

# inspire

Your supporter magazine



Autumn 2023

## Here for everyone

### Inside

- A week with Riley
- Art of invention
- Focus on community

  
**The Children's Trust**  
For children with brain injury

# Welcome



## Thank you for being here

This edition feels like a breath of fresh air. The children are enjoying activities in our beautiful grounds. It's wonderful to see them so excited, and soaking up new experiences.

Your support helps us offer children the chance to be children again after the trauma they have been through. Activities are part of rehabilitation and when they are fun, children work harder. It helps children who have come here after months in hospital to socialise too.

Sometimes your support enables activities you may never have imagined. Accessible art is an innovative project at The Children's Trust School, which is helping children explore

creativity and enhance sensory stimulation. It is another way you are helping us to deliver therapy and education to enrich lives.

When a child experiences a brain injury the impact ripples through their whole family. Our newly-formed community service is here for children like Shakeerah, who otherwise would not be able to get the vital, ongoing support they need.

Your fundraising makes our work possible and in *inspire* you'll discover more ways to get involved. Our Christmas card catalogue is now here, and all profits go towards our work. This year it features a festive angel card made by the children in their accessible art classes.

Children rely on our expertise and specialist therapies every day, so your continuing support is warmly welcomed and very gratefully received.

Best wishes,

**Amanda Boyd,**  
Supporter Care Coordinator

Scan to donate



On our front cover is Harvey, age 13, who attends The Children's Trust School.



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



01737 364 349



[thechildrenstrust.org.uk](http://thechildrenstrust.org.uk)



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## Stay in touch, follow us on:



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TCT\_1744 August 2023

Registered charity number 288018

# Riley's progress

## What is living with a brain injury like?

During Action for Brain Injury Week (15-21 May) thirteen-year-old Riley was at The Children's Trust on a twelve-week rehabilitation programme. We spoke to Riley to get an insight into his week.

On New Year's Day 2023, Riley had a rare type of aneurysm, a swollen blood vessel, in his brain. Following surgeries and multiple seizures, his brain injury left him unable to move or speak.

At the start of Action for Brain Injury Week, Riley had already been here ten weeks and had come so far. From barely able to even lift his own head on arrival, Riley could move, talk and was becoming more independent, thanks to the support of our specialist team.

## Riley's Week



### Day 1 - physiotherapy

Riley wants to walk and to use his left arm again, so these sessions are important to him. You can see that he's well on his way to meeting his goals!

### Day 2 – occupational therapy

Riley uses a 'GripAble' device to work his hand and arm movements and grip strength. For fun and extra motivation, he sees his progress on a tablet, and sets targets to earn points.

### Day 3 – baking

Riley loves to cook, but this therapy session is not just about improving his culinary skills,

the motion of whisking is strengthening Riley's hand muscles, and helping his dexterity and coordination.

### Day 4 – hydrotherapy

Once a week Riley enjoys a session in our purpose-built pool. He coordinates his limbs to swim lengths and impresses everyone by walking widths, showing his growing strength and balance.



### Day 5 – school

There's still time for Riley to attend our school every day. It's fun joining in extra-curricular sports and activities with the friends he's made here during his rehabilitation.

**Every year, 40,000 children in the UK are left with a brain injury as a result of an accident or illness. Your contribution is vital to help children get the support they need, thank you.**

## Update!

Riley has rung the going-home bell to mark the end of his time with us. He's been a motivation to us all, we couldn't be more proud of him.

Watch Riley's leaving speech on Instagram

Scan the QR code





## Daring to dream



**An accident left Keira uncertain about her future.**

**Rehabilitation means she can dream again.**

Keira – ready to go home after her rehabilitation

### Keira's mum Jane shares her story

It had started as an ordinary Saturday. Keira was fifteen at the time and out with friends. I was at home, when there was a knock on the door. It was the police telling me I had to go straight to the hospital. Keira had been involved in an accident.

It was every parent's worst nightmare. She had been hit by a fast-moving vehicle and had sustained multiple injuries, including a traumatic brain injury. At the hospital I was told that Keira couldn't speak or move her left side. I was shocked and really scared. Would Keira recover fully? What would her future look like?

Keira was taken to the Intensive Care Unit, where I sat anxiously at her bedside for two and a half weeks. You can't imagine how relieved I was when Keira was eventually moved to the general ward. Here physiotherapists helped her to exercise and stretch. I did the exercises with Keira three times a day if they weren't able to.

Keira needed to re-learn how to do everyday things too. Keira picked things up faster if I showed her, and then she copied. I spent hours sitting on her bed, talking, smiling, even raising an eyebrow to encourage Keira to copy. Eating was difficult. We started by putting yogurt on her lips, and gradually introduced other foods and textures over time.

### About Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

TBI usually happens after a violent blow or jolt to the body or head. Depending on its severity, the effects can be wide-ranging – including balance problems, headaches, dizziness, memory problems and fatigue. Rehabilitation can help the brain learn alternative ways of working, and minimise the long-term impact.



### Time for specialist rehabilitation

Keira was making welcome progress but it was gradual. To make the best possible recovery she needed specialist intensive rehabilitation. Two months after her accident she went to The Children's Trust.

Their national specialist centre is the only place in the UK where children and young people with a brain injury can receive 24/7 care, and a holistic blend of therapy and play, all in one place. The Children's Trust has such a good reputation and Keira was really excited to go there.

### Personalised therapy sessions

They worked with Keira on a programme tailored to her needs, and she set her own goals. It meant she really pushed herself hard and when she saw progress, it spurred her on even more.

In her first physiotherapy session Keira struggled on all fours. By her third session, the team was helping her to stand, crawl, go up the steps and down the slide. Eventually, she built up the muscles in her left arm and her knees, and the whole of her left side became stronger. From being very weak she now walks easily, and even enjoys a bit of light jogging, despite some ongoing muscle spasms.

In music therapy, specialists helped Keira to work on her brain-to-hand-to-strum motion. There's a lot of multi-tasking involved, so it was hard at first. Over time her strength grew, and Keira even managed to play a tune she used to play at school.

The parental support, such as information and psychologist sessions, have helped me hugely too.

### Going home at last

Only a few months ago, I was anxious about 'what next for Keira?' Now I am excited about the next phase. Keira is doing well, her short-term memory is sometimes a bit difficult, but I'm so pleased and grateful for how far she's come.

Just weeks ago, Keira had trouble writing, not even her own name was clear. Now we're looking at colleges, and Keira hopes to become a midwife in the future. **I tell everyone that the hospital got her here, but The Children's Trust got her home and gave her a future.**



### Q&A with Keira

**inspire:** What did you think when you arrived here?

**Keira:** I was so excited and thought 'I'm one step closer to home'.

**inspire:** Name two specialist therapies and how they helped you?

**Keira:** Physio helped me regain my balance. Music therapy helped my brain coordinate different movements in my arms and hands.

**inspire:** What were your best memories?

**Keira:** I love horse riding and never imagined I'd be able to do it again, but I can!

**inspire:** How do you see your future?

**Keira:** My dream is to become a midwife.

**When families face traumatic times and fear for their child's future, your support means we can use our expertise to give them the very best chance. Thank you.**

# Art of invention



If you were to visit The Children's Trust School, you'd see how our unique curriculum offers children with brain injury and neurodisability access to therapy, nursing care and education all under one roof. **You may not expect to see children using a giant catapult to fling brightly coloured paint at a canvas!**



This is an example of our innovative accessible art. Our learners have profound or multiple learning disabilities, or acquired brain injuries. They experience the world in a sensory way and so we use art to motivate and engage them. From the nursery to the sixth form, we encourage children and young people to be as

hands-on as possible. And if it sounds like fun, that's because it is!

The driving force behind our accessible art is Sarah Townsend, our Professional Expertise Training and Learning Lead, who has worked at our school for six years. She said: "We create imaginative art sessions to let children explore and immerse themselves in art. As well as being fun, it helps them make their own choices and promotes independence."

"We are with the children every day, we know them and understand what stimulates them," said Sarah, "the art equipment we need isn't something you can buy off the shelf, so we often invent it ourselves" – which explains the giant catapult. It was made in-house, and risk-assessed and tested for safety. An old washing machine has been transformed into a colourful light installation, fans have been adapted to spin paint brushes, balloons turned into paint bombs, and much more.

We are delighted that one of this year's Christmas cards features artwork by Platinum class made in an accessible art class. First orders despatched from 25 September. Order our angel card and others at

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/christmas-cards](http://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/christmas-cards)



*Merry Christmas*



### Accessible Art Festival

Every year, to celebrate our learners' achievements, we hold an arts festival in and around our school. We invite other schools in the community, art teachers and supporters to come along. This year, it took place on 12 July and the theme was 'regeneration'.

Creativity has been in full flow over the last few months. Children painted colourful butterfly art, mounting it onto umbrellas to give the effect of fluttering wings. Others have put old



vinyl records onto a spinner, using paint and glitter to give them a new lease of life. They took pride of place as our main art installation.

### Celebrating creativity

We're delighted to have been given top marks from Artsmark, accredited by Arts Council England. Our Platinum Award recognises our accessible art programme for innovation and impact, and is a benchmark for other schools.

Sarah Townsend has been accepted onto the prestigious 'Leaders for Impact' programme. It is for exceptional school leaders who are in a position to influence whole school approaches to cultural learning. Congratulations Sarah!



### Take a virtual tour of our school

Visit the school online and take a look around, visit

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/school](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/school)

### We have availability for new day students in our school.

We offer a unique setting for children and young people with a wide range of special needs including neurodisability and complex education, health, therapy and care needs.

Make an enquiry [thechildrenstrust.org.uk/school/contact](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/school/contact)



# Putting you in the picture

## Royal celebrations and new experiences!



Josiah is King for the day at our Coronation Party in May



Finn enjoys his experience of Colourscape



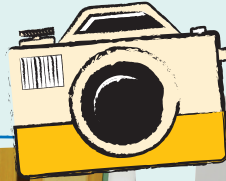
Riley learns how to make his very own pizza at Pizza Express during Enrichment Week



Florence hugs and kisses her sister Emelia for the first time thanks to our new standing sling



Khameo and Karen, Activity and Leisure Lead, give National Doughnut Week a big thumbs up



Children feel the vibrations of the Morris sticks hitting the floor through their wheelchairs and love watching the display



Amal is all smiles while bouncing on the trampoline

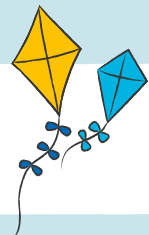


Finn gets ready to join in at Enrichment Week's outdoor disco



Zac welcomes his new furry friend to The Children's Trust

**Pictures paint a thousand words! You can see how our fun activities help children live the best life possible. Your support helps make it happen, thank you.**





## Top marks for teachers

Every year over 40,000 children acquire a brain injury. That's one child in every classroom. It's why we've set up a programme for teachers across the UK to learn about acquired brain injury (ABI).

### What do teachers learn?

They discover how to spot 'hidden' signs, manage the challenges children face, and know where to go for help and support. The interactive programme is online and there's an exercise at the end to assess their understanding.

### Why is it important?

After an ABI, most children return to their old school. So teachers are part of a child's rehabilitation. Our course is a first step in helping teachers support a child who has been impacted.

**"Really professional yet friendly. Communicated in a clear and concise way that gave all the relevant information we need as a school to support a student."**

**Primary School Teacher**

Children who have an ABI are more likely to develop behavioural problems, which may affect how they speak and act towards others. Understanding the signs of ABI early could stop this behaviour being misinterpreted.

**For information or to sign up**  
[www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk/teachers](http://www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk/teachers)

## Volunteers reunited



'Monday Maureen' was Charlotte's (right) nickname for Maureen (left) in 2009

Charlotte came to The Children's Trust for rehabilitation in 2009 after she acquired a brain injury from a haemorrhage. Back then, she met

volunteer Maureen who was running weekly activities in Oak House. Now Charlotte and Maureen are back in Oak House together.

Charlotte has joined Maureen as a volunteer and they both run activities, such as playing games with children on a Monday evening. "It's gone full circle," said Maureen who has kindly volunteered here for an amazing 30 years. "It's a way for me to give something back, to talk to the children and give them hope," Charlotte said.

**Join our amazing team of volunteers**  
[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/volunteer](http://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/volunteer)



# Super team to the rescue



Over the years, estate agents Arun Estates, has raised an amazing £145,289.96 for The Children's Trust. Their staff are always coming up with new ways to fundraise and recently raised lots of smiles too! Team members brightened up our Redhill charity shop, wearing brilliant superhero costumes while they took over the tills for the day.

## Passion for fashion

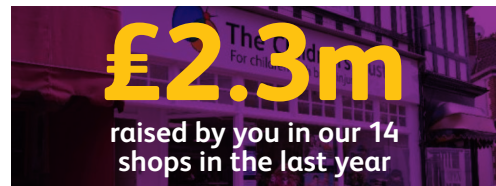


The Great Big Green Week took place from 10 to 18 June. It's the UK's biggest celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. Our shop staff joined in by showing that great fashion needn't cost

the earth, and modelled some of the fantastic fashion finds in our charity shops.

## Purchase power!

Everyone can expect a warm welcome in our 14 shops across Surrey, Sussex and Kent. And we'd like to say a huge thank you too. Last year you helped raise an impressive £2.3m to help us care for the children.



What's in store? Clothes and accessories for men, women and children. Puzzles, games and children's toys. DVDs, CDs, records and books. And so much more.

## Ways to help

There are lots of ways that companies, community groups, schools, colleges, universities and individuals can help us:

- Donate end of line stock
- Hold an event to collect items to donate
- Give out donation sacks
- Promote our furniture collection service to customers, friends and neighbours.

**When you support our shops  
you're helping more children  
who need our specialist care.**

**Find out more**  
[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/shops](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/shops)

## Reaching out to Shakeerah

**Our newly-formed Community Rehabilitation Service is reaching more children than ever before**



Shakeerah with our community physiotherapist, Savannah

Shakeerah was diagnosed with a brain tumour at the age of one, followed by a brain infection. Her mum Yasmeen was told Shakeerah wouldn't survive. It makes Shakeerah's story all the more remarkable.

Shakeerah was profoundly deaf and had complex needs, and spent the next two years in hospital. When it was time to go home, Yasmeen felt completely lost. How would they possibly cope? Then Yasmeen found the answer: The Children's Trust.

Shakeerah came to us for intensive rehabilitation in 2016 and by the time she left, she could walk using a frame and sometimes

independently. She was able to attend her local British Sign Language (BSL) school. In class, Shakeerah was making great progress but couldn't get enough ongoing physiotherapy.

After making amazing progress at The Children's Trust, her mobility started going backwards. "She was only able to make 3 or 4 steps and having to grab onto things as she was unbalanced," said Yasmeen. "Shakeerah is a BSL user and uses her hands to communicate – so when she's using a walking frame or holding someone's hand, she's unable to sign."

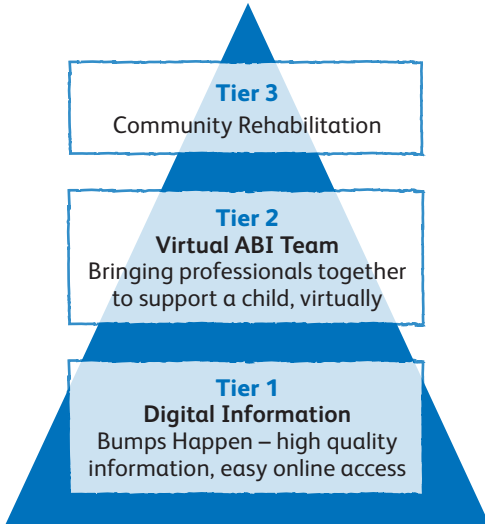
Yasmeen found the answer once again with The Children's Trust. This time Shakeerah received 22 physiotherapy sessions with our Community Rehabilitation Service over six weeks.

### Transforming community services

We want to support every child in the UK with an acquired brain injury (ABI). And we have transformed how we deliver community brain injury rehabilitation. Our three-tier approach means we can support more children with mild and moderate, as well as severe brain injuries.



Shakeerah works on her hand to eye coordination



### Therapy for children closer to home

**Digital information.** Most head injuries are not serious but bumps do happen. We share the signs to look out for, and steps to take in case a child has had a concussion. This ‘self service’ online resource means everyone has access to this key information. You can read more by visiting:

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/bumps-happen](http://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/bumps-happen)



Fun games help Shakeerah to learn balance and coordination

**Virtual ABI Team.** Sometimes families don’t need a face to face meeting but can set rehabilitation goals and interact with our

specialist team virtually. Advice, signposting and consultation can also be provided by experts across our team.

**Community Rehabilitation.** This can take place in the child’s home, school or the community. As you’ve read, Shakeerah had her recent rehabilitation close to home. Our community physiotherapist, Savannah made it fun too. She turned the therapy into games, playing basketball or picking up cones. In Shakeerah’s first session, she worked on strengthening her thighs and glutes so she could balance herself. After four days she’d gone from four shaky steps to walking the length of the gymnasium.



Fun craft activities help Shakeerah to focus and concentrate

Yasmeen said: “After two weeks of sessions, Shakeerah went back to school and, instead of using her walking frame, she walked independently into her assembly to huge applause from all of her fellow students.” This has increased her confidence and motivated her to do more.

Every year 40,000 children in the UK acquire a brain injury. Thanks to your support, our innovative Community Rehabilitation Service can reach many more children like Shakeerah and make a life-changing difference.

### Find out more

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/community](http://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/community)



## What you've been up to...



We're so grateful for everything you do to fundraise for us. The life-changing work of The Children's Trust is only possible thanks to your incredible efforts.

### Fired up to fundraise

Firewalks inspire you to do what you didn't think was possible. In March, 16 individuals were inspired to walk across 15ft of hot coals with temperatures of up to 1200°F in our first ever Firewalk challenge. Feedback has been fantastic, what challenge could you do for us this year?



### Running in the family

A big thank you to everyone who has fundraised as part of our Squad. Jigna and Nikunj Patel ran the London Landmarks for their nephew Kai. The couple said they were absolutely amazed at the level of care Kai received at The Children's Trust after a road traffic accident. The £8,000 they raised will go a long way to support many more children like him, thank you.

Family members Lisa Bradley, her father-in-law Brendon McGurran, sister-in-law Lauren McGurran and husband Matt McGurran all took part too, raising an incredible £9,000. Lisa said: "I was really glad to be able to fundraise for the incredible work you do." In 2024 the family will run the London Marathon and Lisa says she's honoured to run for the children again. Thank you for your dedication.

### Clubbing together

We were so grateful to be appointed Charity of the Year at Kingswood, Bletchingley, Cottesmore and Surbiton Golf Clubs. Together they have raised over £90,000 through a series of golf tournaments, lunches and challenges. Their special efforts will be a huge boost to funding our specialist support for children and young people.

Could your club support us too? Maybe you belong to a club like WI or Rotary, a faith group or Freemasons, or you're a member of a golf, cricket, tennis, running or cycling club. Or perhaps you know people who are?

We have so many fundraising ideas for clubs. You could raise money through a one-off event such as a golf tournament or sponsored event. Maybe your club has the option to choose a Charity of the Year and you could fundraise throughout the year. Or quite simply, you may like to give a one-off donation. If you have any ideas please get in touch with Tracy Poulton, [tpoulton@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:tpoulton@thechildrenstrust.org.uk) or call 01737 365000 (extension 4342).



# What's coming up?

We'd love to meet you at one of our fundraising events in the coming months. Our calendar is jam-packed and there really is something for everyone. Join in our fundraising fun!

## Run Reigate

17 September 2023

Choose from a half Marathon, 10K, 5K or Kids Race and run in the 10th Anniversary of this much-loved event in Reigate Priory Park. Enjoy fantastic scenery and an unbeatable atmosphere.

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/run-reigate](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/run-reigate)



Come join us for our Gala Dinner

## Gala Dinner

4 November 2023

Our celebratory dinner takes place at the historic British Transport Museum in Covent Garden. Try some of the interactive exhibitions and (hopefully) win some exclusive prizes in our auctions.

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/gala-dinner](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/gala-dinner)

## Comedy Night

28 February 2024

Hosted by comedian Adam Hills MBE, this evening promises to be one you'll remember. Where else would it be than The Comedy Store itself in the heart of London!

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/comedy](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/comedy)

## Surrey Hills Hike

17 March 2024

Join us on a picturesque hike which starts and finishes at our rehabilitation centre in Tadworth.

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/surrey-hills-hike](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/surrey-hills-hike)

## London Landmarks

7 April 2024

From cultural landmarks and heritage to the city's quirky and hidden secrets, join us and get to explore the capital on a route like no other.

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/landmarks](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/landmarks)



Take on the challenge of London Landmarks

## Hankley Golf Day

4 September 2024

Hankley Common Golf Club has been described as 'one of the best inland layouts in Britain'. So get your team together and join us on this fantastic fundraising round, with lunch and prizes.

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/annual-golf-day](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/annual-golf-day)

For more information about how to get involved visit [thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events)



The Children's Trust

# WINTER ILLUMINATIONS 2023

7-9 December, 5pm-8pm

**Winter festivities await  
through the gates of Tadworth Court**

Light trail – carol singing – hot chocolate and  
mulled wine – festive gifts – homemade decorations  
made by the young people at The Children's Trust.

**Adults £11, children £7**

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/winter-illuminations](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/winter-illuminations)

**BOOK NOW**



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For children with brain injury