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Hair loss workshops to be pioneered at Leeds cancer centre

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From left, Krystina Koslowska, lead cancer nurse at the trust; Sadie Smith, Macmillan information and support manager at Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre; Linda Mayhew and Paula Lloyd-Knight, associate director of the National Cancer Action Team.

By Suzanne McTaggart

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A cancer centre at a Leeds hospital has been chosen to pilot a unique hair loss support workshop for patients.

The Linda's Great Lengths scheme, at the Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre at St James's Hospital, will offer patients, their carers and families advice on managing hair loss and choosing the perfect wig.

The sessions, created by cancer patient Linda Mayhew in association with the National Cancer Action Team (NCAT), will also show patients how to trim and personalise wigs.

Scarf-tying and head-covering help will be available from the 'Headstart' team at The Christie Hospital in Manchester, as well as demonstrations from beauty experts on eyebrow and eyelash replacement.

Two pilot workshops were completed successfully and a monthly scheme has now been launched by Linda Mayhew and the NCAT's associate director, Paula Lloyd-Knight.

Paula said: "The NCAT are pleased to have supported the piloting of hair loss workshops by Linda's Great Lengths.

"Seeing the patient as a whole person is extremely important, which is why patients and carers having access to hair loss workshops at different points of their patient journey is so important.

"The hair loss support workers at the Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre are great examples of how existing services can be enhanced through the workshop experience.

"It was clear that both patients and carers got a lot from the workshop, which we are proud to have been part of."

The Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre is already home to two qualified wig fitters and hairdressers, who help patients experiencing hair loss.

Breast cancer patient Shirley Freeman is among those to have benefited from the existing service, with Julie Carrick and Marie Nebard finding her the perfect wig and cutting it into a style she liked.

The new Linda's Great Lengths initiative is designed to complement the centre's existing hair loss services.

Sadie Smith, manager of the Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre, added: "The workshop has enabled us to provide a fantastic level of patient and carer support in a different format, with the valuable additions of practical head covering and eyebrow and eyelash advice."

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