

COBALT

SPRING 2026

NEWS



Doing it for...



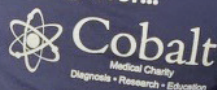
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COBALT'S IMPACT
ON LUNG CANCER

THE BIG SORT

PROTECTING PLAYERS
BRAINS



Cobalt
Medical Charity
Diagnosis • Research • Education

Registered Charity Number 1090790

Welcome to Cobalt News!

Cobalt has been supporting NHS patients across Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire for more than 60 years, and while our roots are here in the Three Counties, our work now reaches far beyond - supporting NHS teams across the UK. So, to open this edition, we'd love you to meet one of our wonderful clinical team members who helps make that possible.

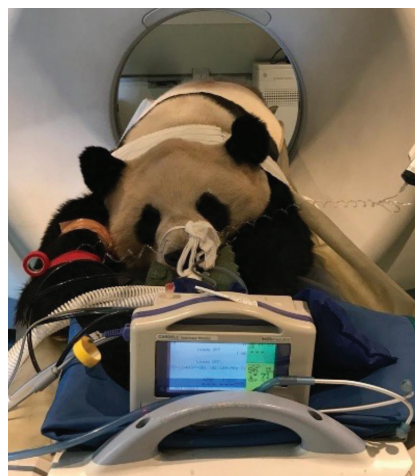
Hello, my name is Claire, and I'm the Lung Cancer Screening Manager for the North of England. I began my career as a radiographer in the NHS in Lancashire, and although that sounds traditional, my path has taken a few unusual turns along the way.

Unlike many of my colleagues, I've scanned both humans and animals - sometimes very large animals. One of my favourite career moments was scanning a giant panda from Edinburgh Zoo (yes, really and yes, the panda was ok!). Experiences like that have given me a wonderfully varied background, and they've taught me to stay calm, adaptable and curious - qualities that certainly come in handy when managing busy mobile lung screening services.

People often ask why I returned to working with humans full-time, and the answer is simple: it's incredibly fulfilling. Being even a small part of someone's journey, helping to provide reassurance, clarity or the information they need at a worrying time is a privilege I never take for granted.

Thank you for reading Cobalt News and thank you for all you do to help make a difference at Cobalt Medical Charity.

Claire Finan, Lung Cancer Screening Manager



CEO Update

This promises to be an exciting year for Cobalt. One of the first things to note is that we will be changing our name to Cobalt Medical Charity. This better reflects who we are, what we do, and clearly signals that we are a charity.

The name change, forms part of a wider strategy approved by our Board of Trustees before Christmas covering the period to 2030. This strategy focuses on our patients, staff, volunteers, services and charitable work, while placing greater emphasis on our local and regional roots. It is designed to strengthen our message and help others better understand what we do, how we do it and why it matters. I will share more on this in the next issue.

In the meantime, Cobalt continues at pace. Our Cheltenham imaging centre remains very busy, our Community Diagnostic Centres in Gloucester and Dudley are supporting high volumes of patients, and our mobile scanners continue to support research and screening programmes across the country.

We have a strong team doing important work, and I look forward to meeting more of our supporters during the year ahead. Best wishes to you all for 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Brown'.

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Get our latest news straight to your inbox. You can either sign up at www.cobalthhealth.co.uk/support-us, call us on 01242 535922 or email us fundraising@cobalthhealth.co.uk.

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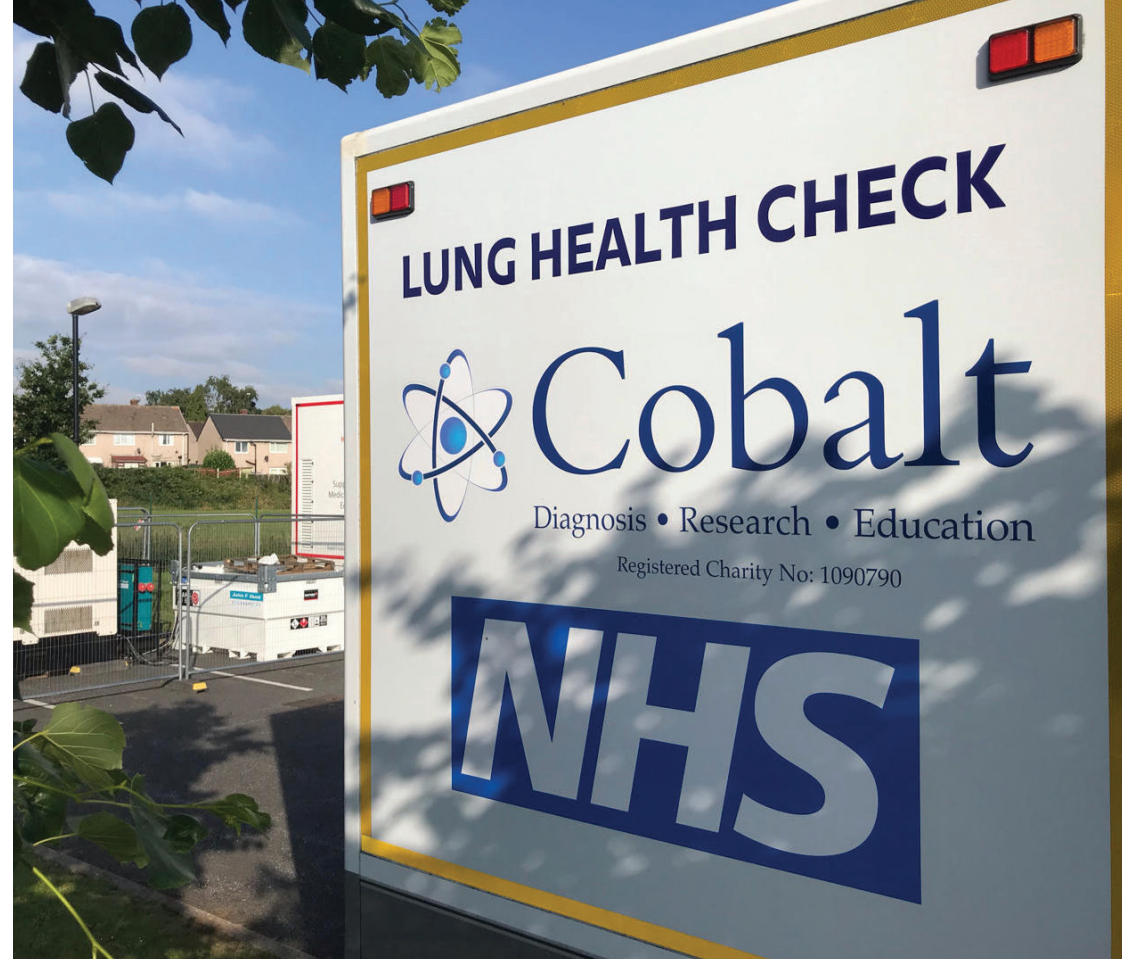
Cobalt's *impact* on Lung Cancer

Since 2019, Cobalt has played a vital role in supporting the NHS Lung Health Check Programme. Cobalt became involved from the very beginning to help deliver the national pilot, providing mobile CT expertise and equipment to test whether bringing scans directly into communities could improve early diagnosis for those most at risk. The success of that pilot now forms the basis of the full national NHS Lung Cancer Screening Programme, set for rollout across England by 2030.

The impact to date has been extraordinary. More than 5,000 lung cancers have already been identified through the programme, with 76%

found at the earliest, most treatable stages. People diagnosed early are nearly twenty times more likely to survive for five years than those diagnosed late. The programme is also helping reduce health inequalities, with more people in deprived areas receiving earlier diagnoses than ever before.

Central to making this work each day are dedicated professionals like Claire, Cobalt's Manager for Lung Cancer Screening in the North of England and who you met in the Welcome to Cobalt News introduction. A trained radiographer, Claire brings both clinical insight and operational expertise to the



complex task of running mobile scanning services. She liaises closely with the operations team to ensure everything runs smoothly moving our £1m+ mobile CT units into supermarket car parks and sports stadiums, to working alongside NHS colleagues to ensure the scanners are ready to deliver safe, high-quality imaging to patients.

“Being part of something that helps diagnose cancer earlier is incredibly meaningful,” Claire says. “All of us know someone affected by this disease. If I can play even a small role in catching it sooner, that makes every day worthwhile.”

♥♥♥ *"So many happy faces"* ♥♥♥

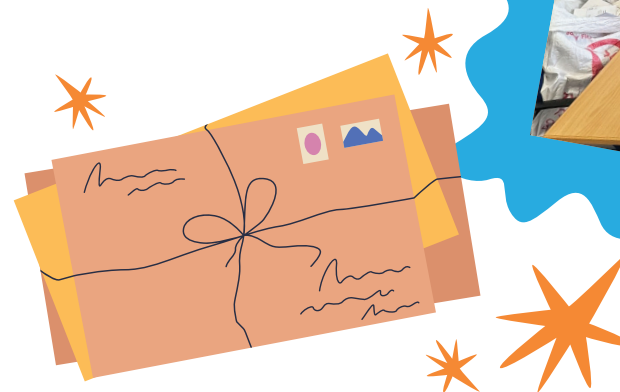
BIG SORT

For more than 40 years, Cobalt's incredible volunteers have been quietly transforming donated greetings cards into something extraordinary - beautiful upcycled cards that raise vital funds for our charity.

While many supporters know about the card-making process, fewer know about the remarkable event that makes it all possible: the annual Cobalt Big Sort.

Each January, tens of thousands of Christmas and greetings cards are dropped off at Cobalt and sorted by hundreds of volunteers over three weeks. It is an extraordinary collective effort that creates our card stock for the entire year and a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when people come together.

For many volunteers, the Big Sort offers a welcome lift during what can be a cold and gloomy time of year. One recently retired volunteer, who signed up after reading about the Big Sort in the newsletter, described instantly feeling



"warm" on arrival. Clear instructions, friendly faces and a shared sense of purpose made the morning fly by. She enjoyed it so much she has already signed up again for next year and hopes to spot a card she helped prepare in the shops.

Another volunteer spoke of walking into Cobalt and seeing "so many happy faces" working together to give old cards a new life. Others highlighted the laughter, companionship and even the surprise of discovering just how many "naughty" Christmas cards exist!

We are deeply indebted to every volunteer who gives their time, energy and smiles to the Big Sort. Their dedication turns simple cards into year-round kindness and helps ensure Cobalt can continue its work.





Capture a Moment 2026

Our annual photography competition produced some stunning images. Twelve of which were displayed at Linton House and made up our 2026 calendar. We had over 500 stunning entrants for our judges to deliberate over. Inspired by these amazing pictures? Whether you use a phone or digital camera, why not enter our 2026 competition. Look out for our launch later in the year.

1	Mick West	Crossing The River
2	Elisa Best	Bee On Waterlilly
3	Helen Webb	Ground Squirrel
4	Simon Vaughan	Incoming
5	Gary Cox	Lone Tree Sunrise
6	Christine Speck	Lucky Escape
7	Peter Mcgeachan	Male And Female Chalkhill Blues
8	Edyta Rice	Misty Island
9	Kris Fraser	Owfull Timing
10	Steve Wrightson	Rabbits Breath
11	Jas Bell	Robin
12	Chloe Mellor	Silently Watching

Cobalt events

Reindeer Run

We were proud to host our inaugural Reindeer Run on Sunday 7th December 2025 at National Star College, and it proved to be a fantastic success. With over 140 runners taking part, the event brought together people of all ages and abilities for a fun, festive day in support of a great cause. Thanks to the generosity of everyone involved, we raised more than £2,500.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to TMC Foods, our principal sponsor, whose support was instrumental in making the event possible. We are also grateful to BBC Gloucestershire, Let's Face It, Studio Fit Gloucester, Morrisons Up Hatherley, FX Live, and Country Grill for their generous backing.

Above all, a huge thank you to our runners, volunteers, and supporters. Your enthusiasm, hard work, and community spirit made our first Reindeer Run truly memorable, and we couldn't have done it without you.

Annual Walk for Cobalt

Following the success of last year, Cobalt is proud to host its second Walk for Cobalt on Saturday, 21st March 2026. This community event invites people of all ages to enjoy a scenic walk through Cheltenham while raising vital funds for Cobalt's work. It's a wonderful opportunity to get active, connect with supporters, and make a difference. Bring your family, friends, children and dogs to explore and learn more about this wonderful historic town.

Join us to make a difference not only for your local medical charity, but a reason to get out and enjoy a stroll around the history which surrounds us. Join us for a special celebration at the end of the walk at the Exmouth on Bath Road, where there will be refreshments and entertainment.





Get ready to make a splash at the Xtreme Colour Run on Sunday, 17th May 2026, held in partnership with Dunkertons - bookings are now open! This vibrant, high-energy run isn't for the faint-hearted. Participants will dash through clouds of colourful powder, embracing the thrill, laughter, and sheer excitement of this unforgettable event.

Perfect for groups, whether you're coming with friends, colleagues, or celebrating a hen or stag do, the Xtreme Colour Run is all about having fun together while making memories that last. Though it's not a casual stroll, the course is designed to challenge and energise those who love an exhilarating run in a unique and colourful setting. We're grateful to Dunkertons for their partnership, helping us bring this incredible event to life. Book your place now and get ready to run, laugh, and experience the Xtreme Colour Run in all its vibrant glory!



From Bowls to Railways and beyond...

On Monday 13th October 2025, we were delighted to welcome members of Fairford Bowling Club to Linton House to celebrate their fundraising for Cobalt. Continuing the legacy of Brian and June Wall, the club has raised over £13,292, supporting our cancer research nurses, dementia studies, and advanced medical imaging.

We also thank Mike Walker and the Cheltenham GWR Modellers Group for their support at this year's Model Railway Exhibition, which raised £1,100. The event featured steam and diesel layouts, model vehicles, trade stands, and refreshments. Their contributions help fund vital research, diagnoses, and education, making a real difference for local patients.

Community Events

It has been a fantastic year for Cobalt, and we are incredibly grateful to our local community for their ongoing support. From coffee mornings and Christmas fairs to card selling and sponsored days, people across the region have come together to raise funds and awareness for our vital work. Each event, whether big or small, contributes directly to research, diagnoses, and supports services that make a real difference for patients and families.

We have been inspired by the creativity, energy, and generosity shown by everyone who has organised or taken part in these activities. Your efforts help ensure that we can continue to provide cutting-edge medical imaging, support young people with cancer, fund dementia research, and deliver essential patient services across the region.

If you are interested in organising an event to support Cobalt, please get in touch with Emily at emily.janes@cobalthhealth.co.uk - we would love to hear from you!

COBALT EVENTS 2026

Save the dates



5 TH - 23 RD JANUARY	The Big Sort	Linton House
5 TH FEBRUARY	Line Dancing	Dunkertons
21 ST MARCH	Walk for Cobalt	Cheltenham
APRIL - COBALT MAKE A WILL MONTH		
12 TH APRIL	Open Garden and Plant fair	Quenington
17 TH MAY	Xtreme Colour Run	Dunkertons
20 TH JUNE	Open Garden	Highnam
31 ST JULY - 2 ND AUGUST	Gloucestershire Vintage and Country Extravaganza	Cirencester
26 TH SEPTEMBER	Coffee Morning	Linton House
OCTOBER - BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH		
TBC	Mistletoe Christmas Fair	Linton House
DECEMBER	Reindeer Run	TBC
DECEMBER	The Big Give	TBC



cobalthhealth.co.uk/events
01242 535922



Pioneering Research to Protect Player Brains

The Podium Institute and Cobalt are proud to be working with Gloucester Rugby on a truly groundbreaking, world-first research study that could transform how head injuries in sport are understood and treated.

For the first time anywhere in the world, elite rugby players' brains are being scanned using a mobile MRI scanner within hours of a suspected concussion.

By bringing advanced medical imaging directly to the pitch, this pioneering approach bridges the critical gap between on-field head impacts and hospital-based scans, allowing researchers to observe what happens in the brain at the very earliest stages of injury.

The study brings together Gloucester Rugby's men's and women's teams, The Podium Institute at the University of Oxford, and Cobalt, which provides

'This study represents a major step forward in how we understand concussion.'

Europe's only mobile 3.0 Tesla MRI scanner. The scanner is deployed pitch-side at both home and away matches, enabling scans to take place within hours of a suspected head impact, a major step forward compared with previous research delayed by hospital logistics.

Alongside MRI imaging, the study combines data from smart mouthguards that measure head acceleration, eye-tracking assessments, saliva tests and detailed video analysis. Together, these measures provide an unprecedented, holistic view of what happens to the brain immediately following a head injury.

By capturing this crucial window, the research aims to improve how

concussions are diagnosed and managed, supporting better treatments and long-term protections for players. Player welfare sits at the heart of this work, reinforcing the shared commitment of all partners to safety and wellbeing in sport. Cobalt's Director of Research, Professor Iain Lyburn, said: "This study represents a major step forward in how we understand concussion. By bringing a high-field MRI scanner directly into the sporting environment, we can capture changes in the brain at a moment that has never been studied before.

The insights gained have the potential to improve diagnosis, guide better interventions, and ultimately help protect the long-term brain health of athletes at every level of the game."



Research Round-Up with Professor Iain Lyburn

As you may have read in Cobalt News, not all our research takes place at Cheltenham. Some of our most exciting work happens at the Institute of Translational Medicine (ITM) in Birmingham.

Recently, we upgraded to a state-of-the-art Siemens VIDA FIT 3.0 Tesla scanner,

opening doors to cutting-edge imaging and smoother workflows for both clinical and research scans.

This new technology is already making a difference with cardiac, breast cancer and liver disease research underway. Your support helps make research possible.



Big Give Appeal

Driving Local Innovation in Dementia Research



Thanks to your generosity, our first-ever Big Give for dementia was a huge success, raising the grand total of £ £42,259.75 to drive vital local research. We would like to say thank you to the Julia Rausing Trust who were our Big Give Champions.

Dementia affects nearly a million people in the UK, taking away memories, independence, and precious time with loved ones. Here at Cobalt we are helping in the fight to change that by using advanced MRI and the only PET/CT scanner in the three counties, we can detect dementia earlier and more accurately, even in complex cases.

Working alongside the NHS and researchers, your support enables new clinical trials, accelerates diagnosis, and helps train the specialists shaping the future of dementia care. Every donation brings us closer to unlocking treatments and giving families hope. Together, we are turning cutting-edge science into life-changing results.

Finally, a personal message from myself to all our supporters, 'Our ability to do this research work is thanks to the kind generosity of people like you. Thank you so much for your continued support.'

We were very fortunate to receive support from several trusts who supported the charity.

Our valued trust supporters make a vital difference to our work and have a pivotal role in helping Cobalt's deliver its mission on research. No matter how big or small, the donations we receive all make a difference to the lives of our patients. There are several ways for foundations and charitable trusts to offer support.

Some give one-off or annual unrestricted gifts, which allow us to use the money to address our identified priorities at that time. Others work in partnership with us to support a specific piece of research or area of work.

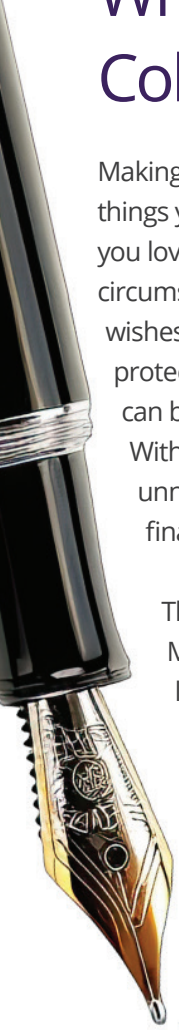
The loyalty and generosity of charitable trusts and foundations is crucial to our work, each making a valuable contribution to the costs of funding our projects.

If you are involved with a charitable trust or foundation and feel able to consider supporting Cobalt, we would welcome the opportunity to provide more background to our charity, including the range of specialist imaging research covered by the projects we currently support.

Massive thanks to the Fieldrose Trust, the Pink Ribbon Foundation, Clive Richards Foundation, Summerfield Trust, Energy for Life, Renishaw PLC, The Gordan Grey Trust, The Brian Shaw Memorial Trust, Wotton under Edge District Council, The Dent Brocklehurst Family Charitable Trust and the Parivar Trust.

Make a Will Month

Write or update your will during Cobalts Make a Will Month



Making a will is one of the most caring things you can do for the people you love. No matter your age or circumstances, a will ensures your wishes are respected and helps protect those closest to you at what can be an incredibly difficult time. Without one, families can face unnecessary stress, delays and financial costs.

This April, during Cobalt's Make a Will Month, several local solicitors are generously donating their time to write or update straightforward wills free of charge, in return for a suggested donation to Cobalt. Appointments are

limited, so early booking is encouraged. We are deeply grateful to Willans, Davis Gregory, Langley Wellington, Dee & Griffin, and Sewell Mullings Logie for their support.

There is no obligation to leave a gift to Cobalt, but gifts in wills are vital to our future.

They help fund life-changing research, specialist nursing roles and innovative trials that bring hope to people affected by cancer and dementia. Leaving a legacy, no matter the size, is a powerful way to make a lasting difference.



Supporting Cobalt

As a charity, we need your help to enable us to do what we do best for patients.



Donating online is easy. If you are eligible for Gift Aid, we can increase your donation by 25%. To make a single donation, or to set up a monthly gift visit www.cobalthealth.co.uk/support-us/make-a-donation/



By CAF or Cheque, payable to 'Cobalt' post to Cobalt Fundraising, Linton House, Thirlestaine Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL53 7AS. Don't forget to include your name and address so we can say thank you.



Fancy organising an event, volunteering or getting involved in some way with Cobalt? Call us on 01242 535922 or email fundraising@cobalthealth.co.uk and we'll be delighted to help.

Book a Volunteer Talk

If your school or organisation or community group is interested in a talk or presentation by Cobalt to learn more about the charity, please get in touch on 01242 535922 or email fundraising@cobalthealth.co.uk

Donate to Cobalt today

Your Donation Will Make an Impact

I would like to give: £15 ☐ £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £5 ☐

Other: My chosen amount £

I would like my donation to go to (please tick): Research ☐ Equipment ☐ Nurses ☐

Where it is most needed ☐

☐ I enclose a cheque, postal order or CAF cheque (please make payable to Cobalt)

☐ I would like to donate with a debit or credit card online or by phone. Please visit
www.cobalthhealth.co.uk or call 01242 535922

☐ I would like to set up a regular direct debit donation - please send me details

giftaid it

Gift Aid It Boost your donation by 25p per £1 donated

☐ Yes, I would like Cobalt to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year and all donations I make from this date until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax to cover the amount that all charities will reclaim on my donations in the tax year and it would be my responsibility to pay any difference.

☐ No, I am not a UK taxpayer

☐ Please save the postage - a thank you letter is not necessary

Please email my acknowledgement to:

Full name: Telephone number:

Address:

Postcode: Email address:

If you're new to Cobalt or have supported us for a while, we would love to continue to keep in touch with you to tell you about our latest work, appeals, and upcoming events and how you can support us. Your details are safe with us. We will never share them with anyone else. Please tick your communication preferences:

Email: Yes ☐ No ☐ Email address

Telephone: Yes ☐ No ☐ Telephone number

Post: Yes ☐ No ☐ Address



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