



# Bray Cancer Support Centre

Serving Wicklow & Dublin

## ANNUAL REPORT 2013



### Foreword

2013 started out with a difference this year. We were moving to our new premises. After years of searching and meetings with various government officials and senior HSE staff we had done it ourselves. We had secured a ground floor rented premises that was suitable for our own needs.

We moved in January and had our official open day in Aubrey Court, Parnell Road Bray on Valentine's Day surrounded by our many friends, volunteers, supporters and community organisations.

This move to larger ground floor premises which was fully wheelchair assessable would allow us to cope with the increased demand for our services.

Our extra rooms would facilitate more than one therapist and counsellor at a time and also provide a children's multipurpose room.

Hand in hand with our new centre and increased services also comes an increase in running costs. Our fundraising team continue to work hard to ensure funds are there to keep our doors open for the thousands of people who visit our centre each year.

We continue to receive approximately 20% of our annual funding from the HSE despite the spiralling level of referrals from Dublin Hospitals.

We applied for project based grants from Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council for children's services and equipment and we were successful.

We were also successful in securing project based grants from the family support agency for bereavement counselling and support.

The statutory grants of HSE for social and respite care.

The national programme for age and opportunity for our Go for Life exercise classes for older people.

Wicklow County Council for community grants.

The year continued to bring unprecedented demand for our services from all parts of Wicklow, Dublin and Leinster.

As Ireland's first community based cancer support centre we continued campaigning on a daily basis to ensure that our doors were open for those whose lives were affected by cancer.

We are indebted to our many supporters, sponsors, volunteers, businesses, sporting organisations and individuals, for without these we would not be able to grow and expand to ensure our community has a centre of excellence for many generations to come.

Take care,

Veronica O' Leary

C.E.O

## Change of Premises

In February 2013 we moved to our new rented premises at Aubrey Court on the Parnell Road, Bray.

As regular visitors to our Drop-In centre will attest, Bray Cancer Support has completely outgrown our previous premises on Bray Main Street. We regularly struggle to find space to cater for all our clients at peak times. Our new rented premises, located just 100 meters from our old centre, will enable us to better cater for the increasing demand on our services. Our “New Home Campaign” will continue to fundraise in order to realise our dream of purchasing a property outright, thereby securing the continued operation of Bray Cancer Support into the future.



## Drop in Centre

Our drop-in Centre, is generally the first point of contact for a new client, be they newly diagnosed or caring for a family member who is ill. The “drop-in” facility is open daily Monday-Friday 10am-1pm and by appointment from 2pm-4pm.

The Drop-in centre provides support, informal counselling, information, and a range of classes and therapies, and our trained volunteers are on hand to offer a sympathetic ear in total confidentiality.

Help with grants and entitlement's is also available twice weekly and on request.

The demand on the Drop-In centre has once again increased dramatically with numbers having more than doubled since last year.

**In 2013 1,345 clients availed of our Drop-In facility for support services.**



Referrals to the centre come from a multitude of sources, ranging from word of mouth, to GP's, cancer nurses and hospitals.

BCSC is a referral centre for St. Vincent's Hospital, St. Michael's hospital, St. Colmcille's hospital, The Beacon Hospital, Blackrock Clinic, St. Luke's Hospital, St. James's Hospital, Beaumont Hospital and the Blackrock Hospice.

During 2013 we continued to experience a significant increase in clients using our services from the South Dublin and Leinster areas.

## Telephone Helpline Service

Our telephone helpline is also the first source of contact for our clients to access our services. People phone us from all parts of Wicklow, Dublin and other counties in Ireland.

The helpline can be a tremendous source of comfort to those who are worried or anxious and also those who need support but cannot physically come in to the Drop-In Centre.

**Similar to the demand for our other services, telephone support calls to our centre rose to 6,834 calls in 2013. This is a huge increase from the previous year.**

## Counselling Services

Bray Cancer Support Centre offers a wide range of counselling and support services for people with cancer and those who care for them. Available daily by appointment our counsellors are especially trained to deal with all aspects of coping with a cancer diagnosis.

Our Counselling service is provided by qualified psychotherapists and professional counsellors.

One-to-one counselling is available by appointment at the centre. However, if a client is too ill to call to the centre, one of our counsellors can call to the client's home.

Relaxation and group therapy sessions are also available weekly. These sessions are very popular and offer techniques to cope with illness or a change in life circumstances.

One-to-one counselling is also available for children and Young Adults who are living with cancer.

Bereavement counselling and support has continued to rise steadily.

**In 2013 the centre provided 1,060 Bereavement Counselling and Support Sessions.** This service was part funded by a Grant from the Family Support Agency for Bereavement Counselling and Support Groups.

## **Classes and Therapies**

Bray Cancer Support Centre offers a range of full and comprehensive programme of classes which have proved to be extremely popular.

**In 2013, the number of people availing of our complimentary therapies increased to 1,895 sessions.**

Our workshops and classes provide an avenue for interaction and productivity as well as an opportunity to make friends, learn a new skill, reduce isolation and keep physically active in a supportive environment.

We provide art therapy and relaxation sessions for children living with cancer. We are the only Centre in the Wicklow and South Dublin areas to provide services for children affected by cancer.

In 2013, BCSC provided the following classes. **The total number of sessions for all our classes rose significantly during 2013 with 5,157 sessions being provided.**

Our classes include:

- Weekly Art and Creativity classes.
- Weekly Go for Life Physical Activity Programme.
- Weekly Group discussions/ General workshops
- Health awareness workshops.
- Weekly Yoga classes.
- Men's group project each week.
- Weekly Swimming hours at Glenview Hotel and The Royal Hotel Bray.
- Weekly Relaxation Classes.
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Classes.

## Outreach Programme and Home and Hospital Visiting

Home Support continues to offer essential psychological help and practical support to people who are too ill to attend the centre.

Caring for a family member who is ill and in need of care in the home can prove to be a very strenuous and emotional time for all the family. It is important that suitable arrangements are put in place to ensure the patient is receiving the best overall care.

Consultation with your loved one's medical team can help to identify other services that may need to be involved.

Since 1994 BCSC has been providing Home Support for Families.

Our services, such as counselling and complimentary therapies can complement existing medical services. Family members can also avail of these facilities.

Our **Volunteer Transport Service** to and from hospitals and clinics, and to attend our classes, therapies and Social Outings, is of tremendous benefit and support to families when they are caring for a family member who is ill or vulnerable.

We also have a limited supply of equipment available on loan such as wheelchairs, commodes, walkers and baby alarms.

BCSC provides an Outreach Service to promote awareness of our services and the supports available in the community to schools and businesses.

We regularly take part in Awareness Days on various topics, particularly around healthy eating.

Transition year students and social work students can gain valuable work experience with us.

We also facilitate students from Bray Institute of Further Education for their placements.



## Voluntary Transport Service

Our transport services are facilitated by our volunteer drivers. Private taxis and coaches are often used when our volunteer drivers are not available.

Our **Volunteer Transport Service** is available for those who are not in a position to drive themselves to hospitals for their treatment or appointments.

The service was introduced for those who live alone, are unable to drive, or have no family member to drive them and we have seen a great demand for this service in recent times.

The service is free of charge for our clients and a family member or carer is welcome to accompany. At least 48 hours' notice is required for booking a trip and at least 24 hours' notice is required for cancellations.

**In 2013, 640 hospital trips were carried out by our volunteer drivers**, with some use of private taxi companies.

Bray Cancer Support is delighted to announce the acquisition of a dedicated new vehicle for the transport of centre clients to hospitals, clinics and appointments.

The dispersed nature of the health care system in Ireland means that many cancer patients have to struggle with the public transport system to attend their hospital appointments. Many hospitals are not well served by public transport, and the nature of cancer treatment means that patients often have to attend for therapy every day for over a month, often whilst physically extremely unwell.

The demand for patient transport is huge and in 2013, Bray Cancer Support provided free transport trips to cancer patients in the Wicklow and South Dublin areas. Hospitals covered included St. Luke's Rathgar, St. Vincents, St. James, Beaumont, Blackrock Clinic, Blackrock day Hospice, St. Michaels Hospital Dun Laoghaire and ST. Colmcille's Loughinstown. Until now, our team of 12 volunteer drivers had been using their own cars.

We sincerely appreciate the grant support towards this project from the following organisations:

- The Hug Charity Group at Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
- Bray Town Council
- The Hospital Saturday Fund
- Dublin Bus Community Spirit Awards
- Several private donations especially for this project
- Axa Insurance
- Michael Grant Motors, Sandymount

The first year's insurance was sponsored by Axa Insurance in Bray and the first years Tax and Service was sponsored by Michael Grant Motors in Sandymount.

***“We rely on Bray Cancer Support to bring my mother into hospital and home again for her treatment .I can't drive and have no other family to do this. The hospital is unable to help us with transport due to cut backs .If it weren't for Bray Cancer Support helping us I don't think my mother would go to her treatments”*** “Mary” , Bray Cancer Support client

Our Volunteer Transport Service was introduced almost 16 years ago for those who were ill, vulnerable, unable to drive, or who had no family members to assist them. Sometimes clients may wish to travel with a family member, carer or friend for moral or physical support. Bray Cancer Support always tries to facilitate this but it is important that this information is given at time of booking along with the name of the hospital, the appointment time and return time. We require at least 24 hours notice for transport and cancellations must be given to the Centre as early as possible so drivers can be notified. Clients in need of mobility or medical assistance must bring along a family member or friend to support them.

Our Volunteer Transport Service is provided free of charge to our registered clients.

Please note that our Volunteer Transport Service is not generally available for private nursing homes or other fee paying institutions (other than private hospitals) except in exceptional circumstances.



## Bray Cancer Support Centre's Breast Cancer Awareness Programmes

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women worldwide with an estimated 1.38 million new cases each year.

In Europe there are 450,332 new cases every year.



Bray Cancer Support Centre has a very active breast cancer support group called ***'Friends Upfront'***.

This support group meet regularly and operate under the umbrella of BCSC. The clients avail of counselling, complementary therapies, Yoga, relaxation Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Classes, and Art and Creativity classes.

Our swimming hours twice weekly offer therapeutic benefit to those post-surgery and on treatment.

Bray Cancer Support Centre organised an Information and Coffee morning as part of World Breast Health Day in October.

## Check Me Out Campaign

In December 2013 BCSC launched its 'Check Me Out' Campaign. This campaign was established to raise awareness among the 18-35 year old age group. The website [www.checkmeout.ie](http://www.checkmeout.ie) was set up by BCSC as part of the multimedia awareness campaign.



This campaign proved to be a huge success and we hope to develop it further in the coming years. Twelve of our younger volunteers and the centre staff and therapists attended on the night and helped promote the centre services. Over 100 people attended.

Having an information tent at the **Groove music festival** greatly increased our brand awareness and presence. The demographic that we are targeting for our "Check me Out" cancer awareness campaign and sun cream giveaways fitted perfectly with the demographic of the Groove festival attendees. Encouraging the younger generation to be cancer aware, is a large part of our work, along with our Cancer support programmes, and our attendance at the Groove festival helped us achieve this. The Groove festival had a total of 10 volunteers working at this festival promoting health awareness and skincare among the 18 to 35 years olds.

## Men's Group Project

Many men with cancer do not easily access support services. Here in BCSC we recognise that men feel more comfortable discussing cancer in an environment where they are around others who have found themselves in a similar situation.

2013 saw the Men's Group Project move to Shanganagh Community Garden in Shankill Co. Dublin. The Gardening Project at this new premises remains a popular project with our male clients both old and new, where it provides a much needed opportunity for interaction. Brendan O'Leary in consultation with the men who participate in the project ensures that this innovative work is on-going.



The men's group operate under the umbrella of BCSC and interact with all the services of the centre.

Weekly support group meetings take place in the Drop In Centre each Tuesday from 11.30am and all men are welcome.

Our counselling services, Drop-In facilities and complimentary therapies and other workshops are all available to all our Male Clients.

## **Research Programmes/Studies**

BCSC regularly link in with the National Cancer Control Programme to review publications.

We constantly take part in research projects organised by PhD students in various third level colleges and Trinity College Dublin.

## **Community Links**

BCSC has strong links with other community-based organisations.

The centre has on-going partnership with Bray Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS). MABS offers their expert advice in association with BCSC to clients who are experiencing financial strain as well as coping with illness.

The centre works closely with community care social workers, public health and palliative care nurses and general practitioners, with many of our referrals coming from these sources.

During 2013 we took part in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Social Inclusion week. We hosted an Information table throughout the week in the Concourse of County Hall in Dun Laoghaire and our C.E.O. Veronica O'Leary gave a talk on Cancer Support Services in the Community.

We continue to work at community level with a host of other groups and organisations:

The Mermaid Arts Centre; Bray Chamber of Commerce; Bray Wheelers Cycling Club; Bray Town Council; Bray & District Soroptomists; Bray Youth Reach; Bray Golf Club; Bray Sea Anglers; Bray Head Fishing Club; The Signal Arts Centre; The Royal Hotel; The Esplanade Hotel; County Wicklow Volunteer Centre, Shankill Tennis Club, Shanganagh Community Gardens, Little Bray Family Resource and St. Fergals Family Resource Centres.

We are indebted to The Glenview Hotel and Leisure Centre in the Glen of the Downs, and the Royal Hotel Leisure Centre for providing their facilities for our weekly hour of swimming.

We appreciate this support as the swimming hour offers therapeutic benefit to our clients when they are undergoing treatment for cancer.

On a wider community level we have strong links with social workers, GP's Consultants and cancer nurses in a number of hospitals including the following:

- St. Vincent's Hospital
- St. Luke's Hospital
- Mater Hospital
- Blackrock Hospice
- The Beacon Hospital

- St. Michael's Hospital, Dun Laoghaire
- St. Colmcille's Hospital, Loughlinstown.
- Blackrock Clinic
- St. James's Hospital
- Beaumont Hospital.

The centre works in partnership with the Irish Hospice Foundation as well as The HSE, The Irish Cancer Society and Europa Donna Ireland. BCSC is part of the affiliated network of cancer support groups with the Irish Cancer Society. We are self-funded and self-governed.

The centre has on-going links with other cancer support groups in various parts of Wicklow and Ireland. Such groups are: Greystones, Wicklow, Rathdrum, Arklow, Enniscorthy, Kildare, Carlow, Clare, Clonmel, Cork, Limerick, Tallaght, Sligo, Dublin and Wexford.

## **Social Programme and Respite Breaks**

BCSC offer numerous social outings and activities, many of which have proved to be hugely popular over the years. In 2013 some of the trips included a trip to the Zoo and other places of interest.

BCSC partner with the Order of Malta to send people to Lourdes. This is a valuable respite break for our ill and vulnerable clients and their families. This Respite Care is funded by the HSE grant for Social and Respite Care.

Our Annual Purple Ball took place in the Barracuda Restaurant on Bray Seafront on the Oct Bank Holiday. This was a lovely social night attended by over 180 friends and supporters. We appreciate the support of our sponsors for this event.

Our Santa Claus Family Day was a huge success and over 80 families and their children paid a visit to our special Santa Claus in our Drop In Centre and brought those all important letters in time for Christmas.

Each child had a photo taken with Santa and received a gift. Our Lottery grant from the HSE for Social and Respite care helped to fund this special day.

Our Annual Ecumenical Candlelight Service takes place on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday in December each year. This is a very important date in our Centre calendar of Social Events and includes representatives from all the various religious denominations.

This event is attended by 300 to 400 people from all parts of Dublin and Wicklow. Reception follows the Service in the adjoining hall. This event is funded by the HSE Lottery Grant for Social and Respite Care.

## **Conferences, Seminars and Workshops**

BCSC continually strives to offer services of a rehabilitative and therapeutic nature for people with a cancer diagnosis and their family members. We keep fully informed of the latest developments in cancer research and treatment and the psychological care of the patient.

Our Centre staff, therapists and volunteers regularly attend training courses, conferences and workshops with the Irish Cancer Society, Europa Donna Ireland, The Wheel, and the Irish Hospice Foundation. We often avail of their literature for the Centre's Information Library.

We also attend training courses in I.T. and Computer Technology. Our thanks and appreciation to Google for their support with this training.

## **Palliative Care**

Our C.E.O. is a member of the Wicklow Consultative Committee for Palliative Care since 2003. Our aim is to continue to strive for the improvement in Palliative Care and Home Care Services for End of Life care for those who need it.



Our Home Support for Families Programme includes visits to the home when someone is very ill and provide much needed practical help and emotional support.

We can often provide a link with communication between the family and the medical team if necessary.

## **Staff and Volunteer Training**

At Bray Cancer Support Centre our staff and volunteers regularly attend training courses. These courses help keep staff/volunteers fully informed and up to date. Samples of courses attended include:

- Keeping Safe Child Protection Training
- Volunteer Driver training
- Training in Google Adwords
- Lymphedema Ireland Open Day
- Radiation Therapy Study Day
- Google Training
- Counsellors and Therapists Meeting
- Management Committee Meeting
- Staff Meetings
- Dell provided Project Management Training Days.
- Reception and Drop in Services Training

## **Grants and Funding**

Bray Cancer Support Centre relies mainly on fundraising events and donations to operate our Drop-In centre and provide our services to those in need. Our catchment area is Leinster.

The HSE provides a grant of less than 22% for our overall annual expenditure and other project based grants include the Family Support Agency for our Bereavement Counselling Services, and the National Programme for Physical Activity for our Go For Life Classes for our Older Clients.

## Fundraising

Fundraising continues to form an indispensable part of the work at BCSC, with two thirds of annual funding for the centre originating from donations and fundraising events.

The **HUG Charity Group of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council** provided us with a grant of €4,000 towards the purchase of a vehicle. This grant enabled us to get other grants to match our target of €16,500 to purchase a vehicle for our Volunteer transport service.

## Children and Young People Services

Our services for children and young adults at present include: One to one complimentary therapies; one to one support with a professional counsellor on Children and Loss; Bereavement Counselling and Support; Classes in Art and Crafts, Sugar Craft, etc. Drop in facilities and afternoons with use of X Box.

Services have also been expanded to include social outings to the Zoo and Panto's and other significant events such as Santa Claus at Christmas with gift for each child. Social respite breaks to Lourdes and hotels in Ireland also serve as a very important support to young people. This service caters for Wicklow

and Dublin and we have a growing number of young people from the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown area using our service.

The Young person's Movie Night took place once a month in our Drop-In centre for young people affected by cancer, whether you were a sibling, friend or had a parent who has or had cancer.



**Cheque Presentation by Ann O'Neill and Bray Line Dancers with their teacher Patricia Magee from the 2013 Line Dancing Marathon and Hoe Down in the Royal Hotel, Bray.**