



TrustTalk

Spring 2026

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Welcome to Trust Talk 2026

Spring is a season of fresh starts – and as we look ahead to 2026, there is real reason for hope across Team BSMHFT.

We know the pressures facing mental health services and that the work can often be complex and challenging. This edition of Trust Talk is a reminder that, alongside those challenges, there is innovation, compassion and progress happening right across our Trust.

At Highcroft, work has begun on our brand-new inpatient hospital – a major investment in the future of mental health care in Birmingham. The new purpose-built facility will provide our staff, patients and their families with modern, therapeutic spaces designed around dignity, safety and recovery. It's a powerful symbol of our long-term commitment to improving care environments for both patients and colleagues.

In the community, Birmingham's first 24/7 Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre is now fully operational in its permanent home. Offering referral and walk-in support,

the around-the-clock service is already making a big difference to people across Small Heath, Heartlands and Bordesley Green. It reflects a bold shift towards accessible, neighbourhood-based mental health care – meeting people where they are, when they need it most.

We're also continuing to strengthen our culture from within. Through the Culture of Care programme, teams are driving meaningful change across inpatient settings and in community services, with a focus on racial equity, Autism and trauma-informed practice and therapeutic relationships. This work goes to the heart of who we are – providing personalised care, responding to the new Mental Health Act and creating team cultures and environments where every person feels safe, valued and heard.

And we are not shying away from the conversations that matter most. By encouraging open, compassionate dialogue about suicide at home and in the workplace, we are helping to build a culture where colleagues feel supported and able to reach out. Sometimes hope begins with simply asking, listening and caring.

These stories are just a snapshot of the incredible work happening across Team BSMHFT that are showcased in this edition. They show that while challenges remain, so too does our determination to improve, innovate and support one another.

As we step into the months ahead, let's hold on to that sense of shared purpose and optimism for 2026. There is so much to celebrate.

And speaking of celebration - we're really looking forward to our Values Awards on Friday 5 June at Aston Villa Football Club. Free tickets have all been allocated but hopefully you have managed to secure yours, for what promises to be the event of the BSMHFT calendar. Let's come together to recognise the brilliant people who make this Trust extraordinary – we look forward to seeing you there!

And finally, a moment just to say 'thank you'. We are always grateful – and often in awe – of the work you do every day. The

compassion, inclusivity and commitment you bring to your role makes a real difference to the lives of service users, carers, families and the wider community.

Best wishes,

Winston Weir
Non-Executive Director

Lisa Stalley-Green
Chief Nurse



Contact us

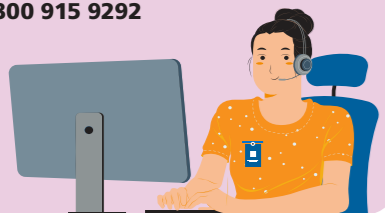
To contact our Trust with any general enquiries:
☎ 0121 301 0000 (our switchboard)

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

For urgent mental health support, call
☎ NHS 111, option 2
This line is available 24 hours, seven days a week.

24/7 Mental Health Text Support for Birmingham and Solihull
✉ Text Space to 85258

For mental health advice and support, call the mental health helpline - in partnership with Birmingham Mind
☎ 0121 262 3555
☎ 0800 915 9292



Keep up with us online

🌐 bsmhft.nhs.uk
🌐 forwardthinkingbirmingham.nhs.uk
📘 facebook.com/NHSbsmhft
📺 @bsmhft_nhs
📍 Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

Sue Bedward is our new SID

We are pleased to announce that Non-Executive Director Sue Bedward has been appointed as our new Senior Independent Director (SID), bringing valuable experience and insight to the role.



The SID plays an important part in the Trust's governance, supporting Chair Phil Gayle and helping ensure the Board operates effectively and delivers safe, high-quality care.

Key responsibilities include supporting and advising the Chair, leading the Chair's annual appraisal, acting as a link between the Board, Chief Executive Roisin Fallon-Williams and the Council of Governors and helping resolve concerns where normal channels have been exhausted.

Farewell to Dr Linda Cullen

Dr Linda Cullen has stepped down as Non-Executive Director after seven years of dedicated service to the Trust, having joined the Board in January 2019 and becoming its longest-serving Non-Executive Director. Alongside her Board role, she worked for 25 years as a Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist across the Midlands and continues contributing to the Care Quality Commission. We would like to extend a big thank you to Linda for her commitment, leadership and expertise.



Meet our Board of Directors



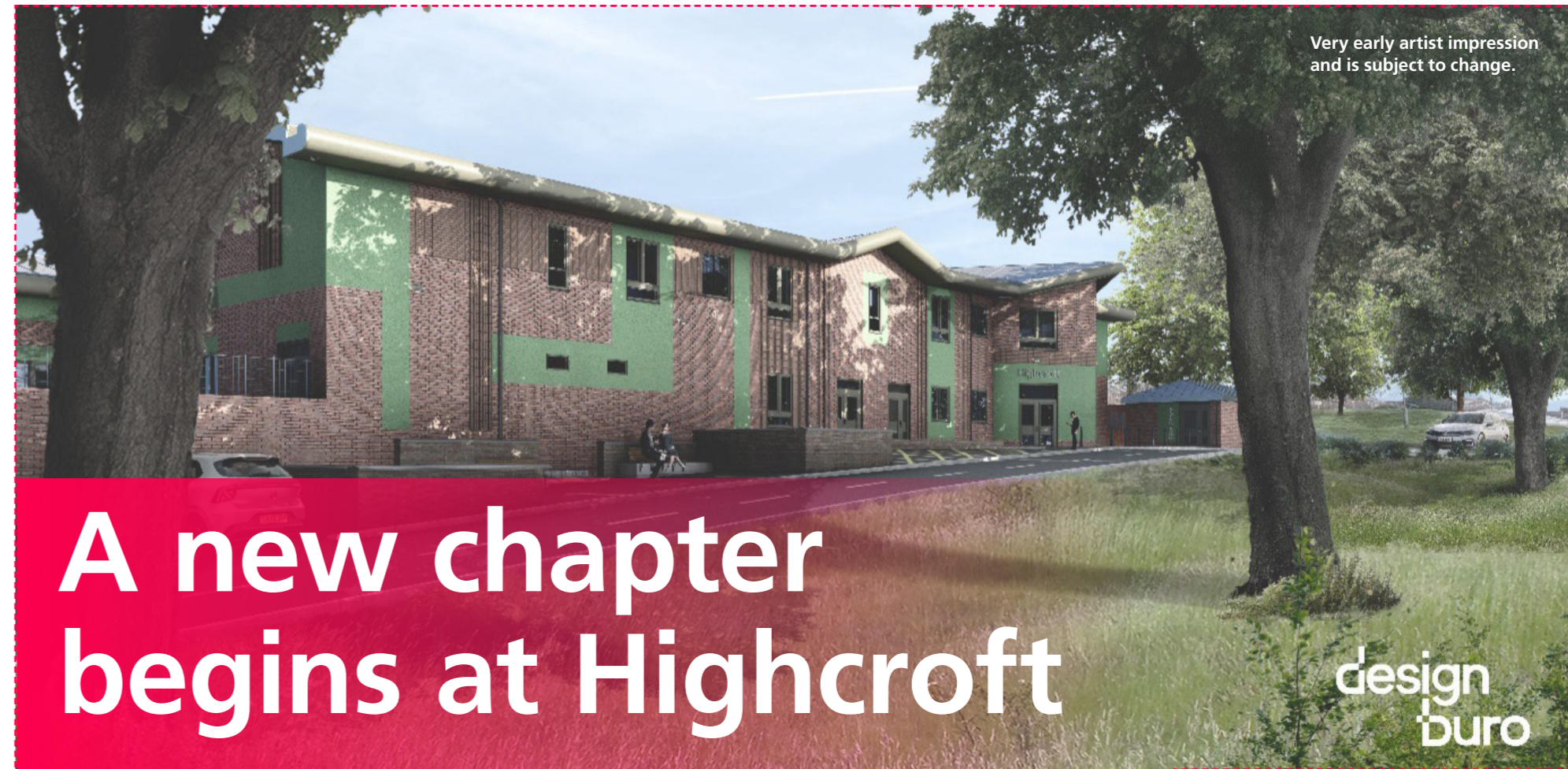
Patrick Nyarumbu MBE Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Strategy, People and Partnerships
Dr Fabida Aria Executive Medical Director
Vanessa Devlin Executive Director of Operations
Lisa Stalley-Green Executive Director of Quality and Safety (Chief Nurse)
Dave Tomlinson Executive Director of Finance



Bal Claire Deputy Chair and Non-Executive Director
Peter Axon Non-Executive Director
Winston Weir Non-Executive Director
Monica Shafaq Non-Executive Director



Sue Bedward Non-Executive Director and Senior Independent Director
Nick Moor Non-Executive Director



Very early artist impression and is subject to change.

A new chapter begins at Highcroft

design buro

Work has officially begun on the creation of a new inpatient hospital at our Highcroft site, marking a significant milestone for mental health services in Birmingham.

The new, purpose-built facility in Erdington, in the north of the city, will ensure that the estate meets both current and future bed demand and capacity requirements. It will also provide a modern environment that improves patient privacy, safety, and dignity while supporting recovery, enabling safer observation and reducing the risk of harm.

A modern space for recovery
At the heart of the development – due for completion autumn 2027 – will be 32 ensuite bedrooms, built in line with the latest guidance on mental health ward design. The scheme aims to transform the care environment, enhancing privacy, dignity and safety for service users while

creating a more supportive and therapeutic setting for recovery.

The new building has been carefully designed to improve patient experience and clinical outcomes, while also providing colleagues with high-quality facilities that support safe, compassionate care delivery.

Tariro Nyarumbu, Associate Director of Operations in BSMHFT's Acute and Urgent Care directorate, said:

"The redevelopment of Highcroft is a significant milestone for mental health services in Birmingham. While we continue to value and make the best use of our existing buildings, this project gives us an opportunity to create a modern space designed around what patients and staff have told us they need.

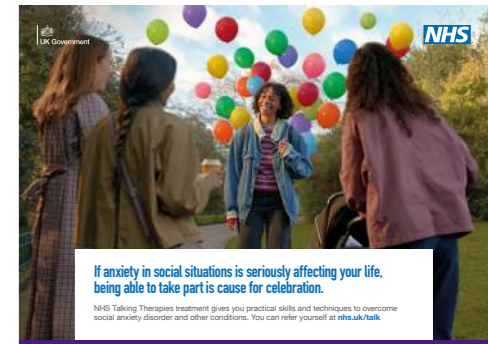
"The new hospital will provide a calm, therapeutic environment that promotes dignity, wellbeing and recovery, alongside high quality facilities that enable our staff to deliver exceptional, compassionate care every day."

An early visual of the completed development offers a glimpse of how the facility will look once finished. This image will be used to support ongoing engagement and communications as the project progresses.

Planning underway

Alongside the build itself, detailed planning and mobilisation work is already in motion. Colleagues from estates, clinical services, communications and the programme management office are working collaboratively to ensure the redevelopment reflects the needs of service users, carers and staff.

Engagement with local neighbours, staff teams and people who use services remains central to the programme. Updates for colleagues - including information about site access during construction - will continue to be shared via our staff intranet, BSMHFT Connect.



If anxiety in social situations is seriously affecting your life, being able to take part is cause for celebration.

Launch of national talking therapies campaign

The NHS has launched a national campaign urging people with common anxiety conditions to seek support by self-referring to NHS Talking Therapies at nhs.uk/talk. Despite the impact of issues like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), social anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), an NHS survey found three in five people delay seeking help and one in five people never seek treatment.

The campaign is backed by Eastenders actress Shona McGarty, The Only Way is Essex's Charlie King and former professional footballer and Professional Footballers' Association chair, Clarke Carlisle, who share their experiences to encourage others. In addition, two local women who have accessed talking therapies to help with PTSD are also supporting the campaign; Jo Kelly from Solihull (as featured in the Autumn/Winter issue of Trust Talk) and Shagufta Zabeer from Birmingham, who was inspired to train as a therapist after her recovery.

You can find out more and refer yourself for NHS Talking Therapies at nhs.uk/talk.

Community invited to help shape Highcroft's future

Now that construction has begun, we are inviting staff, patients, service users and members of the local community to help shape the identity of the new hospital.

A naming competition has been launched to choose names for the main building and its two wards - an opportunity for people to leave a lasting mark on the future of Highcroft.

The ward names will need to follow a theme that can grow over time, as additional wards may be added in the future. The aim is to create names that reflect care, hope and recovery and that will resonate with those who use and work in the building for years to come.

Suggestions can be submitted before midnight, Sunday 31 May 2026.

- By giving your idea to a staff member
- By speaking to a member of the Participation and Experience team when they visit wards
- By completing the online form which you can find by scanning the QR code

You are asked to include your name and contact details so the team can follow up.

For further information or queries, please email: bsmhft.participation@nhs.net





Associate Director of Charities

In this edition of Five Minutes With, we meet Sarah, Associate Director of Charities, who brings nearly 20 years of NHS experience across clinical, academic and charity roles. Working across both BSMHFT and Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BCHC), Sarah provides strategic leadership and oversight for charitable activity. Here Sarah shares what inspires her work and how Caring Minds is helping to support service users, patients and colleagues across the Trust.



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

"This year I will celebrate 20 years of working in the NHS, a career that started as an honorary assistant within the Learning Disabilities Division as part of my Psychology degree. After various clinical and academic roles across the NHS, universities and the charity sector I am ready to embrace my new role as Associate Director of Charities.

"I provide senior leadership, strategic direction and operational oversight for both charities. Splitting my time between the two organisations, ensuring a coordinated approach to delivering impactful charitable activity that enhances patient experience, supports staff wellbeing and enables innovation across both Trusts.

"I am excited to be joining Louise John, Caring Minds' Charity Manager, to help drive the aims of the charity forward, raising awareness and ultimately funds to support service users and their families in ways the Trust is unable to."

What is it like day to day working within the charity sector?

"Working within the NHS charity sector is fast-paced, purpose-driven and incredibly varied, we can definitely say no two days are ever the same. The role sits at the intersection of healthcare, fundraising, governance and storytelling, so you're constantly switching between strategic thinking and hands-on delivery.

"Having grown BCHC charity from a team of one to a team of 10 brings a completely different dynamic and I have this ambition for Caring Minds as we work closer together, maximising resources to drive forward enhancements and innovation across both Trusts. In the early days, you do everything, fundraising, finance oversight, communications, stakeholder engagement and administration. As the team expands, the focus shifts toward leadership, culture-building and strategic growth.



What remains constant however is the impact. You see firsthand how funds raised translate into improved patient environments, staff wellbeing initiatives and innovative projects that wouldn't otherwise happen. It's challenging, often busy, but deeply rewarding!"

Sarah Associate Director of Charities

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

"Every day I am inspired by donors that I talk to, from individuals donating in memory or thanks for the care their loved one has received, to talking to our dedicated clinicians who continue to make a difference for every one of their service users, despite other pressures they may be under. But if I had to choose one key moment during my career it would have to be securing a million-pound grant agreement and having the charity project feature on the BBC's The One Show. For me this really showed the power of the charity sector within the NHS. It can take a while to embed what the charity's purpose is and our role within the Trust, but key moments like this really show the power we have, to make a difference for our communities."

What does Caring Minds do to support service user, patients and staff?

"Caring Minds supports service users, patients and staff by funding projects that enhance wellbeing beyond core NHS provision. Working alongside BSMHFT, it provides additional resources such as therapeutic activities, improved ward environments, comfort items and community events that promote recovery and inclusion. As a charity, we also apply to Trust and Foundations and through a recent successful grant have been able to invest in staff wellbeing spaces - helping employees feel valued and supported in demanding roles.

"By raising funds and engaging carers, families and the wider community, Caring Minds strengthens the overall care experience and creates a more positive, compassionate environment for everyone involved in mental health services. We are just beginning our strategic journey so please do watch this space."

What is the role and need of NHS charities?

"The need for NHS charities is increasingly significant due to rising demand on services, ongoing financial pressures and the growing recognition that healthcare must be holistic, not purely clinical. Core NHS funding prioritises essential medical treatment, but NHS charities enable Trusts to respond flexibly and creatively to emerging patient and staff needs. They fund projects that enhance environments, support mental health and wellbeing, introduce therapeutic activities, improve family spaces and provide specialist equipment that may not sit within statutory budgets. This flexibility allows hospitals to move quickly, pilot innovative ideas and create more compassionate, person-centred settings that support recovery and dignity.

"By engaging donors, corporate partners, volunteers and local communities, NHS charities also deepen public connection to their local trusts. This involvement builds trust, shared ownership and collective pride in healthcare services, ensuring that care extends beyond treatment to emotional, social and environmental wellbeing. Together we are taking this next step, just imagine what Caring Minds and BSMHFT can achieve together if everyone truly understood the value of NHS Charities"

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

"I make it a real priority to take regular holidays, big or small. Stepping back helps me reset, recharge and return with a clearer head. I also love spending quality time with my family. Those moments, laughing together, going on days out or simply relaxing, help keep me grounded and remind me what really matters. I have been lucky enough to visit many different countries and I feel this also brings a sense of humility and appreciation for what I have.

"Swimming is another 'go to' for me. There is something about being in the water that instantly switches my brain into 'calm mode.' It is my way of unwinding, shaking off stress and boosting my energy at the same time. If I can combine the two, even better."

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

"For the past, I would choose my grandma, who died when I was only a few months old. I never had the chance to know her and I'd love to hear her stories, understand her values and learn more about the family history that shaped me.

"In the present, I would choose David Attenborough. His perspective on the natural world, climate change and humanity's responsibility to the planet would make for an inspiring and thought-provoking conversation. I of course would also ask what his favourite dinosaur is!

"For the future, I would choose my future daughter, to see the person she becomes, hear about her dreams and experiences and understand how I might help shape a world she feels hopeful about."

Tell us something that people might not know about you

"Skydiving and scuba diving in Australia over the Great Barrier Reef, although this probably doesn't come as a surprise for someone working in the charity sector. So, I will also share that I once got called out of the audience to play Pictionary on The Graham Norton Show, but my picture was terrible and I got told off by Graham for using letters!"



Describe yourself in three words

"I'm going to use my husbands' words from his wedding speech - determined, caring and loyal."

Mental health support for children and young people

More than 200,000 children and young people across Birmingham and Solihull will benefit from specialist mental health support in their school or college, thanks to the ongoing expansion of Mental Health Support Teams in schools (MHSTs).

During 2026/27, two new waves of MHSTs will be rolled out, bringing the total to 27 teams working across local schools and colleges. These teams provide early help for children and young people experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties, including anxiety, low mood, depression and emotional or behavioural challenges.

Established nationally in 2019, MHSTs are designed to deliver evidence-based early intervention through partnerships between the NHS and the voluntary, community, social enterprise and faith sector (VCSFE).

In addition to direct support for pupils, MHSTs play an important role in strengthening each school's approach to wellbeing. They work closely with senior mental health leads to promote positive mental health across the whole school or college community - including pupils, staff and parents/carers.

The expansion in Birmingham and Solihull is being led by the Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Provider Collaborative, working in partnership with NHS England, local providers and wider stakeholders. Together, they are supporting progress toward the national ambition of achieving 100% MHST coverage by 2029.



Feel the Rhythm, Beat the Stigma Returns for 2026

After striking a powerful chord across Birmingham and Solihull in 2025, *Feel the Rhythm, Beat the Stigma* is back to turn up the volume on mental health once more.

Following the huge success of last summer's events, we're bringing the beat back to four community locations - creating spaces where music, conversation and connection come together. Because when we talk openly about mental health, we don't just change the tempo - we change lives.



With one in four people experiencing a mental health problem in their lifetime, this year's programme continues to build momentum. Expect live music, over 20 vibrant stalls, creative activities, food, raffles and access to local mental health information - all designed to help communities find their rhythm and rewrite the tune on stigma.

- Dates for your diary:
★ Saturday 13 June - Mary Seacole House, Lodge Road, Winson Green, B18 5SD
★ Saturday 27 June - Endeavour Court, 210 Reservoir Road, Erdington, B23 6DJ
★ Saturday 11 July - Maple Leaf, 2 Maple Leaf Drive, Marston Green, B37 7JB
★ Saturday 25 July - Small Heath Health Centre, 42 Chapman Road, Small Heath, B10 0PG

We'll be sharing more on these events over the coming weeks across our social media channels and on BSMHFT Connect - so keep an ear to the ground and stay tuned.
For more information in the meantime, please email: bsmhft.communityengagement@nhs.net.

BSMHFT's Big Comms Check-In



A huge thank you to everyone who took the time recently to get involved in our Big Comms Check-In.

At BSMHFT, communication isn't just about sharing updates - it's about connection. How we communicate and engage with each other as colleagues directly impacts how we communicate with our service users and patients. Clear, timely and meaningful communication helps us provide safer, more compassionate and more effective care.

The Big Comms Check-In was launched to better understand how well we're communicating with Team BSMHFT across our internal channels from posters and handouts in clinical areas, to Colleague Briefing, BSMHFT Connect updates and Listen Up Live. We asked what's working well, what could be improved and how we can make it easier for everyone to stay informed and connected.

We're also grateful to those of you who said you'd be happy to help further shape and develop our communications. Your insight and experience is invaluable.

What happens next?

The Communications team will now analyse the results in detail, identifying key themes and carrying out deeper dives into specific communication elements where needed.

This deeper insight will help inform our future Communications Strategy, helping us prioritise the right channels, focus our time and resource where it has the greatest impact and ensure our messaging is clear, consistent and meaningful for colleagues across the Trust.

Honouring our teams each month

Each month, we proudly highlight a remarkable team whose exceptional contributions set them apart. With more than 6,000 staff members working across 50+ sites, our organisation is filled with inspiring examples of drive, dedication and passion. **The Team of the Month award is more than just recognition - it's our sincere appreciation for those who consistently embody our Trust Values and go the extra mile.**

From clinical services to professional support, every team is essential in providing outstanding mental health care to our communities. Whether it's demonstrating genuine Compassion, fostering Inclusivity, or showing steadfast Commitment, these teams truly represent the spirit of our Trust.

Now, we're excited to announce our latest **Team of the Month** winners:



October - Recruitment team

The Recruitment team successfully managed a significant increase in workload, including the Children and Young People transfer recruitment, right to work checks for

more than 500 staff, and supporting the B501 recruitment review. Despite the added pressure, they maintained strong time-to-hire performance and high standards of customer service.

November - Longbridge Community Mental Health Depot Clinic team

The Depot Clinic team delivers exceptional, compassionate care to a highly diverse patient group with complex needs. The team consistently runs full clinics, seeing over 20 patients each day. They manage unexpected incidents with professionalism and have built strong trust with patients experiencing severe mental illness.



December - AVERTS (Approaches to Violence through Effective Recognition and Training for Staff)

The AVERTS team creates a warm, welcoming environment where people feel immediately valued. Their collaborative approach

encourages shared learning, while their thoughtful induction process ensures new staff feel confident and prepared. The team's integration of Experts by Experience adds powerful depth to training, enriching the experience for both trainers and participants. Most impressively, every team member takes time to build genuine, supportive relationships, consistently living the Trust Values of Compassion, Inclusive and Committed.

January - Solihull Integrated Addictions Service

The Solihull Integrated Addictions Service (SIAS) is a BSMHFT led partnership providing substance use treatment and recovery support across Solihull. As part of this, the Lived Experience Recovery Organisation (LERO), staffed entirely by people with lived experience,



hosted a Christmas Day event for 40 vulnerable and isolated people. The team created a festive space, provided transport, served a full Christmas lunch, offered gifts and ran seasonal activities, extending invitations across Solihull including to those supported by homelessness services.

Nominate your Team of the Month

If you're a member of Team BSMHFT, a service user, patient, 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 social media channels.

Nominations for **Team of the Month** close on the last day of each month.

bsmhft.nhs.uk (see QR code).



Birmingham and Solihull unveils ambitious five year mental health strategy

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Provider Collaborative has unveiled a bold five year mental health strategy aimed at transforming care "at every stage of life" across the region.

Launched alongside Birmingham City Council's 'Creating a Mentally Healthy City' strategy at an event in Birmingham Council House, the plans strengthen a system wide commitment to improving the mental health and wellbeing of our citizens.

The strategy has been co produced with extensive input from service users, families, carers, partner organisations and our local communities. Their message was clear: they want services that are easier to access, more joined up, more community based, and more consistent in improving outcomes.

The strategy focuses on five priorities:

- **Children and Young People: Joined-up support from schools to specialist care.**
- **Acute and Urgent Care: Faster crisis help, more alternatives to hospital.**
- **Community Mental Health: Care closer to home, tailored to local needs.**
- **Learning Disability and Autism: Integrated, personalised support.**
- **Specialist Placements: Efficient, effective care for complex needs.**

Roisin Fallon-Williams, Chief Executive of Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, said:

"This strategy is ambitious and rightfully so. It's really important that we use the data and intelligence this strategy has gathered about people's mental health needs and experiences of care to truly transform the way we deliver mental healthcare for people of all ages, in all communities.

"Launching this together with Birmingham City Council not only reflects our collective commitment to mental health, it also enables us to work together to tackle the wider determinants of health, such as housing, employment and education.

"The cornerstones of our plan are prevention and early help as well as expanding 24/7 neighbourhood mental health provision across Birmingham and Solihull so that more people can get mental healthcare on their doorstep, when they need it most."

Helen Wadley, Chair of Birmingham Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise, added: "This strategy gives us the opportunity to do things differently for and with our communities - not just by asking what they need, but by delivering real change with services rooted where people live.

Our voluntary and community sector partners are vital to achieving that ambition, but we must

invest early and give voluntary and community organisations the support they need to flourish over the next five years."

The strategy was also launched in Solihull in March and delivery plans for Birmingham and Solihull will be developed with communities over the coming months.

Scan the QR code to download a copy of the new strategy:



Colleagues from Birmingham City Council and the Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Provider Collaborative at the joint launch of their mental health strategies. From left to right: Helen Harrison (Assistant Director Healthy Behaviours and Communities, Birmingham City Council), Roisin Fallon-Williams (Chief Executive, BSMHFT), Sally Burns (Director for Public Health, Birmingham City Council), Jenny Watson (Deputy Director of Commissioning and Transformation, Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Provider Collaborative) and Joe Merriman (Service Lead Public Health)

Dementia diagnosis faster, fairer and closer to home

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT) is leading a major new initiative to improve dementia diagnosis and support across parts of the city, after securing more than £600,000 from NHS Birmingham and Solihull's Fairer Futures Fund.

The project will run for three years and its main aim is simple: to make dementia diagnosis quicker, fairer and easier to access - especially closer to where people live.

A new primary care model

At the moment, people showing signs of memory difficulties are often referred to specialist memory clinics for assessment. As part of the pilot, more of the assessment process will happen in local GP practices instead. This means shorter waiting times, less travel for patients in those areas and a smoother, more straightforward experience.

GPs in north Birmingham are already working with us to help design this new model. The idea is to give primary care a bigger role in diagnosing dementia, while still keeping strong links with specialist teams.

The project will also introduce clearer digital

pathways and training for primary care staff, so everyone understands the process from first concerns about memory through to support after diagnosis.

Tackling health inequalities

One of the biggest priorities is tackling inequality.

Data shows that people from some ethnic minority backgrounds and people living in more deprived areas are less likely to be referred for memory assessments compared to the wider population. There can be lots of reasons for this - including lower awareness of dementia, language barriers, or lack of trust in services.

To address this, the project will work closely with local voluntary, community and faith groups, develop culturally sensitive support after diagnosis, run targeted outreach and awareness campaigns and help communities recognise memory problems earlier and access help sooner.

Funding has been set aside to support community organisations to play a key role in this work.

Working together

The project will also help different health and care teams meet regularly and work better together, so everyone with dementia gets the right help in a fair

and joined-up way.

By strengthening primary care, working in partnership with communities and focusing on fairness, BSMHFT and its partners aim to improve outcomes for people living with dementia across the city.

For more information, staff can email: bsmhft.primarycaredementiapathway@nhs.net



Feedback through the Friends and Family Test

We're always thrilled to read the feedback that comes in through our Friends and Family Test (FFT) - it's a real reminder of the amazing care and support our teams provide every day.

The FFT gives patients, service users, carers and families a simple way to share their experiences with us. It's not just about praise, it's also a vital tool that helps us learn, grow and keep improving the way we deliver mental health care.

Here's some of the recent feedback:

Neuropsychiatry

"I was diagnosed with Functional Neurological Disorder (FND) in February 2024. Since June 2025, Alice has been working with me on managing this disorder. Alice has not only supported me but has on occasion welcomed family members to sessions so they too can have a better understanding of FND. I know they have found the sessions invaluable. We have all learned quite a lot about FND from Alice."

Community Mental Health Team Psychological Services - West Hub

"During my six weeks of psychological intervention from Faye, I have been on a fascinating journey of insight, self-discovery, compassion and healing. The Juniper Centre is lucky to have someone with such skill, talent, compassion, knowledge and understanding. Faye embodies all that is best about the NHS mental health service. I feel extremely privileged and grateful that I was lucky enough to encounter such an incredible practitioner."

Forward Thinking Birmingham, Screening, Training, Intervention, Consultation and Knowledge (STICK) Service - Early Help Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service team

"The STICK team have been fantastic. David was exceptionally good with my son, I have seen a markedly difference in him and his confidence has grown since attending the sessions. He is about to start college and I feel the support and guidance he has received will help him massively on his journey. The initial consultation at home was informative and answered any questions I had. Both members of the team were friendly and made my son relaxed, which was great."



Recovery Near You achieves Hepatitis C elimination

Recovery Near You (RNY), Wolverhampton's free and confidential substance misuse service, is celebrating a major public health milestone after achieving hepatitis C elimination across the city.

Delivered in partnership by BSMHFT, Nacro and Aquarius, RNY supports anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drug or alcohol use. The service offers advice, treatment, blood borne virus testing, needle exchange and one-to-one and group support. Teams also work closely with individuals and families to improve wellbeing, rebuild relationships and access wider support including housing, employment and healthcare.

In partnership with Hep C U Later, the NHS programme dedicated to eliminating hepatitis C, RNY has made significant strides in identifying and treating the virus locally.

Since September 2021, fully trained staff have used dried blood spot testing kits to screen 1,921 service users. Testing has been embedded into routine key working sessions, delivered in people's homes, community clinics and through a mobile unit. Rapid Cepheid testing machines have enabled results to be available within 30 to 90 minutes, helping to speed up diagnosis and treatment.

Targeted screening events have also played a key role in the success. Senior Health and Wellbeing Nurse, Emily Dalloway, coordinated



a series of focused initiatives, including activity around World Hepatitis Day, Love Your Liver and European Testing Week, working closely with Hep C U Later and The Hep C Trust.

As a result of this sustained effort, 56 people have successfully cleared the virus, with a further 13 referred for treatment before leaving the service.

Weekly in-reach clinics at the RNY hub, delivered in partnership with New Cross Hospital and The Hep C Trust, continue to ensure treatment is accessible within the community. Recovery Near You will maintain its screening programme and partnership approach to sustain hepatitis C elimination in Wolverhampton and protect the health of local communities.

Birmingham's first **24/7** Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre

More than clinical care

Mental health is influenced by many factors beyond symptoms alone. Housing, finances, physical health, isolation and cultural needs all play a role in wellbeing.

That's why the centre operates a hub-and-spoke model, working closely with 15 Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) partners. These partners provide culturally responsive mental health support, creative and peer-led wellbeing activities, physical health programmes and practical advice on housing, benefits and legal rights.

Together, this partnership approach offers holistic support that looks at the whole person, not just their mental health.

What support looks like

Support at the centre is provided by a multi-disciplinary team including psychiatrists, therapists, nurses, peer support workers and other mental health professionals.

- Immediate mental health support and assessment
- Therapeutic and recovery-focused support
- Crisis care and short-stay beds for those who need extra help to stay safe
- Outreach support within the community

Care is tailored to each person, recognising that everyone's experience and needs are different.

We are delighted to have opened Birmingham's first ever 24/7 Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre, marking a major milestone in how mental health care is delivered across the city.

Now based in its permanent, purpose-designed home on Golden Hillock Road, the centre is operating around the clock for the first time, providing immediate, compassionate mental health support to adults living in Small Heath, Heartlands and Bordesley Green.

The service first opened in early 2025 from a temporary base and in that time more than 1,000 people have already accessed support. Moving into its forever home has unlocked the ability to deliver the full 24/7 model – ensuring help is available day and night, when people need it most.

The centre is one of only a small number nationally, funded through NHS England as part of a pilot exploring new, neighbourhood-based ways of delivering mental health care.

A neighbourhood approach

The Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre is built on a simple belief: mental health support works best when it is embedded in the community and built around people's lives.

Adults aged 18 and over who live in the three neighbourhoods can walk in without a referral and speak directly to a mental health professional. People don't need to be in crisis to attend – they may be feeling overwhelmed, anxious, low, distressed or simply unsure where to turn.

Those who use the service are welcomed as 'guests', reflecting a model of care based on hospitality, dignity and person-centred support. From the moment someone arrives, the focus is on listening, understanding and working together to identify the right next steps.

A space designed for comfort and dignity

The new building has been purpose-designed to feel welcoming, calm and accessible.

- A welcoming reception area
- A communal lounge
- A shared kitchen and dining area
- Six comfortable ensuite bedrooms
- A meditation and prayer room

Every element of the space has been created to support a range of needs and help guests feel safe, respected and at ease.

Shaping the future of mental health care

By opening Birmingham's first 24/7 Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre, BSMHFT is helping shape a new model of care that is accessible, community-based and available when it matters most.

For guests, it means something simple but powerful:

- a place to go,
- someone to talk to,
- and support that meets them where they are.



Postcode Checker

A postcode finder on the Trust website allows people to quickly check whether they live in an area covered by the service and find out how to access support.



Innovation boost for NHS Talking Therapies

Two pioneering projects designed to enhance NHS Talking Therapies services in Birmingham and Solihull have secured national funding, marking a significant step forward in improving access and outcomes for local communities.

All four NHS Talking Therapies providers in the region were invited to pitch their ideas in a 'Dragons' Den'-style challenge, presenting innovative proposals to a panel and demonstrating how their projects would drive improvements in accessibility, inclusivity, efficiency and productivity.

From eight bids submitted, two standout projects have been awarded funding:

1 Health Inequalities Programme

An 18-month initiative focused on improving access for Black men, a group currently underrepresented in Talking Therapies services. The programme aims to tackle barriers and ensure more equitable mental health support.

2 Neurodiverse Youth Pathway

A dedicated pathway for young people aged 11-25 accessing youth counselling services. This project will deliver tailored group sessions and one-to-one interventions for neurodiverse individuals, ensuring support meets their unique needs.

Tom Hancock, Community Senior Commissioner and Transformation Manager for Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Provider Collaborative, said:

"This approach was more than just allocating funds. It created an opportunity for providers and commissioners to connect, share ideas and learn from each other. The healthy competition encouraged innovation and kept service users and underserved communities at the heart of every proposal."

"It was a fantastic experience that allowed creativity and innovation to flourish, all while staying focused on enhancing patient care and supporting the communities we serve."

Olivia Jones

Olivia Jones, Psychological Therapist for Birmingham Healthy Minds and lead for the health inequalities programme, added:

"It was a fantastic experience that allowed creativity and innovation to flourish, all while staying focused on enhancing patient care and supporting the communities we serve."



If you're struggling with flashbacks or distressing memories, being able to get on with your life again is cause for celebration.

NHS Talking Therapies treatment gives you practical skills and techniques to overcome post-traumatic stress disorder and other conditions. You can refer yourself at nhs.uk/talk

BSMHFT shortlisted for Student Nursing Times Award

We are very proud to have been shortlisted for a prestigious national award recognising excellence in student nurse training.

The Trust is a finalist in the Student Placement of the Year category at the Student Nursing Times Awards, thanks to its innovative Applying Theory and Practice Pathway (ATAPP).

Developed and led by the Trust's Pre-Registration Clinical Education team, ATAPP is a structured clinical placement pathway designed to help pre-registration nursing students confidently apply classroom learning to real-world mental health settings. The programme creates a high-quality learning environment that bridges the gap between theory and practice, supporting students to build skills, confidence and professional identity.

A key strength of the pathway is its co-production with Experts by Experience (EbEs), ensuring that lived experience is central to how students learn about mental health care. The programme is also delivered in partnership with subject matter experts from across the Trust, bringing together specialist knowledge and frontline expertise to enhance the student experience.



Chief Nurse, Lisa Stalley-Green, praised the teams involved and the wider nursing workforce who support students across services.

She said: "A huge thank you to all of our nurses and mentors who play such an important role in supporting student training and providing high-quality placement experiences. This nomination reflects your dedication, expertise and commitment to developing the next generation of mental health nurses."

The Student Nursing Times Awards ceremony will take place on Friday 24 April, where winners from across the country will be announced.

Congratulations to everyone involved - fingers crossed for a successful evening.

Flu campaign sees biggest uptake yet

This winter's flu campaign may have wrapped up, but the impact has certainly not gone unnoticed.

Thanks to the fantastic support of colleagues across Team BSMHFT, the 2025/26 campaign achieved our highest uptake yet. Over the winter months, more than 1,800 colleagues received their flu vaccination - nearly 600 more than last year and more than 700 more than two years ago.

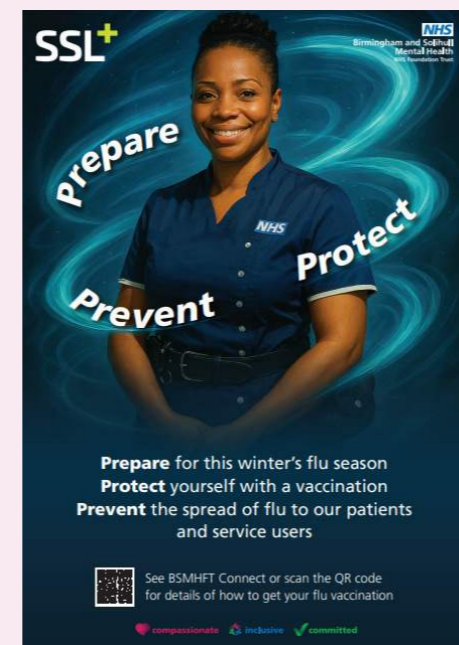
While figures have been strengthened by Children and Young People division colleagues joining the Trust in 2025, the overall percentage of staff vaccinated also rose significantly - climbing from 17.4% last year to 23.7% this winter. That's real progress and a strong sign of our collective commitment to protecting one another and the people we care for.

We also saw a huge increase in colleagues using the Staff Portal to record vaccinations received outside the Trust, with entries rising from 426 last year to 788 this year. This gives us a far clearer and more accurate picture of vaccine uptake and helps ensure the efforts of colleagues are fully recognised.

Although the 2025/26 campaign has only recently come to a close, planning is already underway for 2026/27. By building on what worked well and exploring new

ways to make the vaccination even more accessible and convenient, we're aiming to keep that positive momentum going.

A huge thank you to everyone who rolled up their sleeves and got vaccinated last winter, your commitment helps keep Team BSMHFT and the people we care for, safer.



BSMHFT colleague helps to break the stigma for text service campaign

The latest advertising campaign to promote the mental health text support service - encouraging people to text 'space' to 85258 for mental health support - includes one of BSMHFT's own, e-learning developer and supervisor Junaid Mahmood.

Junaid, who is also a Freedom To Speak Up Champion for the Trust, was keen to lend his support to encourage more people to speak up about their mental health, particularly young, Muslim men.

The 30-year-old, said: "I am proud to represent my culture and I am also proud to work for BSMHFT so was very happy to lend my support to this campaign and do what I can to help break the mental health stigma that exists within my community."

"This service offers a discreet and accessible way to get support, especially for those who may not feel able to talk on the phone or meet in person."

Since its launch in August 2025, the service - a partnership between BSMHFT and Shout, the UK's first 24/7 text messaging support service - has supported nearly 900 people across the region. However, around 70% of texters

are women and young girls, which is why the latest campaign specifically aims to reach more young men.

Adverts featuring Junaid - and two other local young men - have appeared on billboards and bus shelters near Villa Park, St Andrew's, Birmingham City Centre, and around local mosques.

Scan here for more information



"This service offers a discreet and accessible way to get support, especially for those who may not feel able to talk on the phone or meet in person."

Junaid Mahmood

No pressure. No judgment. Just support.

Text 'Space' to 85258

Free, confidential, 24/7

in partnership with shout

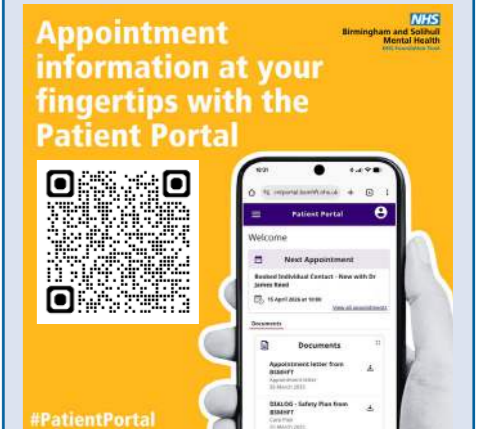
Boosting Patient Portal sign ups

It's been a year since we launched the Patient Portal and it's already making a real difference for the 1,500 service users who are signed up. Now we're starting a renewed push to make sure more patients and service users know about it and can benefit.

The Patient Portal is a secure online service - separate from the NHS App - that gives people easy access to letters from their care team, care plans and appointment details. It was co-produced with Experts by Experience and can be accessed on smartphones, tablets and computers using an NHS login.

If we're patient-facing, please take a moment to tell service users about the portal and how easy it is to sign up. You can also share details with friends or family who use our services.

Sign up via the website by scanning the QR code on the image.



LGBTQ+ History Month event

LGBTQ+ Staff Network members and allies came together at the Uffculme Centre recently to mark LGBTQ+ History Month with a vibrant event celebrating education, visibility and inclusion.

Hosted by entertainer, Mrs Barbara Nice, the event welcomed people throughout the day to reflect on the history of the LGBTQ+ community while celebrating progress and allyship. The programme featured a series of engaging talks and performances, alongside information and community stalls.

The day opened with a warm introduction from Mrs Nice, setting the tone for a programme focused on learning, reflection and celebration. Network member Stacey Duke shared an insightful talk on LGBTQ+ history, highlighting key moments and voices that have shaped the community. This was followed by a powerful talk and performance from activist and drag artist Phil Harper, which was warmly received by attendees.

Over lunch, guests had the opportunity to connect with colleagues and explore the stalls before hearing from teacher and No Outsiders founder Andrew Moffat MBE, who spoke passionately about inclusion, education and creating safe spaces for all. The event concluded with the much anticipated 'Barbara Raffle', adding a fun and celebratory close to the day. The event provided a welcoming space for

people to come together, learn from one another and celebrate LGBTQ+ history, reinforcing the importance of visibility, inclusion and allyship both in the workplace and wider community.



A new strategy for perinatal and infant mental health

Work is underway to strengthen the mental health support available to babies, parents and carers during pregnancy and the early years of a child's life.

This follows investment to develop a dedicated perinatal and infant mental health strategy – the first of its kind for Birmingham and Solihull.

Aligned to our recently launched five year all age mental health strategy, this 12 month project will set out the support, tools and training that parents, carers and professionals need so that giving babies the 'best start in life' means both mental and physical health.

The project is being led by Rachel Bailey, Young People's Commissioning Manager, who has been seconded from her role as Team Manager for the East Perinatal team. It has been approved by the Board and is sponsored at executive level by Patrick Nyarumbu MBE, Executive Director for Strategy, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for Strategy, People and Partnerships.

Rachel said: "Having worked in perinatal care for the past three years in an area of the city with significant health inequalities and high levels of need, I'm delighted that this project has received the backing it needs to make a real difference."

"The parent infant relationship is fundamental in laying the foundations for lifelong mental health – yet so many factors can put that relationship under strain, from

economic pressures and cultural expectations to birth trauma and a parent's own early experiences.

"This strategy aims to create a structured, equitable perinatal offer across Birmingham and Solihull so that every family – regardless of where they live, their culture or background – can access the right support when they need it most."

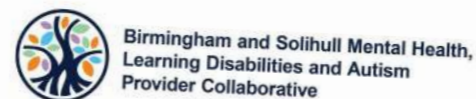
To ensure the new strategy reflects real experience, Rachel is currently gathering feedback from new and expectant parents through a short survey. This will help shape what future emotional and mental health support should look like.

"I'm delighted that this project has received the backing it needs to make a real difference."

Rachel Bailey
Young People's Commissioning Manager



Take part in the survey before the end of May 2026, by scanning the QR code.



**New parent?
We want to hear from you**

Becoming a parent can be amazing but overwhelming, and it can be hard to know where to turn for support.

By taking a few moments to tell us about the emotional support you received during pregnancy and your child's early years, you can help us shape future wellbeing and mental health care for parents, babies and carers.



DIALOG+ supporting community care

Since autumn 2024, DIALOG+ (pronounced di-a-log-plus) has been helping patients and service users take an active role in their care.

DIALOG+ is part of our digital patient record system, Rio, which staff use to securely record and manage care. The tool is a simple questionnaire that explores all areas of life known to affect mental and physical wellbeing, including family, relationships, leisure activities, accommodation, and health. This helps healthcare teams have meaningful, personalised conversations and co-produce care plans that reflect what matters most to each individual.

All community mental health teams are being asked to use DIALOG+ to better understand patients' needs and support recovery. Ogechukwu Ugwudike, Support Time Recovery Worker at our Lyndon Clinic says that the tool helps her work with 18-25-year-olds, track progress, and quickly identify any changes in mental health.

Questionnaires are repeated over time to track progress, celebrate



improvements, and spot any concerns early, ensuring care stays relevant and responsive.

We encourage patients and service users to ask their community team or professional lead about DIALOG+ and how it can help them be actively involved in their care.

To understand more about DIALOG+ from Ogechukwu, please scan the QR code.



It's Not Just Your Age

"Getting older doesn't mean you have to put up with feeling low."

That's the simple but powerful message at the heart of our Older Adults mental health awareness video, narrated by Birmingham's own, comedian, Jasper Carrott.

With warmth and familiarity, Jasper guides us through the reality that while later life can bring significant change - retirement, bereavement, caring responsibilities, physical health challenges or loneliness - struggling with your mental health is not an inevitable part of ageing.

Depression and anxiety affect older adults just as they do any other age group. Yet too often symptoms are dismissed as "just old age" by individuals themselves, by families or even by wider society. The video challenges that misconception head on, encouraging us to recognise the signs of low mood, withdrawal, sleep difficulties or loss of interest and to start conversations about support.

It also highlights the range of help available, from community mental health teams to psychological therapies and local support networks, reinforcing



that compassionate care is there when it's needed.

For colleagues across the Trust, this short animation is a valuable conversation starter. Whether shared with service users, carers, families, community partners friends or family, it helps normalise discussions about mental wellbeing in later life and tackles stigma in an accessible way.

As a Trust, we know that good mental health has no age limit. Ensuring older adults feel heard, valued and supported is central to delivering equitable, person-centred care.

To watch the video, please scan the QR code.



Trust-wide project strengthens enhanced observations

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT) is taking an important step forward in improving how we deliver Enhanced Therapeutic Observations and Care (ETOC).

This Trust-wide Quality Improvement (QI) project has one clear aim: to make enhanced observations more therapeutic, safer and more person-centred for service users who need extra support.

Led by Leona Tasab, Head of Nursing and AHPs for the Specialities Division, alongside Co-Lead Katie Atcherley, Lead Nurse for Safer Staffing and Professional Nurse Advocates – the work is supported by Lisa Farmer and QI Facilitators Hannah Stanyard and Paul Olusanya.

ETOC is about much more than simply observing someone. It focuses on building strong relationships, using good de-escalation skills and spending meaningful time with service users when they may be feeling distressed or vulnerable. The project is centred on four main areas: strong leadership, safe and person-centred care, high-quality training and



making sure we have the right staff in place.

Six pilot wards are leading this work: Laurel Ward in Secure Care; Eden Acute Ward, Meadowcroft and MSH Ward 1 in Acute Care; Cilantro Ward in Specialities; and Rosemary Ward in Dementia and Frailty services. By testing ideas across different services, the team can learn what works well and prepare to roll improvements out more widely across the Trust.

Coproduction is a key part of the project. Staff are working closely with service users, families and Experts by Experience to shape the changes. An Expert by Experience is part of the core team, helping to make sure lived experience guides

the work. On Laurel Ward, service users are co-designing a poster to explain what enhanced observations involve and what people can expect when they need increased support.

The team is also working with Caring Minds to look at funding opportunities to improve ward environments to make them more supportive and therapeutic.

Staff training is also being strengthened through a new three-tier model that combines

eLearning, face-to-face teaching, simulation and competency checks. A new ETOC Dashboard has been developed as well, giving teams real-time information about progress and impact.

This project shows our continued commitment to safe, compassionate and high-quality care, making sure that when service users need extra support, it is delivered in a meaningful and therapeutic way.



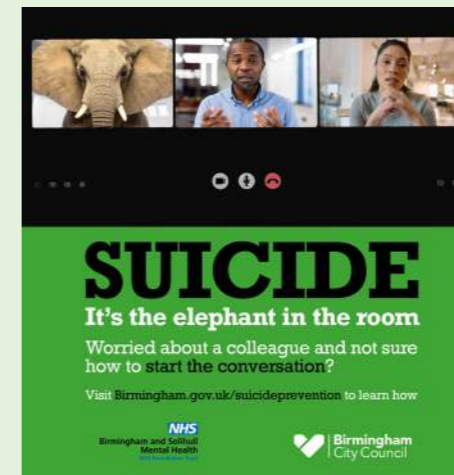
Engaging in open conversations in the workplace about suicide

Suicide is the elephant in the room, yet it is the leading cause of death in young men and women in England today. We all have a role to play in preventing deaths by suicide, starting with how we talk to one another. Building an open, compassionate culture - at home, in our communities, and at work - is a shared responsibility.

Given that one-third of a person's life - approximately 90,000 hours - is spent at work, employers and colleagues are uniquely positioned to notice changes in behaviour or mood that may signal someone is struggling. By engaging in open, compassionate conversations with colleagues around suicide, you can help build a workplace culture where people feel safe to speak up and support one another.

Below are some practical tips you can share across your workplace, or use yourself, to support a colleague who might be struggling:

- Ask how they're doing
- Listen without judgement
- Explain that you're asking because you care and want to help
- Mention changes you've noticed and express concerns for their wellbeing
- Encourage professional support - suggest speaking to a GP and signpost support services such as texting SPACE to 85258 for free, confidential advice from a mental health professional
- Keep checking in and let them know you're willing to listen



To find local crisis support or and advice on how to have open, compassionate conversations about suicide, please visit birmingham.gov.uk/suicideprevention.

To take part in a free, half-day suicide prevention training, you can register by scanning the QR code.

If you're worried about a colleague, or you're experiencing a crisis yourself, you can phone 111 and select option 2 or text 'SPACE' to 85258. You can also phone Samaritans at 116 123, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Join our staff choir – Lift Every Voice

Lift Every Voice is a brand-new, inclusive NHS choir designed to bring joy, connection and wellbeing. Open to colleagues from across BSol, our volunteers and retired NHS staff, the choir welcomes everyone, whether you're a confident singer or only sing in the car (or shower!).

With relaxed rehearsals twice per month and the chance to perform at uplifting *Feel the Rhythm, Beat the Stigma* events across Birmingham and Solihull in the summer, this is a unique opportunity to boost your wellbeing, meet colleagues from across the NHS and be part of something joyful, creative and meaningful. Every voice matters and every voice is welcome. If you would like to find out more or join the choir, please email: bsmhft.communityengagement@nhs.net



Powerful reflections from our mental health nurses

Mental Health Nurses Day (Saturday 21 February) provided an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the compassion, skill and humanity at the heart of mental health nursing, with colleagues from across the Trust sharing powerful reflections on their roles.

Mental health nurses support patients, service users and families at some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives. Their role goes far beyond clinical care, encompassing listening without judgement, building trust, advocating for dignity and walking alongside people on their recovery journeys.

As part of Mental Health Nurses Day, we invited mental health nurses to reflect on their experiences - from the moments that inspired them to join the profession, to times when they saw nursing care change a life and what helps them stay grounded on difficult days. Their reflections reveal a workforce driven by empathy, resilience and a deep commitment to person centred care.

Many nurses described how small, human moments can have a lasting impact. One shared:

"Knowing that just sitting, listening and being present made someone feel safe reinforced how important compassionate care is, even in small moments."

Others reflected on witnessing people arrive in crisis and gradually rebuild hope through consistent, respectful support:

"Seeing patients who have been acutely unwell go into hospital and come back completely changed is so rewarding."

Another nurse described the power of dignity and kindness in recovery:

"Once someone realises, they are worthy of respect and kindness, it's like watching a warm light being turned on."

Compassionate care was described not as a single action, but as a way of being:

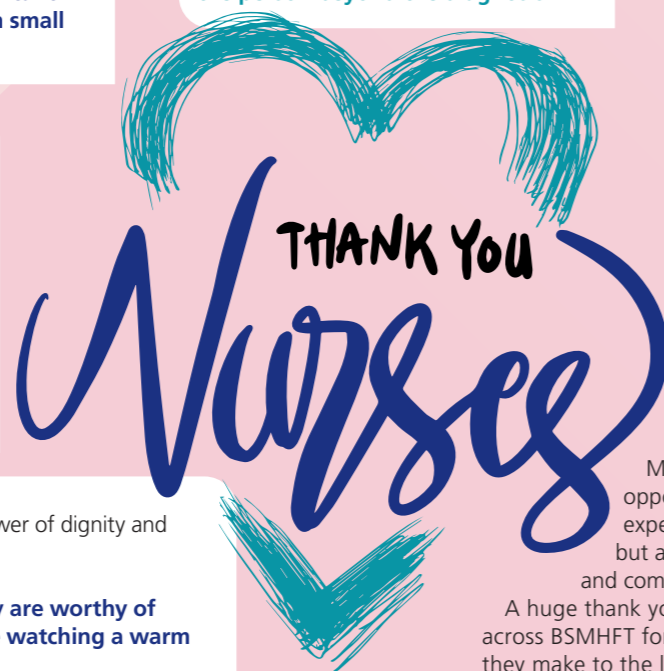
"Listening without rushing, responding to distress with curiosity rather than judgement and seeing the person beyond the diagnosis."

The reflections also highlight the importance of teamwork and community within mental health services. Nurses repeatedly spoke about the strength they draw from their colleagues:

"We are like a family. We look after each other, so we are able to look after those we care for."

Many nurses also reflected on what helps them stay grounded during challenging days, often pointing to peer support and reflection:

"My colleagues. Team support makes all the difference."



Mental Health Nurses Day provides an opportunity to recognise not only the clinical expertise of mental health nurses, but also the emotional labour, compassion and commitment that shape their work every day. A huge thank you to the 1,784 mental health nurses across BSMHFT for their dedication, care and the difference they make to the lives of thousands of patients, service users and families in Birmingham and Solihull.

Hands, wrists and hygiene – keeping us all safe

At BSMHFT, the safety of our staff, patients and service users remains one of our biggest priorities.

One simple but crucial way we protect everyone from healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs) - such as MRSA and Clostridium difficile — is by following Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) guidance, including being bare below the elbows in all patient-facing areas.

This means staff must not wear bracelets, watches or smartwatches, and only a plain wedding band is permitted. False nails, long nails and stone tattoos may not be used in any setting where they may impede good hand hygiene. False nails and long nails must be removed. These measures ensure that hands and wrists can be cleaned thoroughly, helping to reduce the risk of spreading infections.

Everyone at BSMHFT has a role to play in preventing infection - whether in inpatient hospitals, community centres, or patients' homes. The Executive Director of Quality and Safety (Chief Nurse) Lisa Stalley-Green leads our IPC agenda, supported by the dedicated Infection Prevention and Control Team and reports directly to the Trust Board.



Hand hygiene

Always clean your hands using soap and water or alcohol hand gel, especially when entering or leaving patient areas. If you're ever unsure about the hand hygiene of staff you encounter, you are encouraged to ask whether they have cleaned their hands.



Visitor guidance

If you are unwell with a cough, cold, diarrhoea, vomiting, or any other infectious condition, please do not visit our sites. Contact the area you are visiting for advice before attending. If you have concerns about cleanliness or IPC, speak to the Lead/Nurse-in-Charge or Matron, who will be happy to discuss your concerns.

By staying bare below the elbows, practising good hand hygiene and following visitor guidance, we can all help keep our patients, service users, staff and visitors safe from infection.

For more guidance, updates and practical tips, look out for IPC information on the dedicated noticeboards across all sites.

Caring Minds



Generous donation funds wellbeing space at Highcroft

Thanks to a generous £40,000 donation from Equitix to Caring Minds, a new wellbeing cabin 'The Highcroft Nook' has been created for colleagues to use at our Highcroft site.

This peaceful space offers a calm retreat to recharge during the working day. Equitix, a trusted BSMHFT partner, was joined by LRG (fit-out) and Care Display (artwork), with additional support from NHS Charities Together, who helped to furnish the area.

The Nook had a soft launch in November 2025 and was officially opened in January 2026. Caring Minds is working to create more wellbeing spaces across the Trust, supported by NHS Charities Together. Limited funding is still available - contact the Caring Minds team to learn more.



At BSMHFT, a positive experience can have a significant impact on a person's wellbeing and recovery. That's why Caring Minds, our official charity, funds those special extras that the NHS alone can't offer.

Whether it's improving patient environments or supporting wellbeing initiatives, every contribution enables us to do more for those who rely on our services.

To get involved with fundraising or to make a donation email:

✉ bsmhft.fundraising@nhs.net

or visit:

🌐 justgiving.com/caring-minds

Scan here to donate



Caring Minds funds Uffculme's new Wellbeing and Multi-faith Room

Caring Minds is delighted to have funded the new staff Wellbeing and multi-faith room which has recently opened at our Uffculme Centre.

The room offers colleagues a peaceful, restorative space to pause, reflect and recharge during the working day. This dedicated room strengthens our commitment to creating supportive, inclusive environments across the Trust.

The space was highlighted earlier as an upcoming addition to the centre's wellbeing offer and its opening marks an important step in enhancing colleagues' experiences and promoting positive mental health.

Thank you to Stephen Waszak-Hayes, for the time and effort he has put into making this space welcoming and inclusive.



Clent Hills sponsored walk for Caring Minds

Join us on Saturday 25 April at 9.30am for a guided four hour hike across the beautiful Clent Hills, all in support of Caring Minds. This staff sponsored walk is a great opportunity to enjoy fresh air, connect with colleagues and take in panoramic views while helping raise vital funds that support colleagues and service user wellbeing initiatives across BSMHFT.

Places are limited, so if you'd like to get involved and make a real difference, please register your interest below. Every step you take helps Caring Minds continue funding those special extras that enhance care, improve environments and support mental health recovery.

Scan the QR code to find out more about staff sign up.



Improving adult autism care

Autistic adults receiving mental health support in our inpatient facilities can benefit from additional, specialist support, thanks to the autism enhanced support team.

The team, previously known as the intensive support team, provides enhanced wraparound, time limited expertise to clinical staff working with autistic adults. Their focus is on equipping staff with the right guidance and specialist insight to meet the needs of autistic people effectively and compassionately.

A unique aspect of the team is their collaborative set up – being both a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency team.

Hub manager Andrea Craddock explains: “We bring together expertise from social workers from the local authority, speech and language therapists from BSMHFT together with autism support workers from Autism West Midlands – this allows us to provide holistic support to frontline staff and patients.”

The autism enhanced support team plays a crucial role in helping to:

- prevent or reduce hospital admissions
- shorten lengths of stay



- support people experiencing crisis
- improve the quality of care for autistic adults in inpatient settings

While much of their current work involves responding to individuals in crisis, the team’s long term ambition is to shift towards prevention,

helping prevent crises from developing in the first place.

Andrea added: “Our long-term aim is to expand preventative work across services, supporting earlier identification of needs, reducing escalation, and ensuring autistic adults receive the right support at the right time.”

If you would like to know more about the team or make a referral into the service please email

✉ bsmhft.est-autism-enquiries@nhs.net

New cook/freeze facility at Juniper Centre

This April, SSL is opening a brand-new cook/freeze catering facility at the Juniper Centre. The first of its kind at the site this marks a significant step forward in food provision for staff, service users and visitors.

The new facility will enable meals to be freshly prepared at Reaside Clinic before being rapidly frozen to lock in flavour, nutrition and quality. These will then be transported to Juniper for freezing or consumption. This process allows for greater menu flexibility, improved consistency and the introduction of a wider range of dishes tailored to different tastes and dietary needs.

For the Juniper Centre, this signals a commitment to raising food standards, broadening choice and ensuring food plays a positive role in the overall experience of those using the service.

A broader, more flexible menu

When the cook/freeze capability is operational, SSL will be able to introduce new menu items that were not previously available. The system allows the catering team to prepare meals in larger batches whilst maintaining high quality, making it easier to rotate menus and respond to feedback.

Service users can expect:

- Greater variety across the weekly menu
- More culturally diverse meal options
- Enhanced dietary flexibility

Improved consistency in quality and presentation

The new approach is also designed to reduce waste and improve efficiency, ensuring resources are used responsibly while maintaining high standards.

Commenting on the development, Gordon D’sa, Hotel Services Manager for SSL, said:

“This new catering process for Juniper marks an improvement to the food provision at that site and allows SSL to provide a more comprehensive menu which should reach more tastes.”

He added that the investment reflects SSL’s wider ambition to continuously improve services and respond to feedback from those who use them.

Looking ahead

The introduction of cook/freeze technology for the Juniper Centre is at the forefront of modern catering practice within SSL’s portfolio. SSL

will gather feedback on the new menu items to ensure the offer continues to evolve, in-line with preferences and expectations.



From behind the scenes to on your screens

Staff, patients, service users and carers are encouraged to support Summerhill Services Ltd (SSL) by following and engaging with their growing LinkedIn presence.

SSL - a wholly owned subsidiary of BSMHFT - plays a vital role in supporting frontline care every single day. Now, the team is working to better showcase that impact online and highlight the scale and importance of the services they provide.



The team behind the scenes

For those who may be new to the Trust, SSL provides a wide range of non-clinical services that are essential to safe, high-quality care. Their teams deliver domestic cleaning, portering, estates maintenance, catering and many other support services across our sites.

They also manage and maintain Private Finance Initiative (PFI) properties across Birmingham and Solihull, helping to ensure safe, welcoming environments for patients, staff and visitors.

While much of this work happens behind the scenes, it is fundamental to enabling frontline clinical services to operate smoothly and safely.

By following SSL on LinkedIn, liking and sharing posts and engaging with updates, colleagues can help increase visibility, strengthen recruitment efforts and celebrate the people who keep our Trust running.

What you’ll see on LinkedIn

The SSL LinkedIn page shares:

- Organisational news and developments
- Project updates highlighting improvement and innovation
- Colleague spotlights celebrating the people behind the services
- Job opportunities to attract new talent
- Team milestones and achievements

By strengthening their online presence, SSL is reinforcing its reputation as a professional, valued partner to the Trust – and telling the story of the essential services that underpin everything we do.

If you’re not already following SSL on LinkedIn, please consider doing so and help put the spotlight on the teams who support BSMHFT every day.



TrustTalk listening to you

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