



TrustTalk

Summer 2026



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Welcome to the summer 2026 edition of Trust Talk

As we move into the summer months, we are pleased to introduce this latest edition of Trust Talk – a chance to reflect on the progress we’re making together and to celebrate the people and teams who bring our Trust Values to life every day.

This is an important moment for our organisation. In this edition, you’ll read more about the continued socialisation and implementation of our recently launched new five-year strategy – a shared vision that sets out how we will continue to improve care, strengthen our communities and invest in our culture and creativity for the future. Alongside this, our continued focus on locality working is helping us deliver care that is more connected, more personalised and closer to the people we serve.

A highlight of this issue is our coverage of the Values Awards – a powerful reminder of the compassion, commitment and inclusion that define our Trust. The stories of our nominees and winners show the real difference colleagues make each and every day, often in ways that go unseen but never unnoticed by those they support.

We’re also proud to recognise the contributions of our nursing colleagues following International Nurses Day. Their dedication, professionalism and kindness are at the heart of delivering safe, high-quality care and we are grateful for everything they do across our services.

This edition also shines a light on the work of Caring Minds, our charity and the broader impact it has in supporting patient experiences, staff wellbeing and innovation. The generosity

and support shown through the charity reflects the strong sense of community that runs throughout our organisation.

Across all these stories, a common theme emerges: the strength of our people and the shared commitment we have to improving lives. Thank you for everything you do – everyday – to make a difference.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Trust Talk.

Patrick Nyarumbu MBE
Deputy Chief Executive

Monica Shafaq
Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Caring Minds Charity Committee



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
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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



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📘 facebook.com/NHSbsmhft
📷 @bsmhft_nhs
📍 Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

New Non-Clinical Staff Governor elected

Earlier this year, Louise Johnson was elected as the Trust’s new Non-Clinical Staff Governor. She officially joined the Council



of Governors in February and represents non-clinical colleagues across the Trust.

Louise wants to make sure the voices of non-clinical colleagues are heard and has already been able to represent their interests on a number of topics discussed at the council of governor meetings she has attended.

Louise’s role as BSMHFT’s Strategy and Business Development Manager has stood her in good stead for the governor role, as over the past year she has been meeting staff across the whole Trust, both face to face and online, to ensure they are included in the development and implementation of our new strategy. She has been listening closely to ideas, concerns and hopes for the future and this has helped her build a clearer picture of what it is like to work in non-clinical roles.

Louise says she is committed to using these insights, alongside her communication and engagement skills gained in previous Trust roles, to speak up for colleagues. Her aim is simple: to make sure non-clinical colleagues are recognised for the vital work they do every single day.

From admin teams to support services, every role matters. Louise wants everyone to feel heard, valued and included and can be contacted via email:

✉ louise.johnson100@nhs.net

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



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

Shaping our future: Introducing our Trust Strategy 2026–31

We are delighted to launch our new Trust Strategy for 2026–31, setting out a clear and ambitious vision for the future of our organisation: *Excellent care, empowered people, thriving communities*.

The strategy has been shaped by the views, experiences and expertise of hundreds of colleagues, service users, patients and carers from across every part of the Trust. Through extensive engagement, people told us what matters most to them, helping to define where we want to be in five years' time and the actions we need to take to get there.

At the heart of the strategy is a commitment to delivering excellent care, supporting and developing our people and working alongside communities to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities. It reflects the priorities of those who use and deliver our services, while responding to the challenges and opportunities facing health and care services locally and nationally.

Our strategy is underpinned by four guiding principles. We will be service user led, clinically informed, data driven and financially responsible in everything we do, ensuring we focus on the things that will make the biggest difference to the people we serve.

The strategy also introduces our 4Cs

- ✓ **Care,**
- ✓ **Communities**
- ✓ **Culture**
- ✓ **Creativity**

– which will shape how we prioritise our work and focus our energy over the next five years.

To bring our vision to life, the strategy sets out a programme of bold transformation focused on making a real difference at key stages throughout a person's life. This includes transforming care for children and young people, strengthening community-based care, enhancing urgent and crisis support, and providing more



purposeful, therapeutic inpatient care with shorter stays.

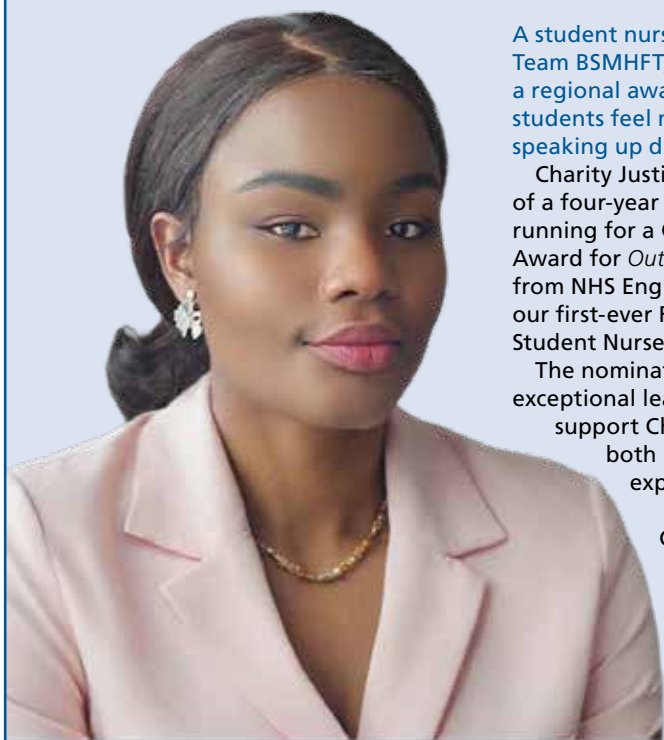
The launch marks the beginning of the next phase of our journey. Over the coming months, teams across the Trust will have opportunities to explore what the strategy means for their services and discuss how they can contribute

to its success. Resources have been delivered to all teams to support these conversations, helping colleagues understand how the strategy connects to their everyday work and the difference they make for service users, carers and communities.

A roadmap for the future

The infographic above brings together the key elements of our five-year strategy, showing how our vision, priorities and ambitions connect to create a clear roadmap for the future. Scan the QR code to read the strategy in full.

Student nurse Charity wins regional award



A student nurse working as part of Team BSMHFT, has been nominated for a regional award after helping other students feel more confident about speaking up during their placements.

Charity Justin, who is in the third year of a four-year master's degree, is in the running for a Chief Nursing Officer Student Award for *Outstanding Individual Contribution* from NHS England Midlands. She is also our first-ever Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Student Nurse Champion.

The nomination recognises the exceptional leadership, innovation and support Charity has shown throughout both her learning and placement experiences.

Charity took on the FTSU Champion role in May 2024 after being inspired by a presentation from our FTSU team. Since then, she has worked closely with

Charity Justin

colleagues to make sure student nurses have a voice and feel supported when raising concerns.

Students can sometimes find it difficult to speak up, especially when working alongside experienced healthcare professionals. Charity has helped identify the challenges students face and shared their feedback to help improve their placement experience.

FTSU Champions volunteer for the role and help create a positive culture where people feel safe to ask questions, raise concerns and share ideas.

Charity will now be working with the Practice Placement team to encourage more student nurses to become FTSU Champions in the future.

Charity's nomination is a fantastic recognition of the positive impact she has had on fellow students and the wider Trust and will be presented with her award at a special NHS England Midlands event in July.

Help us launch our Children and Young People Instagram account

We're getting ready to launch a brand-new Instagram account dedicated to our Children and Young People (CYP) services and we'd love your input!

This account will help us share engaging, accessible content for young people, families and colleagues, highlighting the great work happening across our services.

We'd really like to hear your ideas:

- **What should we call the account?**
- **What kind of content would you like to see shared?**

If you have a suggestion or idea, please get in touch with the Communications team bsmhft.commsteam@nhs.net. Your input will help shape a channel that truly reflects our CYP community.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Programmes Coordinator

Eben Akume



In this Five Minutes With we get to know Eben, our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Programmes Coordinator, who plays a key role in supporting staff networks, promoting inclusion and tackling health inequalities across the Trust. From championing safe spaces through his work as a Freedom to Speak Up Champion to sharing personal experiences that drive his passion for mental health, Eben offers an honest and inspiring insight into his role, motivations and wellbeing.

Hi Eben, please could you start by telling us a little about yourself and your role at Team BSMHFT?

“My name is Eben and I work within the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team as the EDI Programmes Coordinator. My role involves coordinating the Trust’s staff networks, supporting Trust induction, sitting on interview panels to help ensure we recruit the best candidates and contributing to work that addresses health inequalities across our organisation. “I have worked here for just over two years. I am fortunate to work alongside an amazing team of passionate and hardworking people who consistently give their best every day. In fact, I would say we are one of the best teams in the Trust, having recently won a special award. Outside of work, I enjoy music and writing, both of which are important creative outlets for me.”



What does a typical day look like for you in your role?

“No two days are the same. I usually start my day by checking emails before attending meetings focused on addressing health inequalities or supporting colleagues who have experienced challenges within the workplace. “A significant part of my role involves supporting our staff networks. Each day I prioritise one of the five networks, working closely with members and helping to progress their agendas, activities and objectives. Depending on the day, I may also be supporting recruitment as an Equity Panel member, acting as an Inclusion Advisor, or carrying out my role as a Freedom to Speak Up Champion by supporting colleagues who wish to raise concerns.”

For those who may not know, what is Freedom to Speak Up and why is it important within the NHS?

“Freedom to Speak Up is incredibly important because it gives colleagues a safe space to raise concerns. It ensures that staff know there is someone available to listen and support them when they need it most. “As Freedom to Speak Up Champions, we are often one of the first points of contact for colleagues. We listen, provide support and where appropriate signpost individuals to Freedom to Speak Up Guardians or other relevant services. At its heart, Freedom to Speak Up is about ensuring that people know their experiences matter and that there are people who genuinely care about their wellbeing in the workplace.”

What are some of the biggest misconceptions people have about your role and speaking up?

“Many people see the EDI team as the “police” of the Trust, but that could not be further from the truth. “Our role is to support colleagues and promote fairness for everyone. Equality, diversity and inclusion is about ensuring people are treated with dignity and respect while challenging prejudice and barriers that may affect individuals or groups. Ultimately, our work helps create a workplace where everyone can succeed. “One of the biggest misconceptions about speaking up is that nothing will happen if you speak up. In my experience, that is simply not true. Whenever colleagues have approached me with concerns, we have worked together to ensure they receive support and that appropriate action is considered. “Another common misconception is that concerns cannot be raised confidentially. Freedom to Speak Up is designed to protect confidentiality and concerns are always managed at a pace that feels comfortable for the individual.”

Why did you decide to pursue a career in mental health and how has this led you to become a Freedom to Speak Up Champion?

“Mental health is something that is deeply personal to me. We know that men continue to experience some of the highest rates of suicide and through both personal and family experiences, I have seen the importance of providing the right support when people are struggling.”

“I have also had caring responsibilities within my family and experienced the loss of a sibling who faced significant challenges. Those experiences shaped my understanding of how important compassion, support and access to help can be during difficult times. “Working within mental health gives me the opportunity to contribute to the change I want to see and to support people when they need it most. In many ways, it is also a way of honouring my sister’s memory by helping others and making a meaningful difference in people’s lives.”

“This passion naturally led me to become a Freedom to Speak Up Champion. I wanted to be someone who listens, supports colleagues and helps create a culture where people feel safe to raise concerns and seek support. Being able to contribute to positive change and support people through challenging situations is one of the most rewarding parts of what I do.”

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

“Basketball and music are two of the biggest ways I look after my mental health and wellbeing. Playing basketball helps me stay active, clear my mind and focus my energy positively. I also enjoy writing music, which gives me a creative outlet and allows me to express myself. Both help me stay balanced and motivated, no matter what challenges the day may bring.”



If you could have dinner with anyone past, present and future, who would they be and why?

“The first person would be Nelson Mandela. I would love the opportunity to learn more about the challenges he faced, the sacrifices he made and what inspired him to continue fighting for freedom and equality despite immense adversity. His resilience and leadership continue to inspire people around the world. “The second person would be Zohran Mamdani, the current Mayor of New York. I admire the way he engages with communities and inspires young people to become involved in public service and social change. I would be interested to hear more about his leadership journey and his vision for creating opportunities for future generations. “The third choice would be my future self. I would love the opportunity to reflect on the journey I have taken and understand the person I will become in the future. It would be fascinating to see how my experiences, decisions and aspirations have shaped my life and to learn what advice my future self might have for me.”

What is one thing colleagues might be surprised to learn about you?

“Many colleagues would probably be surprised to learn that I sing and write music. It is not something I talk about often at work, but it is a passion of mine and a big part of who I am.”

Describe yourself in three words.

“Energetic, kind and a go-getter.”

Birmingham's first Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre opens

Birmingham's first Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre (NMHC) has officially opened, marking a major step forward in transforming how mental health care is delivered in the city.

Delivered by BSMHFT, the Golden Hillock Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre in east Birmingham builds on a journey that began in January 2025, when the service first launched to provide more accessible, community-based mental health support. Since then, the service has supported more than 550 new referrals, demonstrating strong local demand and the need for more integrated care closer to home. The purpose-designed centre brings together NHS services and voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise partners to provide holistic support that addresses both mental health needs and wider factors such as housing, employment, physical health and social wellbeing. As one of only six national pilot sites, the service is helping to shape the future of neighbourhood mental health care across England.

The official opening event welcomed representatives from NHS England, NHS Birmingham and Solihull and NHS Black Country, The NHS Alliance, community partners and local stakeholders. Guests took part in a ribbon-cutting ceremony, contributed to an art installation, toured the building and learned more about how the service is delivering care closer to home and within local communities.

National leaders see the model in action

Since opening, the Golden Hillock centre has attracted interest from national leaders keen to see first-hand how the pioneering model is improving access to mental health support.

Dr Penny Dash (Chair of NHS England), Sir Ciarán Devane (Chief Executive of NHS Confederation), Lord Victor Adebowale CBE (Chair of the NHS Confederation), Dr Nick Broughton (NHS England's National Director for Mental Health and Learning Disabilities) and Dr Lade Smith (President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists) have all visited the centre.

More recently, Baroness Gillian Merron, (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Mental Health and Women's Health), visited the centre to meet senior leaders, the NMHC team and those using the service. During the visit, she heard how the neighbourhood-based approach is helping people receive support earlier and closer to home



Pictured from left to right - Phil Gayle (BSMHFT Chair), NMHC guests Darren and Claire and Roisin Fallon-Williams (BSMHFT Chief Executive)



Pictured from left to right – Fabida Aria (BSMHFT Medical Director), Sel Vincent (NMHC Clinical Lead), Baroness Gillian Merron, Roisin Fallon-Williams (BSMHFT Chief Executive), Danielle Oum (NHS Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull Chair), Vanessa Devlin (BSMHFT Director of Operations) and Akilah Duffus (NMHC Project Lead)

and praised the team for demonstrating the future of community mental health care.

All of the centre's visitors are seeing first-hand the difference the service is making to local communities and how this innovative way of working is transforming the experience of people who need mental health support. The visits underline the growing national recognition of Birmingham and Solihull's role in shaping the future of neighbourhood mental health services.

Future of neighbourhood mental health centres

Building on the success of the newly opened Golden Hillock Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre, ambitious plans are underway to bring round-the-clock neighbourhood mental health support to more people in Birmingham.

Capital bids have been submitted to fund four

more centres over the next four years, and the Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Provider Collaborative together with BSMHFT, is working closely with the the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VFCSE) Mental Health Collective to develop plans around the needs of local communities.

Engagement workshops were recently held to learn more about the new 24/7 neighbourhood model and better understand the mental health needs of people in Birmingham's five localities. Using local public health and NHS data, together with local context from VFCSE organisations and communities, the group were able to build a fuller picture of the current provision, inequalities and needs in each locality.

This intelligence will support the advance planning for this four-year project, which includes identifying appropriate locations for future centres.



Winston Weir: Reflections from a Non-Executive Director

This year marks five years since Winston Weir joined Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust as a Non-Executive Director. Winston is one of our Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) and brings independent oversight, challenge and expertise to the Trust Board, helping to ensure we deliver the best possible care for our service users, carers and communities.

Alongside his role at BSMHFT, Winston brings extensive board-level experience from across the NHS, housing and charitable sectors. A qualified public finance accountant, he has spent his career supporting organisations with purposes beyond profit and is a passionate advocate for community development, mentoring young people and promoting vibrant, multicultural communities across Birmingham.

In this guest blog, Winston reflects on the changes and progress he has seen during his time with the Trust and his hopes for the future.

"Hello all, my name is Winston Weir and I have been a Non-Executive Board member since August 2021.

"Things have changed a lot since then – COVID-19, Black Lives Matter, the cost-of-living crisis, the Russia-Ukraine war, the conflict in Gaza and wider tensions in the Middle East – the list goes on. However, most things at BSMHFT have changed for the better and I hope you mostly feel the same.

"We now have Children and Young People's services as part of this organisation. We are also now a commissioner as well as a provider of mental health services. The Trust is receiving well-deserved recognition for its work on equality, diversity and inclusion and our Golden Hillock Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre is being recognised as an example of neighbourhood care. However, there is still much more we can do in reaching out to our communities, carers, third sector partners and businesses.

"I grew up in Handsworth during the 1970s and 1980s. I have seen my fair share

of social disruption and I fear there may be more to come if recent local election results are anything to go by. My family background is Caribbean but my siblings and I were all born in Birmingham.

"I chair the Audit and Risk Committee of the Trust Board. It is often good news if the Audit and Risk Committee has nothing significant to report, because our role is to provide assurance on the accounts, internal controls and the overall management of risks. As a Non-Executive Director, I try to visit services whenever I can, showing a genuine interest in the work you do and taking the opportunity to say thank you for your work, your care for patients and service users and your personal commitment to this organisation. These visits are also an opportunity to really listen to your concerns, celebrate your successes and help amplify your messages.

"This time of year is very busy for the Trust Board. We are involved in our own appraisals, setting objectives, reviewing

“The Trust is receiving well-deserved recognition for its work on equality, diversity and inclusion and our Golden Hillock Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre is being recognised as an example of neighbourhood care.”

budget plans and reviewing the accounts. We have relaunched the Trust Strategy, which is brave, ambitious and exciting. I have mixed feelings of trepidation and excitement – much like when I am about to take a train or plane to somewhere new. Excellent care, empowered people and thriving communities remain at the heart of our ambitions, and we continue to be compassionate, inclusive and committed in everything we do.

"I am excited about this summer, with football in North America, the Commonwealth Games in Scotland and the European Athletics Championships taking place here in Birmingham. I do enjoy sport, although there are also many BSMHFT summer events that I could have mentioned. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy summer and every success in all that you are hoping to achieve. I feel honoured to serve on this Trust Board and to continue working towards improving services for the people of Birmingham and Solihull."

Honouring our teams each month

Every month, we shine a spotlight on a team that has gone above and beyond to make a difference for our patients, service users, carers and colleagues.

With more than 6,000 staff working across over 50 sites, there is no shortage of inspiring examples of teamwork, dedication and compassion. Our *Team of the Month* award recognises those who consistently live our Trust Values and make a positive impact through their work.

In this edition of Trust Talk, we're delighted to celebrate our latest *Team of the Month* winners:

February – The Speech and Language Therapy team

The Speech and Language Therapy team goes above and beyond despite ongoing recruitment challenges, ensuring high risk service users receive timely, safe and effective care through innovative triage systems, training and organisation wide clinical leadership. Together they consistently meet the highest standards in supervision, digital transformation, student support and live the Trust Values.

March – Tourmaline Ward

Tourmaline Ward at our Ardenleigh Hospital won *Team of the Month* for their exceptional compassion, inclusivity and commitment to women transitioning from acute care to rehabilitation and the community. The team goes over and above celebrating every achievement and ensuring each patient feels valued, supported and empowered in their recovery journey.



The Speech and Language team receiving their award



The Tourmaline Ward team receiving their award



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 BSMHFT 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).



Feedback through the Friends and Family Test

Behind every Friends and Family Test response is a real experience and a chance for us to learn. Whether it's a thank you to a member of staff or a suggestion for improvement, feedback plays an important role in shaping our services.

Here is some of our recent feedback:

Melissa – Oleaster

"The doctor is particularly good, in all the years of mum's care we have never met a doctor so genuinely caring, diligent and respectful of families wishes and knowledge. The staff are friendly, approachable and mum has a great rapport with them all. Such a good atmosphere. Again, doctors and staff, I really feel listen but also act upon those communications. A rarity throughout the 30+ years mum has utilised mental health services."

Dialectical Behaviour team (DBT)

"I genuinely am so grateful and I really appreciate the team. The group has helped me come out of my shell, out my comfort zone and learnt and acknowledged that talking about issues is okay. It made me also realise I'm not alone and many more people are in that position too. It made me feel heard and understood, I also feel like the people in the group really made it welcoming and feel like home."

Screening, Training, Intervention, Consultation and Knowledge (STICK) Service – Children and Young People

"It was pleasure to meet Hayley and for my daughter and I to be supported by her. Her professionalism and competence really helped me and my daughter. I hope that my daughter will continue to remember and follow the tips and techniques she has given her. Also, for the recommended books. Thank you so much for her help, patience and understanding. I had lots of opportunity to talk and be listened to in the parents' SPACE group."

Perinatal Community – Solihull

"The team were very welcoming and friendly, they created a really nice environment for me and my baby, they encouraged me to stick with it even when my baby's crying was getting to me. I feel more confident in myself as a mother and in the bond I have with my baby now. The staff were asking questions the following week about things I discussed the previous week which was nice because they had listened and remembered to ask about it."



£380k boost for children with learning disabilities and autism

A big well done to our Disability Intensive Care Enhanced (DICE) team for securing £380,000 to expand support for children and young people with a learning disability, autism or both.

The funding – awarded by Toucan, the West Midlands Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Provider Collaborative – will enable our Children and Young People's Division to grow the DICE service over the next 18 months, through additional staffing and increased capacity.

This will allow the team to support more young people across Birmingham who are at risk of psychiatric hospital admission, providing timely intervention and helping to prevent avoidable admissions.

At the end of 2024, more than 200 children and young people with a learning disability or autism were in hospital across England, with Birmingham recording higher-than-expected admission numbers.*

DICE works intensively with young people, their families and professional networks for around 12 weeks, helping to reduce admission risks, improve crisis responses and support safe discharge from hospital.

The investment will fund additional nursing, allied health professional, peer support and clinical support roles, enabling the team to reach more families, strengthen multidisciplinary working and improve



Pictured from left to right are: Ikhanosen Otaru Peter, Abbie Heard, Louise Bull-Tyagi, Faith Ekhabafe and Rachael Hough from BSMHFT's DICE team

outcomes across Birmingham.

It will also support earlier intervention and crisis prevention, reducing the need for hospital admissions and aligning with the ambitions of the NHS Long Term Plan to strengthen community-based support for people with a learning disability, autism or both.

A huge well done to everyone involved in securing this funding and helping us continue to provide specialist support to children, young people and families across Birmingham.

*Data courtesy of the Learning Disabilities in Birmingham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Deep Dive Report (2024); Assuring Transformation Dataset (NHS Digital).

New Guest feature

From his early days as a healthcare worker in the 1980s to leading substance use services in Birmingham today, Mike Jenkins' career spans more than four decades of NHS nursing. In this guest feature, he shares the experiences and values that have shaped his approach, highlighting the importance of trust, relationships and empowering young people to take ownership of their care.



Hi, my name is Mike and I am the Lead Nurse for Forward Thinking Birmingham's Substance Use Services, delivered in partnership with Aquarius, a national charity supporting people affected by alcohol, drugs and gambling.

I have worked in NHS nursing for 41 years. My career began in 1984, aged 18, as a Healthcare Worker supporting older adults with mental health needs. Inspired by the people I worked with, I trained as a Registered Mental Health Nurse (RMN) at Barnsley Hall Hospital in Bromsgrove.

My passion for person-centred care developed early. As a student nurse, I helped design and pilot an Individual Patient Care Needs Assessment Tool focused on understanding each patient's physical and mental health needs. The work was later recognised academically and contributed towards my degree studies.

Career development and experience

I joined Reaside Clinic as a newly qualified nurse in 1989 before moving to the Irwin Unit in 1990. Six years later, I was seconded to complete a degree in Mental Health Studies and the ENB 603 Child Psychiatry course.



Mike aged 18 in 1984

During this time, I worked alongside colleagues who helped advance nursing practice and develop innovative interventions on the Irwin Unit.

After completing my studies, I moved into the community as a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) in Locality Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). In 1999, I became the West Midlands' first CAMHS CPN with a dedicated ADHD role, before moving into a Clinical Nurse Specialist position within CAMHS Youth Offending Services, where I worked for the next 20 years.

Working as an autonomous practitioner allowed me to focus on building strong therapeutic relationships with young people, creating an environment that promoted empowerment,



Mike (second from right) with Yusra, Noreen, Mia, Constance, Collette and Everton from the Aquarius Young People's under 18 team

personal growth and positive change.

Philosophy and approach to care

I have always viewed myself and my knowledge as a resource for the young people I work with and I strongly believe in relational psychiatry. Effective nursing is built on trust and strong therapeutic relationships that help young people develop the confidence and skills to make positive changes in their lives. I also believe in empowering young people to engage confidently with professionals and play an active role in shaping their care.

In 2013, I trained as a Non-Medical Prescriber (NMP), adding diagnostic and prescribing skills to my nursing and therapeutic practice after 25 years as a registered nurse. I also trained in Brief Solution Focused Therapy and Systemic Therapy.

While these qualifications have strengthened my practice, my greatest learning has come from working alongside hundreds of inspiring children, young people and young adults.

Working with young people

Over the past 26 years, I have supported many young people on their journeys of change, recovery and empowerment in substance use and youth offending services.



Mike with Avella, April and Marie - the original Youth Offending team

Our work is built on partnership. Young people set the goals, ambitions and pace of their journey. There is no test to prove they are "ill enough" or deserving of support. Through RiO and our approach to care, their story remains consistent and understood, reducing the need to repeat difficult experiences to multiple professionals.

As the sole clinician in a citywide service, communication is key. Young people have access to my work email and mobile number and I aim to respond during working hours. I share resources, updates and care plans electronically so they are always accessible and care plans are developed and reviewed together. If a young person feels I have misunderstood something, we revisit the conversation and start again.

I encourage young people to challenge me, express their views and advocate for themselves. Having worked as a visiting lecturer for 20 years before COVID-19, I have seen how valuable communication and education skills are in clinical practice. I adapt my language and approach until each young person finds a way of understanding that works for them.

Inclusive practice and specialist services

I work citywide with young people from a wide range of ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds, as well as across all genders and sexual identities. More than 70% of my caseload comes from ethnically diverse communities and engagement levels are exceptionally high, with all young people returning for follow-up appointments. Treatment outcomes are strong, with high levels of abstinence achieved and risks effectively reduced through tailored interventions.

Within my role, I provide specialist pathways for substance use, including Class A drug use, trauma, mood disorders and neurodiversity. I also offer specialist second-opinion consultations and undertake joint clinical work alongside consultant colleagues across the Children and Young People division.

Mike's story is just one example of the incredible work happening across our Trust every day. We know there are many more stories worth telling.

If you're leading, developing or delivering work you're proud of, we'd love to showcase it - get in touch to contribute to a future guest feature
bsmhft.communications@nhs.net

Culture of Care soft launch helps brings services together

Colleagues, service users, carers and family members have come together across the Steps2Recovery (S2R) and Specialties services to support the launch of the Culture of Care Inpatient Collaborative Programme.

The programme aims to improve how care is delivered and experienced within mental health, learning disability and autism inpatient services, creating environments that feel safer, more compassionate and more therapeutic for everyone.

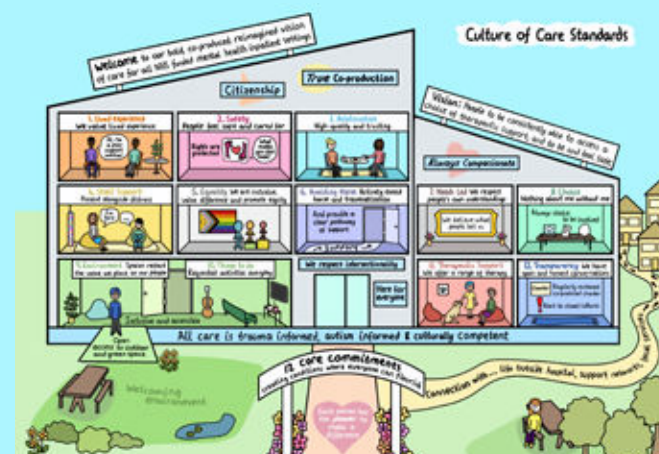
The soft launch events provided an opportunity for people to share their experiences, explore what compassionate inpatient care should look and feel like and help shape future improvements. Discussions focused on creating welcoming, trauma-informed environments where service users, carers and colleagues feel valued, listened to and supported.

Participants highlighted the importance of meaningful activity

and engagement, positive ward environments, effective communication and strong first impressions. The events also reinforced the value of working together to identify what is working well, learn from existing good practice and co-produce changes that will improve experiences for service users and staff.

BSMHFT's Chief Nurse, Lisa Stalley-Green, spoke about the importance of care that not only meets people's needs but also feels right, reflecting the programme's focus on compassion, collaboration and continuous improvement.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the soft launches - the enthusiasm, insight and commitment will help shape the next phase of Culture of Care across our inpatient services.



Conference brings national mental health leaders to Birmingham

Hosted at the Midlands Arts Centre, the From Pilot to Practice conference welcomed almost 100 delegates, including psychiatrists, nurses, approved mental health professionals, operational leaders and commissioners, all keen to understand the lessons emerging from Birmingham's innovative approach.

Organised by BSMHFT Deputy Medical Director, Dr Imran Waheed, the event showcased the work of our Golden Hillock Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre (NMHC) in east Birmingham, which is helping to reshape how mental health support is delivered through open-access, community-based care centred on relationships, continuity and local partnerships.

Opening the conference, BSMHFT Chief Executive, Roisin Fallon-Williams and Executive Director of Operations, Vanessa Devlin welcomed delegates before a series of presentations from national and international experts.

Speakers included BSMHFT's Dr Fabida Aria (Medical Director) and Dr Sel Vincent (Clinical Lead for the NMHC) alongside Sir Norman Lamb, former Minister of State for Care and Support and a longstanding advocate for community-based mental health care.

Throughout the day, speakers highlighted the importance of accessible support, partnership working and ensuring care is shaped around individuals rather than organisational structures.

The conference also heard from community partners who spoke about the value of genuine collaboration between NHS services and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector. Discussions explored how services can continue to strengthen co-production and ensure local communities play a meaningful role in shaping care.



Sir Norman Lamb (centre) with Golden Hillock NMHC's Project Lead Akliah Duffus (left) and Manager Matthew Stafford.

Delegates were particularly interested in the practical realities of implementing neighbourhood mental health care, with discussions covering workforce, leadership, funding, risk management and how services can work more effectively together across organisational boundaries.

The event demonstrated growing national interest in neighbourhood mental health care, with attendees travelling from across the country to hear about Birmingham's experience and consider how similar approaches could be adopted in their own areas.

Following the success of the conference, BSMHFT plans to develop a programme of webinars and learning events to support organisations interested in neighbourhood mental health care and share further insights from Birmingham's journey.



BSMHFT's NMHC Clinical Lead, Sel Vincent



BSMHFT team members at the conference

Research and Development team launch Complex Schizophrenia Clinic

The Trust's Research and Development team, in partnership with the Mental Health Mission Midlands Translational Centre, has launched a new Complex Schizophrenia (CS) clinic. This specialist service supports people living with treatment resistant schizophrenia who have not responded to or cannot tolerate standard treatments.

The clinic provides expert assessment and evidence-based recommendations to improve access to effective care, including the appropriate use of clozapine, while reducing reliance on less effective approaches. It will also support clinical teams with complex decision-making and offer opportunities for research participation.

Operating as a consultative service, the clinic works closely with teams across the Trust to enhance outcomes and improve quality of life for service users with complex needs.



Sharon-Nira honoured at Royal Garden Party

One of our Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Sharon-Nira King, has been invited to the prestigious Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in recognition of her outstanding contribution to patient care, staff support and inclusive practice.

Sharon, who works as part of our Aston Community Mental Health team, attended the event in May following a nomination from the Trust. The invitation recognised the significant impact she has made across the organisation through her clinical leadership and support for internationally educated nurses joining the NHS.

A passionate advocate for inclusion, Sharon developed an international welcome book to help internationally educated nurses settle into NHS roles and adapt to life in the UK. The resource has helped improve confidence, wellbeing and retention, ensuring colleagues feel supported both professionally and personally.

Her work is underpinned by research and a commitment to creating inclusive environments where staff can thrive and deliver the best possible care for patients.

The Royal Garden Party invitation is a fitting recognition of Sharon's compassion, leadership



Sharon-Nira King before attending the Royal Garden Party

and dedication, as well as the lasting difference she continues to make for colleagues, patients and services across the Trust.



Values Awards 2026

The central graphic features the text 'Values Awards 2026' in a large, gold, cursive font. It is surrounded by a vibrant, swirling design of gold and purple lines, with numerous gold stars of various sizes scattered throughout. A large gold star is positioned at the top left, and a purple star is at the top right.





Values Awards

We celebrated this year's Values Awards with a fantastic evening at Aston Villa Football Club on Friday 5 June. With 300 guests and almost 600 nominations, it was our biggest and most inspiring ceremony to date.

Hosted by Phil Gayle (Chair) and Roisin Fallon-Williams (Chief Executive), the event recognised excellence across 10 award categories, with 30 individuals and teams honoured for truly living our Trust Values – Compassion, Commitment and Inclusivity. The evening provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on our achievements, the challenges we've overcome and the positive impact Team BSMHFT continues to make. Congratulations to all nominees and to our bronze, silver and gold award winners. Thank you to our sponsor, Summerhill Services Ltd (SSL) and to everyone who helped bring the event together. We also raised £350 for Caring Minds, helping to fund extra support and opportunities for our patients, service users and staff.

Scan the QR code to watch the 2026 Values awards highlights or visit:
www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/about-us/values-awards-2026



Inclusive Award

For an individual who continually demonstrates our Trust Value of *Inclusive*, always including and considering others.

Committed Award

For an individual who continually demonstrates our Trust Value of *Committed*, someone who is fully *committed* to every element of their role, always motivating others.



Jo Fieldhouse, Team Manager, SERTS Care Home Liaison and Discharge Team



Fay Cook, Consultant Clinical Psychologist



Louise Johnson, Strategy and Business Development Manager



Mary Eliffe, Recovery and Co-Production Lead



Dr Humaira Aziz, Psychiatrist and Clinical Director for Acute Services



Claire Terrington, Occupational Therapist

Quality Improvement, Research and Innovation award

This award is for an individual who uses research and innovation in every element of their role to bring about service improvement for our service users/colleagues.



Physical Health Connector team



Urgent Care and Informatics team – Dashboard and Patient Record Improvement Plan



Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Occupational Therapy team

Mustak Mirza award (formerly the Service User and Carer Choice award)

This award is for an individual member of staff, or a team, that has made an outstanding contribution to the care and recovery of service users.



Sharon-Nira King, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Orsborn House



Enhanced RECONNECT team



Reception team at Reaside

Team of the Year Professional Support Services award

This award is for a non-clinical team that has shown commitment to improving the work environment for their staff and/or the quality of care for our service users.



Trust Pharmacy Services



Urgent Care Admin at Oleaster



Strategy and Business Development team

Team of the Year Clinical Services award

This award is to recognise a clinical team that has shown how excellent multidisciplinary working is improving the quality of care and experience for our service users.



Health Care HMP Birmingham



Disability Intensive Care Enhanced (DICE) team



East Neighbourhood Mental Health team
(Little Bromwich Centre)

Rising Star Award

This award is for an individual who continues to innovate, develop and grow within their role to improve their service/team and the care of service users.



Akshaya Jacobs,
Registered Mental
Health Nurse



Dr Ikhloq Ahmed,
Consultant Psychiatrist,
Home Treatment team



Margaret Marimba,
People Officer



Lamin Faal, Healthcare
Assistant at Tamarind



April Sallah, Kennet
Ward Manager at
Reaside Clinic



Annie Bradley,
Occupational Therapist

Compassionate award

This award recognises an individual who consistently lives our Trust Value of being *compassionate* – always listening, showing understanding and putting others first.

Caring Minds Charity Champion award

This award is for an individual or team who has supported and promoted the charity, inspiring colleagues to get involved and going the extra mile.



Craig Jordan, Ward
Manager at Reaside
Clinic



Martin Germaney,
Senior Estates Manager



Petra Yeomans,
Operations Assistant



Liz Cooksey, Business
Support Manager at
Northcroft



Jonathan Clarke,
Healthcare Assistant,
Acute and Urgent Care
at the Oleaster Centre



Clare Whittaker –
Occupational Therapist
for Dementia and
Frailty

Lifetime Achievement award

This award is for an outstanding and inspirational individual who has dedicated many years of their life to service users and patients, whether that's as part of Team BSMHFT or to the wider NHS.

New welcome packs have arrived on our acute wards

The Participation and Experience team, alongside patients, Experts by Experience and colleagues, has co-produced a new welcome pack for people admitted to one of our 16 acute wards.

Developed through ward-based focus groups, Patient Council sessions and co-production workshops, the pack has been shaped by the experiences and insights of people who have used our services. From the information included to the design and imagery, patients have helped ensure the pack reflects what matters most during an inpatient stay.

Designed to inform and reassure, the welcome pack provides clear and accessible information about what to expect during an admission. It covers topics including care planning, ward rounds, staff roles and the activities available on the ward, helping people feel informed, supported and more confident from day one.

Hayley Carolan, Head of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals for Acute Inpatients, said: "This represents a major milestone in improving the experience of people admitted to our acute wards. Co-production has enabled us to create a welcome pack that reflects the needs and priorities of the people who use our services, ensuring their voices are at the heart of how we welcome and support them."



Taryn Volante, Katy Willmont, Hannah Davis, Jess Fisher and Jayne Archer

“Co-production has enabled us to create a welcome pack that reflects the needs and priorities of the people who use our services, ensuring their voices are at the heart of how we welcome and support them.”

Hayley Carolan, Head of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals for Acute Inpatients



About Me passport helps deliver consistent and personal care

The About Me passport is a simple but powerful way to help staff really understand each person they care for. It's all about giving service users a voice and sharing what matters most to them in one easy place. Instead of repeating the same information to different people, they can use the passport to tell their story once, helping staff provide more personal and consistent care.

This passport was developed as a part of a Quality Improvement project that aimed to address culture-based health inequalities in mental health settings. It aims to capture a snapshot of 'the person beyond their diagnosis'. Through working closely with Experts by Experience, it quickly became something bigger. It's now a tool that captures the whole person, not just one part of their identity. After being tested in the Integrated Community Care and Recovery Service, it's now in use across the Trust.

Part of the passport includes basic information that's already on RiO, our clinical system. The rest is filled in through conversations, giving space for our patients to share their preferences, experiences and anything else they want

About Me Each section is optional - please complete the parts you'd like to share. Please feel free to write on the back if you run out of space.

- Preferred name
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- I communicate best in (language)
- Religion
- Heritage
- Tradition / Faith / Practices
- Important People in my Life
- Next of Kin
- Accommodation Status
- Diagnoses (please note, that is optional)
- My Likes
- My Dislikes
- My wellbeing is affected when...
- Additional information - what you'd like to support me

their clinicians to know.

By creating a quick snapshot of what matters most, the About Me passport helps staff build stronger connections and deliver care that feels more respectful, personal and human.



Celebrating Culture at Ardenleigh

At our Ardenleigh Hospital, the team's 'Culture Club' offers patients and staff a welcoming space to explore cultures from around the world in a fun, inclusive and engaging way. Designed to spark curiosity and creativity, the sessions help build confidence, encourage learning and strengthen connections across the service.

Each country explored is chosen by patients who are invited to share ideas, contribute to planning and shape the experience. This collaborative approach helps create a sense of ownership and ensures every session reflects the interests and voices of those taking part.

So far, the group has travelled to Mexico, Spain and Jamaica, discovering cultural traditions through food, music, facts and interactive activities. From sampling new flavours to enjoying music and taking part in quizzes, each session offers a relaxed and enjoyable way to learn and connect with others.

More than just a learning activity, Culture Club creates meaningful opportunities to celebrate diversity, challenge perceptions and bring people together, supporting wellbeing through shared experiences.

Save
the
date

our

Annual General Meeting 2026

Takes place on
Tuesday 22 September 2026

- Uffculme Centre
Queensbridge Road,
Moseley,
B13 8QY

More details coming soon

Caring for our staff improves our patients' experience

For Occupational Therapist, Annie Bradley, supporting staff wellbeing isn't just about helping colleagues feel good at work – it's about delivering better care for patients and service users.

Research consistently shows that when healthcare staff feel supported, valued and able to thrive, patient outcomes improve too. Better wellbeing is linked to stronger teamwork, safer care and improved patient experiences, making staff wellbeing an essential part of delivering high-quality services.

With this in mind, Annie has spent the last few years helping to create a culture where looking after each other is part of everyday practice in the Intense Community Rehabilitation team.

Since the pandemic, and with support from managers and a psychologist, she has led a range of wellbeing initiatives, including a weekly 20-minute session offering mindfulness, relaxation or simply time to pause, connect and reflect.

What started as a simple idea has grown into a team-wide effort, with colleagues now contributing their own ideas and helping to shape the programme.

The success of the initiative shows how small changes can make a big difference. Any teams interested in learning more about the approach are welcome to contact Annie for advice and ideas.



Recognising our admin colleagues

We marked World Admin Professionals Day in April, with a special celebration for our admin colleagues, to thank them for all of their hard work. Taking place at the Uffculme Centre, the event brought together staff from across the Trust for a day of recognition, networking and learning.

There were a number of stalls for colleagues to explore, including Health and Wellbeing, Learning and Development, Digital, Quality Improvement and Unions. Our Chair, Phil Gayle, also spoke with staff during his popular *Pull Up a Chair* session. Alongside the activities, colleagues had time to take a break, network, catch up with friends and make new connections.

Admin attendees also heard from Patrick Nyarumbu MBE, Deputy CEO/Executive Director for Strategy, People and Partnerships and had the opportunity to ask questions. They also heard from Sue Bedward, Non-Executive Director (NED), who shared her inspiring NHS career journey from telephonist to administrator, PA, business owner and NED. The Learning and Development team highlighted the wide range of opportunities available to admin staff, including apprenticeships, coaching and lunch and learn sessions.

The day also marked the launch of our new Admin Professionals Forum which has been shaped by staff to support connection, shared learning and professional development across the Trust.



Maxine Blake-Jones, Maggie Maher, Sharon Baldock, Hannah Sullivan and Sue Bedward

Launch of free community counselling service

A new community counselling service is now available for adults across Birmingham and Solihull.

Developed in partnership between the NHS and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector, it brings free, early mental health support directly into local communities – reaching people who may not be met by existing NHS services.

Many adults experiencing mild to moderate emotional distress do not meet the threshold for NHS Talking Therapies or Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams but still need support. This service is designed to bridge that gap, providing earlier, community-based counselling in accessible local settings, delivered by organisations that communities already know and trust.

Locality model and delivery

The service operates across six localities: Birmingham north, south, east, west, central and Solihull. Each locality has a designated lead provider working alongside a network of VCFSE partners to coordinate and deliver services.

■ **Birmingham North, East, West, Central and Solihull:** Trustees Women's Consortium leads delivery, working in partnership with Kapella Counselling, Cruse Bereavement Support, university providers and a range of community and faith-based organisations. Women's Consortium coordinates the referral hub, triage and allocation. Kapella Counselling provides relationship-focused and trauma-informed counselling, while Cruse Bereavement Support delivers specialist bereavement and grief support, including one-to-one and group sessions where appropriate.

■ **Birmingham South:** Gateway Family Services CIC leads delivery, working in partnership with Spring to Life, Murray Hall Community Centre and Karis Neighbour Scheme.

Both lead providers work with university providers, community organisations and faith-based groups to promote the service and strengthen local reach across different communities.

Who the service is for

The service is open to adults aged 18 and over across Birmingham and Solihull who are experiencing mild to moderate emotional distress, including those whose needs may not currently be met by NHS Talking Therapies or Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams.

Where NHS Talking Therapies or Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams may also be appropriate, people will be supported to choose the option that best meets their needs.

Community counselling can help with:

- **Low mood or depression**
- **Grief and loss**
- **Trauma**
- **Relationship or family challenges**
- **Adjusting to life changes**
- **Low self-esteem or confidence**
- **Identity and cultural wellbeing concerns.**

This service is not suitable for people in immediate crisis, experiencing active suicidal thoughts, or living with severe or complex mental health needs.

What the service offers

Sessions are delivered by British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy or UK Council for Psychotherapy accredited counsellors,



supported by appropriate clinical supervision and safeguarding processes.

- **One-to-one counselling**
- **Group therapy, where appropriate**
- **Person-centred and trauma-informed support**
- **Relationship-focused counselling**
- **Culturally sensitive counselling**
- **Bereavement and grief support**
- **Signposting or onward referral where another service is more suitable.**

Support is available in person, by phone or online. Interpreter support and accessible formats are available on request. The offer is tailored by locality, recognising that each area of Birmingham and Solihull has different community needs, languages, cultures and access barriers.

How to access the service

Self-referrals

You can self-refer into the counselling service, you do not need a professional to refer you.

If you live in north, east, west or central

Birmingham or Solihull, complete the online self-referral form (see QR code).

If you live in south Birmingham (Edgbaston or Northfield) contact Gateway Family Services on 📞 **0800 599 9880** or email 📧 gatewayfs@nhs.net



Professional referrals

If you are a health or social care professional and wish to make a referral:

For patients/service users living in North, East, West, Central and Solihull, please complete the professionals online referral form.

For patients/service users living in south Birmingham (Edgbaston or Northfield) contact Gateway Family Services on 📞 **0800 599 9880** or email 📧 gatewayfs@nhs.net



Cilantro team improves carer communication

Carers of patients receiving treatment on Cilantro Ward are feeling more informed, supported and involved thanks to a series of changes introduced by the ward team over the last six months.

The improvements are part of a Quality Improvement (QI) project focused on strengthening communication with carers and loved ones when someone they care about is admitted to hospital.

Feedback highlighted that communication was a particular concern during the first few days of admission and in the lead-up to leave or discharge. In response, the team introduced a number of changes aimed at improving contact during these key stages of a patient's stay.

Working collaboratively under the guidance of project lead Sami, staff tested new approaches and shared ideas for improvement. One key change has been ensuring carers are contacted within 48 hours of admission. The team has also introduced measures such as planning meals before leave and checking in with carers before and after leave periods.

The changes are already having a positive impact. Carer satisfaction with communication has increased from 7.5 to 9 and has remained consistently high.



Cilantro Ward, based at our Barberry site, provides specialist eating disorders services. The team will continue to build on this progress, using feedback from carers to further strengthen communication and support.

The project demonstrates how listening to carers and making targeted improvements can enhance people's experience and help them feel more connected to their loved one's care.

Two colleagues recognised for providing life-saving care

Two Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust colleagues have been recognised by the Royal Humane Society for helping to save the life of a member of the public.

Pete Moss, a Community Psychiatric Nurse in the Secure Care and Offender Health FIRST team, and his son Connor Collins, a Healthcare Assistant on Coral Ward at Ardenleigh, recently received certificates from the charity in recognition of their actions at Droitwich Spa Football Club in November 2024.

Pete and Connor were among those who responded when a man collapsed at the football club. Using skills gained through Immediate and Essential Life Support training provided by the Trust, they carried out a full assessment, delivered CPR and used a defibrillator while waiting for emergency services to arrive.

Remaining calm under pressure, they administered five shocks before paramedics

reached the scene. The man was taken to hospital, underwent surgery and survived. A police officer, members of the football club and emergency service colleagues also played an important role in helping to save his life.

The Royal Humane Society, which has recognised acts of bravery and life-saving intervention for more than 250 years, awarded Pete and Connor for their swift response and professionalism during the incident.

At the time, their actions were also commended by Inspector Frankish and Chief Superintendent Williams from West Mercia Police, who wrote to

thank them for helping to achieve the best possible outcome.

Speaking after receiving the Royal Humane Society recognition, Pete said: "I'm just so glad we could help and had the skills we needed thanks to our training at work. I think adrenaline kicked in and we knew what we had to do."



Pete Moss and son Connor Collins

Reducing waiting times for children and young people

When you work in child and adolescent mental health services, you don't need a spreadsheet to know that waiting is distressing. Families feel it. Young people feel it. Clinicians feel it too, especially when a referral sits in the system for a long period and a child's needs begin to change before support even starts. At Solar Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) who support young people is Solihull, a new approach is helping to tackle this challenge.

Over the past year, the team has introduced a Focused Intervention Pathway using Quality Improvement (QI) methods. Each clinician managed a caseload of young people from the secondary care waiting list, prioritising those who had been waiting the longest. These young people were offered four to eight sessions of focused therapy, aiming for discharge where appropriate. This short-term programme is designed to help young people work towards specific goals to improve their mental health and wellbeing in a clear and structured way.

A dedicated project team led this work and they were supported by three newly recruited psychological therapists with skills in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), as well as experience

in other approaches. The team also received additional training to support this new way of working.

Supported by colleagues from our QI team, the project team tested and adapted their ideas. They set up a Focused Intervention Team (FIT), where clinicians worked with young people who had been waiting the longest. Each clinician offered short, targeted support, with regular reviews to make sure the sessions stayed helpful and relevant.

Even when facing staff shortages, the team adapted and kept the service running. This showed that the model could work in real-life situations while still supporting young people and families.

The results have been encouraging. Treatment waiting times have become shorter, helping more young people access support sooner. At the same time, the waiting list has remained stable rather than growing. Feedback from young people, families and colleagues has been very positive, with many highlighting the clear focus on goals and the benefits of the therapy.

This work shows how a focused, flexible approach can make a real difference. By working together and testing new ideas, Solar CAMHS is helping more young people get the support they need, when they need it.



solar
Brightening young futures

Photo by Pavol Štugelat Unsplash

Team reaches new heights on Snowdon challenge



Rebecca Greer, Zerelda Mears and Dorothy Tomlinson



Fifty colleagues from across HMP Birmingham reached new heights as they joined forces to take on the challenge of climbing Snowdon.

Organised by the Birmingham Recovery Team Service Manager, Zerelda Mears, the event brought together staff from across the prison for a day of challenge, teamwork and shared achievement. The hike also gave colleagues the chance to strengthen connections, recharge and support their wellbeing, away from the pressures of the workplace.

The hike tested both physical and mental resilience, but throughout the day there was a strong sense of camaraderie, encouragement and teamwork.

Feedback following the event has been overwhelmingly positive. One officer described the experience as having a significant impact on his mental health and wellbeing, while many others have already expressed interest in future hikes. Several colleagues said the challenge had inspired them to spend more time outdoors and prioritise their wellbeing.

Mathew Kuruvila, Paige Brettle, Matt White, Chris Donnelly, Alan Dryhurst, Charlene Kirby



Pictured are members of the team at the Nursing Times Awards

Award-winning support for next generation of mental health nurses

BSMHFT's Pre Registration Clinical Educators team is celebrating after receiving national recognition at the prestigious Nursing Times Awards, for their outstanding support and training of student mental health nurses.

Raksana, Kiera, Stacey, Pamela, Danial and Emily have together been crowned winners of the *Student Placement of the Year: Hospital* award for the support they have given student nurses on placement.

Working closely with universities and BSMHFT's clinical teams, their Applying Theory and Practice Pathway (ATAPP) model helps students get the support and experience they need during placements. It creates a positive learning environment where students can build confidence, develop their skills and professional identity, provide safer care and feel encouraged to stay in the profession long term.

Chosen from more than 600 entries nationwide, the Pre Registration Clinical Educators team received the award at a ceremony in London in recognition of their student-centred approach to mental health nursing education and the exceptional dedication shown across the team.

The ATAPP pathway was praised for its creative and innovative approach to helping students connect classroom learning with real-world clinical practice, including co-produced resources developed alongside Experts by Experience and engaging interactive learning tools. The programme continues to receive outstanding feedback from students.

Speaking about the team's achievement, BSMHFT's Chief Nurse Lisa Stalley-Green, said: "Congratulations to our incredible Pre Registration Clinical Educators team on this

fantastic national achievement. Supporting and inspiring the next generation of mental health nurses is such an important part of what we do and this award is a reflection of the passion, creativity and care our teams bring to student learning every single day.

"The positive placement experiences created through the ATAPP pathway are helping students grow in confidence, feel supported and develop the skills they need to deliver compassionate, high-quality care in the future. We are incredibly proud of everyone involved, including those who provide an excellent placement experience for learners and our mentors and assessors."

This national recognition marks a proud moment for the team, highlighting their innovation, commitment and excellence in shaping future mental health nursing education.



Still time to *Feel the Rhythm and Beat the Stigma*

There are now just two more opportunities to get involved in our *Feel the Rhythm, Beat the Stigma* community events.

Residents across Birmingham are being invited to join us as we continue our mission to break down the stigma surrounding mental health through music, creativity and conversation. Taking place at BSMHFT venues, the events bring together local people, service users, staff and community groups in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Each event features a range of fun activities, information stalls and a specially formed choir, helping to spark open conversations about mental health and wellbeing while bringing communities together.

Following the success of our previous events, we would love to see as many people as possible at our final two dates:

- 📅 **Saturday 11 July 2026 – Maple Leaf**
- 📅 **Saturday 25 July 2026 – Small Heath Health Centre**

Whether you come along to one event or both, everyone is welcome to join us, 12-4pm, and help beat the stigma around mental health.

✉ **For further information, please email bsmhft.communityengagement@nhs.net**

Celebrating our nurses on International Nurses Day

International Nurses Day, celebrated on Tuesday 12 May, gave us a wonderful opportunity to recognise, celebrate and thank the incredible nursing workforce across BSMHFT for the compassion, expertise and commitment they bring to their roles every single day.

A special celebration event was held to mark the occasion, reflecting this year's theme: *Our Nurses. Our Future*. Empowering nurses to save lives. The event brought colleagues together to acknowledge the vital contribution nurses make to our patients, service users, communities and one another.

Through inspiring keynote speeches, attendees were reminded of the importance of prioritising their own wellbeing. By taking

care of themselves, nurses are better equipped to continue delivering the outstanding care, support and compassion that make such a difference to the lives of others.

Sophia Fletcher, Associate Chief Nurse, said: "We wanted to hold an event to recognise our amazing nurses, encourage them to take care of themselves and give them an opportunity to come together away from the work environment.

"They are the true heart of Team BSMHFT and deserved a special event."

Colleagues also created inspiring displays that showcased exceptional work from across the organisation, highlighting the professionalism, innovation and commitment that our nursing teams demonstrate every day.

“ We wanted to hold an event to recognise our amazing nurses, encourage them to take care of themselves and give them an opportunity to come together away from the work environment. ”

Sophia Fletcher
Associate Chief Nurse

Prince of Wales opens life-saving crisis centre



HRH the Prince of Wales at the James' Place opening. Credit: Kensington Palace

Men experiencing a suicidal crisis can now be referred to a new specialist support centre in Birmingham, offering free, face-to-face therapy in a safe, non-clinical setting.

James' Place Birmingham, which offers rapid access to short, focused therapy for men ages 18+, including trans men, was officially opened by His Royal Highness (HRH) the Prince of Wales last month.

Located at 34 Harborne Road, Edgbaston, the centre provides an accessible, calming and homely environment for one to one therapy as well dedicated spaces for clinical training and supervision.

At the official launch, His Royal Highness toured the new centre and spoke with staff, service users and local partners.

Katie Holmes, Head of Mental Health Commissioning for the Mental Health, Learning

Disabilities and Autism Provider Collaborative, was invited to the launch and had the opportunity to talk to HRH about why men in Birmingham need this centre.

Speaking about the day Katie, said:

"It was a huge honour be part of this prestigious event and meet Prince William. I spoke to him about the local picture in terms of mental health and why some men find it more difficult to seek support, particularly from traditional mental health services."

Suicide is the single leading cause of death for men under 35 and men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women. In 2024, 560 deaths by suicide were registered in the West Midlands, 415 of these (74%) were men.

The Birmingham centre is the charity's fourth site, joining existing centres in Liverpool, London and Newcastle.



Katie Holmes talking to HRH the Prince of Wales

"I spoke to him about the local picture in terms of mental health and why some men find it more difficult to seek support, particularly from traditional mental health services."

Katie Holmes
Head of Mental Health Commissioning for the Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Provider Collaborative

The centre is open Monday-Friday, 9.30am-5.30pm by appointment only. To access support from James' Place, make a referral or find out more about the charity visit: www.jamesplace.org.uk

Patients and staff unite to champion hand hygiene

World Hand Hygiene Day is a global campaign led by the World Health Organization to remind us of something simple but powerful: clean hands save lives.

Across the Trust, this year's campaign wasn't just about posters and reminders. It was about real conversations with patients. In the run-up to the day, the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) team visited 15 wards, using glow gel and UV lights to show how germs spread and how effective good handwashing can be. It was hands-on, eye-opening and, for many, surprisingly fun.

Patients showed they already understand why hand hygiene matters and felt confident speaking up if they noticed something wasn't right. They also shared helpful ideas, including making posters clearer and easier to follow and improving access to soap and hand sanitiser. Some concerns were raised too, from shared space cleanliness to staff practices, with many of these addressed quickly by ward teams.

Working together, patients and staff even



Pictured during one of the IPC ward visits is from left to right Lisa Stalley-Green (Chief Nurse), Nina Dyer, Timea Vig and Winnifred Ekwere

helped design new, more engaging posters now being tested across wards.

Hand hygiene might seem small, but it plays a huge role in preventing infections, protecting staff and patients and tackling antibiotic resistance. Even gloves aren't a replacement – clean hands are still essential.

Celebrating International Nurses Day with four-legged friends

Something a little unexpected brought smiles to the Oleaster on International Nurses Day – two visiting Shetland ponies.

Melissa Ward welcomed the special guests, giving patients and staff the chance to take a break from the usual routine and enjoy something different. From the moment the ponies arrived, the atmosphere lifted, with people gathering to say hello, take photos and enjoy the moment.

For patients, the visit was more than just fun. Spending time with animals can help people feel calmer, reduce stress and bring a sense of comfort.

Sanum Hussain, Deputy Ward Manager on Melissa, said:

"It was wonderful to see people coming together. Colleagues and patients from other wards also joined in, turning the day into a shared celebration of International Nurses Day with Team Melissa at its heart.

"Moments like this don't just happen by chance. They reflect the care, creativity and



commitment of our nurses and other staff who go the extra mile to make a difference."

Several patients shared how much they enjoyed the experience, with one student nurse on placement saying it boosted mood and morale across the ward.

Caring Minds

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](https://www.justgiving.com/caring-minds)

Scan here to donate



Colleagues step out for Caring Minds on Clent Hills



Colleagues and friends came together recently to take on a 9km hike across the beautiful Clent and Walton Hills, raising £1,300 for Caring Minds.

The group was expertly guided by National Trust volunteers whose local knowledge and good humour kept spirits high throughout the walk. While the steep climbs were challenging, they were more than rewarded with stunning views.

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!

📅 **February:** **Melissa Lowe**, Duty Nurse at Northcroft Hub Community Mental Health Team

📅 **March:** **Lisa Draper**, Averts Training Lead at the Uffculme Centre

If you are a permanent or fixed term BSMHFT staff member, 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

Rushall Olympic FC raises £500 for Caring Minds

Rushall Olympic FC presented a donation of £500 following a collection held on Non-League Day in March.

The club's fantastic support will help Caring Minds continue its vital work supporting mental health patients, service users and colleagues across the Trust.

Thank you to Rushall Olympic FC, their supporters and everyone who donated - for championing mental health and making the fundraising such a success.



Caring Minds new picnic tables at Uffculme Centre

Caring Minds funded the instalment of five new composite picnic tables on the Uffculme Centre's grounds.

These tables are intended for staff use, providing a welcoming outdoor space to enjoy lunch breaks, rest time and moments of fresh air during the working day.

For those who work at or visit the Uffculme, please make use of the new seating areas and take the opportunity to pause, recharge and enjoy the outdoor surroundings, particularly over the summer months.



Teamwork at Juniper brings new life to coffee shop spaces

Following the success of last year's outdoor coffee shop transformation, the team at Juniper turned their attention to enhancing the indoor space, creating a more welcoming and comfortable environment for colleagues, patients and visitors to enjoy.

The refurbishment was made possible through the combined support of SSL Estates (Roy Bradley and Adrian Courage), Caring Minds (Louise John) and the dedicated fundraising efforts led by Tara Bacciocchi and the reception team. Their commitment and generosity helped bring the project to life, further improving the experience for everyone who uses the coffee shop.



Louise John and Tara Bacciocchi

SSL+ helps Trust achieve zero waste milestone

Summerhill Services Ltd (SSL) has played a key role in helping Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust achieve an important environmental milestone, with 0% of domestic and clinical waste sent to landfill during 2025/26.

As a wholly owned subsidiary of the Trust, SSL delivers a range of essential support services, including cleaning, portering, maintenance and catering, across Birmingham and Solihull. Working in partnership with the Trust, SSL has continued to drive sustainable and responsible waste management practices across its sites.

During the year, SSL managed a total of 898 tonnes of waste on behalf of the Trust group, while overall waste management and disposal costs remained broadly stable at £301,920, compared with the previous year.

Through effective waste segregation, sustainable disposal methods and robust operational oversight, all waste was successfully diverted from landfill and managed through alternative treatment routes.

Of the total waste managed:

- ♻️ 251 tonnes (28%) were recycled
- ♻️ 624 tonnes (69%) were converted into refuse-derived fuel through waste-to-energy processes
- ♻️ 23 tonnes (3%) were treated through



alternative waste treatment facilities.

The achievement demonstrates the ongoing commitment of both SSL and the Trust to reducing environmental impact while ensuring domestic and clinical waste is managed safely, efficiently and in line with regulatory requirements.

Diverting all waste from landfill supports the Trust's wider sustainability ambitions and contributes towards its journey to achieving net zero.

Building on this success, SSL and the Trust will continue working together to identify opportunities to increase recycling rates, improve waste segregation and further embed sustainable practices across services.

Giving brain health a boost

Colleagues across BSMHFT marked Dementia Action Week by coming together to promote and raise awareness of the importance of brain health and support those affected by dementia.

Led by the Trust's Community Dementia and Frailty team, this year's activities focused on a positive and preventative approach, encouraging colleagues and communities to think about brain health across the life course. The campaign centred on three key messages: *love your heart, stay sharp and keep connected.*

A range of events took place throughout the week. These included an online session that brought colleagues together to learn about the work of the Dementia and Frailty teams. A marketplace event, delivered in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Society, was open to both staff and carers and there were also a series of drop-in sessions held across Trust sites and within community groups.

These events provided opportunities to share information, raise awareness and encourage conversations about brain health. They also helped promote the message that memory matters. Colleagues also attended a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session hosted by Professor Khan, which explored the latest research advances in dementia care.



“Whether it's encouraging conversations, promoting understanding or helping people make positive lifestyle choices, every action can make a difference to brain health and wellbeing.”

Lou Pickering
Dementia and Frailty Community Service Manager

Lou Pickering, who helped to coordinate the week, said:

“Dementia Action Week gave us a valuable opportunity to come together, raise awareness and highlight the many ways we can support people living with dementia.

“Whether it's encouraging conversations, promoting understanding or helping people make positive lifestyle choices, every action can make a difference to brain health and wellbeing.”

Dementia Action Week is a national campaign led by the Alzheimer's Society, bringing people and organisations together to take action and improve understanding of dementia.

Quiz Challenge

1. What is the highest point in the Peak District?
2. The tree *Aesculus hippocastanum* is better known by which name?
3. The BBC TV programme *The Celebrity Traitors*, one of the most-watched TV shows of 2025, was won by whom?
4. Who was the Roman goddess of hunting, also known as Artemis?
5. There are typically how many Formula 1 Grand Prix races held each year?
6. The measurement 297mm by 210mm denotes which standard size of paper?
7. A pink fir apple is which type of vegetable?
8. In the 1980s, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Huey Lewis and the News and Jennifer Rush all had different songs called what?
9. Who wrote the classic novel *The Call of the Wild*?
10. Which Yves Saint Laurent perfume, made in 1977, shared its name with a drug?

FIVE ALIVE

AC	HN	GE	RS	TY
OC		AL		IO
AR	HN	GO	EM	BL
EC		OE		DB
HD	UO	RM	BS	EO

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	5
7 ○	6 ○
3	3
4 ○	4 ○
1	4

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

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

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

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

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.

NONAGRAM

S	I	P
R	P	E
T	I	N

How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines:
33 Good; 39 Very Good; 46 Excellent.

Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

QUICK CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
							8					
9							10					
	11			12		13						
14			15		16							
17		18		19				20				
			21				22					
23						24			25			
					26						27	
28					29							
30					31							

ACROSS

1. Calming drug (8)
5. Musical composition (4)
9. Suffer anguish (7)
10. Play guitar (5)
11. Accepted practice (5)
13. Mild (6)
15. Scornful expression (5)
17. Jot (4)
19. Container (3)
20. Ill-bred person (4)
21. Social customs (5)
23. Domestic fowl (6)
24. Strained (5)
28. Apart (5)
29. Insulting (7)
30. Look for (4)
31. Eternal (8)

DOWN

1. Bridge (4)
2. Worthless material (5)
3. Articles (6)
4. Opinion (4)
6. Colonnade (7)
7. Theological college (8)
8. Escort (5)
12. Get pleasure from (5)
13. Soft, flat hat (5)
14. Food (8)
16. Listening organ (3)
18. White ant (7)
21. Scrimmage (5)
22. Deuces (anag.) (6)
25. Portion (5)
26. Dry river bed (4)
27. Muddle (4)

TrustTalk listening to you

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