# Press Release | 11 July 2024

# **Music therapy to continue enriching lives of dementia patients at QEH**

Hospital patients living with dementia are experiencing significant improvements in their quality of life thanks to a transformative music therapy programme.

From singing familiar songs to moving to music, therapy sessions on two QEH wards are boosting patient mood, helping to reduce anxiety and depression as well as maintaining speech and language.

Following a successful year-long pilot project funded by a £12,000 donation from the hospital’s League of Friends, additional funding has been secured from the hospital’s QEHKL Charity to extend the programme until August 2025.

[The QEHKL Charity](https://qehklcharity.co.uk/) exists to support those receiving care and working at the hospital, enhancing patient, carer and staff experiences through supporting projects, activities, and training over and above that provided through NHS funding.

Its £13,200 grant means that Suffolk Music Therapy Services, which oversees the programme, will continue to visit the hospital every Monday to deliver sessions on the care-of-the-elderly care wards.

Each session is meticulously tailored to meet the individual needs and strengths of the patients, providing them with personalised and engaging therapeutic experiences through individual or group sessions.

Regina Legarte, a music therapist at Suffolk Music Therapy Services, explains: “Each session varies from individual to individual, and each patient has a unique experience of music therapy.

“Patients have the opportunity to engage in whatever way they can and the music therapist will work in a variety of different ways to tailor the session to particular strengths and needs.

“This may include singing familiar songs and improvised musical interactions using movement, musical instruments or voice. Often, the music will evoke strong emotions or memories from a patient's life which they are then able to express and share."

Dr Katie Honney, clinical director for Integrated Care of the Older Person at The QEH, said: “We are incredibly grateful to The League of Friends for supporting this vital programme and to the hospital’s charity for ensuring this is extended.

“Music has so many benefits for patients living with dementia. It can help reduce anxiety and depression, encourage the maintenance of speech and language, encourage physical ability, provide comfort toward the end of life and enhance the quality of life for all affected by dementia.”

Rachel Burridge, consultant nurse for Frailty at the hospital, said: “I am delighted that this important programme has been extended. We’ve seen first-hand the benefits music therapy has on our patients and their families.”

Samantha Taylor, charity manager at The QEH, said: “Donations like this are exactly what our Charity is here for and it’s wonderful we can support patients in this way.”

To find out more about the charity and donate, [click here](https://www.qehkl.nhs.uk/Fundraisingmain.asp?s=foundation&ss=fundraising.and.donations&p=fundraising.and.donations.information).

**Ends.**

**Notes to editors;**

An incredible £100,000 was raised by QEHKL Charity supporters over 18 months. Thanks to donations, corporate sponsors and fundraising activities – all topped up by a generous bequest – it provided funding to make a real difference to our patients with dementia, reducing hospital length of stays and preventing mental and physical deconditioning.

By 2030, it's estimated that 1.1 million people in the UK will have a diagnosis of dementia – and almost all of us already know someone living with the condition.

The Dementia Care Appeal has ensured QEH patients with dementia can benefit from exercise therapies while they are being cared for on our wards. They also have access to stimulating activity packs and reminiscence touch screen devices than enable to reconnect and engage with aspects of their life and times by listening to music, watching news reports of significant historical events, hearing famous speeches and playing games.

QEHKL Charity also funded a £43,000 [Dementia Friendly Garden](https://qehklcharity.co.uk/2023/08/10/hospitals-new-dementia-friendly-garden-blooms-into-action/) which opened for West Dereham Ward patients in August last year bringing the therapeutic effects of nature to patients on the specialist ward. The garden, which has an eye-catching pink safety floor, chosen by patients, won a Landscape Institute Award on in November 2023 for architects [PRP.](https://www.prp-co.uk/)

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