** rounded off the day with a presentation on the topic of acupuncture. Our immense thanks to all of our speakers for their time, and insightful talks.

We'd also like to thank our amazing volunteers, who are invaluable to us in helping to make these events run smoothly, the members who took part in filming content for us, and everyone that joined us on the day. It was wonderful to see so many new faces and catch

up with old friends. We hope everyone enjoyed the day and took valuable information away from the sessions. Visit our YouTube channel

[www.youtube.com/@OvacomeCharity](https://www.youtube.com/@OvacomeCharity) to see highlights and talks from the day.

*The event was kindly funded by the London Freemasons, National Lottery Awards for All, and together with GSK.*

If you didn't make it down to London we have more events in local areas throughout the rest of the year, including Norwich, Cardiff and Cheltenham. Visit our website or call us to check out where you can attend an event more local to you. Did you know that if you're a member and need help to access one of our events we can help fund transport or give you practical assistance? *Get in touch to let us know how we can support you.*





# MARATHON TEAM **SMASH** FUNDRAISING RECORD

Congratulations and a heartfelt thank you to our incredible London Marathon runners! On 27 April, an extraordinary group of 13 fundraisers laced up their trainers and took on the legendary London Marathon in support of Ovacome's vital services. With months of dedicated training and tireless fundraising behind them, they resolutely crossed the start line to do their sponsors and our ovarian cancer community proud.

Nestled among the roaring crowds lining the course, Ovacome's staff team, trustees, and the proud friends and family of our fantastic runners added to the din! *The atmosphere was truly electric.*

At the finish line, Ovacome's fundraising team were thrilled to celebrate with our (somehow still standing!) team: *"It's an incredibly moving day"* says Imo, our Community and Challenge Fundraising Manager. *"You can really sense that everyone is running for somebody. Meeting our runners after they've given so much to our community – both physically and emotionally – is always incredibly inspiring. Their commitment means everything to our small charity and really is what makes our work possible".*

Together, Team Ovacome raised a phenomenal **£55,815.94** – our highest London Marathon team total EVER! To our marathon champions: thank you – we are so proud, your efforts really are *changing lives*.

## *If you're feeling inspired...*

...whether to run in 2026 or fundraise in your own way, we'd love to hear from you. Visit [www.ovacome.org.uk/fundraising](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/fundraising) or email [fundraising@ovacome.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@ovacome.org.uk)

*We'll be with you every step of the way!*

## A really **huge** thank you...

*...to everyone who donated and fundraised to support our work in OCAM!*

A really huge thank you to everyone who donated and fundraised to support our work in OCAM. You helped us raise £92,369, beating our target of £75,000! You are all fantastic. We loved seeing your wonderful varieties of fundraising ideas; from holding an indoor bowling day, bake and cake sales, coffee mornings, running and walking challenges, 'guess how many stitches' in the knitted Teal puss-in-boots, Bollywood

night, selling homemade items, organising raffles and garden events.

Your events and hard work also helped us raise awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer with tens of thousands of people. We are so grateful for your hard work, community action and your support of Ovacome. *Thank you.*

# Welcoming our *new staff*...



## Lucy Christie

I joined Ovacome in February as Communications Manager. I have over 13 years' experience in the charity sector and previously worked for an educational services charity for autistic children and young adults. I am passionate about helping charities to reach and engage their audiences with information and support. I was drawn to Ovacome after reading member stories on the website and being struck by how valued Ovacome's services are in the community. Outside of work I love walking and Pilates.



## Chloe Willams

I recently joined Ovacome as a Communications and Administration Officer. I have a particular interest in health development and inequality and was especially drawn to Ovacome because of its commitment to addressing these inequalities. I've always wanted to work in the third sector, particularly in a role that uses communication to inspire action and awareness. I previously volunteered at a women's centre and an education charity in rural Ghana. In my spare time, I enjoy crocheting, reading, and cooking.



## Dolores Watters

I've joined Ovacome as a Support Services Officer. I have over 20 years' experience in the health and charity sectors, providing health and wellbeing support and coaching, and have managed and developed support and volunteer led services. I feel privileged to work for Ovacome having benefitted from their fantastic support and information in the past, and I am dedicated to providing compassionate, impactful, quality support in my role. In my spare time I love to travel and read.



## Molly Hoy

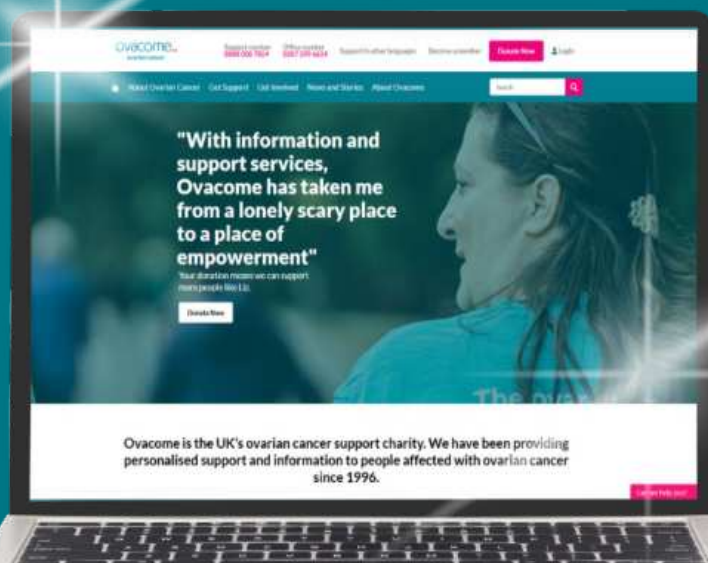
In February, I joined Ovacome as Community Fundraising Officer. I graduated from York Law School after working as a research assistant. I particularly enjoyed writing about gender inequalities, human rights and activism. My personal connection to Ovacome's cause, alongside my passion for building community and connection, is what inspired me to apply for this role. In my spare time, I enjoy cooking and taking (excessive) photographs of my four cats. I also love exploring new places.

## Our new website is live!

With a mixture of excitement and trepidation we launched our new website in April.

We pride ourselves on using our resources responsibly, so when the time came to launch a new website, we chose to do most of the work ourselves to save the cost of an expensive agency.

We want people to be able to find the information they need easily and feel supported by our charity, services and community, so the website continues to be a work in progress, and we'd love your feedback. You can let us know your thoughts here: [www.ovacome.org.uk/website-feedback](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/website-feedback)



# Results from the GRACEFUL study

This important research aims to help clinicians, policy makers and commissioners understand the most important aspects of location of care for patients with gynaecological cancers (ovarian, vulval, vaginal, cervical, and womb).

Gynaecological cancer treatment can sometimes be located within broader women's health services. Many cancer patients have told us they found it distressing to be treated alongside pregnant women and babies/children. Treatments for gynaecological cancers can result in infertility which can leave a lasting feeling of loss and can affect people at any age.

Trans-men and people with non-binary gender can have gynaecological cancer, where being treated within a women's service would also add to the emotional impact of their cancer diagnosis.

The information gathered from the GRACEFUL study will help design and deliver services that avoid unnecessary emotional harm to patients. The study is aiming to identify quick ways to do this.

**The study is asking where best to provide care for patients with gynaecological cancers, to avoid unnecessary distress. The study will:**

- **Gather 500 peoples' views from across the UK with a survey designed with patients.** This will ensure researchers collect the breadth of opinion.
- **Researchers will interview 30 respondents** to understand their views in detail.
- **300 people will be asked to make theoretical choices between different service designs.** This is to understand trade-offs patients make (e.g., dedicated centres over increased travel time to appointments).



One of the clinicians leading the study, **Jo Morrison**, Consultant Gynaecological Oncologist; Honorary Senior Lecturer University of Exeter; Cochrane Senior Editor; Cochrane Reproductive and Sexual Health Thematic Group; Editor in Chief for The Obstetrician and Gynaecologist says:

“We are delighted to be working with Ovacome on this project. We are asking women and people with ovarian and other gynaecological cancer, if the location of where they are seen within the hospital matters to them. From provisional work, we are aware that some people find where they are seen traumatic and insensitive, whereas for others it may matter less.

We want information to help develop services that are patient-centred and trauma-informed. All answers will be anonymous, unless you offer your details so you could be part of further in-depth interviews. Only the research team will know who you are, if you do give us details. Your local gynae cancer teams will not know your answers, or even that you have taken part, so you are free to be open with us. None of your answers will affect your ongoing care.”

## Patient perspective - your views and stories are *powerful*

At Ovacome we know that the way to challenge policy makers, MPs and improve systems is by *amplifying your voices*.

We focus our efforts in **three areas** and have made meaningful progress, including:



**Diagnosis** – An exciting piece of research between University of Nottingham and Ovacome found that information from loyalty card schemes could be used to diagnose ovarian cancer earlier.



**Treatment** - New treatments for ovarian cancer are approved by NICE (National Institute for Clinical Excellence) or SMC (Scottish Medicines Consortium).



Ovacome actively contributes to this process. Our submissions are informed by your views and experiences. This ensures patient voice is represented to the panel that makes decisions about the availability of new treatments.

**Support** – Our Head of Support Anna Hudson was a co author of the BGCS and Menopause guidelines. She sat on the panel as one of the charity partners to help ensure that ‘patient perspective’ was taken into account.

You can participate in the study this summer by scanning the QR code below, or by emailing: [gracefulstudy@somersetft.nhs.uk](mailto:gracefulstudy@somersetft.nhs.uk) or by calling our support line on 0800 008 7054 for more details.

Scan the  
QR code



If you want to get involved and support our work please contact us on [ovacome@ovacome.org.uk](mailto:ovacome@ovacome.org.uk) and to keep up to date make sure you are a Member of Ovacome.



# NAVIGATING ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS

Written by Rachel White,  
Specialist Oncology Dietitian

**Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) have been under the spotlight in the media in recent months. This has caused quite a lot of confusion and worry, so what are they and is there a safe level of UPFs to have in your diet? Rachel White, Specialist Oncology Dietitian and member of Ovacom's Expert Advisory Panel explains further.**

## What are UPFs?

Processed foods are those that have been altered in some way from their natural state. This can include methods such as drying, freezing, fermentation and canning. Examples include frozen vegetables, tinned beans and cheese. Ultra-processed foods have undergone multiple processing steps and include a number of added ingredients. These ingredients, many of which you may not recognise, may include thickeners, sweeteners, colourings, artificial flavourings, and emulsifiers. There is no universally agreed definition of a UPF.

## What does the research say?

There is research that has found that people who eat more UPFs have a higher rate of obesity and chronic diseases including heart disease, diabetes and cancer (particularly colon cancer). UPFs can often be high in calories and be energy dense, this can make them easy to overconsume.

## Should we be eating them?

With both processed and ultra-processed foods, the level of processing alone does not tell us about the nutritional value of the food, for example the macronutrient (carbohydrate, protein, fats, fibre) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) that they provide. Therefore, it is important that we do not just classify a food as 'good' or 'bad'.

It is certainly recommended to cut down on UPFs in the diet, but it is important to recognise that it is incredibly difficult to be perfectly healthy and nutritious in all our food choices all of the time, and we certainly would not recommend cutting them out completely. Not all UPFs are harmful such as some high fibre and fortified foods or plant-based milk alternatives. For example, Weetabix is classified as a UPF because it has barley malt extract added, however it is high in wholegrains, so it certainly wouldn't be a food that dietitians would recommend you avoid.

A more sensible approach would be aiming for an 80/20 rule – 80% whole foods (whole foods consist of a single ingredient and are unprocessed or minimally processed, for

example: fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, beans and lentils, milk, wholegrains and unprocessed meats or fish), then 20% can be focused around food that you enjoy which may be processed. Do not worry about having to avoid them completely, it is more about awareness around the amount and frequency in which you are eating some of these foods.

### Should I be eating UPFs with cancer?

As I mentioned above, currently there is limited evidence about UPFs and cancer, while we know it can increase the risk of some chronic diseases including cancer, we do not know why this is. If you are struggling with your eating, have a reduced appetite or are losing weight, then you may have been suggested to relax healthy eating recommendations by healthcare professionals. This normally ends up meaning increasing UPFs in your diet, but this is reasonable as it is a short term change to ensure you are getting enough nutrition in to keep your energy levels up and stabilise your weight. This can be especially important if you are undergoing treatment. If you are struggling with fatigue then you may be relying on ready meals more, and this is not an issue for concern. Having a ready meal is likely to be a better choice than a takeaway, and why not try adding an unprocessed side dish e.g. side salad, fresh or frozen veg.

## Top tips



- **Try not to worry** about totally avoiding UPFs
- **Rethink meals** – plan meals and cook from scratch when you can. But if you need to use ready meals more frequently, think about adding an unprocessed side dish
- **Read labels** to help identify UPFs
- **Remember everyone is different** and you may need to be more relaxed with your food choices if you are struggling with your eating



For more trusted and up to date information about diet and ovarian cancer, Ovacome has the following resources available. You can always contact our support team for personalised information and support.

### Webinars and talks from experts:

The following webinars can be found on our website: [www.ovacome.org.uk/diet-and-nutrition-webinars](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/diet-and-nutrition-webinars) and YouTube channel:

- **Ovarian cancer and diet mythbusting webinar with specialist oncology dietician, Rachel White:**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySOsQtQRjW0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySOsQtQRjW0)
- **Diet and ovarian cancer webinar with oncology dietician Selin Ramadan:**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhvR1elz2TU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhvR1elz2TU)
- **Q&A with oncology dietician Selin Ramadan:**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oo7BN\\_-mmU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oo7BN_-mmU)
- **Sustainable healthy eating on a budget when you have ovarian cancer webinar:**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lq5DNa2Ye8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lq5DNa2Ye8)
- **Diet and cancer webinar with dietician Adele Hug:**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghsVRM5jiB4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghsVRM5jiB4)

### Information on our website:

- **Ovacome information about diet and nutrition (cancer and your diet / intermittent fasting / plant based diets and soy / sugar and carbohydrates):**  
[www.ovacome.org.uk/diet-and-nutrition](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/diet-and-nutrition)
- **Ovacome information about surgical menopause (includes information about diet and menopause and diet and osteoporosis):**  
[www.ovacome.org.uk/surgical-menopause](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/surgical-menopause)
- **Ovacome information about diet for a blocked bowel:**  
[www.ovacome.org.uk/diet-for-a-blocked-bowel](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/diet-for-a-blocked-bowel)



# Ovacome secures **PIF TICK** accreditation

**Ovacome is delighted to announce that our information booklets have been approved by the prestigious PIF TICK scheme for the second year.**

We now have over 50 information booklets covering ovarian cancer symptoms, types, diagnosis, treatment, side effects and living with the illness – and there are still more to come.

The PIF TICK is the only independently assessed quality mark for trusted health information. It is run by the Patient Information Forum and shows that our information booklets are evidence-based, up to date and easy to understand and use.

PIF research shows that 58 per cent of health professionals struggle to find reliable health information to share with their patients, while half of all UK adults find it hard to access health information they can trust.

To gain the PIF Tick for a further year we have had to prove that:

- Our booklets are endorsed by experts, such as members of our expert panel
- They are supported by patients, such as our members and service users
- They cover rarer types of ovarian cancer
- They were created with patients' access, cultural and literacy needs in mind

The PIF certification confirms that Ovacome is a Trusted Information Creator, and this innovative scheme is being used as a case study by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Meanwhile the PIF report 'Knowledge is Power' shows the need for clear, evidenced health information as 1 in 10 UK adults have been affected by misinformation (rising to 1 in 5 for ethnic minorities) and 80 per cent (80 in 100) say they could manage their health better if they had access to trusted health information.

## Support Ovacome through work pay

**Payroll Giving is an *easy, tax-efficient* way to donate to Ovacome.**

If you pay the basic tax rate through PAYE, for **every £1 that you earn, 20p is paid in tax**. If you donate **£10 a month through Payroll Giving**, we receive the full amount but **only £8 will be deducted** from your net pay.

If you pay **income tax at the higher rate of 40%**, if you donate **£10 a month**, **only £6 would be deducted from your pay**.

Please check if your employer offers Payroll Giving. If they do please consider making a donation through your salary. Let your family and friends know too!

## Know a **company** that could help?

Most companies choose their **Charity of the Year** by nominations from their staff.

**Nominate or ask family and friends to nominate Ovacome today** and help raise vital funds for our life-changing support.



# Joyce's story



**'I feel as though I'm in a daze and this is not happening' - it was such a shock and so hard to take**

Joyce's experience with ovarian cancer started over 20 years ago, around the time period of January 2002. Like many others faced with a diagnosis of ovarian cancer, Joyce initially had vague and intermittent symptoms. These symptoms included bloating, experiencing back pain and fatigue, having painful periods as well as a host of other things. As the symptoms got progressively worse, Joyce was determined to get to the root cause, despite up until that point only receiving a diagnosis of IBS.

"It was just after Easter (2002), I was recovering from a total abdominal hysterectomy which I'd had for endometriosis and suspected fibroids, when I received the news that I labelled in my diary as 'the day my world

collapsed'. Cancer had been found in my left fallopian tube, and the mass had burst and attached to my right ovary and later bowel. In my diary I wrote, 'I feel as though I'm in a daze and this is not happening' - it was such a shock and so hard to take."

At the time, ovarian and gynaecological cancers were far less understood, making things even harder for Joyce.

"My oncologist at the time said my type of cancer was 'as rare as hens' teeth'. The level of research just wasn't at the level of today, so it was a totally isolating experience. I don't remember exactly when, but it was sometime after my first diagnosis that I stumbled across Ovacom. They've been supporting me for 20 years really."

After Joyce's initial experience of cancer, she unfortunately faced a recurrence in 2012, alongside other health issues in her family, but despite this she has still tried to maintain a positive outlook on life.

"The recurrence of cancer in 2012, and being told it was advanced ovarian cancer, took its toll on all of us. Without the enduring love and support of my family - my husband, daughters,

sons in law, and granddaughters - I wouldn't be here. I've been living with this for 23 years now and it really does change your perspective on life, but I just try to keep going - life's for living no matter what, just try to get out there I say."

"Ovacom has been such an important help - providing a mix of information and support in a personalised way. I see Ovacom as a lifeline, and you need as many lifelines as you can get."

Joyce is now set to feature in this year's Touch of Teal show and continues to raise awareness of ovarian cancer and her story - we couldn't be more inspired and thankful!



## Read the full story...

You can read Joyce's full story on the 'Stories' section on our website here:

[www.ovacom.org.uk/stories](http://www.ovacom.org.uk/stories) where Joyce goes into further details of her experiences and also talks about genetic risk and its links to her family history.

# In their own words: *Our fundraisers*

**O**vacome's incredible fundraisers find creative and sometimes unexpected ways to support our work – whether through daring challenges, community events, or personal passions turned into fundraising efforts. In this feature, we hand the mic over to them. Here, in their own words, two inspiring fundraisers share their stories:

## Alec Thompson, *Streatham*:

When you near 30, it becomes a thing that everyone is running a marathon. The idea of doing a challenge really began to appeal to me, but I wanted to do it for a charity that truly meant a lot to me and those around me, and a charity where the funds I would raise would have a huge impact. Over the past 7 years, I have been privy to Ovacome and the fantastic work they do due to my girlfriend's mum, Deanna, having had ovarian cancer. In 2024, I decided it was my year to take on a challenge, and that I wanted this to be for Ovacome, to help all the women and their families in whatever way I can. From this, Ova-It was born, a year where I would run 21 marathons, for the 21 women a day in the UK who are diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

I have just completed my 8th marathon, taking me over a third of the way there. It has been a hard but rewarding start, where all my first 7 marathons were self-organised. I have had support from wonderful friends and family, but am very much looking forward to tackling the Official London Marathon next. The 21 marathons are taking me to Helsinki, Stockholm and Florence, as well as some marathons in places near and dear to mine and my girlfriend's family, such as Exmoor and Norfolk.

Ovacome is such a fantastic charity, who offer support to not only those diagnosed, but to their families and friends as well. Their work to spread awareness on symptoms and treatments is vital. I am honoured to be doing this challenge for Ovacome, for the 21 women a day who are diagnosed and for Deanna.

We are so grateful to Alec for his amazing commitment. If you want to help him reach his target and spur him on through the next 13 marathons, you can donate here: [www.givengain.com/project/alec-raising-funds-for-ovacome-89573](https://www.givengain.com/project/alec-raising-funds-for-ovacome-89573)



**Amanda Jane Davies,**  
*Neyland, Pembrokeshire:*

In 2019, I found Ovacome and cried with relief because I could finally connect with ladies like me, navigating life during and after ovarian cancer. I was diagnosed in 2016 with stage 3B low-grade serous ovarian cancer. I had 18 weekly chemotherapy sessions, debulking and a full hysterectomy. Unfortunately, chemotherapy gave me a pulmonary valve embolism and stage 4 heart failure, so I had more heart surgery including having a pig's pulmonary valve and a mechanical aortic valve. It's rare to have that much damage from chemotherapy, but I was always vulnerable to it, being born with a congenital heart disorder.

Being able to contact Ovacome, through phone call and live chat when I need help is so reassuring. Sometimes just knowing someone is there when you're having a wobble is half the battle. To give back to Ovacome for all their support, like the craft sessions, WhatsApp groups and online meetings, I decided to help raise funds and awareness. I knitted Ovacat, a character similar to Puss-In-Boots dressed in Ovacome colours. I charged a small fee to guess how many stitches were in it. The idea was inspired by my love of knitting. I thought that if I ran it as a competition during OCAM, I could raise vital funds, and someone would get a cute kitty at the end!

I shared my competition on Ovacome's Facebook page, as well as my socials. I requested leaflets and symptoms cards to put in the library, along with posters and a donation box to run the competition there too. I raised £143.00. I can't run a marathon, sky dive or bungee jump, but I can knit, so if knitting can raise awareness and money for Ovacome, then hand me my needles!

## Feeling inspired?

If you'd like to fundraise to support those affected by ovarian cancer, we'd love to hear from you!

Visit

**[www.ovacome.org.uk/fundraising](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/fundraising)**

drop us a line at

**[fundraising@ovacome.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@ovacome.org.uk)** or call

us on **0207 299 6654**



# MAKE YOUR NEXT HOLIDAY COUNT!



Plan your dream holiday with Not Just Travel to support Ovacome's work!

What if your next trip could mean life-changing support for someone affected by ovarian cancer? Amy at Not Just Travel is making this possible. She's a personal travel consultant with a special connection to our community.

"Ovacome is a charity very close to my heart", she explains. "They supported my mum through her ovarian cancer journey, and she was a model for Touch of Teal, which made her feel so special."



Now Amy's giving back in a way that makes booking your holiday both effortless and meaningful. **With her expertise, you'll enjoy:**

- **Stress-free planning** – Amy takes care of everything, from UK escapes to dream destinations worldwide
- **Exclusive deals** – access to over 450 travel suppliers for the best value
- **Supporting Ovacome at no extra cost to you** – Amy donates 25% of her commission to funding our vital services

**Plus, deal alert!** Until 31 July, Amy is offering 2 free lounge passes for every booking made over £2,000!

Every booking with Amy results in an average donation of £75 to the charity – that could pay for 2.5 hours of 1-1 specialist support for someone in need of our specialist support. Even better, Amy's service is completely free. To make your holiday matter and start planning your next adventure today, visit [www.notjustholidays.com/ovacome](http://www.notjustholidays.com/ovacome)



## Download our free *Travelling abroad* booklet

We have been updating our information on travelling abroad if you have an ovarian cancer diagnosis, just in time for the summer holiday season.

Our new booklet is full of advice on travel arrangements, looking after your health, and getting suitable and affordable travel insurance, which can often be a major issue. You can see it and download it on our website in the **Living with ovarian cancer** section here: [www.ovacome.org.uk/information-booklets](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/information-booklets)

If you are planning a foreign trip, then the first step is to check with your clinical team that you are well enough to travel safely. You also need to plan if you need to take medication with you or need vaccinations. **Make sure you read our booklet well before you go to help you prepare!**



# Buying travel and health insurance

This can be a problem if you have a cancer diagnosis. But here are some top tips from our booklet, from expert Fiona Macrae, founder of Insurancewith:



**Be flexible around travel dates, destinations and how long the trip will be** – this can keep costs down.



**Think of the time since your surgery, or since you started medication, or changed medication.** If you have had chemotherapy you need to have a least one cycle completed before cover would be considered, so side effects have settled or are managed.



**Don't exclude your cancer from any insurance that you buy.** If you do, you could be excluding health issues that arise from treatment side effects, like infections or DVT.



**If you have a travel insurance policy with your bank account or credit card, ask them first when looking for cover.** It may be your most cost-effective option.



**If you are travelling in a group, such as your family, then insure everyone on your specialist policy that covers your cancer.** Doing this would give cancellation cover for all of you.

In the booklet Fiona also explains the medical screening systems that travel insurance providers' use and we have lots more tips to help you get the best deal.

## Support near you



At Ovacomе, we know how important it is to care for your whole self when you're affected by ovarian cancer. That's why we host free Health and Wellbeing Days across the UK, offering a chance to connect, unwind, and explore supportive therapies and resources in a welcoming space. Whether you're living with ovarian cancer or supporting someone who is, these events are for you.

Join us for our upcoming events:

**Norwich Health and Wellbeing Day - 19 July 2025**  
[www.ovacomе.org.uk/event/norwich-hwd](http://www.ovacomе.org.uk/event/norwich-hwd)

**Cardiff Health and Wellbeing Day - 16 August 2025**  
[www.ovacomе.org.uk/event/cardiff-hwd](http://www.ovacomе.org.uk/event/cardiff-hwd)

**Coventry Lunch and Connect - 2 September 2025**  
[www.ovacomе.org.uk/event/coventry-lunch-and-connect](http://www.ovacomе.org.uk/event/coventry-lunch-and-connect)



# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS:

Ovacome's Lunch and Learn days make an impact

At Ovacome we are committed to understanding the **barriers that underserved communities and people have in accessing diagnosis, information and support** around ovarian cancer.

Our Community Lunch and Learn days are great opportunities for community engagement and health promotion and it is one of the most effective ways we can reach communities. We know that place-based work, where community leaders, representatives and organisations work alongside their communities and already have deep trust and local knowledge of the people who live there, is instrumental to better supporting people affected by ovarian cancer.

With this in mind, we always ensure our Community Days are delivered in a venue that is both accessible and well known by the people we are trying to reach. We remove as

many barriers as possible, so people feel comfortable and confident to join us. The format of our Community Days is always informal, and whilst we deliver lots of information, we do so around a table, over coffee and food.

Connecting through conversation and learning about the specific ways communities receive health information is important, but we also really want to know what matters to the people who attend.

In 2025 we have run Community Days in Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, Belfast and Walsall, and have partnered with over 30 organisations so far to discuss health inequalities, best practice, support and how we can improve ovarian cancer awareness work in underserved communities.



We always learn so much and find new and innovative ways to work in partnership. Some examples of work which have been established from Community Days include the sharing of our BEAT community language videos on library screens, ongoing reciprocal sharing of training and information, co-designing tailored information for specific communities, creating networks of shared learning between multiple organisations, and ongoing opportunities to deliver work in partnership.

Our work will continue, with Community Days planned in Brecon later on in the year. We are confirming the remainder of the 2025 programme over the summer so please contact Liz Waters on [l.waters@ovacome.org.uk](mailto:l.waters@ovacome.org.uk) or 0207 299 6654 to find out more.



## SONATA Study

Occasionally a Community Day will coincide with another piece of work, and we can harness the power of community engagement to enhance this work. A research project in the West Midlands called **SONATA (tranSforming Ovarian caNcer diAgnostic paThwAys)** has been trialling whether a new test called ROMA could help detect ovarian cancer earlier. The project involves Sandwell and West Birmingham (SWB) NHS Trust and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust (WHT) pairing up with primary care provider Modality and the University of Birmingham, to offer a ROMA test to patients experiencing symptoms of ovarian cancer.

This study will look at blood samples taken from patients with symptoms when GP's request a CA125 test. The study will test around 38000 CA125 blood test samples taken across patients in the West Midlands and Gateshead. The laboratories will automatically add on ROMA test to these samples. ROMA testing is not currently a standard test and therefore it will not be fed back to patients. Patients will be informed of their CA125 results as usual, and the GP will act accordingly to the results.

Throughout the year we have been supporting this work by raising awareness of ovarian cancer signs and symptoms in a targeted way, reaching out to communities and organisations across West Birmingham and Walsall, in areas served by a Modality GP practice. We held Community Days in Birmingham and in Walsall, and continue to deliver awareness sessions, distribute resources and engage with underserved communities to ensure that anyone experiencing signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer seeks advice from a healthcare provider. We have attended 14 events and run targeted online campaigns in different languages to encourage people to know the symptoms of the disease and book a GP appointment without delay.

# Our stories

*Real voices, Real experiences*

The Our Stories series of webinars are an ongoing programme of talks where Ovacom members share their experiences of a particular aspect of living with ovarian cancer.

## PAST WEBINARS

In the past discussions have included:

- Being diagnosed with ovarian cancer as a younger person
- Talking to family and friends about my diagnosis
- Being diagnosed with a rarer type of ovarian cancer
- Living with a BRCA/Lynch genetic change
- Movement
- Riding the rollercoaster: resilience, hope and the power of connection

Earlier in 2025 Lisa and Sophie presented on *Our First Year after Diagnosis*. The session included Sophie's discussion of chemotherapy side effects; coping with menopause; managing other people's expectations; and Lisa's discussion of coming to terms; taking charge; and the new me. **Karen and Lesley have also presented on *Living with a stoma***, speaking about the emotional impacts, getting back to the things they enjoy and practical tips and advice and leaning on support from others. You can find out more about our specialist support for those with Stoma's here: [www.ovacome.org.uk/stoma-group](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/stoma-group)

**I think it is very important for women to know they are not alone...This is why your webinar was brilliant! First, both speakers have a stoma and secondly, they were giving their personal accounts of what happened to them and how they deal with their daily experiences. They showed their raw emotions which enabled me to process and identify with both of those ladies.**

*- A quote from Pina who attended the Members Series session on 'Living with a Stoma'*



We are so grateful to all our speakers so far for sharing their expertise and experiences.

For a full listing of events including Our Stories, see our website here:

[www.ovacome.org.uk/all-support-events](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/all-support-events)

This page also lists our support groups, including Coventry where Sophie and Lisa met one another! Our friendly groups are always looking to welcome new members and they are all listed at the link above.

**In addition, our Coventry group will be having an extended session on 2 September with two talks and Q&A, and lunch provided. To book a place, see our website here: [www.ovacome.org.uk/event/coventry-lunch-and-connect](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/event/coventry-lunch-and-connect) or call our support team on 0800 008 7054 Monday - Friday 10am-5pm.**

## STAY UP TO DATE

To stay up to date on all that is happening at Ovacom, join us as a member and subscribe to our monthly Community News email

[www.ovacome.org.uk/become-a-member](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/become-a-member)

If you're not sure if you are subscribed, contact our office team at

[ovacome@ovacome.org.uk](mailto:ovacome@ovacome.org.uk)

and they can make sure you will receive Community News going forward.

# Walk With Us this September!

Looking for a meaningful way to get active and connect with others affected by ovarian cancer? Join us for Ovacom's annual "Walk With Us" event at Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, on Saturday 27 September 2025.

This uplifting community walk marks the grand finale of Gynaecological Cancer Awareness Month (GCAM).

Whether you prefer a gentle stroll or a more energetic pace, there's a distance to suit everyone with 2km, 5km and 10km routes. Pick your challenge in advance or decide on the day. If walking isn't for you, no problem! Bring a picnic and enjoy the beautiful surroundings.

Everyone's welcome – friends, family, neighbours, dogs!

Nicola, who took part last year, reflects: "I signed up thinking that it would be a good opportunity to meet others with similar stories, and it more than delivered. I left the event with a real buzz, having met some wonderful and inspiring people. I could have easily walked and chatted my way around another couple of laps! It was far more than a fundraising event – it was an opportunity for friendship, network building and a desire to do more!"

While the event is free to join, we're aiming to raise £75,000 this GCAM to ensure that no one faces ovarian cancer alone. Your contribution could bring us a step closer to reaching this goal – that's why we're encouraging attendees to collect sponsorship for their walk. If you commit to raising £100, you'll receive an Ovacom T-shirt and wristband.

**Sign up today! Register now at**  
[www.ovacom.org.uk/event/walk-with-us](http://www.ovacom.org.uk/event/walk-with-us)

**Got questions? Contact us at**  
[fundraising@ovacom.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@ovacom.org.uk) or call 0207 299 6654

**Can't make it? Join Ovacom's Teal Walk at home! Set your own walking challenge and raise funds wherever you are. Prefer a different way to support us? There are plenty of ways to get involved – call us and share your ideas!**

# Wear Ovacome with *pride* this summer!

Support Ovacome by showcasing our merch in the glorious sunshine! Whether you're heading to the shops, sipping your morning coffee, or simply out and about, our branded kit is perfect for raising awareness and supporting our wonderful community.

Head to [www.ovacome.org.uk/shop](http://www.ovacome.org.uk/shop) to check out the full range!



## 1 OVACOME TOTE BAG

Spread awareness and ditch plastic with our bold, double-sided tote. Priced at: £10.00

## 2 #TALKTEAL MUG

Spark conversations with every sip using our #TalkTeal mug – ideal for home or work.

Priced at: £8.00



## 3 OVACOME T-SHIRT

Wear your support proudly – our teal T-shirts feature key ovarian cancer symptoms.

Priced at: £10.00



## 4 OVACOME TROLLEY COINS

Constantly forgetting that all-important £1 coin for your weekly food shop?

Buy one of our handy trolley coin key rings so you're never caught in a pinch again! Every penny you spend funds our life-changing services.

Priced at: £1.50

