



# Complementary health and wellbeing

A guide for patients and their carers



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## The Christie website

For more information about The Christie and our services, please visit [www.christie.nhs.uk](http://www.christie.nhs.uk) or visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham, Salford or Macclesfield.

# Introduction to the complementary health and wellbeing service

## **What are complementary therapies?**

Often called 'integrative therapies', these are offered alongside cancer treatment and are free to patients and their carers. Some therapies aim to enable relaxation and an overall sense of wellbeing. Others may provide relief from symptoms such as anxiety, pain, sleeping difficulties, nausea or vomiting, breathing difficulties, hot flushes, reduced energy levels, constipation, or burning, numbness or tingling in hands and/or feet related to chemotherapy. Complementary therapies are also used alongside other support such as smoking cessation. Integrative therapy practitioners use a personalised, holistic approach.

A 'toolkit' of skills is employed to support emotional, psychological, and physical wellbeing. Integrative therapists provide support through the cancer experience and beyond.

## **Can complementary therapies help in my cancer treatment?**

Cancer Research UK (2023) suggest that complementary therapies, alongside conventional cancer treatments, can improve the quality of life of patients with cancer, by helping them to cope better with symptoms of the disease or side-effects following treatment.

## **Where can I access complementary therapies?**

The complementary health and wellbeing (CH&W) service is funded by The Christie Charity and offers a range of therapies free of charge. The following pages will provide you with further information about the different therapies and how and where you can access them within The Christie NHS Foundation Trust.

## The complementary health and wellbeing team

Undergoing investigations or receiving treatment at The Christie may be a challenging and overwhelming time for many people. The CH&W team recognises the emotional impact that this may have on you and your family or carers.

We are an award-winning team of highly skilled clinical integrative therapists, with many years of experience working with patients and carers within The Christie. Our service works closely with all clinical teams and departments.

We are trained in person-centred care and our specialised therapies help to manage stress and to promote your wellbeing.

## Worry, stress and anxiety – how it may affect you:

Worry often presents as difficult thoughts, images and emotions that can lead to unhelpful behaviours.

Stress is the body's reaction to feeling under pressure or being vulnerable. This can trigger the 'fight, flight or freeze response'.

When stress is constant or excessive, this can lead to feelings of anxiety, or at its most intense, panic. Every individual is different; however, frequent symptoms may include:

### Physical symptoms of anxiety

- Sweating palms
- Hyperventilation (breathing very fast)
- Increased heart rate
- Dry mouth
- Heart palpitations (racing or fast, irregular, pounding or fluttering)

- Feeling faint
- Shortness of breath
- Trembling/shaking
- Muscle tension/pain
- Difficulty sleeping
- Struggling to concentrate
- Exhaustion
- Need to go to the toilet more frequently
- Chest pain
- Nausea/sickness/butterflies in stomach

## Pre-treatment, preparation for procedures and post treatment

You may need support before surgery, procedures, or treatments. Your clinical team can arrange a referral on your behalf, or you can self-refer. We work with you to create a personalised treatment plan that will be reviewed regularly.

Listed below are just some of the concerns that our patients have asked for support with:

- Fear of anaesthesia
- Dealing with uncertainty or loss of control
- Changes to body image and/or function
- Pain
- Previous negative experiences within hospitals
- Phobias i.e., needles or blood, claustrophobia; hospitals
- Nausea and vomiting
- Waiting for results
- Scans

- Moulds for radiotherapy (also known as shells or masks)
- Brachytherapy
- Chemotherapy
- Support during inpatient stay
- Recovery and adjustment after treatment
- Impact on family members

We provide support virtually, via telephone, or face to face when required. Our therapies may include: relaxation, hypnotherapy, resilience enhancing techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture, breathwork and massage/touch therapies.

## Complementary therapies at The Christie

The complementary health and wellbeing service is available at the main Christie site in Withington as well as our satellite sites at Oldham, Salford and Macclesfield.

Acupuncture	
<i>What is it?</i>	Acupuncture originated as an East Asian medicine and suggests that energy called 'Qi' flows through the body. Channels called 'meridians' help to move this energy throughout the body. Inserting fine needles into specific points in the body helps to restore and improve health and wellbeing. Western medical acupuncture is a modern interpretation based on scientific research. Here at The Christie, we offer Western medical acupuncture, which can be given alongside conventional cancer treatments.

<i>Who is it for?</i>	Evidence suggests that acupuncture is beneficial to treat symptoms such as hot flushes, fatigue, nausea, pain, chronic nerve pain e.g., chemotherapy induced peripheral neuropathy (CIPN), as a result of their treatment or disease.
<i>When/where is it available?</i>	Monday – Friday, based in our outpatient departments, we have a specialist acupuncture clinic.
<i>Treatment</i>	Acupuncture is a form of therapy in which fine needles are placed through the skin into specific points on the body. The patient is asked to lie down on a couch during the treatment. These needles are left in place for 20-40 minutes before being removed. All needles are single use only. The treatment works in accumulation, so involves attending weekly for up to 6 weeks. A feeling of relaxation is often reported by patients during their sessions.
<i>Referral process</i>	Acupuncture is only available following a formal referral by your Christie consultant, or Christie specialist nurse/allied health professional (AHP). The acupuncture clinic is by appointment only. Access to blood results will be needed to ensure safety and eligibility of the treatment.

AromaSticks	
<i>What is it?</i>	AromaSticks are specially designed inhalators that contain blends of essential oils/aromatherapy to promote relaxation or to assist in the management of some symptoms, including nausea and anxiety. They can also be beneficial when trying to stop smoking. AromaSticks are usually used effectively alongside other therapies.
<i>Who is it for?</i>	Patients and carers, who like the aroma can benefit from using AromaSticks safely. Some cautions apply related to allergies, or specific medical conditions. Your therapist will assess you clinically, prior to offering an AromaSticks and you will be provided with an information sheet and contact number should you require additional information.
<i>When/where is it available?</i>	Available across the Trust by referral.
<i>Treatment</i>	Treatment involves inhalation devices, known as AromaSticks. This is a small hand held device, that can be used when required e.g. to ease stress during procedures/treatments or to aid wellbeing and relaxation.
<i>Referral process</i>	All clinical staff can make referrals. Patients and carers can also self-refer.



Massage	
<i>What is it?</i>	<p>Here at The Christie, the CH&amp;W team are trained to provide safe therapeutic touch, which promotes relaxation and supports the central nervous system to improve physical and psychological symptoms.</p> <p>Research has shown that massage can enhance the sense of wellbeing, reducing pain, stress, tension, and emotional release. This in turn provides coping skills for patients who are living with cancer and receiving treatment.</p>
<i>Who is it for?</i>	Patients and carers who may be finding it difficult to engage with talk therapies.
<i>When/where is it available?</i>	Massage is used as part of a package of care. This may be done at the bedside as an inpatient or offered during a stressful procedure as an outpatient appointment.
<i>Treatment</i>	Massage involves gentle rhythmic use of touch and movement of soft tissue, which may involve the use of a massage lubricant.
<i>Referral process</i>	All clinical staff can make referrals. Patients and carers can also self-refer. Please note that all referrals are triaged each day and assigned according to priority needs.

Aromatherapy/essential oils (clinical use)	
<i>What is it?</i>	Using plants and plant-products for their healing properties has long been recognised. Worldwide, vast numbers of plant products are used for medicinal therapy. Essential oils are used in aromatherapy partly because components of the oils can help increase beneficial effects.
<i>Who is it for?</i>	Patients primarily. However, inhalation devices (AromaSticks) maybe used as part of therapy for carers.
<i>When/where is it available?</i>	Treatment sessions are available by appointment in certain departments within the Trust, this is by clinical referral.
<i>Treatment</i>	<p>Essential oils are absorbed into the body through the skin or via mucous membranes, for example the lungs or the mouth.</p> <p>The use of essential oils within a topical product (e.g., massage oil, wound care products) help provide physiological/psychological symptom relief. Treatment can also include inhalation devices, known as AromaSticks.</p>
<i>Referral process</i>	Essential oils for clinical use (e.g., wound care) are only available following a referral by your Christie consultant, or Christie specialist nurse/AHP. However, AromaSticks may be offered as part of a package of care following assessment from your therapist.

Health advice (e.g. smoking and alcohol)	
<i>What is it?</i>	<p>This focuses on building an individual's own resources, to increase resilience, manage anxiety levels and address problematic nicotine and/or alcohol use.</p> <p>Guidance and help in stopping smoking and reducing alcohol intake. Stopping smoking and reducing alcohol has been shown to have many benefits during cancer treatments such as reducing the risk of infections, nausea, and anxiety. Improving wound healing, prompting recovery, and increasing the effectiveness of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.</p>
<i>Who is it for?</i>	Patients, carers and staff.
<i>When/where is it available?</i>	The health advisors are contactable by telephone on <b>0161 956 1215</b> or <b>07392 278408</b> between 9:00am and 5:00pm, Monday to Friday.
<i>Treatment</i>	The health advisors are friendly, non-judgmental and are experts within their field. They have many years of experience working with patients, carers and staff offering smoking and alcohol advice. There are many different techniques and resources that the therapist can use including arranging a nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) prescription, AromaSticks, help with coping strategies and general advice.

	<p>The health advisors provide support, guidance, and techniques over the telephone. This is extremely effective in aiding motivation and staying connected with people and may be beneficial for people who struggle to get to the hospital. Follow-up calls are scheduled for approximately 4 weeks after the initial call.</p> <p>On certain occasions and when there is a clinical need, the health advisor may visit you as an inpatient.</p>
<i>Referral process</i>	All clinical staff can make referrals. Patients and carers can also self-refer.

The HEARTS Process®	
<i>What is it?</i>	The HEARTS Process® is a very gentle approach combining touch, empathy, aroma and textures to aid comfort and relaxation.
<i>Who is it for?</i>	Patients and carers.
<i>When/where is it available?</i>	The HEARTS Process® is offered as a package of care. This may be done at the bedside as an inpatient or offered during a stressful procedure at an outpatient appointment.
<i>Treatment</i>	Offered through clothing the HEARTS Process® may also include the use of voice and aromas and can offer relaxation even when massage may not be appropriate.
<i>Referral process</i>	Referrals can be made by all clinical staff; however, patients and carers can also self-refer.

Hypnotherapy	
<i>What is it?</i>	Hypnosis is a state of heightened awareness with increased focus. Hypnotherapy by a skilled therapist uses suggestions to help you achieve desired goals and outcomes. It can help you achieve relaxation, changes to unwanted habits, overcome anxiety/phobias and enhance your personal coping skills.
<i>Who is it for?</i>	Hypnotherapy can be used alongside stress management techniques for patients with treatment-related difficulties. Examples of these are: a needle or blood anxiety/phobia; hospital phobia; claustrophobia; and fears regarding treatment procedures.
<i>When/where is it available?</i>	We can support you before and during your treatment/procedure with permission from the clinical staff.
<i>Treatment</i>	We can provide awake and alert self-hypnosis training by telephone. Relaxation techniques, anxiety reduction and phobia desensitisation are provided face-to-face in clinical or ward settings.
<i>Referral process</i>	Referrals are made by clinical staff both before treatment starts or while procedure/treatment is being delivered. Patients can also self-refer. Please note that all referrals are triaged each day and assigned according to priority needs.

## How and where to access the service

The Complementary Health and Wellbeing service is currently available Monday to Friday between the hours of 9:00am and 5:00pm across the Trust, both at The Christie main site and at satellite sites.

Referrals are usually made by a clinical member of staff, but patients and carers can also self-refer by contacting the CH&W team using the contact details below. Referrals are actively monitored; however, a same day response cannot be guaranteed.

Please note that times and treatment areas may be subject to change following hospital and service developments and infection control measures.

## Contact information

If you would like any further information about our services and other sources of support and advice, please do not hesitate to contact us or visit The Christie website [www.christie.nhs.uk](http://www.christie.nhs.uk)

### **Complementary health and wellbeing team**

Patient & carers support lines –  
Withington: **0161 446 8236** or **07557 592547**  
Macclesfield: **0161 956 1778**

### **Smoking cessation and alcohol advice**

Telephone: **0161 918 7175**  
Mobile: **07392 278408**

## Digital stress management resources

Use your mobile phone camera to scan the QR code below:



## Further support

If you decide to use a therapist outside The Christie, always use a qualified and insured therapist who has also had specialist cancer care training. It is important to talk it over with your doctor or healthcare professional and ask for their advice. Choose the complementary therapy, and therapist, which feels comfortable and safe for you.

Please note the CH&W Team at The Christie cannot recommend private therapists or take responsibility for treatments provided outside of the hospital. Details of organisations and services available may be subject to change.

### Ashgate Hospice

Ashgate Road, Old Brampton, Chesterfield S42 7JD

Tel: **01246 568801**

Email: [clinicalenquiries@ashgatehospice.org.uk](mailto:clinicalenquiries@ashgatehospice.org.uk)

Website: [www.ashgatehospice.org.uk](http://www.ashgatehospice.org.uk)

### Beechwood Cancer Care Centre

Chelford Grove, Stockport SK3 8LS

Tel: **0161 476 0384**

Email: [enquiries@beechwoodcancercare.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@beechwoodcancercare.co.uk)

Website: [www.beechwoodcancercare.org.uk](http://www.beechwoodcancercare.org.uk)

Counselling, group support and complementary therapies via booking system.

## **Blythe House**

Eccles Fold, Chapel-en-le-Frith, High Peak, Derbyshire SK23 9TJ

Tel: **01298 875080**

Website: [www.blythehousehospice.org.uk](http://www.blythehousehospice.org.uk)

Complementary therapies offered through the 'hub' to patients accessing other hospice services.

## **Bury Cancer Support Centre**

406 Bury and Bolton Rd, Bury BL8 2DA

Tel: **0161 764 6609**

Email: [enquiries@burycancersupportcentre.com](mailto:enquiries@burycancersupportcentre.com)

Website: [www.burycancercaresupportcentre.com](http://www.burycancercaresupportcentre.com)

Counselling and complementary therapies via booking system.

## **East Cheshire Hospice**

Millbank Drive, Cheshire SK10 3DR

Tel: **01625 610364**

Email: [admin@echospice.org.uk](mailto:admin@echospice.org.uk)

Website: [www.eastcheshirehospice.org.uk](http://www.eastcheshirehospice.org.uk)

Provides complementary therapy services via booking system at 'The Sunflower Centre'. Tel: **01625 665685** (Sunflower Centre).

## **Maggie's Manchester**

Maggie's provides free practical, emotional and social support to people with cancer, their families and friends. Staff are on hand to offer the support you need to find your way through cancer, including information about treatment, financial advice, psychological support, relaxation and exercise classes and nutritional advice. Or simply to sit quietly with a cup of tea.



No appointment needed. Support is free. Drop-in, Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm.

Maggie's Manchester, The Robert Parfett Building,  
15 Kinnaird Road, M20 4QL

Maggie's is the pavilion style building at the bottom of Kinnaird Road. Cross Wilmslow Road, turn left and then right onto Kinnaird Road.

Tel: **0161 641 4848**

Website: [www.maggies.org](http://www.maggies.org)

### **Maggie's Oldham**

The Royal Oldham Hospital, Oldham OL1 2JH

Tel: **0161 989 0550**

Email: [oldham@maggies.org](mailto:oldham@maggies.org)

Website: [www.maggies.org/our-centres](http://www.maggies.org/our-centres)

Drop in advice, one-to-one support and group support.

### **Oldham Cancer Support Centre Ltd**

2 Ellesmere Street, Ena Hughes Centre, Failsworth, Greater Manchester M35 9AD

Tel: **0161 770 8751**

Email: via website contact form

Website: [www.oldhamcancersupportcentre.com](http://www.oldhamcancersupportcentre.com)

Counselling and complementary therapies offered via booking system.

### **St Ann's Hospice**

St Ann's Road, Heald Green, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 3SZ

Tel: **0161 437 8136**

Email: [enquiries@sah.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sah.org.uk)

Website: [www.sah.org.uk](http://www.sah.org.uk)

Provides complementary services via booking system at 'The Being You' centres at Heald Green and Little Hulton.

Email: [byc-enquiries@sah.org.uk](mailto:byc-enquiries@sah.org.uk)

Tel: **0161 498 3612** (Heald Green), **0161 702 5418** (Little Hulton)

### **St Luke's Hospice**

St Luke's Hospice, Grosvenor House, Queensway, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 1BH

Tel: **01606 551246**

Email: [enquiries@slhospice.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@slhospice.co.uk)

Website: [www.slhospice.co.uk](http://www.slhospice.co.uk)

Complementary therapy available to patients (and carers of patients) with a life limiting diagnosis via referral from a healthcare professional.

### **Trafford Macmillan Wellbeing Centre**

Trafford General Hospital, Moorside Road, Urmston, Manchester M41 5SN

Tel: **0161 746 2080**

Email: [macmillancentretrafford@nhs.net](mailto:macmillancentretrafford@nhs.net)

Website: [www.macmillancentretrafford.org](http://www.macmillancentretrafford.org)

Counselling and complementary therapies offered via booking system.

### **Wigan and Leigh Hospice**

Kildare St, Hindley, Wigan WN2 3HZ

Website: [www.wlh.org.uk](http://www.wlh.org.uk)

Email: [info@wlh.org.uk](mailto:info@wlh.org.uk)

Tel: **01942 525566**

Complementary therapies and counselling are available to patients with a palliative diagnosis who are registered with a GP in the Wigan borough.

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard.

If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact [the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net)

Contact The Christie Hotline for  
urgent support and specialist advice

**The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658**

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

### Visit the Cancer Information Centre

The Christie at Withington **0161 446 8100**

The Christie at Oldham **0161 918 7745**

The Christie at Salford **0161 918 7804**

The Christie at Macclesfield **0161 956 1704**

Open Monday to Friday, 10am – 4pm.

Opening times can vary, please ring to check  
before making a special journey.

### The Christie NHS Foundation Trust

Wilmslow Road

Manchester M20 4BX

**0161 446 3000**

**[www.christie.nhs.uk](http://www.christie.nhs.uk)**



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