

Together

Spring / Summer 2026



PLUS

How supporters like you helped secure the future of children's hospice care

Outstanding result for Acorns in Birmingham

Meet our new Chair of Trustees

Jude's story
See the difference your support makes for Jude and his family

acorns
children's hospice

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Who we are, because of you

When a child you love has limited time it's important to make every day and every moment count. At Acorns Children's Hospice our nurses, care teams, and volunteers create a world where children can be children and enjoy every moment.

This is all possible because of your support. Thank you.

Loud and proud for Acorns: Meet our new Chair of Trustees

Samantha Watson, Store Director at Birmingham's iconic Selfridges, formally became our new Chair of Trustees in November. A trustee since 2023, Sam brings passion, energy and a deep connection to Acorns to her new role.

I still remember fundraising for Acorns as a schoolgirl in Walsall, not realising then how deeply this charity would shape my life. Fast forward to today, and I'm incredibly proud and humbled to be stepping into the role of Chair of Trustees.

From the moment I first visited an Acorns hospice, I was struck by the love and warmth that fills every space.

The care is extraordinary, world-class, deeply compassionate and utterly life changing. Families who come through our doors are met with the kind of specialist care and support that gives them strength, comfort and, above all, time to be together.

That's why my mission as Chair is simple but ambitious: I want everyone across the West Midlands and beyond to know about Acorns.



If you want to give back locally, I want Acorns to be the first charity that comes to mind.

As Acorns first female chair, I bring fresh energy and a determination to be loud and proud about the care we provide.

We should fly the flag for Acorns every single day because what happens in our hospices is nothing short of remarkable.

I'd also like to take the opportunity to pay tribute to our outgoing Chair, Mark Hopton. His leadership and passion have paved the way for this next exciting chapter.

Mark's legacy inspires me to keep building for the future, ensuring Acorns is sustainable, celebrated and here for generations to come.

Together, we can keep turning up the volume on Acorns incredible story and make sure every family who might ever need us knows we're here.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of the support you've given to Acorns. It means more than I can say.

Sam Watson
Acorns Chair of Trustees

Growing our own: Investing in people, securing our future

At Acorns, we know that outstanding care depends on outstanding people. That's why we're investing in our people and growing our own talent to secure the future of children's hospice care for generations to come.

Across the country, children's hospices face real challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled nurses. These shortages make it harder for charities like ours to meet rising demand. That's why we're taking action.

Through our Trainee Nursing Associate programme, we're giving our brilliant Health Care Assistants (HCAs) the opportunity to train, qualify and continue their careers with us. It's helping us build a stronger, more sustainable workforce – and the results have been inspiring.

At our Worcester hospice, Nickie and Catherine have now both qualified as Nursing Associates, and at Acorns in Birmingham, Louise, Maria and Michelle have also achieved success.

For Louise, the journey has been life-changing.

“Completing the course with Acorns has been an incredible opportunity. I've learned so much – it's made me more confident, more skilled, and even more determined to make a difference for the children and families I care for.”

Our Clinical Practice Educator Jamie Wyton, who has supported the team throughout, has seen first-hand the impact of their hard work.

“Their dedication and enthusiasm have been amazing. They've shown what's possible when we invest in our people.”

Behind and every milestone lies something bigger – the future of our care. By supporting and nurturing our teams, we're building a strong, skilled and compassionate workforce ready for whatever the future brings.

At Acorns, we're proud to be helping our people grow, so that together we can keep providing the very best care for every child and family who needs us, now and for years to come.

Thank you for helping make sure the future of hospice care is secure for generations.



Nursing Associates form part of our wider clinical team, comprising several other specialist roles including Registered Nurses, Children, Young People and Family Specialist Practitioners, Therapeutic Practitioners and Psychotherapists.



A very BIG thank you!

Thanks to your support, all of these magical moments and memories have been made possible for the children and families at Acorns.



Pumpkin magic

At Halloween children like Sam were hard at work carving pumpkins and turning them into spook-tacular masterpieces. From carving out smiles, to creating memories, this little superstar helped to create one un-boo-lievable pumpkin!



Bowled over

Worcestershire County Cricket Club visited our Hospice in Worcester, swapping their crickets bats for Santa hats and joining in with festive arts and crafts.



From furry friends to fast fun

Kasim and other children cared for at Acorns in Birmingham had a brilliant day out, meeting farm animals, exploring a fire truck and even racing around on go-karts.



Farmyard adventures

Layla had an unforgettable time during her stay at our Birmingham hospice which included meeting the animals at a local farm park.



Tiny toes and sandy fingers

At our Walsall hospice, children like Deen 'shore' had a lot of fun during a beach-themed palliative play session with trays of sand, mini buckets and spades, seaside sounds and sensory play.

Splash, splash, smile

Adam made the most of every sunny moment at our Worcester hospice over the summer, from splashing in the paddling pool to messy play fun.



Fin-tastic

Remi had a wonderful time watching Everyman Theatre's live-stream of The Little Mermaid and was absolutely enchanted by the beautiful knitted dolls they kindly sent along.

Stardust spectacle

The Christmas season began with a dazzling night at Selfridges Birmingham, which gifted families like Chris' with a special VIP experience, making it a night to remember!



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

Jude with his dad, Ian, enjoying a precious moment together in the garden at Acorns in Birmingham.



We have a range of services available to support families like Jude's including sibling support, complimentary therapies and counselling.

Jude's story

Jude, his parents Rachel and Ian, and his two older brothers Nathan and Joe know Acorns very well. For the past 18 years, Jude and his family have been receiving care from the team at our Birmingham hospice.

With two older children already at home, Rachel and Ian thought they knew what to expect when Jude was born. So when things didn't seem right, they trusted their instincts.

Jude had a range of symptoms which led to him being diagnosed with several conditions; intractable epilepsy, microcephaly, quadriplegic cerebral palsy and global development delay.

At four months old, Jude and his family were referred to Acorns. It took them some time to get their heads around using a children's hospice, but they soon came to see that Acorns was about so much more than just end-of-life care.

Jude began by attending our palliative play group sessions once a month, before moving on to having respite care at our hospice in Birmingham and community nursing at home. This time meant that Rachel and Ian had the chance to focus on their older boys, taking them for trips out and weekends away to places that weren't possible before because of Jude's complex care needs.

"Quite frankly, without Acorns, we would be in a very different place. When Jude was younger, we had some very dark times and I don't think we'd still be standing without them. They've been an absolute lifeline, and allowed us to live."



"Having that level of trust and assurance that Jude will get the best possible level of care, gives you the confidence you need."

Jude's pain is now under control which has allowed his personality to blossom. He engages with school, loves watching football with his dad and joins in with his brothers playing guitar, interacting with his own ukulele. Most importantly of all, he smiles, which was something that was very rare in his younger days.



Outstanding result for Acorns in Birmingham

We are incredibly proud to share that Acorns in Birmingham has received the highest possible rating from Government inspectors.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated our Selly Oak hospice as Outstanding, describing us as *“performing exceptionally well”*, praising our *“strong collaborative approach”* to care and focus on achieving *“the best outcomes”* for every child and young person.

Inspectors described safety as *“a top priority that involved everyone”* and recognised how our support extends to the *“whole family and not just the child”*.

As Director of Care, I couldn't be prouder of our teams. This Outstanding rating is a reflection of their dedication, compassion and skill – qualities that families already know and trust.

Every day, they go above and beyond because the children we care for deserve nothing less than the very best.

This achievement will inspire us to keep strengthening our services, so we can continue to provide exceptional care and support for every child and family who needs us.

This is only possible thanks to your continued, dedicated support. Thank you for being there for local children and their families.

Katie Burbridge
Director of Care and Deputy CEO

Today, Jude requires 24-hour care with gastrostomy feeding, postural draining and physiotherapy to keep him as healthy as possible. So, the community nursing care that the family receive at home makes the world of difference.

of Jude. It was above and beyond what I expected from a hospice.”

The approach of the Acorns team has meant that the whole family has felt supported.

“Without Acorns we'd never have had any time together. They have added to our relationship. Respite care has positively impacted the development of our whole family and opened so many doors for us.”

Now Jude is transitioning from Acorns into adult care services: *“Over the last 18 years, Acorns has been part of the fabric of our story. They are leaving a massive hole in our lives.”*

This care is only possible thanks to your support. If you can help by making a donation today, please visit acorns.org.uk/together

“Acorns allowed us to be able to welcome care staff into our home. They picked up all of Jude's specialist needs and supported the whole family. This care at home helped us to get to a different place. No one tells you what to do, but Acorns helped us work it out.”

For Jude's elder brother Nathan, his time at the siblings group has given him a safe place to be honest about his feelings: *“There was an unspoken understanding that everyone was in the same boat. I made friends with a group where I didn't feel different.”*

Rachel also received holistic massage therapy at Acorns: *“It was time just for me. I wasn't rushing around taking care*



“Other care services should look at this report to see what they can learn.”

- Care Quality Commission



Running for Sophie

When Nicola's daughter Sophie was born in 2016, it marked the beginning of an extraordinary journey.

After being born prematurely, Sophie required emergency surgery to repair her oesophagus. Her family then found out she had cerebral palsy and a bleed on her brain which had caused extensive brain damage.

The family spent many weeks in hospital, during which time, Nicola questioned her ability to look after a child with such complex medical needs. After three months, Sophie was discharged and it was at that point, Acorns was introduced to the family.

"They were there, ultimately for Sophie's medical needs, but they were there for all of us. I was so alone, scared and tired. They guided me through this new world of feeding tubes and equipment, they saw me in my darkest days, and they made me realise that I was good enough."

Sophie is now nine years old, and after setting herself the challenge of losing six stone in 2024, Nicola has completed the incredible feat of running five half marathons over the course of 2025. Each one of these represents the five times that Sophie has been resuscitated during her life, and celebrates her fighting another day.

"She never gives up, so why should I? When my legs tire, I think of her because that's how she feels all day, every day. For me, the feeling will be temporary, but for Sophie, it never goes away."

Feeling inspired to fundraise?
Whether you want to lace up your running shoes like Nicola or try something different, visit acorns.org.uk/startfundraising



Thank you for helping us save the Children's Hospice Grant

We did it! Thousands of you raised your voices – and they were heard!

In autumn, the Government announced £80 million of funding over the next three years to help secure the future of children's hospice care across England.

Over 36,000 supporters signed our urgent petition calling on the Prime Minister to protect lifeline care for seriously ill children, making our voice 36,000 times louder. And the Government listened.

For three consecutive years, we've had to fight for this funding. So, the Government's funding commitment was not just a victory for Acorns, but for every child and family who relies on children's hospice care, and you – the phenomenal community that stood beside us.

While this funding gives us the lifeline we needed and means we can plan for the future with more confidence, it's important to remember that it takes a whole community to keep Acorns going.

More than 75% of the £40,000 we need every day to provide our specialist care comes from income from our shops, fundraising and generous donations from people like you.

To donate today, visit acorns.org.uk/together

Trevor Johnson
Acorns Chief Executive



Gifts in Wills

Your local children's hospice, your legacy, your difference.

Creating a Will is an act of love, protecting those that mean the most to you. It is your chance to leave a legacy that lasts long after you have gone.

Our FREE Will writing service makes it easy to get your affairs in order without the usual expense or hassle.

Including a gift to Acorns in your Will is your chance to make a difference to local children and their families when they need us most.

"There is happiness when you are at Acorns and we made some really magical memories. Acorns made us feel less alone."

Becky, Grayson's Mom

Find out more: acorns.org.uk/GiftInWill

Little Patrick sharing
a cuddle with
Clinical Lead, Siega



Can you help with a gift today?

- £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

Visit acorns.org.uk/together



**SCAN TO
DONATE**

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