

Jacqui Sharp's story

Most everyone will recall where they were the moment they heard that the twin towers had been hit. For me, sitting at my desk at work there was a sense of the world having shifted slightly; that something had just happened that was going to change perspectives, as indeed it did.

Hearing that I had cancer was a bit like that. There was a rush of emotions, mainly fear initially if truth be told, so many things to think about, everything sort of rushing around in my head and the knowledge that what has just happened is massive.

That's why Help those with Cancer Association (Tulips) was such a god send. Everything moved so quickly, I saw Raziye, the founder, almost immediately and on meeting her most all of my initial fears dissipated. An appointment with an Oncologist was made for a few days later; I had surgery within a week of being diagnosed, with the planned course of treatment starting a couple of weeks after that. Throughout it all I knew I could phone Pam (the Cancer Support Worker for Girne and the East) at Tulips with questions or just for reassurance really. Tulips support is tailored to the individuals needs, as much or as little as you need, but was so welcome at what I look back at as being a confusing time.

The treatment at the State Hospital was excellent. The whole Oncology team were friendly and willing, if somewhat over worked, and I was always treated with courtesy and genuine concern for my well being. The occasional issue with language (entirely my fault) was to be expected and some of the systems had me scratching my (bald) head at times, but it was always going to be a testing time and on reflection everything went relatively smoothly.

As I look back over this past summer my over whelming feeling is one of gratitude. The combination of early diagnosis and speedy treatment means I face the New Year with hope for a life without cancer for many years to come. I am humbled by the work that the whole of Tulips do, their commitment and tenacity is commendable as without donations frankly none of the far reaching treatment and support available would exist.

Yes, I was frightened by my diagnosis and treatment was rotten at times, but as I move on with my life I consider it to have been a life affirming experience. The team at Tulips dispelled fears and myths, helped me access health care at a time when I was confused and vulnerable and were always there if needed. As scary as this last 6 months has been it has been made easier by having them around. Thank you Tulips x