



Norfolk and Suffolk Health and Care Awards 2026

Unsung Hero Award

Donny Brown

East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust

Donny is an exceptional volunteer whose lived experience and compassion have made a profound difference to patients and communities connected to Ipswich Hospital. Volunteering twice weekly within the Head and Neck clinic and Radiotherapy department, he offers reassurance, understanding and emotional support to patients at some of their most vulnerable moments. His ability to relate on a personal level provides comfort that complements clinical care, helping individuals feel less isolated and more understood.

Beyond his core role, Donny's contribution extends across multiple areas of the Trust. He supports charity events, provides cover for the hospital buggy service to assist less mobile patients, maintains a therapeutic garden space, and is training as a Hospital Radio presenter. His positivity, flexibility and commitment mean he is always willing to help wherever needed, making a meaningful difference to patients, staff and visitors alike.

Donny also co-founded and leads the Swallows Head and Neck Cancer Support Group, creating a vital peer-support network for patients, families and carers. The group has grown significantly, becoming one of the largest in the UK and offering practical, emotional and social support, including sharing resources, organising experiences and supporting members through end-of-life care.

His impact is both immediate and lasting—supporting individuals in clinical settings while building a strong, sustainable community resource. Through kindness, dedication and genuine connection, Donny embodies the spirit of an unsung hero, transforming experiences and creating a legacy of support for many others.