Macmillan Cancer Support has warned of an estimated shortfall of 7,000 clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) in the UK by 2030 if the workforce does not grow and cancer survival rates continue to improve.

In the report Thinking Differently the charity calls for action to plug workforce gaps and reduce pressures on existing CNSs. The report states Macmillan CNSs reported a rise in colleagues leaving the profession and a growing tendency not to replace these roles, or to replace them with temporary contracts.

It adds that while good patient experience is strongly associated with access to a CNS, one in ten patients in England do not have this. Macmillan programme lead for treatment and recovery Dany Bell, a registered nurse, said CNSs are under ‘immense pressure’.

She added: ‘People are living longer and have more complex needs, so CNSs are dealing with more complex, growing caseloads without appropriate support. They are also working much longer hours.’