

Your

 **Birmingham**
Hospice

HOSPICE UPDATE

TOGETHER, WE'RE MAKING EVERY MOMENT MATTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2025

| PATIENT STORIES

| OUR COUNSELLING SERVICE

| HOSPICE MERCHANDISE



Bulls in the City

Our art trail comes to Birmingham city centre this summer



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WELCOME

Hello and welcome to the Spring/Summer 2025 edition of Your Hospice Update.

I am delighted to be here at Birmingham Hospice as your Chief Executive. The first months of my time here have been focused on getting to know the charity better, understanding the incredible work we do, and meeting the people who make this organisation so amazing.

I would like to thank everybody within the charity who has welcomed me so warmly. It has been great to meet so many people across the charity - including employees, volunteers and supporters, who have shown a real commitment and passion for the work that we do throughout the challenges of the past year.

As always, our patients are at the heart of everything we do and I have also been privileged to meet with many people who are



Paul Bytheway

being cared for by the hospice and their families, which really brings home the importance of our work and how vital your support is in allowing us to keep doing this.

In this magazine, you can read more about some of the inspiring individuals who we have supported when they needed it most, as well as the fantastic news that the upgrade to the wards at our Erdington site has now been completed, thanks to the generous support of the public.

The coming year will see plenty of other opportunities to support Birmingham Hospice, including our exciting Bulls in the City art trail, which is coming to the city this summer. This trail of 40 bull sculptures, with eye-catching individual designs, will be a great opportunity to boost our profile in the city at the same time as raising vital funds and providing a fun activity for people to take part in. I hope to see you there!

Best wishes

Paul Bytheway, Chief Executive

“I would like to thank everybody within the charity who has welcomed me so warmly”

JAMIE'S STORY

Support for the whole family

When Jamie Tinsley was diagnosed with a terminal heart condition, aged just 36, his first priority was to minimise the impact on his family, and he decided he wanted to spend his final days being cared for at Birmingham Hospice.

Known as a 'loveable rogue' who liked to make people laugh, Jamie was a devoted family man who enjoyed going on outings with his two sons and one daughter. A keen Aston Villa supporter, he often went to games with family members, and also ran his son's football team.

After suffering a cardiomyopathy heart failure, he was in hospital for two weeks, followed by a brief period being cared for at home before coming to our Inpatient Unit, where he died four weeks later.

His wife Tracie said: "He was the best husband and father I could have ever wished for. He was my best friend, my soulmate, my everything. He would always put me and the children first and, even up until the day we lost him, he made sure he told everyone to promise that they would look after me and the children for him."

"Jamie did request that when he became more poorly he wanted to go into a hospice as he didn't want the children to see him deteriorate or pass away."

When that time came, Jamie had made his peace with the decision, but Tracie was far more uncertain about what to expect.

However, she said the team couldn't have done more to put their minds at ease and make the process as comfortable as possible.

She added: "Jamie was so calm about going into a hospice, but I was very apprehensive. To me it was just a place that someone goes to at the end of life, but I couldn't have been more wrong. We both felt so welcomed by the staff; they made it feel just like home."

"When the nurses introduced themselves, I remember one saying to me 'it's our turn to look after Jamie, you be his wife again'. This is something that I have never forgotten as it just meant so much to me and really touched my heart."

At first Jamie was looked after on one of the wards but when the nurses found out that his three children - aged 10, 11 and 13 at the time - would be visiting regularly, he was moved to the Family Room that same evening.

Tracie said: "I couldn't believe how lovely the family room was; it was like a little holiday apartment and it didn't feel like we were in a hospice. Being able to have the doors



Jamie

open to the garden was just perfect and we took Jamie out into the garden every day which he thoroughly enjoyed.

"Being in the hospice was so beneficial for Jamie as he had 24-hour round-the-clock care. When he was at home, I was having to make a lot of calls to the district nurse due to him being unsettled - we often didn't know how long we would be waiting and it wasn't nice to see him in discomfort. At the hospice, staff made sure he was always comfortable and never in pain."

"The care he received was nothing short of exceptional, and words will never be enough to express my gratitude. Everyone was so kind and caring, and would have a laugh with Jamie which is something he loved and wanted."

The hospice team also made sure Jamie's family were supported, both during his time there and afterwards. All the family had hand casts made as a lasting memento of their time together, and both Tracie and the children have continued to receive counselling, while Tracie also joined our Good Grief Group for people experiencing bereavement.

Tracie added: "From the moment we walked through those doors, nothing was ever too much. All the staff truly are incredible and the services they provide not only for the patients but for the family really are phenomenal."

"It made a sad experience just a little easier with the great care."

“We both felt so welcomed by the staff; they made it feel just like home”



Jamie and Tracie

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When you have finished reading your magazine please share it with others.

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CURTIS SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE TO HELP OTHERS

Inspirational campaigner Curtis Pugh is helping Birmingham Hospice staff understand how to better support people with learning disabilities by sharing his own personal experience.

Curtis, aged 29, shared his perspective on autism, ADHD and mental health in a special presentation in February.

He wanted to raise awareness of hidden disabilities and the Sunflower lanyard, which is worn by those diagnosed with unseen conditions.

He was inspired by the Oliver McGowan training about caring for people with a learning disability, which everyone working for the hospice receives.

“It’s about raising awareness of people with autism and ADHD, and letting them know about the Sunflower lanyard,” said Curtis, who is a long-time supporter of the hospice with father Stephen, after their mother Tracey was cared for by our Inpatient Unit.

“The Oliver McGowan training was an inspiration to me; I wondered if I could combine it with my experiences and make it my own. If I can help even one person then my work will be done.”

Curtis is also working closely with our Education and Research Team and it is hoped that he will give more talks.

Hilary Murray, Head of the Education and Research Team, said: “Curtis’s presentation is a very powerful way of ensuring people with learning difficulties are heard and receive the care they need.”



Curtis



Craig with his parents

Home care is a lifeline for Craig and family

For Aston Villa superfan Craig Liggitt and his devoted parents, Chris and Bill, our dedicated Hospice at Home Team is a vital lifeline which provides essential support.

Craig, 44, lives at his Northfield home with his mother and father and needs specialist care after being diagnosed with tumours on his brain and spine in 2021.

Chris and Bill struggled to find adequately trained carers, until they were referred to our Community Team.

Hospice at Home’s experienced team of carers visit each morning to wash, dress and help him.

Importantly, they provided an adjustable bed and pillow, which is lowered to the floor and has ensured Craig can’t hurt himself if he rolls out.

“The team at Birmingham Hospice listened to what we had to say and saw what he needed,” said Chris.

Our carers go the extra mile and can often be found singing rap and



“Having Hospice at Home coming in puts your mind at rest

R&B with Craig, who is a huge fan of rapper Tupac.

Chris said: “Having Hospice at Home coming in puts your mind at rest; we know that he’s comfortable and happy. He’s singing and laughing, and they dance with him, which takes a lot of pressure off us.”

Refurbished patient rooms unveiled



Newly modernised patient rooms were officially opened at our Erdington Inpatient Unit (IPU) by High Sheriff of the West Midlands Douglas Wright MBE at a special ceremony.



The rooms have been transformed from outdated multi-occupancy spaces into private suites, which will ensure those under our care receive dignity at the end of life.

The refurbishment was funded by the Room to Care appeal, which surpassed its target of £200,000 thanks to the generosity of local people,



corporate businesses and funders.

Donations ranged from £10 to £50,000 with every penny contributing towards the final target.

Paul Bytheway, Chief Executive at Birmingham Hospice, said: “This is a momentous time for our hospice.

“Having these rooms refurbished means so much to our patients, families, staff and visitors. The transformation of the rooms will ensure we can continue providing the expert, compassionate and patient-focused end of life care we pride ourselves on.

“Thank you to every single person who donated to the Room to Care appeal – from funders to corporate supporters and every single person who donated.”

The original rooms were considered



no longer fit for purpose, while COVID-19 also highlighted the need for individual washing and toilet facilities.

Katie Roberts, Ward Manager at Birmingham Hospice, added: “These new single-occupancy rooms will give patients their own private, personal space.

“Providing patients comfort and dignity at the end of life is our top priority. The new rooms allow more space for things like family visits, meaning people can create special memories at the end of life.

“Myself and my teams who work in the Inpatient Unit each day, are so thankful to everyone who donated – thank you.”

HELPING PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES

At Birmingham Hospice, we have a team of counsellors, spiritual carers, therapists, wellbeing volunteers and bereavement volunteers whose focus is on supporting our patients and their loved ones emotionally and spiritually.

Our trained and experienced counsellors are here to listen to people’s emotional concerns, and provide support.

At the hospice, we offer one-to-one counselling as well as support groups for those with life-limiting conditions and their families, and art therapy to help support patients’ wellbeing. This is free of charge to anyone with a connection to the hospice.

Wellbeing Team Lead Surj Heer said: “This is all about helping people to help

themselves – we give patients and their families the tools which they can use to help get through difficult times in their lives.”

For those who don’t meet our referral criteria, it is now also possible to access our counselling services through a private (fee-paying) plan, including bereavement counselling, couples counselling and anxiety support, allowing you to benefit from the experience and expertise of Birmingham Hospice counsellors.

Prices start from £60 per session (£75 for art therapy) and any money made from these private appointments will be invested back into our services here at the hospice.

Surj added: “There’s great potential for the hospice in using our expertise to reach other



people in the city who may not know where else to go to get the support they need.”

Please contact the Wellbeing Team on 0121 269 5000 or visit www.birminghamhospice.org.uk/private-counselling to find out more.



ART TRAIL STOMPING INTO BIRMINGHAM THIS SUMMER!

Are you ready to join the Bulls in the City herd?



Birmingham Hospice has partnered with Wild in Art to bring a herd of 40 fibreglass bull sculptures to the city this summer, creating an immersive, free art trail for local people while also raising vital funds for our charity.

From Wednesday 16 July to Sunday 14 September, the Bulls in the City art trail will be live across Birmingham – get the dates in your diary and make a trip down!

Rebecca Richards, Bulls in the City Project Lead, said: "We're so excited to finally see this trail come to life. It's going to be a colourful celebration of

local artists and of course, a chance to raise awareness of our incredible charity.

"The trail is the perfect excuse to explore our vibrant city. You will be able to download the Bulls in the City app or buy a trail map in our Herd HQ shop, and go out collecting all 40 bull sculptures, plus a mini-herd of over 80 calves."

Once the trail is complete, all sculptures will be together one last time at our Farewell Weekend on 10-12 October before being auctioned off to raise vital funds for our hospice on Thursday 16 October.

STAY UP TO DATE WITH ALL TRAIL NEWS AT www.bullsinthecity.co.uk



DEDICATE A UNIQUE TRIBUTE STAR ON ASTRO THE MEMORABULL

We're thrilled to announce that as part of the Bulls in the City herd, we will be designing our very own bull, and you can get involved.

We're offering you the chance to remember a loved one or show someone special in your life just how much they mean to you by dedicating a tribute star on Astro the Memorabull.

Your tribute name(s) will be featured in a star incorporated into Astro's striking design, hand-painted by local artist Jess Perrin. These special stars will cover the whole sculpture in a beautiful and unique display.

Astro the Memorabull will be on display throughout the Bulls in the City art trail in Herd HQ, located in the Bullring, so you will be able to visit and spot your loved one's name.

We have just 900 tribute stars available at a suggested donation of £25 for each star, so your tribute will also be a tribute to our care, helping us to continue to be there for local people living with a terminal diagnosis, and their families.

Dedicate a tribute star:
www.bullsinthecity.co.uk/memorabull



Shop number 23 opens in Boldmere

Our newest shop has recently opened in the superb location of Boldmere, Sutton Coldfield.

Retail provides vital income for our charity and thousands of people visit our shops each week, supporting their local hospice.

Our Boldmere team is thrilled to be part of such a thriving local high street.

Vince, the Assistant Shop Manager, has come from a food retail background, bringing lots of experience.

He says: "I'm looking forward to a career change, working for a worthwhile cause with a local charity."

"I really enjoy talking to and engaging with customers so I'm looking forward to making our new Boldmere shop a part of the local community."

We are a leading charity retailer in Birmingham with 23 shops across the West Midlands, and we'd love to welcome you at one of our shops soon. You can find out more about our locations, how to make donations and what items we can accept at www.birminghamhospice.org.uk/shop/.



A big thank you to the Birmingham Hospice Singers who have raised an incredible £25,000 for the hospice over the past 12 years. Our best wishes to founder Marion Biddlestone and her husband Joe, the musical director, who are moving away and stepping down from their roles.

We're delighted to have Rolls-Royce on board as the Learning Programme Partner for our Bulls in the City trail. The team from Rolls-Royce also visited us at Christmas with gifts for our Children's Healing and Therapeutic Support (CHATS) Team, bringing a little extra joy to bereaved children and families this Christmas.



CHECK OUT OUR MERCHANDISE RANGE

Spring is finally here and what better way to celebrate than by checking out the fantastic range of Hettie the Hedgehog merchandise available in our online store.

We have a brilliant collection of stationery at pocket money prices, which are ideal for children who love our prickly pal.

This includes a Hettie pencil, eraser and notebook - perfect for drawing pictures, writing stories or listing your favourite cute animals.

Lovers of Hettie can also buy a plush toy of the hospice's lovable mascot as well as a Hettie keyring and pin badge.

With Easter nearly here, why not hop into action by purchasing some adorable bunny ears, the ideal headgear for egg hunts in the garden.

Our hospice shop also sells a selection of keepsakes perfect for remembering someone special.

The metal heart keyring is a great way to honour the memory of a loved one.

For a truly special keepsake, Birmingham Hospice sells customisable high-quality sterling silver jewellery. Our pendant necklace, bracelet, locket and cufflinks feature the hospice logo, all of which can be engraved.

Also available are eye-catching clothing for our fundraising events, including Choc 5K t-shirts, bags and wigs and a special Birmingham Hospice cycling jersey for Ride the Reservoir.

To see the full range of items on sale on our online shop go to www.birminghamhospice.org.uk/shop/online-shop/.

HETTIE'S HOSPICE HEROES



St Michael's CE Primary School in Bartley Green has supported us in a range of ways over the last 12 months, including Bunny Hop, Rudolph Run and hosting a Summer Fayre, raising over £4,000. St Michael's will also have a bull on our art trail this summer. Thanks so much for your support!



HEARTS & STARS MEMORY WALK

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