



Acorns Children's Hospice Trust
Quality Accounts 2021 - 2022

acorns

Your local children's hospice



Our vision is that every baby, child and young person living in our region who is life limited or life threatened and their families will receive the specialist care and support they need.

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PART 1: Chief Executive's statement of quality

As Chief Executive of Acorns, I am very pleased to share the Quality Accounts. This report is a key part of our public accountability as a care provider, and as a charity that receives significant statutory and voluntary funding. I welcome the way that it brings together in a single document so much of the formal and informal feedback we have received on the care we provide over the past year. Our Director of Care, Emma Aspinall, and her team are responsible for the preparation of the Acorns Quality Accounts. This Report aims to provide clear information about the quality of our services, so that our children and their families may feel safe and well cared for, and their wider circle of friends and supporters are reassured.



We look back on this 12-month period as a second, and hopefully the last, full year of the Covid-19 pandemic. While mercifully less devastating than the first, it was still such a challenging year for the children and families that we support at Acorns, as well as for those working and volunteering with us. Because of the emergence of the Omicron variant, and the reduction of most restrictions shortly afterwards, we actually saw higher levels of infection than the year before, both in our client group and in our own hospice, shop and support teams.

I am particularly proud that Acorns was able to keep open the doors of our children's hospices in Walsall and Worcester every single day of this two-year pandemic. While in September 2021, we were finally able to fully restore our full residential service from our Birmingham hospice. I am happy to note that since that time, and despite the considerable disruption from the different Omicron waves over the winter and spring, we have offered a full and uninterrupted care service from all three of our Acorns children's hospices.

At our most recent Board meeting, Trustees were privileged to hear from Rachel, the mother of one of the children we support from our Black Country hospice in Walsall. She is also one of our Parent Ambassadors at Acorns. This was the first time the whole Board had met in person since February 2020. Rachel was invited to share with Trustees her family's experience of the pandemic and to feed back on the support they received from Acorns. We were all moved to hear just how difficult the two years had been for Rachel and her family, but also inspired by her incredible resilience, courage, and positivity. Above all, we were just very grateful to hear how much our care service had meant to her and her family over the past two years, and more determined than ever, going forward, to reach as many others as we can. It is truly a privilege as well as a responsibility that Acorns was able to offer our children's hospice care throughout the pandemic to so many families like Rachel's.

At Acorns, we feel genuinely privileged that, since the onset of the Covid crisis, we have been in a position to support some of the most vulnerable young members of our community, and their families. As Chief Executive, I could not be prouder of our wonderful team of co-workers and volunteers, and of the strength of our partnerships with other members of the health and social care network in the West Midlands and Gloucestershire. Together, this has allowed us to adapt our children's hospice care in response to the considerable challenges posed by the pandemic. When I look back, the words that spring to mind to describe the qualities our team has shown over the past two years are as follows – courageous, flexible, imaginative, collaborative, resilient and deeply committed to the needs and views of the children and families we work with.

Trustees are confident now that we can again plan with a three-year time horizon, and we have a new strategy covering that duration. Its title is 'For Any Child', reflecting the fundamental wish of the team at Acorns, which is that we are there for any child or family that needs our care and support. You can find a copy of this strategy on our website.

The overarching ambition for our next strategy is to reach more children and families – in order to do so, we need not just to stimulate awareness and demand for our care service, but also ensure that we have the right workforce and culture. Finally, and importantly, we need to ensure we have sufficient funds to run a stable and sustainable care service – funds raised from our NHS partnerships, our shops and from our generous and loyal supporters.

We feel truly privileged at Acorns to be a trusted channel between the compassion and generosity of our supporters and partners, and the children and families in the West Midlands and Gloucestershire community who need children's hospice care.

These Quality Accounts are for all our stakeholders at Acorns: the children we care for, their families and carers, our colleagues and volunteers. It may also be a resource for the general public, and for the many statutory, voluntary sector and other partner organisations with whom we have the privilege to work.

For anyone unfamiliar with the format, the requirement to publish Quality Accounts is set out in the Health Act 2009. Requirements about the content of Quality Accounts are set out in the NHS (Quality Accounts) Regulations 2010, and in the amendments published in 2011. To the best of my knowledge the information in the Quality Accounts is accurate and a fair representation of the quality of care services provided by Acorns Children's Hospice



Toby Porter
Acorns Chief Executive



Part 2: Priorities for improvement and statements of assurance from the Board

There are sound and robust systems across Acorns that are designed to ensure safe and high quality care. An established Care Governance Group internally monitors and quality assures all work across our hospices. A Care Assurance Committee (comprising members from the Board of Trustees) meets quarterly with the Director of Care to rigorously monitor service delivery and quality of care services. There are Standing Operating Procedures in response to the Department of Health (2013) Controlled Drugs (Supervision of Management and Use) Regulations. There are systems across the Trust which monitor and internally regulate Information Governance.

Acorns is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which exercises external governance over the standards that must be met in order for Acorns to operate its services.

Priority areas for quality improvement for 2022-2023

Acorns priority is to ensure quality across all its care services as this document aims to highlight and showcase. We work to the principle of continuous improvement, with priority areas for improvement always underway alongside existing services to enhance the support and care received by the children and families accessing Acorns.

Following consultation with the care managers, hospice leaders and using feedback from service users, Acorns has identified the following four priority areas for quality improvement in 2022-2023.

Quality improvement area 1

Implementation of young people service

Following recommendations from the Care Review in 2020, Acorns has committed to the recruitment to three young people workers based at each of our hospice sites to lead and develop therapeutic based services for life limited and life threatened children referred for our services who are aged between 10-18 years of age.

This will be achieved, and measured and monitored by:

1. Recruitment, appointment, and successful induction of the Young People Workers.
2. Clear service offer for the Young People Services being developed and shared with stakeholders.
3. Guidance and as appropriate training provided to the care teams on the new service.
4. Collation of data on the numbers of Young People accessing the service.

Expected outcomes

1. Children accessing the services reporting improved well-being.
2. Increased number of children aged 10-18 years accessing Acorns specialist services.

Quality improvement area 2

Increased services for siblings

In response to increased referrals and requests for specialist sibling support and reported unmet need in this service area, Acorns has committed to increasing the number of sibling workers from 3 to 5.

This will be achieved, measured and monitored by:

1. Recruitment, appointment and successful induction of the sibling workers
2. Review of the service offer for the sibling services and shared with stakeholders.
3. Guidance and as appropriate training provided to the care teams on the increased service.
4. Collation of data on the numbers of siblings accessing the service.

Expected outcomes

1. Siblings accessing the services reporting improved well-being
2. Increased number of Siblings accessing Acorns specialist services

Quality improvement area 3

Symptom Management service

Symptom management is one of the seven key palliative care services identified within Acorns Strategy for 2022-2025 – For Any Child. This service will be led by Acorns consultant paediatrician in palliative medicine.

This will be achieved and measured and monitored by:

1. Increased number of children accessing symptom management within the Acorns hospices.
2. Number of unique children accessing this service.
3. More families referred for this specialist service.
4. Increased integrated working across palliative care teams in the community and acute settings.

Expected outcomes

1. Reduced need for hospital admissions.
2. Improved quality of life and well-being for the children.

Quality improvement area 4

Development of career paths and revised roles for nurses and health care assistance across the hospices

Our aim is to attract the best talent and maintain the clinical specialists working across our services. We are committed to ensuring Acorn's workforce aligns and is competitive with other providers such as the NHS.

This will be achieved and measured and monitored by:

1. Working with workforce experts develop a Care Workforce Strategy with clear recommendations endorsed by Acorns Board of Trustees.
2. Identify career pathways for all care teams to support recruitment and retention which will link in with the Acorns Academy model.
3. Restructure the clinical management and leadership roles to support development and career pathways within Acorns.

Expected outcomes

1. Clarity on budgetary requirements for Care Workforce developments for 2023-2025
2. Clinical Management Structure across hospices which ensures a sustainable management structure to deliver increased clinical services over a 5 to 10-year period.

Quality improvement area 5

Therapeutic Service Development

During the 2020-2021 pandemic we developed a phenomenal therapeutic based service in response to service need. Therapeutic based service is one of the seven key palliative care services identified within Acorns Strategy for 2022-2025 – For Any Child.

This will be achieved and measured and monitored by:

1. Clear service offer for the therapeutic services being developed and shared with stakeholders.
2. Guidance and as appropriate training provided to the care teams on the new service.
3. Collation of data on the numbers of children accessing the service.

Expected outcomes

1. Children accessing the services reporting improved well-being
2. Increased number of children aged accessing Acorns therapeutic services

Review of quality improvement areas for 2021-2022

Quality improvement area 1

What we said we would do

Implementation of electronic care plans. Following the successful implementation of Acorns electronic care data base system in June 2016, we said we would develop care plans that can be embedded into the client's electronic records. These have been previously paper-based plans.

Achievement:

- ✓ Groups across the hospices have met to agree the different areas of the care plan.
- ✓ The clinical teams have worked in designing a care plan that meets the clinical and system requirements

Outcomes:

- ✓ The assessment, admission and discharge documents are embedded across the hospices

- ✓ Acorns Data team has established that we need additional functions to our Data System to enable the Care Plan to be embedded electronically. The Data team continue to work with Azeus, the data system provider, to determine a solution.

Quality improvement area 2

What we said we would do

Implementation of new senior care management structure: In 2020 we commissioned an Independent Care Review. We received the report in February 2021 and one of the key recommendations was to have less diversification across Acorns care services. In March 2021 a decision was made to centralise the Care Senior Management Team developing a new structure to scope and deliver services for the future.

Achievement

- ✓ Role descriptions were developed with clarity on the structure and areas they would lead on.
- ✓ The posts were open for internal applicants and were also be advertised externally.
- ✓ The new post holders were inducted into these new roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ The Care Deputy Directors, Head of Care Workforce and Education and Care Admin Manager have become active members of the Care Senior Leadership Team and wider Senior Leadership group undertaking key projects and initiatives

Outcomes

- ✓ New post holders have developed the care strategy and operational action plans for the delivery of the Clinical and Family and Care services, that informs the Acorns organisational 2022-2025 strategy
- ✓ There is greater consistency of services across hospice sites (Shift patterns, uniforms, administrative management, synergy in care education across teams)

Quality improvement area 3

What we said we would do

Establishment review programme: An establishment review will identify the optimal numbers and skill requirements of care team members to deliver services both clinically and non-clinically. The expectation is to develop a clear set of actions detailing how an establishment review can be delivered as part of the 2022-2025 strategy.

Achievement

- ✓ A clear term of reference for the establishment review programme was developed with full engagement of hospice managers.
- ✓ The work was led by the Head of Care Workforce and Education and supported by the Deputy Directors for Clinical and Family Support and Care Services working with an external consultant and incorporating views from external palliative care colleagues and experts
- ✓ External benchmarking and support was sought from other organisations in the sector who have undertaken similar reviews.
- ✓ Progress was monitored through a newly formed Care Workforce Advisory Board and then via the internal governance processes via the Executive Director group and the Care Assurance Committee.

Outcomes

- ✓ Clear recommendation for required establishment and skill mix to underpin a comprehensive workforce strategy
- ✓ Resource implications identified and considered for budgetary planning for 2022-2023

Quality improvement area 4

What we said we would do:

Transition initiatives being embedded: Meeting the needs of young people transitioning from children to adults' services continues to be a priority for Acorns, due to restructuring in 2019 our transition service was compromised. Quality Improvement Area 4 will reinstate our commitment to support the transition of these vulnerable young people.

Achievement

- ✓ Transition Policy was developed.
- ✓ A successful pilot and outcome-based review and family support plan has taken place.
- ✓ An individual young people plan/checklist that interlinks with the family plan has been developed as a tool to aid the Family Team Workers in their role in supporting transition.
- ✓ Workshops delivered for Family Service Teams on inclusion of transition support into their roles and responsibilities.

Outcomes

- ✓ Increased data captured to support auditing and evaluation in 2022/2023.
- ✓ Families and young people feeling more informed and empowered about transition.
- ✓ Increased liaison with adult providers supporting the transition of Acorns young people.
- ✓ New KPI's established for 2022-2023 for 95% of all families to have a Family Plan Review.

Quality improvement area 5

What we said we would do

Implementing online care volunteer training: There have been over 300 care volunteers working across Acorns hospices and in the community in families' homes (pre-pandemic). The online training programme will replace a number of face-to-face training sessions.

Achievement

- ✓ An on-line induction programme was developed for all care volunteers.
- ✓ Effective liaison between care volunteer managers leading the services and care education team who support delivery of core training.
- ✓ Core competency framework for care volunteers identified.

Outcomes

- ✓ Production of a volunteer electronic 'flipping book'.
- ✓ All new volunteers have access to the online induction to complement the face to face training provided to introduce them to Acorns services and their roles.

Additional areas of quality improvement to note

1. Responding to a second year of Covid-19

Acorns provided care and support to families throughout the year responding to need within the parameters of what was practical and safe:

- > End of life care was delivered throughout the year as needed.
- > Emergency short breaks support provided when requested.
- > Resident children continued to be cared for.
- > Discharges from acute care were supported to free up capacity and support a smooth discharge.
- > Family members were offered support with the re-introduction of face-to-face meetings and continued telephone and virtual options.
- > We continued nursing secondments to NHS partners to support their service delivery and ongoing honorary contracts into specialist teams.

Responsive and effective use of resources:

- > Our amazing workforce remained flexible and committed, working across our hospice sites, in the community and within NHS services.

- > Infection control guidance was managed centrally by Acorns and updated and cascaded as it evolved from regional and national government.
- > We continued to work with NHS resilience groups which ensured we maintained adequate supplies of appropriate PPE.
- > Our risk assessment were reviewed and necessary changes to working practices made which enabled increased visiting within safe guidelines.
- > Face to face sibling support commenced.

Throughout the year we continued to:

- > Consult with our parent carer champions and young ambassadors.
- > Meet regularly with our workforce through virtual 'Town Hall' style meetings (cross organisational), team-based meetings with local managers, effective email and newsletter communication.
- > Undertake our planned audit programme.
- > Undertake all routine training and development.
- > Participate in research studies.

Appointment of Consultant Paediatrician in Palliative Medicine:

In 2021/2022 we welcomed Acorns Consultant Paediatrician in Palliative Medicine to the Acorns team. This post is fully funded by Acorns charitable funds and is key in supporting the development of palliative care services to children across Acorns three hospices and supporting the specialist palliative care team at Birmingham Woman's and Childrens Hospital (Specialist Childrens Hospice for the West Midlands). The appointment of the Consultant Paediatrician in Palliative Medicine has:

- > Enabled a 24/7 out of hour on-call phone rota to be developed for key clinicians and medics who are supporting children at EoL and with complex symptom management from across the West Midland area.
- > Co-ordinated and facilitated multi-disciplinary forums for GPs and specialist nurses to come together to share learning from recent research and case studies.
- > Enabled more families an informed choice for place of care for their baby or child for EoL and symptom management care.
- > Delivered consultant perspective training for specialist nursing teams across the hospices.
- > Enabled more babies and children to access pre-and post-bereavement care at Acorns hospices as a direct result of the Consultant Paediatrician in Palliative Medicine's engagement with the families.

2. NICE guidance

We remain compliant in the guidelines for the planning and management of care for end of life care for infants, children and young people with life limiting conditions (NG61) through regular review of these and mapping our service against delivery of quality care. The quality standards associated with the guidelines (QS160) help determine the audits we carry out related specifically to the guideline and we are pleased to report good compliance in these areas.

Over the year Acorns has continued to refer to and access all relevant NICE guidance including:

- > *Babies, children, and young people's experience of healthcare:* This will be used to inform some of our engagement work and quality work moving forward.



NICE National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

(View the above online at <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng204/resources/visual-summary-pdf-9204587245>)

- > **Disabled children and young people up to 25 with severe complex needs: integrated service delivery and organisation across health, social care and education:** This informs our partnership working, as we developed advanced care plans with other agencies in particular, and is helping to shape our service delivery models.

3. Mandatory training

As we moved through the pandemic maintaining mandatory training compliance proved more challenging with higher-than-expected absence levels due to the continued need for our workforce to isolate when contracting Covid-19 combined with increasing service needs. We continued to focus on e-learning complimented by small group face-to-face sessions for the practical elements of moving and handling and Basic Life Support.

Compliance for mandatory training as of the end of Quarter 4
(The target has been extended from 85% to 95% excluding long term absence)

The table key 95% and over = **Green** 90-94% = **Amber** 89% and below = **Red**

Mandatory	Overall	Birmingham	Walsall	Worcester	Central
Safeguarding Level 3	98%	98%	98%	97%	100%
Safeguarding Level 2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Adult Safeguarding Level 3	100%	100%	100%	100%	n/a
Adult Safeguarding Level 2	89%	82%	90%	84%	100%
WRAP	98%	100%	95%	96%	100%
Food Hygiene	98%	100%	95%	96%	100%
Equality and Inclusion	95%	98%	98%	98%	100%
Information Governance	96%	98%	98%	89%	100%
Mental Capacity	95%	87%	100%	93%	100%
Manual Handling	96%	91%	89%	88%	100%
Fire	98%	100%	100%	93%	100%
Basic Life Support	96%	96%	92%	97%	100%
Infection Control	98%	97%	98%	97%	100%

In addition, a wide range of other education sessions have been developed to support clinical needs and care for bespoke children. These included:

- ✓ A new 2-day respiratory course for new staff and those wanting a refresher has been developed and is evaluating well.
- ✓ The successful *Care of the Unwell Child* for Registered Nurses has been complimented by a Recognition of the Unwell Child Course for Healthcare Workers. These courses were delivered through virtual classroom, they have been well attended by both internal and external attendees.
- ✓ Partnership work with Birmingham City University led to the development of a learning session that, under the umbrella of Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), explores unconscious bias in clinical decision making using the approach of humble learning.
- ✓ We actively contributed to a number of education groups including the Together for Short Lives Clinical Practice Forum; South Staffordshire Palliative Care Education Subgroup; and the National PENSo Clinical Practice Educators Network.

4. Partnerships

Throughout 2021-2022 Acorns has worked both operationally and strategically with NHS trusts, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Public Health England (and from October 2021 UK Health Security Agency), the Care Quality Commission, and other statutory and voluntary providers.

During the second year of the pandemic Acorns continued to mobilise our workforce of specialist nurses to work across Acorns sites and also into community nursing teams and into Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital, supporting the children in some of the high dependency wards.

Acorns partnership work was further cemented with BWCH following the highly successful and hugely impactful appointment of a level 4 Consultant Paediatrician in Palliative Medicine.

There have been quarterly virtual meetings arranged with the commissioning teams across the West Midlands and with our CQC relationship Managers. These meetings have provided opportunities for Acorns to present on services being provided and clarify how resources have been mobilised to respond to service need.

Acorns has both attended and coordinated meetings with NHS England at both regional and national levels to provide oversight and clarity on service provision for life limited and life threatened children across the West Midlands to consider the operational and strategic perspectives.

In our general management of infection control and Covid cases in our hospices we have diligently liaised with Public Health England (and from October 2021 UK Health Security Agency).

Acorns family team workers have worked proactively with statutory services in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults accessing our services. We have, like many providers, seen an increase in safeguarding concerns and vulnerabilities as a result of social isolation and reduced access to support services so many of our children and families relied on.

Acorns continues to host and provide administrative support to West Midlands Paediatric Palliative Care Network, a proactive group of key clinical and medical professionals from across the West Midlands.

5. UNICEF – Rights Respecting Award

Building on our success of being the first children's hospice in the UK to receive the UNICEF Rights Respecting Bronze Award in 2020 we set ourselves the target of being awarded the Silver Award in 2021-2022.

The UNICEF champions across the hospices worked directly with children and their colleagues further embedding the principles of Children's Rights in every aspect of our work and delivery of care. In December 2021 we were delighted to be awarded the Silver Award.

We are now working towards the Gold award which will focus on:

- ✓ Widening the knowledge and understanding of articles across the hospice and it being everyone's responsibility.
- ✓ Include appropriate training during induction.
- ✓ Further develop opportunities for siblings and service users where appropriate to be part of groups and initiatives that facilitate their voices to be heard and their ideas to be promoted so that they can take ownership of ways to improve the experiences of those who access the hospice.
- ✓ Work with the schools the children and young people we support attend to either build upon their child rights-based approach experience or as an advocate for Children's Rights.
- ✓ Facilitate opportunities for the children/young people to initiate advocacy and campaigning work on local and global issues, linked to children's rights.



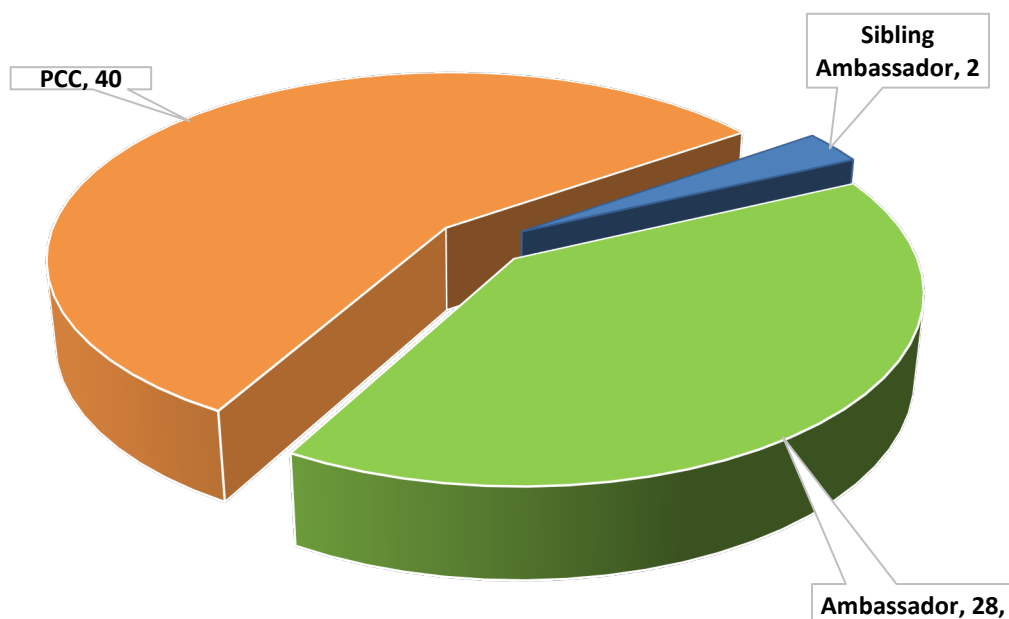
Just one of many of our displays in our hospices highlighting children's rights

6. Young Ambassadors and Parent Carer Champions (PCC)

During 2021-2022 Acorns Ambassadors and Parent Carer Champions (PCC) have been extremely active in supporting developments and initiatives from across the wider organisation. There has nearly been a 100% increase on the number of tasks and events they have supported with a total of 80 tasks this year compared to 41 tasks in 2020-2021.

As the following table highlights 57% of the tasks were completed by PCC, and 43% completed by either our Young Ambassadors who are children that are currently assessing or have accessed our services, or Siblings Ambassadors whose brother or sister are currently or have accessed the hospice service.

Ambassador/PCC tasks 2021/2022

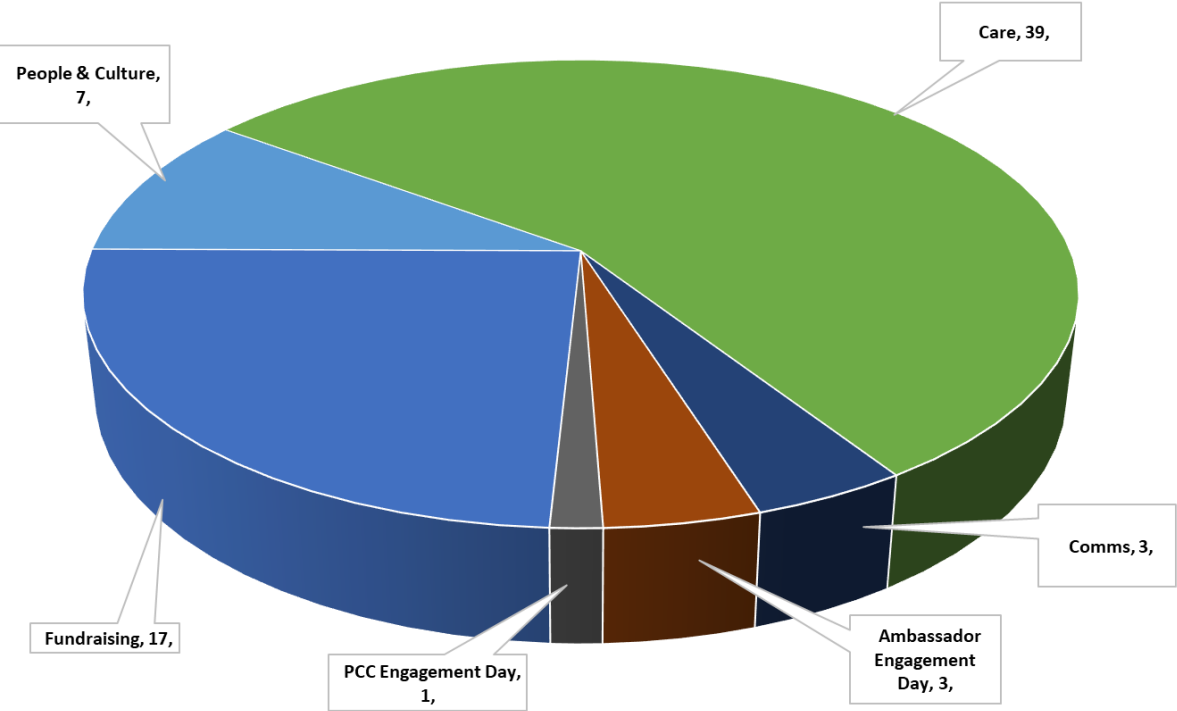


The tasks undertaken by PCC and Ambassadors have included:

- ✓ Attending forums and engagement days to discuss service development and inform the development of our strategy.
- ✓ Promoting Acorns services by attending events.
- ✓ Being active on social media supporting our Supporter Engagement Team.
- ✓ Supporting the recruitment of the clinical workforce; showing applicants around our hospices and explaining the importance and impact of our services.

The table below highlights the organisational areas of focus for the PCC and champions throughout 2021/2022.

Tasks by department



One of our Ambassadors, Assya Shabir, was instrumental in a UNICEF assessment visit in December 2021. She was able to share her experiences as a young person who had accessed our services and share her lived experience of Acorns. In recognition for this and other work Assya has undertaken throughout the year she was presented with an award at Acorns Values Recognition Award Ceremony alongside some of our people, who were also recognised for their achievements in living Acorns Values.



Statements of Assurance from the Board

The following are statements that all providers must include in their Quality Accounts. Many of these statements are not directly applicable to specialist palliative care providers, and therefore explanations of what these statements mean are also given.

Review of services

During 2021-2022

Acorns Children's Hospices

Acorns hospices are strategically located within the West Midlands to meet the needs of families from the Black Country and Staffordshire; Birmingham and Warwickshire; Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire. They include separate accommodation for families to stay with their children, if they desire, and are specifically designed to create a homely environment and atmosphere suitable for the care of children and young people with a diverse range of complex medical needs.

During 2021-2022 we presented and worked to our Bridging Strategy. This was a one-year Strategy which provided an opportunity for the organisation to collate learning from the first Covid year and inform our new strategy from 2022.

During the bridging strategy we made the following promises about our service:

What we said:	What we did:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">> We will deliver the most ambitious, impactful and caring children's hospice service that we can over the next year.> We will continue to operate as closely as we can with the NHS.> We will reintroduce services that are so important to families which we had to restrict through the pandemic.> We will use what we have learnt during the crisis and from our Care Review to do things even better in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Impactful services: emergency breaks, therapeutic services, family support offered F2F and remotely, centralised structure, paediatric consultant in palliative medicine commenced in role.✓ Work with the NHS Secondments and shared posts with BWCH, liaison with CCN increased referrals, honorary contracts and education links.✓ Re-introduction of our services: In July we recommenced our clinical outreach services across the West Midlands and Gloucestershire areas. In September our Birmingham hospice opened for all day and overnight services ensuring we had all three Acorns hospices open.✓ Embed learning: 7 Core Care Services were identified to increase reach and included in the new Strategy 'For Any Child'.

We made the following promises to our workforce:

What we said	What we did
<ul style="list-style-type: none">> We will continue to care and keep you safe.> We will communicate clearly and transparently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ PPE, followed national guidance, testing protocols.✓ Provided access for all our care teams to Town Hall meetings, team meetings, email communications and updates, accessibility to senior care managers across the hospices.

Overview of Service delivery in 2021-2022

The Children: We worked with 733 children, which included 130 new referrals.

Hospice Service: We averaged 177 unique children in receipt of hospice support overnight, day care and therapeutic support at our hospices every quarter.

Family Service: Family Services prioritised their work to focus on EoL support, Safeguarding and Crisis Intervention, the planned assessment, groups are re-started, face to face visits increased. 66 children died in the last year and all families were offered bereavement support.

Outreach: The demand for outreach increased in 2021-2022; we provided 886 outreach visits compared to 351 the first year of the pandemic (2020-2021).

Care Projects achieved in 2021/2022

- ✓ UNICEF Silver Award – acknowledged Children's Rights being embedded into our services.
- ✓ Diversity Award – acknowledged Acorns proactive work for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- ✓ Establishment Review was undertaken and concluded re the clinical workforce needs across the hospices.
- ✓ Engagement Strategy developed to ensure service user involvement in service development.
- ✓ Implementation of consistent shift patterns across all three hospices.
- ✓ Comprehensive review of the Family Service Teams resulted in comprehensive investment which will enable the delivery of increased services.
- ✓ Review of care volunteer service to support and inform an improved care volunteer structure to work alongside specialist care teams.
- ✓ Hospice refurbishments plans identified, future proofing our hospice environments.
- ✓ Through effective liaison and partnership with other local hospices and our national body, Together for Short Lives, we agreed the new capitation funding model.
- ✓ Centralising the Care Senior Management Team through the development of a new structure and the appointment of a Consultant Paediatrician in Palliative Medicine.

Appendix 1 highlights the New Care Senior Leadership Team developed in 2021-2022

Equality Diversity and Inclusion

Acorns has worked tirelessly since first being established in 1988 to ensure we deliver an inclusive service to the wide demographic we serve across the West Midlands.

We produce an annual Equality Diversity and Inclusion report which details how we are proactive in our commitment to providing a culture of inclusivity for our children, families and workforce. This report is accessible from our website: <https://www.acorns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Acorns-Equality-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Report-2021/2022-FINAL.pdf>

In 2021-2022 we set Equality Objectives to cover both Acorns Bridge Strategy for 2021-2022 and the 2022-2025 strategy. The monitoring of the equality objectives is achieved through existing governance procedures via the Equality and Inclusion Steering Group which reports to the Care Governance Group and to the Trustee Board via the Care Assurance Committee.

Our six objectives were:

1. To achieve the Silver and Gold UNICEF Rights Respecting Award.
2. Review of E&I training provided to Retail Volunteers.
3. Supporting our workforce with increased access to Wellbeing support.
4. Achieve the Diversity Award annually following a published annual Diversity and Inclusion Report.
5. To involve our children and families, including those we do not hear from often, in shaping services.
6. Ensure our services reflect the broader demographic of people across the West Midlands in all our communications.

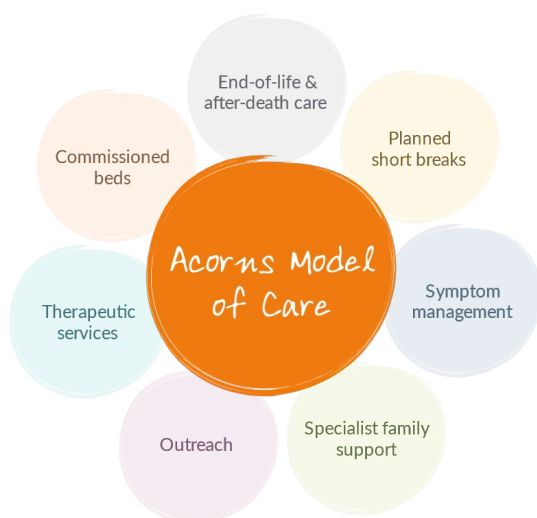
Development of the 2022-2025 Strategy – *For Any Child*

The Bridge Strategy of 2020-2021 provided an excellent platform for Acorns to review and commence the implementation of some of the recommendations from the externally commissioned Care Review of 2020. The Bridge Strategy also enabled our managers and leaders to evaluate the impact of the pandemic, review the revised services we delivered through these unprecedented times and collate any learning and feedback from all our stakeholders.

As a result of this work we have identified six key goals for the 2022-2025 strategy – *For Any Child*:

1. A responsive, inclusive and quality care service
2. More care partnerships reaching more families
3. Acorns recognised as a great place to work and volunteer
4. Engaging our diverse audiences
5. Investing sustainably in care
6. Excellence as a charity

Goals one and two will be led by the Care Directorate and each have seven key elements for delivering a quality service responsively whilst working in partnership with others to reach more children and families. The diagrams below highlight each of those seven areas. (For more information please visit our website: <https://www.acorns.org.uk/about-us/reports-publications/strategic-plan-2022-2025/>)



Goal 1: A responsive, inclusive and quality care service



Goal 2: More care partnerships reaching more families

Participation in National Audits

During 2021-2022 the hospice was ineligible to participate in the national clinical audit and national confidential enquiries. This is because there were no audits or enquiries relating specifically to specialist palliative care in 2021-2022.

Research

Acorns has not conducted any 'Clinical Research' which has needed support from a research ethics committee within the National Research Ethics Committee. We continued to work in partnership with universities in supporting research projects which could further advance the care and services available to the children and young people we work with. We received 11 requests for involvement over the course of 2021-22.

Acorns supported the following external research projects during 2021-2022:

1. Bristol University - Quality of life for young people with a long-term illness.
2. University of Bath - Understanding of common practices used by palliative care staff.
3. Pharmacological intervention for symptom management.
4. Kings College Children's Palliative Care Outcome Scale (C-POS) Validation Study.
5. Partners in paediatric long-term ventilation project.
6. University of West England - How does the experience of music therapy affect parents/care givers of children attending hospice care?
7. Kings College Mini Mouthcare Matters. The role of Acorns in the mini mouthcare research was acknowledged in their published article.
8. Nottingham Trent University - Impact of Therapy Dogs in Healthcare.
9. Acorns also contributed to the Ambitions Framework - mapping Examples into Practice Report available at <http://oro.open.ac.uk/82928/>. Acorns will be participating in the second stage of this research.

Other work being undertaken to support research and development includes:

- ✓ A number of Acorns nurses and allied professionals are undertaking research projects as part of their academic studies.
- ✓ An abstract was submitted by Acorns Clinical Practice Educator Gemma Williams to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion National Conference in 2021. This led to a workshop being delivered at the conference.
- ✓ An article was published by Acorns Family Service Manager Monica Borchardt on *'The impact of using cooling facilities on parental experiences of grief'* in the Journal of Health and Social Care improvement 2021 Issue 4 Vol 1.
- ✓ Acorns is working with the West Midlands Palliative Care Network and local Academic institutions to reenergise palliative care research activity in the West Midlands.

Quality improvement and innovation goals agreed with our commissioners

There were no conditional targets for the Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUIN) payment framework set by commissioners for 2021-2022. Acorns has provided a robust and comprehensive Quality Assurance Report for our commissioners on a quarterly basis. This report details the quality services and new developments being provided by the charity.

What others say about us

The hospice service is required to register with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the current registration status is unconditional. The hospice service has no conditions on registration. The CQC did not take any enforcement action against Acorns during 2021-2022. Acorns is subject to unannounced inspections by the CQC, the last on-site inspections were in 2016 for Acorns in the Black Country and Acorns Birmingham. Acorns for the Three Counties was inspected in late 2019 and the final report issued in 2020.

The overall ratings for the services are:

Acorns in Birmingham overall rating of OUTSTANDING

Acorns in the Black Country overall rating of GOOD

Acorns for the Three Counties overall rating of GOOD

A further breakdown is provided in the following tables.

Birmingham	Safe	Effective	Caring	Responsive	Well-led
Key question rating	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Overall location rating	Outstanding				

Black Country	Safe	Effective	Caring	Responsive	Well-led
Key question rating	Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Overall location rating	Good				

Three Counties	Safe	Effective	Caring	Responsive	Well-led
Key question rating	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Overall location rating	Good				

The full reports can be accessed from Acorns website: www.acorns.org.uk

During 2021-2022, Acorns had quarterly meetings with the CQC relationship managers, some of these meetings were formal TMA ¹calls, TMA templates were completed and updated throughout the year. All of these virtual meetings with our CQC relationship managers provided Acorns an opportunity to present detailed updates of the services we were delivering for each of the hospices.

Additionally, we were informed on six separate occasions via email that the CQC had carried out a review of the data available to them about Acorns Children's Hospice in Birmingham, Acorns Children's Hospice in the Black Country, Acorns Children's Hospice for the Three Counties and they had not found evidence that they needed to carry out an inspection or reassess their ratings.

Acorns held two internal CQC monitoring meetings, chaired by the Director of Care and attended by an Acorns Trustee. These meetings review notifications to the CQC and documented how our services continued to be:

- ✓ Safe
- ✓ Responsive
- ✓ Caring
- ✓ Effective
- ✓ Well-led

In July 2021 two of our Trustees and an external assessor undertook an unannounced inspection at our Walsall Hospice. This took place over a period of one day and examined care management and delivery across a range of areas and activities. The team focused on a 'walkabout', taking a holistic view of the environment and observations of care-related activity during the day alongside interviews/discussion with individuals who have key responsibilities. The framework for the visit also considered CQC Key Lines of Enquiry (KLoEs) with a focus on issues identified within the previous inspection and Trustee review and analysis of events recorded in a recent Significant Event Audit (SEA).

¹ TMA- Transitional Monitoring Approach brings together elements of existing methodologies and specifically targets Key Lines of Enquiry ("KLoEs") covering safety, access and leadership

There was a full report with some key recommendations which were all actioned in 2021-2022. The compliance Team noted the following:

The hospice had a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and everyone we spoke to was engaged and proactive towards the inspection. Children and families were treated with compassion and respect, and staff members went out of their way to provide supportive and family-centred care (e.g.: the HCA with lead responsibility for Activities had spent a considerable amount of time experimenting with options for creating memories for a family whose child was receiving end of life care).

We were pleased to host a quality compliance visit by one of our Clinical Commissioning Group Quality Leads to our Worcester hospice in early 2022.

Acorns developed a new role as part of the revised senior management structure: Lead for Governance and Quality Improvement in Care.

Acorns continued our annual programme of audits, review of policies, introduction of new policies and guidance in relation to the pandemic.

Data quality

Acorns did not submit records during 2021-22 to the Secondary Users Service for inclusion in the Hospital Episode Statistics which are included in the latest published data. This is because the hospice is not eligible to participate in this scheme.

Acorns collects and submits the following internal activity/performance data:

- > Annual data to Together for Short Lives
- > Child death data to Child Death Overview Panels
- > Annual activity data to nine clinical commissioning groups and three combined authorities
- > Data to evidence that Acorns meets the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOES) standards as identified by the Care Quality Commission
- > Data to evidence performance for commissioner contracts
- > Completion of the NHSE capacity tracker

Clinical coding error rate

The hospice was not subject to the payment by results clinical coding audit during 2021-2022 by the Audit Commission.

PART 3: Review of quality performance

At Acorns we pride ourselves in providing quality care for all children with varying complex needs.

- > Our teams across care including volunteers are committed to delivering high quality care services.
- > Care Team members all have access to high-quality evidence-based training and learning opportunities delivered in range of formats.
- > Our permanent care employees are supported by our own Nurse Bank who also access mandatory core and developmental training opportunities.
- > Day-to-day staffing levels and skill-mix is determined through professional judgement and knowledge and assessment of individual children. We have a minimum of two Registered Nurses on every shift in addition to skilled health care assistants. There is a robust clinical on-call system for support including access to a Consultant Paediatric in Palliative Medicine for end-of-life and symptom management support.
- > Staff receive annual My Career Reviews (appraisals) focussing on Acorns Values alongside their personal development needs.
- > Line management and clinical supervision is also provided to the Care teams in addition to regular debrief sessions. Staff also have access to a self-referral staff support service.
- > We have an established system to measure our care workforce views through an anonymous data system called Winningtemp. Individuals are encouraged to input their views on a fortnightly basis enabling the senior leaders across the organisation to monitor and respond effectively to views in real-time from their teams.
- > There is a commitment to Wellbeing for employees including access to Mental Health First Aiders and a range of other benefits including cycle to work and discounted gym memberships. Well-being rooms are also available in the hospices for the Care Teams.



Well-being rooms at our Birmingham and Worcester hospices

Acorns Care Education team works across the hospices ensuring consistency and that any required training is delivered to meet children's individual clinical needs.

Every member of the clinical team has access to a learning pathway identified within Acorns earning platform Litmos, which includes the mandatory core and developmental training appropriate to their role. There is also access to personal development through Acorns Learning and Development team including access to coaching forums, leadership, and management skills.

Good communication is central to services whether this is internal across teams or regular updates and information to families. Families receive regular newsletters, and we are developing our website to include a new Family Hub. Acorns teams have access to updates through email communications, newsletters, posters and on the Acorns Intranet, via Yammer, local team meetings and virtual 'Town Hall' forums.

Employees, volunteers, and families are involved in improvement initiatives e.g., champion roles for UNICEF, and Equality Diversity and Inclusion, Mental Health First Aiders.

All Care team members work to a Gold Standard Framework within care which outlines the quality service children and families can expect from our teams.


In 2021-2022 Acorns People and Culture Team launched our new set of Values and the Acorns Behaviour Framework. Our Vision and Mission set the ambition and target for us as an organisation to ensure the child is at the centre of everything we do. This requires the determination and commitment of all our people. Our Values (below) give us a broad view of what we all need to deliver to our Mission. In order to ensure we can translate this into all areas and across all levels, we have compiled the Acorns Behaviour Framework which is embedded into the annual appraisal process for all our workforce.

Our Values




Caring

We are passionate about getting it right, actively responding to individual needs to deliver the highest quality of care and service



Committed

We are determined to achieve our goals and take accountability for our results



Trusted

We build effective relationships based upon trust by consistently being open, honest and transparent, delivering what we commit to



Collaborative

We actively work together with colleagues and build external partnerships that help us deliver our mission



Courageous

We are brave in challenging the status quo, embracing difference and change



Curious

We are inquisitive and empathic putting ourselves in the position of others. We seek to understand the why, exploring different ways to succeed.

Acorns commitment to safeguarding

Working with over 700 children every year, we recognise the need to have a strategic overview of safeguarding concerns. Throughout 2021-2022, a Safeguarding Steering Group met every quarter reviewing the safeguarding concerns reported to the Acorns Designated Safeguarding Lead. Management representatives from each hospice and an external safeguarding lead from one of the Clinical Commissioning Groups who works with Acorns were in attendance at this group. Outcomes and key learnings and subsequent actions from these meetings were reported via the quarterly reporting system to the relevant CCGs and via Acorns internal governance processes.

As part of our safer recruitment practice, all the staff and care volunteers have enhanced DBS checks undertaken before they take up their posts and roles.

In 2021-2022 Acorns Board of Trustees appointed a Trustee with specific oversight of Safeguarding. Whilst recognising safeguarding was a Board responsibility the Trustee provides governance oversight on the assurance areas required by our Board. The Safeguarding Trustee has liaised proactively with the Designated Safeguarding Leads in the development of an annual Safeguarding Assurance Report for the Board.

Context

We entered the second year of the pandemic in 2021 and, like all services we have seen the negative impact the prolonged lockdown and isolation has on the mental well-being of the children and families. Acorns Family Service Teams are working actively with social care in both the support and monitoring of vulnerable children and adults. We are improving and recording of this ongoing safeguarding support and monitoring through the quarterly steering group. For 2021-2022 there were 30 cases of support reviewed².

Safeguarding concerns

There were **15** Safeguarding concerns for children and vulnerable adults reported to statutory agencies. Acorns provided 5 place of safety requests responding to emergency placement requests. The categories and numbers of referrals made are displayed in the table below:

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Physical abuse	5	4	1
Sexual abuse	2	5	2
Emotional abuse	0	1	0
Neglect	4	7	3
DV	1	12	2
Mental health	0	5	1
Unexplained injury	0	3	1
Family Support	0	1	1
Missing person	0	1	0
Sexual exploitation	0	0	2
Hate Crime	0	0	1
Threatening behaviour to Workforce	0	0	1
Total	12	39	15

² Some of these were double counted as support provided over more than one quarter.

Acorns Steering Group reviews each reported concern and considers the following questions for each case:

1. Could anything have been done differently?
2. What learning has come out of the situation?
3. What actions have we put in place as a result?
4. How have we shared this learning in Acorns?

Safeguarding training

Acorns has continued to update and review the safeguarding training for Acorns wider workforce. All of Acorns workforce undertake level 2 training which is accessible from our online platform, completed in their welcome week and updated on an annual basis. Any new care staff can passport current safeguarding achievements.

Level 3 safeguarding training: Completed by all clinical teams and care team members providing direct care to children and families. During 2021-2022 a bespoke face-to-face course was provided focusing on the impact of the pandemic in relation to safeguarding.

Level 4 safeguarding training: The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Safeguarding Leads all attended external level 4 training.

The Safeguarding training is reviewed by Acorns Head of Care Workforce and Education, Head of Talent and Acquisition and Development and the Designated Safeguarding Leads. Jointly they ensure the training meets the requirements identified in the DoH Intercollegiate Document on Safeguarding 2019 whilst also having a specific focus for the safeguarding risks faced by the children and vulnerable adults who are supported by Acorns services.

Prevent

98% of all staff required are up-to-date with their WRAP training. We have a dedicated section for Prevent issues on the Safeguarding area of the Intranut as an information resource for all staff.

Governance

Acorns has the following policies in place:

- ✓ Child Death Overview Panel
- ✓ Missing Children
- ✓ Responding to Domestic Abuse
- ✓ Safeguarding and Child Protection
- ✓ Safeguarding and Supervision in Care
- ✓ Safeguarding vulnerable adults

Developments to support safeguarding practice across Acorns

- ✓ Appointed Trustee to provide governance oversight on safeguarding process.
- ✓ Used the checklist identified in the NVCO guidance on safeguarding for charities; a report was developed that identified a 28-point checklist that provided assurances for the Board of Trustees on Acorns governance practice and processes to safeguard our children and workforce. The document considered three key areas:
 - Leadership and Accountability
 - The organisation and its beneficiaries
 - People and Risk
- ✓ Acorns developed bespoke level 3 Adult Safeguarding Training.
- ✓ Review of Acorns Safeguarding Poster which is displayed across all hospices.
- ✓ The Corporate Risk Register was updated to identify how as an organisation we mitigate abuse.

Regional and national development considered

- > Updates provided to safeguarding steering group included:
 - Regional and National changes to guidance and legislation collated and shared by Wolverhampton CCG
 - Learning from Serious Case Reviews

Learning from complaints and incidents

Learning from complaints

In the spirit of openness and under the principles of Duty of Candour we encourage children and families to raise any concerns or complaints they may have about our service. All our teams are committed to deliver high-quality care but, as with any service, mistakes and problems can happen. We recognise people may complain or raise a concern for different reasons, but most complainants want their views to be listened to and an explanation of what happened and why. In 2021-2022 we received a total of 10 complaints. All were reviewed at the quarterly Care Governance Group and reported to the Care Assurance Committee.

The complaints fell into the following categories:

1. Unhappy about outcome of previous concern raised x1
2. Alleged poor care x 4
3. Poor communication/ not being listened to x2
4. Not able to access short break stays x 3

All the complaints were fully investigated, formal written responses given and, where appropriate, apologies were issued to the complainants. Where we exceeded the 20-day response rate families were kept informed throughout the process.

Managing and responding to incidents

Following the words of Don Berwick in his 2013 'A Promise to Learn – A Commitment to Act' report, Acorns Children's Hospice promotes a culture of pride and joy in our work.

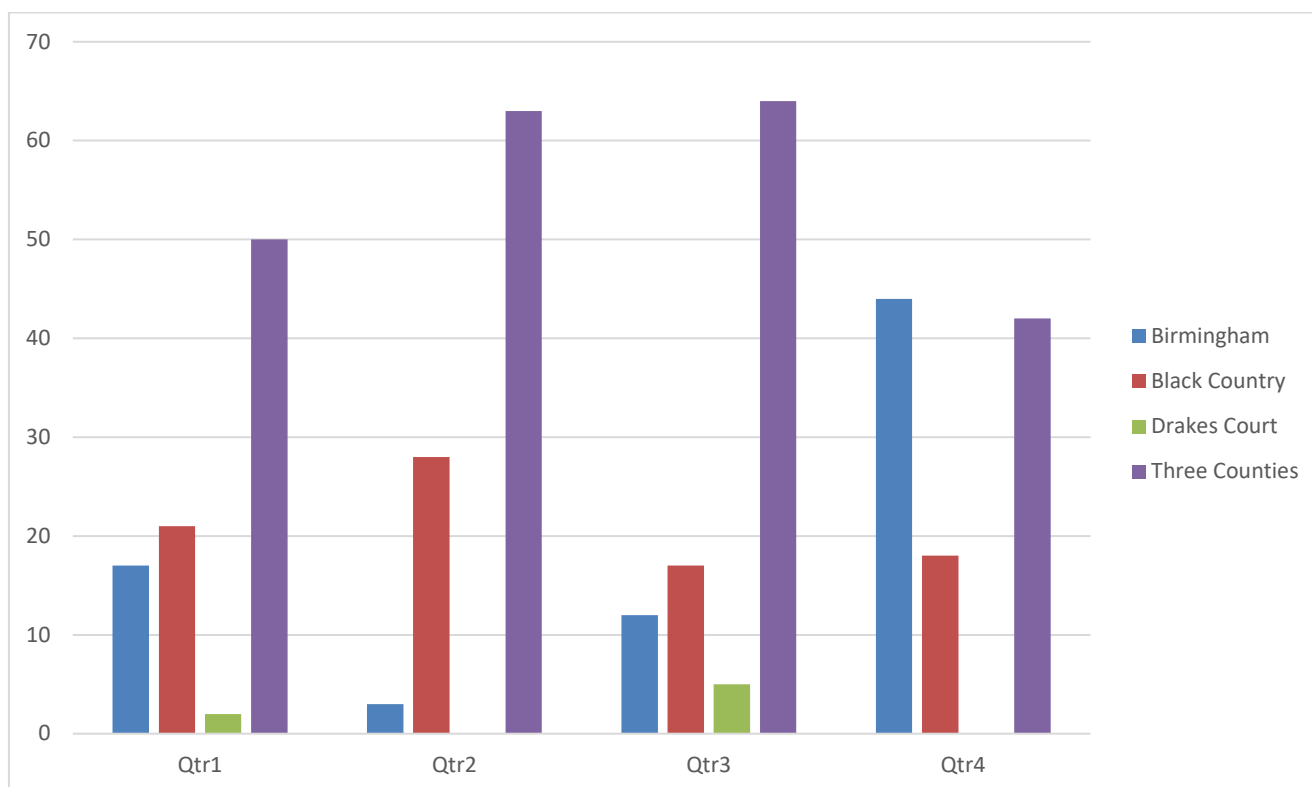
In 2021/2022 we introduced Vantage, an electronic incident reporting and management system. This saw the abolition of paper reporting forms and gave organisational immediate transparency of all incidents.

The reporting culture remained healthy and the focus on learning from incidents was robustly fostered through the central repository of all incidents, action plans and sharing of that learning. We have been reassured by the upward trend in reporting, the teams highlighted the benefits of reporting near misses. This evidenced our increasing awareness and vigilance of situations that could have led to error if they had not been identified, and to has enabled us to apply organisational learning and system improvement.

There were 386 reported concerns and incidents for 2021-2022, this compares with 295 for the previous year.

Our Birmingham Hospice remained closed until September 2021, with a return to full 24/7 service from November, resulting in fewer clinical incidents being raised at that site for the full year but an increase in quarter 3 and 4.

Reported incidents 2021-2022 by Hospice



Key themes identified across the 12 months

Thematic analysis of incidents demonstrated some key themes that ran through the year.

The greatest number of concerns were raised about clinical care, this has given us opportunity to refine this category as the incidents range from some staffing related concerns, delays in cares being provided, and communication issues.

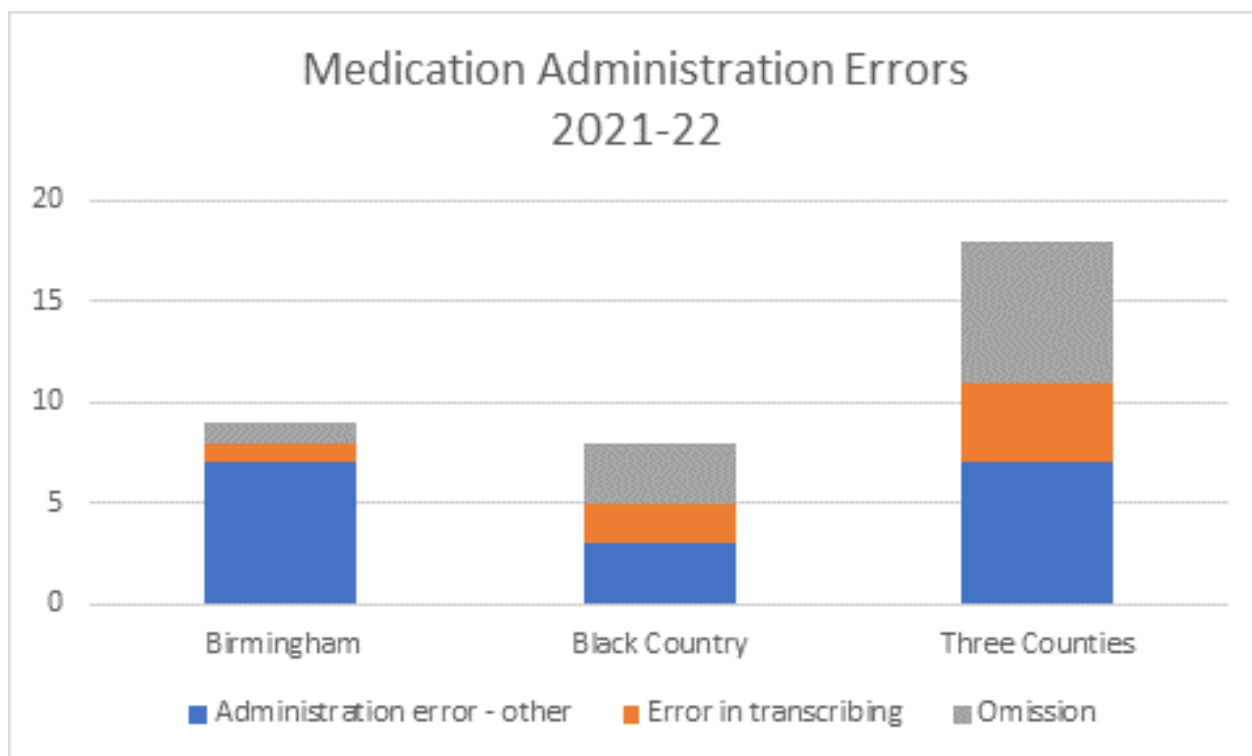
As numbers were still fairly low, we had the opportunity to investigate each incident at service level and are assured that no child suffered harm as a result of any of these concerns.

Staffing was the next highest reported incident, with a focus on concerns related to staffing levels. On analysis we saw a number of shifts with less than optimal or planned levels, as a result of Covid-19 absence. The guidance for staff who test positive to stay away from work had a huge impact on our staffing, as many staff were absent for up to 10 days after a positive result.

Data and documentation were highlighted as another theme with opportunity to improve practice. This included a range of incidents from a clinical and non-clinical source, including care plans not being up to date. Children had not attended for short breaks through the pandemic therefore their care plans all needed extensive review. We were able to invest clinical time in contacting families ahead of their stays to update care plans.

It was to be noted, that clinical care was not compromised on any of these situations.

Medication Incidents



Administration of medications remained the highest number of interventions over any other care giving activity and returned the highest number of reported incidents.

Our analysis of this demonstrated that the proportion of medication incidents compares to approximately 0.2% of administrations resulting in error.

This does not make us complacent however and we continue to analyse all our incidents to inform improvements and changes to our processes to make the process safer.

This has included

- ✓ Intentional board rounding of medications.
- ✓ Introduction of a visual reminder of fridge items.
- ✓ A nurse-to-nurse handover of medications due at each shift changeover.
- ✓ Implementing independent checking of all medications in the hospices.
- ✓ Increased our surveillance.
- ✓ Reporting all episodes where:
 - Parents bring in medications labelled prior to a consultant led change in medication.
 - Where a parent has only just started a new supply or is unable to attend a pharmacy to request a newly labelled supply.
 - The incorrect dose is not administered - the admitting nurse will always seek confirmation a new dose is appropriate via checking with the clinician, the parent(s) and the in-house prescriber.

In 2021-2022 we reported 112 medication incidents compared to 74 in 2020-2021, a rise that correlates to the increase in number of children accessing in-house services, and an increase in surveillance of those incidents.

Medicines related CAS alerts

All alerts have been evaluated and those relevant communicated to teams as required. Where relevant any identified stock has been checked and withdrawn from service.

Learning from Incidents

Sharing the learning from all incidents occurs at hospice level through reporting at team meetings, recorded in minutes for Medicines Management Committee and Clinical Assurance Committee. A regular newsletter has also been circulated to all staff. **Appendix 2 – Incident Report Summary August 2021 Issue.**

Where improvements to process or systems have been identified through investigation, we address this through our Quality Improvement Program.

In addition, individual feedback is sent to each reporter as part of the electronic process so that all staff know their incident has been noted and investigated. Plans for the coming year include additional awareness of incidents training by our new Lead for Governance and Quality Improvement, improving functionality and reporting of the electronic reporting system, which is a year old now.

Trustees are kept informed of all risks and incidents and are instrumental on our assurance committees.

Information governance (IG)

There were 13 low level incidents recorded by Acorns Caldicott Guardians. These included personal information being stored on work devices, individual letters being sent to the wrong address, documents being sent to an unsecure printer within the organisation, copying in people instead of blind copying when sending emails to personal email addresses, filing incorrectly onto a child's file. None of the incidents were reportable to the information commissioner's office. All incidents were reviewed and learning actions identified for either the individuals or relevant teams.

Duty of candour incidents

There were 8 Duty of Candour incidents reported via Acorns incident reporting system. None of the incidents met the threshold as being a notifiable incident or a serious untoward incident. Incidents included the following: missed physio session, missed medication, trips and falls, child got out of bed, equipment not alarming. All parents and carers informed of incidents.

An overview on the quantity of work undertaken across Acorns

Context setting

Whilst this has been a second year of a global pandemic, we have seen the gradual but steady return of services. Some of the families have continued to be cautious in either accepting clinical outreach in the home or short-break care from our hospices. There have been children born during the pandemic who have never been outside their home environment other than to access hospital or clinical appointments.

We have adapted our services through Stay and Play sessions and increased therapeutic services to engage with these children and their families.

Many of the older children have not returned to school due to continued shielding. So, access to Acorns has been their only outlet for socialising and clinical assessment of need.

The data in the table overleaf compares the data from this year with the two previous years. It highlights a gradual increase in children and families accessing services this year. We supported a total of 733 children and 945 families in 2021-2022.

We have continued to undertake annual clinical and family plan reviews which ensures only those children with ongoing palliative care needs (as identified by TfSL Criteria) or those that wish to continue to actively access our services continue to be registered. The high discharge rate in 2019- 2020 has now balanced out and we are seeing a consistent number of children and families being discharged in line with last year's figures.

	Reporting year's figures 01/04/2021 - 31/03/2022	Reporting year's figures 01/04/2020 - 31/03/2021	Reporting year's figures 01/04/2019 - 31/03/2020
Total number of open cases at end of the 12-month period	613 current number of children with an active case	603 current number of children with an active case	602
No of families supported at the end of the 12-month period	829 families receiving support	810 families receiving support	824
Total number of children supported for 12 months	732	704	821
Total number of families supported for 12 months	945	940 families supported	1077
Number of new patients	Total Number of New Referrals = 130	Total Number of New Referrals = 99	143
Number of referrals made – accepted, declined	<p>Declined referrals in this period Birmingham - 11 Black Country - 14 Three Counties - 4 Total Declined = 29</p> <p>All Accepted Referrals: Birmingham - 49 Black Country - 43 Three Counties - 38 Total Accepted = 130</p>	<p>Declined referrals in this period Birmingham - 9 Black Country - 2 Three Counties - 2 Total Declined = 13</p> <p>All Accepted Referrals: Birmingham - 49 Black Country - 23 Three Counties - 27 Total Accepted = 99</p>	<p>Declined referrals in this period Birmingham - 13 Black Country - 15 Three Counties - 9 Total declined - 37</p> <p>All Accepted Referrals: Birmingham - 49 Black Country - 46 Three Counties - 48 Total = 143</p>
No of Beds Available (based on 14 beds) Occupancy calculation based on 7 beds per hospice (2 hospices)	BC & TC based on 365 x 14 BHAM 195 x 7	Beds available (based on 365 x 14)	Beds available (based on 359 x 30 beds)
Based on Annual Occupancy of 86%	Annual Occupancy 60%	Annual Occupancy 62%	Annual Occupancy - 55%
Number discharged from care	<p>Child – Death 66 Discharged to TT Extension 1 Child – Left District 1 Child – No longer able to Contact Family 2</p>	<p>Child – Death - 51 (includes children whose DOD was March 20 but discharged in April) Child – Left District - 1 Child – No longer able to Contact Family - 1</p>	<p>Child – Death - 68 (includes children whose DOD has been recorded after discharge) Child – Left District - 2 Child – No longer able to Contact Family - 7</p>

	Child – No longer life threatened 14 Child – No longer meet criteria by age 4 Child – No longer requires support 13 Child – Transferred to Adult Services 17 Family – No longer Requires Support 2 Total Discharged = 120	Child – No longer life threatened - 10 Child – No longer meet criteria by age - 11 Child – No longer requires support - 17 Child – Transferred to Adult Services - 5 Family – No longer Requires Support - 3 Total Discharged = 99	Child – No longer life threatened - 48 Child – No longer meet criteria by age - 2 Child – No longer requires support - 60 Child – Transferred to Adult Services - 24 Family – No longer Requires Support - 3 Family – Left District - 1 Total = 225
No Clients (aged 16- 19) based on Age	38 of clients supported	49 of clients supported	62
Number of episodes of support from the Family Team:	Family Team = 12,559 Sibling Team = 2705 Total = 15,264	Overall support provided by Families Services inclusive of Sibling Support was Total = 22,091	Family Team - 2358 + 5468 = 7826 Sibling Team - 455 + 1502 = 1957 Total = 9783
Number of Outreach support visits	Activity delivered = 33 (non -care) Care Delivered = 503 End of Life = 84 Assessments / Reviews = 96 Total = 716	Inclusive of activity and care delivered and End of Life care. Total = 351 Additionally, we also provided C-19 – Clinical Telephone Contact - 596	Activity delivered (non -care) - 5 Care Delivered - 835 Face to Face (e.g. Care Plan updates) - 105 EoL - 0 Total = 945
Number of deaths	66	49	68
Number of episodes admissions of end of life care Number of nights provided	10 clients 22 bookings 256 nights	10 clients 16 bookings 125 nights	Clients - 16 Bookings - 53 Nights - 279

Understanding the Data

As we see the return of services in the wider external environment there have been more children referred to our services, whilst not yet comparable to the pre-pandemic referral levels we have seen an increase of 20% from last year's figure.

The data below highlights decrease in activity for our Family Services Teams compared to 2020-2021. During the previous year we mobilised the Family Services Team and Care Volunteers to deliver household supplies and provided weekly calls to families which reflected in the high number of hours delivered. This level of service was no longer required, instead our family service focused on a blended model of support with the return of face-to-face visits, virtual meetings and phone calls. The activity for 2021-2022 has however exceeded the family service hours delivered pre-pandemic (2019-2020).

The occupancy figures in the table reflect the stays at the Walsall and Worcester hospices. Both these hospices were open 24/7 through the year. Our Birmingham hospice remained closed until September 2021. The team of physiotherapists were delivering hydrotherapy and physiotherapy through bookable appointments. From September to November, we began the phased re-opening of the hospice for overnight and day-care stays, we fully opened the Birmingham hospice 24/7 from November 2021.

Our participation in clinical audits

Clinical audit is a key element of clinical governance supporting the strategic direction of Acorns and enabling us to promote and measure our commitment to delivering quality care.

Implementation of a systematic audit programme ensures that we are able to consistently assure ourselves and our service users that we are delivering care against our policies and identifying opportunities to improve services where appropriate.

Engaging our workforce to be integral to the audit process ensures they 'own' the element of care being scrutinised, and as the front-line care giver, are often the right person to identify challenges and opportunities to enhance that care further.

The programme is identified through the Clinical Governance Group and reviewed yearly to ensure that all crucial elements of assurance are included, and that the audits are fit for purpose and embody best practice and policy.

Details of all audit compliance, improvement and actions are shared and scrutinised by Trustees at the Care Assurance Committee, allowing opportunity for independent challenge and assurance.

Details of audit programmes, compliance, actions and improvements are made available to the whole care workforce through a number of staff forums including:

- ✓ Clinical governance meetings
- ✓ Hospice specific SMT meetings and team meetings
- ✓ Key groups relevant to the subject areas e.g. neonatal group
- ✓ Care governance meetings

Audits were completed between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Appendix 3 Audits Summary 2021/2022

The views of Acorns services users

Received from children, young people and families who use our services across the West Midlands

Over the past year Acorns has endeavoured to continue to seek and encourage the involvement of children and families and record the views and feedback on our services.

This was the second year of the pandemic when our services were being gradually re-introduced to families that had been shielding and we have been pleased the response we have had from our service users has been so positive.

This has comprised of:

- > Direct feedback to Family Team Workers. We continued to seek direct feedback from families with Family Team Workers making routine 'wellbeing calls' through the year.
- > Direct feedback from families via Acorns social media channels.
- > Direct feedback from Young Ambassadors and Parent Carer Champions at meetings on five separate occasions throughout the year. They have also been very active on the charity's media and social media channels.
- > Specific feedback following a successful SnowDome Event for our Black Country families.
- > Real-time feedback from families, children and young people using the hospices.
- > Feedback to Sibling teams via groups, both virtual and face to face.
- > We launched a pilot for reviewing outcomes and the impact of our service with families. Families will, on an annual basis, rate the impact of our services on their physical and emotional well-being.
- > Acorns Executive Board of Directors approved a Service User Engagement Strategy. The Action Plan from the Strategy features in **Appendix 4**.

In addition, we carried out electronic surveys on Acorns iPad or by offering a QR code for the following service areas:

- ✓ Young Person Survey
- ✓ Birmingham Family Experience which includes specialist services such as physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, Stay and Play
- ✓ Family Experience - which captures a family's experience at one of our three hospices and groups attended
- ✓ Clinical Outreach survey
- ✓ Bereaved Parents Group survey

The ongoing nature and limitations of the pandemic meant that only small numbers of children were able to access short breaks during the first half of the year and this inevitably impacted on the feedback received. Socially distanced admissions and discharges further limited opportunities for staff to offer the opportunity to feedback in real-time. There were 45 responses in total, of these, 43 confirmed that they would recommend Acorns services, and two responses indicated that they are neither likely nor unlikely to recommend Acorns to friends and family if they needed similar support/care. All respondents were positive about the services they were able to access.

As the restrictions of the pandemic eased, we were able to re-open the Birmingham hospice for end of life care and short breaks in September 2021. This has been greatly appreciated by families and together with the continuation of a high level of therapies introduced in the previous year has enabled ongoing positive feedback. This feedback continues to demonstrate the real impact for children, making them more relaxed and able to sleep better and ensuring they got some exercise.

The reintroduction of our group work has also been welcomed by families and we have recognised and responded to an increased need for both one-to-one and group work for our siblings and our bereaved families who have been particularly impacted by the pandemic.

"(We) would like to thank the staff for putting on these sessions for us grieving parents. It shows us we are not left alone and not forgotten about when our children have passed away."

Bereaved Birmingham Family.

"I prefer face to face because there are always some children who cannot join in online due to not having the IT equipment or have technical difficulties. Everyone can join in face to face and its more enjoyable. It's nice seeing friends and interacting with them, we have fun and we all know what everyone else is going through, we relate to each other and feel at ease."

Worcester Sibling.

What's new?

- > All real-time surveys have been reviewed and updated.
- > We have introduced the use of text messaging to gain feedback following short breaks, activities and groups.
- > We have introduced a QR Code to enable families to offer their feedback in their own time.
- > We have reviewed and finalised our User Engagement Strategy in line with our new organisational three-year Strategy 'For Every Child' 2022-2025.
- > We will be feeding back to all families following the outcomes of 'You Said – We Did'.

You said, we did

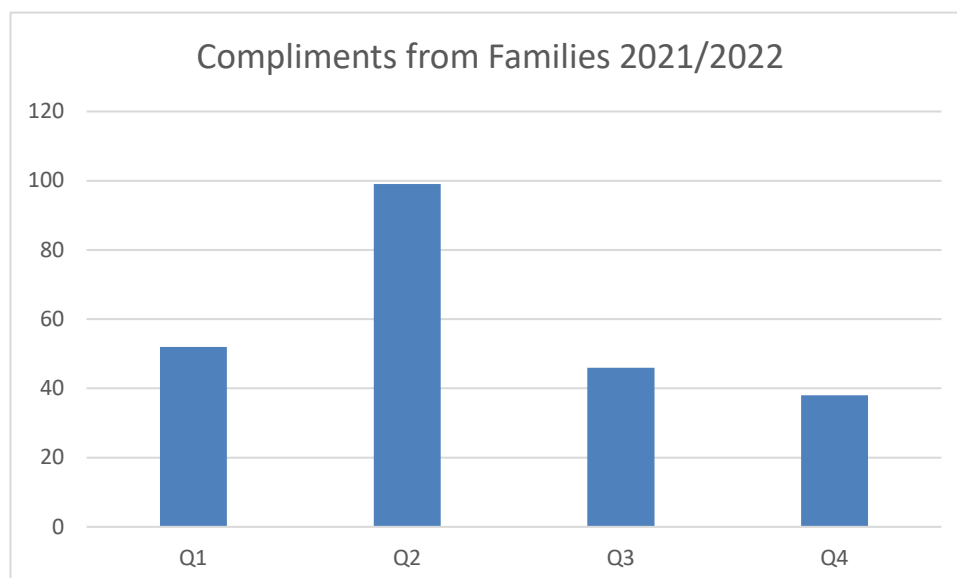
The You Said, We Did response collates issues raised by children and families during 2020-2021.

You said	We did
<p>Young Person Survey</p> <p><i>"Suggestions - create more spaces to sit in the garden, furniture needs painting Improve WiFi (consoles spent long time updating), and better computer games, buy an Xbox series X. Would like bigger plinth in pool changing area"</i></p>	<p>All our hospices are having updates this year. This will address some of these issues, such as better wi-fi and improved seating areas in the gardens. We have updated all our consoles through our partnership with Lifelites charity.</p>
<p>Birmingham Family Experience</p> <p><i>"Such a wonderful place. Staff are amazing"</i> <i>"The essential care provided doesn't seem to be available or up to the same standard Acorns elsewhere."</i> <i>"Incredible staff and support"</i> <i>"It's a really great place to visit with awesome facilities that make me feel included."</i> <i>"Fabulous time and a lovely environment. Thank you for all your support"</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your feedback 😊</p>
<p>Family Experience</p> <p><i>"It has helped build a network of people who can provide support to our child"</i> <i>"My daughter and I both had a brilliant time. Needed this break after long. Thanks to all staff for being excellent."</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your feedback. We are delighted you have managed to get a long-awaited break.</p>
<p>Outreach Feedback</p> <p><i>"Through lockdown outreach have been my sanity. They have helped us so much, with play, personal care and some much-needed company. Always something new for my daughter to try and do and they accommodate my son who isn't special needs and he loves the time as much as me and my daughter do."</i> <i>"Outreach support has been amazing service for me and my child"</i> <i>"Acorns has been very supportive at all times, especially through this troublesome time with the virus. Outreach play has been a godsend"</i></p>	<p>We are very pleased that Outreach has been about able to support you so well. We hope to be able to develop and extend this service to more families over the coming months.</p>
<p>Birmingham Virtual Bereaved Parents Group</p> <p><i>"I guess it has given me more confidence in how I process things, in my time frames, in what I have worked through and in what I still need to work through"</i></p>	<p>We are very pleased to have received such positive feedback from this new virtual group. We will take this into consideration as we plan our Bereavement Groups for 2022/23 which will include both face to face and virtual groups.</p>

<p><i>"I think I tried to listen more than talk; I get very anxious when talking especially in a group."</i></p> <p><i>"I enjoyed the group interacting with other parents who have experience loss."</i></p> <p><i>"Because I met with other parents too, find helpful talking to them"</i></p> <p><i>"The group is very good, and I met a lot of people there that go through the same things that I go through"</i></p> <p><i>"I would like to thank the ladies Diane and Shamim for their passion and patience"</i></p>	
<p>Black Country virtual bereaved parents' group</p> <p><i>"I would have preferred more, or sessions to be a little longer."</i></p> <p><i>"...I would like to meet face to face with other members."</i></p> <p><i>"Times to suit everyone can be challenging. Personally, for myself, evenings were better as I didn't have a child around me most times."</i></p>	<p>Thank you for your feedback. We will be considering the number of sessions and timings as part of an organisational review of our Bereavement work this year.</p>

Compliments

235 compliments were received from families over the year (excluding duplications with group feedback). [See appendix 5.](#)



The views of Acorns care colleagues

Acorns has invested in an online survey tool which Acorns teams complete twice a month. This is an anonymous process for all employees to complete. It is reviewed and commented on by managers, so individual's comments are seen and responded to.

The data covers the period from April 2021-March 2022.

Overview (key values)

Over the 12-month period, 44% of the care employees were active in completing the surveys. We were pleased to hear that the majority of our Care teams were positive about their employment at Acorns. With the overall score of satisfaction rating being 6.6 out of 10. We have been advised the optimum rating is 7.4.

The survey aims to measure the satisfaction and happiness of our people, the key measure for which is the Employee Net Promoter Score (ENPS), by asking '*how likely would you be to recommend Acorns as a great place to work*'. ENPS score is a universally accepted employee engagement measure which considers responses in 3 categories:

1. Promoters – those who actively promote Acorns as an employer
2. Passive – those who feel reasonably content but do not actively promote
3. Detractors – those who are unhappy and would actively say that Acorns is not a great place to work

A great score is +11 or above. The organisation as a whole had an ENPS score of +14, however the rating for Care was lower than the benchmark of 11, with our teams scoring -19.

We have attributed this response to the second pandemic year being challenging, as we have needed to continue to mobilise our care workforce across hospices and into statutory services. Our teams have had to work very differently, and we know this continued displacement has been more difficult for some of our colleagues. There was also the added stress and fatigue for all health and social care workers working on the front line with the continued uncertainties of the how the virus was impacting those working directly in this sector. These front line workers delivered services when high numbers of colleagues were needing to isolate and other provider services were also impacted.

Positive trends

The most positive response we have had through the course of the 12 months has related to personal development, which saw a 2% increase and team spirit with an increase of 1% over the reporting period. The teams' score for feeling respected by their colleagues was 7.9 out of 10 and 6.6 for learning new things at work, both of which are in the upper quartile for these measures.

Negative trend

Two of the areas which showed the least positive answers were autonomy, which dropped by 3% to show a score of 6.1 (index average is 7.5) and job satisfaction which dropped by 2% to 6.4 (index average is 7).

Overview

The dashboard provides a summary of all the areas we sought feedback from our teams. All 10 of the categories were positive and rated 'green'. Our leaders have been able to utilise the anonymous feedback to respond directly to the individuals and have conversations with teams to address concerns or issues raised about their work situation through this process.

We are continuing to embed this system across all of our teams having introduced it 18 months ago. The immediacy of responding to individuals and making change at both a localised and strategic level is both empowering for the employees and a helpful tool for leaders and managers who are committed to making Acorns a positive working environment for all our teams.

Summary of current temperature for all categories

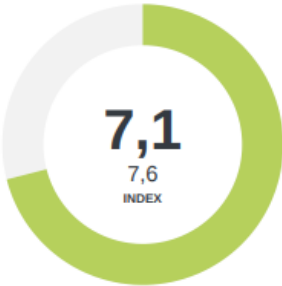
LEADERSHIP



JOB SATISFACTION



MEANINGFULNESS



AUTONOMY



WORK SITUATION



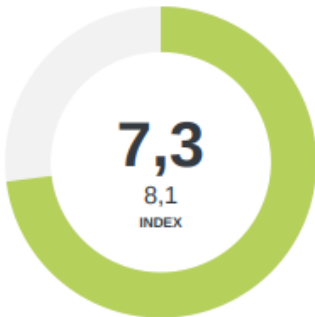
PARTICIPATION



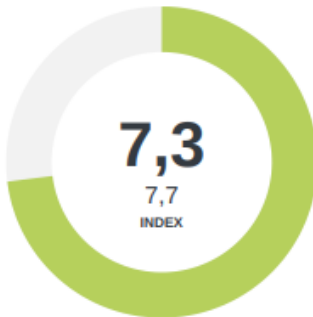
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



TEAM SPIRIT



COMMITMENT



ACORNS TOWN HALL



Closing statement from the Director of Care Services

2021-2022 was the second year of the pandemic, we continued to see families shielding their children, some children did not return to school. Many children born in the pandemic were not fully socialised, having been cared for solely by their parents and carers in the home setting.

The Bridge Strategy enabled Acorns to retain the flexibility to adapt our care service and indeed our entire charity to the considerable uncertainties associated with the second full year of the Covid-19 crisis. It enabled our care workforce to respond sensitively and respectfully to the continuing anxieties of the children and families referred to our services. Our mission at Acorns has remained consistent:



1. To provide essential specialist palliative care services to babies, children, young people and their families across our region
2. To deliver these services in partnership with others
3. To champion the cause of children's palliative care

As the details in this Quality Account demonstrate we have delivered these three pillars of our mission. Our teams have continued in their flexibility and versatility by adapting and developing services and by working across hospices, within community and acute settings.

I am immensely proud of the teams not only for increasing services through the year with the reintroduction of clinical outreach services, but also for the successful re-opening of our Birmingham hospice for day and overnight stays, delivering on care projects and for the delivery of five Quality Improvement Areas:

1. Implementation of electronic care plans
2. Implementation of new senior care management structure
3. Establishment review programme
4. Transition initiatives being embedded
5. Implementation of online care volunteer training

It is a great achievement that Acorns has continued to support over 730 children and nearly 1,000 families.

The Quality Accounts highlights comments and compliments from families and professionals.

Workforce training programs, audits and governance monitoring processes have continued ensuring the quality of our services is consistently maintained.

It continues to be a privilege to work with such committed and dedicated teams, and a joy to work for Acorns as we have supported children and families through such a challenging year.

Emma Aspinall
Director of Care Services

Appendix I

Centralised Care Senior Leadership Team – Established 2021-2022



Emma Aspinall
Director of Care



Christine Mott
Paediatric
Palliative Care
Consultant



Sue Jordan
Statutory
Contracts and
Partnerships Lead



Jackie Crossland
Care Admin
Manager



Jo Flemming
Deputy Director
of Care
Clinical



Susan Haywood
Deputy Director
of Care
Family Services



Ann Smallman
Head of Care
Workforce and
Education

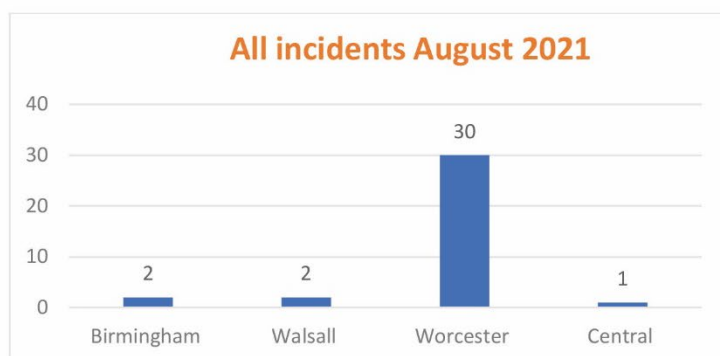
Appendix 2

Learning from Incidents Newsletter (August Issue)

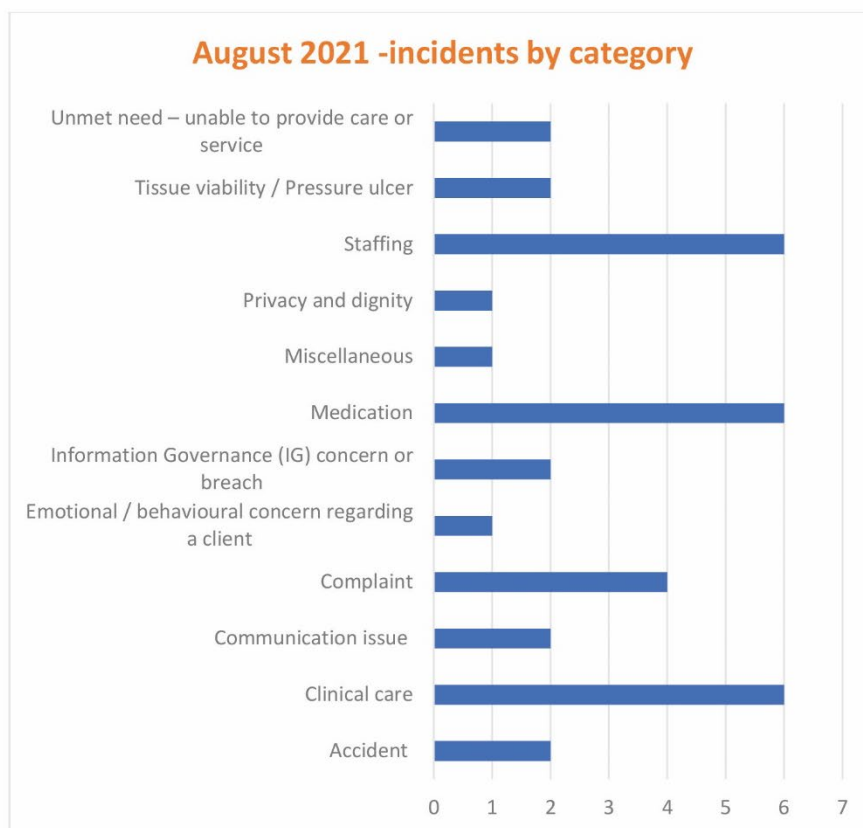
Incident report summary August 2021

Thank you to everyone who has reported an incident or concern this month, and thank you for embracing the Vantage system. Please continue to send through any comments / feedback to help make the system work for us all.

A total of 35 incidents and concerns were reported in August, compared with 26 in July 2021. There were no serious untoward incidents recorded this month.



Incident reports were received for a range of categories, with further information highlighting the learning from these provided below.



Summary and Learning

Staffing:

8 reports were recorded around staffing and unmet need, concerns around the impact on care included

- inability to offer 1:1 care
- unable to respond to 2 children's request for the toilet in a timely manner
- staff working additional hours after their shift to ensure safe care
- inability to provide the expected support to a new family and children having less time out of their chairs
- challenges with admission of complex children due to skill mix
- failure to deliver /access clinical supervision
- challenges moving heavy equipment due to staff numbers
- Adolescent unable to undertake activities

A further report highlighted concerns about privacy and dignity, when a child had to be monitored in the lounge post seizure, rather than their own room.

All reports were highlighted to the Care Senior leadership team at the time and fed into the organisational risk assessment and action plan.

Medication concerns:

There were 6 medication related reports recorded in August, this compares with 9 in July.

- 2 reports relating to Insufficient Carbamazepine to deliver the required dose.
Learning: wherever possible identify volume of drug required on admission.
- Medications delayed through staffing and need for two persons checking.
- Reconciliation issue - full box of four. Midazolam syringes recorded on admission, but box was already open and only one inside. This was confirmed by dad.
Learning: please check seals on admission and not assume boxes are full.
- Medications administered by solo checker as other nurse busy with a sick and deteriorating child.
- Maxijul was not recorded on the Mar chart and was only written on the feed chart and was omitted. Family made aware.

Clinical Care:

- 3 incidents related to enteral feeds. One was at the wrong rate; one was the wrong feed and one was set at the wrong volume.
Learning: There is a need to be focused on reading the care plan to ensure accuracy, especially at busy times.
- A mum raised concern about use of a low bed for her child. They had grown and needed reassessment.
- A child was not weighed during their stay, even though this was a request from his NHS team.
ACTION: Weight is one of the baseline recordings that should be documented for all children on admission.
- A child's care plan was incomplete and there were gaps in the epilepsy plan.
Learning: Whenever possible, read through the care plan with an emergency in mind, to check all required information is present.

Tissue viability:

- A child sustained a friction burn
- Child identified being high risk for low bone density, but assessment not completed on admission

Emotional and Behavioral Difficulty:

- A child scratched several staff.

Communication issues:

There were two concerns where communication around PCR tests had not been clear, leading to confusion for the families involved.

Complaints and concerns:

There were 4 records of complaints and concerns recorded. These are all being investigated and addressed in line with policy and any learning will be disseminated in due course.

Non-Clinical Health & Safety

Accidents:

- A child tipped his chair but had no injuries
- A volunteer noted inflammation and numbness after using the hedge trimmer

Nonclinical Generic

Information Governance (IG) concern or breach:

- Another child's info was included in paperwork sent externally. It had been scanned to the wrong child on Azeus and then downloaded.
- When scanning to a child records, another child's information was found in the care plan

Learning: please be vigilant in ensuring filing is correct and any scans are put into the correct record

Miscellaneous

Mum concerned that personal iPad had been damaged while the child was at Acorns.

Appendix 3

Audit Summary 2021-2022

Audit Area	Audit	Quarter Delivered	Tool/comments	Number of Audits
Infection control	Hand washing	All	Maintain compliance to ensure that Bare below the elbows is adhered to - Adaptation to sinks required to comply with HSA	10
	Personal Protective Equipment	All	100% compliance Ensure PPE supplies are maintained in each Hospice	10
	Toilets and bathrooms	Q1	Maintenance of areas to be considered on a work plan, overall good condition	2
	Patient areas and meds rooms	Infection control	Maintenance of areas to be considered on a work plan, overall good condition	3
	Kitchen areas including main areas	Infection control	Maintenance of areas to be considered on a work plan, overall good condition	3
	Sluices	Infection control	Maintenance of areas to be considered on a work plan, overall good condition	3
	Sharps	Infection control	Good compliance overall, reminders to replace and dispose of sharps bins regularly	3
	Mattresses	Q1,3	Good overall condition, minimal replacement required	4
	External Audit - Infection Control	Q4	Fresh eyes, identified good overall standards and some structural improvements required - escalated to facilities capital plan	3
Medicines management	Prescribing	Q1	100% compliance	2
	Medicine storage and disposal	All	100% Compliance	4
	CD storage	Q2	CDLIN Police link visited 1 area, regular contact maintained	1
	Medicine storage and disposal	All	100% Compliance	4
	Controlled drugs	All	100% Compliance	3
	MAR and transcribing	All	100% Compliance	10
Personal care	Bath temperatures	Q1,3	100% Compliance	4
Documentation and process	Care plans	All	Overall good compliance, photos to be updated and this is potentially due to non attendance due to covid - Care plan review project continues across all sites	10

Audit Area	Audit	Quarter Delivered	Tool/comments	Number of Audits
	Azeus data	All	Overall good compliance	4
	Electronic records	Q1,3	Overall good compliance	8
	Skinny files	Q4	Some areas for improvement of documentation noted and for review in 22-23, overall good compliance	3
	Dependency tool	Q1,3	Good compliance - project to review dependency tool 22-23	4
Holistic care	EOL and special bedroom use	Q3	Good Compliance	3
	Bereavement support	Q2	100% Compliance	3
	Use of HNA and review forms	Q3	100% Compliance	3
	Communication	Q1,2,3	Good Compliance	3
Documentation and process	On call review	Q1,2,3	Evidence that on call system is used effectively and is valuable as support for care teams	3
	Organisational IG	Q3	Good Compliance - minimal evidence of unlocked PC's	3
Clinical care	Baseline observations	Q1,3	Areas of improvement noted - new process developed and training developed to highlight need of condition of child on admission	5
	Care of the unwell child	Q3	Analysis of children being transferred to hospital, to ensure that correct processes were followed and escalation of care was appropriate	3
Clinical care	Resus Trolley	Q3	Trolleys have been redesigned and checklists developed - opportunity for further development	3
	Pain	Q1,3	Re-evaluating pain documentation and rationale for re-evaluation, pain group has been reformed across sites	5
Documentation and process	ACP	Q4	Evidence of some old ACP's on Electronic notes system, up to date versions in paper files, project to streamline this process for 22-23	3
	Azeus data	All	Overall good compliance	4
	Electronic records	Q1,3	Overall good compliance	8

Appendix 4

Action Plan from User Engagement Strategy	Timescales	Progress
Key Priority: Review existing engagement activity		
Incorporate compliments into service user feedback reports	April 2022	Complete
Discontinue use of postcards	Immediate	Complete
Key Priority: Improve access to opportunities for engagement		
Roll out interpreting app for use with families where language is a barrier to engagement.	May 2022	In progress Contract in place and user guidance for staff prepared. Trial with Birmingham FTM's expected in April 2022 and rolled out to all staff in May 2022.
Add a link and QR code (sticker) to discharge forms to enable parents to provide feedback using their own devices.	April 2022	In progress. To be rolled out in Q1 2022.
Feedback by SMS -Provide families with links to surveys by SMS for completion after their stay	Spring 2022	In progress. Consent form agreed March 2022, and request has been submitted to Data Support for this to be incorporated into the electronic HNA with a report that can be used by Admin to send links to surveys to families.
Key Priority: Involve families in consultation for specific projects within Care		
Testing and feedback on Family Portal developments	March 2022	Complete Testing sessions held w/c 16 th March and feedback received will result in some development requests and changes to guidance.
Involvement for all Service Developments and facilities projects. Surveys - Walsall refurb	March 2022, Ongoing	In progress Survey shared with parents by letter in Feb 2022 and as a part of the display in the Walsall hospice.
Key Priority: Increasing our reach		
Work with external partners, commissioners, other charities and parent groups to build on findings of care review to identify the key barriers to access and plan measures to overcome these.	Ongoing	In progress Reintroduction of monthly Professional Days from Feb 2022 at all hospices.





Appendix 5

Compliments received from external contacts and professionals

Themes along the lines of key lines of enquiry: safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led

Hospice	Compliment
Three Counties	The Worcester Family Services Team received an e-mail from a Doctor at Birmingham University, thanking them for their help and support in obtaining feedback from families of their experiences of a diagnosis of their baby's life-limiting condition antenatally. She noted it was very helpful to their research project.
Three Counties	Physio student from Birmingham Uni emailed Acorns Physio following her placement here to thank Acorns for her allowing her to come. She had an invaluable experience and enjoyed working with the children.
Three Counties	Social Worker to a client e-mailed the FTW to say it was lovely to be made feel so welcome when she arrived with the client for his lengthy stay.
Organisational	Compliment from an external Researcher: We felt that Acorns were incredibly supportive and had a critical role in shaping what we did. We had your advice at the initial family day and in our steering meetings, we had great feedback from one of your parent/carer champion meetings and Outreach Lead and Family Team Worker provided invaluable expert advice at the end-of-project study day for professionals.
Three Counties	FTW received an e-mail from Paediatrician, thanking her for supporting a family following the recent death of their daughter.
Three Counties	Student Nurse sent a thank you card to staff following her Nursing placement at Acorns. She said she had learnt so much during her time with us and loved working with the children. Special thanks to both of her mentors.
Black Country	Carer of client "I am amazed at how nice it is to work at Acorns and will be applying for job"
Three Counties	Assistant Head at Northwick Manor Primary school thanked Sibling Worker for her support with a pupil and the support offered to school.
Three Counties	Family Support Worker at Bristol Children's Hospital emailed FTW thanking her for her bereavement work with a family who have experienced another loss.
Three Counties	Enteral Feeding Nurse said thank you so much FTW, I know that you will have been such a fantastic support to this bereaved Mum.
Three Counties	Dietitian emailed FTW saying take care and well done for all the work you do in supporting families.
Three Counties	Sibling Worker received email from Deputy Head and SENDCO at Camwoodfield Junior School to thank her for the excellent support offered to sibling.
Three Counties	Sibling Worker received email from Social Worker advising that while visiting Dad and Mum they were very positive about the good work the Sibling Worker is doing with siblings, they both look forward to their sessions with Sibling Worker.

Hospice	Compliment
Three Counties	Family Support Worker at Bristol Children's Hospital saying thank you so much for supporting a bereaved Mum so well at a desperately difficult time.
Three Counties	Following a recent placement with Acorns, Student Nurse sent a card to staff thanking them for all their support and knowledge passed onto her during the 4 weeks. She especially thanked the Staff Nurses who were her Mentors whilst here.
Three Counties	Health Visitor e-mailed FTW saying thank you so much for your sensitive e-mail, it is such sad and shocking news. I am also very grateful for the kind words you said to Mum at the end of the last 'My Plan' meeting.
Three Counties	FTW received an e-mail from Social Worker after she visited a client and Mum in hospital recently. She thanked FTW for speaking up which allowed client to have physio.
Black Country	From Volunteer's daughter (who passed away) The gardeners bought a rose "princess Anne" which was planted in the Acorn's gardens in Annie's memory. Photos sent to the family and message received back "Such a lovely tribute, she loved pink roses so I can't think of anything more perfect. Your photos brought happy tears and put a smile on Dad's face. Mom loved Acorns and it's easy to see why. Thank you for showing such kindness to our family in these sad times"
Three Counties	Sibling Support Worker shared this compliment received from Deputy Head at clients School: Client has made massive strides - the support you have provided has made a huge difference to his resilience in terms of making sense of what happened and learning to incorporate the loss of his sister in every day life. Thank you for supporting him to get past the 1 year milestone
Three Counties	Physio received a thank you letter from the Physio Student who has spent the past 6 weeks on placement with us. She said how much she had enjoyed the placement and had gained lots of valuable experiences.
Birmingham	Fundraising Walkers – Compliments were received from the Walkers last Sunday who went to each hospice as a fundraising event. Two Staff Nurses made them sandwiches whilst they were sat in the garden and they had said how lovely they both were and were very appreciative of what they had done for them.
Birmingham	Paediatric Community Palliative Care Nurse, emailed family team worker following client's death and said "Thank you all for your hard work in supporting client and her family".
Black Country	A lady called into hospice, she was a volunteer befriender at the hospice several years ago, she recently qualified as a doctor, was passing through the local area and wanted to call in to thank us for being part of her career journey. She learnt a lot and gained confidence at Acorns which really helped in her career path.
Birmingham	Thanks received from the APPM for the use of the Birmingham Conference room. Compliments on the facilities used.
Black Country	Compliment from Community Dietician. "It's been a pleasure working with you to Staff Nurse, thank you so much for your support moving client onto meeting her fluid requirements orally, minimising the need to use the gastrostomy"
Black Country	Compliment from doctor "Thank you to you to Staff Nurse (and your team) for looking after client so well and for your fantastic communication. We've made enormous progress in understanding client's needs".
Birmingham	Email from Advanced neonatal nurse practitioner at City Hospital "Many thanks for attending the counselling meeting today, it was really helpful having you all on board for this meeting".
Birmingham	Email from Consultant Neonatologist at City Hospital "Thank you all for joining us today for the meeting. It was indeed very helpful for the family to go through the process and you guys have been absolutely amazing. You are doing a great job".

Hospice	Compliment
Three Counties	Sibling worker received the following from Deputy Head at Clients School: We are so pleased with the support you have given client - he has benefitted immensely and there has definitely been a shift in his mood and emotional wellbeing over time. Whenever he knew you were visiting for a session he would say 'yay'. I agree, bereavement is a long bumpy journey which can knock you sideways at expected milestones and unexpected moments too. We will continue to monitor client and if we feel he is really struggling, we will let you know. You do such a valuable job and your role is crucial so keep up the good work and I wish you well.
Black Country	Compliment from the managing hospital team about how responsive we were able to be with EOL Client.
Three Counties	A Deputy Head at a school said to a FTW "Thank you for coming to meetings (EHCP reviews) almost religiously for the children and you don't just listen and go away, but you take things back and share with the team so that it is used well for the children. We value you being here".
Three Counties	It has been an absolute pleasure to work with you and your team and to witness the support you all provide to children and their families.
Acorns Children's Hospice	We are really inspired by what your are doing embedding Child's rights – we are enthusiastically beginning this too. Any information you are happy to share would be wonderful. Your consent policy is really helpful and similar (but more detailed!) than what we have currently. Thanks so much & wishing you a safe & Merry Christmas.
Black Country	Here's some nice feedback that a student physio tweeted. Placement 2   @AcornsHospice in Walsall, you have been amazing! You have made me a better person, a better physiotherapist and I will miss you all so much! Thank you so much for having me, hopefully see you soon   #physiotherapy #physiostudent
Birmingham	Public Health, England - They were very impressed with the procedures we had in place and were blown away with our pro-active testing. They commented on the fact that it was Acorns that had got in touch with them instead of the other way around
Three Counties	Wiltshire Police - Thank you for letting us come and see you guys and thank you for the amazing work you do. I'm sure you don't see it but I genuinely think that what you all do at the Acorns is incredible. I've been a police officer a long time, and not a great deal affects me anymore, but I can honestly say that the visits to Acorns will stay with me for the rest of my life."
Three Counties	Social worker - "Thank you so much for your kind words and heartfelt gift. I definitely could not have done it without your dedication and support. So, a massive THANKYOU. The love, kindness and passion that you have shown her has touched and moved me. You have made a lasting difference, not only in her life, but also in mine: an example I wish to follow."
Three Counties	Continuing Care Nurse, Walsall – "It's evident from all the hard work you have put in means so much to you. None of it would be possible without your expert care and attention.
Three Counties	Foster Family and Social Worker - and family sent their best regards and thanks for everyone's care and dedication in caring for her. They were very impressed by Acorns and the love we have for her. They also thanked us for such a smooth transition to their home- something their Social Worker also echoed.
Three Counties	Wales Nursing Team – gave positive feedback regarding how quickly Acorns were able to turn her placement around considering the tight time frame.

Hospice	Compliment
Birmingham	MP for Birmingham, Selly Oak – Letter sent to ceo “I would like to congratulate you and all the staff at the Acorns Children’s Hospice Trust for your recent Unicef UK Silver Award. I am very proud to hear that the hospice is the first in the UK to win this prestigious award, following your Bronze accolade award in 2020. This is an especially proud achievement for Birmingham. The efforts of you and all of your staff to care for children to the highest standard, ensuring the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child is at the core of your policies and practice has given many children and families hope and the very best support they require. Many congratulations again, and please do extend my felicitations to all of your colleagues for this remarkable achievement”.
Black Country	Compliment from the Smethwick Asian funeral service - Funeral director got back in touch yesterday to say that Bereaved client was settled with them there he had his radio with him and mum and dad have spent some quality time there with him. He then said “It is always an honour to meet you and the excellent team at Acorns “
Birmingham	Compliment from Palliative Community Nurse - “Mum reports that he really enjoyed his session with outreach from Acorns, he loved the toys and activities that were brought and he has asked mum when Outreach Lead is coming back daily!! Mum has really positive feedback from this session! Just wanted to say thank you for your support with this family”.
Black Country	From Professional to DHN Thank You – I have recently had a few conversations with client's dad who as always, cannot fault the care and support given by your team. He is fully aware of the contents of your assessment and 'happy' to trust advise and continue using Acorns
Birmingham	Compliment received from Head of Service for Disabled Children’s Services, Birmingham at a MDT Meeting which Acorns was a part of: ‘Dear All, I just wanted to say a huge thank you for all of your efforts in securing the best possible outcome for client. This has been a really challenging piece of work to coordinate and we have all kept him at the centre of our planning and managed to put together something that will give him the most security by remaining in the 2 placements he knows well and still being able to attend school. I realise the difficulties for all of us in this type of scenario but by being able to work together and to keep everyone at the table in discussion, shows that as a system we can solve some complicated problems and this will also help us in our thinking about the services we all provide going forward. Thank you all. Kind Regards”.
Black Country	Telephone call from cardiac Liaison nurse at BCH. She wanted to say how fantastic it is that we were able to support client and his family. She feels the time in the cool room has given the family precious time that they would not otherwise have been able to have with child. She would particularly like to thank FTW for the support given to parents whilst he has been at Acorns.

Compliments from Acorns Families 2021-2022

Hospice	Compliment
Black Country	Compliment from bereaved family "We can't put into words how much Acorns helped us"
Birmingham	Positive feedback was received for FTW, for all the support she has given so far, it has been appreciated and Mum was very grateful.
Birmingham	Sibling Group held on 30/03/2021 - Comments and feedback; "she enjoyed it. Thanks for the session", "enjoyed it 😊 thanks for doing the sessions with them xxx", "enjoyed it 😊 Lovely to see you xx"
Black Country	Client's dad said: "We just wanted to say thank you for the eggs you dropped off today, it's really kind of Acorns to think of us, we so appreciate it"
Birmingham	Sibling Group Feedback to Sibling Support Worker from mum "Hi thank you she had a lot of fun".
Birmingham	Bereaved mother being discharged from Acorns feedback to Family Team Worker "Ahh going to miss working with you, thank you so much for everything you helped me with, you have been my favourite worker I've ever worked with for my daughter"
Birmingham	Bereaved mom said thank you to the Family Team Worker for support throughout bereavement journey.
Three Counties	FTW received an email from the Mum of a client, thanking her so much for visiting them recently saying it is lovely to feel so supported in the short time she has got to know them.
Birmingham	Client had music therapy session and said afterwards what a fantastic boost the session had given her.
Black Country	Siblings mum- Thanked Sibling Support Worker for continuing to check in on the siblings and keeping in contact with one sibling in particular. She appreciates the effort the sibling support worker is putting in to support him.
Black Country	Client's mum: "Thank you to FTW for all the psychosocial support you have given me."
Black Country	Bereaved Mom has donated £500 to help with the hospice refurbishment project.
Birmingham	Mom said she was grateful for the day at Acorns Birmingham Hospice and glad to have things for the children to do.
Birmingham	Mom said she did not know what she would do without the support from Acorns.
Three Counties	Dad thanked all the staff for his son's stay in February which allowed the family to have a break which they were very grateful for. The family were also amazed by the offer to go as a family to Worcester Warriors match in December, and it was a unique experience for them all!
Black Country	Sibling: "I really enjoyed the sibling group, my favourite part was probably the planting"
Black Country	Compliment from bereaved mom: "The time spent at Acorns lifted the burden and allowed the time we had to be the best it could under the circumstances. Thank you for the support" The family have raised over £900 for Acorns.
Three Counties	Mum emailed her FTW to say that the Outreach visits being provided have been a lifeline for the family and thanked Acorns for all the support they were being offered in general.
Three Counties	FTW recently hosted a visit to the garden by a family who were referred in November but due to Covid have been unable to come to the Hospice. They commented how beautiful our gardens were and had a peep through bedroom windows into the Hospice which helped the family understand the Hospice. They thanked us for refreshments provided.
Birmingham	Mum, to FTW. "First time I've felt really happy for ages. Cannot thank you enough!"
Birmingham	Compliment for the Physios, from client's Mum, via the FTW, following a pool session. Mom texted saying "He absolutely loved it omg it was amazing! So Happy! He was so so happy! Absolutely incredible. Got back into the car and cried with joy. Completely amazing."
Birmingham	Mum said Hydrotherapy has been our saviour during lock down and she loves outreach and welcomes its return.

Hospice	Compliment
Birmingham	Compliments to the Physio Team - Mum expressed that Acorns has been a lifeline for her the client. The care and support they have received has been tremendous and has found that no one else has given them this much care and support. Compliments to Physio and staff member who is assisting - Mom expressed that the time they have been in and spent time within the hospice, with physio who have been supportive for car seat and pool sessions, she has found this experience wonderful and she was overwhelmed with gratitude that the staff member was able to spend time with her, having a chat, where she was able to drink a hot drink whilst it was still hot. This was something she never gets to experience and she was so grateful to Steph for this specially to give her the time to chat openly and freely with a hot drink.
Birmingham	Compliment to Outreach Worker, - during visit to Birmingham hospice the Outreach worker was chatting to mom about how it was unfortunate mom she wasn't getting to meet more staff, whilst they were at the hospice, as everyone who works at the hospice has a lovely character and personality and we all care for our children and families, the client's sister came up and hugged the Outreach worker and said 'you care too for us and are nice and lovely'.
Birmingham	During Outreach session with specialist nurse Mum commented; 'Thank you , all I can hear is laughter and it is so nice to hear her laugh and enjoy herself, like any other child would do, to hear and see her having fun is great'
Three Counties	Foster Mum of a client emailed HCA thanking her for inviting them to be involved in the zoom Stay and Play session on the 6th May. She said he had continued singing the songs all day afterwards and loved the session.
Birmingham	The client came for hydro on 5th May with Dad and Granny came for the first time. She was amazed by our pool facility but after having to use toilet in FCS before leaving she was in raptures about how clean our toilets were and how unfavourably a Hospital she had been to comparedshe was more impressed with our cleanliness than pool session!!
Black Country	A Parent said: "Acorns has been amazing for respite and support. Acorns has always been supportive especially during the time that my son was in hospital".
Black Country	Bereaved parents thanks Acorns for all of the support they have received
Black Country	Parent "My daughter was overjoyed to receive a visit from her Outreach Support Worker. Such a lovely sight to see, lots of smiles and my daughter burst into tears when she saw her because she missed her so!
Birmingham	FTM received from client's Mum, a thank you message with a red heart.
Birmingham	Client's Mum is thankful for the support she has received from Acorns.
Birmingham	FTW received a compliment from the client's Mum) who said the following. "Thank you so much for your support, I don't think I would have been able to do it without you and your constant support. I am so grateful to you, you are a wonderful support worker, and this must reflect on how wonderful a person you are. You went beyond to support me, you were empathetic towards me, and I really appreciate this. Thank you so much".
Black Country	Bereaved parent: "Just want to say thank Outreach Lead Nurse for everything. The thing Acorns do is just amazing and I am so glad I got to spend extra time there with her so thank you xxx"
Black Country	Compliment from Parent; "in regards to his FTW and the Acorns team. He has said that he values the telephone calls and home visits from his FTW and that he "will always support Acorns and value the unconditional care and support staff have provided to my children and to us as a family."
Three Counties	FTW received a thank you from a bereaved family following their visit to the garden and memorial stream.
Three Counties	Grandmother of a client thanked the FTW for supporting her with a change of worker.
Black Country	Mum to FTW "Thank you so much for your support and really grateful you could attend the meeting".
Birmingham	Family said Birmingham hospice garden is looking amazing. mum commented on how lovely it was to be in such nice surroundings.
Birmingham	Re sibling Group - "She enjoyed the group, she was so excited that she got up at 5am and woke me and her dad up as well."
Birmingham	Sibling Group - "she enjoyed it she said it was best part of the day so much fun."
Birmingham	KiT Team member managed to get client an appointment to be reviewed at ROH, after 6th cancellation, after lots of networking and persistence . Mum was so distressed and said she had lost the energy to fight it. Mum is delighted and very thankful for all the KIT workers efforts.

Hospice	Compliment
Birmingham	Mum said that she was looking forward to stay and play as she feels very isolated and vulnerable talking to her friends. She said she doesn't know what she would have done without all the support she has had here at Acorns and was so grateful.
Birmingham	Following hydro sessions mum was so delighted to have the sessions and said it was so lovely to hear her daughter laugh again, move easier and have fun. She will continue to have physio sessions to help reduce backpain.
Three Counties	Mum thanked her FTW for arranging for a respite stay for her son and for submitting an application to Jerome Trust for a family holiday.
Birmingham	Mom said to the sibling Worker " thank you for all of your hard work and patience in arranging these sessions for my daughter, we really appreciate it"
Birmingham	mom said she was thankful for the Family Team Workers support and gifts.
Black Country	Client's family have raised £610 for Acorns to say thank you for all the support they have been receiving
Three Counties	Mum of a client messaged Acorns social media site to say what a wonderful time they had had in the hydro pool during her stay. It was the first time that her daughter had been swimming and she loved every second. Mum wanted to say a huge thankyou to all staff especially the Physio Team for being so kind in the pool, and for her FTW who arranged a grant to allow them to have a family holiday.
Birmingham	Good feedback for 16/06/2021 Stay and Play. A mom said how they were looking forward to Stay and Play, as there is nothing else around like it. They said how well it was all set up and both said how nice it is for the children as they both enjoyed it because they haven't seen anyone since Covid. They hope the sessions continue when the pool reopens and they are looking forward to next week's session.
Birmingham	The family were full of praise for Acorns and said the Family Team Worker has been phenomenal.
Black Country	Sibling said: "Thank you ladies and my sunflowers are growing really well". She had commented that her sunflower is now a foot tall.
Three Counties	Mum of a client e-mailed her FTW thanking her for the HNA document sent, and thanking her for getting everything done so quickly for them.
Three Counties	At a home visit FTW had conversation with Mum in which she opened up and shared a lots of emotion. FTW texted Mum the following day to check up on her and received a reply from Mum: "Thank you for texting, you are right that I did feel exhausted that day, funny isn't it the effect of emotions. Thank you for taking the time with me, I appreciate it".
Three Counties	Sibling Worker received a text from a Mum following her offer of telephone support. She thanked her for the chat saying "you're fab!"
Black Country	Compliment from Client's family, "thank you for the support we have received over the years and compliments to the team. My daughter is looking forward to attending the sibling group".
Black Country	Compliment from client's family, "thank you for the support we have received over the years and compliments to the team. May daughter is looking forward to attending the sibling group".
Birmingham	Mum was very thankful for the support and techniques that the Physio taught her. Since then she is suctioning the client less. She is happier, more vocal and responsive. FTW could also hear her over the phone.
Birmingham	Mum was provided with the iPad that was donated. She was very thankful, the client was watching cartoons on Mum's phone.
Black Country	Compliment received from family social worker in regards to client and family. Nan is the primary carer and had notoriously struggled to engage with professionals and was very weary about her grandson attending Acorns as she had lost a son with the same condition that was a client of Acorns. Nan complimented FTW's work with her in the CIN meeting and has said that she finds FTW's support beneficial and looks forward to their conversations she 'finds that they really help'
Birmingham	A verbal thank you from Mum who brought the client to hydrotherapy. Said that they had really missed going in the pool while it was closed for renovations as it was so beneficial for her and were so happy to be back. During the following session Mum said that coming back to hydrotherapy had significantly improved the client's sleep.
Birmingham	Feedback from Mum - she has felt very supported by Acorns and that considering we have all gone through a global pandemic, she is really thankful and grateful for the amount of support they have had from us all as a team. She said Acorns have been amazingly supportive of her and her family.
Birmingham	Following FTW's visit with Mum on Tuesday, she thanked the FTW for all the support she has given over the past year. She gave the FTW a thank you card and plant.

Hospice	Compliment
Birmingham	Mum was thankful to staff at Acorns. She said Acorns was not what she expected when she heard the word 'hospice'. She is excited to start using the facilities.
Birmingham	Dad came in on Tuesday and spoke about how much the bereaved client had loved his time at Acorns, he said Acorns was his favourite place to come and they have a lot of fond memories.
Birmingham	Mom sent Acorns a thank you card on behalf of all the family saying "thank you for all the support you have given our family over the last nine years, without Acorns our family life would have been so difficult. We see Acorns as our angels who have supported us through good times and bad, who make us smile and make wonderful things happen for all of us. You have helped us make so many wonderful memories for us to treasure forever as a family. Losing Acorns is like losing one of our family members. It is going to be hard to say goodbye. You will be in our hearts forever, words cannot express how much we appreciate you. The staff and volunteers are such wonderful, loving, thoughtful people and always listen and smile and so caring it means the world to us to be a part of that."
Birmingham	Aunty was overwhelmed that her nephew was independently walking in the pool, she was really please.
Three Counties	Sibling Worker received some feedback from the Mum of a client, saying that his sibling loved the recent Sibling Group he attended and was beaming when he returned home – Mum was thrilled.
Black Country	Bereaved mum: "I just want to say a big thank you to all at the Walsall Hospice for my daughters lovely memorial stone, it is placed in a perfect spot near the water which my daughter would have very much loved."
Black Country	Bereaved mum: Said she is really grateful for all the support they have received via outreach, music therapy and for the physiotherapist for arranging a hoist
Birmingham	nan was so grateful for respite arranged in October at Worcester and wished to express her thanks to everyone involved in making this happen.
Three Counties	Following a recent Group, Sibling Worker received many e-mails from Volunteers who supported on the day and Families, thanking her so much for inviting their children, saying what a wonderful time everyone had
Three Counties	FTW set up a get together with a few Acorns families in a local park, following which she had a message from Mum thanking her for arranging it, the boys had a wonderful time and plan to meet again in a few weeks.
Birmingham	Physio Team – mom said "Thank you for having us, sorting transport and listening to me ramble on! He had a lovely day it's nice to get him out doing things he enjoys there's not much out there for kids with disabilities really. Was lovely chatting with you x"
Birmingham	Mom said "Thank you so much for your time and support"
Black Country	Foster mum of a client says that she and her husband valued her FTW's support immensely and would have probably given up fostering without Acorns support
Black Country	Compliment: Client's mum: She said that she is very sad to be leaving Acorns, wanted to pass on her thanks to the whole team and that everyone will be missed. Her daughter has also said thank you for the Amazon voucher.
Birmingham	nan thanked KiT staff member for organising the respite for her grand daughter to allow Nan to attend her dads funeral.
Birmingham	mom said the physio is wonderful
Birmingham	family said we love our Acorns nurse he is amazing
Black Country	Bereave family thanked FTW for all the support Acorns has provided in the last year
Birmingham	Following a day a Birmingham hospice having a hydrotherapy session, sensory room booking and a meeting with FTW, mom said she cannot remember having received such goodness and found the experience overwhelming and said it is such a good facility which she is grateful for being able to access.
Black Country	Client's mum said to FTW: "We have a cheque to send to Acorns through our son or £1,289. My sisters company raised the money and let our son decide where he'd like it to go"
Black Country	Compliment received for FTWs for bereavement group from client's dad said it was both helpful and supportive.
Three Counties	Sibling worker received a message from client's mum to say thank you for arranging the sibling needs assessment stating "You have captured her so well-thank you"
Three Counties	Sibling worker received thanks from client's mum for arranging transport support at the sibling group and for taking her home afterwards, Thanks was also given to our volunteers.

Hospice	Compliment
Three Counties	Sibling Worker received thanks from client's mum with regard to the recent sibling group stating that child had a great time and has talked loads about it since.
Three Counties	Sibling Worker received thanks from client's mum with regard to the recent sibling group stating thank for yesterday, they really enjoyed it.
Three Counties	Client came for a recent short break (the first following Covid restrictions) and Mum was very anxious to leave him as he is now following a palliative care pathway. She fed back to her FTW how welcoming and thorough a particular Staff Nurse had made them feel on their admission which had helped with her confidence enormously.
Birmingham	Birmingham Nursing Staff – A handmade Thank You card received from two clients – “Thank you for all the care and love you have given us. We will miss you, lots of love xxx
Birmingham	Feedback received from FTW from Worcester hospice re: Compliment from Mum: “Hi, I just thought I would share with you some feedback I had from Mum after a recent stay in Worcester. The client has come to us for many years, but he last stayed before the pandemic and before a deterioration in his health which has resulted in him following a palliative care pathway. This meant it was quite a big thing emotionally for Mum to leave him with us this time: he hasn't been out of their sight since the palliative decision, and then there was the added worry of Covid. Talking to her about it this week, she said how relieved she was that it actually felt fine to leave the client and she really managed to relax and spend time with their other children. She particularly mentioned you by name and said how helpful and thorough you had been on admission, and that you really helped to instil her with confidence that the client would be fine in our care. I thought you might like to hear what a difference that had made to her and how it has helped them re-establish short breaks support for the future now too. Best wishes”.
Black Country	Compliment from Bereaved Mom regarding photographs from Staff Nurse: "I have received them they are beautiful thank you so, so much"
Black Country	FTW spoke to bereaved mom last Thursday following the news that her son had died. Mom wanted to reiterate how grateful the family were for all the support which they had received from us. She said they only had happy memories of Acorns and will be forever grateful.
Birmingham	A Staff Nurse received a compliment from a client's Mum stating - 'Its down to the support I have received from you that a respite stay booked at Birmingham that I feel much happier and more positive'
Birmingham	FTW said that as Mum is struggling a bit at the moment, she is really thankful for the respite granted for the October half term.
Birmingham	After a family splash last week, Mum said she was very grateful for the support she has received from Acorns and for the opportunities created for her daughter. This was the client's first ever pool experience and Mum expressed her gratitude
Three Counties	Sibling Support Worker received the following news from a client who had received a certificate in class assembly and that he was very proud because the certificate was for excellent self-control. He added that he received this because of the work that he and Sibling Support Worker had done together in their one to one sessions and he was very grateful.
Black Country	Compliment from Bereaved Mom “Thank you to everyone for all the support you have given me”
Three Counties	Sibling clients had a short break at the Hospice to allow their parents to take their sibling on his trip of a lifetime to ride an open-air London double decker bus ride. Parents sent a photo of him 'living the dream' as they put it!
Birmingham	Parents enjoyed their tour of Selly Oak hospice and stated that “it is much less clinical, and more homely than they anticipated which was a very nice surprise”. They are looking forward to booking their first stay with us.
Birmingham	mom was very appreciative of support she received from Acorns when her daughter passed away in October.
Birmingham	Mom said thank you to the Head Nurse for arranging her daughter to have daycare, on the day of her Grandads funeral, as it helped them cope as a family being together.
Birmingham	Appreciates Acorns services and is looking forward to accessing the hospice.
Black Country	PR did an interview with the family and they spoke fondly and had lots of warm things to say about the hospice and staff.
Birmingham	family wanted us to know how amazing we all are here at Birmingham Acorns. She said she uses other respite services and Acorns Birmingham is their favourite and they know their sister gets looked after really well here. She said that when her sister comes home she is still her usual self, whereas when she returns from other places she never seems herself and that Acorns is their number one choice. She gave lots of thanks to all the staff.

Hospice	Compliment
Birmingham	mom thanked everybody at Acorns for all their support and for everything they put in to getting her daughter in for respite a couple of days before she passed away.
Three Counties	FTW received a text to say "Thank you so much for everything you have done for us, for being there and for checking in we truly do appreciate it
Black Country	We are so grateful to the staff for the service we have received over the years.
Three Counties	Clients mum sent a text to Sibling Worker thanking them for all their support and for liaising with school around support for client
Birmingham	mom said a huge thank you to the Birmingham nurses as to how they conducted themselves before her daughter passed away and she really appreciates their kindness and support.
Birmingham	Bereaved mother said without the Family Team Worker's, support she does not think she would be where she is now and wanted to say a special thank you.
Birmingham	Bereaved dad emailed the Birmingham FTM in response to the confirmation of discharge from Acorns services, saying "We appreciate your taking the time to write to us, you are correct in stating we do not require support at this time. We will most certainly be visiting the memorial garden as our daughter's stone is laid there and appreciate Acorn's permission for this. We will always be eternally grateful for everything all the wonderful people, such as yourself, have done for us at Acorns. The support and encouragement without which we could not have got through to have the best time possible with our daughter. We continue to promote and regard Acorns wherever possible, both myself and my wife are Amazon Prime subscribers and as part of their charity donations scheme, our elected charity is of course Acorns. As well as this we cherish the website that Acorns setup for us to remember our daughter and help promote Acorns good work.
Black Country	Client's mum: "Thank you to the team we had a lovely day. We enjoyed the spa and the sensory room and have made fond memories"
Three Counties	Following the transition/leavers tea party at the end of October, FTW received some lovely feedback from a Mum. She said they both had a lovely time thank you. The Amazon gift card has been spent on a talking hamster and karaoke microphone! Ear plugs at the ready!!! Thanks again for everything.
Birmingham	Visit from brother of client who died at Acorns in Birmingham in 1996, also to remember his mother who died last year. Staff Nurse & Volunteer Manager hosted the visit to the memorial garden, Staff Nurse nursed client back then and they shared memories with brother who had not visited since then. They were able to show him clients stone in the garden, it was a very emotional visit all round. Brother made a donation and wants to do so regularly, Volunteer Manager has spoken to fundraising and they have contacted him about setting up a Daisy Chain Fund. Family expressed their thanks to all at Acorns for all the care and support they had received.
Birmingham	Visit from the family of client who died in 2015. Volunteer Manager was able to locate the memorial stone for the family. They brought in a donation from a family friend and they also brought in boxes of chocolates for the hospice for the Christmas period. Family expressed their thanks to all at Acorns for all the care and support they had received.
Black Country	Compliment from client's mum. A massive thank you to you and Acorns. The boys absolutely loved the Snowdome Winter Wonderland last night. Client really enjoyed the pantomime section which he's struggled with things like that in the past. On no, he was there stamping his feet and shouting, "oh no it isn't!" Great family memories for all.
Black Country	Compliment from clients Wonderful evening, the children loved it. All staff were pleasant, caring and provided support. Thank you for organising this and inviting us, we had a lovely time.
Black Country	Compliment from client's mum regarding the Snowdome which reads:- Friday was amazing thank you for inviting us!
Black Country	Compliment for Outreach Nurse Lead from client's mum. Nurse completed and assessment visit recently and mum said that she instantly felt at ease with her and that she could trust her. Nurse suggested that she look after her son for 20 mins and mum said that she sat on the corner of her own bed and didn't know what to do with herself as she has spent so long as a single parent with little support taking care of her son x who does not sleep well at night. Mum is now looking forward to having some free time when OR nurse visits.
Three Counties	Parents gave thanks to Family Team worker for all of the support offered over the last 5 years
Three Counties	Parent text Sibling Worker to thank her for her visit, and that her daughter was really enjoying her sessions
Birmingham	Father stated that he is truly grateful for Acorns services and said thankyou for the care and support.

Hospice	Compliment
Birmingham	Dad stated he is grateful for outreach visits.
Birmingham	Family attended Acorns on the fourth anniversary since their son passed away. The family said thank you for all the support they have received and sent their love and best wishes from all the family and they donated money to Acorns.
Birmingham	Family gave the FTW a gift of chocolates and thanked her for everything she has done.
Birmingham	the family said it was a shame they got to know Acorns during a difficult time but wanted to say a huge thank you for the time they have been able to spend with their daughter.
Three Counties	Family team worker received a text that said "me and (Father) would just like to say thankyou for today, we felt so relaxed and at ease 😊 the girls were amazing with (Client) and ourselves. We haven't been able to this so thankyou from the bottom of our hearts. (Father) is very happy with the experience and is looking forward to coming back soon x x "
Three Counties	Client's mum has asked very expressly for me to thank everyone on the team. She wanted you all to know that they are so very grateful to everyone. Client loved coming to Acorns, always. And Mum said they couldn't thank us enough for the care we have given them over the last few days while they have used the special bedroom for client – they have been so grateful for the support given to them as parents, to the children and to the extended family. They have felt so looked after through this time. They said they hope to visit again soon.
Birmingham	The family spoke continually to many of the staff about how they were made to feel so welcome at Acorns and they feel they are part of the family and that nothing was too much to do for them. They said they couldn't imagine going through what they have experienced anywhere else.
Black Country	Compliment to FTW from client's mum to say how much fun they've had at the Snow Dome and how grateful they are for the stays for her son especially when Mom required treatment for her own health needs.
Three Counties	Sibling worker received a text message from Mum which stated: Thank you so much, client really enjoys his sessions with you and is excited every Thursday he enjoyed his biscuits didn't share them lol and he has explained his cushion. We hope you have a lovely Christmas and New year, Thanks again x
Three Counties	Sibling worker received a text message from client mum which said "Thank you for everything that you do xx"
Three Counties	Dad thanked Family Team Workers for the support they have offered the family.
Three Counties	Mum said she could never thank her FTW enough for the support she has offered her and thanks also to Sibling Worker for the support she has offered the sibling.
Three Counties	Mum thanked FTW for arranging for the boys to see Santa at Bennetts Willow Barn. She said it was the least stressful Santa trip they have ever had! he spent lots of time with the boys and she felt they had captured some really precious memories.
Birmingham	Thank you to Sibling Worker from the family - "A big thank you for all the amazing and vital support you do".
Birmingham	Thank you to Sibling Worker from Sibling - "I will miss you and miss talking to you". Sibling wrote Sibling Worker a letter and made her a picture.
Three Counties	bereaved Mum asked to thank everyone on the team. She wanted to express that they are so very grateful. they loved coming to Acorns and couldn't thank us enough for the care shown to them whilst their son stayed in the special bedroom. They have been so grateful for the support shown to them as parents, and to the siblings and extended family, they felt so looked after.
Three Counties	Dad thanked FTW's for the support they have offered the family.
Three Counties	Bereaved Mum said she could never thank the FTW enough for the support she has offered her and thanks also to her colleagues for the support they also offered to siblings.
Three Counties	Client's mum thanked us for the Christmas presents child was given – "Thanks so much for all of Clients presents. She was so happy all day, can't thank Acorns enough, really makes a difference". Client waited two hours for her little sister to return home after an outing, so that they could open the parcels together and she could share them with her sister.
Three Counties	Clients mum sent thanks for the Christmas Light Trail, saying: "the Acorns yesterday was lit up with many beautiful lights and 'love'. Very bright idea to meet Father Christmas in the garden!"
Three Counties	Mum thanked Acorns for the Christmas presents.

Hospice	Compliment
Three Counties	Mum sent thanks for the Christmas Light Trail, saying: "the Acorns yesterday was lit up with many beautiful lights and 'love'. Very bright idea to meet Father Christmas in the garden!"
Three Counties	Foster Parents wanted to thank all the staff for what Acorns did for all the children at Xmas time. They wanted to say how much they appreciated what was done for them at Acorns and how lovely it was for them to meet up again with other parents. He got the chance to see Santa & have a lovely time and build memories with photos.
Birmingham	Compliments received for FTW from the parents of the client when they took him back to the Special bedroom. They said the FTW has been very helpful and very nice and they would have been lost without the help received as they do not know the practicalities about the funeral etc. They also commented on the flat, how helpful it is to have a flat and how precious the moments were when they had him in a cuddle cot upstairs. The parents were also very thankful to the Staff Nurse for all her support.
Black Country	Compliment for Staff Nurse from Client's mom. Staff Nurse has been an "inspiration" to her. She talked to Staff Nurse last year about running and took it up. As a result, she has lost 39kg and has so much energy now. This has had a really positive effect on her and her family. 🙌
Black Country	Compliment to FTW- Client's dad said that he was really grateful for FTW's support and that she had been the only professional who has consistently supported him.
Black Country	Compliment to FTW- Bereaved' mum said FTW's support had made all the difference to her and she will continue to fund raise for Acorns.
Birmingham	Mum said that she wanted to thank the FTW, and everyone at Acorns for the support the family have received.
Birmingham	FTW received a WhatsApp message from Mum, she and the siblings are thankful for the Christmas gifts.
Three Counties	A client's family sent a card thanking Acorns for inviting them to the wonderful Christmas light trail and their gifts from Santa – they all had a fabulous time.
Birmingham	Compliment to Sibling Worker - Mum said "You are a god send, you came in at the right time to support the client and she so needed the groups because she is struggling."
Birmingham	Compliment to Sibling Worker - Mum said "I really appreciate your support, thank you
Birmingham	Compliment to Sibling Worker - Mum said "Thank you for the gift, sibling took the pens to school".
Birmingham	Mum said she really appreciated the toys that the FTW brought along for the children at the first visit. The children loved opening them.
Birmingham	Dad had some initial reservations about the concept of a children's hospice and Acorns; however now that the client is here, he says that he would not want her to be anywhere else. He has said how settled she is and the staff are amazing.
Birmingham	After attending a performance at Hippodrome Theatre - 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. - feedback from Mums was "thanks ever so much for the experience it was epic", "She can't stop raving about it", "lovely time together" "loved every minute"
Three Counties	mum thanked us for the Christmas presents she was given – "Thanks so much for all of her presents. She was so happy all day, can't thank Acorns enough, really makes a difference". She waited two hours for her little sister to return home after an outing, so that they could open the parcels together and she could share them with her sister.
Three Counties	mum sent thanks for the Christmas Light Trail, saying: "Acorns was lit up with many beautiful lights and 'love'. Very bright idea to meet Father Christmas in the garden!"
Three Counties	Family sent a card thanking Acorns for inviting them to the wonderful Christmas light trail and their gifts from Santa – they all had a fabulous time.
Birmingham	Thankyou from family to Sibling Worker - "I just wanted to say a huge thank you for the tickets to Goldilocks and the 3 Bears at the Hippodrome. I took sibling for a night out, and she was beaming the whole way through; the sets, music, lights, performances, songs and jokes were just wonderful - though I did have to spend a bit of time explaining who Jason Donovan is and now I feel REALLY old! After a really difficult six months (after a really difficult four years) this was a massive treat and very inspirational for sibling as she starts rebuilding her life. Sibling was particularly excited by the production and lighting, and now wants to learn more about working in theatre production. "I want to work one of those big lights" she said!"
Birmingham	Thank you from Family "Hope you are well and thank you so much for coming out to my home and a big thanks for the bath chair. She seems comfortable and it's just the right height and knowing she's safe and comfortable gives me peace of mind. Thank you Physio, you're a star".
Black Country	Fom client's mom – Thank you to all the staff for the support which you have given us as a family over the years. Particularly FTW, for supporting me and Staff Nurses and Physiotherapist, in for the care given to my son, especially when he has been very poorly.

Hospice	Compliment
Three Counties	FTW received a thank you card from the family "Thankyou so much for all your help, care and support over the last 10 years since he's been coming to Acorns. We truly are so privileged to have had you all in our lives. He loved coming to Acorns he had some of his happiest days there and it gave us some time to spend as a family with his siblings. We will never forget any of you. You are all truly amazing, love from all the Family"
Birmingham	Thank you to FTW from family - "Thank you so much for the help you've provided over the years for the girls it was lovely to have met you. Sorry couldn't catch up with you this week. Hope the best for you and your family and may Allah bless you with countless blessings ameen".
Birmingham	Thank you to FTW from family - "Thank you for the help that you have given me. I appreciate that someone will go to such lengths to help me".
Birmingham	Thank you to FTW's from clients family - "I have completed the feedback form, apologies for the delay in responding. We would like to thank you for your support during these sessions. We both like to make sure we keep talking about him and his journey, and having yourselves there to listen without judgement was so helpful during the sessions. We can't thank you both enough for what you do, it can't be an easy job, but you do it so well!"
Three Counties	Following a recent stay Mum sent a card to staff thanking them for all their positive feedback and care showed to her Daughter and help with her needs. Siblings had fun too.
Three Counties	Feedback following first stay at Acorns. Mum telephoned FTW to say what a lovely time they had had at Acorns for her Daughter's first assessment stay. She said "it made me realise what she can do...so often people talk about what she can't do....it opened my eyes up massively". She gave particular thanks to certain members of the Care Team for looking after her Daughter during her stay.
Birmingham	Thank you from client - FTW dropped off Nintendo Switch which was donated by Aston Villa, he was ecstatic and kept screaming. He doesn't normally make eye contact with people, but he looked at FTW and said "Thankyou".
Birmingham	Virtual Sibling Groups - Some feedback from the group "Thank you she really enjoyed it" "They enjoyed it, thank you" "it was really good".
Three Counties	Thank you card received from family thanking staff for looking after the client and sibling during their recent stay. They enjoyed swimming and music and soft play.
Birmingham	Virtual Sibling Group - Thursday 24th February – A virtual sibling group went ahead facilitated by Sibling Worker, and Volunteer. The theme of the groups was around 'Our World' and looking at different countries. We started with 'China' and completed some activities around this. Each sibling received a resource pack through the post (put together by another Volunteer) and the siblings created some pictures. There was also a quiz and the game 'Would You Rather....'. 6 siblings participated. The group was lively and there was a lot of conversation and laughing during the group. The group ran slightly over because of the interaction by all of the group members.
Birmingham	Virtual Adolescent Group (Super Sibs) - Saturday 26th February – A virtual adolescent group went ahead, facilitated by x2 Sibling Workers. Three adolescents participated. The discussion was set around devising an Unicef Charter for the adolescent group (Super Sibs). The adolescents all contributed to the discussion and shared their thoughts and ideas. The group ended with an art quiz.
Black Country	From Bereaved parent: Thank you to FTW for sitting with her and helping her work through her thoughts and feelings around daughter's death.
Birmingham	Mother of bereaved client regarding the sibling groups "The sibling was a bit nervous but he seemed so happy after. Thank you for taking the time out to do this for the kids, its truly appreciated"
Birmingham	Compliment received from Mum, stating that the client enjoyed his recent respite stay at Acorns and the family really enjoyed the family splash that coincided with the end of his stay. Mum gave her thanks to the Physio and said that she could not have been more helpful and made the session very easy and enjoyable. Mum was very grateful for this.
Black Country	Client's family are happy that we are still using covid measures. Mom was really concerned about the lowering of measures but feels reassured that they are still in place.
Birmingham	FTW spoke to Mum, to get an update on how she was doing. Mum thanked the FTW for all the support she received especially when she had been feeling so ill, just after she had given birth. The FTW will contact Mum again in a few months' time.
Birmingham	FTW, provided the client with a Nintendo Switch, which was donated by Aston Villa FC. The client's face lit up when she realised what it was; Mum was thankful for the gift.

Hospice	Compliment
Birmingham	Compliment received from Mum of a bereaved client. "Outreach came at the right time. He really enjoyed the sessions and would ask for the Outreach Team. "Everyone at Acorns have been lovely."
Black Country	From Supporter Services - I have just had a lovely conversation with Great Great Aunt of Client. She wanted me to pass on her thanks for all of the great work that everyone at the hospice does for her great great niece. She made a donation at the same time towards fundraising on behalf of the Room to Grow Appeal. She really was a lovely lady and the donation came all the way from Florida 😊
Birmingham	The client opened the present and was full of smiles and thanks. She could not believe that it was a present for her and one she got to keep. The client's family was extremely grateful.
Birmingham	Compliments received from client's Mum, "Hi, All looks good. Thanks very much for the chat the other day. Hope to see you around swimming sometime. Thanks a million."
Birmingham	Compliments received from client's Mum, "Many thanks for dropping me a line - will wait and see what date we get given and take it from there. Hopefully catch up with you again soon, many thanks for all your help and support. Best wishes"
Birmingham	FTW received a thank you from client's Mother and her partner for co-ordinating the meeting to discuss the client's symptoms and for arranging such an enjoyable swim. The family have already booked in for another hydrotherapy session and some music therapy.
Birmingham	KiT worker spoke to client's Mum who was full of praise for Outreach Nurse Lead and the service that she is delivering. In her words, 'she gets the client and not everyone does'.
Birmingham	Compliment received from client's Mum for FTW "I just want to say thank you so much for attending the EHCP meeting yesterday. I really am grateful for when people take time to attend... Sadly I never seem to get any therapists attending, and if we do it's a rare occasion. But honestly, thank you."

What the commissioners say

Statement of Assurance from NHS Birmingham and Solihull ICB July 2022

- 1.1. NHS Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (ICB) as coordinating commissioner for Acorns Children's Hospice Trust, welcomes the opportunity to provide this statement for inclusion in the Trusts 2021/22 Quality Account.
- 1.2. A copy of the Quality Account was received by the CCG on 24th June 2022 and the review has been undertaken in accordance with the Department of Health and Social Care Guidance. This statement of assurance has been developed from the information provided to date.
- 1.3. The information provided within this account presents a balanced report of the services provided by Acorns Children's Hospice. The report identifies progress over the past year against the 2021/22 priorities. It identifies what the organisation has done well, where further improvements are required, and the actions needed to meet the goals and priorities set for 2022/23.
- 1.4. Progress made against the key recommendations from the Commissioned Independent Care Review in February 2021 is acknowledged and we look forward to seeing the progress of the quality Improvements against the 22-23 Quality priorities. The ICB also welcome future planning of the new three year strategy 'For Any child' incorporating the right workforce and culture to enable a further reach out to more children and their families.
- 1.5. NHS Birmingham and Solihull ICB is pleased to note continued initiatives which prioritise the transition of young people from children to adult services. A young person's plan/checklist to interlink with the family plan has been developed and is an example of how to aid family team workers to support the transition. The increased liaison with adult providers to support Acorns young people is an important piece of work for the hospice and the young people across all hospices.
- 1.6. Supporting the development of Palliative Care services for children across Acorns' three hospice sites and the specialist palliative care team at Birmingham Women's and Children's hospital through the appointment of Consultant Paediatrician in Palliative medicine is reassuring. We support the ongoing work across the organisations for end-of-life care and pre and post bereavement care at Acorns from the Consultants engagement with the families and anticipate positive experiences in care.
- 1.7. NHS Birmingham and Solihull ICB is pleased to see the achievement of the UNICEF Rights Respecting Silver Award and acknowledges the efforts of the Acorns UNICEF champions working directly with children and their colleagues to embed the principles. We support the focus on working towards the Gold award through facilitating opportunities to raise the voices of children, siblings and service users.
- 1.8. During the second year of the global pandemic, it is assuring to see a gradual return of services and the adaption of Family Services teams to focus on a patient-centred blended model of support through face-to-face visits, virtual meetings and phone calls. The now fully opened Birmingham hospice providing overnight and day care stays as well as delivering hydrotherapy and physiotherapy sessions is a positive step to enhance the experience for Acorn's children and families.

- 1.9. We recognise the unprecedented challenges due to the Covid-19 global pandemic on staffing across the services. The commitment to staff wellbeing through accessing mental health first aiders, regular team debriefs and well-being rooms for staff to use is a welcomed resource for staff to feel valued and should support a positive impact on the staff survey for 22-23.
- 1.10. As an organisation NHS Birmingham and Solihull ICB is committed to engaging with Acorns in an inclusive and innovative manner and hope to continue to build on our existing relationships as we move forward into 2022/23 in support of the best possible care and outcomes for patients and citizens whilst ensuring services are designed and delivered to meet the different needs of the different communities we serve.



Karen Helliwell
Accountable Officer
BSol CCG