



**Linc Charity**

# **NEXT CHAPTER**

**5 YEAR STRATEGY 2026 - 2031**

Design Sponsored by



**Supporting local blood cancer patients & their families**

**Reg Charity no.1078183**

# Chair's Introduction

It gives me huge pleasure to welcome you all to review Linc's Strategy document. This was made possible due to the commitment and support shown by patients, families, friends, supporters, volunteers, and staff. To each one of you who attended a focus group or took the time to complete our survey, please accept a massive thank you.

Over the last few months, we have been reviewing the results and have formulated our new strategy around these. This sets out the key areas of work for Linc to deliver, our 'Big Objectives'. In taking these forward we will look to prioritise those actions you said are most important.

This is an exciting time for Linc and delivering our new strategy will ensure that we can help more patients and families dealing with a blood cancer diagnosis.

None of this would have been possible without the support of my fellow trustees. The biggest thanks must however, go to the Linc team, led by Lou Neal, our CEO. Together, they have ensured the survey results are formulated into a clear plan and started to action key parts of this, the details of which we will be sharing as they come to fruition.

I am proud and honoured to be involved with Linc during this period of development and growth.

**Gill Parker**  
Chair of Trustees - Linc



# CEO Introduction

**I'm honoured to be writing this introduction to our new strategy.** This offers an ideal opportunity to reflect on how far we have travelled since I joined the organisation in June 2023. Through the team's hard work, Linc is in a stable financial position. We also continue to benefit from a fantastic level of support from Gloucestershire's wonderful community. Together, this offers a firm platform from which we can plan the charity's next five years.

As a long standing and greatly loved local charity, it is incredibly energising to pause and explore fresh ideas, all of which have supporting patients and their families at their very heart. One of our most important values is being patient focused, so in developing this strategy, we first spent time gathering evidence and data through patient and clinician focus groups, followed by conducting a broad survey. Everything set out in this strategy is designed in response to this valuable feedback.

Linc's close relationship with the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust is fundamental to everything achieved to date and everything we will achieve going forward. Our foundations are rooted across Gloucestershire's hospitals, ensuring we are present both where and when patients need us. Our new strategy builds on this strong relationship with the Trust and will help to foster deeper integration and even closer collaboration.

As well as introducing our new strategy, it would be remiss of me not to take this opportunity to thank every member of the Haematology Team for their unwavering support for patients. Whilst developing this strategy, patients told us countless times about the high levels of care that they received from Haematology and the positive impact this has on them and their families during an extremely challenging time.

Our new strategy is both carefully considered and ambitious. It will see us not only continuing to fund vital aspects of the Trust's blood cancer care, including both Clinical Psychology support and Clinical Trials, but also offering a range of new services ourselves focused on making a real difference for local blood cancer patients and their families.

Blood cancer is a disease of extremes. We see both patients in crisis, dealing with an aggressive condition, as well as other patients successfully living with the disease long term. Linc needs to support all these people to the best of our ability. To do this, we need to continue to listen to patients, keep vital services, and, when needed, be innovative, adopting a fresh approach to our work. This strategy sets out how we will achieve this.

**Lou Neal**  
Chief Executive - Linc.



# Who We Are

**Linc is one of the oldest hospital charities in the county.** Since 1998, we have proudly supported tens of thousands of adults and their families to cope with the impact of a loved one being diagnosed with, or living with, blood cancer.

A unique feature of our work is that we sit within the Haematology departments at both Gloucester Royal Hospital and Cheltenham General Hospital. This places us at the heart of the Haematology care, enabling us to collaborate effectively with clinical teams and be on hand to offer support to patients and families when they need us most.

For over 20 years, we have funded Clinical Psychologists offering tailored emotional support within the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. They are specialists in supporting patients with blood cancer and have many years of experience, allowing them effectively to explore with patients how best to meet their needs. This can involve a wide range of support, including talking about the impact of having cancer, looking at ways to manage the stress and challenging emotions often associated with a diagnosis, or supporting patients to talk to their children about a diagnosis.

We also fund clinical trial nurses who work with blood cancer patients receiving treatment and support them to access trials that could help them further. This also provides new learning and information, which has the potential to change future outcomes for blood cancer patients nationally and beyond. For a small charity, Linc has a massive impact!

Away from treatment, we also make a difference to the everyday lives of patients and their families. Our long-standing and accessible 'Linc Fund' offers valuable financial aid. In the past year alone, it has helped with childcare and rent costs, access to alternative pain management and play therapy sessions for children. The Linc Fund also pays for items needed within the hospitals that the Trust would not otherwise be able to provide, this includes Sky TV for patients who can spend lengthy periods receiving hospital treatment, the refurbishment of ensuite facilities and vital equipment. This all has a significant impact on patients.



The Linc Team

Nikki Tandy



***"The Linc fund is essential, and people need to be made aware of its importance for people facing the ongoing financial struggles Cancer brings. It's not just financial it's a lifeline to carrying on. We applied to have our childcare costs covered so I could attend my daily treatments at the hospital. The overwhelming sense of relief when we were told it was approved was indescribable. It meant my husband could continue to work knowing both myself and my son were safe. Myself and my husband also accessed the Linc Clinical Psychology team, they gave us a guided way through the dark. We really value the difference it has made and are eternally grateful to Linc Charity for being an invaluable part of me completing treatment."** (Nikki Tandy)*



Linc Charity



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[www.linccharity.org](http://www.linccharity.org)



# Our Mission and Vision

## Vision

A Gloucestershire where everyone affected by blood cancer feels supported, understood and never alone.



## Mission Statement

Linc exists to ensure that people affected by blood cancer in Gloucestershire, and their families, achieve the best possible outcomes and quality of life by providing practical and emotional support, offering grants, and funding research.



## Our Values

### Compassionate

We listen with care and respond with kindness, always putting people at the heart of what we do.



### Patient-centred

Everything we do is shaped by the needs, experiences and voices of people affected by blood cancer and their families.



### Respectful

We recognise that every experience of blood cancer is unique and treat everyone with dignity, empathy and understanding.



### Belief in Progress

We are committed to improving lives and patient outcomes by supporting effective and meaningful research in haematology.



### Act with Integrity

We respect equality, diversity and inclusion, acting openly, honestly, and responsibly, in everything we do and ensure every donation is used wisely and with transparency.



### Sustainability Focused

We seek to maximise our mission while minimising our environmental footprint.



# The Background to Our Work

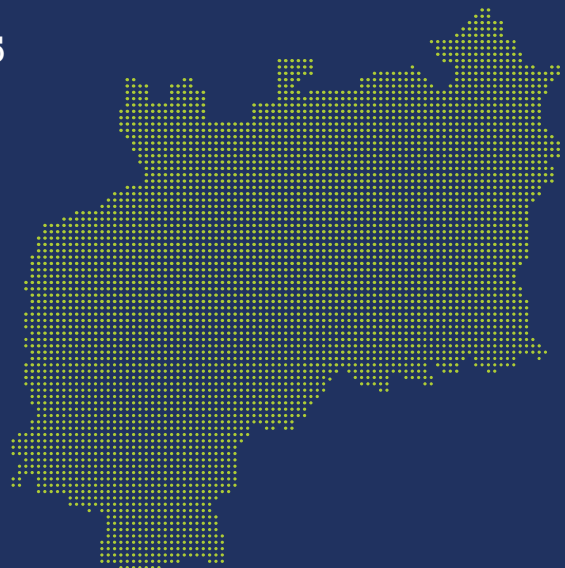
**Blood cancer is frighteningly common** and affects every aspect of patients and their families' lives.

## Nationally:

- \* Blood cancer is the third largest killer of all cancers in the UK.
- \* Blood cancer is the fifth most common cancer in the UK.
- \* One in 16 men and one in 22 women will develop blood cancer in their lifetime.
- \* Currently, across the UK, 280,000 people live with blood cancer.
- \* 40,000 people are diagnosed each year.

## Locally:

- \* There have been over 18,000 haematology appointments in Gloucestershire since April 2025
- \* 89% of patients are seen at Gloucester Royal Hospital's Edward Jenner unit
- \* There are around 237 people newly diagnosed each year in Gloucestershire with blood cancer.
- \* In 2025 there were 500 appointments with Linc's Clinical Psychologists
- \* In 2025 there were 142 patients recruited to Haematology Clinical Trials in Gloucestershire



# Blood cancer is complex

**There are over 100 distinct types of blood cancer**, ranging from slow to fast growing. After a diagnosis patients with an acute cancer often require urgent treatment, while people with a less aggressive form of the disease can live for years or even decades, with less medical intervention.

Linc is proud to be the only Gloucestershire charity whose sole focus is supporting blood cancer patients and their families across the full spectrum of this serious disease. The charity was set up to provide patients with support and items that the NHS can't provide. This includes financial help, improvements to facilities, equipment in wards and funding for clinical haematology posts. Over the last twenty years, if it were not for our funding, locally, there would not be nurses focused specifically on haematology trials. Likewise, there would not have been a provision for blood cancer patients to access clinical psychology.

With the ever present constraints on NHS funding, our support is still vital, as are the services and activities we have historically funded. Whilst we will seek to maintain these where appropriate, in developing our new 5-year strategy, we have listened to patients, families, and clinicians, and based on this, our strategy sets out how Linc intends to further expand our service provision to ensure patients and their families receive the best possible support.



Tom Coote

***“When I was 27, I woke up one morning to massive bruising across my legs; it looked like I had been in a car accident. So, I went to the doctors urgently. That same day, I was diagnosed with Lymphoblastic Leukaemia and put into treatment right away, being told to head to Cheltenham Oncology immediately and to pack for at least 6 weeks.” (Tom Coote)***

## How we developed our strategy

One of Linc's core values is to be **'patient-led.'** This means that we ensure the lived experiences of patients, their families and the clinicians who support them help inform our priorities.

We have always made sure to include Haematology clinicians within our board of trustees, as this helps to ensure we deliver the highest possible impact for patients and their families.

In developing this strategy, this meant that we worked hard to gather data and evidence from both clinicians and patients, which was then used to ensure this strategy was designed around their experiences and the things that mattered most to them.

In 2025, over three months, we ran a series of focus groups for patients, designed to provide them a safe space for them to tell us about their experiences and express their views. We also ran both online and face to face focus groups for clinicians working with blood cancer patients. This ensured that those closest to patients during their treatment could share their knowledge with us.

The findings from the focus groups informed the design of a large-scale public survey, allowing us to explore key issues in more depth. This was circulated to blood cancer patients, families of patients, haematology staff, Linc supporters, Linc volunteers and other interested parties across Linc's social media platforms, our mailing lists, and a range of other settings.

The findings from both the focus groups and survey were presented at a Strategy Day, attended by Linc's staff and Trustees, which helped shape the key themes and actions you see set out below.



Caroline Wynn

# Our Big Objectives

## Expand Our Emotional Support Offer

Linc will expand our emotional support services, launching a counselling service at a non-clinical space. This will help us reach more patients and family members. We will also enhance this offer beyond clinical settings by developing more patient support groups and peer support opportunities.



## Develop a Space for Patients Outside of Clinical Settings

Patient feedback has told us that Linc need to expand its services into non-clinical settings to create a more accessible and comfortable support environment for them and their families. Central to this, we will develop a new base for Linc outside of the hospital environment, which is more flexible and fit for purpose, providing a welcoming and supportive environment for staff, volunteers, supporters, and visitors.



## Providing Financial Assistance for Blood Cancer Patients

As the cost-of-living climbs, we will expand our crisis fund to help patients and families cope with the financial challenges many experience after diagnosis. We aim to scale our resources to match rising demands, raise awareness of the fund's existence, and ensure that accessing support stays quick, simple, and barrier-free.



## Collaborative Clinical Innovation Through Research

Improving long-term outcomes for blood cancer patients through research and clinical trials will remain at the heart of our work. Working with Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust we will ensure patients can take part in medical trials to access innovative treatments.



## Improving the Environment for Blood Cancer Patients in Gloucestershire's Hospitals

Positive physical environments directly affect patient outcomes, so we will remain dedicated to our legacy of supporting hospital improvements. By investing in modern haematology spaces and deepening our partnership with Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, we will ensure clinical teams can deliver excellent care in the best possible environment for patients.



## Enhancing Regional Accessibility for Haematology Care

Travel has been identified as a critical barrier to accessing treatment, especially for those in remote areas or on low incomes. So, we will explore how Linc can provide dedicated patient transport. This will ensure that geographic or financial circumstances do not hinder access to appointments and treatment.



## Enhancing Linc's Impact Through Greater Visibility and Stronger Communication

To build awareness of our work and grow our fundraising, it is essential to boost our visibility, this includes how we inform clinicians and patients about the support available. This can be achieved in many ways, including physical signage in our shops, offices, and hospital waiting areas, improving the reach of our website and social media, or through informative leaflets and training programmes.

We are committed to amplify our work by growing our audience and levels of engagement with Linc. We will build and maintain supporter relationships, tell our stories more loudly and share our news and updates more widely.





# What Are We Going to Do

## 1: Expand Our Emotional Support Offer

- ✿ Continue to fund a Haematology Clinical Psychologist post within the NHS, ensuring that specialist psychological support is available for in patients and selected out patients identified as needing this level of care.
- ✿ Launch our own counselling service, designed to provide tailored, free emotional support to people living with blood cancer, and their families. Our vision is to create a service with minimal waiting times, ideally none, so individuals can receive support when they need it most. We will work collaboratively with the NHS to ensure that patients can quickly access the right level of counselling. This will strengthen our commitment to holistic care, ensuring that no one faces cancer alone.
- ✿ Expand the range and number of support groups for patients and their families, ensuring these are shaped around patient and family needs, interests, and preferred activities. This will include a new structured peer-support programme enabling patients to connect with others who share similar experiences, fostering community, building confidence, and reducing isolation.
- ✿ Explore how best to provide emotional support for haematology clinical teams, recognising the intense and often emotionally demanding nature of their work. By creating safe, confidential spaces to reflect, we will also help ensure clinicians feel valued.

## 2: Develop a Space for Patients Beyond the Clinical Setting

- ✿ Create a welcoming, accessible space that supports wellbeing outside of traditional clinical environments, where patients can access support, information, and non clinical services in a relaxed environment.
- ✿ Open a new base to strengthen Linc's organisational identity by reflecting our values, improving operational efficiency, and enhancing the experience of everyone we interact with. This will also support collaboration, hybrid working and staff wellbeing, as well as enabling new services for patients.

## 3: Providing Financial Assistance for Blood Cancer Patients

- ✿ Increase patient awareness of the Linc Fund by building on our strong relationships with the clinical teams and promoting the service across hospital sites.
- ✿ Assess the level of funds available and how this is distributed, to maximise impact.

## 4: Collaborative Clinical Innovation Through Research

- ✿ Continue to work closely with the Research and Innovation Team at the NHS Trust to ensure that our funding for clinical trials has the maximum impact.
- ✿ Explore new funding opportunities to ensure Linc's commitment to clinical trials and research is sustainable and meets clinical need.

## 5: Improving the Environment for Blood Cancer Patients in Gloucestershire's Hospitals

- ✿ Develop a patient and clinician co-designed work plan highlighting improvements needed across the clinical spaces and waiting areas at both Gloucester Royal Hospital and Cheltenham General Hospital.
- ✿ Ensure that any investment Linc makes into physical improvements of hospital facilities provides value for money.
- ✿ Ensure our presence is appropriately embedded into designs for the redevelopment of the waiting areas for Haematology clinics at both hospital sites.

## 6: Enhancing Regional Accessibility for Haematology Care

- ✿ Undertake a comprehensive research project with blood cancer patients receiving care within Gloucestershire fully to understand their barriers to accessing services and how ease of access could be improved.
- ✿ Build on this research by setting up a dedicated patient transport service to ensure that all patients, regardless of income or location, can access appointments and treatment at the county's hospitals.
- ✿ To help ensure geographical inequality is addressed assess the scope for widening Linc's services to localised hubs across the county.

## 7: Enhancing Linc's Impact Through Greater Visibility and Stronger Communication

- ✿ Improve signage across our offices, clinical spaces, wards and waiting rooms to ensure patients know what we do, and how to access our services. We will also enhance the messaging at our Charity Shops to ensure our customers are aware of the difference they make.
- ✿ Develop our communication across all available media and platforms to ensure that we raise awareness of blood cancers, celebrate our successes, maximise our impact and tell our story more loudly.
- ✿ Build the size and level of engagement of our audience by investing in a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to enhance communication, enable data-driven decision making, increase income and improve supporter experience.