

**Visit Report**

**Maggie’s Centre**

Service address: The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre
Clatterbridge Road
Bebington
Wirral
CH63 4JY

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Clatterbridge Cancer Centre, Clatterbridge Road, Bebington, CH63 4JY

Service Provider: The Maggie’s Keswick Jencks Cancer Caring Centres Trust

Date and time: Tuesday 10th November 2015

Authorised representatives: Elaine Evans

**Acknowledgements**

Healthwatch Wirral would like to thank the Manager, staff and service users at Maggie’s who gave us a warm welcome.

1. **General profile of the service that was entered and viewed.**

The Maggie’s Centre is a national charity which provides free practical, emotional and social support to people with cancer. It also supports their families and friends.

**2.0 Purpose of visit**

As part of **Healthwatch Wirral Week 2015**, Elaine Evans, Healthwatch Wirral Project Officer, visited the Maggie’s Centre at Clatterbridge Cancer Centre site.

**3.0 Type of visit undertaken**

Informal

**4.0 Methodology**

The visit was not designed to be an inspection, audit or an investigation, but an opportunity for Healthwatch Wirral to get a better understanding of the service by seeing it in action and talking to staff, service users and carers/relatives. Healthwatch Wirral seeks to identify and disseminate good practice wherever possible.

The visit provided a snapshot view of the service and this report is based on the findings at the time of the visit.

**5.0 Discussions, findings and observations**

I was warmly welcomed by the Centre Head, Kathy Wright and met some of the professionally trained staff and volunteers. The Centre offers an evidence based core programme of support developed to complement medical treatment. The team consists of Cancer Support Specialists, a Clinical Psychologist, a Benefits Advisor and a Nutritionist. Specialist support is available for managing hair loss and skincare during and after cancer treatment and bereavement support either 1 to 1 or as a group to develop strategies for coping.

Courses and workshops are offered for people to access information and share experiences. These include physical activity such as Yoga, Tai Chi, knit and natter, creative writing and expressive art as well as specific support groups for colorectal, gynaecology and melanoma cancers.

People do not need to make an appointment and can drop in to the Centre and stay as long as they need.

The first Maggie’s Centre opened in Edinburgh in 1996 and since then 18 further Centres have opened at major NHS hospitals in the UK pioneering a new concept of cancer support. They are a national charity and receive no government funding. Five more Centres are expected to open next year.

Maggie’s at Clatterbridge opened 18 months ago as an interim Centre which may be relocated adjacent to the new Clatterbridge Cancer Centre in Liverpool in the future.

The structures are all enclosed by a singular envelope of fibre glass panels, while inside the centre is set out to feel more like a home than a hospital, with a large kitchen table, a quiet room and office, a lot of open space and a large amount of natural light.

Six of the cabins came from a builder’s merchants, where they were used as accommodation, the striking glass-fronted 11m-long London Dresser art installation was spotted for sale online by one of the charity’s directors.

The London Dresser, which looks out onto the beautiful farmland, is attached to the cabins. People can sit in this area and look out onto the landscape.

At the time of Healthwatch Wirral’s visit, the centre was busy and staff were interacting with the visitors. The environment was welcoming and the interior was clean, comfortable and homely. The building was domestic in scale with a kitchen housing a large table and chairs to facilitate social interaction and a sense of community. There were a large amount of visitors in this area engaging in a lively discussion. Both staff and visitors appeared to be happy and contented. A yoga class was being run in an adjacent room and was well attended. I was informed by Kathy that 9000 people had been seen over the last year and that people can receive regular e-mail updates or alternatively access the online centre at any time day or night

**Feedback (from Staff, Service Users, Relatives, Visitors)**

“I like sitting in the London Dresser as it is very peaceful and relaxing.”

“People come in and are treated as a person rather than a patient”

“We offer something special”

“I appreciate the care and support that I receive from Maggie’s”

“I enjoy meeting other people when I attend the Centre”

“I love working as a volunteer at the Centre, it is so rewarding”

**6.0 Conclusions**

The Centre had a very personal and caring feel to it and people were treated with dignity and respect. Many people attending Maggie’s are facing enormous challenges and may feel vulnerable and alone. It was gratifying to see that they are given the chance to meet others in the same predicament and share their hopes, fears and experiences. They can offer support to each other as well as receiving support themselves in a non-hospital environment.

It was impressive to see the quality of the emotional and psychological support offered to cancer patients and their families who attend the Centre.

**7.0 Distribution of report**

Healthwatch Wirral will submit the report to the Provider and will publish the report on its website.

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