

# Macmillan Cancer Support

## Evaluation of the Online Research Community Pilot



### What our client wanted

Macmillan Cancer Support wanted to explore new and innovative ways of engaging people who have/had a cancer diagnosis, whose voices are rarely heard in research:

- Older people (Aged 65 plus)
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME)
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)

Therefore, Macmillan Cancer Support commissioned Forum Research to deliver a research project using online research communities<sup>i</sup> (ORCs) to explore the experiences of cancer, and of cancer-related services and to investigate inequalities in cancer care experiences. In parallel with the delivery of the research project, Macmillan wanted to undertake an independent evaluation of the online research communities pilot project.

### What Frontline did

Working closely with Macmillan and Forum Research, we undertook consultations with the Macmillan and Forum Research project teams and gathered views from community participants and key stakeholders. We also conducted extensive analysis of community data to determine the quality of interactions between community participants and an assessment of cost-effectiveness of the community model.

### What difference we made

We provided evidence on the benefits and challenges of using the online research community approach and made recommendations to assist Macmillan on their decision about whether to use the approach of online research communities again in future. The report also explored the quality of interactions within the community and provided profiles of how different participants engaged within the community.

### What our client said

***"We commissioned Frontline to carry out an evaluation of a significant piece of online research, and we were very pleased with the result. The project was fairly demanding with large amounts of data to analyse in a relatively short space of time, which they handled professionally. When an unforeseen technical problem threatened the delivery of the project, the Frontline team put in extra work to find a solution at no extra cost. I would work with them again."***

Matt Lumsden, Inclusion Partnerships & Change Lead

<sup>i</sup> ORCs are purpose-built, closed virtual environments where people are brought together to take part in research and consultation activities, including interviews, group discussions, diaries, surveys, polls, self-ethnography.