

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE, TOGETHER

IMPACT  
REPORT  
2024/25



# TOGETHER, WE CHANGE LIVES





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# Welcome

## from our Chair Tom Bromwich

*Welcome to the Get A-Head Charitable Trust's impact report for the period July 2024 – December 2025. As we reflect on another remarkable 18 months for Get A-Head, I'm struck by how much we've accomplished together in our mission to support people with head and neck cancer.*



Against the backdrop of increasing rates of head and neck cancer and the challenges faced by patients, our work funding research, equipment, education and patient support has never been more vital.

The projects, research, campaigns and collaborative partnerships highlighted in this 2024/25 impact report demonstrate our commitment to making a tangible difference to people's lives.

I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our small yet brilliant team who consistently deliver impact far beyond their size. Their dedication and expertise enable Get A-Head to punch well above its weight in addressing the complex challenges faced by those with head and neck conditions.

Of course, none of this would be possible without our supporters, donors and partners. Your generosity, whether through attending our events, taking on your own challenges, making donations or providing corporate support, underpins everything we do.

As we continue to build on the momentum of our 30th anniversary year, your ongoing commitment will help us expand our reach and deepen our impact.

Together, we're working towards a future where fewer people develop head and neck cancer, those who do are diagnosed earlier and everyone affected enjoys the best possible quality of life.

*Thank you.*  
Tom Bromwich



# A milestone period of achievement

## Over the past 18 months we've raised in excess of £220,000

through extraordinary supporter generosity, from our annual clay shoot to our marathon runners and loyal corporate partners. Not forgetting, of course, our 30th Anniversary Ball, which took place at the Hilton Metropole in Birmingham, welcoming nearly 400 supporters.

We've distributed over £194,000 in grants, including £40,000 towards a nationwide head and neck cancer audit and £37,000 towards the operation of patient support groups. We've strengthened partnerships with organisations across the sector, and our education initiatives have continued to raise awareness of head and neck diseases among both healthcare professionals and the public.

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we've raised in excess of  
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in grants

## OUR VISION

Our vision is clear: To see reduced rates of head and neck cancer, earlier diagnosis, effective rapid treatment and the best possible quality of life following treatment.

To achieve this, we focus on four strategic priorities:



### Equipment provision

Funding specialist equipment unavailable through the NHS



### Research support

Investing in projects that enhance understanding and improve diagnosis and treatments



### Education development

Supporting professional training and awareness campaigns



### Patient support

Providing direct support to patients and carers and working with patients to develop co-designed services

# A period of transformation

## Director Danni Heath

*The past 18 months have been characterised by transformation and challenge for Get A-Head as we navigate the growing crisis in head and neck diseases, particularly cancer. We've focused on strategic collaboration to drive meaningful change.*



I'm particularly proud of how we've evolved to get closer to the people we support. By working directly with patients, carers and grant recipients, we're gaining invaluable insights that help us target our resources where they can have the greatest impact.

Our partnerships with the Head and Neck Cancer Coalition, Oracle Head and Neck Cancer UK, Swallows Head and Neck Cancer Support Group, BAHNON and many more, exemplify our collaborative approach to generating a lasting impact.

Fundraising continues to be a significant challenge, and we simply couldn't deliver our vital work without our loyal supporters and corporate partners. Your generosity has enabled groundbreaking initiatives such as our £40,000 contribution to the UK-wide audit feasibility study that will transform our understanding of head and neck cancer care.

I'd like to extend my thanks to the patients and carers who have bravely shared their difficult stories to raise awareness and help others. Your courage inspires everything we do.

And to our small, dedicated team – thank you for your continued hard work and for going above and beyond to help us address the complex challenges of head and neck conditions.

*Together, we're making a real difference.*

Danni Heath  
Get A-Head Director

# OUR IMPACT

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Total grants awarded

**£194,337**



Total funds raised

**£223,868**

**3**

New charity  
partnerships  
formed



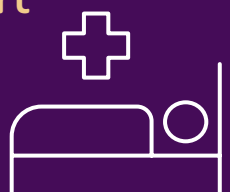
**5**

Research  
studies  
funded



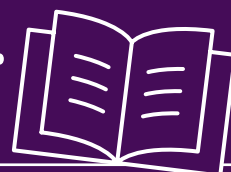
Grants awarded for **equipment**  
and **patient support**

**£62,116**



Grants awarded for **education** and  
**professional development**

**£132,221**



**21.5  
million**

Media audience reach

**183**

individual pieces  
of media coverage



**10**

Social media **awareness**  
campaigns supported

**+5.7%**

Increase in **social media**  
**audience across** all platforms





# The head and neck cancer crisis

## *Head and neck diseases present a growing health challenge across the UK.*

Some **17,000 people are diagnosed with head and neck cancer annually** – and the figure is increasing by 30 per cent every decade. Meanwhile millions more are affected by thyroid disorders, lymphoedema and ENT conditions. Against this backdrop, the need for specialised support is urgent.

**Alarmingly,  
60% of cancer diagnoses  
occur at late stage.**

**JUST OVER HALF  
OF PATIENTS RECEIVE  
TREATMENT WITHIN  
THE RECOMMENDED  
65-DAY TARGET**

with stark geographic inequalities  
across England and Wales.

## TREATMENT CHALLENGES AND GAPS IN CARE

### Critical gaps we've identified:

- No comprehensive audit exists of how head and neck cancers are diagnosed and treated nationally, creating a postcode lottery of care.
- Research deficits particularly affect rare but aggressive cancers like anaplastic thyroid carcinoma, which comprises only 1-2 per cent of cases but contributes to 50 per cent of thyroid cancer deaths.
- Support network inadequacies leave patients facing visible scarring, loss of speech and eating difficulties without adequate psychological and social support.
- Healthcare professional education lacks sufficient funding for advanced training in rapidly evolving surgical techniques.
- Data collection limitations prevent comprehensive understanding of treatment outcomes and patient experiences across regions and demographics.



# Our collaborative approach



## ***It is clear the need for coordinated action has never been more urgent.***

After 30 years of independent work, Get A-Head has fundamentally shifted its approach to amplify impact. Central to this has been a strategic drive to form lasting partnerships with other charitable organisations within our sector.

This is why our charity Director, Danni Heath, became a director of the Head and Neck Cancer Coalition in 2024, to amplify our voice alongside other 15 organisations, working to create 'one strong voice for all those affected by head and neck cancers in the UK'.

## **This collaboration enables:**

- Coordinated advocacy to influence policy
- Shared resources for maximum impact
- A united approach to addressing systemic challenges

We're proud to be part of this collective model which allows us to tackle challenges no single charity could address alone, from national data gaps to regional inequalities in care. By working together, we're better positioned to address the postcode lottery of care and to champion earlier diagnosis and more effective treatment pathways.



# Partnership philosophy and strategic priorities

*In addition to our work with the Head and Neck Cancer UK Coalition CIC, we are also driving change with several other key strategic partnerships:*



## **Swallows Head and Neck Cancer Charity**

Progressive funding in 2024 and 2025 to support 2,500 plus patients annually through peer support groups.



## **BAHNON (British Association of Head and Neck Oncology Nurses)**

Supporting professional education and clinical excellence.



## **Oracle Head and Neck Cancer UK**

Our partnership tackles inequality head-on through research in Tower Hamlets, where oral cancer rates have increased by 33 per cent over the last decade.



## **Global Action on Men's Health**

Supporting a worldwide campaign to raise awareness and eliminate HPV-related cancers.



## **Young Tongues**

Supporting the development of a dedicated patient hub providing age-appropriate, clinically reviewed resources for younger adults with tongue cancer.



## **Oracle and North West Cancer Research**

Our £36k contribution to the Oracle Small Grants Fund is supporting vital projects including research into boron neutron capture therapy; tobacco-related oral cancers in South Asian communities, testing of electrical nerve stimulation to improve shoulder function after neck surgery, and expanding a laryngeal cancer cohort to improve diagnosis and treatment approaches.



# Supporting the national Head and Neck Cancer Audit

***We're incredibly proud to continue playing a key part in this groundbreaking nationwide study, contributing £40,000 towards the total £270,000 initial stage of the research project.***

For Get A-Head, this represents a vital investment in understanding and improving care for people with head and neck cancer across the UK.

The study, led by Professor Thomas Cowling at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, tackles a problem we've long been concerned about – despite affecting 17,000 people annually, there's no comprehensive picture of how head and neck cancer is treated throughout the country.

"This work goes to the heart of what Get A-Head stands for," explains Danni Heath.

"Without knowing what's happening now, it's virtually impossible to identify where improvements are most needed. We're delighted to support research that will transform patient care."

## **The research aims to:**

- Develop and evaluate key performance indicators for diagnostic procedures, treatments and outcomes
- Assess variations in care between different regions, providers and patient groups
- Identify the clinical areas with the greatest potential for improvement
- Explore whether the research can be extended to less common head and neck cancer sites

The ongoing project will examine whether existing NHS data can reveal differences in patient experiences based on where they live, what treatment they receive and their personal circumstances including age and background.

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**By funding this work, we're helping to**  
**ADDRESS INEQUALITIES IN**  
**HEAD AND NECK CANCER**  
**CARE AND CREATE THE**  
**FOUNDATION FOR EVIDENCE-**  
**BASED IMPROVEMENTS**  
**ACROSS THE UK.**

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# Supporting carers

## Wirral University Teaching Hospital Project

### *Pioneering technology for cancer carers*

When someone you love is diagnosed with head and neck cancer, where do you turn for reliable information? This critical gap in support has inspired Get A-Head to fund a ground-breaking pilot project with Wirral University Teaching Hospital.

Our grant will enable a pioneering approach that combines human expertise with advanced technology. This feasibility study will investigate how to create trustworthy, accessible resources specifically for carers of head and neck cancer patients; using artificial intelligence technology to draw on a database of over 3,800 research articles. A second stage in this project will then be to transform this complex medical literature into practical guidance that carers can actually use.

### COLLABORATIVE EXPERTISE IN ACTION

Led by consultant Simon Rogers, the project brings together a steering group including representatives from national associations, support groups and clinical experts. The team will test the approach, refining and co-designing the resources to ensure they meet carers' real needs.

By supporting this innovative pilot with funding and with Danni Heath sitting on the steering group, we're not only exploring new ways to improve carer wellbeing but ultimately enhancing patient care and recovery.

## "CARERS ARE OFTEN THE UNSUNG HEROES OF THE CANCER JOURNEY,"

explains Danni Heath.

"They're thrown into a demanding new role with little preparation or support, yet we know that when carers cope well, patient outcomes improve. This pilot addresses a significant unmet need that perfectly aligns with our commitment to supporting everyone affected by head and neck conditions."



# Researcher spotlight

## investing in hope and innovation

*By supporting innovative projects across the spectrum of head and neck conditions, we're investing in hope – hope for faster diagnosis, gentler treatments and better quality of life for the thousands of people affected by these challenging conditions each year.*

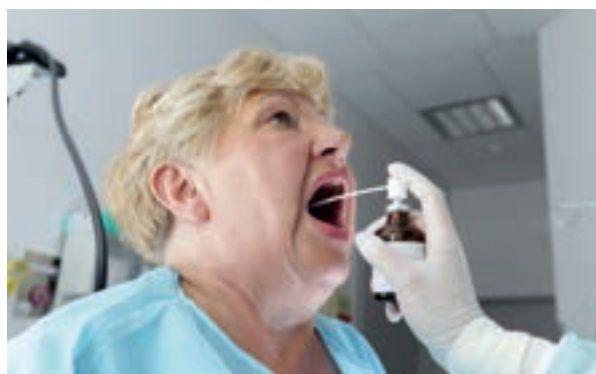
Over the past year, we've continued to support talented researchers who share our vision of improving outcomes for head and neck patients. From pioneering surgical techniques to innovative care pathways, we're proud to showcase some of the remarkable projects that your generous donations have made possible.

### NEWLY FUNDED PROJECTS



#### **KARAN JOLLY** *Advancing endoscopic skull base surgery*

Get A-Head has awarded £7,450 to Karan Jolly, ENT consultant at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, supporting his PhD research in anterior skull base surgery and reconstruction. His work focuses on minimally invasive endoscopic approaches to tackle sinonasal tumours and malignancies at the skull base. This research has significant potential to improve surgical outcomes by reducing morbidity and enhancing postoperative recovery through less invasive techniques. By supporting the publication and defence of this PhD, Get A-Head is helping to disseminate valuable knowledge about endoscopic endonasal skull base techniques across European institutions, potentially benefiting institutions still using more invasive approaches for conditions such as pituitary tumours.



#### **NAJMA CHOWDHURY:** *Transforming patient follow-up care*

Skull Base Clinical Nurse Specialist Najma Chowdhury received £1,274 to present her innovative work at the European Rhinology Society Congress. Her research introduces a new model of care: A nurse-led follow-up clinic and endoscopy service for head and neck cancer patients who have undergone treatment for tumours near the skull base. This pioneering approach has already demonstrated significant benefits, including faster patient appointments, more consistent care from trusted nurses and earlier detection of potential complications. By supporting Najma to share this model internationally, Get A-Head is helping to spread best practices that could improve care for thousands of patients across the UK and beyond.



## RESEARCHER SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED

*While our 2024-25 report primarily focuses on current initiatives, the impact of research we funded in previous years continues to deliver significant benefits for head and neck patients.*



### ABDUL NASSIMIZADEH

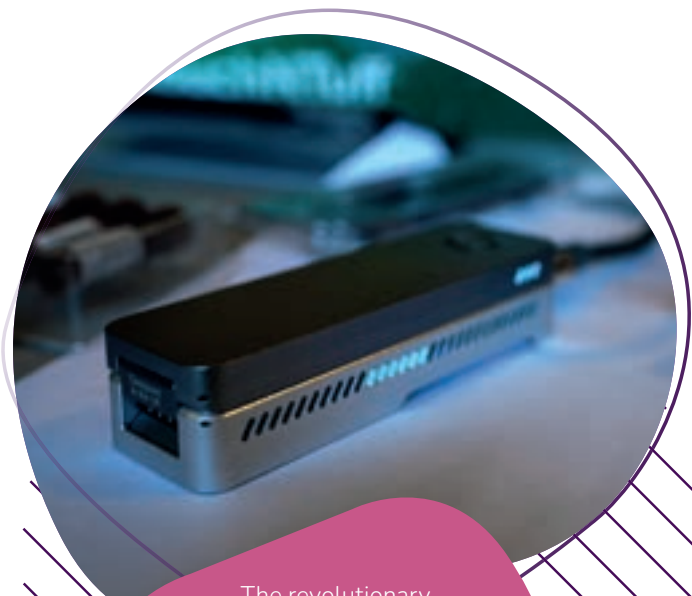
#### *Advancing skull base surgery*

Get A-Head provided a grant of £7,450 to Abdul Nassimizadeh, a locum rhinology consultant at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, supporting his decade of research into new skull base surgical techniques for cancer patients. This funding enabled Abdul to successfully defend his PhD thesis at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, ensuring his valuable research will now be shared across the UK and Europe. His work focuses on reducing the significant risks associated with skull base surgery through innovative techniques, potentially improving patient outcomes by reducing complications, hospital stays and the need for additional treatments.

### HANNAH NIETO:

#### *Revolutionising speed of treatment to reduce fatal outcomes of aggressive cancer*

Our £24,089 grant to Hannah Nieto at the University of Birmingham has enabled vital research into rapid genetic sequencing for anaplastic thyroid cancer using Oxford MinION nanopore technology. This rare but highly aggressive cancer comprises just 1-2 per cent of thyroid cancer cases but contributes to 50 per cent of thyroid cancer deaths, with average survival of only six months. Hannah's pioneering work aims to transform how quickly patients can access targeted treatments through portable DNA sequencing. The revolutionary technology can generate results within hours rather than the several weeks currently required, critically important in a disease that progresses so rapidly. By identifying specific genetic mutations faster, clinicians can match patients with appropriate therapies more rapidly, potentially improving survival rates for one of the most fatal forms of head and neck cancer.



The revolutionary technology can generate  
**results within hours**  
rather than the several weeks currently required

# Addressing inequalities in cancer diagnosis and treatment

## Tower Hamlets research

### THE REALITY OF HEALTH INEQUALITY

Tower Hamlets represents one of the starkest examples of cancer inequality in England. Residents face a 63 per cent higher likelihood of developing oral cancer compared to the national average, with rates of 21.5 per 100,000 population versus 13.2 for England as a whole. Even more concerning, oral cancer incidence has increased by a third over the last decade in this area characterised by high levels of deprivation and a large ethnic minority population.

### HEARING FROM THESE COMMUNITIES

Our £29,700 partnership with Oracle Head and Neck Cancer UK funds groundbreaking research that puts community voices at the centre of understanding these disparities. The project, conducted with Queen Mary University of London, represents a shift from top-down interventions to community-led approaches.

“We know that there are significant inequalities in the incidence of head and neck cancers across the whole country, and that is nowhere more obvious than in Tower Hamlets,” explains Danni Heath. “Understanding why these inequalities happen is the first step in being able to tackle them, and speaking directly to these communities is essential.”

### A COMMUNITY-CENTRED APPROACH

The research uses Patient Public Involvement networks to work directly with community groups, raising awareness of head and neck cancers, understanding barriers to timely care and capturing lived experiences to inform culturally appropriate interventions.

The methodology is designed to be applicable to other areas facing similar challenges, potentially creating a replicable model for addressing health inequalities in head and neck cancer across England.

### OUR COMMITMENT TO THE PROJECT

Our investment in the Tower Hamlets research reflects our strategic commitment to addressing health inequalities in head and neck cancer. By supporting this community-centred approach, we’re helping to develop a model that could transform how we understand and tackle disparities in cancer outcomes across the UK. Ultimately, improving quality of life for all those affected, regardless of their background or postcode.



# Expanding patient support

## Our partnership with Swallows

*Our strategic partnership with Swallows Head and Neck Cancer Support Group has gone from strength to strength in 2024/25 as we commit to ensuring more people affected by head and neck cancer receive vital support. Building on our previous investment of £24,000, we've approved a further grant of £37,000 to help Swallows launch more local support groups across England and Wales.*

This enhanced funding supports Swallows' dedicated support group coordinator in establishing new groups, training volunteers and coordinating guest speakers – ultimately extending the reach of these invaluable community resources.

### WHY THIS MATTERS

"We are delighted to strengthen our important partnership with Swallows to ensure that all patients and carers affected by head and neck cancer get the treatment and support they need," explains Danni Heath. "The support groups provided by Swallows deliver immeasurable benefits to patients and their carers."



### MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Head and neck cancer patients face some of the most complex challenges of any cancer group. The peer-led support that Swallows provides helps people navigate the profound changes to appearance, speech, eating and breathing that can result from treatment. By supporting Swallows' work, we're directly improving the lives of hundreds of patients each year.

Chris Curtis, Founder and CEO of The Swallows, said: "We are incredibly grateful for this support from Get A-Head. Its belief in our mission and the funding they've provided has already helped us reach more patients and raise awareness. Formalising this partnership means we can now go even further, together."



more  
patient  
support

# Enabling a digital resource for young patients with Young Tongues

## *Bridging the gap for young cancer patients*

When you're young and diagnosed with tongue cancer, where do you turn for information that speaks to your unique situation? This question led Get A-Head to award £20,000 to Young Tongues to create a dedicated online Patient Hub – a digital resource for an often-overlooked group.

“Young adults with tongue cancer face a particular challenge,” explains Danni Heath. “They’re dealing with a life-changing diagnosis while finding that most available resources don’t address their specific concerns. This project creates a space where their experiences are properly represented.”

## FROM ISOLATION TO COMMUNITY

The strength of this initiative lies in its approach. Much of the content comes directly from patients themselves – real stories, practical advice and valuable insights that don't exist in medical literature. The platform will transform these experiences into trusted, clinically reviewed resources that guide users from diagnosis through recovery and beyond.

With £8,000 allocated to professional website development and £12,000 for a project administrator, the hub will offer clear, straightforward information, peer support and practical tools to manage daily life during and after treatment.



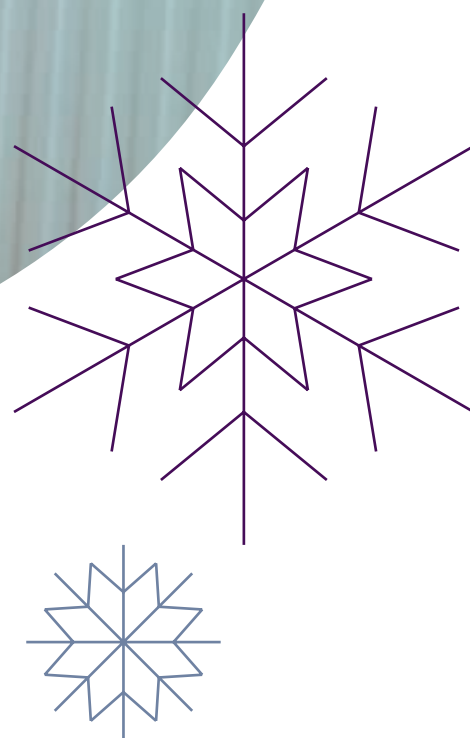
## Rehabilitation to improve swallowing for cancer patients

We provided £1,019.85 to Annette Zuydam from Shrewsbury & Telford NHS Trust to fund 12 EMST devices. EMST is a rehabilitation approach which transforms life for those who have been through head and neck cancer treatment, whereby the effects have altered their ability to swallow. The device helps exercise muscles in this area of the body, making swallowing easier, safer or more efficient.

It also works to improve the cough reflex and strength; an essential part of human anatomy that is often lifesaving.

We are extremely proud to fund this work, as sadly Annette has seen an increased number of patients being referred to Speech & Language Therapy for this problem. They are given exercises, but EMST is the key to seeing improvements, yet there is no budget for this in the trust, and so patients are asked to purchase it themselves. While a small number can, most of this demographic do not have the funds and are therefore not getting the best treatment.





## Cost of Living Fund for Patients over Christmas and the New Year

*A head and neck cancer diagnosis is devastating. Not just physically, but financially. In many cases, a person's day to day life is altered; often unable to work, to travel to appointments, to afford quality food or therapies that would aid their recovery. In extreme cases, people can fall into poverty. Without financial support, it can be incredibly difficult to maintain a good quality of life, with many falling into depression, or leading to other health concerns.*

For these reasons, we decided to create a Cost of Living Fund. A direct payment for head and neck cancer patients, to support them above and beyond what is provided by the state.

These individual grants of **£150 per patient** focus on key areas that patients can choose from, meaning they can decide what is best for them.



We fundraised for this project utilising the

### **Big Give Christmas Challenge campaign**

Which helped us reach new audiences, as well as our existing supporters. Donations were doubled, thanks to a philanthropic supporter: the Hospital Saturday Fund.

**We raised £4,000 through this campaign**

Plus, we added £6,000 to top-up the fund to £10,000 – all of which has gone directly to patients in January 2026.

**Big Give**



The Hospital  
Saturday Fund®



# Fundraising Event Highlights

## AN EXTRAORDINARY TIME OF GIVING

The generosity of our supporters has been truly remarkable

***over the last 18 months, with nearly £224,000 raised through a diverse range of events, donations and personal challenges.***

This outstanding achievement demonstrates the growing community of people committed to our mission.



### Our **30th Anniversary Ball**

at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole Hotel provided a fitting finale to our anniversary celebrations, bringing together nearly 400 supporters who have been with us over the decades. We heard moving speeches from patients affected by head and neck cancer, showcasing the importance of research, equipment and patient support.



### The **annual Clay Shoot**

at the Holland & Holland Shooting Grounds, which took place in 2024 and 2025, and will continue into 2026, proves to be a standout event with supporters returning year on year, entertaining their guests and having a brilliant team day out, all whilst learning more about the impact of our work, and taking part in fundraising activities.

# Personal challenges, remarkable impact

*In 2024/5, we welcomed new and long-term supporters to tackle physical challenges to fundraise for Get A-Head.*



Raising a staggering  
**£150,000**



## ROWING THE ATLANTIC

**Rod Adlington** and his **Brightsides crew** completed their epic trans-Atlantic rowing crossing in aid of the Get A-Head Charitable Trust, and Meningitis Now in early 2024, raising a staggering £150,000.

In 2026 they are taking on a new challenge: to cycle the length of England and Scotland from Lands' End to John O'Groats





## RUNNING CHALLENGES

In this period, we were delighted to welcome new and existing supporters to take part in physical challenges, raising money for Get A-Head. The London Marathon has often been the flagship, as one of the world's most prestigious running events worldwide.

In 2024, we were delighted that long-term supporters **Neil Ayliffe** and **Immy Yeoman** took part to raise **over £4,427 between them**. In 2025, we welcomed new supporters **Dave Inglis** and **Imogen Adams** who **brilliantly raised over £1,900**, as well as **Eleanor** and **Hannah Broggio**, who raised a **combined total of £2,525**.

We also welcomed supporters **Simon Freeman**, **Christina Hadjiyianni** and **Ollie Aldridge** who took part in the Cardiff Half Marathon; and **Gemma Mitchell** tackling the Birmingham 10K, raising a combined total of **£1,410** – including a generous match funding of £500 by Simon's employer, Barclays.



### Harry Bromwich and Frankie

**Bromwich raised more than £1,000**

**between them** participating in the Oxford Half Marathon and Vitality London 10k respectively.

Harry and Frankie's commitments are especially meaningful as they – along with their uncle Tom (our chair) and three cousins – needed to have their thyroids removed in primary school to avoid the genetic thyroid cancer suffered by their father.



To everyone who  
has supported our  
fundraising efforts ..

**Thank you for making  
a real difference.**

# Amplifying voices and driving change

## Our awareness campaigns



*Over the last 18 months, we've significantly boosted our profile across international, national and regional media, securing 183 pieces of coverage with a combined audience reach of 21.5 million. Alongside this, our social media presence continues to grow, with audience numbers rising by 5.7% across all platforms.*

Patient stories have been at the heart of our awareness work:



Mark Allen's incredible journey following facial reconstruction after his dog detected his tumour.



Claire Barbery's experience with rare olfactory neuroblastoma.



Wendy White's powerful message about trusting your instincts have all helped put a human face to the challenges of head and neck cancer.

## STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN ALIGNMENT FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

We've proudly supported 10 major awareness initiatives, carefully aligning our patient stories and expert voices with campaigns including World Head and Neck Cancer Day and Less Survivable Cancer Awareness Week. By joining forces with NOMAN is an Island, we've strengthened our advocacy around HPV vaccination, while our involvement in Mouth Cancer Action Month and Thyroid Cancer Awareness Month has highlighted the diverse range of conditions we support.

This coordinated approach has enabled us to elevate our profile and showcase our mission through a strong media presence, helping us reach new audiences with potentially life-saving messages about early symptom recognition. As we look ahead, we'll continue building on these foundations to ensure Get A-Head remains a trusted, authoritative voice for everyone affected by head and neck diseases.



# Our Supporters

*We'd like to dedicate a page of this report to some of our core supporters, who for many years – especially the last 18 months – have been vital in enabling the charity's success.*

The **Janet Nash Charitable Settlement** is a grant-giving charity that supports a range of medical and health related causes. The charity has been a long-time supporter of Get A-Head, providing an annual donation of £50,000.

**Wigley Investment Holdings** is a UK-based company that owns and invests in several businesses, which operate across the real estate life cycle, on behalf of the Wigley family. The organisation has supported many Get A-Head events, sponsoring the Annual Clay Shoot Challenge, the Brightsides Row Across the Atlantic Challenge, as well as the flagship 30th Anniversary Ball in 2024. Furthermore, they provide valuable room hire pro bono, something which is incredibly important to help charities work collaboratively in-person, and host events without incurring costly expenses.



Our thanks also extend to **EHB Residential, Rosconn Group** and **Bromwich Hardy** for their continued support. To Katie Absalom at **Wilde & Glorious** for her exceptional work managing the Clay Challenge year on year, and to Louise Connor at **Lemon Zest** for her dedication and flair with our flagship 30th Anniversary Ball.

We also have a wonderful group of **patrons**: Dr Hilary Jones, Peter Scudamore, Nigel Wray, Hoss Mehjoo, Harry and Jamie Redknapp, HRH Princess Micheal of Kent, Cher and Digby Lord Jones of Birmingham.



And not to forget, our **Board of Trustees**, who are all passionate, and committed to shaping the future of Get A-Head. Our heartfelt thanks go to Tom Bromwich, Rob Spittle, Wendy Davies, Simon Fisher, John Watkinson, Shahz Ahmed, Paul Mourtton and David Spooner.



# Supporting professional development

## Investing in excellence

### ADVANCING EDUCATION NATIONWIDE

Get A-Head continues to fulfil one of its primary strategic aims by investing in the education of healthcare professionals working with head and neck patients. A highlight of this commitment was our support for the British Association of Head and Neck Oncology Nurses (BAHNON) conference in Birmingham.

Our funding provided 10 fully-funded places for nurses from across the UK, including professionals from London, Sussex, Cornwall and beyond – significantly extending our national reach. We also sponsored prizes and helped with accommodation costs for delegates.

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***“Professional conferences can be invaluable, but the cost can be prohibitive. It’s great that we’ve been able to provide free places for nurses to attend.”***

Danni Heath

***“Get A-Head is helping to break down barriers to professional development so that more nurses can learn from each other and bring new knowledge back to their patients.”***

BAHNON president Claire Barber

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### INVESTING IN SPECIALIST SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Get A-Head has also supported individual professional development through a £1,600 grant enabling Lisa-Marie Thompson, a Head and Neck Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist at Musgrove Park Hospital in Somerset, to attend a prestigious master’s module at The Royal Marsden Hospital.

This training enhances her ability to assess patients during radiotherapy treatment, particularly in areas such as chest auscultation and neck lump assessment. The advanced skills will allow Lisa-Marie to provide more timely and comprehensive care, reducing diagnostic delays and contributing to the development of nursing-led surveillance clinics that benefit patients by reducing waiting times.

This investment continues to demonstrate our commitment to supporting excellence in head and neck cancer care nationwide.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR HEAD AND NECK CANCER HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Funding for professional development across healthcare is limited; and yet these courses and events often provide incredibly valuable, up to date research, insights, peer-to-peer relationship building, that greatly enhance confidence, quality of work, and as a result, patient experience.

We have provided £4,500 to Camilla Dawson, a Consultant in Speech & Language Therapy. This sponsorship provides 10 ward and outpatient staff, AHPs and nurses, the opportunity attend the European Head and Neck Course Birmingham 2025. This esteemed four-day, unique and excellent course offers a clinical update for teams locally and nationally. It is a fantastic opportunity for teams to understand how to optimise outcomes for patients with head and neck cancer.

# Delivering on our commitments

## Strategic achievements in 2024/25



*Against our vision of reduced rates of head and neck cancer, earlier diagnosis, effective treatment and improved quality of life, we've delivered tangible progress across all our strategic aims:*

### EQUIPMENT PROVISION AND PATIENT SUPPORT

We awarded **£61,096** in grants for specialist equipment and patient support, directly improving treatment options beyond what's available through the NHS. We strengthened our Swallows partnership with a £37,000 grant to expand support groups nationwide, invested £20,000 in Young Tongues' digital platform for younger patients, and established our hardship fund.

### RESEARCH SUPPORT

We distributed **£105,604** in research grants including funding five critical research studies, most notably our £40,000 contribution to the nationwide head and neck cancer audit and a £29,700 partnership with Oracle to address health inequalities in Tower Hamlets. A further £36,000 was awarded to the Oracle Small Grants Programme; £14,854 funding to University of Birmingham to support the continuation of research focused on developing and validating a novel thyroid risk-stratification tool and funded a £9750 pilot system at Wirral University Teaching Hospital to improve access to resources for carers.

### EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

We invested **£21,908** in professional development, sponsoring 10 nurses to attend the BAHNON conference and supporting specialist skills training for a number of medical professionals.

### AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

We supported 10 major awareness initiatives, aligning powerful patient stories with key campaigns including World Head and Neck Cancer Day, generating 183 pieces of coverage, an audience reach of 21.5million and driving a 5.7% increase in social media audience.

**Through our collaborative approach with the Head and Neck Cancer UK Coalition and other strategic partners, we've made a tangible impact – transforming research, care and awareness despite our small size.**

# Looking ahead

## What next for Get A-Head

*As we look forward to 2026 our strategic priorities will continue to focus on raising awareness, data, support, research, and collaboration. We will continue to support the Head and Neck Cancer National Audit feasibility study to address gaps in diagnosis and treatment data.*

Post-treatment support remains a top priority, targeting inequalities in access to rehabilitation, speech therapy, and mental health care.

Our grant funding focus will see us invest £350k in 2026 across a range of innovative projects.

**Equipment** – Funding specialist tools not covered by the NHS, including a £400k grant for an Integrated Theatre at Birmingham's QE Hospital.

**Research** – Addressing data gaps and supporting projects to improve understanding, treatment, and equity.

**Education** – Continuing partnerships with BAHNON to train nurses and healthcare professionals and expanding public awareness campaigns.

**Patient Support** – Backing charities and groups that are working directly with patients and carers to provide community-based support.

Future development will see us begin co-production work with patients and carers, establishing an advisory group to ensure lived experience informs all strategy and funding decisions.

## PARTNERSHIPS, FUNDRAISING & IMPACT

Get A-Head will focus efforts on donor and stewardship management, looking after our supporters, and growing individual, legacy and corporate giving. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks will track outcomes, while storytelling, social media, and newsletters will strengthen communications.

In 2026 Get A-Head will strive to be a collaborative, data-driven, patient-centred charity that drives earlier diagnosis, equitable care, and better lives for everyone affected by head and neck cancers.

*Thank you for your support.*



# Contact information

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