

Together



Autumn / Winter 2025

All about Jack

Find out how your support helps Jack and his family

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acorns
children's hospice

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Ozzy's legacy of care

We were overwhelmed to be a charity partner for Ozzy Osbourne and Black Sabbath's iconic Back to the Beginning show this summer. We're incredibly grateful to Ozzy, Sharon and Black Sabbath for shining a global spotlight on our children's hospice care and the families who need us.

To be recognised on this scale is something that will stay with us all forever. For families caring for children with life limiting conditions, the day served a powerful reminder they are not alone.

At the time of publication, the final fundraising total had not yet been confirmed. Whatever the amount, every penny will help us continue to positively impact children with short lives and the families who love them.

Jack's story

Jack is a determined, energetic and affectionate little boy who loves to explore his surroundings, especially the great outdoors.

When Jack was born, a nurse noticed that he had unusual facial features. This led to a series of tests, which identified a severe brain abnormality known as bilateral generalised polymicrogyria.

Upon receiving the news of his diagnosis, Jack's parents, Louisa and Aaron, knew instantly that this would be life-changing for Jack and for the whole family.

Born tiny and fragile, Jack spent 10 weeks in hospital during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was during this time that Louisa and Aaron were told that it was unlikely Jack would ever walk, talk or sit, and he may not see his first birthday.

Today, Jack is a strong five-year old boy who has defied all odds. He now only needs oxygen when he's unwell and has even learnt to sit up – milestones once thought impossible.

However, Jack's medical needs remain complex and demanding. He requires eight doses of medication daily, regular physiotherapy, overnight monitoring of his oxygen levels with what is known as a SATs monitor and is fed via gastronomy tube four times a day, each feed taking over two hours to complete.

Jack and dad Aaron enjoying a precious moment together at Acorns in the Black Country



In the past year, Acorns has supported over **1,000 families** like Jack's.

It was last year, when researching hydrotherapy pools for Jack, the family discovered Acorns. Initially, they were nervous at the thought of trusting someone else with Jack's complex care needs. But after their first visit, their worries were eased.

"The scope of therapies that Acorns offers was beyond anything we'd imagined. It's hard to trust somebody else with your child when their needs are so complex, but the level of care at Acorns is truly amazing."

"The nurses are not only highly trained but also so warm and passionate. They know all his idiosyncrasies and understand his little language. You can see from the smile on Jack's face how happy he is there."

Now, the family are supported at Acorns in the Black Country - their Family Practitioner, Nadine, guiding them through this transition.

Acorns has opened up opportunities for Jack and his family that simply wouldn't have been possible otherwise, from the magic of Christmas Wonderland and play sessions at Cannock's accessible playground, to therapeutic sessions in the hydrotherapy pool and overnight rehabilitative respite stays.

With the expert nursing team taking care of Jack's medical needs, Louisa and Aaron are able to focus on simply being mum and dad.

"Acorns has gone above and beyond. They really understand the complexities and difficulties that we have as special needs parents and just want to help us."



Jack's Community Nurse from Acorns, Ruth, has been a crucial part of his care journey, joining multi-disciplinary care meetings sharing her knowledge and expertise on feeding options, as well as his sleeping arrangements.

During Jack's respite stays, Aaron and Louisa also get a much-needed break from the routine of being caregivers.

"A weight has been lifted that we didn't even realise we were carrying. We now have a safety net for the times that we are exhausted and need a break. We feel so much lighter. Knowing that Acorns is there takes away some of the feeling of being overwhelmed."

Your support is helping families like Jack's. Thank you.

A very BIG thank you!

Here are some of the amazing things you've done to make stories like Jack's possible.



Garden power

Shoutout to Malvern Garden & Nature Club for raising a brilliant £1,000 with their garden creche.



Team Harrison

Ashley and his CEF teammates from across the UK came together for Harrison, getting wet and muddy in this epic Total Warrior test of strength and solidarity.



Smethwick challenge

A gang of fundraisers took on a 160-mile cycle ride challenge in memory of their dear friend, Mark, raising over £26,000.



The long walk

Tina and her colleagues at Sage laced up for 21 miles of hills, lakes and team spirit, taking on the scenic Coniston to Barrow route with energy and smiles.

Students fundraising together

A huge thank you goes to the staff and students at Worcester Students Union for the incredible £3,602.09 raised over the last year.



Generous golfers

Special thanks to Kidderminster Golf Club Men's Captain Russell Tolley for raising a wonderful £6,300 from his captaincy.



Thank you Walsall FC

The generosity of Saddlers fans, players and staff raised a whopping £5,459.09 over the 24/25 season. We are thrilled to be a chosen charity for the 25/26 season too!



Open day success

A heartfelt thank you to Reindeer Court Dental in Worcester for raising a fantastic £930 at their open day. We're so grateful to the amazing staff and patients for their support, to Alexander for playing his violin and Bulgarian dance group Nestinari-Detelina for their performance.

Your fundraising and support means Acorns can be there now and in the future for children and families when they need us most. If you're planning on fundraising for us, and want some support, please get in touch with our team on **01564 825 037** or email **supporter.services@acorns.org.uk**

Leo enjoying the lights in the sensory room at our Worcester hospice

Multisensory magic

The sensory room is one of the most essential facilities at our hospices, offering relief and enjoyment for the children we care for.

The sensory room at Acorns for the Three Counties was reaching the end of its life and in need of replacement. Thanks to a grant generously given by the National Lottery Community Fund, we have been able to replace and relocate this vital resource, allowing for larger and more accessible facilities.

Multisensory therapy means that children with cognitive and sensory impairments have the opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of sensory experiences. A combination of light, sound, touch and smell provide therapy for stimulation and relaxation purposes.

Many parents of a child with a life limiting condition have to give up work to care for their child full-time.

This means that financial resources are limited, and due to a shortage of accessible facilities, can become extremely isolated. One of the ways many families first discover Acorns is through our multisensory rooms, available in each of our three hospices. This in turn leads to them accessing further support such as palliative play sessions, respite care and support groups.

These spaces offer a tranquil environment for children and families to relax, bond and make memories together.

The new design features state-of-the-art multi-coloured LED tubes, soft furnishings, mirrors, fibre optic curtains and an in-built sound system.

Aged three, Leo lives with lissencephaly – a rare condition that means he needs 24-hour care and experiences seizures. He can't walk or sit independently, but when he's in the sensory room, something changes.

"He lights up," says mum, Suzanne. "He smiles, babbles more, and even rolls his way towards the bubble tube. It's clear how much he loves being there."

The room has had such a positive impact on Leo that it's even inspired his family to create one at home.

"The support that Acorns gives us through resources like the sensory room has made us live as a family again. I can't thank them enough."



To all who have given their support to make this possible, and help us continue to be there for children who need us, thank you.

Introducing Matron Jo

Jo is a busy mum of three. At the weekends, you'll find her cheering on her three sons on the side of a football pitch, but during the week, she's the Matron at our Birmingham hospice in Selly Oak.

With over 20 years of experience, Jo began her nursing career in paediatric intensive care, before joining the health visiting service as a staff nurse and prior to joining Acorns, she was on the school immunisation team as clinical manager.

A caring, passionate person by nature, a new challenge as Hospice Matron was the perfect fit for Jo.

Jo joined Acorns in April and her role is focused on leading the team that cares for the 329 children who access our Birmingham hospice services each year.

This means ensuring a continued high quality of specialist care and sharing her knowledge, whilst also being a visible leader for both her team and the families we support.

"The best part of my job is the friendliness of the team that I work with. Everybody works hard, pulls together and helps each other. I love seeing the children involved with their activities. The hospice feels like a homely environment, and I love that."

"It's a privilege to be able to deliver that specialist care but also have the time to spend with children and their family members. For families going through the worst time in their lives, they remember the small things that my team does. That is what makes all the difference."

Your support allows Jo's vital work to continue. Thank you.



Have you raised your hand yet?

Children's hospice care is in your hands



This summer, we launched our latest Children's Care Matters campaign by unveiling a powerful artwork outside Parliament - a striking portrait of the Prime Minister made entirely using the handprints of the incredible children we care for.

Since then, we've been overwhelmed by the public response. Behind this emotive artwork is an urgent message to save vital funding for children's hospices across England.

Titled 'Hands for Hope', the artwork calls on the Government to protect the Children's Hospice Grant - worth £26 million to hospices across England, and £2.2 million every year for Acorns. Without this funding, for the first time in our history we face the prospect of having to turn a seriously child away.

At the heart of the campaign we are urging the public to join us by raising their hands for the children and families who rely on Acorns care. Thousands have pledged their support.

Will you stand with us? To join the fight, visit [savethegrant.com](https://www.savethegrant.com) and click 'YES'. Then tell your friends and family on social media to help spread the word - every click counts.

The more people who pledge their support, the stronger our voice becomes, making it impossible for the Government to ignore the pleas of the children and families who need us.



PRIME MINISTER - the future of children's hospice care is in your hands.

Together, we can help secure this vital funding and ensure children and families continue to receive the expert care they deserve at the darkest time of their lives, now and for years to come.

Act now. The future of children's hospice care is in all our hands.

Add your voice at: [savethegrant.com](https://www.savethegrant.com)

A legacy of love

Why one mother is leaving a gift in her Will to Acorns Children's Hospice.

When Joy Clarke talks about her support for Acorns, it's no ordinary act of giving - it's a deeply personal promise, shaped by a lifetime of compassion, loss and a desire to make a difference.

Already a dedicated donor, Joy's journey began with an invite to celebrate the 10th anniversary of our Birmingham hospice, which left a lasting impression.

A familiar face in Tewkesbury, Joy runs a small but mighty craft stall alongside friends, with all proceeds supporting our care. Joy pays for the stall herself, an act of generosity that speaks volumes.

Her family are also part of this legacy. Her husband, a fundraiser for Acorns in his own right, is well-known for his charity roasts at the Three Kings in Hanley Castle. Their son Anthony has also held many quiz nights.

But it's Joy's son Robert who inspires her support. Robert sadly died in 1988 at the age of 22, after living with epilepsy, scoliosis and cerebral palsy. Joy still remembers the difficult hospital stays.

"There wasn't much support back then, not like there is now with Acorns. If a place like this had existed when Robert was alive - it would've changed everything."

This reflection led Joy to make an extraordinary decision: to leave a gift in her Will to Acorns.

"I've seen what a difference Acorns makes. Children with short lives, and their families, deserve comfort, space, dignity and love."

"I want to help make sure Acorns can be there for them, not just now, but long into the future."



Leaving a gift in your Will to Acorns will help local families for generations to come. Learn more at [acorns.org.uk/GiftInWill](https://www.acorns.org.uk/GiftInWill)





Trekking the Great Wall

This spring, a group of dedicated Acorns supporters took on the challenge of a lifetime trekking along the Great Wall of China to help raise vital funds for Acorns.

For five days, the group faced steep climbs, difficult terrain and some serious heat, pushing themselves physically, mentally and emotionally.

A true team effort. Together, this incredible group raised a jaw-dropping **£155,000**, absolutely smashing their original target. Among the group were current and former Acorns staff, loyal supporters and friends old and new.

Coventry Support Group

The brilliant Coventry Support Group have been raising funds and awareness for Acorns for over 36 years. Founded by Martin Banbury, the group sets out to raise £50,000 each year – and

to date, they've raised a phenomenal **£1.5 million** for Acorns.

When the China Trek came up, Martin and his wife Felicity rallied five other members to join them. Together, the group raised over **£36,000**.

"It's an amazing sense of achievement, knowing that we've pushed ourselves and raised such a significant amount for Acorns."



Marking a special birthday

Lindsay decided her 40th birthday was the perfect time to take on an extraordinary challenge. Having marked her 30th birthday by running the London Marathon, she wanted to do something bigger this time.

Upon her return from China, Lindsay reflected on the experience: *"I am so proud to have taken part and completed the trek with the most amazing people and all to raise money for Acorns."*

Lindsay, Martin, Felicity and the team tackled this enormous challenge, overcoming their fears and pulling together, forging lifelong friendships along the way.



Acorns China Trek – an incredible achievement

To everyone who took on this once-in-a-lifetime journey trekking along the Great Wall of China, thank you. You've made such a difference to the lives of children and their families.

Has this story inspired you to take on a challenge in aid of Acorns? Check out our upcoming events at acorns.org.uk/events



Barney creating memories with his mum
and dad at our Worcester hospice



Can you help with a gift today? Visit acorns.org.uk/together

£27 could help enable a child to have a one-hour
session with a Physiotherapist

£54 could help fund one hour of care for a child
in a hospice

£100 could help provide an overnight stay at a
hospice for a family



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