



TrustTalk

Spring 2025

Support for
local Sudanese
communities
Page 5

Suicide is
everyone's
business
Page 8

• Values Award
renamed to
honour late
Governor, Mustak
Page 10

Welcome to Trust Talk

As the days grow longer and brighter, we're pleased to welcome you to the spring edition of Trust Talk. This season brings hope, new initiatives and pilots and opportunities to reflect on and learn from the incredible work being done across Team BSMHFT as we look forward to celebrating our Values Awards in May.

One of the most significant projects we are piloting currently is the 24/7 Neighbourhood Mental Health service, a vital initiative designed to provide round-the-clock support to those who need it most. This is a huge step forward in ensuring that mental health care is accessible at any time, in local communities, where it can have the greatest impact.

In this edition, we are also taking time to remember and honour a valued member of our Trust. We were deeply saddened by the passing of Mustak Mirza, our Deputy Lead Governor. Mustak was a passionate advocate for service users and staff alike, dedicating

himself to ensuring that every voice was heard. In recognition of his unwavering commitment and contributions, one of our Values Awards will now bear his name - an enduring tribute to his legacy.

Our commitment to community outreach remains strong and we are proud of the work being done to support Sudanese communities across the country. Led by Dr Mahmoud Saeed, alongside colleagues from the Sudanese Psychiatrist Association (UK) and Sudan Doctors Union (UK), a series of talks were delivered across the country to raise awareness about mental health support. These sessions provided vital information on accessing services and addressed the psychological impact of the ongoing conflict in Sudan. We are incredibly grateful to those involved in this important work.

Thank you to every member of our staff for your commitment, compassion and inclusivity. Together, we continue to make a real difference to the mental health and lives of those we serve. Best wishes,

Fabida Aria
Medical Director



Nick Moor
Associate Non-Executive Director



Meet our new Associate NED

A warm welcome to Nick Moor (pictured in the Welcome), who has recently joined Team BSMHFT as our Associate Non-Executive Director (NED).

A former mental health nurse, Nick is also the Managing Director of the Care Review Ltd, a small specialist consultancy that supports health and social care systems with independent reviews and investigations. Nick is also a delegated Chair for Care Education and Treatment Reviews for NHS England (London region) for people with a learning disability and/or autism and an independent Chair for Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Nick worked in mental health services for the first half of his career, working up to senior management roles, before leaving to become a management consultant. He was the partner lead for mental health investigations for Niche Health and Social Care Consulting and has led investigations into many high-profile incidents. Nick brings a deep understanding of patient safety and clinical governance matters and has a special interest in mental health law, mental capacity and safeguarding issues.

Contact us

To contact our Trust with any general enquiries:
☎ 0121 301 0000 (our switchboard)

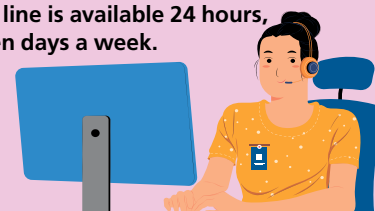
Trust headquarters address:
✉ Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
Uffculme Centre
52 Queensbridge Rd
Birmingham
B13 8QY

Birmingham and Solihull Urgent Mental Health Helpline, in partnership with Birmingham Mind

If mental health help is needed you can ring the numbers below for advice and support:
☎ 0121 262 3555
☎ 0800 915 9292

For urgent mental health support, call NHS 111, option 2.

This line is available 24 hours, seven days a week.



Keep up with us online

🌐 bsmhft.nhs.uk
📘 facebook.com/NHSbsmhft
📧 [@bsmhft_nhs](https://twitter.com/bsmhft_nhs)

Meet our Board of Directors



Roisin Fallon-Williams
Chief Executive



Philip Gayle
Chair



Patrick Nyarumbu MBE
Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Strategy, People and Partnerships



Dr Fabida Aria
Executive Medical Director



Vanessa Devlin
Executive Director of Operations



Lisa Stalley-Green
Executive Director of Quality and Safety (Chief Nurse)



Dave Tomlinson
Executive Director of Finance



Bal Claire
Deputy Chair and Non-Executive Director



Linda Cullen
Non-Executive Director



Winston Weir
Non-Executive Director



Monica Shafaq
Non-Executive Director



Sue Bedward
Non-Executive Director



Nick Moor
Associate Non-Executive Director

Record number of flu vaccine uptake

This flu season, more BSMHFT staff than ever rolled up their sleeves for the flu vaccine, marking the highest uptake rate in years. *Fighting flu starts with you.*

Our uptake for frontline staff is 19.4% and for all Trust staff is 17.3%. Although there is room for improvement it was good to see that 200 more frontline staff had the flu vaccination this year compared to last year.

With hospital admissions up this year related to flu, we are pleased to see an increase in uptake and to focus on staff wellbeing. We had some very good engagement in the flu campaign and hope to build on this for the 2025/26 campaign.

Derek Tobin, Project lead said: "Special thanks are extended to all who

supported the flu campaign this year particularly our vaccinators who provided a wide range of planned and ad hoc clinics to ensure those who choose to have a flu vaccination had a good choice of where to attend. A detailed post flu campaign report will be available shortly the report will provide an overview of learning that we can use to enhance our 2025/26 campaign."

We are keen to build on improvements made this year and will continue to encourage staff to have a flu vaccination to protect themselves, service users, patients, carers, colleagues and loved ones from experiencing serious illness associated with the flu particularly those with vulnerability and underlying health conditions."



Lisa Stalley-Green
Chief Nurse

Outside, Alongside

If you struggle with feelings of isolation but find it hard to be a part of traditional clinical settings or large groups, we could have the answer for you.

Outside, Alongside is an art therapy group run by our Arts Psychotherapies team at the Trust.

Held at the beautiful grounds of our Uffculme Centre, this group is perfect for people who;

- Find being in groups difficult but also feel isolated
- Want to practise connecting with others and expressing emotions
- Find being in traditional clinical spaces challenging
- Might benefit from being outside and being more active.

Please note that you do not need to be 'good' at art to participate, this group is for anyone who feels they could benefit and is under the care of one of our Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs).

If you are interested in learning more about Outside, Alongside, please visit our website for more details by scanning the QR code.



Outside, Alongside

An outdoor art therapy group

Over 600 people are now using the Patient Portal... are you?

The Patient Portal is a brand-new online system that gives our service users/patients 24-hour access to their personal mental health and community healthcare information.

We are pleased to report that we currently have well over 600 people signed up to the Patient Portal.

In addition to mental health care information, users will be able to view their community healthcare information in the portal from Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BCHC) who provide core community health services to 1.1 million people across the Midlands.

The portal allows service users/patients to view their care plans and appointments at a time convenient to them, it also empowers them to have greater autonomy over their care.

Download the Patient Portal today



The Patient Portal is compatible with all smartphones, tablets, laptops and PCs and is currently available to past and present BSMHFT service users who are aged 16 and over, registered with a GP and have an NHS number.

Using the integrated NHS login makes registration quick, easy and most importantly keeps healthcare records secure.

A full guide on how to get yourself set up is available on our website. Simply scan the QR code to get started.



Choose the right route for your healthcare



It's important to remember that the NHS offers a range of services and choosing the right one can help us get the right care when we need it.



Choose pharmacies for minor illnesses
Pharmacists are highly trained and can offer advice and over-the-counter medications for many common ailments such as colds, coughs, sore throats and minor aches and pains. Highly trained pharmacists can now also assess, treat and when appropriate, provide some prescription medicines without the need for a GP appointment.



Choose GPs for non-urgent medical needs
GP's can provide support for long term conditions, chronic pain and referrals to specialists if needed.



Choose Urgent Care Centres (UTCs) for urgent but not life-threatening conditions
UTCs are equipped to deal with a wide range of urgent medical problems, including suspected broken bones, sprains, strains, minor burns and cuts.



Choose 111 for fast medical help and advice and crisis mental health support
For life-threatening emergencies, always dial 999 or go directly to the nearest Emergency Department.

Coumar named in The King's New Year Honours List



We are pleased to share that Marimouttou 'Coumar' Coumarassamy, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, was named in His Majesty The King's New Year Honours List.

The honours system recognises people who have made achievements in public life and committed themselves to serving and helping the UK.

Coumar received a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for Services to Supporting International Nurses nationally through his work in setting up, leading and developing the British Indian Nurses Association (BINA). BINA was founded in 2020 and is closely linked with the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin. It aims to positively influence the UK's healthcare system and helps to address equality and diversity issues.

You can read more about the New Year Honours List 2025 online: [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Carolyn honoured with Queen's Nurse title

Carolyn Musgrave, Drug and Alcohol Team Lead was awarded the prestigious title of Queen's Nurse (QN) for her work supporting people recovering from addiction.

Working for Recovery Near You, the Trust's partner service that specialises in substance misuse, Carolyn has dedicated 35 years of her life to supporting thousands of people across the West Midlands with addiction.



The QN title is not an award for past service but indicates a commitment to high standards of patient care, learning and leadership.

After qualifying as a General Adult and Registered Mental Health Nurse in 1982, Carolyn has built up an impressive list of qualifications in counselling, clinical supervision and more recently, management, health assessment and prescribing.

Since 2012, Carolyn has managed the

Alcohol and Drug service at New Cross Hospital, a service set up alongside the Recovery Near You addiction service. The partnership between BSMHFT, The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, Nacro, Aquarius and NCVO offers free, confidential help to anyone affected by drinking and/or drug use.

- Carolyn has continuously gone over and above to develop special projects to support vulnerable members of the community who are struggling with addiction, some of which include:
- A maternity project for all women experiencing addiction issues who are pregnant
 - Addressing the barriers women face when accessing help with addiction, providing a safe, non-judgemental space for women who may also be experiencing domestic/sexual abuse or other traumas
 - Specific support services for people struggling with addiction in the workplace
 - Developing trauma-informed addiction training.

Carolyn said: "Addiction can be a key factor for people struggling with their mental health, either as an antecedent to their symptoms or as a way of coping with them. I am hopeful that the award of Queen's Nurse will enable me to raise the profile of addiction nationwide."

Carolyn was formally given her QN title in an official ceremony held at the Millennium Gloucester Hotel, London. She joins 3,500 of her nursing peers across the country to hold this prestigious title.

I am hopeful that the award of Queen's Nurse will enable me to raise the profile of addiction nationwide

Carolyn Musgrave
Drug and Alcohol Team Lead



Supporting the mental health of local Sudanese communities

A successful series of talks across the country targeting Sudanese communities have been delivered in a bid to increase awareness about mental health support available.

It is estimated that there are approximately 10,000 Sudanese people living in Birmingham, many of whom are unaware of the mental health support available to them.

BSMHFT's Dr Mahmoud Saeed, Consultant in Old Age Psychiatry along with Dr Tarig Salah and Dr Hala Abdalla from the Sudanese Psychiatrist Association (UK), in collaboration with the Sudan Doctors Union (UK) and Sudanese communities, held a series of talks to local Sudanese communities in Birmingham, Liverpool and Oxford.

During the sessions, Dr Saeed, Dr Salah and Dr Abdalla, supported by the Sudanese Psychiatrist Association (UK), discussed the psychological effect that the war in Sudan may have on Sudanese people. They also helped to dispel myths about mental illnesses, discussed common mental health symptoms and explained where to access mental health services if they needed it.

Dr Saeed shared: "It was satisfying and fulfilling to be able to increase awareness and challenge misconceptions of mental illnesses to my fellow home country men and women. Our



Dr Mahmoud Saeed, Dr Tarig Salah and Dr Hala Abdalla from the Sudanese Psychiatrist Association (UK), in collaboration with the Sudan Doctors Union (UK) and Sudanese communities

overall aim is to fight the stigma of mental illnesses and to encourage people to seek help if they have been affected by the war in Sudan."

The meetings were well attended and generated good discussions with over 100 people joining the event held at the Al Amanah Mosque off the Stratford Road.

After high demand for more talks to be held, the group is planning to continue talking to Sudanese communities in other cities in the UK and Egypt later this year.

Compassionate Mind Celebration Day

All BSMHFT staff are invited to join the Compassionate Mind Team on Wednesday 16 July at Midlands Art Centre, for a session celebrating the compassionate mind. The day will include games, presentations and connection, with light refreshments provided. More information is available on Connect.

Spaces are limited so to book on either the 9.30am-12.30pm or 1.30-4.30pm session, please email bsmhft.compassionate.mind@nhs.net



**Compassionate Mind Training**

**Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust**

CMT Celebration Day

Come and join the CMT team this summer for an informal session celebrating the compassionate mind



- Presentations, practices, games and connection
- Light refreshments will be provided
- Limited spaces available - first come first served

16th July 2025
9:30am - 12:30pm or 1:30 - 4:30pm

Midlands Arts Centre
Birmingham B12 9QH

Enhanced RECONNECT launch day

The newly commissioned Enhanced RECONNECT service celebrated its launch with a lunch and learn event at their base, Phoenix House, Erdington. The event was attended by staff from a range of stakeholders including probation services, prisons, police, national security division, mental health services and learning disability services.

The Enhanced RECONNECT service supports high-risk offenders with complex health conditions following release from prison. The aim of the service is to ensure a safe transition back into the community, by offering a psychologically informed approach to understanding and addressing the barriers individuals can experience in accessing health and support services.

The Enhanced RECONNECT team is comprised of a range of professionals including psychologists, occupational therapists, nurses, social workers, substance use workers, psychiatrists, speech and language therapists, support, time and recovery workers and peer mentors. The service provides direct intervention as well as working with a range of partner agencies to ensure an effective and joined up approach to healthcare and risk management.

If you would like to know more about the Enhanced RECONNECT service please contact the team at bsmhft.enhanced.reconnect@nhs.net 0121 301 6800, Kate Harris, Clinical Lead



LGBTQ+ BSMHFT = a psychologically safe space

One in four people will struggle with their mental health at some point in their lives, yet for our lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (LGBTQ+) community, this figure is much higher.

Firstly, it is important to clarify that being LGBTQ+ **does not** cause mental health challenges. However, the experiences faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, such as discrimination, hate crimes, bullying, homophobia, lack of family acceptance and social isolation, can contribute to poor mental wellbeing and self-esteem.

Mental health issues such as depression, self-harm, eating disorders, substance abuse and suicidal thoughts are unfortunately common amongst the LGBTQ+ community.

In a recent study, 27% of LGBTQ+ individuals expressed concerns about seeking mental health services due to fear or embarrassment. ”

We want to assure you that there is nothing to be fearful or embarrassed about when reaching out to us - we are here to help you.

One of the seven key principles the NHS abides by is that it provides care to all, irrespective of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity or marital or civil partnership status. BSMHFT is no exception, in fact, inclusivity is one of our three core values.

At BSMHFT, we have a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination. Our staff are committed healthcare professionals who support one of the most diverse cities in the country, treating all our service users and patients with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Lynn Phung, Senior Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, said:

“As a Trust it is crucial we keep fighting for equality/equity and respect for all people regardless of identity or sexual orientation. BSMHFT is committed to being a No Hate Zone, meaning that all staff and service users/patients are treated fairly.

“Over 3,000 colleagues from across the Trust have signed our No Hate Zone pledge, supporting our zero-tolerance approach to discrimination. If you are a member of staff, please visit Connect to learn more.”

If you need mental health support, please do not hesitate to contact us.



Scan the QR code to find out more about the mental health services we provide at BSMHFT and other local LGBTQ+ mental health support services across Birmingham and Solihull.

Garry and Eugene champion Recovery College for All

Team BSMHFT colleagues were invited to attend a Royal Literary Fund training event in London to host a workshop about our Recovery College for All.

Recovery College for All runs courses and sessions that support people's recovery from mental health difficulties through learning and education. It is co-produced by people with lived experience and people with professional expertise.

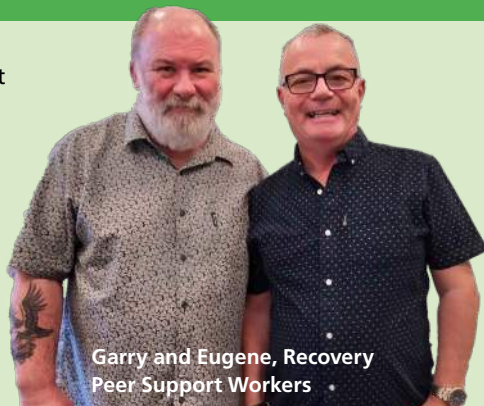
The Trust has been in partnership with the Royal Literary Fund since 2022 and the Writing for Self-expression course is one of our most popular, always receiving excellent feedback for the content, delivery and facilitators.

Speaking to attendees at the event, Recovery Peer Support Workers, Garry and Eugene did an exceptional job of eloquently sharing their own recovery experiences and how they use these experiences in their role within Recovery College for All.

Forty five authors from around the UK were in attendance to learn more about Recovery College for All and to receive training to allow them to facilitate the Writing for Self-expression course.

Anne Glover, Recovery Improvement Lead, said:

“Congratulations Garry and Eugene for highlighting not only the fantastic work that you do and all you bring to Recovery College



for All, but for flying the flag on a national scale for everyone who works with and supports us to provide the best experiences for our learners. You both are a credit to this organisation.”

The Royal Literary Fund shared that out of the 14 recovery colleges they currently partner with, BSMHFT is the gold standard. They appreciate the warmth and support we provide to facilitators and learners and feel that BSMHFT is exemplary for how recovery colleges should run.

For more information about Recovery College for All, contact us:
0121 301 3992 or
bsmhft.recoverycollege@nhs.net.

Sycamore ICU shines as 'Outstanding' in peer review

The Sycamore Intensive Care Unit (ICU) ward at the Tamarind Centre has received an 'Outstanding' rating in a recent peer review, demonstrating exceptional dedication to patient care, staff wellbeing and operational excellence.

The review based on the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) five domains – Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well-led – highlighted the ward's commitment to maintaining high standards.

Iqra Malik, Ward Manager, was praised for her supportive leadership and ability to address concerns promptly and effectively. Mira Gecheva, Deputy Ward Manager's knowledge of patient needs and risks earned her commendation within the report, while Lamin Faal, Healthcare Assistant's compassionate approach and rapport with patients, showcased the team's caring ethos.

During the review, the ward environment was noted as calm, clean and organised, with

safety measures, including well maintained sharps audits and clear staff responsibilities implemented effectively. Patient feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with all service users expressing feelings of safety and care.

Congratulations to the Sycamore ICU team for setting such a high standard of care and teamwork. Your dedication makes a real difference to service users, patients and colleagues alike.



Sycamore ICU team

Paralympic gold medallist champions Op COURAGE

Paralympic gold medallist and former Royal Engineer Commando Gregg Stevenson joined members of the Midlands Op COURAGE team at St Andrew's Stadium in Birmingham, to give a special presentation about his journey from serving in the Armed Forces to becoming a professional rower, to now supporting other veterans.

Gregg served as a Royal Engineer Commando before suffering a traumatic injury in 2009, where he lost both legs below the knee. Despite initial struggles, he worked hard to regain his fitness and pursued opportunities to learn new sports.

He became interested in rowing after trying out for the Invictus Games in 2018. Gregg then went on to qualify for the 2024 Paris Paralympics, where he won gold in the mixed double sculls, alongside his partner Lauren Rowles.

Alongside his impressive professional rowing career, Gregg is also a skilled mental health practitioner, supporting veterans in his role as Armed Forces Lived Experience Lead for Op COURAGE North.

Op COURAGE is an NHS service developed with people who have served in the Armed Forces and experienced mental ill-health. Working together with NHS services and charities, Op COURAGE makes sure people who have served and are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing get the specialist care, support and treatment for their specific needs.

During his presentation, Gregg shared his inspiring story, touching on his time in

the Armed Forces, his injury and subsequent rehabilitation, incredible professional rowing career and now his valuable work with the NHS, using his own lived experience as a veteran to help develop the Op COURAGE service.

Gregg said:

“Working in veterans' mental health is unique and in Op COURAGE we're very lucky to have expertise from both skilled staff and veterans. It's so important that we spread the word and make sure veterans reach out for help when they need it.”

Dr Helen Brown, Consultant Clinical and Forensic Psychologist and Clinical Lead for Op Courage Midlands' Treatment Pathway, said: “It was so inspiring to hear about Gregg's experience as veteran, Paralympian and now Armed Forces Lived Experience Lead.



“Gregg, along with other veterans who attended the event have given us lots of ideas and feedback as to how we can develop our work to benefit the veteran community now and in the future.”

In addition to his speech, Gregg also took the time to send a strong message to the Armed Forces community to reach out to Op COURAGE if they need specialist mental health support. Scan the QR code to watch this in full.



Midlands Op COURAGE is one of six regional providers of the service in England. Since April 2023, it has supported more than 2,000 veterans, service leavers, reservists and their families across both the East and West Midlands.

Veterans, their families or other health professionals can refer, or self-refer to services by to services by contacting us:

0300 323 0137
mevs.mhm@nhs.net
opcourage@midlands.nhs.uk

Midlands Op COURAGE is proudly delivered in partnership by: Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust, St Andrew's Healthcare, Walking With The Wounded, The Ripple Pond, Tom Harrison House and Mental Health Matters.

NHS
The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service
OpCOURAGE



Midlands Op COURAGE and Gregg Stevenson

Patient Council implement positive recommendations

The Acute Patient Council is a place for service users to share their positive experiences of BSMHFT, whilst also being a safe space for people to share their thoughts on where we could improve.

The Patient Council is now a well-established bi-monthly meeting that has been embedded across acute wards

since November 2023, with positive regular attendance from all 16 wards.

The Patient Council has implemented a number of positive recommendations and requests, including Recovery College on wards which has been positively received by service users.

Other improvements included the scheduling of morning meetings to allow service users to be engaged and assured for the plans for their

day, better food provision in North Birmingham where fresh fruit is now delivered and available on a daily basis and group psychology sessions which have been well received by both staff and service users.

The Acute Patient Council would not be what it is today without the involvement of our Experts by Experience, who helped co-produce the Patient Council from the very beginning.



Feedback Friday

Every Friday on our social media platforms and internally, we share positive feedback from service users, carers and family members that access any of our services as part of our 'Feedback Friday' feature.

The feedback is gathered from our Friends and Family Test and is an opportunity for service users, carers and family members that access our services to comment on their experiences. If you would like to leave feedback, please use this link:

fftsurvey.bsmhft.nhs.uk

Why not follow us and see if your feedback is featured.

@bsmhft_nhs
facebook.com/NHSbsmhft



#FeedbackFriday



Follow us on Instagram

Did you know that Team BSMHFT is on Instagram? Follow **@bsmhft_nhs** for the latest mental health news, support services, staff celebrations and much more. We are always looking at new ways to communicate and share information about the work we do across the Trust, used by 35 million people in the UK alone, Instagram is helping us to do just that. Why not hit that follow button to discover what exciting things we are working on this year.

Suicide is everyone’s business

One in five of us will experience thoughts of suicide and one in 15 of us will attempt suicide. Would you know what to do if you suspected someone was feeling suicidal?

Sadly, more than 6,000 people die by suicide in the UK every year, leaving behind thousands of bereaved friends and family who are impacted by their loss.

There are many things in life that can lead a person to think about suicide, but it is important to state that suicide isn’t inevitable. With the right approach, resources and support, suicide is preventable.

Don’t suffer alone. If you’re feeling like you want to end your life, it’s important to tell someone. Help and support is available right now if you need it.

As of 2024, millions of people experiencing a mental health crisis can now dial NHS 111 to get the help they need. People of all ages, including children, who are in crisis or concerned family and loved ones can now call.

Call NHS 111 if you are in a mental health crisis – this line is free and is open 24/7.

If you are deaf, have hearing loss or if English is not your first language please visit the NHS 111 website.

Suicide is everyone’s business. Everyone should have the confidence and skills to play their part in preventing suicides – not just those who work in mental health/ suicide prevention directly.

Dr Sadira Teeluckdhar, Deputy Medical Director for Quality and Safety and the Trust’s Suicide Prevention Lead, said:

“It’s important to note that not everyone displays how they are feeling inside, some people can be very skilled at hiding how they truly feel. Your loved one can be very low in mood yet still laugh or joke, post on social media, go to work or talk about the future.”



Three in four people who die by suicide are not known to mental health services.

What to do if you are worried about someone

- ✓ The safest way to know if someone is thinking about suicide is to ask them “Are you having suicidal thoughts?” It can be intimidating to initiate this kind of conversation and you may be thinking “Won’t talking about suicide put the idea in their head?” The short answer is no. If a person is suicidal, the idea is already there, if they aren’t, it won’t do any harm.
- ✓ Trust your gut instincts. Suicide rarely comes with no warning signs. If something about the person doesn’t look or feel right, say something to a mental health professional by dialling NHS 111 as soon as possible.
- ✓ Be there to listen and keep up regular communication. Ask open ended questions such as “How do you feel about...”
- ✓ Enrol onto online courses to educate yourself on suicide prevention such as the Zero Suicide Alliance (ZSA). Their training empowers, educates and equips individuals to support suicide awareness and prevention, helping you to know what to do in a mental health crisis.
- ✓ Encourage the person to make a suicide safety plan. Visit Mind’s website for more information about the steps you can take to prevent a mental health crisis.



The NHS continues to advise people to call 999 if there is a serious risk to life.



Principal Forensic Psychologist Kimberly Sham Ku



Hi Kimberly, please could you start by telling us a little bit about yourself and what you do at Team BSMHFT?

I was born and raised in the beautiful Caribbean island of Trinidad and Tobago. I went on to do my studies in Barbados and then moved to the UK. I am a proud West Indian through and through and this certainly influences the way I approach my work, as well as my wider professional interests. In terms of work, I am a Principal Forensic Psychologist based at the Tamarind Centre, a medium secure forensic hospital for men. I have worked in the Trust and at Tamarind for just over six years. We work with a range of mental health difficulties and risk presentations. The majority of our men have had contact with the criminal justice system, so there’s not only the stigma of having a mental health problem but also a forensic history.

What it is like to work in a medium secure setting?

Working in secure services can be a mixed bag of emotions. We have the privilege of hearing people’s stories and work with them to develop an understanding of what may have happened to them and what may have led to where they’re at now. I never take this part of my work for granted.

We have the chance to build safe and trusting relationships that some men may never have experienced in their lives.

We work with people who have had some of the most marginalised and oppressive life experiences. Where systems have failed them and where there has been a lack of access to resources and opportunities that can be painful and angering. We also work with men who have committed very serious offences and it can be challenging to hear the level of harm caused.

Has there ever been a stand-out moment in your career that has made you pause and reflect?

Before starting with the Trust, I worked in Scottish prisons. That was probably one of my major career defining moments, leading me to return to BSMHFT. It was an isolating experience being different, a foreign national, a person of colour and having a qualification people were not familiar with.

It was hard personally and professionally but transformative. I think this cemented my passion for the work that I do and especially my interest in working with racially minoritised groups. My values around social justice is important to me and it has really helped working in an environment and on projects where this has been nurtured and where there has been safety to just be me.

What kinds of interventions do you offer at Tamarind to support a patient’s rehabilitation?

At the Tamarind, more broadly, we have input from a wide range of professions, nurses, doctors, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech and language therapists and social

workers - all of us working together to support patients’ recovery and management of their risk. In terms of the Psychology team, we are made up of our fantastic assistant psychologists, we have trainees, a specialist psychological practitioner, practitioner psychologists and our lead psychologist.

Our day-to-day work can be pretty varied. We have the more structured aspects like completing risk and psychological assessments, helping people to make sense of their difficulties and offending behaviour through psychological formulations and delivering therapy. Working in forensic services can be emotionally heavy and we’re often vicariously exposed to high levels of trauma. As such, another crucial part of our role is providing support to our teams to think about the impact of this work on them, their wellbeing, their relationships with patients and colleagues.

More generally, our goal is also to help people within the system, think more psychologically. Be that within teams or how we work with patients. The interventions we deliver are evidence based for the population and include cognitive behavioural therapy, eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing, dialectical behaviour therapy, narrative therapy, family interventions, schema therapy and specialist therapies that also develop the evidence base.

One of the things I am proud of in the psychology department is the openness to creativity, boldness and innovation, which inherently recognises the importance of responding to the nuanced needs of the population we work with. For example, alongside my Multidisciplinary colleagues, we have been running the Elders Project, a project to support African-Caribbean men transitioning from secure services back into the community. The work has involved delivering Black-culture based psychosocial interventions and has been a pilot at our site. This is an aspect of my role I enjoy and has enabled us to build relationships with community organisations and bring their expertise into forensic services. There are also the challenging parts of this work that involves thinking about institutional racism in our context and how Black men are disproportionately affected. This work aligns with the other service development and research projects across race and ethnicity that we have undertaken at the Tamarind. For example, a recent study on racial trauma in forensic services and a pilot group intervention with staff and service users on mental health and healing across cultures.

What’s the biggest misconception people have about your job?

I’d be a millionaire by now if I collected money for the number of times people hear I’m a psychologist, followed by, “so you’re psychoanalysing me?”. I’m not and I definitely do not have a superpower to read anyone’s mind- this would make life very intriguing!

Why did you decide to pursue a career in mental health specifically?

My interest in forensic psychology actually stemmed from a serious violent assault on a child, perpetrated by two older peers in Trinidad. It was horrifying. I was especially curious to understand what these young boys had witnessed or experienced in their lives to carry out such a gruesome attack. The mental health system is not very well developed in the Caribbean and as people, we have a lot of pride. We do not

share our problems publicly and mental health is not something we openly acknowledge. This contributes to our resilience as a community - we work hard and we keep it moving. The downside to this is that people may only be seen when they become very unwell, at which point, the police may become involved. As such, when I came to the UK, I was fascinated by the scope of the field and the level and type of support that people can receive.



What do you do to improve your mental health and wellbeing?

I go to the gym. It’s amazing how my journey has evolved from being purely about aesthetics to getting stronger, challenging myself and improving my mental wellbeing. I’m not the greatest sleeper either and I realise how much better I sleep when I train. Music is also at the top of my list. It’s Carnival season now in Trinidad and Tobago and music is at the centre of Carnival or what we refer to as, ‘the greatest show on earth’ (Trinis will know this term)! I love how they both bring people together, irrespective of race, class and culture barriers.

Past, present or future, what three people would you most want to sit down for a meal with?

I can’t think of people specifically at the moment, but I love interesting conversations. I’m always drawn to the stories and work of people who are bold and courageous and aren’t afraid to challenge the status quo, whilst also maintaining their humility. People who stand on their integrity.

Tell us something that people might not know about you

I can be introverted. No one believes this. I can be very gregarious at work and I think this is essential to the type of work I do. However, I value my space and quiet time and can really keep myself well entertained alone.

Describe yourself in three words

I’d describe myself as thoughtful, rebellious and determined.

Our *Team of the Month* winners

Our *Team of the Month* award is one of the ways we recognise our fantastic teams across the Trust. With more than 4,000 staff working across over 40 sites, we are immensely proud of the 160+ teams that support thousands of local people who need our mental health expertise.

Whatever the role each team plays, *Team of the Month* recognises those who bring alive our values of Compassionate, Inclusive and Committed every day while they are at work. We are delighted to share the latest winners of our *Team of the Month*.

December's *Team of the Month* Wolverhampton Substance Misuse Service

The team were nominated for their hard work and compassion over the last six months, as services have been adapting and developing. The team has gone above and beyond for the service users. The whole team are dedicated in delivering a high standard service despite having low staffing and the service going out to tender, the team show dedication and commitment daily.



January's *Team of the Month* Solar Crisis team

Solar Crisis team work so hard, working with vulnerable children who are in crisis, children with awful histories of trauma, abuse and mental health concerns. Solar Crisis is an amazing team who go above and beyond to ensure they help to heal, guide and support each young person onto the right pathway to a brighter and better future. Not only supporting the young people themselves they support families with different pathways of support, so there able to support their child also, by engaging in therapies/courses.

February's *Team of the Month* North Solihull Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Service team

The team has consistently demonstrated a remarkable spirit of commitment, compassion and inclusivity. They are exceptional in their unwavering dedication to providing the best possible care to our service users along with providing support to families and carers. They support and show kindness to each other, despite dealing with some very complex cases. Always going above and beyond and that extra mile to step in and support their colleagues.

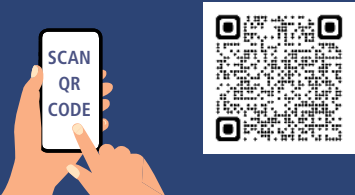


Nominate your *Team of the Month*

If you're a member of staff, patient, service user, carer, family member or one of our health partners, we'd love you to nominate the team that you feel has had a positive impact on you.

Just complete the short nomination form explaining why your chosen team should be worthy winners of the *Team of the Month* crown. This is available on the staff intranet Connect or via our website bsmhft.nhs.uk (see QR code).

Nominations for *Team of the Month* close on the 15th day of each month. Any nominations received in the second half of the month will be included in the following month's awards.



Mustak ensured that the voice of service users was heard in the Boardroom and in every senior discussion.”

John Travers
Lead Governor

Mustak Mirza award to honour late Governor

In a heartfelt tribute to the late Mustak Mirza, our *Service User and Carer Choice Award* has been renamed the 'Mustak Mirza' award ahead of this year's Values Awards ceremony.

Honouring Deputy Lead Governor Mustak's remarkable contributions to Team BSMHFT, the award serves as a lasting tribute to his unwavering commitment to enhancing the lives of service users and carers.

Mustak was an integral part of the Trust for over two decades. Serving as a Governor for seven years, he became Deputy Lead Governor in 2022. During his time as part of Team BSMHFT, his leadership was pivotal in establishing and chairing the Patient Experience and Recovery Forum, where he championed the voices of service users and carers.

Chief Executive, Roisin Fallon-Williams, said: "Mustak's compassion, drive and dedication to improving the lives of others will be sorely missed, but his memory lives on here in Team

BSMHFT. He role-modelled all of our values in his interactions with us on behalf of others."

The Mustak Mirza award will be given to an individual member of staff, or a team, that has made an outstanding contribution to the care and recovery of service users.

Lead Governor John Travers, added: "Mustak ensured that the voice of service users was heard in the Boardroom and in every senior discussion at the Council of Governors. He showed us all how to put compassion and humility at the forefront of our minds in thinking about the way we care for and support each other while developing better mental health services. It's very fitting and appropriate, therefore, that we remember his contribution in this way."

BSMHFT's Values Awards includes 10 categories, the winners of which will be announced at a ceremony on Friday 23 May at Aston Villa Football Club.

Double celebration for our Research and Development team

Congratulations to Linda Everard, Research and Development Implementation and Performance Manager who has won Birmingham Health Partners' (BHP) first-ever People Award for her recruitment to clinical trials and research. Linda's award is in recognition of the integral contribution she makes to 'groundbreaking scientific endeavours'.

By championing individuals - including research nurses, statisticians, pharmacists and many others - BHP People also highlights the incredible diversity of careers in research and the essential contributions that these professionals make.

BSMHFT has also successfully supported a bid to establish one of the UK's new National

Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Commercial Research Delivery Centres (CRDCs) to expand access to innovative clinical trials and deliver life-changing treatments to some of the UK's most underserved communities.

The new CRDC will make it easier for individuals across the Central and Northwest Midlands region to take part in research trials for cutting-edge healthcare treatments, partnering with drug companies to deliver treatment trials in a safe and responsible way. The new centre will also work closely with local businesses, patient groups and charities to help it reach a broad range of communities, including those that haven't taken part in research before.

NHS 111, option 2

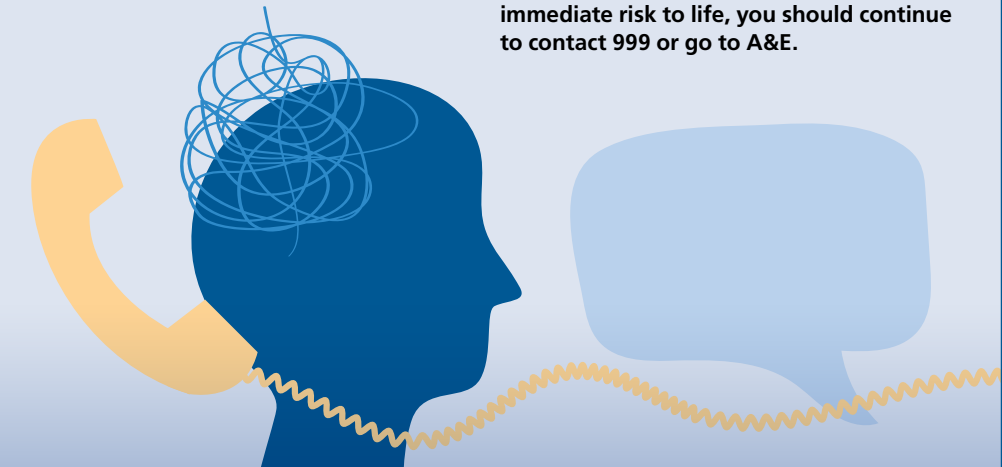
If you are experiencing something that makes you feel unsafe, distressed, or worried about your mental health, you can now contact your local crisis service in Birmingham and Solihull by calling NHS 111, option 2.

The phone will be answered by a trained mental health professional who will be able to listen to your concerns and help you get the support you need. With your permission, they can also access your electronic patient records to better meet your needs and to avoid you repeatedly having to tell us your situation.

NHS 111 is for all ages, including children and young people and those with neurodevelopmental needs.

If you're deaf or have hearing loss, please visit: signvideo.co.uk/nhs111/ to be connected to local crisis service. If you aren't able to make the call yourself, then anyone can call on your behalf. You can also access NHS 111 online 111.nhs.uk.

In emergency situations where there is an immediate risk to life, you should continue to contact 999 or go to A&E.



CaringMinds



Enhancing a person's visit to BSMHFT can make all the difference to their wellbeing, recovery and overall experience of our services. Caring Minds is our charity and supports the Trust's vision of improving mental health wellbeing, by providing added extras that are over and above what the NHS can provide.

If you would like to raise money for Caring Minds or find out more about the work of the charity, please email: bsmhft.fundraising@nhs.net

Alternatively you can make a small donation today, by visiting Caring Minds' JustGiving page: justgiving.com/caring-minds



The latest lucky Caring Minds lottery winners

More lucky staff members have each won £250. Below are some of our recent winners, congratulations to all!

- ★ October: Angela Brown, Support Services Manager East and North Community Mental Health Teams
- ★ November: Kuli Bharj, Team Administrator at North Neighbourhood Mental Health Team, Northcroft
- ★ December: Hayley Broadfield, Health Care Assistant, Ardenleigh Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- ★ January: Lisa Davis, Ward Administrator
- ★ February: Dawn Freeman, Housekeeper at Reservoir Court

If you are a permanent or fixed term member of staff of Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, you can join the Caring Minds lottery for as little as £1 a month. You can find out more information on Connect or contact the team:

✉ bsmhft.fundraising@nhs.net



National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day 2025



Community Services team, Hillis Lodge, National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day

On Wednesday 18 June, Summerhill Services Limited (SSL) will be joining organisations across the UK in celebrating the fourth annual National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day.

National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day was first launched in 2022 and is now celebrated annually. In 2024 over 633 healthcare organisations from all over the UK registered to support the day, representing a total of 294,000 estates and facilities staff.

The initiative has been met with widespread approval and support from the NHS national bodies, colleagues throughout NHS hospital Trusts and Health Boards, commercial

providers and supply chain partners.

This annual celebration is an opportunity to spotlight and celebrate the hard work that each of our estates and facilities heroes do for the wider healthcare system. In previous years, SSL have celebrated locally by displaying themed bunting in suitable areas and coming together for team pictures! See below for a snapshot of last year.

This year, SSL will be celebrating on a local level and will be able to celebrate through their annual Our People and Value Awards ceremony which will take place over the summer. More information on this to come.

SSL celebrates National Apprenticeship Week 2025 (10-16 February 2025)



In February, SSL recognised 11 current apprentices from across the organisation, in honour of National Apprenticeship Week 2025 (NAW). Each colleague is studying an apprenticeship from Level 2 to Level 7 (GCSE to Post Graduate levels) and completing assignments, end point assessments and that

all important on and off the job learning. Throughout the week, each apprentice shared how they felt about their current training – describing their experience as ‘thought provoking’, ‘challenging’ and ‘confidence building’.

Green and Sustainability across our Trust

The organisation has been awarded grant funding to create detailed designs for a decarbonisation scheme at our sites. Consultants have been visiting Ardenleigh, Juniper, Tamarind, Lyndon and Little Bromwich to have a look inside the plant room at the infrastructure already in place.

The surveys were carried out to see if it is possible for air and ground source heat

pumps to provide lower carbon energy to the buildings.

This project has the possibility of decarbonising some of our energy supply and will provide more sustainable ways to heat our buildings!

Look out for green and sustainability updates in the coming months.

Quiz Challenge

1. The Indian dish known as dhal has what main ingredient?
2. The Tyrrhenian Sea is part of which larger body of water?
3. A porbeagle is which type of marine creature?
4. In the 2018 and 2023 Aquaman films, who plays the half-human, half-Atlantean Arthur Curry?
5. Which is the lightest and most common element?
6. In the 2024 UK Snooker Championship, who defeated Barry Hawkins 10–8 in the final to secure the title?
7. Which type of building is known as a ‘rathaus’ in German?
8. Scientist and TV quizzer Darragh Ennis has what nickname on ITV’s The Chase?
9. The 1979 hit song Cool for Cats was by which English rock band?
10. The shepherd Gabriel Oak is a main character in which Thomas Hardy novel?

FIVE ALIVE

OF	MA	IE	GN	TA
EU		CN		UN
GT	RI	VI	LE	NL
HC		EO		LO
HT	HO	RY	MS	EY

Here are two miniature five-square crosswords using the same grid – but the letters have been mixed up. You have to work out which letters belong to which crossword.

EQUALISER

	5		3	
1	○	1	○	2
	3		3	
12	○	2	○	2
	2		5	

Place the four signs (add, subtract, multiply, divide) one in each circle so that the total of each across and down line is the same. Perform the first calculation in each line first and ignore the mathematical law which says you should always perform division and multiplication before addition and subtraction.

CROSS CODE

16	24	25	13	23	4	1	9		2	10	9	9
21			10		25		18		23			3
10		16	24	12	4	1	11	4	23	9		10
14	24	12	17		25		24		21	12	6	12
		14		18	12	21	21	9		1		22
1	7	11	14	7		11		15	25	10	21	22
23		20		23	19	1	24	12		24		11
24	23	12	4	1		24		4	12	22	14	23
24		1		9	20	23	12	5		12		
12	8	23	1		12		15		12	17	12	7
26		9	10	15	16	1	10	25	10	9		10
26			2		16		9		21			20
25	15	11	1		17	11	23	21	22	11	20	14

ABCDEF GHIJ KLMNOPQRST UVWXYZ

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	G							L				

Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5	6		7
8								9			
11						12		13			
		14	15								
16											17
18						19			20		
21						22		23			
24						25					

ACROSS

1. Talk of standard weapon (8)
5. Maria almost upset the prince (4)
8. Thought again and saved? (8)
9. Theologian accepted you had changed colour (4)
11. Mixing fuel behind cask in musical (7)
13. Key found on the coast in west Africa? (5)
14. One who puts up poster about William’s watch (11)
18. French revolutionary not in the Old Testament! (5)
19. Achieve fame by playing darts with order (7)
21. Bush’s girl? (4)
22. Winner to support the cause (8)
24. Spot a rambling 21 Across (4)
25. Surgeon and soldier about to finish feud (8)

DOWN

1. Equality of one in political group (6)
2. Element that Ronald these days included (5)
3. It’s on the cards that he could be a golf 22 Across (3,2,5)
4. Signal billiards players need (3)
6. Dance centre? (7)
7. Fish caught in a flash may have this look (6)
10. Pluto maintained that it had been rejected (10)
12. Lily’s yoga position (5)
15. Cut pointless gold tooth (7)
16. About the start of June river crossing places turn into deep sea inlets (6)
17. One girl or another holding her partner (6)
20. Stray in the snow (5)
23. He includes classy colour (3)



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