# **A group of people standing outside a building AI-generated content may be incorrect.**Press Release | 22 August 2025

**Refurbished QEH Macmillan unit set to transform cancer care thanks to fundraisers**

Cancer patients being treated at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital are just weeks away from returning to a transformed Macmillan Cancer Care and Treatment Centre, where a brighter, more welcoming and practical environment is taking shape following an eight-week refurbishment.

The £255,000 major renovation is being delivered thanks to the extraordinary fundraising of the late Gavin English, charity supporters and partner charities as well as the hospital’s own QEHKL Charity.

QEH Head of Nursing for Medicine Karon Strong and her team have worked with the wider hospital team to bring Gavin’s wishes and those of cancer patients to life: a unit filled with light, dignity, and comfort for more than 12,000 people from across West Norfolk who receive treatment and support there each year.

**Growing demand, growing need**

The Cancer Care and Treatment Centre’s chemotherapy suite first opened in 2011, with a treatment room added in 2016. Fourteen years on from its opening, the unit had become outdated, cluttered, and lacking the privacy, comfort and facilities patients and staff needed. Poor lighting, cramped waiting areas, and limited seating had become a daily reality for patients who face long hours of treatment.

While work is underway, patients are continuing to receive their treatment in the former Discharge Lounge, which has been temporarily adapted to ensure continuity of care.

The refurbishment is expected to cater for the needs of more than 70,000 patients the hospital expects to treat before the New QEH opens in 2032. Today’s major investment will transform the experience for patients and staff now by providing:

* Greater comfort – new seating and treatment couches
* Improved layout – redesigned areas giving patients more dignity during sensitive procedures
* Calming atmosphere with softer lighting to reduce stress
* Nature-inspired artwork and photography – including local landscapes as well as a crocus mural symbolising eternal love for Gavin and his wife, Frances.
* Entertainment and relaxation – a TV in the chemotherapy room, background music, books and magazines
* Clearer information – digital screens and a centralised information point
* Access to refreshments for patients and families
* New reception desk, entrance area layout with comfort cooling for summer months
* Dedicated staff spaces including a staff room and lockers to support wellbeing

**“Dad’s dream is becoming reality”**

Belinda Penkethman, Gavin English’s daughter, said: “Dad always wanted patients and their families to have surroundings filled with dignity, warmth and hope. To see his vision coming to life is incredibly moving.”

Gavin’s son Ray English added: “Knowing that every penny he raised is helping to make this possible is something our family will always treasure.”

Gavin’s fundraising, which totalled £116,500, came from more than 800 car boot and supermarket collections he single-handedly ran over a decade. His wish was that the centre be refurbished with colour, comfort, and crocuses – a flower that held deep personal meaning for his family. Before his death, Gavin often described QEH staff as “angels dressed as doctors and nurses”, saying they gave him and his wife Frances, who received cancer treatment, an extra 15 precious months together – time he treasured.

Alongside Gavin’s fundraising, additional generous donations from the Breast of Friends charity (£9,500) and the Robert Foot Leukaemia Foundation (£10,000) have helped bring the project to life alongside donations by patients, families and local organisations.

Karon Strong, Head of Nursing for Medicine, said: “This refurbishment will make a huge difference to both patients and staff. It is creating a sanctuary where people feel safe, respected and supported. My nursing team and I worked hard with our patients and project team and we are so proud to see Gavin’s dream being realised. Without him and other incredible supporters, this simply would not have been possible.”

The project is being managed by Senior Project Manager Michael Skinner who oversaw the £1.6m QEHKL Charity-funded Peddars Way end of life unit. Hesaid: “The team have listened closely to feedback from patients, families and staff and the new look unit will be brighter, more spacious and far more comfortable as a place to receive and deliver care.. It’s been a privilege to work on a project that will make such a difference to our cancer patients.”

The QEH team is once again working with a team of local business who developed Peddars Way, including Advanced Building Projects, EDI Electrical and Norfolk Flooring. Artist Nicola Marray Woods, whose murals adorn walls in the Peddars Way is contributing bespoke artwork in the centre’s reception area.

The refurbished Macmillan Care and Treatment Centre is on track to reopen in September 2025, with an official opening ceremony planned for October.

**CAPTION:** (From left) Emma Carlton, Health & Safety Compliance Manager, Aiswarya George, Sister/Charge Nurse for the Cancer Unit, Michael Skinner, Senor Project Manager, and Karon Strong, Head of Nursing for Medicine.

**End**

Top of Form

**Notes to editors; About QEHKL Charity:** QEHKL Charity plays a vital role in supporting The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King’s Lynn. The charity raises funds for medical equipment, research, services, and facilities that directly benefit patients and their families. With its support, QEHKL can provide high-quality care, expand services, and improve the hospital experience for those in need. [www.qehklcharity.co.uk](http://www.qehklcharity.co.uk). Alternatively, please email our Charity team at [Charity@qehkl.nhs.uk](mailto:Charity@qehkl.nhs.uk) or call 01553 613309.

**For media enquiries only**, please contact Communications Team, [media.enquiries@qehkl.nhs.uk](mailto:media.enquiries@qehkl.nhs.uk) or 01553 613216. For all other enquiries, please contact QEH Switchboard on 01553 613613.