



# talk BWC

News for patients, visitors and staff

June 2026



**Page 3**  
**Baby Noah fights on**  
**after operation to**  
**repair hole**

**Page 3**  
Women's Hospital is site  
of pioneering miscarriage  
research

**Page 12**  
Share your favourite song  
for our birthing playlist

## Sharing your thoughts

We are constantly working to improve your experience at our Trust. It's important that you let us know your thoughts and feedback so that we can assist you and learn. We also want to know when we do well as this helps us to continue doing the right things.

See below some of the feedback we have received throughout May.

### Play Admissions Centre, Birmingham Children's

"I would like to nominate Hema for outstanding care and support. She delivered an exceptional role play session to prepare my daughter for her MRI scan, allowing her to explore and 'play' on the scanner beforehand. This made a huge difference in reducing anxiety and helping her feel safe and confident."



### Homebirth Team, Birmingham Women's

"Nicky was fantastic. She was so kind and compassionate as well as highly informative throughout my pregnancy. Nicky and the team have been so responsive and supportive throughout. It's been an amazing birth and pregnancy experience. I felt listened to and empowered and had a far more positive birth experience with my second."



### Ward 10, Birmingham Children's

"After three difficult months and our world turning upside down, we are so grateful to each and everyone of you for the care you have provided to us. You are all so wonderful and incredible at your jobs. We'll always remember each and every one of you. Thank you so much."



If you would like to give your feedback and for a chance for it to be featured in July's edition of talkBWC, head to our website.

[bwc.nhs.uk/patient-experience](http://bwc.nhs.uk/patient-experience)

# Triple visit to learn about our research

Our Trust welcomed delegates from across the pond – and the road – to share best practice, opportunities to develop research and how we're tackling health inequalities.

Arriving from the University of Maryland in the USA, Manitoba in Canada and Birmingham's Aston University, each group were given a tour of our Children's Hospital, showcasing our expertise within education, research, nursing and maternal health.

Students and lecturers from Maryland University heard from Hayley Durnall, Consultant in Public Health about health inequalities in the West Midlands and how we're tackling the issue.

She said: "We have many common issues around health with Maryland and so they were keen to hear how we are focusing on prevention, treatment and looking at innovative ways to improve care."

"There was discussion around opportunities for collaboration and sharing learning."



Delegates from Manitoba, Canada visited our Children's Hospital



Trust staff with the University of Maryland delegation

They also heard from Daljit Athwal, Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer about nursing within the NHS and Louisa Davidson, Director of Midwifery, who spoke about maternal healthcare.

Meanwhile, Hon. Uzoma Asagwara, Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care, led the delegation from the Canadian provincial government of Manitoba.

The group heard insights from staff on topics including the health inequalities experienced by our communities and our work in research and innovation. They also saw delivery of care first-hand when they toured the hospital to meet and talk with teams in both the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit and the Emergency Department.

Ruth Wilkin, Chief Officer for Partnerships and Corporate Affairs, said: "Sharing knowledge and experience with others is invaluable. We identified

many similarities and common challenges from our conversations.

"There are always lessons to be learnt to improve how healthcare is delivered. We look forward to continuing a relationship with Manitoba for mutual benefit."

Discussions took place with Aston University about working closer together to increase research which will benefit our patients and staff. This could be through supporting development of a skilled workforce and addressing barriers such as funding.

Alison Tennant, Paediatric Pharmaceutical Clinical Scientist Research Lead, led a tour around the new Medicine Chest Pharmacy where our newest edition – a state-of-the-art robot which dispenses prescriptions.

They were also shown around the wards 18 and 19 where sickle cell and thalassaemia patients are undergoing pioneering gene therapy.

## New Maternity Charter focused on the needs of all users

A new Maternity Charter which outlines the care parents-to-be can expect at our Women's Hospital has been introduced.

The agreement, displayed across the site, shares 10 key aims patients and families should experience throughout their maternity journey.

### Maternity Charter aims include:

- Making sure our communication is clear, open and honest
- Foster an inclusive culture that welcomes, supports and celebrates the diverse voices of our employees, patients, families and visitors
- Be polite, professional and respectful
- Ensure your care is personalised and offer choice and control in how your care is planned and received

### Meanwhile, there are eight "asks" of our patients, including:

- Respect the hospital environment
- They are polite and treat staff with kindness and respect
- They support us in infection control and prevention



Chief Executive Matt Boazman, Melanie Brown, Nicola Round and Ian McCullagh

The charter was developed by Nicola Round, Inpatient and Workforce Matron and Melanie Brown, Consultant Midwife, as part of a Quality Improvement (QI) project, which is about identifying opportunities to improve the way we work to benefit patients and staff.

Feedback from patients and staff, alongside the Maternity Voices Partnership (MNVP) which is an NHS-working group, revealed they were unclear about what could be expected from their care.

Working with the MNVP and the Patient Experience team, they gathered insights from patients about their experiences and expectations. They also reviewed existing patient information materials and best practices for maternity charters from 23 other organisations nationally.

The updated Maternity Charter had a positive impact on:

- Providing patients and families information on what to expect throughout their maternity care. The clear, concise and visually engaging format has made the information more accessible and easier to understand
- Building trust by setting clear expectations and fostering open communication
- Awareness of the charter by displaying it at key points in Maternity departments, ensuring all patients and families have access to the information
- Reflecting the diverse local community, which has been received well

# Baby Noah fights on after op by surgeons to repair hole

The parents of a baby born with a hole in his diaphragm have thanked surgeons for the life-saving operation which he underwent just a week after he was born.

Noah James-Slater, now aged four months, was rushed to our Children's Hospital for surgery, after it was confirmed he had Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia (CDH).

The serious condition means the diaphragm fails to fully form and can lead to limited lung

growth and development and severe breathing difficulties.

Medics suspected he was suffering from the condition during a 24-week scan and mum Nervern was referred to the Fetal Medicine Team at our Women's Hospital. She was put under special care for the duration of her pregnancy.

The mum-of-two said: "Every day we look at Noah we're filled with love. He's our special little fighter."

Noah's dad Matthew added: "His big brother loves him so much and treats him with so much care. He's a fantastic role model for him."

"We're both so thankful to everyone at both hospitals. So much happened during those two weeks after he was born and everyone was so kind to us, we'll always remember them for what they did for us and for Noah."

Baby Noah was born in January 2026 but spent the first five days of his life on the Neonatal Unit with specialist breathing equipment until he was stable enough for surgery.

Matthew added: "As a father I felt so helpless. I would do anything for my children but there was nothing I could do."

"The staff were incredible, but eventually they had done all they could do and said to us that it was over to him to start fighting."

"And he did. After two days he made a turn for the better."

Nervern, a 38-year-old teaching assistant, added: "I prayed a lot and my faith kept me



Matthew and Noah

Noah was in surgery for nearly five hours, where experts carefully repaired a hole in his diaphragm.

Matthew added: "When we got the call to say he'd pulled through, it was the best feeling of our lives. It felt like we'd won the lottery ten times over."

Nervern said: "We were there to welcome him out of surgery."

"We could see him trying to breathe on his own for the first time and it was remarkable."

"He still needed support, but he was so strong."

Noah spent another week in hospital learning to breathe on his own before he was well enough to go home to his big brother Ethan for the first time.

"He's doing so well now and we can't thank the staff enough for looking after our precious boy."



Nervern and Noah

strong. I never gave up hope and I knew so many people were behind us praying for me and our family and that really helped me."

When he was stable, Noah was transferred to the Children's Hospital where he'd receive the life-changing operation to repair his diaphragm.

"There were still so many uncertainties and risks," Matthew said: "Because of where his organs were, they couldn't get a clear view of his lungs and wouldn't know the full extent of any damage until he was in surgery."



Brother, Ethan and Noah

## Women's Hospital site of pioneering miscarriage research



Prof. Arri Coomasamy

devastated by loss and to identify treatable health issues and other risk factors that can affect pregnancy outcomes.

The pilot study, by researchers at Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research and Birmingham Women's Hospital, found that women treated under the Graded Model of Miscarriage Care were more likely to have risk factors and medical conditions identified than those who received the usual NHS care.

They also had a reduced likelihood of another miscarriage compared with the usual care group.

Professor Arri Coomasamy OBE, Director of Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research, said: "If the graded model were implemented across the UK, our study indicates it could prevent around 10,075 miscarriages every year. That's more than 10,000 families bringing their babies home instead of suffering the trauma of a pregnancy loss."

Under the Graded Model of Miscarriage Care, a specialist nurse provides a one-to-one consultation after a first loss to discuss optimising preconception and pregnancy health. The hormone progesterone, which Tommy's trial found to be effective in preventing some miscarriages, is offered in future pregnancies if a woman is experiencing early vaginal bleeding that signals she may be at risk of loss.

After two miscarriages, women are additionally offered tests for anaemia and abnormal thyroid function, both of which are treatable and can affect pregnancy outcomes. Early reassurance scans are offered in future pregnancies.

After three miscarriages, as well as the care provided after the first and second losses, women join the pathway offered usually by the NHS. They are referred to a recurrent miscarriage clinic overseen by a consultant and offered tests to look for 'sticky blood' syndrome (antiphospholipid syndrome, which increases the risk of blood clots and related pregnancy complications), possible genetic causes for their miscarriages and a pelvic ultrasound scan.

Of the women in the Graded Model of Miscarriage Care pilot group who had experienced two miscarriages, one in five were found to have either thyroid problems or anaemia (low iron), identified by a blood test they would not have had at that stage under standard NHS miscarriage care.

Kath Abrahams, Chief Executive of Tommy's, said: "Our pilot study indicates that providing support after a first miscarriage, with escalating care after further losses, is not only effective but achievable without significant additional workload for NHS teams who are already working extremely hard to deliver good care."

"Put simply, it is the right thing to do."

### Other key findings from the pilot include:

- 99 per cent of women who took part said they were very satisfied or satisfied with their care
- 93 per cent of healthcare professionals involved said the graded model was straightforward to deliver
- 86 per cent of women who took part had one or more risk factors identified that could increase their risk of miscarriage and were given advice about changes they could make. This was compared with 58 per cent in the usual care group

"We will do all we can to drive that change across the UK, so that more women and families are supported after every miscarriage."

In the foreword to the report, Tommy's Ambassador Myleene Klass MBE – who has shared her own experience of recurrent pregnancy loss and campaigned extensively for change – hails the Graded Model of Miscarriage Care as 'a turning point'.

Describing it as 'an honour' to have met some of the parents who took part in the study and went on to have a baby, she says: "This is our moment to give every family that same life-changing opportunity."

Our Women's Hospital has been at the forefront of a research trial that could help prevent more than 10,000 pregnancy losses every year.

Currently women can access tests and support only after a third miscarriage in most cases. Miscarriage charity, Tommy's, has trialled a 'graded model' that offers care after every miscarriage, including the first. This creates earlier opportunities to support families

# Toddler Harper rings end of treatment bell



Mum Laura, Harper and Dad George

**This is the emotional moment that Harper and her family had been waiting for - the toddler ringing the end of treatment bell after months of gruelling chemotherapy treatment.**

It follows her battle with medulloblastoma, a fast-growing cancerous brain tumour.

George Gibson, Harper's dad, shared: "When Harper rang that bell, it was not just the end of

treatment. It was the closing of a chapter that tested us in every possible way. It was relief, pride, gratitude and a moment that belongs just as much with the people who got her there as it does to us."

Harper was rushed to our Children's Hospital in August 2025 after an eye test picked up an early warning sign of a serious condition. Shortly after, her parents received the devastating news that she had a brain tumour.

After arriving at the hospital, Consultant Paediatric Neurosurgeon Mr William Lo performed an emergency seven-hour operation to save her life and remove the tumour.

"The news was crushing, but we were so thankful to have Mr Lo there to guide us. He walked into our lives at the exact moment when we needed him," George shared.

Following surgery, Harper underwent intensive chemotherapy at the hospital's specialist cancer centre.

After eight months living in hospital, she has now finished her treatment and celebrated with her friends and family by ringing the symbolic end of treatment bell.

Her Mum, Laura added: "We will never forget the love, care and compassion shown to Harper, but also to us as parents. In the moments where we were at our lowest, they lifted us. They didn't just look after our daughter, they looked after our whole family."

George is currently training to complete a staggering 268-mile run for our Children's Hospital Charity in June. He will be running The Montane Spine Race, which is widely regarded



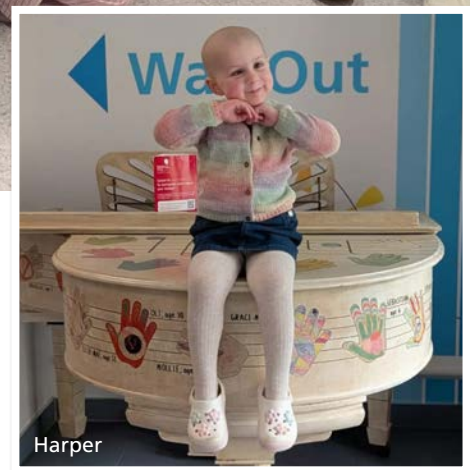
Harper with her care team

as one of the toughest endurance races in the world.

"Every mile will be for Harper and every step will be a thank you to all at the hospital," George explained.

"There were days where Harper couldn't eat, days where she couldn't walk, days no child should ever have to face. But every single time, there was someone there, someone fighting her corner. Someone reminding us we weren't alone.

"There aren't really words strong enough to describe what the consultants, doctors, nurses and support staff have done for us. They were the calm in the chaos. The people who sat with



Harper

us on the hardest nights and somehow made the unbearable feel manageable.

"They didn't just treat Harper, they carried us as a family. We'll forever be thankful."

## Nominate your healthcare hero

Patients and families are being urged to nominate healthcare heroes from our Trust who have changed their lives.

The BWC Spirit Awards recognises staff who have gone above and beyond in the care they deliver to patients.

The Moment of Magic accolade is one of 14 categories in the event and recognises where a staff member or team have made a patient or family's experience special at any of the Trust-run healthcare facilities.

Staff work across Birmingham Women's Hospital, Birmingham Children's Hospital and the mental health unit Parkview.

Last year's winner Mr James Castleman, a Consultant in Maternal and Fetal Medicine, was recognised for going above and beyond in the care of a patient expecting high risk twins.

He said at the time of his win: "It's an incredible honour to be recognised as the Moment of Magic winner. We make the care of our patients our utmost priority, so to be able to help someone in need at any time is a great privilege.

"To win an award that is voted for by patients and the public is unbelievable, especially with the quality of nominees that I was up against."

Other awards include Outstanding Clinical Team, Unsung Hero, Charity Champion and Volunteer of the Year.

Nominations close on Friday 26 June and can be made by going to:

[bwc.nhs.uk/bwc-spirit-awards](https://www.bwc.nhs.uk/bwc-spirit-awards)



Mr James Castleman who won the Moment of Magic award last year

# Adam's goal to manage asthma

Asthma has always been difficult for football mad Adam Mousa, but thanks to pioneering personalised treatment at our Children's Hospital his condition is under control so he can get onto the pitch.

The Manchester United fan, aged 10, Tyseley, Birmingham, has severe asthma and had always been on high-dose asthma treatments. Severe asthma affects around 5 per cent of children with asthma.

But new medication Dupilumab has improved his life so much.

The schoolboy, who was diagnosed aged three, said: "I would have breathlessness, tightness of my chest and I'd be wheezy, even if I wasn't doing anything. It was scary and it got worse before we got to the hospital. I'd end up going there all the time to get treatment.

"The doctors and nurses really helped me. They monitored my lungs, reviewed my inhaler and educated me about asthma and how to stay safe from it. My nurse Laura Morris and Dr Prasad Nagakumar were very nice to me."

Now, instead of the frequent visits he previously required, Adam's condition is managed with an injection every four weeks. He continues his regular inhaled therapy alongside this to maintain good asthma control.

Adam's mum, Eshfaq Ali said: "When he was younger, he couldn't take part in many things. It would take a lot of planning before we went anywhere and he was limited to anything like walking or swimming. Since he has started his biologic treatment, it is a lot better and he can do so much more.

"The team at the hospital have been absolutely brilliant with him. He has had asthma from a very young age, but it changed when we got there. They've played a really big part in helping Adam, but they've also taught me a lot about managing his asthma."

Eshfaq now administers Adam's biologic injection at home, with virtual support from the asthma nursing team, thereby reducing the need for hospital visits.

Adam's nurse, Laura said: "It has been wonderful to support Adam and his family with the asthma care. A team made up of difference healthcare professionals assess and manage children like him who have severe asthma. Adam understands how important his treatment is and he has faced each step of his treatment journey with growing confidence.

"His determination and resilience have helped to make a real difference and he approaches his care with a positive mindset. His commitment has not only helped him manage his treatment but also had a meaningful impact on his daily life, allowing him to feel healthier and more in control.



Adam in hospital



"Early referral to our service facilitates the delivery of personalised treatment strategies, with the aim of reducing asthma attacks and improving quality of life in children with severe asthma."

It has made a huge difference to Adam's life and Eshfaq has some timely advice for parents in the same situation.

Eshfaq said: "He wasn't able to play football before but now he can, with regular breaks.

"It is really important for parents to take asthma really seriously, follow the treatment plans and use the prescribed medication. Asthma doesn't have to limit life.

"Don't be afraid to go out there and ask 'is this normal?' Sometimes it looks like cold symptoms but it can actually be triggers for asthma. I've spoken to many parents who were scared about new medication, but I always advise for them to try as it does help."

And the youngster had this message for everyone: "Asthma is a serious condition, even though it's not always visible. Awareness, understanding and proper management can save lives. I encourage everyone to learn the signs of worsening asthma and to support those living with it.

"I want to say thank you so much to Laura and Dr Nagakumar, I really appreciate it."

## Experts showcase three key treatments and tests for asthma

World Asthma Day saw our experts share vital information around treatment and tests for children with breathing difficulties.

They demonstrated how children should use a spacer with a MDI inhaler, the technique used with a Turbohaler and how the lung function department perform a Fractional Exhaled Nitric Oxide (FeNO) test.

Senior Respiratory Nurse Laura Morris set up an information stand in the main outpatient area at our Children's Hospital to display the different methods. She said: "It's really important that our patients and their families understand the different ways in treating and diagnosing asthma.

"Using the right techniques for each test or treatment will help the condition. We had nurses and doctors on hand to demonstrate the FeNO test, using a spacer inhaler and a Turbohaler, a newer medication which is now part of the child's asthma plan where needed."

The team were joined by two patients, Amiaya and Eloise, who have been under our care for a number of years due to difficult-to-control asthma.

Their presence was considered invaluable, as they shared personal insights into living with asthma, the challenges and barriers they have worked hard to overcome.

Asthma remains one of the most common long term conditions affecting children in the UK, with rates of asthma related illnesses particularly high across Birmingham.

Specialists provide outpatient services, specialist investigations, clinics held with a range of healthcare professionals and advanced treatments for severe asthma. We also run a diagnostic hub at Washwood Heath Community Diagnostic Centre.

Laura added: "We'd urge families who suspect their child may have asthma, to see their GP."

During the event, nurses created a video which showed the different techniques, which you can watch by scanning the QR code.



## A Few Minutes With... Rhys Martin, Volunteer

### In a nutshell, explain what your job entails?

My role as a volunteer is mostly admin, where I work with the administration team in the clinical chemistry department. I make sure that outgoing test slips are sent to the correct places.

I have also volunteered in the eye department, where I helped with telephone calls, like reminding parents about their child's appointments. In addition to this, I supported wayfinding by helping patients navigate the hospital and find where they needed to go.

### What achievement are you most proud of (so far)?

One of my proudest achievements at the Children's Hospital was supporting the smooth move over to the new patient admin system, MyChart. I started this role last year as my

first position with the Trust, where I spoke with parents, hospital staff and members of the public about the system and how to register for it. This made me proud, as I was able to explain the system to parents who, at first, found it confusing.

### Why did you choose your career?

I chose to volunteer because I have a passion for helping others and volunteering in the NHS closely lines up with my goal to become a paramedic. Volunteering at the Children's Hospital has also given me the opportunity to interact with a wide range of people, which has supported me in my role as an event first aider alongside my college studies.

### Who would you say was your inspiration?

My biggest inspiration has always been my mum. She is kind, caring and always goes out of

her way to make sure everything is right for me and my family. Because of this, she has motivated me to give back to others and treat people with the same kindness and respect that she shows us.

### If there was one thing you could change in the world, what would it be?

If I could change one thing in the world, it would be to improve the access to healthcare and support services. From my experience volunteering, I have seen how important communication and timely care are and I would want everyone to have that level of support.

### Describe yourself in three words?

Reliable, compassionate and motivated.

### Finally, not a lot of people know this about me but...

I really enjoy talking to people and learning about their hobbies and interests as it helps me connect with a wide range of people.



# Spotlight on research that's making a difference

Research was at the top of the agenda at our Women's Hospital focusing on the impact and importance it has on the health of the population.

Those attending the event heard about groundbreaking studies and trials taking place at our Trust, including information about improved access, pathways and treatments for recurrent miscarriage and treatments for induction of labour.

Kelly Hard, Director of Research Operations, said: "The day was a huge success and really showed off how we are making a difference to healthcare through research."

"The day was a huge success and really showed off how we are making a difference to healthcare through research"

Kelly Hard



The event saw speakers share information about the latest research trials at the Trust

"We are a research active Trust – which means we are improving patient treatments and outcomes by continuing to either lead or be part of trials and studies across the world."

"I would urge patients and families to ask their healthcare professional about research and how they can be involved or have a look on the NIHR BePartofResearch website."

The day also paid tribute to Liz Adey, Head of Research and Development at our Trust, who passed away in February 2025 following a short illness.

She had been responsible for raising the profile of research and development across the Trust and helped to establish a Clinical Trials Scholarship programme which has led to more than £10 million in grants.



During the day, tribute was paid to Liz Adey, former Head of Research and Development who passed away last year

## New mums helping to drive change across the world by taking part in research

Researchers at our Women's Hospital are part of a ground-breaking global project to reduce the risk of severe bleeding in women after they have given birth.

The REACH study compares two medicines to see if they are as effective as each other. Both are routinely used to prevent bleeding.

One of these medications, Oxytocin, needs to be stored in a fridge, whereas the other, known as Heat Stable Carbetocin, doesn't.

The study is being led by The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Human Reproduction Programme (HRP), the research arm of the United Nations.

Severe heavy bleeding after giving birth is known as postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) and is currently the leading cause of maternal death worldwide.

If continuous refrigeration to certain drugs is disrupted, this can compromise the quality and effect they have.

This is a problem in certain areas and countries where providing continuous refrigeration is challenging. A heat stable option for management of PPH would be a game changer to maternal health.

Laura Walton, Research Midwife, is leading the trial for our hospital – the only healthcare site in the UK taking part.

She said: "By joining the study, women giving birth at Birmingham Women's Hospital have the opportunity to drive meaningful change in maternity care and contribute to better, long term health outcomes for mothers globally."

This study will help develop the latest up-to-date evidence to support the best care and treatment options for women when they give birth.

Since it started in February 2026 at our Women's Hospital, 85 recruits have already signed up, with more than 33 doctors and 146 midwives being given extra training to be able to deliver the medication safely and confidently on the Delivery Suite.

Laura added: "Research elevates women's care and it elevates us as midwives. Being part of a research active Trust means we're constantly expanding our knowledge and refining our practice, ensuring we deliver the safest, most evidence-based care possible."

If you would like to find out what research opportunities are available for you, please speak to your midwife.



The REACH study hopes to have a huge impact on families

# Jonathan's operation to rid him of epileptic seizures

For Jonathan Terry, it was a life-changing operation which left him seizure-free and able to live a normal life.

The 21-year-old, from Nuneaton, would suffer up to three fits a day after being diagnosed with epilepsy at the age of three.

Going into a trance-like state, Jonathan's muscles would stiffen, he'd lose consciousness and his body would jerk rapidly – one of the most dangerous forms of fitting called a tonic-clonic seizure.

But surgeons performed a delicate 'right temporal lobectomy' at our Children's Hospital, where experts removed a section of his brain larger than the size of a walnut in a procedure only done five times a year at the hospital.

Following its success, Jonathan says it's given him a new lease of life.

He said: "The operation has been life-changing for me. Not having the seizures and being able to work on my farm and even drive has been amazing, I never thought I'd be able to do it."

Since the operation, he's been seizure free and has been able to work on his family farm and even got his driving licence.

He said: "The seizures felt so normal to me, I was having them every single day and some days I was frightened to leave the house.

"The older I got, the worse it seemed to get. When I was 16, I had one so bad they had to give me oxygen in the back of an ambulance.



Jonathan in hospital

"I don't remember much of the really bad ones, but my parents told me it was really scary to see."

By the age of 17 his seizures had become daily and were lasting longer.

Dr William Lo, Consultant Paediatric Neurosurgeon, explained: "Jonathan was first seen by our Children's Epilepsy Surgery Service and had many different tests to find out the cause of his seizures.

"There were changes to the deep part of the temporal lobe, which is just behind the eye and in front of the ear.

"Because of this, Jonathan was eligible for a very specific surgery to rid him of the seizures.

"The operation involved removing the first 4.5 centimeters of the temporal lobe which was causing the seizures, while preserving the important functional area of the brain."

Jonathan instantly said yes to

the operation, adding: "There was no doubt in my mind.

"I kept thinking if the seizures carried on what my life would be like in 30 years' time.

"I just wanted them gone and to live without constantly worrying if I was going to have a seizure."

In June 2022, Jonathan went in for the life-changing procedure, which took seven hours. He then spent the next two weeks recovering before being well enough to go home.

He said: "I don't remember much immediately after the operation. I had a seizure and I was really concerned it meant it didn't work, but Mr Lo explained that it was normal and you can sometimes get one straight after.

"But it was the last time I had a fit."

Since the operation, Jonathan has been able to go back to life on the farm, even successfully learning to drive in 2024.

"Getting my driving licence was a really special moment," he said. "I never thought I'd be able to drive because of my epilepsy.

"Because of my work I'm up and about every single day, so this has been life-changing.

"I'm so grateful to Mr Lo for everything he's done, he's really changed my life and I'm so thankful to him and the whole of the epilepsy team."

## Our Star of the Month finalists shine bright

The Gynaecology Booking Office team at our Women's Hospital have been named the latest winners of our coveted ABC Star of the Month Award.

The initiative recognises staff who demonstrate our Trust values of being Ambitious, Brave and Compassionate.

The team were praised for the dedication they show every day in delivering the best possible experience for patients.

Their nomination read: "Over the last few years, this team has evolved in so many ways and they still are. The things I am most proud of would be their compassion, open communication and their team spirit.

"I would like to thank them for everything they do, the efforts that are made to achieve the best outcome for the patient and the hospital and lastly, the strong work ethic that they demonstrate week on week."

Alongside the winning team, two finalists were also celebrated for their outstanding contributions to patient care and support services across the Trust.

Family Support Worker Christine Breen was recognised for the brilliant support she provides to children and families living with intestinal failure.

Her nominator shared: "Christine demonstrates exceptional dedication in supporting these patients and their families. She offers families reassurance, guidance and



The Gynaecology Booking Office team

a listening ear whenever they need it.

"Through her kindness, dedication and commitment, Christine has made a profound difference in the lives of many children and families living with intestinal failure."

Clinical Support Worker Jaspreet Kaur was also named as a finalist for the care and professionalism she brings to the renal unit each



Christine Breen



Jaspreet Kaur



day. Described by her fellow team members as "the face of the renal unit", Jaspreet was praised for creating a welcoming and supportive environment for families attending the outpatient area.

A staff member shared: "She provides invaluable insight, support and compassion using her translation skills. She provides this commitment constantly during her working day and we would be lost without her."

The ABC Star of the Month Award is open to nominations from both staff and patients and provides an opportunity to recognise staff for their

exceptional care and support. If you know someone who has made your experience at hospital special, consider submitting a nomination to help celebrate the difference they make every day.



[bwc.nhs.uk/star-of-the-month](https://www.bwc.nhs.uk/star-of-the-month)

# Founders fly from USA to surprise DAISY award winners



It was an extra special surprise for midwives Hannah Lee and Jessica James-Hill when they were both presented with DAISY Awards by the founders of the international accolade.

Bonnie and Mark Barnes paid a VIP visit to our Children's Hospital to make the presentation which recognises nurses and midwives for their dedication and compassion to their patients and for the positive impact they have on their colleagues.

The founders, from the USA, attended a Nursing Midwifery and AHP Excellence Conference organised by Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Daljit Athwal to recognise and celebrate the great work of our staff.

Midwives Hannah Lee and Jessica James-Hill, who both work within the Homebirth Team at our Women's Hospital, attended the conference and were surprised with the DAISY accolade by Bonnie and Mark in the heartwarming moment.

Hannah beamed: "This is such a wonderful moment for me. Having this recognition is a career highlight."

Jessica added: "To be presented with a DAISY by the founders themselves is an honour. I was so shocked to receive the award – it's been an amazing experience."

Bonnie said: "I am so happy to be at Birmingham Children's Hospital to celebrate all the nurses and midwives.

"Twenty-six years ago, my family experienced extraordinary care when nurses looked after my stepson Patrick. We were so touched by that care that we had to say thank you."

She told the audience at the conference: "You all are part of a global community, not only of extraordinary, compassionate nurses, but also of leaders who recognise the true value of the work you do every day.

"When we met Daljit a couple of years ago, we made a commitment we would come here and I'm so happy to be here to fulfil our promise and to thank you for the commitment to your work and the team."

Daljit said: "It has been a true honour to welcome Bonnie and Mark to our Trust. I am immensely passionate about the DAISY initiative as it showcases our nurses and midwives in such an emotive way. The nominations we receive reflect the compassion and high standard of care our staff deliver and presenting the awards is one of the highlights of my job."

The DAISY (Diseases Attacking the Immune System) scheme is run across the globe with 8,000 healthcare facilities implementing the initiative across 46 countries.

It was created in memory of Patrick Barnes who died from an auto immune disease. His family wanted to establish a recognition programme to honour nurses following excellent care he'd



DAISY recipients Jessica and Hannah with founders Bonnie and Mark Barnes and Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Daljit Athwal

received. The scheme was established and has since been expanded to include midwives and nursing associates.

Nominations can be from staff, patients and their families and the scheme is funded by our Charity.

The latest DAISY recipients were both nominated by mums they'd cared for throughout their pregnancy.

Hannah's nominator wrote: "She gave me exemplary care antenatally in my own home with such kindness and humour. She restored confidence in my abilities to achieve a positive birth following a traumatic experience with my first baby.

Whilst the nomination for Jessica read: "During my whole pregnancy she was fantastic, her home visits were supportive, educational, compassionate and organised.



## Deserving DAISY for Eleana

Eleana Cooper, a nurse on our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) was awarded the highly coveted DAISY Award for her outstanding care.

Eleana was nominated by a family after she cared for their daughter on the unit and for showing compassion to a parent during a challenging moment in their daughter's care.

The nomination said: "My daughter nearly died and that day will stay with me for the rest of my life.

"In the middle of absolute fear and uncertainty, Eleana showed a level of compassion I will never forget. While my world felt like it was falling apart, Eleana stayed calm and present, treating my daughter with such gentleness and care.

"Eleana didn't see us as just another patient or parent, Eleana saw us as people who were terrified and hurting.

"She spoke to me with honesty and kindness, reassured me when I felt like I couldn't breathe and made sure my daughter was never alone or afraid.

"Her compassion gave me strength when I had none left and it brought a sense of humanity into the most frightening moment of my life.

"I truly believe her care made a lasting impact on both my daughter and me and I will always be grateful for the comfort and compassion she showed us that day."



## Alison wins DAISY Award

Congratulations to Alison Watson, Neurology/Epilepsy Clinical Nurse Specialist, who is our latest recipient of the prestigious DAISY Award.

Alison received a heartfelt nomination from a peer who wanted to recognise the positive impact she has on patients, families and those she works with. It described her as being "the kind of nurse families remember for the rest of their lives."

It said: "Her compassion, dedication and unwavering commitment to children and young people with complex epilepsy across the West Midlands sets her apart as an extraordinary clinician and an extraordinary human being.

"For Alison, excellence isn't an aspiration; it's her baseline. Nothing is ever too much

trouble. She consistently goes out of her way to ensure every patient receives the safest, most thoughtful and most personalised care possible.

"Families trust her because she earns that trust every single day through her actions, her empathy and her relentless advocacy for her patients."

It rounded off by explaining how Alison "uplifts her colleagues, reassures anxious parents, empowers young people and brings dignity and hope to families navigating some of the hardest moments of their lives."

As a winner of a DAISY Award, which is kindly supported by our Charity, Alison received a certificate, Healer's Touch statue, a DAISY pin and cinnamon rolls for her and her team.

If you would like to find out more and nominate someone for a DAISY Award, visit our website for information. [bwc.nhs.uk/daisy-award/](https://www.bwc.nhs.uk/daisy-award/)



# Celebrating our nurses, midwives and ODPs

The spotlight was on our nurses, midwives and operating department practitioners during May as we marked global awareness days for the professions.

Staff were treated to cupcakes on International Day of the Midwife, International Nurses Day and National Operating Department Practitioners Day to celebrate their dedication to their jobs.

Daljit Athwal, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, said: "It's important that we recognise the ambition, bravery and compassion of our healthcare professionals.

"They are devoted to caring for our patients and families every day. The cupcakes are a small gesture from us to say thank you and they were well received when they were delivered to them across our sites."

As well as the sweet treats, special thank you videos were also created, which shared messages from patients and families to nurses and midwives which were shown across the Trust's social media platforms.

You can watch the videos on our YouTube channel via the QR code.



# Charity News



## Become an ambassador and help bring our 'fin-tastic' new aquarium to life

Calling all patients with a passion for nature and science - we have a once-in-a-lifetime job opportunity to become a volunteer ambassador of our brand-new 2,200 litre, live-reef aquarium being created inside the new front entrance at our Children's hospital.

The Hope Aquarium is the 'jewel in the crown' in the transformation, supported by our £3 million It Starts Here Appeal.

An impressive 4m x 2.2m tank - it will be filled with approximately 61 fish species and over 300 fish and will be the largest living reef aquarium in a hospital in the world.

Overseeing aquarium operations, we need some chief marine officers, who we're calling our 'Hope Aquarium Ambassadors', to help select the fish and marine life as well as make the aquarium educational, fun and engaging for the 100,000 patients and families which use the hospital every year.

A total of six volunteer roles are available for patients aged between four and 16 years old. All appointees will also be able to attend the official grand unveiling of the aquarium when building work on the hospital's new front entrance completes later this year.

If you think your child or patient would be interested in becoming a Hope Aquarium Ambassador, you can learn more about the role and apply by visiting

[bch.org.uk/aquarium-ambassador](https://bch.org.uk/aquarium-ambassador) - but hurry, as applications close on Thursday 11 June at 5pm.

### Vote for our first fish

The fun doesn't just stop there! We need your help to decide on which fish will be the first to join this magical marine world. We have several fish species to choose from need you to place your vote. Simply visit our Fundraising Hub, off the main entrance corridor, before 30 June where you can vote.



Become an aquarium ambassador

## Patient's race suit design speeds to victory

Patient Tilly has sped to victory, beating hundreds of other kids from across the country to win a race suit design competition for the Aston Martin Aramco Formula One™ Team.

The creative 13-year-old was invited to visit team's Technology Campus at Silverstone to see her winning design brought to life on a real race suit, created to her size.

The youngster has been under the care of our Children's Hospital since she was just 10 days old after being diagnosed with biliary atresia. Following a liver transplant at 10 months old, she has gone on to live a full and happy life, until recently facing further complications which have meant more hospital stays and procedures over the past few months.

Joined by her family and Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, Daljit Athwal, the day was truly unforgettable. After such a challenging time, it couldn't have come at a better moment for Tilly and her family.



Tilly with her design brought to life

## Our charity is getting a new online look

We've been working hard behind the scenes to update our two Charity websites, so they're easier for you to use. The new look sites will showcase our impact in a more engaging way and make

it simpler for you to make a donation or sign up to an event.

Make sure you take a look at [bch.org.uk](https://bch.org.uk) or [bwh.org.uk](https://bwh.org.uk)

## Our supporters take over the city for the Great Birmingham Run

We turned the city purple and red last month, as more than 1,000 supporters took to the streets to run for our hospitals at the Great Birmingham Run, across the junior and mini, 10km and half marathon distance.

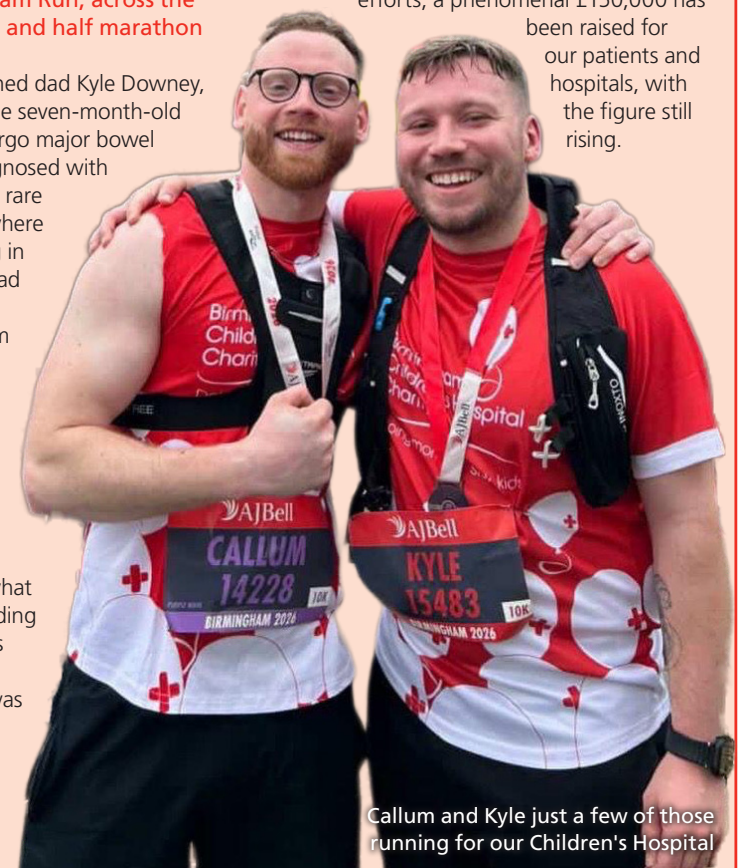
This includes determined dad Kyle Downey, from Birmingham, whose seven-month-old son, Oliver, had to undergo major bowel surgery, after being diagnosed with Hirschsprung disease - a rare and lifelong condition where some nerves are missing in the bowel, which can lead to intestinal obstruction.

Kyle took on the 10km race with his friend. He said: "What happened to Oliver took a huge toll on our whole family, especially his siblings. Until you're there in that frightening moment with a young child, you don't know what it's like, but the outstanding care of hospital staff has meant everything to us.

"I won't lie, the run was tough, especially on no sleep, but I knew I had to get to the end with everyone supporting me. It was amazing to

see Oliver there on the day and we'll show him all the photos when he grows up."

Thanks to his and all our runners' incredible efforts, a phenomenal £150,000 has been raised for our patients and hospitals, with the figure still rising.



Callum and Kyle just a few of those running for our Children's Hospital

# Destiny defies the odds and has her biggest wish granted



Destiny was all smiles as she met her biggest hero, but there have been times when her family feared she wouldn't make it.

The teenager lives with severe complex bronchiectasis, a condition where the airways in the lungs are damaged and produce a lot of phlegm.

Mum Sam explained: "She had a rocky start in life. There were times when we weren't sure whether she would be here.

"When she was younger, she would often breathe more heavily than usual, flare her nostrils and take longer than other children to get over colds.

"I noticed these episodes would be more regular around wintertime and early spring. When the ground is damp or there's been heavy rainfall, it would exacerbate her condition."

Believing Destiny was suffering from more than just a cold, Sam found support from the Respiratory team at our Children's Hospital who were able to diagnose her with Bronchiectasis.

"Since being diagnosed, the team at the hospital have been on hand to support me and Destiny whenever they need them.

"I'm forever thankful for their input on how to manage her condition. If I'm unsure of something, the respiratory nurses are always there to help and it means Destiny is able to thrive and I'm eternally grateful for each day with her."

Having gone through so much, Destiny's respiratory nurse, Hollie Smith, knew just what she needed to boost her spirits and referred her to Make-A-Wish.

Hollie explained: "It's always a joy to see Destiny in clinic; she is a wonderful young person with an incredibly warm personality.

"Her condition involves a significant burden of ongoing treatments and regular



Destiny with Martin Clunes

management, but despite this, the challenges have not dampened her spirits.

"Her resilience in coping with a long-term respiratory condition is clear and she continues to

**"It meant the world to Destiny. She knew just what her wish would be and she could finally have it."**

Destiny's Mum Sam

bring positivity to those around her. Her strength and outlook have been inspiring and I felt she would greatly benefit from the joy and hope that a Make-A-Wish experience can bring during such a difficult time."

Thinking back to finding out about the referral, Sam said: "It meant the world to Destiny. She knew just what her wish would be and she could finally have it."

When Destiny is unwell, she finds comfort watching her favourite show, Doc Martin. So, when it came to choosing her wish, it couldn't be any other but meeting the man himself, Martin Clunes.

Sam and, a very excited, Destiny travelled from their home in Dudley to the Park Plaza County Hall Hotel in London where they experienced the VIP treatment, including being driven in a limo.

The family spoke about everything from Martin's role in the Nativity movie and, of course, Doc Martin, but they also discussed Destiny's condition.

Sam recalled: "He was very understanding to

Destiny's complex needs and I explained how bronchiectasis affects her.

"People don't hear much about it, but it can be debilitating. We want people to understand the condition and how they can support those living with Bronchiectasis to help improve their quality of life.

There are times when Destiny is on antibiotics for weeks and she'll struggle to breathe and eat food orally.

But Destiny, mum Sam and big sister Kiti, refuse to let it hold them back and if anything, it's taught the family to live each day to the fullest and focus on the positives.

"So far Destiny has amazed me. She's achieved more than what I could have hoped for and I always look at all the things she can do rather than things she can't do. She's so caring and loving, she's an amazing little girl."



Martin Clunes was happy to be Destiny's Make-a-Wish

## Celebrating 45 years of Radio Lollipop at our Children's Hospital

Our Trust's Radio Lollipop is celebrating 45 years of providing comfort, play and entertainment to the patients and families in our care.

And it's all thanks to the dedication and commitment of the volunteers to the charity-run service – which not only broadcasts programmes to listeners at our Children's Hospital, but involves face-to-face activities as well.

Volunteer Aimee Morley shared: "I love being part of Radio Lollipop and it's a real honour to be part of such a long-standing charity. It's amazing to be celebrating 45 years."

Radio programmes and play are at the heart of everything they do, but the impact of the organisation goes much further.

A team of volunteers engage with children and their families, offering distraction during difficult times and helping to create cherished memories.

The support contributes to the well-being of everyone involved, from the patients to the visiting siblings, everyone is encouraged to take part and feel included.

Aimee continued: "Our impact is long lasting and that's something I'm incredibly proud of. Many of the children we visit have family members who remember us from when we first started out."

Last year alone, Radio Lollipop reached out and engaged with over 1,000 children and the continued popularity and success of the much-loved Lollitrollie is a testament to the value and enjoyment the service brings to those at our hospital.

The Lollitrollie is a mobile interactive entertainment hub that brings bubbles, disco lights, fibre optics and karaoke to patients wherever they are.

But they aren't stopping there, as Radio Lollipop is excited to grow the service even further, creating more memorable experiences for the children and families who walk through the doors of our Children's Hospital.

Aimee concluded: "We are committed to bringing magic and fun to Birmingham Children's Hospital and making a difference with every interaction."



The Radio Lollipop team

# Share your favourite song to our birth playlist

New parents are being urged to share their favourite songs to add to a playlist for families giving birth in the operating theatre at our Women's Hospital.

Staff are creating a collection of songs to be used in emergency birth scenarios or when families don't have their own music.

The playlist will help to create a more relaxing environment during a birth.

Dr Kerry Cullis, Consultant Anaesthetist, originally came up with the idea. She explained: "Giving birth in the theatre can be a scary thought for many of our families. Playing familiar music is one of the ways we try to reduce that anxiety. Families are invited to bring their own playlists and connect to our speaker."

The playlist will be used for families having an emergency caesarean birth or for families who haven't prepared any music.

It will be played in the theatre to help to provide a positive environment during a potentially stressful time.

Kerry added: "I see the impact that music can have on people.

"It can really help set the tone and atmosphere of the room and we want people to feel at ease.

"Music can also provide a talking point and work as a distraction and it could be very empowering to listen to music used by other women during their birth.

"I want this playlist to help ensure they have a positive birthing experience no matter how it happens."

**Do you have a song you would like to contribute to the playlist? Send us your song on the QR code.**



Recommend your songs for our birthing playlist

## Family fun day for our CEW service

Our Complications of Excess Weight (CEW) Service hosted a Fun Day bringing together families and staff for a day of connection.

The team is dedicated to supporting children and families across the region to improve their health. It brings together experts from different fields, working to deliver personalised and compassionate care tailored to each child's unique needs.

**"This was absolutely wonderful. We didn't know what to expect at first but once the fun started, they had the time of their life."**

CEW attendee



Staff and families enjoyed the family fun day

During the event families enjoyed a whole host of fun activities, including crafts, cookery, an Inspire physical activity workshop, mindfulness and guided relaxation.

One of the attendees said: "This was absolutely wonderful. We didn't know what to expect at first but once the fun started, they had the time of their life. Five stars (and the rest) from us."

The event funded by our Charity, brought together 62 attendees for a day filled with

connection, creativity and fun at The Factory Young People's Centre.

Kiran Duggal, Family Support Worker, shared: "Our aim was to create a safe, welcoming space where families could try new experiences, spend quality time together and build meaningful relationships with both the team and one another."

Tracie Davies, Hospital Social Worker, added: "In a world where obesity is often met with

stigma and judgement, it was truly powerful to bring families together in a supportive environment where they could feel understood, encouraged and empowered. We were also pleased to welcome Autism West Midlands, who provided valuable mini advice sessions for families.

"Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make the day so memorable."

