# North Yorkshire mother defies breast cancer prognosis with resilience and hope



A North Yorkshire mother, Julie Blackburn, aged 53, has spoken publicly about her remarkable journey through breast cancer, defying a prognosis that once suggested she would not survive beyond two years. Diagnosed initially in February 2015 with breast cancer after discovering a lump while showering, Blackburn underwent a mastectomy and radiotherapy. However, in 2018, she faced a devastating turn as she was diagnosed with stage four secondary breast cancer, which had metastasised to her lymph nodes and bones.

In speaking with the media following her groundbreaking medical journey, Blackburn recounted the harrowing news that came with her second diagnosis. "This was a new, unrelated cancer, but it had already spread and was in my lymph nodes and my bones," she explained. "I was told my life expectancy was about two years. I was absolutely devastated and had some very dark days." However, she expressed a resolve to focus on living as fully as possible despite the dire prognosis.

Seven years since her initial diagnosis, Blackburn continues to defy the odds, reporting that her cancer markers remain low and stable—a surprising development for both her and her medical team. “It is unbelievable to see for me and my doctors,” she remarked.

Initially diagnosed at the age of 43, Blackburn's treatment journey began rapidly; within two weeks of visiting her GP, she had surgery and was prescribed Tamoxifen, a medication commonly used for breast cancer treatment. “I thought that was the end of it and I was grateful to have put cancer behind me,” she noted, reflecting on her early experiences with treatment.

To prepare for her son's future, Blackburn began writing letters to her son, Henry, intending to share them annually until his thirteenth birthday. As her condition improved, she found joy in sharing these letters with him in person. Her treatment regimen also included Palbociclib, an innovative chemotherapy drug developed through advancements in cancer research, which she credits for keeping her alive longer than anticipated. "I will never be cured, but this magnificent drug developed by Cancer Research UK is keeping me alive," she stated.

While Blackburn continues to manage the ongoing side effects of her treatment, including fatigue and aches, she lives in the moment and makes the most out of her time with family. She highlighted her gratitude towards cancer research, expressing that many important milestones in her life had been possible due to the advancements in treatments. “I've celebrated my 50th birthday, seen Henry start secondary school and become a teenager,” she said.

In light of her experiences, Blackburn has started advocating for legacy donations to Cancer Research UK, stressing their significance in funding critical research that could impact future treatments. With many breakthroughs resulting from donations, she expressed hope that her story will inspire others to consider leaving gifts in their wills. "By leaving a gift in their Will to the charity, people across the region could help give the gift of hope to many more people like me," she said.

Lisa Millett, the Cancer Research UK spokesperson for North Yorkshire, recognised Blackburn's efforts in raising awareness and affirmed the importance of ongoing research support. "Our scientists have played a role in around half of the world's essential cancer drugs,” Millett said. However, she stressed the need for continued contributions to support scientific advancements that could lead to more effective treatments in the future.

Through her resilience and proactive approach to her health, Julie Blackburn serves as a testament to the potential impact of cancer research and the importance of community support in this ongoing battle against the disease.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/health/yorkshire-mother-given-two-years-to-live-is-defying-the-odds-seven-years-on-5033634> - This article corroborates Julie Blackburn's initial diagnosis with breast cancer in February 2015 and her ongoing battle against the disease, defying the odds seven years later.
* <https://www.yo1radio.co.uk/news/local-news/a-single-mum-from-york-who-was-told-she-had-just-two-years-to-live-after-being-given-an-incurable-cancer-diagnosis-is-defying-the-odds-seven-years-on/> - This news piece supports the details of Julie Blackburn's diagnosis and her remarkable journey with breast cancer, highlighting her resilience.
* <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/> - This website provides information on Cancer Research UK's role in developing cancer treatments and the importance of donations for future research, aligning with Julie Blackburn's advocacy.
* <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/breast-cancer/treatment> - This webpage explains various treatments for breast cancer, including Tamoxifen and Palbociclib, which are mentioned in Julie Blackburn's treatment regimen.
* <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/get-involved/leave-a-gift-in-your-will> - This page supports Julie Blackburn's advocacy for legacy donations to Cancer Research UK, highlighting the impact of such contributions on cancer research.