

The aim of our Wellbeing service is to help more people to live longer, feeling the best they can every single day. To achieve this we provide, completely free, a wide range of support groups and therapy sessions. Some help to keep people mobile and physically active – or just reduce the pain a condition brings. Other sessions offer the chance for self-expression through creative activity. Many people find great comfort in the emotional and spiritual support we offer.

But one common link runs through everything we offer to people at **ellenor** – tea. So much so, in fact, that our most important group sessions are called ‘Cuppas’. It’s so much easier to discuss a difficult subject, or even to just sit and listen as a group share their experiences, when there’s a cup of tea in your hand. We make dozens of cuppas each day at **ellenor** – and there’s usually a slice of cake or a biscuit to go with them!

Here are just a few of the Cuppa sessions our Wellbeing Team are working to restart over the next few months – with your help.



Bereavement Cuppa

The first is the **Bereavement Cuppa**; this is where recently bereaved relatives can come together to share their own experiences of loss and grief – and where they can find strength in the understanding and experience of others.

Carers' Cuppa

Our **Carers' Cuppa** group offers the chance for people who are (often full-time) carers of a life-limited loved one to have a brief time of respite, to come in and meet others who know the stress and pressure that a carer’s role often brings.



Social Cuppa

The **Social Cuppa** groups are open drop-in sessions, where anyone is welcome to come and join us over a cup of tea. These sessions are always lively and will often be made up of a mix of patients, carers and those loved ones were cared for here, even many years ago.

I.T. & Biscuits

Our new Cuppa session, which we’ll be launching this Autumn, will be called **I.T. & Biscuits**. We’ve all recently come to recognise that online communication – and the use of computers, tablets and phones – has become a central part of our lives. We’re going to continue to offer video calls as one of the ways people isolated at home can access our Cuppa groups – but we know many people (especially our older clients) don’t have experience and find using a computer or the internet too daunting.

So, our new group will in effect be an I.T. class (with tea and biscuits!) – teaching basic skills and giving people the confidence to use these new technologies at home for themselves. With our help, people will be able to get online and make videocalls to their children and grandchildren, they will be able to order their own shopping online; or even just order a birthday card over the internet for a grandchild they won’t be able to see.



Over the next few months, with your help, we’ll re-connect with hundreds of local people who have missed face-to-face contact over the last 18 months. They’ll all be welcome – and the kettle is already on.

I CAN’T WAIT TO MEET ALL MY ELLENOR FRIENDS ONCE AGAIN.

I was a bit dubious the first time I went to **ellenor**. But they welcomed me so warmly and I had a lovely lunch. The following week they picked me up and I went back again – I was hooked. I made such close friends at the hospice, others like me living with a very difficult illness. I treasured my day each week at the hospice.

When the pandemic arrived they introduced me to ‘Zoom’. I had no idea at first – I’m not very technical! But they showed me how and I can do it all for myself now.



I've been told that they will be ready for me to come back into the hospice again in a couple of weeks and honestly I can't wait. I so want to see my friends, and the staff who look after us all so well. I really don't think they realise just how much they've helped me.

Now, I don't drink tea; I've always just had water. But a few months after I started going to **ellenor** I won first prize in one of their raffles – a food hamper, inside which were two packets of fancy fruit tea which I bought into the hospice to share the following week. And do you know, I quite liked it! We were all sitting round, sipping our tea, just chatting. That's what I've missed the most – and I can't wait to have that feeling again.

Pat

ELLENOR HAVE BEEN SUCH A MAGNIFICENT SUPPORT TO ME OVER THE LAST YEAR AND NOW I CAN'T WAIT TO MEET THEIR LOVELY TEAM FOR THE FIRST TIME.

I saw first hand the incredible care **ellenor** gave to a close friend in their hospice – but that was 25 years ago! And so when I received my own diagnosis early last year I thought that maybe I would need them myself one day – but I was still nervous about going to a 'hospice'.

My condition isn't operable, but I take chemotherapy pills just to keep things at bay (so far they are doing their job, touch wood). But they really reduce my immune system – and so I was isolated at home on my own during the first lockdown. My children arranged my shopping for me, which the supermarket delivered to my door. But I couldn't see anyone in person.

I had my TV, my books – and I bought a jigsaw! But I am a 'people person'; I was an active member of the W.I. before my diagnosis and I love spending time with my friends and family. During lockdown I missed them all terribly.

My hospital nurse first suggested that I get in touch with **ellenor** – and so, last year, I had the first of what were to become my regular phone calls with them. They were so kind and so helpful. They are there for me when I need to talk about how I'm feeling, how my condition is progressing. But they've given me such wonderful, practical help too.

They made sure I was signed up for my 'attendance allowance', which helps me with the cost of getting to and from hospital. Thanks to them I now have a care plan in place and I've talked that through with my children, so everyone knows what I want to happen when my times comes. Having that is a big relief. Their support has made me feel better; and I have decided that, if they'll have me, I would like to go to **ellenor** for my final days.

I am very excited as I write this, because I have just received my invitation to go in to the hospice for the very first time two weeks from now. I can't wait to see all the staff who have been so kind to me – and to put faces to voices. I have also been promised there will be lots of tea and cake on offer, so I'll be there early!

I'm looking forward to meeting others, making friends – but also being taught new ways for me to feel better more of the time. One of the classes I want to sign up to is their new "I.T. and Biscuits" group. I'm really not very good with computers or the internet. I speak to my family a lot on the phone, but I want to be able to see my children and my grandchildren – and so I need to learn how to 'Zoom' – and they are going to teach me!

I realised recently that having **ellenor** enter my life does not signify an ending – it's a beginning. They're going to help me to feel as well as I can, do as much as I can, for as long as I can. And there's so many like me who need their help right now. I've been supporting by donating things to their shop inside the hospital whenever I go. I hope everyone realises how lucky we are to have **ellenor** to care for us, because we are all going to need their care someday.

Barbara



THEY TOOK AWAY ALL MY PROBLEMS.

I was living in France when I was diagnosed with my cancer. The care they gave me there was wonderful – but I wanted to be back in Kent with my family.

Coming home was difficult. I was on my own and having to try and find a place to live, and a job; juggling between hospital appointments in Maidstone. My new landlady – who also had cancer – told me about the **ellenor** and suggested I go. I arrived for my first session and, quite simply, they changed my life.

They just took all my problems away. They said I could have my (frequent) blood tests there instead of queueing at the hospital. They helped me with all the forms when I was signed off work. But most importantly they helped me meet my friends – others who I met every Wednesday at the hospice, people who were going through what I was going through – and knew how I felt. I wasn't alone, I had people around me who cared.

When the pandemic arrived they just moved us all onto Zoom. It wasn't the same, but it was still wonderful to see friendly faces each week. Now I've been invited back again and I'm so happy. I know I'll see their smiling faces when I walk back through the front door again and the first thing they'll do is to offer me a cup of tea. I can't wait.

Jean