A speed dating event offers the opportunity to bring primary and secondary care together to discuss patient pathways. While speed dating provides a relaxed and informal opportunity for primary and secondary colleagues to ask questions and provide feedback, it can also help to establish processes to aid communication in the future. In addition, a speed dating event can provide a forum for the sharing of ideas and also support new processes, for example around urgent suspected cancer referrals or implementation of the national optimal lung pathway.

**WHY ARE THESE SESSIONS SO IMPORTANT?**

The UK still lags considerably behind in terms of 1 and 5 year survival from cancer. Communication between primary and secondary care is vital in ensuring the patient is reviewed in a timely manner. There is often uncertainty surrounding the appropriateness of a referral and opening up the channels of communication is a vital part of streamlining a patient’s journey. Speed dating supports and reinforces communication between primary and secondary care. It also provides a forum for an exchange of ideas with regard to early diagnosis and early presentation.

This is an excellent opportunity for GPs and MDT members to meet and share information regarding two week waits and the unique set of problems faced by both parties. The richness of the experiences of both teams will be captured by a facilitator on each table and collated following the event. This is a fantastic opportunity to strengthen links, channels of communication and improve our understanding of local cancer services.

The Cancer Research UK Facilitators can work with Commissioners, Planners and GPs to identify existing or future topics that could benefit from a speed dating event. Once a topic has been identified, the Facilitator can liaise with NHS staff across Primary and Secondary care to ensure appropriate invitations are made, arrange timings and venues, and develop suitable, action orientated session plans.

**WHO HAVE THESE INVOLVED SO FAR:**

- Primary care physicians
- Hospital/secondary consultants
- Clinical nurse specialists in hospitals
- Facilitators
- Funders – GP Tutor, Clinical Commissioning group, private provider, third sector
- Secondary Care Cancer Managers

**WHAT IS DISCUSSED?:**

Topic areas which have been included in speed dating events in the past include:

- Introduction of a new pathway (for example symptomatic FIT; national optimal lung pathway)
- Reviewing an existing pathway
- Implementation of new referral guidelines (e.g. NG12)
- Design of direct access or straight to test pathways

**WHAT HAPPENS?**

- Around 5 primary care physicians and 1 or 2 secondary care physicians at each table.
- 15/20 minutes to talk
- A CRUK Facilitator sits on each table, taking notes and prompting if needed.
- Primary or secondary colleagues rotate when bell sounds
- Summary provided to everyone following the event.

**WHAT HAVE PEOPLES COMMITTED TO DOING DIFFERENTLY AS A RESULT OF THESE EVENTS?**

- Try to accelerate our plans in radiology for service development
- Pick up the phone to a consultant
- Give more clinical information in the referral forms
- Feel less “guilty” about possibly investigating or referring people
- Understanding FIT test better and use
- Aim to engage with secondary care more directly
- Contacting cancer manager team and contacting them with regard to my complex patients about referral
- Understand "guilty" about possibly investigating or referring people
- Feel less “guilty” about possibly investigating or referring people
- Contacting cancer manager team and contacting them with regard to my complex patients about referral

**WHO CAN CONTACT IF I AM INTERESTED IN ORGANISING A SPEED DATING EVENT?**

The CRUK Facilitator Programme is committed to supporting health professionals to improve cancer prevention and Early Diagnosis. We would be delighted to hear from you, you can contact us at Facilitators@Cancer.org.uk.