

News



For supporters of
St Gemma's Hospice
Autumn/Winter 2026



Specialist care, right at home

So much of the care St Gemma's provides
happens in the community.



**St.
Gemma's
Hospice**

st-gemma.co.uk

0113 218 5500



Make a
donation





A lasting tribute to John, reaching across Leeds

If you were out and about in Leeds this summer, you may have spotted St Gemma's in some unexpected places – from billboards and digital screens to bus shelters and Leeds Station.

The message was simple: "Leeds, we love ya. We'll always have your back in the hardest moments. We hope you've got ours."

The city-wide campaign was made possible thanks to an extraordinary gift from The Ark Media, who donated a significant package of outdoor advertising space across Leeds in memory of their co-founder and Managing Director, John Ainley.

John was cared for by St Gemma's last year, and his family and colleagues wanted to find a meaningful way to honour his memory while helping to raise awareness of the care available to people across Leeds.

It was a particularly special gift. John experienced St Gemma's care himself, and his family continues to be supported by the Hospice.

John's widow, Nichola, said: "John didn't just work in the out-of-home advertising industry, he believed in it. He loved every billboard, bus rear and bus shelter because he understood how a single message could stop people in their tracks and make them feel something.

"John had such a strong reputation within the out-of-home industry that media partners generously donated the advertising space in his memory.

"It was a fitting tribute – taking the medium he loved and using it to give something back to St Gemma's through space and visibility."

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He would have absolutely loved seeing the campaign out there across Leeds.

The campaign ran throughout the summer, with eye-catching adverts designed to grab attention across Leeds and remind people that St Gemma's is here for everyone in our city when they need us.

The campaign itself came at no cost to St Gemma's, thanks to the generosity of The Ark Media and its media partners. But the vital care John and his family received, and the care we provide every day, relies on the generosity of our supporters. The need for hospice care continues to grow, while the cost of providing it continues to rise. Thanks to our supporters, we can continue to be here for Leeds, in the hardest moments and beyond.

We would like to thank The Ark Media and its media partners for this incredibly generous gift, and for helping to honour John's memory in such a meaningful way.

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At St Gemma's, John was cared for with such kindness and patience in his final days, and I continue to receive support from the team. It means a great deal to me and our family.

Hospice care, everywhere

For many people living with a terminal illness, being able to stay at home for as long as possible is incredibly important. That's why so much of the care St Gemma's provides happens in the community – supporting people at home, including those who wish to remain at home at the end of their lives, helping their families and working alongside other healthcare professionals.

The St Gemma's Community Team supports around 250 patients at any one time across Leeds. Among them is Rosie, a Clinical Nurse Specialist who has worked at St Gemma's for 14 years. She provides expert care for people with complex symptoms, alongside advice and support for their families.

But Rosie's support has meant just as much to Edward's wife, Pat.

“

When Edward was diagnosed, I was at a loss – totally adrift. Rosie is an anchor, connecting all the support together. She's always on our side, and we know we can rely on her. She's helped us with so much, from care and medication to planning ahead. We'd be completely lost without her.

Pat

“

Most patients want to stay at home for as long as possible throughout their illness, so it's our job to support them and make sure they get what they need.

Rosie

When Edward was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer, he was referred to St Gemma's, and Rosie helped manage his symptoms. As a qualified nurse prescriber, Rosie was able to prescribe medication that same day, helping to get his symptoms under control quickly. He continues to live as well as he can at home and sees Rosie regularly.

Edward says, "Rosie listens, gives advice and is so knowledgeable and experienced. She just knows what to do when we don't. I feel quite well at the moment but am reassured that St Gemma's are supporting Pat too."

Rosie says: "We genuinely have the skill and the time to really get to know our patients and understand what's important to them. It means we can give them the care they need, while helping them live as well as possible, for as long as possible. Even when someone is facing a terminal illness, it's important that they feel supported every step of the way and it is a privilege to be a part of that care."

Your support helps make this specialist community care possible, helping local people and their families receive expert care at home when they need it most.



Making the most of every donation

You never quite know what might turn up in a St Gemma's shop donation – and our retail team are experts at spotting something special.

While most donations are sold through our chain of 27 shops across Leeds, the team carefully researches larger, vintage and unusual items to work out the best way to sell them and maximise their value for the Hospice. Recent finds included a 1980s Habitat Terence Conran desk, which sold for £300, and an early 20th-century L. M. Ericsson & Co skeletal telephone, which was sent to a specialist auction house and sold for £120.

Our high street shops are evolving too. Our Otley shop recently moved into a larger new unit on Boroughgate, and our Merrion Centre shop will soon relocate to a new space, giving us more room to welcome customers and make the most of the donations we receive.

It's all part of making every donation count. Whether an item finds a new home in one of our shops, is sold online or goes to a specialist buyer, our retail teams work hard to achieve the best possible return for St Gemma's.

So next time you're having a clear-out, remember St Gemma's. Your unwanted treasures could be worth more than you think – and every pound raised helps us care for local patients and families.



A huge thank you to our retail team and more than 500 volunteers who make all this possible. If you'd like to join them, there are lots of opportunities to volunteer in our shops – email volunteering@st-gemma.co.uk to find out more.

Buy your Christmas cards

Our beautiful and exclusive range of cards are now on sale. Buy your cards from St Gemma's this year and unlike many of the charity cards you'll find on sale in supermarkets, 100% of the profits from our cards directly support the work of the Hospice.

We have 20 cards in the range including this gorgeous one of Harewood House and the snowy surroundings.



Sharing knowledge, improving care

At St Gemma's, learning is part of everyday life. We are committed to continually learning and improving so that we can provide the best possible care for patients and families.

Our Clinical Practice Educator Nurse, Clare, supports students undertaking placements from universities across Leeds, welcomes and inducts new nurses joining St Gemma's, and helps colleagues maintain and develop the essential knowledge and skills they need in their roles.

Clare says:

"My role is really about increasing people's confidence and competence. We want our clinical staff to feel invested in and supported to be the best they can be.

"Great learning is shaped by more than what you teach. It's also about how you teach it and the environment in which learning takes place. Being in a working hospice means learning is closely connected to the reality of specialist palliative care, with patients and families at the heart of everything we do."

"We have a new learning and education room on In-Patient Unit, which gives us a dedicated space to provide hands-on training close to the clinical environment. This enables staff to apply what they have learned directly to their practice."

Some of the training is highly specialist. St Gemma's is one of a few adult hospices in the area providing tracheostomy care for people with a breathing tube in their neck. Clare also helps to deliver training in psychological care, helping colleagues across the organisation – including those working in our shops and Bistro – to recognise when someone may be distressed and know how to offer support, while also looking after their own wellbeing.

"Education isn't just about clinical skills. We want everyone at St Gemma's to feel able to recognise when someone is struggling and know how to respond. We're always learning and looking for ways to improve, because ultimately that means better care for our patients and families." Clare says.

St Gemma's was the UK's first University Teaching Hospice, and through our academic unit we continue to share our specialist knowledge with healthcare professionals across the region. During 2025/26, we trained 919 professionals from outside St Gemma's, equipping them with knowledge and skills they could take back to hospitals, care homes, GP practices and community services, helping improve care for patients and families across Leeds and beyond.

Your support helps us invest in our people, share our expertise and keep improving the care we provide – today and for the future.



Remembering your loved ones with St Gemma's

Our St Gemma's community comes together in many different ways to remember and celebrate the people we love. From taking on a challenge in someone's memory to dedicating a leaf on our Tree of Life, each tribute helps keep their memory alive while making a lasting difference to local patients and families.



Relay for Sophie

In July, an incredible team of 170 colleagues from Manning Stainton and Northern Estate Agencies Group came together to complete around 200 miles in memory of their much-loved colleague, Sophie.

Sophie was diagnosed with cervical cancer in summer 2025 and, after a short illness, was cared for at St Gemma's earlier this year. She would have turned 43 in July, so her family and colleagues wanted to mark her birthday by celebrating her life, her warmth and the wonderful community spirit she brought to everyone around her.

Over five days, colleagues walked, cycled and ran from their Clitheroe branch, visiting all 36 branches along the way before finishing at the Hospice in Moortown. They were welcomed with a balloon arch, cheers and cake – a fitting celebration of a truly special challenge.

Sophie had previously organised relay challenges for the company, so this year her colleagues were proud to continue that tradition in her honour. Together, they raised over £36,000 for St Gemma's Hospice and the Ruth Strauss Foundation, two charities that supported Sophie and her family at the end of her life.

“

The relay challenges were something Sophie was incredibly proud of, so it felt only right that we continue that tradition in her memory. Relay for Sophie is our way of celebrating her life, honouring her legacy and supporting two charities that make a real difference to people affected by terminal illness.

Mark Manning, Managing Director, Manning Stainton

Ways to remember someone special

There are lots of ways to remember and celebrate someone special with St Gemma's over the coming months.

Sponsor a Day of Care

Choose a meaningful date to sponsor a Day of Care in memory of someone you love.

Dedicate a leaf

Add a leaf to our Tree of Life as a lasting tribute to someone special.

Light Up a Life

Shine a light in memory of a loved one and help support local patients and families.

Join an event

Take part in events such as our Winter Ball or Santa Dash and celebrate someone special while raising vital funds.

However you choose to remember someone this season, thank you for helping us continue to provide compassionate care and support to those who need it most.



A collection that continues to care

Lisa was one of St Gemma's dedicated supporters. She was the niece of one of our Rothwell shop's very first volunteers, regularly fundraised for the Hospice and tirelessly knitted items for our Christmas and Easter campaigns.

Earlier this year, Lisa spent the final 12 weeks of her life at St Gemma's Hospice.

As part of her legacy, Lisa requested that her beloved collection of Charlie Bears be donated to St Gemma's. We were incredibly fortunate to receive 51 bears, which have since raised an amazing £1,878 to help care for local patients and families.

We are so grateful to Lisa for wishing to support St Gemma's and our community in this special way.



Could you leave a lasting legacy?

Like Lisa, your legacy could help give patients peace, comfort and dignity at the end of their lives. Once you have provided for your loved ones, including a gift to St Gemma's in your Will could make a real difference, helping us be here for those who need our care in the future. To find out more, visit www.st-gemma.co.uk/yourlegacy

Dates for Your Diary

September & October

Make a Will Month

5-11 October

Hospice Care Week

28 November

Winter Ball at New Dock Hall

28-29 November & 3-5 December

Christmas Tree Sales at the Hospice

6 December

Hospice Light Up a Life Event

10 December

Immaculate Heart Light Up a Life Event

December

Santa Dash

January 2027

Treecycling

Get in touch

Donate: 0113 218 5555 | fundraising@st-gemma.co.uk

To find out more visit www.st-gemma.co.uk/support-us



More than a meal

Food can mean so much more than simply keeping us nourished. At St Gemma's, our chefs and Bistro team play an important part in helping patients in the Hospice feel comfortable, cared for and at home.

Our kitchen team works closely with patients and clinical colleagues to make sure food and drink meet individual needs and preferences. Whether it's a favourite meal, baking a cake for a special celebration, or simply a cup of tea at just the right moment, these small things can bring comfort and pleasure at a difficult time.

For our chefs, getting to know patients and finding out what matters to them is an important part of the job.



“

I love working at St Gemma's because I know I'm creating something that patients and families really want and enjoy. Patients can ask for whatever they fancy, which is so important when you don't feel well, and families often tell us how much they appreciate having good food when they visit. I particularly enjoy baking a special cake for a special occasion.

Chef Mark

From meals on the In-Patient Unit to snacks and drinks for families and colleagues, our kitchen team helps create the warm, welcoming and homely environment that is such an important part of St Gemma's.

More than a garden



Our gardens have always been a much-loved part of St Gemma's – peaceful places where patients, families, visitors and colleagues can relax, reflect and connect with nature. But there's much more going on here than meets the eye.

Over the past year, our garden team and volunteers have been creating more wildlife-friendly spaces across the Hospice grounds, helping to increase biodiversity and provide valuable habitats for pollinators. Being a responsible and sustainable organisation matters to us, and our gardens are one of the ways we put that commitment into practice – creating spaces where wildlife can thrive.

The new apiary, known as The Hive, has become a special addition, with our bee colonies now settling into their new home. The bees, hives and beekeeping training have all been generously donated, making this wonderful project possible at no cost to the Hospice.

And the work has already been recognised. We were delighted to win a Bees' Needs Champions Award, celebrating organisations making a difference for pollinators and wildlife across England. Our Head Gardener, Cath, and Estates colleague Simon have completed their beekeeping training and are now caring for our new bee residents.

The gardens are also creating opportunities for people to learn and connect with St Gemma's. This summer, we welcomed school groups to discover more about bees, biodiversity and the natural world. It's a wonderful example of how our gardens can bring comfort and connection while helping our local environment too – thanks to the generosity and commitment of everyone involved.



We really want to communicate with you and keep you posted about news, events and updates from across St Gemma's. We also want to show you how your support benefits local patients and their families. But we respect your decision if you wish to change how we send you information, or choose not to hear from us at all. Ring us on **0113 218 5555**, email supportercare@st-gemma.co.uk or update your preferences online: www.st-gemma.co.uk/mydata

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