Music in Hospitals & Care

Newsletter | Summer 2026



Our pioneering Music Jam initiative is being rolled out to hospitals across the UK after demonstrating for more than a decade the positive impact it has on the mental health and wellbeing of patients in Edinburgh.

Unlike traditional live performances, patients are encouraged to actively sing, play and perform. For over a decade, Music Jam has been running at The Hive, a communal space for patients at the Royal Edinburgh mental health hospital, where they have helped to improve mood and connection.

Following the long-term success at The Hive, we have now expanded the format to hospitals across Glasgow, including Leverndale Hospital and Gartnavel Royal Hospital this year.

Musicians from the North of England have been shadowing sessions before bringing them to St Nicholas Hospital in Newcastle and then further afield.

The participatory format of Music Jam is particularly suited to healthcare settings where inpatients often stay for longer periods and can really benefit from consistent social interaction and creative expression.

Music in Hospitals & Care singer and guitarist Charlie Gorman, who hosts Music Jam at The Hive, explains:

> "I've seen how valuable and therapeutic participation in music can be. A lot of people who come in for the first time find it quite hard to engage. But once someone gets involved, you can't get them to sit down - it's that transformative. It's especially rewarding because a lot of them are young people, many facing tough situations. They get a lot out of it, both from the experience and the community around them."

As the programme expands across more NHS psychiatric hospitals, we hope that these sessions will become a regular part of care and bring the joy of live music into everyday hospital life.

Supporter Spotlight: Robin and Anne Barr

"Music in Hospitals & Care is an active and progressive charity, which supports health and care services for both young and old. It also promotes the professional employment of musicians. This connects strongly with my career training young musicians at the RSAMD (now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). It also reflects my wife's work as a child psychologist.

It is now 45 years since I was invited to assist in establishing a base in Edinburgh. During those early years, myself and others helped with auditions to ensure the most suited performers were chosen to represent the organisation in Scotland. As the charity grew, I actively fundraised with events and brought awareness of the importance of live music to social groups such as U3A and lunch clubs.

More recently, Anne and I were able to open our garden in Orkney to visitors as part of the Scotland Gardens Scheme and introduce many more folk to the national spread of Music in Hospitals & Care.

At this advanced stage in life, we are now limited to simply making a personal, regular donation and have pledged a legacy in our future will.

This commitment has been deeply rewarding, and supporting this work has played a major part in our lives.



One of the principal motivations throughout the time we have supported Music in Hospitals & Care has been the dedication and efficiency of the staff and their total dedication and involvement with the cause. It has been a pleasure to see how the paid staff and the volunteers on the governing committees have progressed, moderised and expanded the charity over the years.

Having seen all of this, we simply owe it to them to keep supporting the work of Music in Hospitals & Care in whatever way we can."

Music that lifts

Our musician Andy McKay has been visiting wards and care homes across Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria, where we have been able to share 29 hours of live music between September 2025 and May 2026.

Barrow-in-Furness is one of the most deprived areas in England in relation to health and disability (English indices of deprivation 2025, GOV.UK). Thanks to your support, we were able to share live music with three hospital wards and two care homes in the area.

One of the spaces Andy visited is the Ramsey Unit at Furness General Hospital, an assessment unit for patients with organic illnesses such as dementia.



Andy shared this story, which beautifully shows the impact live music can have:

"I was very moved by a lady who appeared very 'down' when I spoke to her before the live music (I usually mingle and ask for requests or who is their favourite singer, etc). Afterwards she came up to me and tearfully told me that she had thought she would never smile or laugh again prior to my performance and asked when I was coming back because I'd lifted her spirits so much. She nearly had me in tears! She added that she hoped to be out in a fortnight and would try to find more live music because it had changed her feelings in an instant.

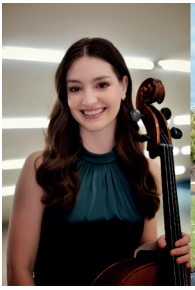
So many residents, relatives and staff came up and thanked me at the end. It was very touching. What we do is definitely very important and cannot be underestimated."

Research shows that live music can reach people even in the later stages of dementia, evoking memories and helping them to reconnect with their sense of self. For patients and relatives, these live music experiences create shared moments of connection during a vulnerable and often isolating time.

Thank you for supporting Music in Hospitals & Care and making this vital work possible.

Supporter stories

We are so proud of our London Marathon runners this year. Colm, Lydia, Rachel and Chris did an amazing job to cross the finish line for Music in Hospitals & Care. They fundraised throughout the year with gigs, recitals, raffles and a coffee morning, raising an amazing £9,960 including Gift Aid. Each runner had their own inspiring reason for taking part and fundraising for us.





"I have always played music in settings that are a bit more unconventional. When I was younger, my grandfather was in a care home, and we would visit and play for him. Live music gives people a sense of community and purpose, and a chance to step outside of their usual routine, which they really enjoy. I think there is something very meaningful about being in these settings."

Marathon runner and professional cellist, Lydia

We were deeply saddened by the loss of our musician and supporter Jenny Logan last year. In her memory, a sale of Jenny's beautiful yarn was held in Edinburgh, raising £2,000 for Music in Hospitals & Care. There was a great turnout of friends, and we are honoured to benefit from this kind generosity thanks to Jenny's family. Jenny will be remembered with fondness and gratitude.





Our musicians across the UK have been generously donating their time and ticket profits. Classical guitarist Matthew Sear held a birthday collection and contributed proceeds from his monthly open mic nights in Sidcup. Harpist Ruth Corry organised concerts around Northern Ireland, including recitals from her harp students, and even ran the Rome Half Marathon! A huge thank you to them both for raising over £500.

Music in Hospitals & Care is a registered charity in England and Wales no. 1051659 and SC038864 in Scotland. Company limited by guarantee registered in England no. 3138683

Address: Canopi, 82 Tanner Street, London SE1 3GN

If you would prefer not to receive our newsletter, please get in touch with us to let us know. We value your support and would like to keep you informed of how you can help share the healing power of live music.

0204 553 9219
hello@mihc.org.uk
mihc.org.uk

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