



Northamptonshire  
Health Charity



# The heart

Our community in action

Autumn 25



# Harry's going above and beyond

**At 14, Harry has already faced challenges most of us can't imagine. A keen rugby player, he was used to muddy tackles and weekends on the pitch, until a rare illness left him paralysed and unable to speak.**

What started as an ordinary illness quickly became something far more serious. Harry was diagnosed with a rare brain infection that turned his world upside down. Within days, the once energetic, sporty teenager was in a hospital bed, paralysed and unable to speak.

The shock was overwhelming for his family, who suddenly found themselves navigating an uncertain future. Northampton General Hospital became a second home, as Harry began the long journey of treatment and rehabilitation.

His mum, Ria, remembers, "He went from being a fit, sporty boy to lying in a hospital bed."

Recovery was far from simple. There were long days filled with physiotherapy, speech therapy, and endless determination. Each small step forward was celebrated. From moving a finger to forming his first words again.

**"There were some really dark days, but the staff were amazing. And Harry never gave up." Ria, Harry's mum**

Step by step, word by word, he found his way back.

This summer, a stronger and even more resilient Harry decided he wanted to do something to thank the nurses, the doctors and the hospital that helped him through his toughest challenge so far.





Giving back, one step at a time



## From small steps to incredible strides!

Harry took on the Wolf Run, a gruelling 10k of mud, water and obstacles, and raised an incredible £2,310 for Northamptonshire Health Charity.

Cheered on by his rugby teammates, he crossed the finish line with a smile. "Seeing him run, climb and laugh with his friends again was amazing," says Ria. "It felt like things had come full circle."

With the money he raised, Harry chose to support the **Children's Play Area Appeal** at Northampton General Hospital. The project will transform the outdoor space into a colourful, accessible play area for children of all abilities.

**"When you're in hospital, it can feel like forever. Having something fun to do makes such a big difference."**  
Harry

Thanks to Harry, the appeal is one step closer to becoming a reality.

**Harry's story is one of selflessness and determination. It shows what's possible when amazing people decide to go above and beyond to make a difference for others.**

### Play makes hospital days brighter

Thank you to Harry and all our amazing supporters helping to make the new play area a reality. Discover more at [nhcharity.co.uk/play](http://nhcharity.co.uk/play)



## A little hug can make all the difference

**In Northampton General Hospital's Neonatal Unit, thanks to you, staff have received some rather wonderful equipment to help poorly babies feel less alone.**

Connection is something we all need, especially when we're at our most vulnerable. A cuddle, holding someone's hand, simply knowing a loved one is close by – these moments bring comfort and reassurance when life feels fragile.

For babies born too soon, or those who are too poorly, that comfort is even more vital.

Thanks to your support, we were able to fund the soft, ergonomic supports called Zaky Hug Hands, that mimic the warmth

and weight of a person's touch, helping babies feel safe and soothed, even when their parents can't be by their side.

**"The Zaky Hands provide that sense of comfort and closeness when a cuddle just isn't possible."**  
Claire Houghton, Sister,  
Local Neonatal Unit

Placed gently over or around a baby, the Zaky Hands can help to provide deeper sleep, relaxation and most importantly, a sense of connection. For some babies, the impact is instant. It helps their breathing to steady, their tiny body to relax, and rest comes more easily.

## Little hands are doing some big work!



A hug is such a simple gesture, but it goes above and beyond in helping the tiniest patients feel held, even when they can't be.

And it's not just the babies who benefit. Knowing their child feels comforted can be a huge reassurance for parents who are desperate to hold their newborn.

**“Not all parents can be present on the unit all the time, and of course they need to rest too.”** Neonatal nurse

For staff on the unit, these little hands have made a big difference too. They've seen how a simple tool can transform a baby's rest and a parent's peace of mind.

**It's a beautiful little reminder to everyone that care isn't only about medicine, it's about comfort and connection too.**



Thanks to you!



Breast care support worker Layla, who helped bring the project to life, explains:

**“Encouraging parents to talk about their diagnosis with their children brings them closer together. The reality is often a lot less scary than what children imagine.”** Layla

By funding these books, you help families to stay connected and hopeful during the toughest times. Thank you!

## A little library of comfort

When a parent is diagnosed with cancer, one of the hardest challenges can be finding the right words to explain it to their children.

Thanks to donations, Northamptonshire Health Charity has funded boxes of carefully chosen books to help families start those conversations.

From The Invisible String, which reassures children about the lasting bond with their parents, to The Huge Bag of Worries, which helps little ones share their concerns, each book is a tool for comfort and connection.

# It wasn't lonely last Christmas

**Christmas in hospital can feel like the hardest time to be away from home, but thanks to your support, we are able to go above and beyond to make sure no one feels forgotten.**

Last Christmas, because of our supporters, we were able to spread warmth, kindness, and community spirit when it mattered most. From thoughtful gift boxes that bring comfort on the wards, to festive activities, we did all we could to make sure no one felt alone over the holidays.

**“It was so kind, and I actually cried when I opened it.”**

Linda



## A gift to remember

**Christmas in hospital is never easy, but thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, wards across our hospitals are transformed each year with a simple, joyful gesture: gift boxes for every patient.**

Linda, who spent last Christmas in hospital after major surgery, remembers opening her box:

“Even now, I feel quite emotional about it. It was so kind, and I actually cried when I opened it.”

Inside were cosy socks, chocolate mints and a pack of playing cards. Simple things, but chosen with care. “I felt like somebody out there was thinking of me,” she explains. “It really lifted my spirits.”

For patients like Linda, these boxes aren't just parcels, they're reminders of community, compassion, and the fact that no one is forgotten at Christmas.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters, last year thousands of gift boxes were delivered across Northamptonshire's hospitals.

**And this year, with your help, we hope even more patients will experience the same joy Linda did.**





Gift boxes spreading joy, thanks to you!



## A ticket to joy

The Raffle of Joy helps to fund projects that brighten hospital life for patients, families, and NHS staff. It also brought some unexpected cheer for last year's winner, Beverly.

When Beverly's name was drawn as the first prize winner in last year's raffle, she was over the moon. "I don't usually win anything," she said, "so it was such a surprise, like an early Christmas present."

But for Beverly, the real joy wasn't just the prize.

**"It wasn't just about the winning, it was also for raising money for a good cause."**  
Beverly

And that's what the Raffle of Joy is all about: raising vital funds, spreading festive cheer, and reminding patients that their community is thinking of them.

Thank you to all who took part!

**Last year, the Raffle of Joy raised £12,620!**



## Your chance to WIN!

The Raffle of Joy is back for 2025 and this year the prizes are even bigger!

You could win our top prize of £2,500 cash just before Christmas, or even our £1,000 cash second prize! Thanks to our sponsors Equitech.

Scan QR code now to buy your Raffle of Joy tickets:



## Unleash your inner elf

From bake sales and fancy dress to fun runs and karaoke nights. Our amazing supporters find all sorts of ways to embrace their inner elf and raise funds for Northamptonshire Health Charity at Christmas time. Are you ready to join in too?

Whether you choose to raise money through a fun run, organising a local bake sale or jingling your way through the neighbourhood singing carols – however you raise those magical pennies this Christmas, your support could help bring Christmas joy to patients across Northamptonshire's hospitals to enjoy festive treats, gift boxes and a little extra cheer when they need it most.

Find out ways to fundraise for your local hospital this Christmas.

Visit [nhcharity.co.uk/christmas](https://nhcharity.co.uk/christmas)



# Taking care of yourself this winter

Winter can be a wonderful season of cosy evenings, frosty mornings and time with family, but it can also take its toll. Shorter days, colder weather, and the inevitable round of colds and flu can leave us feeling run down.

That's why now is the perfect time to pause, have a cup of tea and give our winter word search a go...

## Winter word search

Find the 10 words hidden in this puzzle. They're all related to winter!

S	S	C	A	R	F	I	P	T	N	M
B	N	S	B	F	K	G	C	H	L	A
C	O	A	V	R	H	Q	E	C	T	A
O	W	S	N	O	W	M	A	N	A	Y
E	F	L	X	S	S	I	C	E	M	E
D	L	E	T	T	W	T	L	B	C	N
L	A	I	C	H	A	T	X	C	F	M
E	K	G	M	S	L	E	D	A	J	I
Z	E	H	B	M	Q	N	U	O	T	H
U	I	K	L	M	G	S	B	H	K	C
G	R	F	C	O	L	D	A	N	L	G

## Stay connected

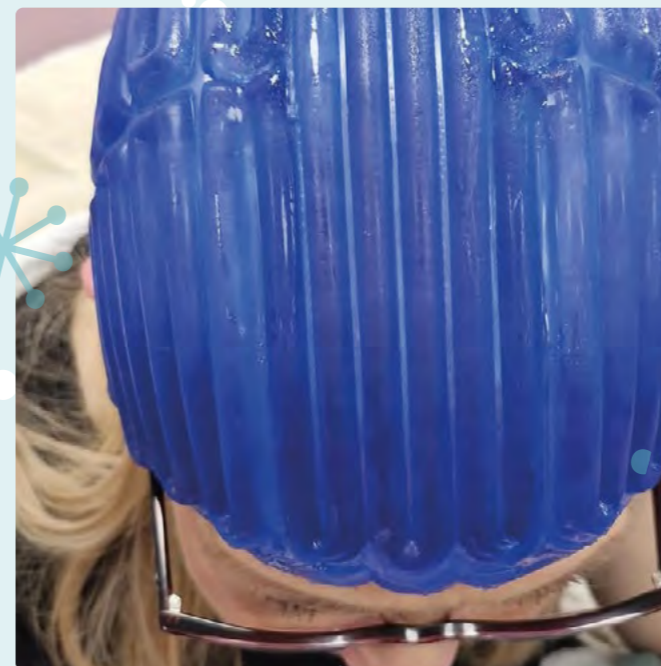
Winter's easier when we look out for one another.

A small act of kindness, a cuppa with a friend, a quick message to check in, can brighten even the coldest day.

Or here's another idea: why not host a coffee morning in person or online, and raise funds to help support your local hospitals?

**Remember: when we look out for each other, the whole community grows stronger.**

List the words here:



**“To all the wonderful, wonderful people in my journey, thank you from the bottom of my heart.”**

# Finding warmth in the coldest of places

**Christmas Eve 2019 was the day Denise's life changed. Instead of festive cheer, she was faced with a cancer diagnosis. What followed was surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, supported by the hard-working teams at Northampton General Hospital.**

One thing made a real difference to Denise: the cold cap. This special piece of equipment gently cools the scalp during chemotherapy to help reduce hair loss. “It's not glamorous; it makes you look like an alien and it's very cold. But it helps me feel normal,” Denise said. “I still have some hair, and I'm so grateful for that.”

The cold cap isn't funded by the NHS at the moment, but thanks to the generosity of supporters of Northamptonshire Health Charity, it's there for patients like Denise. For her, it meant holding onto her dignity and hope at a time when everything else felt so uncertain.

Wanting to give something back, Denise has set up a monthly donation and chosen to leave a gift in her Will. “I can't give much time right now, but this is something I can do,” she said. It's her way of making sure others will have the same comfort she did.

As the colder months set in, Denise's story is a reminder that small acts of generosity can bring warmth where it's needed most, today and long into the future.

**If you would like to learn more about leaving a gift that makes a lasting difference, visit [nhcharity.co.uk/legacy](http://nhcharity.co.uk/legacy)**



# A heartfelt thank you

At Northamptonshire Health Charity, we are constantly inspired by the kindness and generosity of our supporters. Whether you've fundraised, donated, volunteered, or simply spread the word, your efforts are helping us to transform our local NHS into the very best it can be.

**“We can't make that impact without the help of the community. It's the generosity of local people that makes it all happen.”**

Alison McCulloch  
Head of Impact  
Northamptonshire Health Charity



**Northamptonshire  
Health Charity**

Fundraising for:



University Hospitals  
of Northamptonshire  
Foundation Trust



Northamptonshire  
Healthcare  
NHS Foundation Trust