



RUTH STRAUSS
FOUNDATION

**OUR STRATEGY:
THE NEXT PHASE**



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RUTH'S LEGACY

In early 2018, Ruth Strauss, mum of two young boys, was diagnosed with an incurable lung cancer that affects non-smokers. Her family faced the toughest challenge: telling their two sons about her diagnosis and preparing them for her death.

Towards the end of her life, the idea of the Foundation arose out of Ruth's wish to help other families in similar circumstances.

The Ruth Strauss Foundation was established in 2019 to:

- Provide emotional support for families navigating a parent's incurable cancer diagnosis
- Raise awareness of the need for increased research, earlier diagnosis and greater understanding of non-smoking lung cancer



Ines speaks at our annual Friends of RSF event.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO INES THIRU



I am proud to present the new strategic plan for the Ruth Strauss Foundation, which will guide our work over the next three years.

This plan is not just a roadmap for the future but a reflection of the foundations we've built and the progress we've made in just 6 years since inception.

Our work to support families where a parent is living with an incurable cancer, and advocate for those diagnosed with a non-smoking lung cancer, is driven by a deep understanding of the unmet need, a commitment to collaboration, and an unwavering focus on delivering impact. We continuously evaluate our approach, learning from both our successes and challenges. Whether it's through our Family Support Service or our growing advocacy efforts for non-smoking lung cancer, we strive to maximise every resource, ensuring that every pound is spent on real, measurable outcomes.

As we enter this next phase, we aim to broaden our reach, ensuring families from all walks of life have access to our support. We're evolving our network of care so that families are looked after - at home, in healthcare settings, at work and now crucially, in schools. This integrated approach ensures families receive essential help to navigate challenging times together with reassurance and hope.

Our strategy outlines clear objectives: to expand our reach, measure our impact, strengthen advocacy, and grow our fundraising efforts to support our ambitions. Each one of our services are designed to deliver real impact for the families who rely on us.

This mission is only made possible by the unwavering dedication of our supporters, our partners, trustees, advisors, the RSF team, and most importantly with the trust of the families at the heart of everything we do. Thank you for your continued support and for being part of this journey.

Ines Thiru

CEO, Ruth Strauss Foundation

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Since 2019 we've come a long way. We're proud to have launched our Family Support Service, multiple training programmes, and our research grants programme, all of which make a real, measurable difference. Combined, they form a network of care for families facing one of life's toughest tests.

2019
THE RUTH STRAUSS FOUNDATION IS FOUNDED

2021
OUR FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE LAUNCHES

2020
WE FUND OUR FIRST NON-SMOKING LUNG CANCER RESEARCH STUDY

2022
WE BEGIN TRAINING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

2023
RSF NON-SMOKING LUNG CANCER RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAMME IS ESTABLISHED

2024
OUR PEER SUPPORT GROUPS ARE INTRODUCED

2025
TRAINING PROGRAMMES LAUNCH FOR SCHOOLS AND WORKPLACES



BETWEEN 2019 - 2025

OUR IMPACT



1,215
families supported through our Family Support Service across the UK



5,000+
families reached with essential resources



1,500+
cancer and palliative care professionals trained



£810,000
invested in research since we were founded



THE PROBLEM WE TACKLE: A DUAL FOCUS

We work to solve two different problems which are closely linked. Through our compassion, support and advocacy, we're always striving to make progress.

Families Lack Support

Families living with an incurable cancer diagnosis often lack the support to prepare their children for the future.

- No other UK-wide organisation focuses specifically on anticipatory grief. We offer dedicated support to help parents talk openly with their children and prepare them for the future.
- Professionals in healthcare, education and workplace settings often feel unequipped to support families where a child faces the impact of a parent's incurable illness.
- While bereavement support is widely recognised, pre-bereavement support is frequently overlooked - despite its potential to affect children's long-term wellbeing.

Non-Smoking Lung Cancer Isn't Understood

Non-smoking lung cancer (NSLC) affects thousands - yet progress is held back by stigma, late diagnosis and limited research. We're committed to addressing this.

- Non-smoking lung cancer is rising in prevalence but remains under-recognised by the public and professionals.
- Collaboration in cancer research, information-sharing, and decision-making remains limited, slowing progress in understanding the disease and improving care.
- More work is needed to improve early diagnosis, understand the causes, and advance treatment options - so those affected receive better outcomes and support.

OUR VISION AND MISSION



OUR VISION

SUPPORT CHILDREN

A future where children of parents with incurable cancer are supported to continue to thrive throughout life.

TRANSFORM OUTCOMES

A future where awareness, earlier diagnosis and increased research transform the outcomes of people living with non-smoking lung cancer.



OUR MISSION

BUILD RESILIENCE

To provide specialist and accessible support for families where a parent has incurable cancer, so that parents feel confident and equipped to keep their children informed and involved, building understanding, connection and resilience together.

EMPOWER RESEARCH

To advocate for and invest in non-smoking lung cancer research and awareness, collaborating with patient-led organisations, industry, and healthcare professionals, so that patient outcomes are improved.

A MESSAGE FROM DEEPA DOSHI



DIRECTOR OF SERVICES

I am continually touched by the people who so openly share their experiences on both sides of our mission. These stories not only shape our work but also highlight the profound need for the support we provide.

For families navigating an incurable cancer diagnosis, our services are truly one of a kind. While counselling is at the heart of our support, we pride ourselves on offering flexibility that adapts to the unique needs of each family. The time from an incurable prognosis to the end of life varies greatly, and our tailored approach ensures that families receive the right support at the right time.

Building on this foundation of family support, we have also made significant strides in equipping professionals to better serve these families. Our training programme for cancer and palliative care professionals has reached and influenced the practices of over 1,000 NHS and hospice staff across the UK. Championing this initiative since its inception, our Family Support Advisory Group has created a strong foundation for the programme's future expansion into schools and workplaces, further extending our impact.

Equally integral to our mission is the grants programme, which drives advancements in understanding and treating non-smoking lung cancer. I'm particularly proud of this initiative, developed with the expertise and guidance of our Scientific Advisory Group, whose contributions have been invaluable to its success.

At the core of all our efforts is a commitment to evidence-based action. Where no evidence exists, we actively commission evaluations to measure the impact of our approaches and ensure they are making a real difference. I am deeply grateful to our team, advisory groups, parents, those affected by lung cancer, and our board. Through their unwavering support and dedication, they make it possible for us to keep improving how we support families and advocate for change.

Deepa Doshi

Director of Services
Ruth Strauss Foundation



Deepa speaks to BBC Look North at Yarm School for the launch of our Minecraft education game.

OUR MISSION SERVICES AT A GLANCE

Family Support Services

Direct, tailored, virtual guidance and counselling for parents to help them support their children from diagnosis until bereavement.

NSLC Grants Programme

Our annual grants programme supports projects that advance knowledge of non-smoking lung cancers and improve patient experiences from diagnosis through treatment and beyond, addressing medical, psychological and practical needs.

NSLC Awareness Campaigns

All You Need Is Lungs: Public awareness campaign to highlight that anyone with lungs can get lung cancer.

See Through the Symptoms: GP and HCP Awareness campaigns to drive earlier referral and diagnosis. Both campaigns in collaboration with ALK+ UK and EGFR+ UK.



HCP Training Programme

No Conversation Too Tough

Equips cancer and palliative healthcare professionals (HCPs) with the skills, knowledge and confidence to support parents with an incurable cancer diagnosis to have conversations with their children about their diagnosis.

Schools Training Programme

Responding in the Moment

Equips UK educational and school staff with the skills to support children and families. The training involves interactive case studies, with a focus on culturally inclusive approaches and neurodiversity.

It now also includes RSF Minecraft Education Worlds. These are interactive, curriculum-linked games to help students learn what cancer is and how it is diagnosed.

Corporate Training Programme

Compassionate Management

Two programmes, one for staff and one for HR Leads, offering awareness, confidence, knowledge and practical insights into how colleagues can support a peer who is living with, or whose partner is living with, a life-limiting illness, and support those who are bereaved.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PRE-BEREAVEMENT AND ANTICIPATORY GRIEF?

Pre-bereavement refers to the period leading up to the bereavement, such as when a loved one is diagnosed with an incurable illness.

Anticipatory grief refers to the feelings of grief when you know a loved one will die.



“As parents, we’re not experts in this field so it’s important to speak to a professional who is. It’s not going to change what happens to that parent, but it will change what happens to the children.”

- Sam, pictured below, whose husband Matt was diagnosed with an incurable brain tumour.



Sam, her husband Matt, and their two children.

LUNG CANCER CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE - ALL YOU NEED IS LUNGS

At the Ruth Strauss Foundation, we aim to raise awareness of non-smoking lung cancers. To achieve this, we fund research that supports early diagnosis and improves care for people with non-smoking lung cancer.

We also offer guidance and support for parents facing any non-curable cancer. We help parents talk openly with their children about their cancer and its impact on their family. Together, we believe that families can manage this challenging time.

Gini, a professor of psychology and mother to two small children, was diagnosed with stage 4 non-smoking lung cancer. As someone who had never smoked, and who was otherwise relatively healthy, it felt like her world had suddenly collapsed.

When she was first diagnosed with EGFR Exon 20 non-smoking lung cancer, there were no treatments available in the UK for her specific type of genetic mutation. There are now two and several more in the pipeline.



Gini Harrison, her husband Andy, and their two children.

OUR 4 STRATEGIC PILLARS

We are committed to building a sustainable and resilient charity that can withstand challenges and adapt to the needs of those we support. Our ambitions are underpinned by four strategic pillars.

1. EXPAND OUR REACH AND NETWORK OF CARE
2. AMPLIFY OUR VOICE AND IMPACT
3. FUEL OUR AMBITIONS
4. MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

1. EXPAND OUR REACH AND NETWORK OF CARE



Beneficiaries Jim, his late wife Laura and their two boys.

Our strategy:

We are committed to expanding the reach and impact of our services to ensure that every family facing an incurable cancer diagnosis, regardless of their location or background, can access and receive the support they need.

As a result:

Families across the UK will have greater access to personalised, comprehensive support, while professionals across sectors will be better equipped to guide them. Together, these efforts will ensure no family faces the challenges of living with an incurable diagnosis alone.

To achieve this we will:

- Broaden the reach of our Family Support Service
- Enhance and maintain digital accessibility
- Engage with new and diverse communities

2026-2029

AMBITIOUS TARGETS, MEASURABLE IMPACT:



Grow number of families accessing resources and services

Support **6,000** family members through our Family Support Service

Train **3,000** healthcare professionals

Train **8,000** school staff

Train **2,500** employees, managers and HR leads



Grow reach across underrepresented groups

2. AMPLIFY OUR VOICE AND IMPACT



Broadcaster and former cricketer Ian Ward speaks to actor and RSF ambassador Nigel Harman.

Our strategy:

Broaden public awareness of RSF and strengthen our advocacy efforts to drive systemic change in how people are supported when facing an incurable cancer or navigating NSLC. By raising our profile and amplifying our voice, we will reach more families and carers, grow public and patient engagement, and build stronger support for the charity's mission.

As a result:

We will expand public engagement, grow our advocacy network, and influence key decision-makers so that our mission reaches wider audiences. These efforts will help drive systemic change in healthcare and support systems, ensuring the voices of families and patients are amplified, represented and acted upon.

To achieve this we will:

- Enhance public engagement using digital channels, media outreach, and ambassador collaborations
- Develop partnerships with broader health, wellness, sport and cancer advocacy communities
- Build a network of advocates and influencers
- Engage key stakeholders, including healthcare professionals (HCPS), policymakers, and community leaders

2026-2029

AMBITIOUS TARGETS, MEASUREABLE IMPACT:



Include people affected by NSLC in all grant funding decisions



Co-design services and campaigns with people with lived experience



Track growth in partnerships with advocates, HCPs, policymakers and community leaders



Track digital reach, media coverage and ambassador-led campaigns

3 FUEL OUR AMBITIONS



Two young RSF supporters at the annual Westminster 'Family Mile'.

Our strategy:

Diversify and strengthen our fundraising efforts to secure sustainable income and enable the delivery of our mission. By broadening our income streams and deepening relationships with supporters, we aim to build resilience in a challenging fundraising climate.

As a result:

We will secure stable and diverse funding to grow and sustain our work supporting families facing incurable cancer and non-smoking lung cancer. By strengthening loyalty among existing supporters and welcoming new fundraisers across a range of channels, we will build a more sustainable base of support and extend our reach to help more families.

To achieve this we will:

- Develop a balanced mix of income, reducing reliance on event-based fundraising
- Deliver a combination of short and long-term fundraising initiatives
- Ensure a supporter-centric approach to strengthen retention and loyalty
- Expand engagement with high-net-worth individuals and corporate partners

2026-2029

AMBITIOUS TARGETS, MEASUREABLE IMPACT:



Sustainable income growth to maximise investment in family support and research



Strengthen supporter relationships to increase average gift and lifetime value



Increase donor retention and reduce attrition



Increase fundraising activity

4. MEASURE WHAT MATTERS



Our strategy:

Leverage data-driven insights to maximise the impact of our work, ensuring our services and advocacy are tailored, responsive, and effective. By integrating digital systems and real-time analytics, we aim to enhance decision-making, optimise resource allocation, and adapt quickly to changing needs. In simple terms, we will convert data into meaningful action.

As a result:

We will continue to develop our data literacy across the organisation, create transparent impact dashboards for all stakeholders, contribute to sector-wide evidence on non-smoking lung cancer and anticipatory grief, and use predictive analytics and AI alongside our team's expertise to drive efficiency, growth and service planning.

To achieve this we will:

- Further invest in and develop automated systems and processes
- Utilise real-time insights to identify trends, gaps, and opportunities for improvements
- Measure and evaluate impact by developing robust metrics and feedback mechanisms

2026-2029

AMBITIOUS TARGETS, MEASUREABLE IMPACT:



Commit to ensuring that every pound raised delivers the greatest possible impact



Build team confidence in using systems and insights to guide strategic decisions and service improvements



Provide transparent, regular reporting on our impact across our services.

OUR APPROACH IS BASED ON THE FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY

A parent's incurable cancer impacts not only them but also their children, partners and extended family. Stress in one part of the system ripples through to others. Equally, when one part of the system is supported, it can stabilise and strengthen the whole.

Our support is based on this theory, helping those impacted by grief.



“You just want your children to remain innocent, don’t you? You want them to have that carefree life. I felt like I had to take that from them – and that’s where I had support from the Ruth Strauss Foundation. Setting the foundation for open, honest conversations has helped them grieve and given them the strength to carry on.”

– Anushka’s husband, Mike, was diagnosed with head and neck cancer in 2009 and died in the summer of 2024.

Pictured above: Anushka and her son Arun, who bravely shared their story with us in 2025.

Anushka’s husband Mike with two of his three children.

TOGETHER MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The progress we've made and the lives we've touched wouldn't be possible without the people who stand with us.

We're continually inspired by the strength and honesty of the families we support. Their experiences shape our work.

We're also deeply grateful to the donors who fund our mission, and the organisations and ambassadors who help us reach more people.

Together, this community is driving change - through every conversation, campaign and act of support.

In April 2024, a community of family and friends rallied around Gaynor, who was living with incurable bile duct cancer, and her family. 'Walking with Gaynor', a 20km walk between Laleham and Windsor, celebrated Gaynor and all that she meant to so many.

Gaynor was supported by our Family Support team, and we were incredibly honoured to be invited to join the walk and be the beneficiary charity for the day, reflecting her wish to support other families facing an incurable diagnosis.

Gaynor passed away in August that year. The same route continues to be walked in her memory.



"I'm blown away again at the kindness of the Foundation and your partners."

- Gaynor



OUR VALUES



COMPASSIONATE

With dedication and understanding we strive to improve the lives of those affected by cancer.

SPIRITED

We carry Ruth's spirit in delivering our mission: with determination, grace and laughter.

FAMILY FIRST

Without compromise, family is at our heart - together we can make a difference.

PIONEERING

We are unafraid to think and respond differently. Our aspiration is to pioneer change.

PROFESSIONAL

We take pride in our approach; it's the little extras that make the difference.



THANK YOU

This strategy reflects what we've learned, what we've built, and where we're going. None of it would be possible without the families we support, the professionals we work alongside, and the donors, ambassadors and trustees who back us every step of the way.

Whether you've shared your story, given your time, offered your expertise, raised funds, or simply believed in what we do - we're truly grateful. You're helping us reach more families, raise awareness, and invest in the services and research that are so urgently needed.

At the heart of our work are the children - those navigating the uncertainty of a parent's incurable cancer, and those whose futures we aim to protect through better research and care. Ruth's hope was for families in this situation to feel less alone, and she wanted those affected by non-smoking lung cancer to have answers, earlier diagnoses and better outcomes. Thanks to you, we're making this a reality.

Team RSF



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www.ruthstraussfoundation.com

