



The voice of those affected by cancer in Yorkshire and The Humber

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Welcome to the December edition of the VOICE Newsletter

Hi everyone and welcome to our last edition of VOICE newsletter for 2025.

This month we held our first major fundraiser Rhythm & Ribbons at the Irish Centre, Leeds which was a resounding success. We all had a fantastic time whilst raising much-needed funds and awareness of Yorkshire Cancer Community and the work that we do. We even featured on ITV Calendar!

Our Cancer Champion get together this month was a fantastic opportunity for our volunteers to get together, share ideas and tips on how to get the most out of volunteering and sharing the Cancer SMART message. We were joined by friend of YCC Emily Lunn, who came to talk to us about her work researching the barriers to engagement regarding breast screening and the Roma community. Her insights will certainly help us in our work for Cancer SMART.

We hope you have enjoyed reading our monthly editions, and found the content interesting and informative. As always, we'd love your feedback so that we can continue to improve.

Wishing you all Season's Greetings and a very Happy New Year!

Jill, Clare, Lauren & Jess

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Your stories

Rhythm and Ribbons – fundraising for Yorkshire Cancer Community – held on 30 November 2025

types of cancer.

When blood cancer patient Linda Walker joined Yorkshire Cancer Community as a volunteer fundraiser, she said she not only wanted to raise money but to raise awareness of us as a charity too.

Having done very little fundraising before, the trustees had no idea what Linda had in mind, and pictured a small raffle or tombola.

But Linda thought we ought to aim big and called into her local club, The Irish Centre, Leeds, who offered her one of the few remaining dates before Christmas **completely free of charge**.

And so the idea for *Rhythm and Ribbons* was born – rhythm to incorporate some upbeat funky, soul and eighties music and ribbons – to reference the coloured ribbons which represent the different



Linda (right) enjoying the music with another attendee



Singer Jeni Jaye, who wowed us with her tribute to Madonna

Aided by a small group of trustees and staff, Linda masterminded an event which brought together a choir, four performers and a DJ, all offering their services free of charge and a raffle with more than 30 donated prizes totalling hundreds of pounds.

The ambitious event was a huge success attracting more than 150 people and raising over £4,000 which will help to support our charity's work in providing a support and information network to anyone affected by cancer.

Linda also managed to attract sponsorship from her local councillors covering the Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward of Leeds: Councillors Nkele Manaka, Luke Farley and Asghar Khan, who all attended the event.

And in keeping to her word to raise awareness, she invited along journalists from ITV Calendar who interviewed both her and YCC Chairman, Dr Stewart Manning, which was broadcast that evening.

A delighted Linda said: "A huge thankyou to everyone who contributed to our Rhythm & Ribbons event, it was amazing. The feedback was that everyone enjoyed it, and we raised some money. Most of all through this event, we have got the word out there about who we are, and that will hopefully bring in more people who wish to donate."

Cancer Champion and Trustee Bev said: "It was great to be a part of a good team yesterday. This is what being a part of YCC is for me. A charity to be proud of. "

Big thanks go to everyone who made the day possible:

The Irish Centre, Leeds

Leeds City councillors, Asghar Khan, Luke Farley and Nkele Manaka, Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward

Performers: Jeni Jaye; Those 2; The Singing Wardens of Lower Grange Choir; DJ Tommy K; Hollie Rose; Paul Mac Music

Everyone who donated raffle and tombola prizes (a full list of raffle prize donors will appear on our website)

Addleshaw Goddard for their donation to our fundraising through Liz Ward



Trustee Bev, singing along with the choir

ITV Calendar who filmed our event and featured us on their programme.

Jack Houldworth and Jamie Barawitzka, journalists from Leeds Beckett University who also filmed and interviewed on the day

Everyone who came along.



Above: The Singing Wardens of Lower Grange Choir, who opened the event

Above: Lucky winner Caitlin, who correctly guessed that our gingerbread person was called Bob

Right: Event funders L-R Cllr Nkele Manaka, Cllr Luke Farley and Cllr Asghar Khan with some of the YCC fundraising team



Sharna 'Banana' Matthews

Rhythm and Ribbons entertainer **Sharna 'Banana' Matthews** was visiting the Cavell Unit, Dewsbury

Hospital, for her regular blood check when she

was recruited to join the line up.

Trustee and Cancer Champion Michael, who volunteers for Macmillan on Tuesdays at the hospital, was chatting to Sharna about the forthcoming fundraiser.

Sharna who sings with her husband, Jim under the stage name, *Those 2*, immediately offered her support, especially as she is on her own cancer journey, living with a lung cancer diagnosis.

Sharna, who lives in South Leeds, was a youth worker, fitting in singing engagements between work, but following her diagnosis, she has had to give up her work.

Her Mum died in 2022, and she recalls it was a rubbish year when she felt physically run down and had to undergo several operations including an investigation into a shadow on her kidney.

By 2024, still pursuing music and working, Sharna ended up being admitted into Pinderfields Hospital for septicaemia, pneumonia and pleurisy. Initially she felt blasé when cancer was mentioned, as she felt it was caught early and very treatable, but by late

May she discovered it was more serious than she realised.



May she

"We felt pretty deflated, but I'm finding music is my happy place and I'm staying positive', she told me before she performed on stage at The Irish Centre.

Now Sharna and Jim are taking every opportunity to perform, singing both covers and original music. They've found their tribe with a group of music makers in Bridlington on the East Coast, where they now often perform and where they plan to record an EP on Mother's Day 2026 in memory of Sharna's Mum.

Sharna added: "Mum loved to hear me sing. She said she wanted me to sing and now I'm doing just that. Cancer ain't stopping me living and loving life!"

To find out about *Those 2* they are on Facebook and Instagram.



@Sharnaandjimthose2



@sharnaandjim_those2

Cancer Champions Get Together in Leeds



Cancer Champions got together in Leeds last month to talk about Cancer SMART and to reflect on the year's work which included our successful entry in the Picker Experience National Awards.

Our chairman Dr Stewart Manning welcomed everyone to the event (left).

Former Champion Emily Lunn, a Research
Associate from the University of York, came to talk
about her project Barriers to engagement —
inequalities in breast screening uptake in Yorkshire.
She acknowledged that Cancer SMART is the 'best
model of engagement' she has come across and
that her tips for working with hardly reached

communities are the way we already work.

Tips include:

- Build trust through presence attend meetings in community spaces and build up relationships
- Work with trusted partners collaborate with community groups and leaders
- Communicate accessibly plain English, verbal communications and bilingual support where possible
- Make engagement practical go to familiar, trusted spaces, offer refreshments and keep it informal
- Support confidence by offering safe, respectful spaces for questions and share positive screening stories
- Commit to long-term partnership maintain regular contact and follow ups

Emily (pictured delivering her presentation, right) is now working on Strong cancer awareness and screening with Gypsy, Roma and Travelling Communities in Yorkshire.



Our social media specialist Vicki Farr joined us to talk about making the most of social media and encouraged Champions to share links with Yorkshire Cancer Community's website, which is packed with information including a directory of patient support groups.





Administrator Clare Lockwood asked attendees to complete tasks on the website checking accessibility and understanding. Here's Cancer Champions John, Stephen and Sally testing out our website.

Patient VIEW coordinator Lauren Cross also demonstrated how to run an information stall, the ways to engage members of the public and to reassure Champions that no one was expected to have all the answers.

Jess Hart, who is covering Lauren's maternity leave, also came along to introduce herself.

If you would like to know more about volunteering for Yorkshire Cancer Community, please get in touch with info@yorkshirecancercommunity.co.uk



Give the gift of kindness this Christmas with easyfundraising

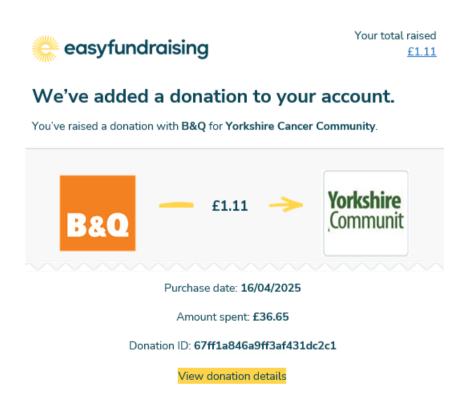
With Christmas just around the corner, we thought this would be a good time to let you know about Easyfundraising.

Did you know that if you shop online at one of the 8000+ retailers signed up to easyfundraising, you could also be raising funds for your favourite charity at the same time? It's really simple. You just open an account with easyfundraising, and then when you do your online shopping, you go to easyfundraising first and enter the name of the retailer. You will then be directed to their site and shop in exactly the same way as you would normally. The only difference is that easyfundraising will give a donation to us, usually as a percentage of whatever you have spent. There is absolutely no difference in cost to you.

So, whether you're buying your Christmas presents, food, hotel rooms or holidays, you could be raising money for your favourite charity at the same time.

Our Cancer Champion Michael gave it a go, and here's what he said about it.

"I signed up for easyfundraising during a fundraising meeting where we were discussing it. It was really straight forward. Later, I needed to buy something from B&Q, so I I logged in to easyfundraising first, searched for B&Q and it took me straight to their site. The donation for YCC came through really quickly. I was surprised how easy it was and would definitely recommend it to others".



Here's Michael's donation confirmation.

Raise funds for us for FREE





easyfundraising



Join as our supporter today at:

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause

lust search for:

Yorkshire Cancer Community

8,000+ retailers will donate to us whenever you shop with them





JOHN LEWIS







Start at the easyfundraising website or app





Checkout: prices are exactly the same!



The retailer sends a % of your spend to easyfundraising





Plus, you'll get...



Exclusive retailer offers



Competitions



A warm feeling inside!



£0
extra cost to anyone

News

BBC Documentary Series Ambulance comes to Yorkshire

You know it must be Autumn when all the quality TV programmes make a return. A favourite in our house is Ambulance, and this series showcases the remarkable work of emergency ambulance crews and control room staff in Yorkshire.

Filmed across winter and spring of 2025, mostly in West Yorkshire, this series captures the pressures on the NHS and the wide variety of incidents Yorkshire Ambulance Service responds to. Each programme demonstrates the highest standards of care and compassion, the power of caring for others and reminds everyone how humanity can shine brightest in the toughest of times.



Prostate Cancer Diagnostics Test

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is launching a pilot which could transform diagnostic testing for prostate cancer and save some men up to a month of waiting.

The new 'one stop shop' pilot, funded by NHS England, will use artificial intelligence to interpret MRI scans for men with suspected prostate cancer, helping to spot lesions in a matter of minutes.

The AI tool is being trialled at up to 15 NHS hospitals, with a pilot set to begin in Leeds early next year. The 'rapid diagnosis' pathway will offer all investigations within one day.

Through the pilot, men will be called for an MRI scan following a referral by their GP for suspected prostate cancer. This scan will be reviewed by Lucida Medical's Pi™ AI Technology and if a scan is found to have a high-risk of cancer, it will be sent immediately to a radiologist for priority review. If a patient needs a biopsy, this will take place on the same day, removing the waiting time between appointments which can often cause distress and anxiety.

This gives doctors everything they need to either potentially give an all clear the same day or confirm a cancer diagnosis, following a review of the biopsy results.

Dr Oliver Hulson (pictured), consultant radiologist at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and leading the trial in Leeds said: "As clinicians, we are always looking at ways to improve the diagnosis and treatment of cancer to ensure our patients get the expert care they need as quickly as possible.

This latest innovation pilot aims to take that a step further. The AI assisted MRI screening introduces a rapid diagnostic approach, so that we can fast-track those patients that may need to receive further investigations through MRI scans



and a biopsy, to have them all in one day at the Leeds Cancer Centre. We hope this can pave the way to mean faster treatment and better outcomes for our patients and their families."

Professor Peter Johnson, NHS national clinical director for cancer, said: "We're really excited by the potential of artificial intelligence to speed up cancer diagnosis, and we hope this trial of an AI-powered 'one-day diagnostics' could be a game changer and help save men weeks of worry and uncertainty."

"As with all cancers, speed is crucial – the quicker the diagnosis, the sooner treatment can begin and help give the best chance of treatment being successful for patients and their families."

"Prostate cancer continues to have a devastating impact for tens of thousands of men and their loved ones every year in this country. We are determined to see more patients diagnosed or given the all-clear quicker, and combining the latest technology with this new testing pathway will give clinicians the tools they need to provide patients with peace of mind or pin down a cancer diagnosis as soon as possible"

Lucy Davies, VP of Clinical at Lucida Medical and NHS Innovation Accelerator Fellow said: "Through our partnership with Leeds Teaching Hospitals and NHS England, we aim to show that our technology Pi™ can help doctors rapidly identify men with prostate cancer. This has the potential to enable a more efficient care pathway, supporting a "one stop shop" for diagnosis, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for patients and cost savings"

The project is one of 7 innovative pilots backed by a £14 million investment aimed to improve the early detection of cancer, as part of the NHS Cancer Programme Innovation Open Call.



CALL FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS!

Are you over the age of 18, Black or South Asian Women Living with Secondary Breast Cancer?



Please consider participating in an online interview about your experiences and support needs while living with secondary breast cancer.



If you are interested in taking part, please email summayah2.zafar@live.uwe.ac.uk or scan the QR code on the left-hand side.



Who is the research?

am Summayah Zafar, a Health Psychology Doctorate Student and Cancer Support Worker. Who is also a Pakistani Muslim. I am keen to gather the voices of Black and South Asian women to understand their experiences of living with secondary breast cancer. As a thank you, you will be invited to enter a prize draw for a youcher.

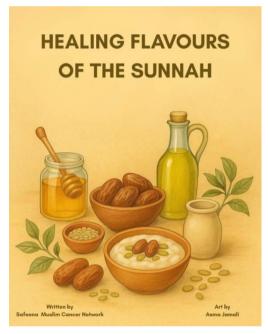


Free Healthy Eating Cookbook available online

Safeena Muslim Cancer Support Network has just published an online cookbook and dietary guide called Healing Flavours, designed to support those of Muslim faith in embracing healthy eating.

An extract from the foreword reads:

"Healing Flavours of the Sunnah is more than a cookbook — it is a heartfelt offering rooted in tradition, compassion, and trust in Allah's mercy. For those facing the challenges of cancer, this book offers gentle support through the foods loved by our beloved Prophet Muhammad, combining spiritual wisdom with modern nourishment."



You can access the online book here: Healing Flavours:https://www.safeena.org.uk/diet-and-exercise/healingflavours/ Please feel free to share this far and wide, across your networks and with anyone who might benefit from it.

Safina provide practical, educational, emotional support and in particular, Islamic guidance for Muslims affected by cancer.



Choose Compassion Over Cards This Christmas

This Christmas, rather than sending cards, please consider making a donation to Yorkshire Cancer Community instead, so that we can continue to provide vital help and support to people affected by cancer and continue spreading awareness of how to reduce your risk of cancer. A simple contribution can make a far greater and more lasting difference than any card ever could. By giving in this way, you're not only spreading festive goodwill—you're making a real and lasting difference by giving the gift of hope



Firm Roots Online Christmas Service for anyone affected by cancer



We invite you to join our

Online Christmas Service





Tuesday 16th December 2025,

7.00pm til 8.30pm

Join our Firm Roots Cancer Prayer Support Groups from around the UK for carols, reflections & prayers.



Everyone welcome!

Please email support@firmroots.org.uk

for a link to the service.

www.firmroots.org.uk



An online Firm Roots Christmas Service for anyone affected by cancer, either as a patient or loved one will take place on **Tuesday 16th December, 7pm to 8.30pm** (on Google Meet) and will include involvement from their various groups from around the country.

If you haven't heard of Firm Roots before, they are a small Christian network who offer prayer and spiritual support to people affected by cancer and their families and friends. They hold cancer prayer support groups around the UK as well as an online group for anyone who does not live near one of the groups. They also run Christian retreat days periodically. Please have a look at their website for further information: www.firmroots.org.uk.

The Rev Helen Jones said: "Having managed two Macmillan Information and Support services myself, and now in my role as a hospital chaplain, I see that spiritual needs are often hard to identify and support."

People can email to book (as in the flyer), or join using the booking link on their website: https://www.firmroots.org.uk/online.html - you will need to scroll down to the section which says 'register here.'

New Grant Opportunity: Help Macmillan Make Cancer Care More Inclusive

The CARE Grants Programme supports community organisations across the UK to tackle unfairness in cancer care. Macmillan want to fund projects that challenge the current system and create lasting change for people facing the greatest barriers to care.

At Macmillan, we believe everyone deserves high-quality cancer care—no matter who they are or where they live. But right now, too many people face unequal experiences across the UK. That's why we're inviting community organisations to help us change that.

We're launching the Macmillan CARE (Culture • Agency • Respect • Equity) Grants Programme, a new pilot initiative to support community-led projects that challenge inequality and reimagine cancer care.

We're offering grants of £50,000–£150,000 to voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations with a track record of tackling health inequities and co-designing impactful solutions.

Projects should focus on one or more of these key areas:

- Cultural Responsiveness: Making cancer care more sensitive to diverse cultural needs
- Shared Decision Making: Empowering people to actively participate in their care
- Dementia-Friendly Cancer Care: Supporting those living with both cancer and dementia

Up to £1.5 million is available in this first round, the application deadline is Friday, 23rd January 2026.

If your organisation is ready to lead change, Macmillan would love to hear from you.

Further information about the Macmillan CARE (Culture • Agency • Respect • Equity) Grants Programme can be found on our website: Macmillan CARE Grants | Macmillan Cancer Support

Grants Information Webinars

Our Grants Information Webinars are opportunities to hear more about the Macmillan CARE Grant and other Macmillan grants currently available for community applicants. These include time to answer general questions.

Our Grants Information Webinars will take place on Microsoft Teams on the following dates:

- Tuesday 2nd December 2025 at 11:00am 12:00pm. Click here to register.
- Thursday 11th December 2025 at 6:00pm 7:00pm. Click here to register.
- Thursday 8th January 2026 at 3:30pm 4:30pm. Click here to register.

For any other questions, please get in touch at CommunityGrants@macmillan.org.uk



What have we been up to?





Jill, Stephen and Kathy went along to the Dewsbury Health and Wellbeing event in Dewsbury. They were joined by the always popular Liver Buddies, with their mobile liver scanning unit. Pictured are Matt and Rehana from the Jobcentre, and Steve and David from Liver Buddies.



Bev (left) visited Angel & Star Bereavement Christmas Fair at Holy Trinity, Meanwood, Leeds with her Cancer SMART information stall (pictured below)





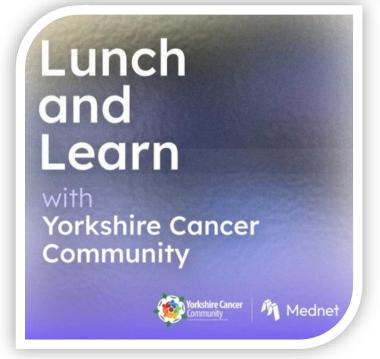
Trustee David (left) took his Cancer SMART stall to the Carers Rights Day event at Brian Jackson House in Huddersfield



Trustee and Cancer Champion Michael went along to a Health Event in Rothwell with his Cancer SMART stall and chatted to members of the public about the importance of Knowing Your Normal, and If In Doubt, Get Checked Out. Having experienced a bowel cancer diagnosis himself, Michael is keen to help others avoid cancer or catch it early when it is easier to treat

Stewart attended a Men's Health Group at Keighley Healthy Living to share the important Cancer SMART message and the importance of seeking help quickly if you notice anything unusual - Take Action NOW is one of the important Cancer SMART messages





Our Chairman Dr Stewart Manning provided an online talk for Mednet Health's Lunch and Learn project. The session was a great way to raise awareness about cancer symptoms and how early diagnosis can improve treatment outcomes.

This talk formed the first part of a much wider partnership with Mednet

Patient VIEW

This month has been quieter than usual, as Lauren has been focused on her recovery and learning to walk using crutches — with just **4 weeks to go until baby's due date!**

This will be **Lauren's final newsletter update for a while** as she begins her maternity leave. During this time, you'll be in the **fantastic hands of Jess**, who will continue to support the panel and keep everything progressing smoothly.

Patient VIEW Members Take Part in Cambridge University Research Workshops

In **November**, Patient VIEW panel members were invited by **Cambridge University** to take part in a series of research workshops. These sessions support the development of a research proposal exploring **patient preferences around the use of PARP inhibitors to reduce cancer risk**.

The workshops brought together several patient involvement groups, including ours, ensuring that the research is shaped by **diverse real-life patient perspectives from the outset**.

So far:

- Two workshops have taken place, with
- Five of our panel members actively contributing their insights.

This collaboration highlights the **value of lived experience in shaping cancer research** and may lead to further involvement opportunities in the future.

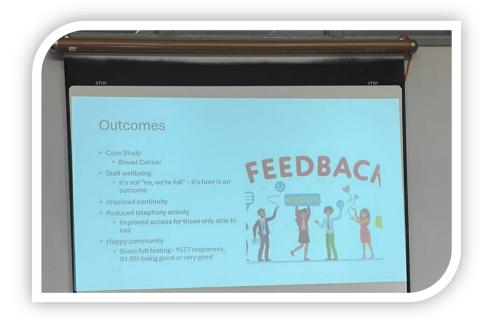
We look forward to keeping you updated as this exciting initiative develops!

Recent Activity

9 5th November

Lauren attended the Reducing
Healthcare Inequalities
Community of Practice event at
the Westfield Centre in South
Elmsall.

The event brought together healthcare professionals and VCSE organisations to reflect on the **10-Year Plan**, which aligns closely with our Patient VIEW work within the Wakefield District.



21st November

Lauren and Jess attended the **final Patient Experience Strategy Improvement Group meeting of the year** with the **NHS West Yorkshire and Harrogate Cancer Alliance**.

They shared feedback gathered from:

- our recent roadshow session with BHA Skyline, and
- the October Patient VIEW panel meeting,
 along with plans to act on this feedback in the new year more to come soon!

Final Patient VIEW Meeting of 2025

Wednesday 3rd December

Join us via Zoom:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86750086626?pwd=tUkmLZYouZIYzwc2zNwE9aaUaEacbY.1

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! From Lauren & Jess

Upcoming events

Here's some events we have coming up in December.

Thu 4 Dec - Talk to women's group at Highfield Community Assoc, Drewry Road, Keighley BD21 2QG - 1-2.30pm

Thu 4 Dec - Stall, Info and vaccination day at Sue Belcher Centre, Bracken Bank Ave, Keighley BD22 7AE - 1-3pm

Thu 4 Dec - Health and wellbeing day, Ravensthorpe Community Centre, Dewsbury, WF13 3AR - 10am-1pm

Mon 8 Dec - Stall, employee health and wellbeing day at Thornton & Ross, Linthwaite HD7 5QH - 9.30am - 3pm

Wed 17 Dec - Talk, Motive8 Wyke Community college, Bradford BD12 8AA

Watch out for our social media posts too to keep up to date on what we've got coming up.



@YorkshireCancerCommunity



@yorkshirecancercommunity

Could you help us raise vital funds by nominating us for a Movement for Good award by Benefact Group?

Please scan the QR code or visit

https://movementforgood. com/#nominateACharity to nominate us.

The deadline for nominations is 15 December 2025





Singing for Lung Health



Breathe Better, Feel Better with Music

Join our Singing for Lung Health programme supportive and fun sessions designed to help people with lung conditions breathe more easily, feel more confident, and enjoy the benefit of singing together in a friendly environment.

Who is it for?

If you are aged 18+ and live with a lung condition such as COPD, asthma, bronchiectasis, interstitial lung disease (ILD) or long-COVID, this programme is for you! No previous singing experience is needed.

What to expect:

- Friendly, guided singing sessions designed to support better breathing
- A chance to meet others and build confidence
- Gentle movement and breathing techniques to help manage breathlessness
- No pressure to perform or sing solo just come and enjoy!

Meet Your Leader: Marie Claire

Marie Claire will guide you through the sessions with warmth, humour, and plenty of encouragement. She is an experienced singing leader who loves helping people discover the joy and health benefits of singing.



Project by: Opera North in partnership with Leeds Local Care Partnerships.

How to join:

To find out more or book your place, please contact Linking Leeds on linkingleeds.tt@nhs.net or speak with your Respiratory Team on 0113 843 4200

Let your breath find its rhythm through song – join us for Singing for Lung Health!



Join us for an evening of festive music, warmth, and goodwill at one of our fantastic Carol Concerts in Yorkshire — all in support of a great cause 💯



🛠 Ripon Carol Concert

Date: Monday 1st December @ 7.30pm

Venue: Ripon Cathedral, HG4 1QT

Tickets: from £20, available 3rd November







Leeds Carol Concert

Date: Tuesday 9th December @ 7pm

Venue: Leeds Minster, Kirkgate, LS2 7DJ

Tickets: £12 - scan the QR code



Beverley Carol Concert

Date: Tuesday 9th December @ 7pm

Venue: Beverley Minster, Highgate, HU17 0DP

Tickets: £15 - scan the QR code







York Minster Carol Service

Date: Wednesday 10th December @ 7.30pm

Venue: York Minster, Deangate, YO1 7HH

Tickets: free admission, donations welcome

scan the QR code

All proceeds from the evening will go directly to supporting the work of Macmillan in the local area.

Let's make this season brighter — one song at a time!



In aid of



COPING AT CHRISTMAS

The Added Pressures of Christmas can be Tough, but it's Important to know there's always Someone you can Talk to...



111 online

Call 111 & select option 2 to speak to the NHS Mental Health Crisis Response Service 24/7

Nhs.uk/mental-health



Under 35s can Call 0800 068 4141, Text: 88247 or Email: pat@papyrusuk.org 24/7

Papyrus-uk.org



Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans, or email: jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours

Samaritans.org



Call MIND's Mental Health Helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 0800 414 8247

Mind.org.uk



Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line, or text "YM" if you're under 19

Giveusashout.org



Mental Health Forum & Chat for Men from 5pm - midnight every day Call or Watsapp 0800 585858

Thecalmzone.net

ChristmasCountdown.uk

