

Alison Brind Memorial Bursary in counselling skills for supporting people with or at risk of liver disease

This scheme will offer approximately 10 bursaries a year to health care professionals working with people diagnosed with or at elevated risk of liver disease, to encourage and enable the professionals to develop their counselling skills to help them support these individuals in modifying their lifestyle to reduce their risk.

The bursary will cover the fees for an on-line certified course in Motivational Interviewing. The scheme is aimed at both professionals working in acute hospital services and also professionals working in the community including in organisations such as drug and alcohol services.

Applicants will have a choice between a one-day interactive online course offered by ETAL training on specific dates or a recorded course offered by APT constituting 18 hours of CPD which can be accessed anytime and taken in stages.

Bursaries will be awarded throughout the year. Applicants working in the Staffordshire area will have priority; applications from elsewhere in the UK will be considered. Decisions on awards will be made by a committee of people with experience working in hospitals and the primary care sector. The bursaries will be awarded from a fund held for this scheme by the British Liver Trust.

Awardees will be expected to provide a feedback report after they have completed the course in order to provide an audit trail for the expenditure of the charitable donations and also to enable us to assess the impact of the bursaries.

Applicants should complete this online form: [Application Form](#).

If you have any questions about the bursary or the application process, please contact alisonbursary@gmail.com.

About Alison

Dr Alison Brind was a Consultant in Gastroenterology at University Hospital North Midlands (UHNM) in Stoke on Trent. She was the first liver specialist the hospital had recruited, and she was one of just four consultants in the gastroenterology unit that covered a population of more than half a million people. At UHNM she helped establish a nurse-led hepatitis C treatment programme and provided support to a hospital alcohol liaison team.

Alison cared deeply about her patients and was committed to helping those with and at risk of liver disease. She firmly believed that if liver disease is recognised early enough and lifestyle adaptations are made to reduce alcohol intake, exercise and eat healthily to maintain a normal weight, it can usually be successfully managed or even prevented, at least in its most serious forms.

She was dismayed by the fact that the incidence of liver disease has been rising year on year including in young people. In England the number of people dying prematurely from liver disease and liver cancer has increased by almost two-thirds (64%) in the last 20 years. In the UK there are

more than 11,000 deaths due to liver disease each year. That's more than 31 deaths a day. Three-quarters of people with cirrhosis are only diagnosed at crisis point, when they develop potentially life-threatening symptoms of late-stage disease.

Alison was a generous donor to the British Liver Trust; she was very supportive of the British Liver Trust's outreach activities. She was a keen runner, long distance walker and skier. She participated in many running and walking events and challenges to raise money for charity.

Alison was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2022. In the last year and a half of her life, after her diagnosis, and before, she campaigned tirelessly for better treatment and better services for patients with liver disease and raised money for screening and support in the community. In this video on YouTube, she talks about the importance of tackling liver disease:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79XI3jAxAeI>.

She organised fundraising running events and walks. She wrote a book, *I Never Stop*, on her running and walking exploits, to raise money for her campaign. This is a video on her fundraising campaign: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96e-g-t2bfl>. As a result of her fundraising campaign a Fibroscan® scanner was purchased to allow instant feedback to be given to individuals on their liver health.

In 2023 she was awarded a Special Recognition Award by the British Liver Trust and the British Association for the Study of the Liver; and a local NHS Hero Award in recognition of her service to the population of Staffordshire. Alison sadly passed away in April 2024.

One of her objectives was to set up a bursary to help health care professionals gain skills in counselling to support those at risk of liver disease to empower behaviour change. Sadly, she was not able to complete this before she died; therefore, this bursary has been established as a memorial to the inspirational example she set.

