



## Robert's Story

My name is Robert, I am 69 and I had an operation on a rare form of slow-growing cancer in August 2016. I had the symptoms for a year before I had a nucleus test and was diagnosed. Now I attend the Beatson every 6 months for blood tests and hormone tests and if something is wrong I get a call from the hospital.

I first heard about Macmillan @ Glasgow Libraries when my Clinical Nurse Specialist mentioned it after my operation but I wasn't in the right place mentally to take it in or talk to anyone. I found it hard to talk to my family as many people do. I was given a leaflet about the support again at another appointment with my Cancer Nurse Specialist and surgeon and they encouraged me to go to talk to volunteers about how I was feeling and to get extra support.

I went along to Parkhead Library initially where I spoke to volunteers. They referred me for free counselling and complementary therapies from Cancer Support Scotland at both Dennistoun and The Mitchell Library. The therapists taught me techniques to help me sleep and I have a far better night's sleep now. I always have the best night's sleep after my massage! To be honest, I was initially reluctant to speak to a therapist but now I benefit greatly from our talks.

Counselling was hard at first, but they are all nice and professional, they were just waiting for me to speak at first which was initially awkward and then it got easier. It is informal and non-clinical - we even discuss my favourite authors! I got a lot of things freed up from my brain - I used to be up all night and I didn't feel right. I feel in a much better place now.

The volunteers also helped me to get support with benefits and I now receive an Attendance Allowance which I wouldn't have without the referral to the Macmillan Benefits Advisors in Glasgow. I have had a range of health issues throughout my life but for some reason I never thought about benefits I was entitled to.

Visiting Macmillan @ Glasgow Libraries is now part of my routine - a routine I will maintain even after my last therapy session. I go at least once a week and have developed a good relationship with the volunteers there. **It's great to have just general conversation about non-cancer topics to help you get your head around it.**

The libraries are in great locations and are much less formal than a health care setting with a better atmosphere. They are really easy for me to get to - I can access 3 libraries in 15-20 minutes and I live on the bus and train routes. **The best elements of the service include the volunteers, the non-intimidatory environment and knowing that people are there to help.** I also think it's great to talk with volunteers who I find less intimidating than health care professionals.

Although it would be impossible for them to do anything more for me I'll continue to visit - I'm not going distance myself from the support in the libraries. **If you are living with cancer I say go and speak to them. You won't regret it. You'll get nothing but help. You won't find a better place to go to than the library.**