



**The Sick  
Children's  
Trust**

We're here, so families can be together

The Sick Children's  
Trust Impact  
Report **2020/21**

Keeping families together



## Keeping families together

The Sick Children's Trust is the charity that gives families with a seriously ill child in hospital a comfortable place to stay and a friendly ear to listen in one of our ten 'Homes from Home'. As families navigate the additional challenges that COVID-19 has brought with it, we continue to provide them with the support they need.

Hospital can be a lonely and scary place for anyone, but especially a child. Providing families with somewhere to stay together just minutes from the hospital means that they can be by their sick child's side and have one less thing to worry about. We support thousands of families with a seriously ill child in hospital each year by giving them a warm and comfortable place to stay when they need it most.

“ I realised while we were in this situation, in a hospital with our newborn far away from home, that Chestnut House could give us everything that we needed in order to be with Hugo and to look after ourselves. ”

Ben Cirne, Hugo's dad



Front cover image: Rachel and Sal with baby Aydin

# Welcome



**Paul Jardine, Chairman**



**Jane Featherstone, CEO**

The last year has been incredibly challenging for everyone but for families with a seriously ill child in hospital, the worry and strain has been far greater. Families have needed our 'Homes from Home' more than ever and with many hospitals only allowing one designated parent to visit their critically ill child in hospital, our House Teams have been on hand to provide much needed comfort and support.

A close working relationship with the NHS and our hospital partners has been key over the last year in ensuring the safety of our staff and the families in our care. While we have not been able to operate at full capacity, we were still able to keep 1,521 families together at such a critical time.

At the beginning of the year we predicted a 25-30% drop in income due to the cancellation of events and the uncertainty that COVID-19 brought with it. We have, however, been inspired by the generosity of our supporters and been able to claim the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which has helped us to raise £2,041,256 and keep our 'Homes from Home' open.

As we look ahead, we will continue to work closely with our hospital partners as we adapt and navigate new regulations, always keeping the safety of families and our staff at the forefront.

We know that 2021/22 is going to be equally as challenging, and we again predict a shortfall in income but our focus is to ensure we are able to get our ten 'Homes from Home' back to full capacity and supporting all the families who need us.

We would like to extend a special thank you to our wonderful dedicated staff, volunteers and trustees who have worked hard in difficult circumstances to keep our 'Homes from Home' open this year, always going the extra mile to provide the best possible service to families. Thank you, very much, for the work that you do; and thank you, once again, to everyone who supports us. We hope that reading the family experiences in this report inspires you as much as they inspire us.

## The impact of COVID-19

**Throughout 2020/21 COVID-19 had and continues to have an impact on the service we provide to families with a seriously ill child in hospital. We have continued to do all that we can to keep our ten 'Homes from Home' open to support families when they need us.**

While we were able to keep our ten 'Homes from Home' operating, to do this safely we had to close around 50% of our bedrooms and all of our communal areas. We also implemented a number of other safety measures including our staff working reduced hours to ensure social distancing was adhered to. We followed hospital protocol which in most cases meant one approved family member staying with us at a time, as well as ensuring families only used our 'Homes from Home' for sleeping, washing and doing their laundry. These measures worked well and meant we could support families who needed us as they faced the worry of having a seriously ill child alongside the additional COVID-19 concerns. We will look to reopen

communal facilities when it is safe to do so in consultation with hospital infection control teams.

Our Head Office closed in March 2020 and has remained closed since then. We continue to follow Government guidelines to work from home where possible and will reopen our office when it is safe to do so.

Our dedicated staff working in our 'Homes from Home' and in our Head Office had to adapt very quickly to new ways of working and deal with the many challenges that COVID-19 brought with it. But through all of this we kept the families that we are here to support at the front of our minds and at the heart of what we do.



Jane and Fiona from Eckersley House

As we were predicting a significant fall in income from fundraising events we launched an emergency appeal and quickly came up with digital and virtual fundraising campaigns and challenges to help us close that gap and we're so grateful to all of our wonderful supporters who donated or took part in a virtual activity.

We know that 2021 is going to be equally as challenging, but we will continue to work closely with our hospital partners and adapt and navigate new regulations. Our focus is to ensure we are able to get our 'Homes from Home' back to full capacity to support more families when they really need us.

Adele and Martin Jefferson during their stay at Magnolia House



“ Life was so stressful with the added worries of COVID-19 and the restrictions but right from the beginning Magnolia House was there and it was that bit of support that we didn't realise we needed. Without it, we would've fallen over.

Martin Jefferson, Joshua and Edward's dad

”

## Supporting families like Aydin's

**"I was sitting by Rachel's side watching everything. I could see the doctors gathered around our baby on a table. Time dragged by as they resuscitated him, two fingers pumping his little chest. There was a lot of panic in the room and I tried to keep Rachel calm and positive. She said there must be something wrong because we hadn't heard him cry. Five minutes passed, then ten, then 20. It took 23 minutes to resuscitate our baby. I saw my son with a little red hat on and his body was limp. Neither of us were sure if that would be the last time we'd see him." (Sal)**

Rachel Payne and Sal Yildiz were suddenly thrown into hospital life when Rachel became seriously unwell, she was just over 35 weeks pregnant and needed an emergency caesarean. Within 30 seconds of his delivery, Aydin stopped breathing. He was transferred to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, where he

spent the first 72 hours of his life on cooling treatment – where his body temperature was lowered and then warmed back up again to prevent brain damage. For the next two weeks, we gave Rachel and Sal a place to stay at Chestnut House, Cambridge.

"We could not be more grateful for Chestnut House. It made everything so much easier, especially because it meant we could be together at such a crucial time. It was so emotionally draining that I was so thankful that we could stay at Chestnut House. Every day we would have breakfast, visit Aydin, have lunch, nap or call our parents in our room or go for a walk, then go back up to visit Aydin, have dinner in our room and visit Aydin again. It was easy for us to be there. We were so close to Aydin that it wasn't stressful and we didn't have to worry. We were escaping everyday life and could just focus on Aydin." (Rachel)





“

The worry doesn't ever go when your baby is unwell in hospital. The best way to deal with it was to take each step as it came, rather than thinking too far into the future. Staying at Chestnut House allowed us to solely focus on the here and now.

”

Sal Yildiz, Elise and Aydin's dad

Elise, Aydin, Sal and Rachel at home

## In 2020/21

## Families told us

Due to COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions we were not able to help as many families as usual. For the safety of our staff and the families we support we closed around 50% of bedrooms and our communal areas.



We supported

**1,521**

families in our 'Homes from Home'



We provided

**21,888**

nights

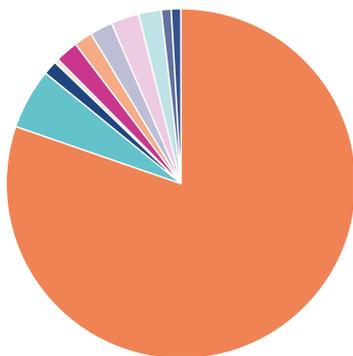


Average length of stay

**14 nights**

### Ethnicity of families staying in our 'Homes from Home'

We support any family that needs us while their seriously ill child is in hospital, giving them one less thing to worry about.



- White British: 80%
- Any other White Background: 5%
- White and Black Caribbean: 1%
- White and Asian: 1%
- Indian: 2%
- Pakistani: 2%
- Bangladeshi: 2%
- Any other Asian background: 3%
- African: 2%
- Caribbean: 1%
- Any other Black/African/Caribbean background: 1%

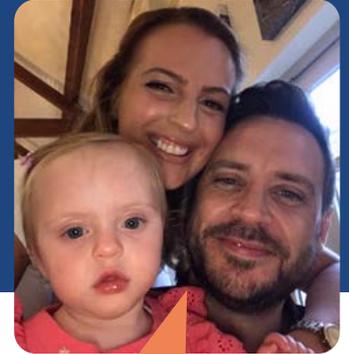
"Rainbow House gave us the time and space to come to terms with what was happening and process all the thoughts, feelings and worries we were having. Being able to stay close to our daughter and be together was the most valuable thing."

Hayley Partridge,  
Molly's mum



“The staff have been absolutely amazing at Crawford House and go out of their way to ensure that your stay is as comfortable as possible. They are always friendly and ask how my daughter is doing – it can be a very lonely time being away from home, separated from family with the huge worry of what your child is going through.”

**Neil Timmins, Evie’s Dad**



“While Ben was working, I would chat to other mums in Eckersley House who were in the same position and I felt reassured. You can’t help but think why has this happened to me and feel as if you’re the only one going through it but at Eckersley House you realise, you’re not alone and that there are people who understand.”

**Faye Brown, Isabelle’s Mum**

“With any sick child it doesn’t just affect the parents, it has an impact on the whole family; siblings, grandparents and it is so important to have somewhere the family can be together. Caitlin missed me, she missed her baby sister and having somewhere she could come and spend time with us in Scott House meant she was involved.”

**Louise Maurais, Caitlin and Bridget’s mum**



“The most important thing was being close to Esther, which is what The Sick Children’s Trust made possible. Nothing was ever 100% on a day-to-day basis, we didn’t know what might or could happen each day, it was incredibly worrying and Guilford Street House helped ease that.”

**Charlotte Herbert, Esther’s Mum**

## Our 'Homes from Home'

Despite the challenges our 'Homes from Home' have faced during the last 12 months, we have continued to improve and update our spaces to ensure that families have access to clean and modern facilities.

In 2020/21, long-standing major donor supporters, and former and current trustees came together to help with our emergency campaign and capital appeal to refurbish the much needed bathrooms at Stevenson House. We were also able to safely redecorate Crawford House, update the toy room in Treetop House, and furnish Magnolia House with brand new sofas. Argos kindly donated essential household items, and we're so grateful that all bedrooms in our ten 'Homes from Home' were freshened up with new duvets, mattresses, linen and towels, kindly donated by Dreams, Next plc, and Beaumont Brown. These generous



Tracey and Tina with the Dreams duvet donation

gifts have meant families could be comfortable and warm during their stay.

In 2020, we made the decision to close all communal areas in our 'Homes from Home' to ensure the safety of the families and our staff. With support from generous donors, like our partners at Aberdeen Standard Charitable Foundation, we were quickly able to provide food takeaway vouchers for families, in addition to adding tea and coffee facilities to each room, ensuring that parents would not miss out on the home comforts we often take for granted.

One mum, who stayed in Acorn House during COVID-19 last August told us "It will make such an enormous difference to my mental wellbeing just to be able to have a coffee in bed in the morning as I would at home, or a cuppa after a long day at the hospital without the time and expense of queuing up for Costa".

**In 2020/21,  
99% of parents  
said that the  
opportunity to  
stay in the 'Home  
from Home' helped  
them to cope**

# A day in the life of our House Managers

In order to keep our 'Homes from Home' open during the last 12 months, and to ensure the safety of families and staff, our House Managers adapted their day-to-day routines to include new COVID-19 procedures.

**Ann Wyatt, Treetop and Magnolia House Manager, describing a typical day before COVID-19:**

"I manage Treetop and Magnolia Houses and make sure they run smoothly, and my days would often involve sitting down of a morning with a mum, chatting about how her poorly child is doing over a cup of coffee or meeting a dad in the hallway and discussing how their day had been. As well as taking deliveries donated from our wish lists, doing budgets and inducting families, I would also prepare rooms and make sure our 'Homes from Home' were warm and welcoming places for the families who need us."



**Andrew Leadbitter, Crawford House Manager, explaining how our 'Homes from Home' adapted their typical day to include COVID-19 procedures:**

"Things have changed so much because of COVID-19. Families are still at the heart of everything we do but now I spend a lot of my day doing risk assessments and checks to make sure Crawford House is a safe and clean place for families to stay. I prepare rooms following guidelines, talk to hospital infection control and make sure rooms are stocked with tea and coffee since our kitchen is closed. Social distancing measures mean we can't give a family a hug after a tough day but we can still be there to show compassion and kindness when they need it."



## Raising funds to keep families together

**2020/21 was a challenging time for us and sadly, we saw a significant drop in our income due to cancelled events and the uncertainty that COVID-19 brought with it. Despite this, our incredible supporters defied all odds and found innovative and creative ways to continue to raise vital funds to keep families together.**

We continued to work closely with our corporate partners throughout COVID-19 and BGL Group made an incredibly generous donation to help keep our 'Homes from Home' open. This exceptional support was in addition to the BGL Make a Difference Fund to sponsor a family room at Stevenson House for over 720 nights. Our partnership with Fortem was extended for another year, further helping us to support families during this challenging time. Our individual supporters, corporate partners, major donors, and trusts and foundations

all contributed to help to raise an amazing £2,041,256, taking on everything from virtual marathons and sponsored walks to a charity Christmas single and a virtual car race.

### A decade of support

Although events were postponed or cancelled during 2020/21, in the last decade the Leverton family have raised enough for us to fund almost 8,000 nights of support through their bi-annual black-tie event, which was due to take place again in 2020.

"My family were introduced to The Sick Children's Trust in 2009 when my son Harry was rushed into the Intensive Care Ward at Sheffield Children's Hospital with breathing difficulties. Ann from Treetop House offered us a room five minutes' walk from Harry's bedside and a shining light in a very dark time. The room was simple,

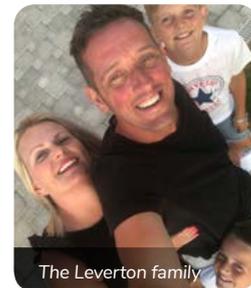


The Six of Hearts band with a kind donation

immaculately clean and a quiet little sanctuary to gather our thoughts, have a cry, get some sleep, and have a shower and gain that little bit more strength that my baby boy required from his parents before heading back to his bedside."

"Our story is one with a positive ending. Harry fought off the three viral infections and the non-related bowel perforation to fully recover. I made a promise when Harry was in surgery that if he came back to me I would do something to help the charity, something to somehow repay my gratitude and help others."

Marcus Leverton,  
Harry's dad



The Leverton family

# Super Supporters



## Henry Lindsay

Nine-year-old Henry cycled one mile for every day of his summer holidays, totalling 48 miles, to raise money for us because we supported his mum and dad when he was born prematurely. He raised a terrific £2,126.



## Sarah Farrow

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

## Regular givers

Thanks to support from our regular givers in 2020/21, we were able to maintain our 'Homes from Home' and plan for the future.

Kate has been a supporter since 1990 and is a regular giver who, during COVID-19, chose to generously increase her monthly donation to us. Kate donates from her state pension and frequently adds extra gifts when she can.



## Emily Murphy

Emily created a 'Community Mask Tree' in Guildford, where she hung her handmade masks and asked people to donate to her JustGiving page if they took one. She has raised £504.



## Sebastian and Caspar Waring

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



## Joe Taphouse

Joe braved the shave for us in January, saying goodbye to his beard and raising an excellent £1,250 in the process.

## Taking fundraising online



### Our online Auction House

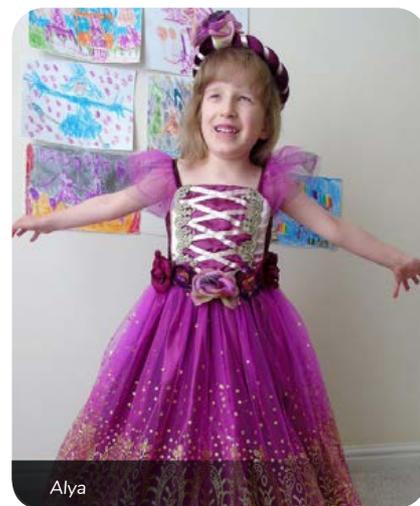
This year, we have not been able to hold any of our usual major events in person due to the social distancing restrictions and we have had to get creative by exploring online fundraising. As a result, we opened the doors to our online Auction House in October 2020 for two weeks. We had a range of coveted prizes, such as designer handbags, holidays, sports memorabilia, and much more.

Within 48 hours we had raised £18,000 and by the time the auction closed we had hit a fantastic £30,825.

### A birthday surprise for Alya

One of the prizes in our online Auction House was a private virtual dance class from Strictly Come Dancing star Anton Du Beke, which was won by Claire Waites for her seven-year-old daughter, Alya. She is one of Anton's biggest fans, often dressing up to watch him on a Saturday evening and dancing in front of the television.

Alya was born with a rare heart condition called truncus arteriosus which meant her heart didn't work properly and made it difficult for her to breathe. She has spent much of her life in and out of Leeds Children's Hospital and we have supported her family over the years in Eckersley House. We organised a special birthday surprise for Alya with Anton where he brought her a cake and sang happy birthday. It was the last thing she expected, and it put a huge smile on her face.



Alya

“

We want to say a huge thank you to Mr Du Beke and The Sick Children's Trust for organising this, and to the charity for its support. Your child being in hospital is traumatic but can be made easier with help from The Sick Children's Trust and as a family we want to do whatever we can to help raise awareness of this incredible service.

”

Claire Waites, Alya's mum



## Our ambassadors



Michael Crawford CBE

Michael Crawford CBE continued his involvement as our President, and the enthusiasm and support of our ambassadors has been particularly appreciated over the last year. From generous grants and innovative fundraising ideas, to embracing our virtual challenges and ensuring our name is shared on social media, we couldn't have made such an impact without them. Michael kindly allowed us to auction an exclusive phone call with him for our Auction House event, Tim Downie took to Twitter to raise funds by raffling off an original personalised poem and Christina Johnston regularly took to social media to raise the profile of our key events and campaigns.



Leanne, Paul and Adam Curry

### Together this Christmas

Our Christmas appeal, Together this Christmas, had a record-breaking year. We raised £33,639,

## Making an impact

which will provide an incredible 1,121 nights support for families in our 'Homes from Home'. This year our appeal was completely digital due to COVID-19 and we launched virtual Christmas cards alongside a range of virtual gifts, plus our first Instagram filter. We also worked closely with families, our celebrity ambassadors and the Toon Council, a Newcastle based fundraising committee, to raise awareness and funds for the appeal.

### Supporting families like Adam's

"We celebrated Adam's first Christmas together in the Royal London Hospital. People had 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." Leanne Curry, Adam's mum.

### Max and Keira's Law

Since 2017, we have worked alongside The Mirror newspaper on its Change the Law for Life, a campaign to change the laws regarding organ donation to an opt-out system.

It started in Scott House, building a close bond with the family of a young man who was waiting for a lifesaving donor heart. Max Johnson's parents, Emma and

Paul, were introduced to us and shared their experience to help raise awareness of our 'Homes from Home'.

Not only did Max's story touch our hearts, it touched the heart of the nation.

Our Communications Team, who for years had been working with Mirror Journalist Jeremy Armstrong, introduced Max's parents to Jeremy.

From there, Jeremy documented Max's agonising wait, the moment he received his gift, the day he met his donor, Keira's, family and his pleas to Theresa May.

Building trust, empowering Max's family and working closely with The Mirror aided the success of this campaign and the historic moment in May 2020 when new legislation was introduced: Max and Keira's law.

## Looking ahead to 2021/22

We know that 2021/22 is going to be equally challenging, but our focus is to ensure we are able to get our 'Homes from Home' back to full capacity and supporting all the families who need us.

As families navigate the additional challenges that COVID-19 has brought with it, such as restrictions to hospital visiting, regular COVID-19 testing and added anxiety over simple tasks like food shopping, we will continue to give them one less thing to worry about by providing them with a warm, comfortable and safe place to stay when they need it most.

We will keep working closely with our hospital partners as well as continue to adapt and navigate new regulations and we are hopeful that we will be able to support more families when they really need us.

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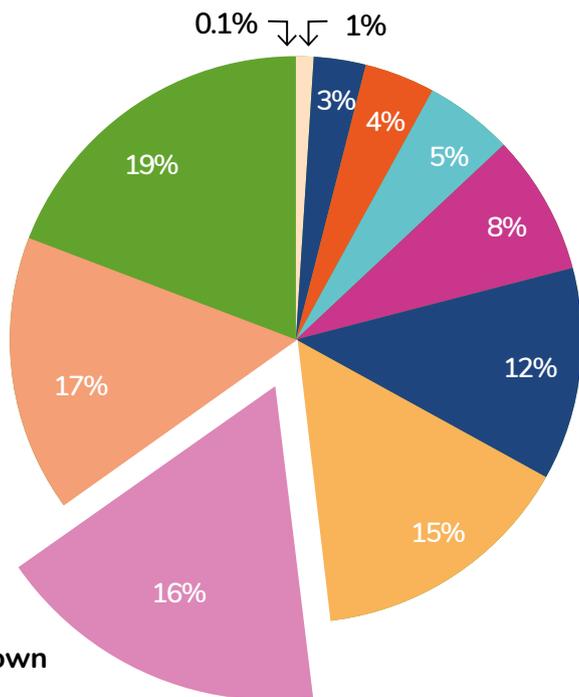
Without Scott House we would've struggled to be there consistently for Max. It would not have been possible. We would have been crippled financially but we'd be completely physically and emotionally exhausted – we had to be strong to support Max.

Max's mum, Emma

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# Income 2020/21

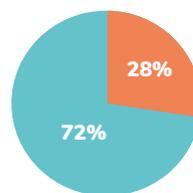
# Expenditure 2020/21



**Income breakdown**  
**£2,041,256**

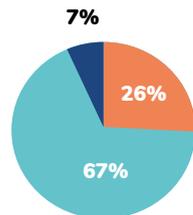
- Charitable Trusts and Foundations £378,534
- Community £340,477
- Government grant income £333,204
- Major Gifts £302,158
- Corporate £254,456

- Hospitals £161,293
- Other income £96,844
- Donations in memoriam £75,036
- Events £68,242
- Gifts in kind £28,910
- Legacies £2,102



**Expenditure (without capital costs)**  
**Total £2,463,497**

- Costs of generating voluntary income
- Charitable activities (supporting families)



**Expenditure (with capital costs)**  
**Total £2,636,899**

- Capital costs (house refurbishments)
- Costs of generating voluntary income
- Charitable activities (supporting families)

# Huge thank you

**In this unprecedented year we can't thank you enough for helping us to keep families together.**

We would like to thank everyone that has helped us to keep our 'Homes from Home' supporting families this year. Our Trustees, hospital partners, and trusts and foundations generously contributed through matched funding and room sponsorships. Essential running and staff costs were bolstered with help from the People's Postcode Lottery, BBC Children in Need, The Band Trust, Michael Crawford Children's Charity, Children's Heart Surgery Fund and Candlelighters. And to our wonderful volunteers and volunteer committees, the Cambridge Fundraising Committee and Toon Council, we couldn't do it without you.



**“ We were so grateful for the opportunity to stay in Chestnut House, there are no words to describe that. Due to the circumstances in the world, it made us feel safe. Thank you so much. Joanna Pabis ”**

## Our President

Michael Crawford CBE

Thank you to our amazing ambassadors and celebrity supporters for their kind and generous support throughout the year.

## Our Board of Trustees

Paul Jardine,  
Chairman

Fiona Blakemore

Gary Boom

Vicky Carter

Tim Craig

Peter Cunard

Stephen Masters

Jo Mier

James Rigby

Michael Robinson

Dr Jack Singer

Polly Staveley

Soren Tholstrup



Scott House,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
Freeman Hospital

Crawford House,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
The Royal Victoria Infirmary

Eckersley House, Leeds  
Leeds Children's Hospital

Acorn House,  
Cambridge  
Addenbrooke's Hospital

Chestnut House,  
Cambridge  
The Rosie Hospital

Stevenson House,  
London  
Royal London Children's Hospital

Rainbow House, London  
Great Ormond Street Hospital

Treetop House, Sheffield  
Sheffield Children's Hospital

Magnolia House, Sheffield  
Sheffield Children's Hospital

Guilford Street House,  
London  
Great Ormond Street Hospital

