

# Radio care campaign has Christmas wish

The NHS formed an unprecedented partnership with the Radio Society of Great Britain, back in April 2020, when Paul Devlin, from the NHS Emergency Care Improvement Support Team, came up with an idea to help reduce loneliness and isolation. The idea started off as a weekend project to encourage as many radio amateurs as possible to take to the airwaves and reach out to fellow operators.

Amateur radio, also known as HAM radio, is both a hobby and a public service. Its aim is to support the advancement of radio communications as well as provide emergency communications in disaster management situations.

Specially licensed radio operators have access to restricted radio frequencies and use a range of equipment to transmit across the global communications platform. This can range from people in the same town talking to each other through to the use of satellites and communications with the International Space Station.

Paul Devlin, who runs the NHS radio communications

station GB1NHS, took his idea to Steve Thomas (General Manager) and Heather Parsons (Communications Manager) at the Radio Society of Great Britain. Within 48 hours, Steve and Heather transformed the idea into a campaign called 'get on the air to care' (#GOTA4C). Eight months later it has become the biggest campaign the society has ever run, since it was formed in 1913.

Paul explains that the campaign works in two ways: firstly, it encourages existing radio amateurs to take to the airwaves and become a bit more active; secondly, it encourages new people into the world of radio communications. Paul says, "Now, more than ever, we need to optimise all modes of communication to help reduce loneliness and isolation within communities. Amateur radio provides a wonderful opportunity to help make this a reality. People often forget that around 45% of the world's population do not have access to traditional forms of communication such as cell phones or the internet. For them, radio communications is a lifeline."



## Get on the air for Christmas

Heather Parsons, co-creator of the #GOTA4C campaign from the Radio Society of Great Britain, says, "We know that Christmas can be difficult for many at the best of times. With the extra restrictions due to COVID-19 we want to make sure that every radio amateur and short-wave listener feels part of a caring community."

Get on the air for Christmas will run from 19 December to 9 January. There will be several activities that radio amateurs can participate in, such as special communications networks.

<https://rsgb.org/main/get-on-the-air-to-care/get-on-the-air-for-christmas-gota4c>