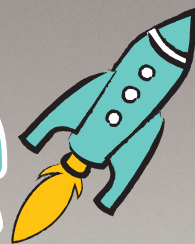


inspire

Your supporter magazine



Spring 2022



Bright future for Rafe

Inside

- Milestone victory for children with brain injury
- Nurse Sally's rewarding role
- Jade's life-changing treatment


The Children's Trust
For children with brain injury

Welcome



As the pandemic continues, our collective commitment to the children stays strong.

Over recent months it is truly amazing what we've been able to achieve together, and our ambition to help children live the best life possible shines through.

A milestone came on 2 December last year when the Government confirmed plans for an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) strategy which will ensure better support for those living with ABI. We have actively campaigned for this alongside other charities and Dalton Leong, our Chief Executive, is delighted the Government has committed to this much-needed plan.

We continue to focus on our goal of reaching and supporting more children with brain injury and neurodisability. Four year old Rafe is now looking forward to a brighter future after his recent rehabilitation. We were delighted to hear from Jade who lives a full life today thanks to her rehabilitation 21 years ago.

Our team is determined to make a positive impact for more children. Sally Aspden, one of our experienced nurses, explains what she finds so rewarding about her role and why she loves working here.

At our annual Winter Fair last December The Children's Trust community enjoyed a magical afternoon of festive fun, games and music. As you will read, a wonderful time was had by all.

Whatever you do to support us, you help us change lives every day. I hope you enjoy reading about the work you make possible.


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A Boyd".


Amanda Boyd,
Supporter Care Coordinator

Scan to donate



On our front cover is Rafe, age 4, who is living life to the full after a tough start, see page 4.

 The Children's Trust, Tadworth Court,
Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5RU

 01737 364 349

 thechildrenstrust.org.uk



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TCT_1275 February 2022

Registered charity number 288018

Milestone victory for everyone with an acquired brain injury

We have put our full support behind an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Bill which commits the Government to preparing and publishing a strategy to meet the needs of adults and children with an ABI.

The work was led by Chris Bryant MP and supported by The Children's Trust along with other charities. On 2 December last year, all their hard work paid off when the Government approved plans to develop an ABI strategy.

This is a milestone victory because it will mean more support for everyone with an ABI. ABI affects more than one million people in the UK, including 40,000 children and young people. But it can be hard for people to get the support they desperately need because its effects can be hidden or misunderstood.

**40,000
children
acquire a
brain injury
every year**



The right support helped three-year-old Phoebe.

At The Children's Trust, we see the huge challenges faced by people with brain injury every single day and at every milestone of their lives. Children and young people miss out on the education they deserve and the opportunities that other young people have as they transition into adulthood.

That is why The Children's Trust is committed to raising awareness of ABI too. If people can spot the signs of ABI, children can get help sooner.



Dalton Leong, Chief Executive of The Children's Trust, at Downing Street with Chris Bryant MP, sponsor of the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Bill.

One way we do this is to share knowledge and information with others, like healthcare professionals, so they can help us support children too.

Dalton said: "This is a huge milestone and a great victory. We look forward to supporting the creation of the Government's strategy and ensuring the needs of children with ABI are considered carefully."

The ABI strategy at a glance

A plan of action from the Government aimed at:

- Improving services
- Tackling current lack of support
- Improving understanding of acquired brain injury

Rafe – the boy wonder



Rafe started life with many challenges.

Now he's coming on in leaps and bounds!

Rafe's family feared he'd never walk

Rafe was born 11 weeks early in December 2017 and his parents were delighted he could go home after just six weeks in the neonatal unit.

All seemed to be going well but his parents Nicola and Phil felt increasingly concerned. Rafe was struggling to gain weight and wasn't reaching any of his developmental goals. They noticed a weakness on his left side was getting worse and Rafe went for an MRI scan.

After Rafe's early arrival, his parents thought the most difficult times were behind them. But the scan led to a devastating diagnosis of hemiplegic cerebral palsy. It completely shattered their world. Nicola said:

"The diagnosis was diverse and we didn't understand how much Rafe would be affected."

into hospital with viral meningitis. Nicola and Phil could only watch and wait as their little boy lay unconscious for over a week. "We were propelled into another world we had no understanding of at all," Nicola said.

Thankfully Rafe eventually recovered enough to go home, only for the family to face the difficult task of finding community therapy for him. "We had minimal success and tried to do the basics ourselves like helping Rafe to sit and crawl, but we were no experts," said Nicola.

At the start of 2020, Rafe was given a further diagnosis for epilepsy. You can imagine how incredibly hard everything was for the family. But then came some good news. Rafe was being referred to The Children's Trust for specialist rehabilitation.

The family travelled to Tadworth in February 2020 for Rafe's four-week residential placement. His goals were to develop both his motor skills and the use of his left arm. He could then continue to build on this in community sessions close to home.

Just as they were trying to take in this life-changing news, Rafe was admitted



Our therapy helped Rafe grow in confidence and ability

Rafe was supported by lots of different therapists and began his busy weekly schedule of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, hydrotherapy, play therapy and speech and language therapy.

“It was amazing to see how creative the therapists were,” said Nicola. “Rafe’s favourite session was occupational therapy with Marie. She cleverly disguised his therapy into every part of his day, making everything such fun.”

At the same time, our medical team supported Rafe with his new diagnosis of epilepsy and helped his mum and dad to understand what to expect too.

After four weeks, Rafe left The Children’s Trust with all the building blocks he needed to continue progressing, and within a few months he was walking. It was something Nicola, Phil and big sister Olivia weren’t sure he’d ever do!

Occupational therapy for his left hand means he now uses it to hit buttons on toys, clap his hands and wipe both hands together. The family are over the moon that Rafe can now attend a mainstream pre-school where he’s already made lots of new friends.

Nicola told us that before all this, they’d never heard of The Children’s Trust but from the moment they arrived they were instantly

About Hemiplegic Cerebral Palsy

It is caused by brain damage or spinal cord injury, which makes the muscles stiff and tight, so it is difficult to move. Symptoms depend on the severity and location of the injury, but they don’t get worse over time. The word hemiplegic means that one side of the body is affected.

Our specialist says...

Rafe is a delightful boy who came here when he was nearly two years old. Rafe could roll on the floor, sit up and shuffle on his bottom. He could pull himself up but couldn’t stand unaided.

Our goal was to develop his motor skills and the use of his left arm. We worked with Rafe intensively for four weeks, making rehabilitation part of his daily routine, so that everything he did was focused on reaching his goals.

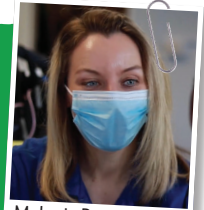
After his recent block of occupational therapy, Rafe could hit buttons, clap his hands, feed himself with finger food and use a spoon. He could say ‘Mama’, ‘Dada’ and call his sister Olivia ‘Yaya’. Rafe could not only stand, but also walk.

reassured that Rafe was in safe hands and that he would be well cared for 24/7.

Nicola said: “We felt so supported by everyone at The Children’s Trust. From the admission team and our accommodation manager to the catering staff and the volunteer bus drivers, everyone made it feel like home.

“It was a difficult time for our family and they welcomed us with open arms, and it’s incredible that they kept everything going in spite of COVID-19.”

“We will always be grateful that we attended The Children’s Trust just weeks before the first lockdown. The specialist support Rafe had during those four weeks has changed his life forever.” Nicola



Melanie Burrough,
Head of Therapy
School, and
Integrated Services
Lead



Time to care

We ask Sally Aspden, experienced Registered Nurse, to tell us more about her role at The Children's Trust.

Where did you start your career?

I trained at a large children's hospital and then worked on paediatric wards and in Accident and Emergency. I gained a wide range of clinical skills from giving chemotherapy to stitching wounds.

What drew you to The Children's Trust?

It's very different to a hospital where children come in, get treated and go. Here you can spend time with the children building up a bond. You discover their little quirks, likes and dislikes, and you can build on that to benefit their treatment.

What's a typical day for you?

There's no such thing! As a nursing team, our focus is on working closely with the therapy team and medical team to deliver the all-round care each child needs. It's such a close-knit way of working.

Has working here helped you build on your nursing skills?

Yes. Having more time to care means I can draw on my wider skills including empathy and listening. I now have a deep knowledge of brain injury and its impact, and how to support children effectively through rehabilitation.

Is there ongoing training for you?

The Children's Trust is known as a centre of excellence and our team is at the forefront of delivering specialist care. As well as a full induction, we have regular, ongoing training. Within a month or two I was running shifts as standard, which gave my confidence a big boost.



What's the working environment like?

Fantastic! The facilities are second-to-none and I work in a beautiful setting at Tadworth Court, Surrey. I've built such close relationships with my colleagues too, we really pull together as a team. That's been so important with all the extra challenges around COVID-19.

What makes The Children's Trust special?

For the children and families who come to Tadworth, it can be their home for many months. So we make it warm and welcoming. We build therapy into each child's day, making it as much fun as possible. These are tough times and there may be tears, so our team helps raise hope and smiles too.

Scan to watch video

Hear why nurse Sally thinks The Children's Trust is such a great place to work.



Calling nurses and care assistants



We are always looking for dedicated and enthusiastic individuals to join our friendly, fun, dynamic and supportive team which is rated Outstanding in care by Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Find out more:

thechildrenstrust.org.uk/jobs

Winter wonderland

Our Winter Fair was closed to visitors due to COVID-19, but our team pulled together to make it truly magical for the children living onsite at Tadworth.



Josiah got his skates on!



So much choice... Olivia and specialist teaching assistant Ellen deciding what to do next.



Market stalls on the Mansion lawns offered fun activities, drinks and snacks.



Frankie and other children loved meeting the big man himself.



Is this Rudolph? Children asked the reindeer animal handlers lots of questions.

Loving life thanks to The Children's Trust



Jade came to The Children's Trust at the age of 15 in 2001 after a life-threatening brain injury. Read how the specialist support she received gave her the chance to live life to the full.

Jade and daughter Florence, born in October 2021

With supporters behind us, we're providing specialist support to give today's generation of children with brain injury and neurodisability the opportunity to live life to the full.

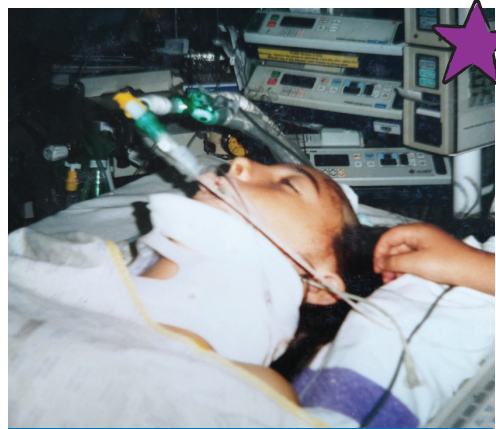
Someone who knows how much an opportunity like this means is Jade. Today she lives with fiancé Martin and baby Florence, and you may never guess that 21 years ago she was at The Children's Trust having rehabilitation after a life-threatening brain injury.

Jade was hit by a car on her 15th birthday and was rushed to hospital. As the ambulance

raced through traffic with sirens blaring, Jade's parents were warned that she may not survive the journey. They breathed a sigh of relief as they reached the hospital.

Jade had fractured the back of her skull and badly damaged her brain in the impact. She had five hours of brain surgery and part of her right frontal lobe was removed. Jade's parents were told she may never walk or talk again. A happy birthday had turned into the worst day imaginable.

"I don't remember anything," said Jade, "and I spent the summer in intensive care in a coma." Jade slowly recovered in hospital, but she needed intensive, specialist rehabilitation to help her walk and talk again. The part of Jade's brain that had been removed affected her personality and organisation. So, she also needed support with her cognitive skills, which the brain uses to think, remember, pay attention and reason.



Part of Jade's right frontal lobe was removed



Raising money to help today's children, with mum Lin

Her parents were delighted that Jade could come to The Children's Trust to get this support and expertise, and she arrived in September 2001.

"People ask me 'what's it like to have a brain injury?'" said Jade. "Think of your brain as a filing cabinet. Everything you can do, know, think and feel are sheets of paper all stored inside. When you have a head injury it is as if someone has emptied the filing cabinet and all the papers are scattered and muddled up. Some are even missing.

"What The Children's Trust did was to help me pick up all the papers and sort them out for myself. When a paper was missing, I learned new ways to do things."

She achieved this through our programme of therapies: physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and play therapy. Jade recalled: "The staff were serious specialists but made everything such fun. I still remember their names, they were like family to me."

Jade amazed her parents by being able to walk and talk again. A big moment for Jade was when she organised and booked a trip to the cinema. It sounds simple, but it was a huge challenge at the time. She proved to herself

that she could 'file things' in her brain again, which gave her confidence a massive boost.

In December 2001, Jade went back home and to school, continuing to receive our support.

"The Children's Trust even came to my school to explain to my teachers and classmates about my injury and what to expect," said Jade.

Jade completed her GCSEs, went on to college and studied a diploma in childcare. After this she went to University where she achieved a BA in Educational Studies gaining a 2:1. She took a placement in a school for a while and worked for a major UK retailer. Now Jade is busy looking after baby Florence and she and Martin are planning their wedding.

Over the years Jade has come back to The Children's Trust to talk about her experience. She's walked the Great Wall of China, run the London Marathon and trekked through the jungles of Panama with her mum, Lin, to raise money for our work.

"I wanted to give something back because I wouldn't have achieved so much, if not for this wonderful charity," said Jade.

Let's keep on changing futures!

Jade's story shows why our work must continue. As the pandemic continues we are tapping into our resilience like never before, and so are our supporters by raising the funds we heavily rely on. Could you help keep our work going with a regular monthly gift? Find out more: thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate

What you've been up to...

Whether you run marathons, bake cakes or make donations, all of your efforts are hugely appreciated. The money you raise makes our work possible, and we can't do it without you! Thank you.

Amazing running feat!

A massive thank you to our dedicated Squad of runners who pulled out all the stops to raise over an incredible £100,000. Big races like the TCS London Marathon were delayed and rescheduled. This made it a real mental, as well as physical, challenge for runners. These hard-run funds will go a long way to help the children.

Robin keeps on running

Robin Gibson, from Edinburgh, was inspired to run the Brighton Marathon AND London Marathon to raise money for The Children's Trust after his daughter Floss came to our specialist rehabilitation centre for treatment.

Within the first week of focused rehabilitation at The Children's Trust, Floss showed responses not seen before. In the following nine months, we helped Floss to communicate, start to look after herself, and even get her back on her feet with a few tentative and supported steps.

Robin smashed his original target of £3,000 raising £4,500 so far, and is running the 2022 London Marathon to continue his support. He said: "I'm very excited to raise vital funds for a charity that has given our family so much. We'll be forever grateful for how the staff helped Floss with her recovery and I'm pleased we can give back in some way." A huge thank you to you, too, Robin!



Robin with Floss who was determined to stand on her own two feet

In May 2019, Floss was a passenger in a high-speed car accident. She suffered a devastating brain injury and was in a coma for a month with limited awareness of the world around her for nearly a year.

Retail heroes

Staff and shoppers at The Belfry in Redhill, Surrey stepped up to support us.



Santa's Grotto proceeds go to support our children

Centre supports our pop-up charity shop for a third year running



Thank you to Centre Manager Andy Nash, his fun team and all shoppers!



What's coming up?

There are lots of opportunities to get out in the fresh air and fundraise this Spring! Fingers-crossed that everything can go ahead, so please check our website for any updates. Whatever you do, you'll be raising much-needed funds – thank you.

Challenge events

Surrey Hills Hike

Sunday 20 March 2022

Join us for a picturesque hike through a section of the Surrey Hills area of outstanding beauty. Choose from a distance of 10 or 5 miles across Banstead Heath and the North Downs Way, everyone is welcome!

www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk/surreyhillshike



Brighton Marathon

Sunday 10 April 2022

Run with other fundraisers in The Children's Trust Squad. The race route starts with a loop of gorgeous Preston Park, then takes in the best of the city centre including the iconic Brighton Pavilion and fabulous stretches of coastal road.

thechildrenstrust.org.uk/brighton



RideLondon-Essex 100

Sunday 29 May 2022

The 100-mile cycling sportive is back with a new route! Saddle up and cycle traffic-free roads through the heart of London and neighbouring Essex, finishing on Tower Bridge. Book your place in our Ride Squad

thechildrenstrust.org.uk/ride

Family events

Parallel

Sunday 26 June 2022

This is the world's only fully-inclusive mass participation event, helping to shine a positive light on disability. Set in the stunning Windsor Great Park you can run, walk, wheel, push or be pushed! Parallel is an inspiring, fun day out and all ages and abilities are welcome to join in. parallellifestyle.com/windsor2022



The Children's Trust Supercar Event

Friday 22 – Saturday 23 July 2022

This spectacular two-day experience will return to the iconic Goodwood Motor Circuit in 2022. Please help us make it bigger and better than ever and visit this incredible event.

thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events/supercar-event



Find out more about all our events and how you can get involved
thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events

Support children like **Josiah**

Play our weekly
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