

Health and well-being clinics

Helping people live well after cancer

Maureen Rutter, March 2010

Two million people are living with and after cancer in the UK today, a figure set to climb by 3% every year. Diagnoses may be on the rise, but the number of people living after the disease is growing too, thanks to better treatment and earlier recognition. Good news. But what isn't so inspiring is that many of those living after cancer report poorer health and wellbeing than the rest of the population.

At the time that treatment ends, people are often only part of the way along their cancer journey. They need support easing themselves back into everyday life, as well as dealing with the consequences of their illness, whether late side-effects, possible recurrence or emotional fallout. We came up with health and wellbeing clinics as a groundbreaking method of continuing people's care after their treatment is finished. Our aim is that everyone who has had a cancer diagnosis will have access to one.

Health and wellbeing clinics – the lowdown

The explanation's in the name. Health and wellbeing clinics will be places people can go for support that improves the quality of their lives, making these as long, healthy and active as possible. They are one of a range of services to help people surviving cancer.

We envisage them as 'one-stop-shops' where volunteers and Macmillan professionals will play key roles; running the clinics, providing information, financial advice and expert medical care. People making the shift from treatment to life after cancer can talk to a broad range of individuals, including clinicians, complementary therapists and benefits advisers. They can use the clinics to find out all the facts about:

- benefits and other financial support
- how to get back to work
- good diet and lifestyle

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Questions about living with cancer? Call free on 0808 808 00 00 or visit macmillan.org.uk

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- the possible long-term side-effects of treatment
- issues surrounding their particular cancer
- local services, facilities and other opportunities available.

Visitors to the clinics will also enjoy the chance to meet and share thoughts with people in a similar situation, through support groups and a buddying service.

The outcome

We're expecting many benefits. Visitors will leave the clinics informed and supported. They'll have more self-confidence, feel less stigmatised and be better equipped to manage their illnesses, any long-term side-effects and the challenges of returning to everyday life. There may be less need for follow-up medical appointments.

The time frame

Jane Rudge and Fay Scullion will joint project manage the initiative until April 2011. Maureen Rutter, Director for East Midlands and Northern England, is project sponsor. The clinics will pilot at 15 sites UK wide from April 2010 to March 2011, with interim findings from the evaluation available in September 2010. We'll then make a full report in April 2011.

Want to know more?

If you'd like more information on the health and wellbeing clinics initiative, please contact Jane Rudge, Fay Scullion or Maureen Rutter, via Jackie Persse on 01904 756420.