



## Helen Rowntree

Chief Digital, Services & Innovation Officer  
Blood Cancer UK



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If you’ve watched the news over the past four months, it’s more than likely you will have heard the name Blood Cancer UK; impressive for an organisation that rebranded less than four months ago. As a prominent organisation in Blood Cancer research and the national voice for the 200,000 individuals with blood cancer shielding in the UK, the charity has been lobbying the Department of Health, Government and NHS England through the pandemic to represent the best interests of the UK Blood Cancer community.

### Rebrand

You may not be so familiar with their old name, Bloodwise. The charity completed their rebrand and relaunched their website during the lockdown period, which was no small feat given the significant increase in demand for support they received from the Blood Cancer community.

We interviewed Blood Cancer UK’s Chief Digital, Services and Innovation Officer, Helen Rowntree, about their rebrand and lockdown successes.

“When lockdown started, we had discussed whether the rebrand should be put on hold. We were adjusting to COVID & remote

working and facing challenges such as delayed shipping of our newly branded materials. But, as we got closer and closer to launch date, we felt it was more urgent than ever to move to Blood Cancer UK. We felt this would enable us to reach as many people affected by blood cancer as possible and to best represent our community, particularly in the media. In the end, we launched a couple of days earlier than planned. Gemma, our Chief Executive, was interviewed on the BBC the day of relaunch and it just felt right to have our new clear and identifiable brand.”

### Virtual working

The switch to virtual working had no impact on the rebrand project. In fact, Helen reports that virtual working had resulted in greater productivity across the charity and brought a new synergy to the whole organisation, who have rallied around the needs and concerns of the Blood Cancer community.

“The calls to our helpline helped us develop a good understanding of what our community were concerned about, which meant that as a charity we could respond rapidly and appropriately.”

The forced switch to virtual working meant that the support services team, who manage the helpline for the Blood Cancer community, needed to operate from a virtual call centre. This change had been long discussed but needed to happen rapidly.

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### **Upskilling workforce & volunteers**

“We had to flex our workforce and rapidly train volunteers and other staff to provide 1st line support. What we are really impressed with is the pace we were able to upskill people and get them access to the systems they needed.

Over time we got better at predicting the peaks and troughs in call volumes; for example, when the Prime Minister made announcements our call volumes would spike. So, we planned our support team resourcing around these predictions, which worked well.”

### **Weekly meetings**

The charity holds an all staff briefing once a week on a Wednesday morning. Being geographically dispersed meant that the regional offices joined remotely, whilst others came together physically in the London head office. Being in lockdown has meant that the Wednesday meetings have been virtual, and this has worked so much better.

“The meetings are much more equitable now; previously there was a divide between those joining in person from London and staff dialling in. We have found new ways to run the meetings virtually and going forwards,

whatever happens, we will continue to hold our Wednesday meetings this way.”

### **More successful innovations**

Frankly, there is lots more we could write about Blood Cancer UK and their successes over the past few months. We haven't touched on their virtual recruitment process or their new cloud working and CRM projects that are nearing completion. To keep up to date with Blood Cancer UK news, visit their website or follow them on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

### **Research**

Unfortunately, like most research charities COVID has had a huge impact that has been less positive. Research has slowed because labs and equipment have been repurposed, and resources redirected at COVID. And the charity has not been immune to the income reductions that many other charities are facing. The charity is developing a new research strategy which will be key to its future development and will make sure that every penny spent on research goes towards furthering their mission of a Blood Cancer free future for all.

If you would like to find out more about this amazing charity or become a supporter of Blood Cancer UK, visit their [website](#).

**Blood Cancer UK**, is a UK based charity dedicated to funding research into all blood cancers including leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma, as well as offering information and support to blood cancer patients. Blood Cancer UK's vision is to beat blood cancer.