



TrustTalk

Autumn 2026



HSJ Award winners
Page 3

Stay well this winter
Page 14



All About You

Pages 7 – 10

Welcome to the Autumn 2026 edition of Trust Talk

As autumn arrives, we are delighted to bring you the latest edition of Trust Talk, celebrating the achievements, milestones and inspiring stories from across our Trust.

This issue showcases just some of the ways our colleagues continue to make a positive difference for patients, carers and communities. You'll read about our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team's national recognition with a prestigious HSJ Award win, the Medical Celebration Event, which honoured the dedication and achievements of our medical workforce and our successful

recruitment campaign that welcomed 82 new nurses to the Trust. We also share updates on our new building at our Highcroft site and look back on our Experts by Experience Celebration, recognising the invaluable contribution of people with lived experience in helping to shape our services.

For the first time, we are also pleased to include All About You, our staff wellbeing newsletter, within Trust Talk. Turn to the centre pages for wellbeing tips, support and practical advice on how we can all take time to look after ourselves.

Across these stories runs a common theme: the passion, talent and commitment of our people. Thank you for everything you do to improve lives and support one another every day.

We hope you enjoy this autumn edition of Trust Talk.

Vanessa Williams,
Executive Director of Operations

Sue Bedward,
Non-executive Director



Forward Thinking Birmingham telephone numbers have changed to BSMHFT numbers

Please be aware of these new numbers for the following sites:

- East Hub Blakesely/Washwood: 0121 301 2480
- North Hub West/Finch Road: 0121 301 7500
- South Oaklands: 0121 301 3500

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

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



Nick Moor
Non-Executive Director

Our medical workforce celebrates excellence

More than 100 doctors and colleagues came together for the BSMHFT Medical Celebration Event 2026, at The Studio Birmingham. The event was a chance to learn, reflect and celebrate the outstanding contribution of medical colleagues across the Trust.

The programme included keynote presentations, quality improvement and research showcases, the annual Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) Awards and the Medical Celebration Awards 2026. A highlight of the day was the fireside chat, Be More Human, with Sir Norman Lamb, former Minister of State for Care and Support, who spoke about the importance of compassion, humanity and giving mental health the same priority as physical health.

The event also recognised the achievements of our doctors through the PGME Awards and Medical Celebration Awards, celebrating excellence across education, leadership, patient safety, partnership working and the Trust Values.

Congratulations to all winners:

PGME Awards

The PGME Awards were presented by Dr Jonathan Hurlow, Associate Medical Director for Medical Education at BSMHFT and Dr Amitav Narula, Head of School of Psychiatry.

Foundation Year Doctor of the Year - Dr Mohammad Zubair Ahmed
General Practitioner Doctor of the Year - Dr Arishah Hussain
Core Training Doctor of the Year - Dr Saroop Raja
Specialist Trainee Doctor of the Year - Dr Emma New
Resident Doctor of the Year - Dr Wen Leing
Specialty and Associate Specialist Doctor of the Year - Dr Onyekachi Ugwuonye
Trainer of the Year - Dr Bill Calthorpe

Top, Dr Fabida Aria, (second from right) enjoys the celebrations with colleagues.
Middle, delegates at The Studio
Bottom, Dr Sadira Teeluckdharry and Sir Norman Lamb



Medical Celebration Awards 2026

The Medical Celebration Awards recognised outstanding doctors across seven categories. This year also saw the introduction of a new category - the LAS Award - recognising Locum Appointment for Service doctors. The LAS Award was presented to two recipients, reflecting the exceptional quality of nominations received.

A Highly Commended award was also presented in each category. The full list of winners and Highly Commended recipients is as follows:

Valuing Everybody:
Winner - Dr Nilushi Ratnayaka,
Highly Commended - Dr Morouge Elbadawey

Leading and Inspiring:
Winner - Dr Dinesh Maganty,
Highly Commended - Dr Ishtiaq Ahmed

Partnership with Patients and Carers:
Winner - Dr Hafsa Jalisi,
Highly Commended - Dr Kallol Sain

Working Together:
Winner - Dr Nudrat Rizvi,
Highly Commended - Dr Nick Tarrant

Unsung Hero:
Winner - Dr Arshad Siyad,
Highly Commended - Dr Zeine Daoudi

Patient Safety:
Winner - Dr Sadira Teeluckdharry,
Highly Commended - Dr Rita Duarte da Silva

LAS Award:
Winner - Dr Taskia Alam and Dr Riaz Nawaz,
Highly Commended - Dr Gul Sanga

Meet the robot transforming pharmacy services



A new pharmacy robot is helping improve efficiency, accuracy and patient care across the Trust. Introduced by SSL's Pharmacy Technology team as part of a Quality Improvement project, the Omnicell Vanderbrink robot prepares 28-day blister packs for patients who are unable to manage their medicines independently.

The service produces around 2,000 blister packs every month. Before the robot was introduced, these were prepared manually by pharmacy staff. By automating much of the process, the robot has reduced the time needed to prepare medications, helped minimise dispensing errors and reduced delays, allowing colleagues to spend more time on other important aspects of patient care.

Operating with a reported accuracy rate of 99.9%, the system provides a reliable and consistent way of preparing medicines while supporting patient safety. The project is also a significant digital milestone, becoming the first robotic system to be integrated with existing Trust systems following collaboration between pharmacy teams, ICT colleagues and the System Strategy Group.

The innovation demonstrates how technology can ensure patients receive the right medication at the right time, support staff, streamline services and help.

Health inequalities project wins national award

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Informatics teams have won an HSJ Digital Award for a tool that is helping make mental health care more inclusive.

The teams took home the Digital Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award at the HSJ Digital Awards 2026. Held at Birmingham's ICC, the awards celebrate the best digital innovations across the NHS, recognising projects that are improving services and patient care.

The winning project, a Health Inequalities Tracking Dashboard, helps teams better understand how different communities experience

mental health services.

The dashboard brings together real-time service and community data in one place, enabling teams to identify inequalities more quickly and take action sooner. It is already helping to shape anti-racism initiatives, improve cultural awareness training, support the development of 24/7 neighbourhood mental health services and is ensuring more equitable access to mental health care.

Patrick Nyarumbu MBE, Director of Strategy, People and Partnerships, said: "We're incredibly proud to receive this award and for the



recognition it gives to the important work happening across our teams and partnerships every day.

"This achievement reflects the passion, collaboration and commitment of colleagues and partners who are dedicated to creating fairer mental health services for everyone."

With hundreds of entries from across the UK, winning this award shows just how important the project is in improving both access to care and people's experiences, especially for communities who are often underrepresented or face challenges in getting support.



Head of Programmes for Strategy, People and Partnerships Directorate

Mandy Fletcher



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

"Hi my name is Mandy and I am Head of Programmes for Strategy, People and Partnerships directorate. My role involves delivering projects and programmes across the directorate and the wider Trust. Some of the recent work I have been involved in includes leading the transfer of the Children and Young People's NHS Foundation Trust services from Birmingham Women's and Children's Trust to our Trust, the implementation of the Sexual Safety Policy and resources to support our colleagues, I led on Health and Wellbeing from 2020 till this year and I am currently providing programme support to the Trust wide transformation programme.

"I have been in the Trust a little over 25 years and have worked in a variety of teams and departments. My background is Human Resources (now known as People) and I hold a master's degree in Human Resources Management. During my time in the Trust I have worked in HR, Learning and Development, ICT Project Management, Programme Management Office and now my current role.

"I do not have a team which has its pros and cons, but I do get to work with a variety of really passionate colleagues which allows me to be able to increase my knowledge in areas I would not ordinarily get involved in. I work very closely with the Communications team and support the arrangements for our annual Trust Values Awards, (one of my favourite nights of the year). I also work a lot with my colleagues in Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Organisational Development most recently developing our corporate response to the Staff Survey."

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

"In addition to the day job, I am the chair of the Women's Staff Network and have been doing this role since the network's inception three years ago, I am also a trained mediator and a Freedom to Speak Up Champion.

"No day is the same in my world, I am really fortunate that I have great variety in my role, so one day I may be supporting the sexual safety working group and the next holding a focus group to support our Communications team, or even planning the topics we are going to be talking about in our Women's Staff Network. I usually have a number of things on at the same time, so I need to be able to switch between work quickly in order to be able to respond to questions, queries etc. This means I need to be really organised and I pride myself on doing this. I think it's in the nature of anyone that does projects."

For those who may not know, what is Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) and why is it so important in the NHS?

"For me Freedom to Speak Up is really important, it's about creating a workplace where colleagues feel safe, heard and supported when raising concerns or suggestions for improvement. Champions act as trusted local contacts who listen, encourage and signpost

colleagues to appropriate support.

"I became a Freedom to Speak Up Champion because I believe everyone deserves to be listened to. By being a trusted local contact, I can help create a culture where colleagues feel safe to raise concerns, share ideas and contribute to improving staff experience, patient safety and quality of care."

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

"I think the biggest misconception people would have is I organise meetings, projects and paperwork. When in reality, much of my job is about changing culture, influencing people, building relationships and helping the organisation deliver its strategy through others. What they often don't see is that behind every paper or project there is negotiating competing priorities, building consensus where people disagree, supporting leaders to make difficult decisions, helping teams work together across boundaries, creating the conditions for change to happen and managing risk and assurance when there is no obvious answer.

"It's very much "If the plan is written, the job is done." whereas the reality is often, writing the plan is the easy bit; getting lots of people to understand it, believe in it and deliver it is the real work."

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

"The reality is that I didn't set out to pursue a career in mental health. At the time, I was working as a temp and had been told my assignment would be in the Finance team at University Hospital Birmingham (UHB). However, when I arrived, I discovered I was actually working on reception in outpatients at the QEPH (which I'm sure many people will remember).

"Very quickly, I realised how much I enjoyed working with service users and patients. I also really valued the people I worked with and the ethos of the Trust. While I was there, I saw a flyer advertising a Personnel Manager role and thought, I want to stay with this Trust. I applied and as they say, the rest is history.

"I am passionate about breaking down the stigma associated with mental health. Having had family members who have experienced mental health problems,

I feel I am in a position to help influence positive change in how we deliver our services.

"I wanted to become a Freedom to Speak Up Champion because I have seen first-hand how issues at work can have a significant impact on all aspects of a person's life, including their mental health. I want to be able to listen, create psychological safety, bring people together and help ensure voices are heard so that meaningful and lasting change can be achieved across the Trust."

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

"Holidays must be my number one, my husband and I love to travel to really nice hotels with amazing food, once it's in the diary, I can already feel my wellbeing improving. Cooking is also a huge thing for me, when I finish work it really helps me decompress, I get to stand in the kitchen and try to create lovely meals for my family to enjoy. I also love to go out walking with my dog Beau, I pop my air pods in and listen to a podcast and I could walk for hours, not only is that good for my mental wellbeing it also helps with my physical wellbeing too. Finally, I love to catch up with my friends, whether that be a meal out or just a round at someone's house for a chat."



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

"Past would be my mom, who we lost seven years ago. I'd want to ask her whether she was proud of who I had become and did she feel that I managed some of the adversity in my life with compassion and maturity. There are so many things I wish I'd asked her and stories I'd love to hear now that I'm older. I'd love one more chance to sit, chat, laugh and tell her how much she shaped the person I became.

"Present would be Sir David Attenborough - I'd love to hear firsthand how he's remained passionate and optimistic despite witnessing so much change in the world. I think I'd leave that meal feeling inspired to keep making a difference in whatever way I can.

"Future would be my future self I'd like to have a meal with my future self in 20 years' time. I'd want to know whether I spent enough time with the people I love, whether I was brave enough to take opportunities and what really mattered in the end."

Tell us something that people might not know about you

"I spent the majority of my youth as a member of an American style marching band 'The Sunrisers', I was a colour guard member and all my weekends were spent either in the middle of a muddy field in Great Barr practising or travelling around the country on a coach with all the other members competing in competitions. I feel that this experience really shaped the person I am today, it taught me respect, punctuality and teamwork, some of the values I carry with me through life. I made lifelong friends during that time and look forward to our annual reunion."

Describe yourself in three words

"Caring, organised and on-time."

Mental health text service supports 2,000 in first year

It's been just over a year since we launched a new mental health text support service and in that time, it has helped more than 2,000 people across Birmingham and Solihull to feel better.

Offering free, confidential mental health support to people of all ages who text 'Space' to 85258 from a mobile phone, the service - delivered in partnership with Shout - was introduced as a discreet and accessible way for people to access support for anxiety, stress, loneliness, depression and other mental health challenges.

The round-the-clock service, which is staffed by mental health professionals, complements existing support including NHS 111, Crisis Cafés and NHS Talking Therapies. It also helps reduce pressure on crisis care while providing timely support for those waiting to access further help.

For 55-year-old Louise* from Sutton Coldfield, the service has been a lifeline in helping her manage symptoms of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in recent months.

Louise is supported by her local Community Mental Health team and regularly meets with her community psychiatric nurse. However, she sometimes needs additional support between appointments or outside normal service hours. In those moments, she has turned to 'Space' for support.

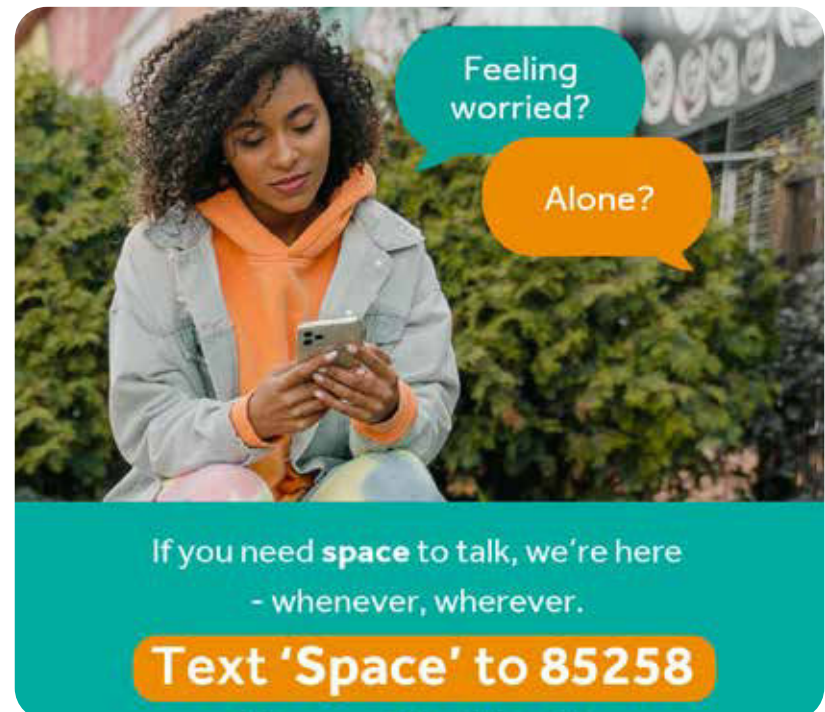
Louise, said: "Knowing I can chat to someone anytime and anywhere is really helpful. I have lived with depression for 12 years, so I recognise the early warning signs and know when I need to seek support to feel better.

"When I have had thoughts of harming myself and I can't speak to my usual team, I contact the text service knowing I'll be able to chat to someone in a matter of minutes.

"I have used it a few times now and have always felt better afterwards. I like that it's confidential. It makes it easier for me to talk openly about a sensitive subject.

"You know that you're speaking to a real person, and that feels reassuring."

*Shared with permission; some details have been anonymised to protect privacy.



Over 80 new nurses join the Trust



Nurses from our Tourmaline Ward

More than 80 newly qualified and experienced nurses have joined the Trust, helping to strengthen services and support the delivery of high-quality care.

A total of 82 Band 5 nurses have been recruited through a major recruitment campaign designed to fill vacancies across the Trust. The new appointments will help reduce workforce gaps, improve staffing levels and ensure patients and service users continue to receive safe, compassionate care.

The nurses were selected through a values-based recruitment process, ensuring they not only had the right skills and qualifications, but also shared the Trust's commitment to kindness, respect and person-centred care.

Supporting new colleagues is a key part of the Trust's approach. Nurses joining the

organisation will receive structured support, supervision and development opportunities, helping them build confidence and thrive in their careers. The investment in new staff also benefits existing teams by reducing vacancies, improving workforce stability and easing pressure on services.

The recruitment campaign supports the ambitions set out in the Trust's new Five-Year Strategy, particularly its commitment to creating a culture where people can thrive and developing a sustainable workforce for the future. By investing in recruitment, development and retention, the Trust is building a strong and skilled nursing workforce that can continue to meet the needs of local communities for years to come.

New app launched to support SEND children

A therapeutic mobile game designed to tackle childhood anxiety is being piloted with a targeted group of children and families across Birmingham and Solihull.

BSMHFT has partnered with social enterprise BFB Labs to pilot an app, *Lumi Nova*, to children and young people with neurodivergence (diagnosed and undiagnosed) and children with a learning disability.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommended immersive game combines Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with ethical and immersive gaming, delivered via a mobile app. It helps children aged seven - 12 to gradually face their fears through a series of personalised quests.

The free app will be made available via health and education colleagues who work with children who have learning disabilities and neurodivergence, such as Mental Health Support teams in schools and Special Educational Needs Coordinators.

Lumi Nova is recommended by NICE as a first-line treatment option to help children manage anxiety before difficulties get worse, or whilst they wait for other support. The service aims to bridge the gap in mental healthcare provision for children, providing early help to manage difficulties with fears, worries or anxiety and improve access to inclusive and timely care.

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:



team's compassion, inclusivity and commitment to supporting wellbeing.



April – Ardenleigh Reception team

The Ardenleigh Reception team launched 'Ask for Ruby,' a discreet wellbeing initiative providing free sanitary products to staff and visitors with dignity and privacy. Supported by site-wide communications and posters, the service has received positive feedback and is already being used. The initiative highlights the



May – Hertford House Steps2Recovery team

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.

June – Screening, Training, Intervention, Consultation and Knowledge (STICK) team

The STICK team continues to provide exceptional support to young people and families despite significant service pressures. Led by Kat Baldwin and Craig Hodgson, the team's compassion and expertise are regularly recognised. Feedback highlighted the life-changing impact of Hayley Sherlock's support, helping one young person regain confidence, improve wellbeing and feel truly heard and understood.

July - Lavender Suite

The team was nominated for consistently providing compassionate, person-centred care,

with service users describing staff as caring, respectful, supportive and committed to helping them through difficult times while making them feel safe, heard and valued. Staff were praised for their professionalism, empathy and dedication, with individuals recognised for going above and beyond.

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.

Simply 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.

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).



Community music group strikes a chord

More than 1,000 people attended this summer's Feel the Rhythm, Beat the Stigma community events, bringing together colleagues, service users, carers, families and local residents through music, creativity and conversations about mental health. The four events created welcoming and inclusive spaces where people could connect, learn more about local support services and help challenge the stigma surrounding mental health.

The programme began with a hugely successful event at Mary Seacole House, which attracted almost 300 people, before continuing at venues including Endeavour Court, Maple Leaf and Small Heath Health Centre. Visitors enjoyed live performances, creative activities, wellbeing sessions, community stalls and opportunities to meet local organisations and services.

The events also attracted support from community leaders, including Zaker Choudhry, Lord Mayor of Birmingham, who joined attendees at the Endeavour Court and Small Heath events and highlighted the importance of working together to improve mental health, reduce stigma and strengthen community connections.



Lift Every Voice NHS Choir



Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Zaker Choudhry attended two of events



A huge thank you goes to everyone who attended, performed, volunteered, hosted stalls or helped organise the events and to our Community Engagement team, Beresford Dawkins and Caroline Mitcham. The success of this year's programme demonstrated the power of music, creativity and community in promoting wellbeing and bringing people together.

Planning is already underway for next year's *Feel the Rhythm, Beat the Stigma* events.

If you are interested in performing, hosting a stall, running an activity or finding out more about how to get involved, in next year's event please contact the Community Engagement team at

✉ communityengagement@nhs.net

ADHD Rundown

A new booklet designed by young people with lived experience of ADHD is helping others better understand the condition while they wait for an assessment.

Created by the Trust's Children's and Young People's 18-25 ADHD team alongside Experts by Experience, *The ADHD Rundown* provides practical information about ADHD and offers tips to help manage some of the challenges it can bring.

The booklet was developed by Lillia and Amina, who drew on their own experiences of ADHD. They wanted to create a reliable and easy-to-understand resource after finding that accurate information can be difficult to find online. Their aim was to provide young people on the waiting list with helpful advice, information and reassurance.

While the booklet has been created primarily for young people awaiting assessment, the team hopes it will also help families, carers and professionals learn more about ADHD and the experiences of those living with it.

By sharing knowledge and practical support, the resource aims to help people feel more informed and empowered while they wait for specialist assessment and care.





All About You

Issue 6, Autumn 2026



Welcome to the latest edition of *All About You*, our staff health and Wellbeing newsletter.

In this edition read about overcoming the winter blues, why it's important to have your flu jab, why we should stay warm in winter and how to save energy.

We can also read about managing stress and the new Reasonable Adjustment Passport designed to help us feel supported at work.

Happy reading!

Don't let winter blues take over

As autumn turns to winter and daylight hours become shorter, many people notice changes in their mood, energy levels and sleep patterns. For some, these changes can be more significant and may be a sign of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a type of depression that follows a seasonal pattern and most commonly occurs during the winter months.

SAD can affect people in different ways. Common symptoms include low mood, feeling tired or lacking energy, losing interest in activities that are usually enjoyable, difficulty concentrating, changes in appetite and sleeping more than usual. Some people may also feel irritable, anxious or withdrawn from friends and family.

While the exact cause of SAD is not fully understood, it is thought to be linked to reduced exposure to daylight during the winter. Lower light levels can affect the body's internal clock and influence hormones such as melatonin and serotonin, which play an important role in sleep, mood and wellbeing.

The good news is that there are practical steps we can take to support their wellbeing during the darker months.

How you can help yourself

- Get outside in natural daylight every day, even if only for a short walk.
- Keep physically active. Exercise can boost mood, improve sleep and increase energy levels.
- Maintain regular sleep routines by going to bed and waking up at similar times each day.



- Stay connected with friends, family and colleagues instead of withdrawing from social activities.
- Let as much natural light into your home or workspace as possible by opening curtains and brightening darker areas.
- Plan ahead for difficult days and make time for activities that help you relax and recharge.
- Focus on the positive aspects of the season, such as spending time outdoors, enjoying seasonal activities or creating cosy routines at home.

If you think you may be experiencing SAD, speak to your GP, access support through NHS Talking Therapies or seek help via Optima, our occupational health providers. Treatment options may include talking therapies, medication and, in some cases, light therapy.

Remember, it's normal to have ups and downs during the winter months, but if changes in your mood are affecting your daily life, help and support are available.

Stay active and stay well this winter

As the days get shorter and the weather gets colder, it's easy to spend more time indoors and become less active. But staying active during the winter months is important for both our physical and mental wellbeing. Regular movement can help boost mood, manage stress, improve sleep, increase energy levels and reduce the risk of a range of long-term health conditions.

To help promote clear, consistent messages about physical activity, the National Partnership team has shared updated information on physical activity covering different life stages, including children and young people, adults, older adults, pregnant and postnatal women and disabled people. The resources highlight the benefits of moving more, sitting less and incorporating strength and balance activities into everyday life.

The guidance reminds us that every movement counts. Any activity is better than none, and small changes such as taking a brisk walk, using the stairs, dancing, gardening or cycling can make a real difference to health and wellbeing. For adults, the recommendation is at least 150 minutes of moderate activity a week, alongside strength-building activities on two or more days. Scan the QR code for more information.

The NHS Better Health Get Active programme also offers a range of free support, including home workout videos, the Active 10 walking app and Couch to 5K. It also signposts to resources such as Parkrun, This Girl Can and Sport England to help people find activities that work for them.

The key message is simple: every minute of activity counts. Whether it's walking, cycling, dancing, gardening or taking the stairs, small changes can make a big difference to your health and wellbeing.



Your wellbeing support, all in one place

Did you know that all colleagues have access to a dedicated Workplace Wellbeing platform through our occupational health provider, Optima Health?

The platform brings together a wide range of trusted wellbeing resources to support your physical health, mental wellbeing and work-life

balance. Whether you're looking for advice on managing stress, improving sleep, maintaining a healthy lifestyle or navigating challenging times, you'll find practical guidance and support in one convenient place.

Easy to access via a website or web app, Workplace Wellbeing features articles, podcasts, videos, toolkits and self-help resources that you can explore whenever it suits you. Managers can also access dedicated resources, including a manager's toolkit, guidance on occupational health referrals and information about wellbeing campaigns throughout the year.

The platform can be accessed on any device and added to your mobile home screen for quick

access. No personal data is collected, allowing you to explore resources confidently and privately.

Scan the QR code or visit
bsmhft.workplacewellbeing.com
to discover the support available to you.



Scan the QR code or visit

www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active



Vaccination: protecting ourselves and others



As we approach flu season, it is important to remember why vaccination remains one of the most effective ways to protect ourselves, our patients and our communities from serious infectious diseases.

Vaccines train the immune system to recognise and fight infections, helping to prevent illness, serious complications and, in some cases, death. They not only protect the person receiving them but



also help protect others through herd immunity, making it harder for diseases to spread.

All vaccines used in the UK undergo extensive safety testing before they are approved and continue to be closely monitored once in use. Before reaching the public, vaccines go through a rigorous development process, including laboratory research and multiple phases of clinical trials. Independent regulators review all safety and effectiveness data before deciding whether a vaccine can be approved for use.

The flu vaccine can help keep us well this winter

As winter approaches, getting the flu vaccine is one of the simplest and most effective ways we can help protect ourselves, our colleagues, our patients and our loved ones from serious illness. The flu vaccine reduces the risk of catching flu and can make symptoms milder if you do become unwell. It also helps prevent complications such as pneumonia and reduces the likelihood of spreading the virus to others.

Flu is much more than a bad cold. It can leave people feeling seriously unwell for weeks and can be particularly dangerous for vulnerable groups, including older people, pregnant women and those with long-term health conditions. Every winter, flu places additional pressure on NHS services and can lead to hospital admissions.

For healthcare staff, vaccination is an important way of protecting the people we care for. Many of our patients and service users are at greater risk of complications from flu, and vaccination helps reduce the risk of passing the virus on in clinical and non-clinical settings.

The flu virus changes every year, which is why a new vaccine is developed annually to provide the best possible protection against the strains expected to circulate during the winter months. The vaccine cannot give you flu and undergoes

rigorous testing to ensure it is safe and effective. If you do experience mild side effects like a sore arm, low-grade fever, or slight muscle aches this shows your body is actively reacting to the vaccine components.

By choosing to have the flu vaccine, you're helping to protect yourself and the people around you, while also supporting the NHS during one of its busiest times of year. Together, we can reduce the impact of flu this winter.

Recent increases in measles and mumps cases highlight why staying up to date with recommended vaccinations remains important. Delaying vaccination can leave people vulnerable to infection before they have built protection.

The NHS advises people to seek vaccine information from trusted sources, including healthcare professionals and the NHS. By keeping vaccinations up to date, we can protect our own health, safeguard vulnerable people and help prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

For more information, visit the NHS website.

Health and wellbeing champions event

On 24 September, we welcomed the Trust's new cohort of health and wellbeing champions to the Uffculme Centre for their first face-to-face event since relaunching the role in April.

Our wellbeing champions are colleagues from across the Trust who volunteer alongside their day-to-day role to promote the wellbeing agenda, signpost support and information, and encourage positive wellbeing conversations within their teams.

The Trust has a growing pool of over 20 wellbeing champions, and the event was a great opportunity to come together, connect and reflect on the journey so far, and identify where we would like to be in the future. We explored how the role links to the Trust Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Framework, and heard from the Staff Engagement Lead about the NHS Staff Survey.

Apart from the biscuits and cakes(!) one of the highlights was the open and honest discussion about the existing wellbeing offer and what the Trust could do more of. Champions shared ideas about strengthening connection and belonging, making support more visible, and creating simple local initiatives that can make a positive difference to colleagues.

A huge thank you to everyone who attended. We are looking forward to working together to build on the enthusiasm and passion shown, and to continue supporting the wellbeing of colleagues across the Trust.

Scan the QR code or visit [BSMHFT Connect](#) to find out more about our health and wellbeing champions

FIRST find room to thrive at Main House

A move to a new workplace can be a big change, but colleagues in the FIRST team have embraced their new home at Main House in Northcroft and are already making the most of the opportunities it brings.

The Forensic Intensive Recovery Support Team (FIRST) is a multidisciplinary community service with around 95 staff members. The team supports people moving from secure mental health services back into the community, helping them continue their recovery and live fulfilling lives.

After many years in accommodation that no longer met the needs of the growing service, the team relocated to Main House, where they now have access to a wider range of workspaces, meeting rooms and quiet areas. The additional space has created a more comfortable environment for both staff and service users, supporting confidential conversations, team collaboration, training and clinic activities.

A great deal of planning went into ensuring colleagues felt welcome and well supported from day one. Staff received site inductions and

guided tours, helping them quickly familiarise themselves with the building and facilities. Any practical issues were addressed promptly, allowing people to settle in and feel confident in their new surroundings.

The move was also marked with a popular summer fayre, bringing together staff, service users and colleagues from across the Trust. The event featured relaxation activities from the Spiritual Care Team and inspiring contributions from Experts by Experience, creating a positive atmosphere and helping people connect with both each other and their new environment.

Main House is already proving to be a valuable base for the service. With improved facilities, accessible transport links and more room to grow, the team is well placed to continue delivering high-quality care while supporting staff wellbeing and development. As colleagues continue to settle in, the move is being seen as an exciting new chapter for the FIRST team.

Reasonable Adjustment Passports help you feel supported at work

Everyone should have the support they need to feel comfortable, confident and able to do their best at work. A Reasonable Adjustment Passport can help make that support clearer and easier to maintain.

At BSMHFT, the passport is a confidential document completed jointly by a colleague and their line manager. It records any reasonable adjustments or support needed because of a physical or mental health condition, long-term illness, impairment or neurodiversity, such as autism or ADHD.

One of the biggest benefits is that it provides a single record of agreed support, reducing the need to repeatedly explain your circumstances if you change role, team or manager.

The passport can include information about your health condition or neurodiversity, recommendations from Occupational Health or Access to Work, adjustments that could help, and an agreed action plan. It can also record what, if anything, you are comfortable sharing with your wider team.

A Reasonable Adjustment Passport can help to:

- make conversations about your individual needs easier and more structured
- ensure agreed adjustments are clearly recorded and followed through
- provide greater consistency if your circumstances, role or manager change
- create opportunities to review whether adjustments are still working for you.

Colleagues are encouraged to keep their passport up to date and discuss changing needs during one-to-ones or review meetings. Managers should regularly review the passport and support agreed actions.

Completing a passport is voluntary, but it can be a valuable tool for supporting wellbeing and helping colleagues get the right support to thrive at work.

Scan the QR code or search BSMHFT Connect to find out more.



Could less alcohol improve your wellbeing?

The Sober October campaign encourages people to take a break from alcohol for 31 days, but you do not need to wait for a particular month or challenge to make a positive change. Taking time to think about your alcohol intake at any point in the year can have a significant impact on both your physical and mental wellbeing.

Many people use alcohol to unwind after a busy day or cope with stress, but alcohol is a depressant that can affect the way we think, feel and behave. While it may help you feel relaxed initially, drinking regularly can disrupt sleep, reduce energy levels, affect concentration and contribute to feelings of anxiety or low mood. Over time, drinking above recommended levels can increase the risk of serious health conditions including liver disease, high blood pressure, stroke and some cancers.

The good news is that even a short break from alcohol can bring noticeable benefits. Studies have shown that reducing or stopping alcohol consumption can lead to better sleep, improved energy levels, enhanced concentration, weight loss and improved overall wellbeing. Many people also report feeling more productive, having a clearer mind and enjoying improved mood after taking a break from drinking.

Current NHS guidance recommends that men and women should not regularly drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week, spread over three or more days. To put this

into context, a pint of 4% beer contains around two units, a standard 175ml glass of 13% wine contains approximately 2.3 units and a single measure of spirits contains around one unit.

If you're thinking about cutting back, small changes can make a big difference. Try planning alcohol-free days each week, alternating alcoholic drinks with soft drinks, avoiding drinking in rounds or finding new ways to relax such as exercise, hobbies or spending time outdoors. Every step towards drinking less can have lasting benefits for your health and wellbeing.



NHS
Birmingham and Solihull
Mental Health
NHS Foundation Trust

NHS Staff Survey 2026

Don't just think it. Survey it.

Confidentially rate what works and what doesn't to create what's next.

Look out for your email invite from IQVIA. Find out more on BSMHFT Connect.



We each have
a voice that
counts

compassionate inclusive committed

Building a better place to work through the Staff Survey

The annual NHS Staff Survey invitations landed in our NHS inboxes on Tuesday 22 September, giving BSMHFT staff opportunity to share their experiences and help shape a positive culture and a more supportive workplace. The survey is one of the most important ways colleagues can influence their experience at work.

Staff Survey feedback has already helped drive changes locally and nationally, informing work on staff experience, equality, engagement, career development and workplace culture. At BSMHFT, previous survey results have informed the introduction of the Authentic Leader Programme, led to improvement conversations in more than 150 teams and supported local changes to working practices.

Feedback also influenced our approach to reasonable adjustments and we will shortly

be introducing the Reasonable Adjustment Passport, helping colleagues agree workplace adjustments that support them to work safely and effectively. Colleague feedback also helped shape our approach to developing health and wellbeing champions as another way of sharing information on how colleagues can get support at work.

The survey is confidential and all colleagues are entitled to 15 minutes of protected time to complete it. As an added bonus, there is a chance to win a £50 shopping voucher. Every response matters and helps make Team BSMHFT a better place to work. Please complete your Staff Survey by Friday 27 November.

Keeping warm at home is important for your health

As temperatures begin to fall, deciding when to switch the heating on is not just about comfort and energy bills. Keeping warm can be particularly important for health, especially for older people and those living with long-term medical conditions.

Cold homes are associated with increased risks to health. They can worsen conditions like circulatory problems, diabetes, arthritis and asthma, particularly where damp or mould is present.

Rather than holding out for a particular date, consider putting the heating on when the home starts to feel cold, particularly if someone in the household has a medical condition.

Keeping the home adequately warm can be an important part of looking after health and wellbeing during the colder months. However, we know many people are concerned about the price of energy which is why we've shared some useful tips.

Ways to save energy at home

With colder weather approaching, a few small changes around the home can help reduce energy use and take some pressure off household bills. The British Gas Energy Trust recommends focusing on heating, keeping warmth in the home and using everyday appliances efficiently.

Here are some practical ideas:

- **Keep the heat in:** Draught-proof windows and doors, use curtains and rugs, and check insulation where possible. Radiator reflector panels can also help direct heat back into the room.
- **Use heating efficiently:** Set the thermostat between 18°C and 21°C, use heating controls and avoid blocking radiators with furniture or curtains.
- **Heat people, not rooms:** Turn radiators down in rooms that aren't being used and keep doors closed, while being mindful of condensation and ventilation. Wearing extra layers can also help people stay warm without turning the heating higher.
- **Switch to LED bulbs:** LEDs can reduce electricity use and the British Gas Energy Trust says replacing bulbs with LEDs could save up to £40 a year.
- **Cut standby energy:** Switch appliances off at the wall rather than leaving them on standby and turn lights off when rooms aren't being used.
- **Save in the kitchen:** Only boil the water needed, use lids on pans and wait until the dishwasher is full before running it.
- **Rethink the laundry:** Wash clothes at 30°C with a full load and air-dry clothes where possible instead of using a tumble dryer.
- **Use less hot water:** Shorter showers can help reduce both energy and water use.



Stress Awareness Week and finding ways to switch off

International Stress Awareness Week takes place from 2 to 6 November, raising awareness of stress and the importance of mental health and wellbeing. This year's theme, "Shaping the Future of Stress and Wellbeing: Rehumanising the Workplace", focuses on creating healthier, more supportive ways of working and living.



Stress is the body's natural response to pressure. Some stress can help with motivation, but too much can affect mood, physical health and relationships. Long-term or severe stress can also lead to exhaustion and burnout.

Phones, emails, social media and 24-hour news can add to the sense of being constantly 'switched on'. The Mental Health Foundation says repeated scrolling through negative news can leave people feeling anxious or overwhelmed and affect concentration and sleep. [mentalhealth.org.uk]

Small steps can help manage stress:

- Break things down. When work feels overwhelming, focus on smaller, achievable tasks rather than everything at once.
- Take proper breaks. Step away from the screen where possible, move around or spend some time outside. Connecting with nature can support mental wellbeing.
- Talk about pressure. If workload or other pressures are becoming difficult to manage, speaking to someone can help identify what support may be needed.

- Create boundaries. Try to make space between work and home life and give the mind opportunities to switch off.
- Be mindful of scrolling. Step back from news or social media that leaves you feeling overwhelmed.
- Protect sleep. Good sleep supports the body, mind and ability to cope with everyday pressures.
- Stay connected and active. Every Mind Matters highlights connecting with others and getting active as ways to support mental wellbeing.

Every Mind Matters also offers a free personalised Mind Plan with practical actions to support mental wellbeing.



Scan the QR code or visit mentalhealth.org.uk



Scan the QR code or visit nhs.uk/every-mind-matters

Getting help and support

If you're a member of team BSMHFT and need mental health support, contact the Birmingham and Solihull Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub:

call 0121 301 1470 or email bsm-tr.referrals@nhs.net

If you need local mental health crisis advice, call 111 and choose the mental health option (Option 2).

If you have been affected by a traumatic, distressing incident at work, support is available. Search for our Post-Incident Support Toolkit on BSMHFT Connect.

Optima, our occupational Health provider, can also provide support. Search BSMHFT Connect for Optima or scan the QR code.

Take a look at the Health and Wellbeing page on BSMHFT Connect for advice and support on all aspects of Health and Wellbeing or scan the QR code.



Optima



BSMHFT Connect

AGM celebrates progress and future of mental health

More than 200 colleagues, service users, carers, partners and stakeholders came together at the Uffculme Centre for BSMHFT's Annual General Meeting (AGM). The event provided an opportunity to celebrate achievements from the past year and explore how the Trust's new Five-Year Strategy will help shape the future of mental health and wellbeing services across Birmingham and Solihull.

Held under the theme *Supporting wellbeing, strengthening culture, creating our future*, the day featured a range of information stands, wellbeing activities and networking opportunities. Attendees had the chance to learn more about the work of teams from across the Trust and a wellbeing zone offered mindfulness, a sound journey and Shinrin-Yoku (forest bathing) sessions, encouraging colleagues and visitors to prioritise their wellbeing.

The formal AGM opened with three powerful service user stories, sharing personal recovery journeys and highlighting the positive impact that Trust services have had on people's lives. These moving accounts set the tone for an afternoon focused on learning, reflection and the difference that compassionate care can make.

Phil Gayle (Chair), David Slatter (Lead

Governor) and Roisin Fallon-Williams (Chief Executive) reflected on the past year, highlighting key achievements, challenges and the priorities that will guide the organisation over the coming years. The meeting also included presentations on quality, patient safety and experience, alongside an overview of the Trust's Annual Report and Accounts and financial performance.

Attendees heard about the development of the Trust's new Golden Hillock Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre model and its role in supporting more integrated, community-based mental health care. The programme also showcased the Trust's innovative partnership with British Transport Police, highlighting how collaborative working is helping to improve mental health support and outcomes for people in crisis.

The event demonstrated the strength of partnership working across Birmingham and Solihull and reinforced the Trust's commitment to working alongside service users, carers, staff and communities to deliver high-quality mental health services. It was a day of celebration, reflection and forward thinking, bringing people together to help shape the future of mental health and wellbeing care.



Radio show gives communities a voice on mental health

Hosted by Beresford Dawkins, Community Development Lead at BSMHFT, What Shape Are You In? has become a trusted platform where communities across Birmingham and Solihull can discuss mental health, wellbeing and recovery in an open and supportive environment. Beresford has presented the weekly Unity FM programme since it launched in 2018, using it to strengthen links between the NHS and communities that have historically felt unheard. The show now reaches over 11,000 people and covers many social media outlets.

Every week, he shapes the programme's content around the issues people tell him matter most to their wellbeing. Drawing on community feedback, lived experience and conversations with listeners, Beresford brings together guests from the NHS, voluntary sector organisations, faith groups, law enforcement, and people with lived experience of mental health challenges.

Topics regularly include housing, purposeful employment, vocational opportunities, music and the arts, reflecting Beresford's belief that recovery is about more than healthcare alone. Discussions around stigma, trust, crisis support and culturally responsive care also feature prominently, helping people better understand available support and encouraging earlier access to services.



"Hearing real stories from real people is what I enjoy most," says Beresford. "The programme creates a safe space for honest conversations and helps build trust between communities and services. When someone tells me they're in better shape today than they were yesterday, that's incredibly rewarding."

Listen to What Shape Are You In? on Unity FM 93.5FM, live 4pm-5pm on Wednesday's or catch the repeat on Saturday's between at 4pm. Call the show on 0121 772 8892.

Email our Community Engagement team to find out more:

✉ bsmhft.communityengagement@nhs.net

Help shape the future of our food 🏠 🍏 🗑️

Colleagues, patients, carers and visitors are being encouraged to share their views as part of a new Trust-wide food feedback campaign.

The initiative aims to gather feedback on inpatient meals and catering services to help inform future menu developments and support the creation of a wider food and drink strategy. It also supports ongoing work to improve food quality, safety and the overall dining experience across the Trust.

Whether you have suggestions for new menu options, comments about recent meals or ideas for improvement, your feedback can make a real difference.

The survey takes just a few minutes to complete and is available online – scan the QR code to share your views.

Every response will help ensure our food and catering services continue to meet the needs of the people who use them and support the best possible experience for patients, carers, visitors and colleagues.

Thank you to everyone who takes the time to share their views. Together, we can help shape the future of food services at BSMHFT.

Experts by Experience inspire pride, hope and recovery

The participation and experience team hosted an Experts by Experience (EbE) Celebration over the summer at Uffculme.

There was a great turn out of over 30 EbEs and colleagues who have the privilege of working closely with EbEs attended. The afternoon was full of moving testimonies, pride and appreciation for our EbEs who so generously give us their time and expertise. Many of our EbEs spoke about the impact of being an EbE on their wellbeing. They highlighted that their first step into the welcoming space of Uffculme was a significant step towards recovery.

The event was compered by Dr Katherine Allen, Lead for Recovery, Service User, Family and Carer Experience.

Formal proceedings commenced with a recording from Roisin Fallon-Williams, who expressed gratitude for the huge impact our EbEs have on all the lives they touch. She also talked about how our EbEs connect us to our deepest values and why we choose to work in mental health.

Sunny Kalsy-Lillico, Chief Psychologist then spoke about the power of co-production and how we simply wouldn't be the Trust we are without our EbEs.

Sandra Baker and Jayne Archer from the Participation and Experience team talked about what the EbEs mean to the team and Katherine

spoke about how EbEs inspire more of us to talk about our own lived experience.

Mary Elliffe told us about the profound changes that the EbEs have made in secure services and Lisa Draper described how significant the EbEs' contribution to the AVERTS training is, highlighting the NHS England award they have just received. Anne Glover talked about how her experience with EbEs has led her to developing exciting new co-production activities for medical students on placement at BSMHFT.

Special guest Max Carlish, EbE, BAFTA awarding winning film maker, National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) fellowship award winner and patient involvement lead at Birmingham University, gave a rousing speech about what makes our EbEs extraordinary. He acknowledged that we continue to face challenges and power inequalities in using lived experience to bring about change, but inspired everyone to believe that it is a wholly worthwhile journey.

Max then presented certificates to our new EbEs who have recently completed their EbE induction. We finished with thanking Jennifer McCalla and Lynette Cole, whose administrative support made the event possible. Our EbEs went home with party bags, and we all went home with high spirits, fires in our bellies and deep senses of pride and joy.



Max Carlish with EbE Shoyfun Nessa



Max Carlish with EbE Ozma Shazia



EbE Kathleen O'Brien

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:

Zinnia Centre South Day Services

"The team at Zinnia Day Services are amazing. They care and approach to each individual is impeccable. You feel at ease, they have a non-judgemental approach and guide you through whatever you are feeling or thinking in order to help you feel less anxious. The team at day services listened and gave helpful, useful practical advice depending on what I asked or was feeling on that day. Each member of staff including the students who had come for placements/training listened and gave everyone time and attention. No one was rushed and everyone was heard. We were all learning at different paces and the support needed. Thank you so much for everything. I appreciated the transport staff too."

Homeless Primary Care Mental Health

"I'm very happy with all help provided by health exchange staff. They're always so attentive and ready to give all the help you need. Every staff member is attentive and listens to you. After they're always ready to go above and beyond just to help you."

Perinatal Community – Solihull

"I am better than I was before treatment, the team, especially Jon and Lauren were very helpful. I honestly believe that I wouldn't be in this position now if it wasn't for them. One of the reasons that I think I got better is the fact that the team has always validated my feelings. It was hard navigating my feelings as a first-time mom. I often went down in a rabbit hole where I just wallow in my sadness. I scrutinised every aspect of what I do and how I feel. All these were heard and validated. When I told all these to the team, they were always so compassionate and even offer me different perspectives that made me change my mindset."



About Me passport

The About Me passport is a single-page communication tool available on Rio since September 2025. Developed through a Quality Improvement project to help address health inequalities in mental health settings, it supports more personalised and effective care by offering a snapshot of the person beyond the diagnosis.

We are pleased to see a growing number of passports being completed across several Divisions and encourage colleagues across the Trust to help increase uptake of this valuable clinical tool.

Please support by reviewing and updating passports for service users on your caseload and consider making the About Me passport a routine part of everyday practice.



More information on About Me can be found on BSMHFT Connect including a demonstration video and a quick reference guide.

Names chosen for Highcroft's new building and wards

The names for our new inpatient building and its two wards at Highcroft have been chosen, marking another important milestone in the development of the Trust's modern mental health facilities.

The announcement follows a significant moment for the project in July, when Paulette Hamilton MP visited the Highcroft site to celebrate the start of the main construction phase. Hosted by Vanessa Devlin, Executive Director of Operations, the visit recognised progress on one of the Trust's most significant estate investments in recent years. Colleagues, partners, contractors, service user and carers came together to mark the occasion.

The new building will be called Rowan House, with its two wards named Willow Ward and Birch Ward.

Inspired by nature, the names were carefully selected to reflect the themes of resilience, recovery, growth and hope that are central to the care and support provided by the Trust.

Rowan House takes its name from the rowan tree, long associated with protection, renewal and strength. Known for thriving in challenging conditions, the tree symbolises resilience and hope, while its bright red berries represent life, energy and new beginnings.

Willow Ward is named after the willow tree, which is recognised for its ability to bend without breaking. It has become a symbol of flexibility, inner strength and recovery.



The team who are making it happen



Paulette Hamilton MP and Vanessa Devlin

Birch Ward takes its name from the birch tree, a symbol of renewal and fresh starts, reflecting the opportunities for growth and positive change that recovery can bring.

The meanings behind the names will help shape future communications about the development and may also be reflected within the building through artwork, colour schemes and interior design.

A special thank you goes to Katy Willmont and the Trust's Experts by Experience group,

whose time, insight and thoughtful contributions helped identify names that capture the spirit of hope, healing and new beginnings that Rowan House will represent for patients, families and communities across Birmingham and Solihull.

Once complete, the new facility will provide modern, purpose-built environments designed to enhance safety, dignity and experience for both patients and staff, helping to support the delivery of high-quality mental health care for years to come.

Celebrating excellence in clinical education



More than 130 delegates from across the country attended the recent Clinical Nurse Educators Network (CNET) Annual Conference, hosted by BSMHFT recently.

The national event brought together clinical educators, nurses and healthcare professionals to share learning, innovation and best practice. Coordinated by Theiba Khan, Lead Clinical Educator at BSMHFT, with support from colleagues across the Trust and the CNET committee, the conference showcased the importance of clinical education in developing and supporting the healthcare workforce.

Deputy Chief Executive Patrick Nyarumbu welcomed delegates and highlighted the value of collaboration and professional development. Professor Nicola Ranger, Chief Executive and

General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, delivered a keynote address on leadership and the future of nursing.

The programme featured workshops on Compassionate Mind, Shinrin Yoku (Forest Bathing), Nature Prescription and wellbeing, alongside a video celebrating the contribution of mental health nurses and clinical educators.

Delegates also enjoyed a performance by The Desi Pulse Group, made up of Theiba, Clinical Educators and BSMHFT nurses, celebrating culture, diversity and inclusion.

Attendees praised the programme, networking opportunities and warm hospitality, highlighting the conference as a valuable opportunity to connect, learn and share ideas that support workforce development and high-quality patient care.

North wards Summer Games Challenge brings wards together

Staff and patients across the north wards came together for the Summer Games Challenge, taking part in a wide range of physical, creative and social activities designed to promote wellbeing, participation and connection.

Across the six wards, hundreds of attendances were recorded as people got involved in everything from walking groups, football and fitness sessions to gardening, arts and crafts, bingo, karaoke, pottery and smoothie making. The challenge encouraged everyone to try something new, stay active and enjoy time together in a fun and supportive environment.

The week highlighted the importance of meaningful activity in supporting recovery and wellbeing, while also creating opportunities for staff and service users to build relationships, boost confidence and celebrate achievements.



Congratulations to Eden Acute, who were crowned overall winners thanks to their outstanding patient and staff engagement, alongside an impressive range of activities delivered throughout the challenge. A special well done also goes to Eden PICU, who achieved the highest overall activity time and secured second place.



Stay well this winter

The cold weather during the winter months can be bad for health, especially for those aged 65 or older, and people with long-term conditions. But there are lots of things you can do to stay well this winter.

Get your flu vaccine

As winter approaches, getting the flu vaccine is one of the simplest and most effective ways we can protect ourselves, our colleagues, our patients and our loved ones from serious illness. The flu vaccine reduces the risk of catching flu and can make symptoms milder if you do become unwell. It also helps prevent complications such as pneumonia and reduces the chance of passing the virus on to others.

Flu is much more than a bad cold. It can leave people seriously unwell for weeks and can be particularly dangerous for older people, pregnant women and those with long-term health conditions. Every winter, flu places additional pressure on NHS services and can lead to hospital admissions.

For healthcare staff, vaccination is an important way of protecting the people we care for. Many patients and service users are at greater risk of complications from flu, and vaccination helps reduce the risk of spreading the virus in both clinical and non-clinical settings.

The flu vaccine is updated each year to provide the best possible protection against the strains most likely to circulate. It cannot give you flu and is rigorously tested to ensure it is safe and effective. By choosing to get vaccinated, you're helping to protect yourself and others while supporting the NHS during one of its busiest times of year. Together, we can reduce the impact of flu this winter.



Protecting yourself from winter viruses

Highly contagious infections like flu and norovirus, aka the 'winter vomiting bug' spread during winter. Getting vaccinated against flu, COVID, RSV and pneumonia as well as washing your hands with soap and water are ways in which we can all protect ourselves and others from catching these nasty viruses.

Check your medicine cabinet

Ask your pharmacist what medicines should be in your cabinet to help you this winter. Many over the counter medicines are available to relieve symptoms of common winter illnesses such as colds, sinusitis or earache. To help manage winter illness symptoms, keep warm, rest, drink plenty of fluids and have at least one hot meal a day to keep your energy levels up.

Keeping warm

Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems such as heart attacks and pneumonia. Heating our homes can be expensive – here are a few tips to help you during a cold snap:

- ✓ Close blinds/curtains at night and even in the daytime if rooms are not being used
- ✓ Reduce draughts - using an old towel under a door can help
- ✓ Reflective foil placed behind radiators can increase the impact of heating
- ✓ Wearing several layers of clothing will keep us warmer than one thicker layer
- ✓ Try to heat rooms that you regularly use, to at least 18°C if you can.



New video champions learning disability Annual Health Checks



As part of work underway to improve the long-term health of people with a learning disability in Birmingham and Solihull, a new video has been launched to promote Annual Health Checks.

An Annual Health Check is a yearly assessment that looks at both the physical and mental wellbeing of a person with a learning disability. It is carried out with a GP and anyone aged 14 or over who is listed on the Learning Disability Register has the right to receive one.

Improving uptake of Annual Health Checks is part of a new three-year Learning Disability and Autism Delivery Plan, which outlines how the NHS and partners will work together to improve the lives of people with a learning disability and autistic people.

The video has been developed in partnership between Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Learning Disabilities and Autism Provider Collaborative, Solihull Healthcare Partnership and people with lived experience. It features insights from parents, carers and people with a learning disability about the benefits of an Annual Health Check. It also includes an interview with a local GP who highlights the vital role Annual Health Checks play in supporting this vulnerable group to maintain good health.

You can watch the video on our website and search 'Annual Health Checks' or scan the QR code.



Forward House celebrates 25 years of recovery and community

Forward House Steps2Recovery Ward recently marked its 25th anniversary with a special celebration bringing together patients, staff, former patients and colleagues from across the Trust. The event recognised not only 25 years of service, but also the achievements, progress and relationships that have helped shape the ward's community-focused approach to recovery and rehabilitation.

Guests enjoyed a range of activities, including games, an inter-ward Connect 4 tournament, a cake competition and an awards presentation. A highlight of the day was welcoming back a former patient, reflecting on the positive impact of rehabilitation and recovery support.

The celebration also included reflections from Ward Manager, Jil Farnworth, who recognised the dedication of everyone who has contributed to Forward House over the years. The event was a fitting tribute to the ward's ongoing commitment to supporting patients towards greater independence, confidence and wellbeing.



Forward House team

CaringMinds

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



Birthday bash brings colleagues together to celebrate NHS 78

Colleagues came together at Moseley Hall Hospital to celebrate the NHS's 78th birthday at a fun-filled Birthday bash organised in partnership with Birmingham Community Healthcare Charity. The event featured games, live music, treats, raffle prizes and fundraising activities, creating a fantastic atmosphere for staff, volunteers and visitors. The event was a wonderful opportunity to recognise the dedication, compassion and commitment of NHS colleagues while celebrating 78 years of caring for patients, supporting communities and changing lives. A huge thank you to everyone who helped make the day such a success.



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!

📅 **May: Betty Bbosa**, Northcroft Community Mental Health Team, Community Psychiatric Nurse

📅 **June: Una Butler**, Perinatal Community Nursery Nurse

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

Juniper Centre Fun Day brings staff and the community together

The Juniper Centre was filled with fun, laughter and community spirit as staff, patients, carers, families and local residents came together for a hugely successful Fun Day.

Organised by Tara Bacciochi, Business Support Manager and Charity Champion, alongside an enthusiastic team of colleagues, volunteers and family members, the event featured a packed programme of activities including a bouncy castle, giant games, face painting, an ice cream van, raffle prizes and a visit from Highgate Fire Crew. Generous support from RLW Roofing Ltd helped make many of the attractions possible.

The day showcased the strong sense of



community at the Juniper Centre, with staff, loved ones and local residents coming together to enjoy the festivities. The Fun Day was a wonderful

example of teamwork, bringing people together for a memorable day of fun, friendship and connection.

30 colleagues take on the Wolf Run

During the summer, 30 colleagues from Reaside, Tamarind and FIRST took on the Summer Wolf Run in Leicestershire to raise money for Caring Minds. For many participants it was their first Wolf Run, but they embraced the challenge with determination, teamwork and plenty of good humour.

The demanding 10K course featured muddy trails, water crossings and a range of tough obstacles, testing everyone's resilience from start to finish. Thanks to the incredible efforts of those taking part and the generosity of sponsors, an impressive £1,855 was raised.

A huge congratulations and thank you to everyone involved for supporting Caring Minds and making the event such a fantastic success.



A magical night celebrating the very best of SSL

Colleagues from across SSL came together at Austin Court, Birmingham, for their annual SSL People and Values Awards - an evening celebrating the individuals and teams who bring our values to life every day.

From acts of kindness and inclusion to outstanding service and teamwork, the awards shine a spotlight on colleagues whose contributions make a real difference across SSL.

There was a little extra magic in the air this year too. Magician, David Penn welcomed guests with close-up magic at the start of the evening, before returning during a break in the awards with a showstopping performance that had the room captivated.

At the heart of the evening, though, were the inspiring stories of our nominees and winners, and the opportunity to recognise achievements that might otherwise go unseen.



Winner Martin Germaney, Senior Estates Manager and presenter, Shahana Khan, Non-Executive Director



Winner Tony McElheron, Domestic Assistant and presenter, Gordon D'sa, Contracts and Implementation Manager

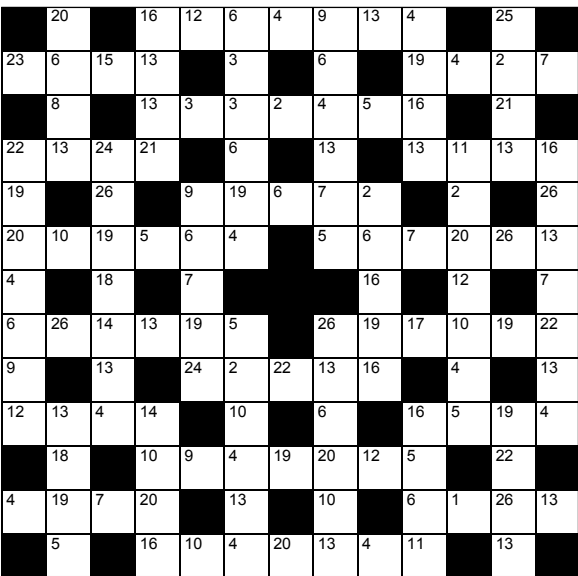
Winner Susan Hill, Hotel Services Manager and presenter, Shane Bray SSL Managing Director

SSL colleagues were recognised in a number of award categories including Excellence in Service, Respect Award, Kindness Award, Inclusion Award, Innovation Award, Team of the Year and Special Recognition Awards for a team and individual.

The evening was about much more than trophies. Every nomination represented someone taking the time to recognise a colleague or team and say: what you do matters.

Congratulations to everyone nominated, shortlisted and recognised on the night - and thank you to all our colleagues who continue to bring the SSL values to life every day.

CROSS CODE



ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

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

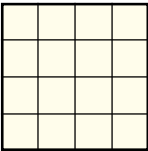
Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

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.

MAGIC SQUARE

HEAR NEWER CHICKEN

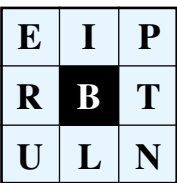
Using all 16 letters of the phrase above, form four words each of four letters which will fit in the grid to form a magic square in which the words can be read both horizontally and vertically.



Quiz Challenge

- What is the difference between libel and slander?
- The Man-Machine was a 1978 album by which influential German band?
- In May 2021, tennis player Cameron Norrie was ranked No. 2 in Britain. Who was ranked No. 1?
- Which fuel is a by-product of the process of burning coal to make coal gas?
- The Mindhunter book and TV series detail the FBI's attempts to profile which type of criminals?
- The Museo del Greco, which is devoted to the works of the painter El Greco, is in which city?
- Michael York starred as the boyfriend of Sally Bowles, played by Liza Minnelli, in which classic film?
- Which US TV comedy-drama shares its name with garments worn in operating theatres?
- Why is the flower polyanthus so called?
- Bernina, Singer, Husqvarna and Pfaff are all brands of what?

NONAGRAM



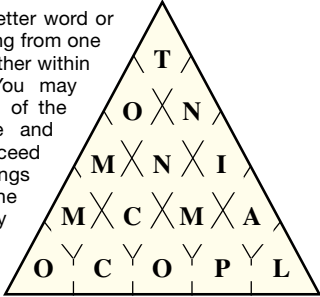
How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines: 23 Good; 27 Very Good; 32 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).

WORD PYRAMID

Spell out a 15-letter word or phrase by moving from one chamber to another within the pyramid. You may only enter each of the chambers once and may only proceed through openings in the walls. The first letter may appear in any chamber.

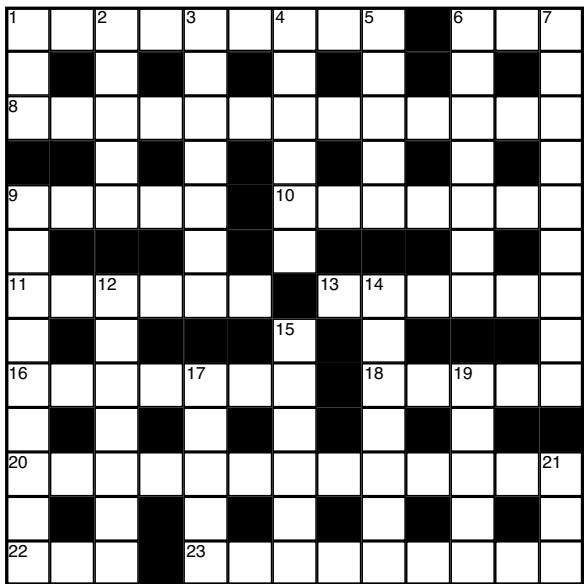


FIVE ALIVE

CP	OL	UR	MC	PH
AI		SE		IO
TD	RO	IT	EL	LM
ET		NR		OE
TA	IL	OG	HU	DT

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.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Wildcat joins flyer in light plane (5,4)
- Keep under - lower (3)
- An exaggeration about the bowling analysis (13)
- Financially and physically exhausted (5)
- Clumsy pathologist loses plot - how foolish (7)
- Thanks non-drinker with spectacles for the design (6)
- Dance in a short jacket (6)
- Australian island, it's in East Anglia (7)
- Met Fred initially with Bill and Edward (5)
- Deceitful - like a two-headed lizard? (6-7)
- City entirely hidden (3)
- Cut inside French father and continue steadfastly (9)

DOWN

- Sounds like a number as well (3)
- Be breaking leg first on church land (5)
- Rex is to return to the dish (7)
- Nothing on the hills but fruit (6)
- Expression of surprise about longing to find this animal (5)
- Shift for pharmacist having time off with sweetheart (7)
- Observe some letters making up phrase (9)
- Excite border clique (3,2,4)
- Resort has landing-place below rocky height (7)
- Illegal act of a receiver (7)
- Fish right for one on ice (6)
- Neat edge of a bloomer (5)
- Photograph, we hear, is a slide (5)
- Expected novice to leave fight (3)

TrustTalk listening to you

Contact the editors: The Communications team, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Uffculme Centre, 52 Queensbridge Rd, Birmingham, B13 8QY Email: bsmhft.commsteam@nhs.net Designed by graphics@uhb.nhs.uk

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