

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A CANCER DIAGNOSIS

Lisa Sanderson

March 2015

Who am I



- ▣ My name is Lisa Sanderson.
- ▣ I am married to Paul
- ▣ I have three children
- ▣ And six grandchildren
- ▣ I am a Macmillan Head and Neck Cancer CNS
- ▣ In March 2015 I started my busman's holiday

I have cancer !

In the early hours one Friday Morning I found a sausage shaped lump in my breast.

I saw my GP on Monday

Tuesday I had a mammogram, ultrasound and biopsy

Thursday I had cancer

Life as I knew it was about to change!

Heartbreaking

One of the hardest things I have every had to do was telling my children that I had cancer.....

It was worse than having cancer itself

Scans, operations and attachments



Hair today, gone tomorrow



It wasn't long before the chemotherapy started taking effect. So I went shorter and when the inevitable was about to happen I had a trip to Estee lauder counter and my husband armed with hair clippers became a barber for a day.

Altered body Image



From jokes about where to finish putting your foundation on in the absence of a hair line and not having to shave in the early days

To.....

Hating your reflection and not recognising the person staring back at you. Having to watch what your wear to hide the attachments. To struggle to breath just going to the toilet. To be so bloated you could hardly walk.



Second Home: Hospital



Due to a unruly temperature, I spent the vast part of my time in hospital enjoying a vast selection of intravenous cocktails

Feelings



Having cancer is a lonely place. I felt isolated from those I love and the things I liked doing.

I missed my family, my friends and my job

I missed being me !

Friends

I did find out though that I had some amazing friends. That ran races for me and even shaved their head for me so I wouldn't be alone.



Halloween

Although looking rather terrible did have some benefits



Chemotherapy to Radiotherapy

So I managed 5 out of my 6 Chemotherapies until my Oncologist said enough was enough. My temperature wouldn't come down so an MRI was ordered to rule out brain mets. Fortunately it was clear.....

It just turns out that I'm
HOT STUFF

Three and a half weeks of Radiotherapy was a breeze after chemotherapy and managed to get away with only a little breakdown



Treatment finished



Last day of Radiotherapy
11.11.15 Remembrance
day. So what do you do
when you're treatment
finishes?

Do you just walk away
from clinic?

Nope !!! You do it in
style



One Year Cancer Free

In November 2016 I had my first mammogram since I finished my treatment in November 2015. It was a relief to find out it is all clear and I am eternally grateful for my treatment and all my care.

It has though come at a price in that the treatment itself has left me with some long term side effects which have really impacted on our lives. I know I am not alone in this situation and since I have seen both sides of the Cancer journey, I am committed to contribute my experiences to the...

THE LIVING
WITH AND
BEYOND
CANCER
PROGRAMME



Still me - 2017