Your ECHC

News from Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity

echcharity.org

Autumn 2026

Dear Edinburgh

Our city.
Our kids.
Your support.

Marking milestone moments

How we're making sure life's big moments aren't missed in hospital

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Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity

Scottish charity number SC020862

Welcome

from ECHC CEO, Roslyn Neely

In March, we wrote a letter to Edinburgh. We asked our city to stand beside the children and families we meet every day at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP), facing some of the darkest days of their lives.

Across the capital, supporters like you donated, fundraised, volunteered your time or helped spread the word about the work of our charity. An enormous heartfelt thank you.

As you'll see throughout your autumn issue of *Your ECHC*, your support is already helping so many hospital families. On page 5, you'll meet Noah and his family, whose experience highlights the realities faced by so many when a child becomes seriously ill.

You'll also read about our Milestones Moments photography (page 6) and find out how you are ensuring families hold on to the special occasions that still happen during a hospital stay. And on page 8, you'll discover how donor-funded equipment is improving care for hundreds of children every year.

While each page tells a different story, they all point to the same thing: when families are in need, Edinburgh looks after its own.

But we still have a long way to go.

Every day, new families arrive at the hospital facing challenges they never expected. That's why our Dear Edinburgh appeal continues, and why we're asking our city to stay with us.

If you're already part of our story, thank you. And if you're considering supporting ECHC for the first time having read this, thank you too.

Edinburgh has already shown what can happen when we come together for seriously ill children and their families. Now, we need to keep going.

Our city. Our kids. Your support.

Roslyn

**Dear Edinburgh,
will you stay with us?
Scan to donate now.**

The hidden cost of hospital

Last year, we shared our 10-year Commitment to ensure no child faces hospital alone. Shaped by conversations with families and NHS staff, one issue came up repeatedly: the financial pressure that comes with having an unwell child.

The hidden costs of hospital life – travel, food, accommodation, time off work – mount up quickly and can be devastating.

And thanks to you, we're already responding.

Thanks to your donations, families can now access emergency financial support when they need it most, helping to ease some of the pressure. But charity support can only go so far.

The Scottish Government's Young Patients Family Fund (YPFF) was created to help families cover the cost of visiting or staying with a child in hospital. In theory, it's exactly the kind of support families need. But in practice, the criteria for accessing the fund excludes many of the people who need it most.

As a result, the fund is shrinking year on year due to a perceived lack of demand. The demand is there, in bucketloads, but is out of reach for those who cannot cover the costs upfront, or whose income has suddenly been cut off because of their circumstances.

Families deserve support when they need it, not weeks later through a convoluted system that assumes they can pay first and claim the money back later.

There are simple changes that could make a real difference: making payments available upfront and extending support to families attending outpatient appointments – whose costs can be just as financially draining as an overnight stay.

This is why ECHC is calling on the Scottish Government to reform the YPFF, making it easier to access and making it available to more families. Families have told us what needs to change. Now it's time for policymakers to listen.

Dear Edinburgh...

Earlier this year, we wrote a letter to this beloved city we call home. We asked Edinburgh and beyond to stand with its children and families navigating some of the most challenging days of their lives.

And Edinburgh, you answered. You donated. You fundraised. You shared our campaign far and wide, across Scotland and beyond.

Thanks to your support, more families are receiving emergency financial help for an unexpected hospital stay. More children are finding comfort and distraction to break up long days on the wards. More parents and carers have someone in their corner when things get too much.

But this is only the beginning.

Beside every child's hospital bed is a family whose lives have been turned upside down by an admission, trying to hold everything together while juggling jobs, bills, and often siblings at home.

We've seen families use the last of the little cash they have for bus fares to get their child to hospital. Parents forced to think twice about eating dinner. Those sleeping in cars, chairs and waiting rooms because they can't afford to stay close to their child.

No one should have to choose between paying the bills and being at their child's bedside. But for far too many, this is the reality behind a hospital admission. The need isn't going away. So neither are we.

Edinburgh, we're asking you to stay with us.

Because right now, more families are arriving at the hospital worrying about where they'll sleep, how they'll get home, or whether they can afford their next meal.

Your donation today could ensure these families don't have to face these challenges alone.

Over the next few months, you'll see families like Noah's (opposite page) on billboards, buses and bus stops across the city. These are real

Meet cover star Noah

"When you spend months living beside a hospital cot, your world becomes very small."

When Noah was born in February, parents Cuan and Malcolm thought they were finally at the end of a difficult pregnancy. Instead, their world became a blur of intensive care and emergency interventions.

Born with a rare condition affecting his oesophagus and trachea, Noah underwent major surgery at just two days old. In the weeks that followed, he experienced repeated choking episodes.

Cuan says, "The first time, he turned blue in my arms. A few weeks later, it happened again. He went completely blue and floppy. I had to give him CPR. I genuinely thought I'd lost him."

"The uncertainty is one of the hardest parts. You can never fully relax because you're always worrying what might happen next."

Amid the fear and exhaustion, support from ECHC has helped make life on the ward a little easier.

"Your support means families like ours have someone to check in on them, listen when they need to talk, and remind them they're not facing this alone. When you're living through something this stressful, having people in your corner matters more than you can imagine."

Edinburgh families sharing their stories, asking our city to stand beside them.

When you see our billboards and buses, don't just read the message. Please be part of the answer. If you can, please donate £20 today. Encourage your friends, family and colleagues to get involved. Because Edinburgh's children need every one of us to step up and help.

Our city. Our kids. Your support.

for up-to-date news follow us on **@echcharity**

Dear Edinburgh, are you in?

Join our movement to ensure no child faces hospital alone. Scan the QR code to make a donation now.

Capturing milestone moments

First tooth. First steps. First day at school.

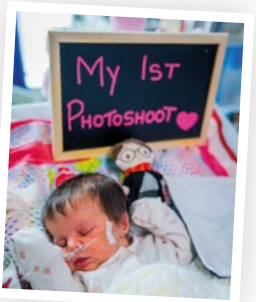
For many families, these are the moments that fill photo albums, take pride of place on mantelpieces, and get shared with grandparents.

But when a child spends weeks, months or even years in hospital, milestones change, and a parent's camera roll tells a very different story to the one they expected.

Snapshots instead capture the first time their baby feeds without a tube. An unsteady toddle down a ward corridor. Birthday balloons beside a hospital bed.

Here, life can quickly become a blur of tests, treatments, and long days at the bedside. But life's big moments don't stop, nor should they be missed, just because they happen in hospital.

That's why, thanks to supporters like you, families were invited to take part in *Milestone Moments* – a special day with professional photographer Chris Watt, designed to celebrate the memories that matter most.



Among those photographed was 10-day old Elodie.

Mum Samantha said, "We had our first photoshoot booked for a few days after Elodie was born, but unfortunately we ended up in hospital instead.

"We were so sad to miss out on those first family photos, so it was a lovely surprise to be given this opportunity here. It's given us something really positive to look back on during a difficult time."

Because of your continued support, these families now have keepsakes to recognise and remember how far they've come. Some milestones won't wait until you get home.

Donate £20 today to help more families celebrate them.

Our city. Our kids. Your legacy.

Throughout this edition of ***Your ECHC***, you've seen the realities so many families face when a child is in hospital, and how our incredible supporters are helping them through.

The Sick Kids has been part of Edinburgh's story for generations. Today, a gift in your Will could help keep our city standing beside its children for many more generations to come.

Whether it's helping parents and carers stay close during a hospital stay, funding state-of-the-art equipment, or providing emergency financial support, none of this would be possible without the people who share our belief that no one should face hospital alone. People like you.

Every gift matters

Making or updating a Will is a personal decision, and something to consider in your own time. There is no pressure and no obligation. You do not need to tell us if you leave a gift to ECHC, but if you'd like to talk things through, we'd be more than happy to have a confidential conversation.

Even 1% can make a difference

A gift in your Will doesn't have to be large to be powerful. After taking care of those closest to you, even 1% of your estate could help support children and families long into the future.

Whatever size of gift you choose to leave, you'll become part of a community of people helping to ensure that, when a child in Edinburgh (or beyond) needs their hospital, their city is right there behind them.

To hear what support from ECHC can mean to a family, scan the QR code to listen to Carol share her experience as a grandparent.

We'd love to hear from you

If you'd like to have a friendly chat about leaving a gift in your Will, please contact **hello@echcharity.org** or call **0131 668 4949**.

Our city's children will always need their hospital. Become a Future Funder today.

A clearer picture for children facing surgery

Every year, more than 4,000 children undergo surgery at Edinburgh's Children's Hospital.

Whether it's a planned operation or an emergency procedure, it can be daunting for young patients and their families. As one dad told us:

"Sixteen times I've handed my baby over, and I have the same knot in my stomach every time, waiting for him to come back."

Thanks to supporters like you, clinicians at the RHCYP now have access to a new state-of-the-art ultrasound scanner – the first of its kind in a paediatric NHS setting in Scotland.

The £40,000 scanner uses artificial intelligence (AI) to provide clearer images and real-time guidance, allowing clinical teams to carry out procedures with greater precision.

Importantly for children, this can mean fewer needle attempts, shorter procedures, and a faster recovery.

Dr Su Ying Ong, Consultant Paediatric Anaesthetist, says the impact is already being felt.

"Getting lines into tiny babies is a common challenge. We recently had a baby who weighed just 900 grams and needed a femoral line. Because the image from the new scanner is so clear, we could see exactly what we needed. This wouldn't have been possible before.

"Young patients also often have to go without food or drink before an anaesthetic because we need their stomach to be empty. With this scanner, we can check that at the bedside and, if everything looks as it should, take them straight through to theatre."

In some cases, the technology may even help children avoid general anaesthetic altogether.

For Dr Ong, though, the greatest benefit is simple. She says,

"If we can reduce waiting times, speed up recovery and generally make the experience a little less frightening, that will make all the difference."

Can you donate today to help make a child's hospital journey easier?

Scan the QR code now.

find us on /echcharity

Doors Open Day

Sunday 27th September 2026

Come and see the magic happen! After an enormous success last year, Edinburgh's Children's Hospital is once again taking part in the Doors Open Days festival this September – and you're invited.

Join us on Sunday 27th September for a behind-the-scenes look at the hospital and the many ways supporters like you help children and families facing life-changing diagnoses.

Guided tours will run every half hour from 10am to 4pm. **Rest assured, we won't be disturbing any children by taking you to the wards.** But you will get to explore the spaces where your donations help families to find comfort, support and a little normality during their stay.

You'll step inside our Hub, where parents and carers can find a cup of tea, some calm, and a listening ear. You can try your hand at interactive activities and discover how your support brings distraction to long hospital days.

This is your chance to ask questions, meet the team, and see firsthand how your generosity helps children and families get the emotional and practical support they need when navigating hospital life.

For families with upcoming appointments, procedures or surgery, the tour can also be a great opportunity to become more familiar with the hospital environment, helping children to feel more comfortable ahead of their visit.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to go behind the scenes!

Scan the QR code to book your spot today. See you then!

Supporter Showcase

Pure goals!

Football-mad Noah (8) took on a fundraising challenge inspired by Scotland's 28-year World Cup wait. He visited 28 Scottish football stadiums, scoring five penalties at each to raise money for children just like him.

Inspired by his own experiences at the children's hospital after being born with Tracheo-Oesophageal Fistula (TOF), Noah even took his challenge to Hampden Park, scoring penalties in front of a crowd of more than 51,000 fans. And he raised a whopping £3,620 while he was at it!

Jellycat jackpot

Lucy (11) was over the moon when she discovered she'd won our giant Jellycat dog raffle.

"I didn't even know my mum had entered," she said. "I couldn't believe it when I found out I'd won!"

A huge Jellycat fan, Lucy says her new furry friend, Frank, has now taken pride of place on her bed and has very much settled into his new home. A big thank you to our charity partner Dalkeith Country Park for generously donating Frank, making Lucy's win extra special and raising over £2,000.

A stormtrooper, a giraffe and a Pikachu walk into a festival...

Nope, not the start of a very strange joke. Instead, just another day at FoxFest! Between the tribute acts, face painting, funfair rides, food trucks and live entertainment, Team ECHC was certainly kept busy chatting to supporters and getting stuck into the family fun at Conifox Adventure Park.

An enormous thank you to Conifox, the 17 amazing volunteers who gave up their weekend to support us, and everyone who stopped by our stall. Together, you helped to raise an incredible £903 for children and families in hospital.

Mr B goes the distance

Headteacher Mark Becher – better known to pupils as Mr B – laced up his walking boots and took on a 110-mile coast-to-coast walk from Ayr to Haddington, raising over £6,400 for children and families.

Taking on the challenge to celebrate a milestone birthday, Mr B battled plenty of blisters along the way but never stopped putting one foot in front of the other.

He said: "The support we received through donations and words of encouragement meant there was no way we wouldn't finish."

What an achievement – and what a way to mark a big birthday!

Community volunteers needed

Want to get involved but don't fancy walking 110 miles or visiting 28 football stadiums?

Behind every incredible fundraising event are the many wonderful volunteers who help make it happen. We're always looking for friendly faces to rattle a collection bucket, cheer on our challengers, pitch in for a bag pack or lend a hand at a local event.

There's no regular commitment and no minimum number of hours. Just fun, flexible opportunities whenever you can spare the time.

Join the fun!

If you can give a little bit of your time, we'd love to hear from you! Drop us an email at hello@echcharity.org

Sparkle and Shine Christmas Carol Concert

The Dean, Edinburgh
Thursday 3 December
6pm-8.30pm

Join us for our Christmas Carol Concert,
a heartwarming evening filled with music, joy and the spirit of giving, all in support of young patients and their families.

Scan the QR code below to get your ticket now!

Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity

Sponsor The Sparkle