

Getting support in the UK (online & locally)

What Fight Bladder Cancer supporters say about the difference a support group makes to them:

I cannot begin to tell you how important the Fight Bladder Cancer support group has been to me – even when I lost my husband suddenly, they were there holding me up. Then, a storm damaged my roof and a lot of my memories of my husband were lost, but still I was not alone. They were with me all the way. Nowadays I try to do as good a job at giving support to new members because I was treated so very well when I needed that help.

It has helped me to learn that this disease can be beaten if it is diagnosed early enough. There is a wealth of information, advice and guidance and I've found that the support and camaraderie within the group is second to none. This applies to sufferers and carers alike.

No matter what you felt or what you said, there was always someone there who understood or even if they didn't, had virtual hugs to spare. I've always been so impressed with how welcoming and friendly everyone is and surprised by how much it helps.

At Fight Bladder Cancer we encourage everyone affected by bladder cancer to get advice and support from others who also have real experience of dealing with a bladder cancer diagnosis, treatment and side effects.

Receiving a cancer diagnosis often triggers a strong emotional response. Although some people experience shock, anger and disbelief, others may feel intense sadness, fear and a sense of loss. Loneliness and isolation are other common feelings because even the most supportive family members and friends cannot understand exactly how it feels to have cancer.

Support groups offer the chance for people to talk about their experiences with others living with cancer, which can help reduce stress. Group members can share feelings and experiences that may seem too strange or too difficult to share with family and friends.

The group dynamics often create a sense of belonging that helps each person feel more understood and less alone.

In addition to sharing their feelings and experiences, support group members may discuss practical information, such as what to expect during treatment, how to manage pain and the other side effects of treatment, and how to communicate with health care providers and family members. Exchanging information and advice may provide a sense of control and reduce feelings of helplessness.

Many studies have shown that support groups help people with cancer feel less depressed and anxious and more hopeful. Although they are not the right fit for everyone, and some people may benefit from other sources of support, people who choose to participate in support groups often find that the experience enables them to manage their emotions better.

Choosing a type of support group

To decide which type of support group may fit you best, consider your needs and personality.

Do you need emotional support, information and education, or a combination of both?

Do you prefer sharing your experiences face-to-face with a group, or are you more comfortable sharing in an Internet support group such as the Fight Bladder Cancer Confidential Forum?

If you are not interested in joining a support group or find that support groups are not helpful for you, consider these other sources of support:

- Use the Fight Bladder Cancer Bladder Buddy service.
- Talk with a friend.
- Get individual counselling or psychotherapy.
- Ask a doctor or nurse specific questions.
- Participate in activities that you enjoy and that allow you to connect with friends or family.

Finding support online – our Confidential Forum

Our [Confidential Forum](#) is a great place to get support and advice. With about 2,000 members from the UK and further afield, this group of patients and carers is there 24/7 to help you in any way they can. The forum is a place to get help, ask questions, to tell your story and to help others.

The forum is run as a closed group on Facebook which you can join by invitation. Head to [this page](#) on Facebook and ask to join the closed group. If you're not currently on Facebook we have all the information you need about how to join and access our Forum [here](#).



Our Bladder Buddy Service

If you would prefer to talk to someone on a one-to-one basis, do get in touch with us and we will do what we can to find you someone to talk to privately. If possible, this person will be of the same gender, and age group, have been through the same treatment and live near you.

To see if we can help, just email Annette, our Bladder Buddy coordinator.

annette@fightbladdercancer.co.uk

Finding a Local Support Group

Currently there are not that many bladder cancer support groups that have been set up by hospitals themselves. The ones that we know of, some which cover all urological cancers rather than just bladder cancer, are listed on the next page with contact details.

Fight Bladder Cancer have helped some of these groups get started but we have now started to set up our own "Fight Clubs" throughout the country. These will start to go live early in 2016 with a target of between 8 and 10 local groups by the end of the year.

The first locations for our Fight Clubs will be in:

- Lancaster
- Barrow
- Carlisle
- Sheffield
- Manchester
- South Buckinghamshire/Oxfordshire
- Essex
- Portsmouth/Southampton
- Mid Wales/Shrewsbury

If you would like to join any of these groups or help with setting up a local group in your part of the country, please get in contact at support@fightbladdercancer.co.uk

Meeting dates and information for all bladder cancer local support groups are featured on the [Events Calendar](#) on our website.

Other local bladder cancer support groups

We support all local groups across the country and will supply speakers, leaflets and posters, etc. to these groups on request. The current groups that we know about shown overleaf.

BRIGHTON

Meets every 2 months at the Audrey Emmerton Building (opposite the Sussex County Hospital).

Email: admin@beatbladdercancertogether.co.uk

www.beatbladdercancertogether.co.uk

ISLE OF WIGHT

Meets monthly at the Wessex Cancer Centre, Lugley Street, Newport.

Contact: Dave Kiely – Chairman

Call: 07548 549038

Email: davekielyiow@aol.com

isleofwighturologycancersupportgroup.org.uk

LINCOLNSHIRE

Meets 4 times per year in different locations around the county (Lincoln, Louth, Boston, Grantham)

Contact: Angie Parton

Call: 01507 631451

Email: angela.parton@ulh.nhs.uk

LONDON – GUY'S AND ST THOMAS'

A support group for patients and carers from Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital

Contact: Suzanne Amery 44(0)20 7188 7636

Email: suzanne.amery@gstt.nhs.uk

READING

Meets monthly at St Andrews Church Hall, London Road, Reading, RG1 5BD (just a few metres from the Royal Berkshire Hospital's main entrance)

www.readingbladdercancersupport.org.uk

SOUTHEND

A general support group for all urological cancer, including bladder, kidney, prostate, testicular and penile cancer. Meets monthly at Southend Hospital.

Contact: Terry Catt 01268 754179

Email: wintell@hotmail.co.uk

SWINDON

Meets at Great Western Hospital, Marlborough Road, Swindon, SN3 6BB

Contact: Dick Hills 07568-551200

Email: swindon@wessexbcs.org.uk

WOLVERHAMPTON

Meets at St Albans Church, Griffiths Drive, Ashmore Park, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV11 2LJ

Contact: Helen Heap – Urology Nurse
01902 694467

Email: helen.heap@nhs.net

ABERDEEN

A general support group for all urological cancers, including bladder, kidney, prostate, testicular and penile cancer. The meetings take place monthly.

Contact: Alan Harrow 01224 555885

CLAN House, 120 Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB25 2QA.

Email: ucan@abdn.ac.uk

EDINBURGH

Contact: Sandra Bagnall – Patient Involvement Manager
01314 657684

Email: sandra.bagnall@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

CARDIFF

Contact: Sarah Bennett 02920 748401

Email: uro.oncology@wales.nhs.uk

<http://bladdercancercardiff.org.uk/>

If you know of any local support groups for bladder cancer that are not included here please do let us know.

Requests for speakers and information should be sent to support@fightbladdercancer.co.uk.

Last update: 1st October 2015



About Fight Bladder Cancer

Fight Bladder Cancer is the only patient and carer led charity for bladder cancer in the UK.

At Fight Bladder Cancer, we take great care to provide up-to-date, unbiased and accurate facts about bladder cancer. We have a very supportive medical advice panel made up of some of the best professionals working with bladder cancer, and hope that our information will add to the medical advice you have had and help you to make decisions.

To donate, go to our **Just Giving** page:

[justgiving.com/fightbladdercancer](https://www.justgiving.com/fightbladdercancer)

or text **FBCD00 £5 to 70070**

Registered charity **1157763**

Please note that our services are not intended to replace advice from your medical team.

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YOU CAN FIND A WEALTH OF INFORMATION, SUPPORT
AND ADDITIONAL DOWNLOADS ON OUR WEBSITE:

[fightbladdercancer.co.uk](https://www.fightbladdercancer.co.uk)