

# Newsletter



## There from the very beginning

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How support from other families helped Kate in Scott House

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Marc tells us about his virtual 10km race in a special Q&A

# Welcome



**W**elcome to our Autumn/Winter 2020 newsletter. While this has been an incredibly unpredictable year, we have worked hard to adapt our service to meet government guidelines and continue to keep families with a seriously ill child in hospital together - you'll find some of their stories in this issue.

Our 'Homes from Home' offer families a free place to stay while their child is seriously ill in hospital. For many families, like Kate's on page 10, the additional support that they receive from our friendly staff and other families makes a world of difference to them during some of the most challenging periods of their lives.

It's so important that our 'Homes from Home' stay open for the families who really need them, so we have a whole host of new ways that you can get involved with us as the winter months are drifting in. Join our 'Together this Christmas' campaign, plus we have a range of virtual challenges available. Find out more on pages 4 and 11.

**Connect with us on social**



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# We're In This Together

**T**hroughout the pandemic children are still falling ill, being born prematurely, and still require emergency treatments with their family by their side. Pandemic or not, we will be here to keep families with a seriously ill child together.

25-30% of our income could be lost during this time because our supporters are unable to hold traditional events.

We are so grateful to those who are supporting us during this uncertain time. From virtual runs, to mask-makers, and birthday fundraisers we have seen an incredible amount of creativity as we have all adapted to a 'new normal'.

We couldn't do it without your support.

**Thank you** 



# Together this Christmas...



Is where we want families to be.

£30

will keep a family together for one night

£60

will keep a family together for two nights

£90

will keep a family together over the Christmas period

This year, more than ever, we are grateful for the times that we can be together with loved ones. Families with a seriously ill child in hospital may not be at home for Christmas, but they can be together in our 'Homes from Home'.

Christmas is better together.

☆ Visit [sickchildrenstrust.org/christmas](https://sickchildrenstrust.org/christmas) to donate

## Adam's First Christmas

We celebrated Adam's first Christmas together in the Royal London Hospital. People left advent calendars and chocolates at Stevenson House for us to enjoy and the nurses made it special on the unit. Adam wasn't meant to arrive until March so we weren't prepared for Christmas, but we made him a Christmas card and the day was memorable.



On Boxing Day another twist in our journey occurred. Unknowingly, I'd retained placenta and that night I hemorrhaged. Paul had to carry me over to the hospital from Stevenson House.

For a long time I wasn't able to hold Adam, and that was hard, but the nurses were so good at involving us in his care. I learnt how to feed him through his tube and to aspirate him. Everything became so much easier staying at Stevenson House, even the midnight phone calls. We were never far away, and it was a real comfort to both of us.

When your baby or child is sick in hospital all you want is to be there for them. You just want to stay. You don't want to worry about missing

the last train home, but the reality is you can't stay with them all the time without a charity like The Sick Children's Trust.

You never think that you're going to need charity. No parent thinks their child is going to end up in hospital, but when it happens you need to be there for them, which is why I'd encourage everyone to support The Sick Children's Trust this Christmas.

Leanne Curry, Adam's Mum

Help us to keep families together this Christmas.

[sickchildrenstrust.org/christmas](https://sickchildrenstrust.org/christmas)

# ★ Super Supporters ★

Our wonderful supporters helped us to keep almost **3,800 families** together last year, just minutes from their sick child's hospital bedside.

Here we're shining the spotlight on some of our Super Supporters from the last year.

## ★ Sarah Farrow

Sarah raised £1,545 by asking her friends and family for donations via a Facebook birthday fundraiser. Thank you Sarah.



## ★ Andrew Young and Team Tedious

Andrew and his team of runners raised £805 for us by completing a 12 hour relay race and covering a whopping 100.3 miles. Well done team.



## ★ Stephen Rennie

Stephen Rennie held a fantastic auction event last year and raised over £12,000 for The Sick Children's Trust. Thank you Stephen.



## ★ Henry Lindsay

Nine year old Henry cycled 48 miles over his summer holidays to raise money for us because we supported his mum and dad when he was born prematurely. He has raised a terrific £2,126.



## ★ Hazel Thompson

We gave Hazel's daughter's family a place to stay in Magnolia House. In May, Hazel became one of our regular givers with a donation of £10 per month. Thank you, you're helping us to plan for the future.



## ★ Sebastian and Caspar Waring

Sebastian, 11, and Caspar, 7, raised an incredible £689 for us by taking part in our 2.6 challenge in April. Well done.



Read on to find out how you can become a Super Supporter too....



# Become a Super Supporter

You may not have considered virtual fundraising before, but we are here to help you every step of the way with whatever you choose to do.

## For the sporty...



Do a virtual sponsored walk



Stream a challenge with your family

## For the social...



Have a birthday fundraiser on Facebook



Host a virtual quiz night

Please head to [sickchildrenstrust.org/fundraise/run-your-own](https://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/fundraise/run-your-own) to register your activity and one of our friendly team will be in touch.



### Super Supporter Kate

Kate ran a virtual half marathon and tracked her progress on her phone, raising £1,284.

“The most wonderful part was about 11 miles in - I ran past a family in the park and noticed the dad had nudged his young daughter and pointed out my charity top- she had a matching hoodie on and was so excited.”

# There From The Very Beginning

## World Prematurity Day - 17 November



While my partner Carl travelled to Sheffield with Felicity in the ambulance, I had to wait to be discharged from Doncaster Royal Infirmary.

Seven hours later, I finally got to see my girl. She was beautiful and she looked so tiny in her incubator. I fell in love with her immediately and had an overwhelming sense of protection towards her.

I was 29 weeks pregnant and back in hospital for a second time having not felt much movement from my baby Felicity. The sonographer found that Felicity had a lot of fluid in and around her abdomen, her head and a reverse flow in the umbilical cord. Our girl was struggling and working very hard to stay alive.

For the following three months we stayed in Magnolia House. The best thing about being given a place to stay by The Sick Children's Trust was that I was able to tuck my baby girl in every night and do night feeds without having to travel to get there. I could do mum duties throughout the day and night and not have to worry about missing out or not being there for her.

Felicity was born at 12:51am that day in Doncaster Royal Infirmary and she was not breathing. For 30 minutes the doctors performed CPR, then intubated her and drained 100mls of excess fluid to get her stable enough to transport her to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Jessop Wing in Sheffield. She weighed just 2lb 10oz and was whisked away before I could see her.

### Charlie Birks, Felicity's Mum

Every year, we support over 600 families with a baby in Neonatal Intensive Care and many have been born prematurely.

## Family Friendships

**K**ate stayed with us earlier this year and spoke about the benefits of having other families in our 'Home from Home' going through a similar situation.

While staying at Scott House it was so helpful to be able to speak to other families for support as they truly understand what you are going through, which is unimaginable for most parents.

When in the communal areas, families and staff would check in with us to see how we were doing. We'd talk about our children and sometimes just have a chat about life – at the time Love Island and the World Cup was on. Having this time out from our worries really helped us stay strong for our baby, Harry.

We got close to one family whose daughter, called Orlaith, had been born about four hours before Harry and they were also staying in Scott House. Orlaith's mum, Laura, and I were going through similar things and it was really comforting to have this extra support.

It wasn't the place that we expected to form a friendship, but it's lovely that it has happened.

“**It wasn't the place that we expected to form a friendship.**”



We have kept in touch with Laura and her family and we often meet somewhere halfway between our houses. We are looking forward to meeting up again now that Harry and Orlaith have started talking!

**Kate Collins, Harry's Mum**

## Meet the Turners

**A**t my 28 week scan the consultant decided that my baby's kidney was getting too big and we were referred to The Rosie Hospital in Cambridge. It wasn't long before I was scheduled for an elective caesarean at 38 weeks, as this would give Ruby enough time to develop in the womb without her kidney enlarging too much.

However, at 37 weeks I went into labour and needed an emergency c-section at Colchester Hospital. Our little Ruby Rose Cassels was born weighing 6lb 10oz, but she needed to be transferred to The Rosie Hospital so specialists could assess her.



Ashely and I were so concerned on our journey to Cambridge, not only about Ruby, but where would we stay and how would we afford it. We settled with the fact we'd probably have to sleep in the car for now, whatever it took so that we could be by Ruby's side.

After checking in with Ruby at The Rosie, her nurse told us about The Sick Children's Trust and brought us down to its 'Home from Home' Chestnut House. As soon as she left to let us to settle in, I burst into tears. Tears of relief as we were able to sleep in a bed, with our very own bathroom while only being a couple of minutes away from our poorly baby.

We are waiting for Ruby to have an operation, which will take place at The Rosie as soon as this current situation with Coronavirus calms down. For now Ruby is just getting on with life with not a lot bothering her and I cannot thank The Sick Children's Trust enough for their support as without Chestnut House I really don't know how we would have coped.

**Lily Turner, Ruby's Mum**

# Sister, Sister: Sibling Perspectives On Staying In A 'Home from Home'

**Lauren and Rosie are incredibly close and staying in Acorn House meant that the sisters never had to be more than a few minutes apart.**

## Lauren

When Rosie was a baby, we went through so much turmoil with her health. When that was over and we had got through it, I could never envision something bad happening to my sister again. Sadly it did. When Rosie was 15 she was diagnosed with an ovarian tumour.

It was the most destroying news I've ever received. The hospital ward isn't the most private place to deal with awful news like this. There's no personal space to process it, which is something that we really needed.

We were over the moon when we were told about Acorn House. As well as giving us a place to stay near to Rosie when we couldn't be at the hospital, it offered us a



place to relax and learn how to deal with all the information we were receiving.

Rosie is a miniature version of me and we spend a huge amount of time together so naturally we are the best of friends. I couldn't imagine not being near her. Acorn House really helped us maintain our close bond, despite her being in such a bad place health-wise.

Just a week after her operation, Rosie wanted to go back to school and get back to normal. She really is my hero and a true inspiration for others with the way she dealt with the news about her condition and her operations.

## Rosie

The situation was extremely shocking. I am never usually the person to be sick and I haven't had any problems since I was a very small baby, so when I was diagnosed with an ovarian tumour it brought a lot of concern to my family.

My family were given a place to stay in Acorn House, run by The Sick Children's Trust, while I received treatment at Addenbrooke's Hospital. Their family rooms meant there was plenty of room for my sister Rosie to stay there too. We've always been so close and I wouldn't have wanted to go through this without her – I really have no idea what I would've done.

Acorn House was genuinely the best thing and I couldn't be



**“Without The Sick Children's Trust, my family would have been over an hour away. Instead, they were mere minutes away.”**

more grateful. Without The Sick Children's Trust, my family would have been over an hour away. Instead, they were mere minutes away. For me, this was such a blessing and stress reliever because if anything was to go wrong I'd have them close by.

I had an operation and now I am doing really well. I will be eternally grateful for The Sick Children's Trust's generosity and hospitality towards my family while I was at Addenbrooke's. Their support has truly been a miracle for my family and Acorn House was vital to us all, as it is to so many other inspirational and strong families.

**Do you have a story to share with us?**

Please visit [sickchildrenstrust.org/share-your-story](https://sickchildrenstrust.org/share-your-story)

# Meet Marc

**M**arc Thompson organised a virtual 10km race, called Warboys Runners, in aid of The Sick Children's Trust and we spoke to him to find out more.

## Can you tell me why you've launched a virtual 10km for The Sick Children's Trust?

I decided to host the race as I had entered another 10km race which got cancelled and changed to a virtual race due to COVID. I knew The Sick Children's Trust would have events cancelled too, so I wanted to do something to help after they supported my family at Chestnut House. I contacted the race organisers, I explained what I was doing, and they pointed me in the right direction.

## What were the benefits of having a place to stay at Chestnut House?

Having a base where you could keep your items such as clothing, plus being able to get well-needed rest while never being more than two minutes away from our sick child. It enabled us to constantly be there without



having to travel back home.

## How can people get involved?

Virtual challenges like this can be done anywhere, which is the beauty of virtual challenges. For this challenge, no previous experience is required. We have a lot of new walkers and runner signed up and some heavily experienced ones too.

## What's the best part about your event?

The best part is the medal, it's a lovely one-off wooden one. If we do another event next year we will design another one!

# Challenge Calendar

Here are some of our upcoming challenges that we'd love you to get involved with.



## 'Walk In Our Shoes'

Our families travel miles from their homes to ours. We challenge you to walk or run the distance between two of our houses for sponsorship.

## 30 Day Fitness Challenge

Ask friends and family to sponsor you to do a 30 day fitness challenge to keep you motivated and raise vital funds for The Sick Children's Trust.

## House Of Cards

Take on our #HouseofCardsChallenge! It's you against the clock to build a house of three triangles at the bottom, then stacking two and then one on top of each other and make a donation to us.

## More Ideas Online

You'll find plenty more ideas in the Virtual Fundraising section on our website: [sickchildrenstrust.org/fundraise/virtual-fundraising/](https://sickchildrenstrust.org/fundraise/virtual-fundraising/)



Please help us keep our vital  
'Homes from Home' open by  
giving a regular monthly gift

**£5** will help to pay for the cleaning of our  
'Homes from Home' ensuring a safe  
environment for families.



**£10** will help us provide pillows, duvets  
and sheets so parents can have a  
comfortable night sleep.



**£15** will go towards paying for our 'Homes  
from Home' front line staff, so they can  
support families when they need it most.



**Any amount** that you can give will be truly appreciated  
and will go a long way to supporting us to keep our  
'Homes from Home' open.

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We're here, so families can be together

