



Southampton  
Hospitals  
Charity

SOUTHAMPTON  
Children's Hospital

# Charity Matters

Spring Edition 2026

Inside Southampton  
Children's Hospital

“ Having the right  
tools at a child's  
bedside is not  
a luxury –  
it is a necessity.

Dr Clarissa Chase  
UHS Paediatric Emergency Medicine  
Consultant and Wessex Director for  
Paediatric Major Trauma.

# Welcome

**Welcome to the Spring 2026 edition of Charity Matters. My name is Dr Melanie Ranaweera, and I am a Paediatric Emergency Consultant in our Children's Emergency Department at Southampton Children's Hospital.**

Every shift I work, I am reminded of something extraordinary - the trust that families place in us during their most frightening moments. A parent rushing in with a sick child. A teenager arriving by ambulance or helicopter after an accident. In those moments, all that matters is giving them the very best care we can.

**The life-saving extras – specialist equipment, enhanced facilities, pioneering research – often fall outside what NHS budgets can provide. That is where Southampton Hospitals Charity makes such a vital difference. Through the generosity of supporters like you, the Charity bridges that gap, enabling us to go beyond the basics and give children the very best care possible.**

In this issue, you can read about something that could have a big impact on the way we care for children in the Children's Emergency Department. Right now, we share a single ultrasound scanner with the adult department, which can cause critical delays and isn't suitable for children as it's designed for adult use. That is why we are working to secure a dedicated paediatric ultrasound scanner for our department. You can read more about why it matters so much to me and my team on pages 4 and 5.

**Alongside that story, my colleagues across Southampton Children's Hospital share how charitable funding is already improving the care we provide - from refurbished spaces to backpacks that allow children to receive part of their cancer treatment at home with their families.**



I hope this edition gives you a glimpse into the heartbeat of our hospital - and the difference that your support, through Southampton Hospitals Charity, makes every single day. Thank you for being part of our story.

*M. I. Ranaweera*

**Dr Melanie Ranaweera**  
Paediatric Emergency Consultant,  
Ultrasound lead,  
University Hospital Southampton

# In this edition:

A life-saving ultrasound scanner for Children's Emergency Department	4-5
The backpack that brought Aria home	6-7
Dinosaurs & nature take over the children's waiting area at Nuclear Medicine Unit	8
Small grants, big impact	9
How we work	10
Improving our Teenage & Young Adult Cancer Unit	11
Team Spotlight - Clair	12-13
A day in the life of Matron Lucia	14
Running for our youngest patients	15

## Join your local hospital lottery

Sign up for just  
£1 a week!



18+ | Ts&Cs apply

win up to £25,000

Please scan the QR code above to join the lottery!



FR registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR | Gamble Aware

Southampton Hospitals Charity is a registered charity in England and Wales (Charity No: 1206909). Lottery registration number: LL06/1535



# A life-saving ultrasound scanner for Children's Emergency Department

**Imagine a child in need of urgent care. Now imagine the team caring for them having to wait for a vital piece of equipment to become available. They wait. In moments where every second counts.**

This is the daily reality in our Children's Emergency and Trauma Department – one of the country's leading major trauma centres, caring for around 35,000 children every year. Patients arrive from across the South Central and Southwest regions, the Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands, many with life-threatening conditions that demand immediate action.

Currently, the team shares a single ultrasound scanner with the adult emergency department. That can mean delays in situations where time affects the outcome.

We spoke with Dr Melanie Ranaweera, Paediatric Emergency Consultant and Ultrasound Lead, and her team. Their message was clear: a dedicated paediatric ultrasound scanner would transform the care they deliver. Non-invasive and working in real time, ultrasound accelerates diagnosis, guides lifesaving decisions in trauma, and takes the guesswork out of procedures that can cause children real distress.

"Having the right tools at a child's bedside is not a luxury - it is a necessity," says Dr Clarissa Chase, Paediatric Emergency Medicine Consultant.



## A difference felt across the entire department

In trauma cases, rapid chest, lung and heart scans save precious minutes. For children with difficult veins - including those who are afraid of needles - using ultrasound can help staff place the tube into the vein more easily, making it more likely to work the first time.

Play Therapist Kelly Williams has witnessed it first-hand: "We've used it with needle-phobic patients who'd had terrible experiences with multiple attempts. The ultrasound minimises those tries and creates a much better experience."

For neurodiverse children, the impact is equally powerful. Phillipa Mitchell, the department's Learning Disability Champion, explains: "Children learn through play and being able to see and feel in control. An ultrasound gives them that bit of power back."

And the benefits reach beyond today's patients. Paediatric Emergency Research Lead Consultant, Dan Owens, highlights ultrasound as an exciting frontier in paediatric emergency research: "A dedicated machine will help us be at the forefront of improving children's emergency care for years to come."



## You can help make this happen

With your support, we can place this essential scanner right where it is needed most. Please complete the donation form enclosed, or visit [southamptonhospitalscharity.org/charity-matters](https://southamptonsouthamptonhospitalscharity.org/charity-matters), and help us support projects like these to give our youngest patients the care they deserve.

# The backpack that brought Aria home

## When Suzanne's daughter Aria was diagnosed with cancer, their world changed overnight.

"One moment, Aria was a lively, energetic 11-year-old," Suzanne says. "The next, we were living life between hospital walls."

Like many children undergoing cancer treatment, Aria needed medication delivered over long periods of time. That often meant being connected to equipment on the ward for hours at a time - day after day.



"We even gave the chemo stand a name," Aria says. "We called it the ballerina, because it twirled around so much. I couldn't really go far with it."

For Suzanne, seeing her daughter tethered to machines was heartbreaking. "It felt like everything revolved around hospital routines," she says. "There was very little normality."

## A different way of delivering care

Aria was given a portable medical device known as a computerised ambulatory delivery device (CADD) pump. Inside a small backpack, a pump, carefully programmed and monitored by specialist hospital teams, delivers medicine at a controlled rate through a fine line into a child's vein.

For some children, this means treatment can continue safely away from the ward. For Aria, it meant something simple and incredibly powerful.

"It meant she could go home," Suzanne says. "She could sleep in her own bed, see her friends, and spend time with family. That made such a difference to all of us."

"It's amazing," Aria says. "The pump means I can go home. Go to school. And see my best friends."



## Small backpacks that make a BIG difference

The backpacks are designed to be practical, discreet and easy for children to carry. Before a child leaves hospital, the pump inside is prepared by specialist nurses from the Hospital's ambulatory team.

Combined with ambulatory care, this approach doesn't change the treatment itself, but it changes how that treatment fits into a child's life.

Instead of spending every day on the ward, children who are able to use the pumps can spend more time with siblings, eat meals at home, and hold on to routines that bring comfort during an incredibly difficult time.

## Christmas Appeal

It was this difference - between being confined to the ward and being able to spend meaningful time at home - that sat at the heart of our recent Christmas appeal, which focused on the specialist equipment and innovations that help children and families through cancer treatment.

During our appeal, donors rallied behind stories like Aria's, helping to shine a light on the role specialist kit, like the backpacks, plays in supporting children and families through treatment.

As our Piam Brown Children's Cancer team continues to develop and deliver ambulatory care, charitable



support will play an important role in helping the service grow, enabling more children to receive treatment in ways that reduce time spent on the ward and better support family life wherever possible.

Because for children facing cancer, being home for the moments that matter most can make all the difference.

For families like Suzanne and Aria's, those moments away from the ward are priceless. "When your child is unwell, you treasure every normal moment," Suzanne says. "Being together at home, even briefly, makes such a difference."



# Dinosaurs & nature take over our children's waiting area at Nuclear Medicine Unit

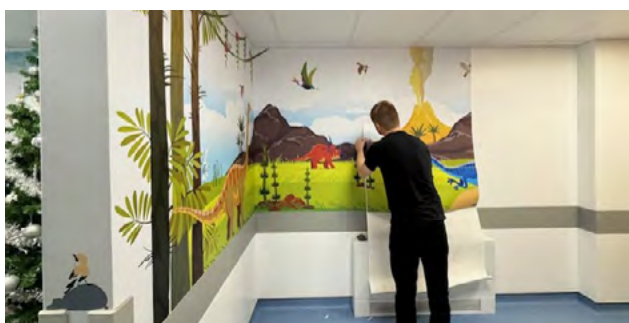
Through our Improving Spaces programme, we fund a wide range of projects – from full refurbishments to simple updates that have a big impact. One of those improved spaces is the Nuclear Medicine Unit.

## A space in need of change

The Nuclear Medicine Unit is a busy part of the hospital where both young and older patients wait for scans and diagnostic tests. Before the children's waiting area felt sterile, cold and impersonal, doing little to ease the anxiety many young patients were experiencing. Due to the complexity of the work carried out in the Unit, children can spend anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours in the space while they wait.

## A whole lot wilder

Led by the Charity's Arts Team, the children's waiting area underwent a creative transformation. Out went the plain white walls – in came dinosaurs, jungle scenes and vibrant colour. A bespoke mural has turned the room into a bright, uplifting and engaging environment.




## Look up at the sky

The transformation does not stop at the waiting area. Inside the scanning rooms themselves, we've installed specially designed ceiling panels that recreate a beautiful, open sky. This gives young patients a peaceful escape to gaze up at whilst they are required to lie still during their scan.

It is these thoughtful, creative touches that make all the difference - turning clinical spaces into calming ones and offering a moment of welcome distraction exactly when it is needed most.

# Small grants, big impact



Through our Micro Grants Programme, we offer funding to University Hospital Southampton for projects that go beyond what NHS budgets can provide helping improve care, comfort and outcomes for patients and their families. These grants are under £500 and may be modest in size, but their impact can be anything but. 

Time and again, we see how a relatively small investment can make a lasting difference. A Micro Grant might fund bravery stickers that help a nervous child face a scan with confidence, or teddy bears to help them feel less alone in unfamiliar surroundings.

Here's how some of our smallest grants have improved the experience of young patients and their families.

## Teddy bears for sleep studies

Every year, around 1,500 children from across our region are referred to the Children's Respiratory Sleep Service for help with sleep-related breathing disorders. For many of these young patients, attending hospital can be challenging - with lots of wires, probes and sensors to get used to, especially for those with sensory sensitivities.

Thanks to funding from Southampton Hospitals Charity, the team now gives each child a special teddy bear at the end of their sleep study. A small reward to celebrate just how brave they've been.

## Bravery stickers

For many children, hospital visits can be stressful, especially when they involve blood tests, allergy checks or other procedures with needles. The team in the hospital's Children's Outpatients Department, who see patients for a variety of treatments, noticed this and wanted to make visits a little easier.

With our funding, they now give bravery stickers to young patients. It may seem like a small gesture, but for children, a sticker can make a big difference.

## Buzzy Bee pain relievers

For some children, injections are an occasional worry; for others, they're a weekly - or even daily - part of life.

At the Paediatric Rheumatology Unit, they treat children and young people with inflammatory conditions who often require regular injections. These treatments can be stressful and sometimes traumatic, not just for the child, but also for parents and carers who help administer the medication.



Thanks to funding from Southampton Hospitals Charity, the team now uses Buzzy Bees Pain Relievers. This is a device combining cold and vibration to make injections less painful. It gives children a sense of control and helps prevent needle fear, making treatment a more positive experience.

# How we work: Grants for long-term impact

At Southampton Hospitals Charity, we work in partnership with University Hospital Southampton to improve care, comfort and experience for every patient. But what does that really mean? How does your support translate into action? Let's take a closer look.

## 2025 Impact



## From your donation to real change



### STEP 01

#### Identify a need

Hospital staff identify a need in their department that cannot be covered by UHS budgets. All team members can apply.



### STEP 02

#### Apply for funding

Staff apply for funding via our website where they can complete an application form with all the necessary details about the project.



### STEP 03

#### Panel review

A grants panel assess and discuss each project and decide whether it can be funded.



### STEP 04

#### Funding transferred

If agreed, money is transferred to the hospital for the staff member to run the project. The decisions and projects are led by the hospital staff who really understand the needs of patients.



### STEP 05

#### Impact report

When completed, an impact report is submitted to show how the funding has been used and what has been delivered. We can then use this to keep our donors updated and informed.

We also work strategically with the hospitals executive team to understand their priorities and align our work to their needs. This may lead to large project grants, co-funded renovations, or inform the grant programmes that we open.

**“ Thanks to your support, Southampton Hospitals Charity turns donations into tangible, life-changing grants for patients every day.**

Lizwe,  
Grants and Impact  
Officer

# SPOTLIGHT PROJECT:

## Improving our Teenage & Young Adult Cancer Unit



**Architects are now drawing up plans for an exciting refurbishment of our Teenage and Young Adult (TYA) Unit, funded by Southampton Hospitals Charity.**

Since opening in 2013, the TYA Unit has been a lifeline for 80 to 100 new patients aged 16 to 25 each year - a place where young people can be alongside others their own age during cancer treatment. With six single bedrooms, a day care ward, gaming areas, a jukebox, pool table and kitchen, it is a space designed to feel like home.

However, as time has passed and the needs of patients and staff have evolved, the Unit now needs to adapt. Lead TYA Cancer Nurse Jo Grout explains: "We already have a lovely space, but our needs have changed. This is about being creative with what we have."



### What to expect

The project will improve three key areas:

- A new office for our Youth Support Co-ordinators - a visible, welcoming base right at the unit entrance.
- A dedicated staff room with kitchen and seating, giving the team a proper space to rest during demanding shifts.
- A quiet room for families, providing privacy for sensitive conversations with the medical team.

This refurbishment will ensure the Unit continues to serve its young patients, their families, and the staff who care for them.





# Give a gift that matters

Support Southampton Children's Hospital today.



SCAN ME

Scan the QR code and select an item from our Amazon Wishlist to support young patients and staff at your local hospital.



# Staff spotlight: Clair

**Meet Clair – our amazing Children’s Hospital Engagement Coordinator. We sat down with her to hear about her motivation for working with Southampton Hospitals Charity and her relationship with Southampton Children’s Hospital.**

## **You started as a volunteer. What made you want to get involved?**

I got involved as a volunteer because I wanted to give something back. I have personal experience of supporting a child with autism, and I know how overwhelming hospital environments can sometimes feel for children and their families. I’d seen first-hand how much a small moment of comfort, distraction or understanding can make a huge difference. Volunteering felt like a way to use that experience in a positive way.

## **How did you go from volunteer to member of staff?**

While volunteering, I absolutely fell in love with the environment and the people. I could see how much the Charity’s work directly impacted patients, families and staff, and I wanted to be more involved.

When the opportunity came up to apply for the Children’s Hospital Engagement role, it felt like the perfect fit. It brought together my personal experience, my passion for supporting children, and everything I’d already learned as a volunteer. It’s incredibly special to now work in a role that I genuinely love.

## **You work closely with the Children’s Hospital. What does your role involve?**

My role is all about engagement - connecting the Charity with the Hospital’s patients, families and staff. I spend time on the wards, talking to play specialists, nurses and other teams to understand what children need to feel more comfortable and supported during their stay, and how the Charity can help.

## **How do you engage with their staff?**

Engagement for me starts with relationships. I regularly visit wards and departments to chat with staff, find out what’s working well and what support they need from the Charity. Sometimes it’s an informal catch-up in the playroom, other times it’s attending team meetings to talk about how charity funding can support their ideas.

For example, a play specialist might tell me they need more sensory toys for children with additional needs, or a ward team might want to create a calmer space for teenagers. I take those conversations back to the Charity and help turn those ideas into funded projects or Wishlist items.

**“It’s incredibly special to now work in a role that I genuinely love.”**

**Clair,  
Children’s Hospital Engagement Coordinator**

## **Can you tell us more about the Wishlist, and how it works?**

The Charity’s Amazon Wishlist is a really simple but powerful way for people to support patients. Hospital staff tell us what items would make a difference, and we add those directly to the Wishlist.

These can be things like toys, books, sensory items, arts and crafts materials, or comfort items for different age groups and needs. You can then buy something from the list, and it gets sent straight to the hospital. Even a small item can have a big impact.

# A day in the life of Matron Lucia

We joined Child Health Matron Lucia for a morning on ward G3 – the Trauma and Orthopaedic Ward at Southampton Children’s Hospital, and one of only two children’s trauma units in the South of England. We asked her to walk us through a typical day.

## First things first

Lucia oversees teams across multiple wards at the Children’s Hospital: “I usually start by checking staffing levels,” Lucia tells us. “I need to know that every ward has what it needs before the day really gets going.” She moves quickly between screens and conversations, reviewing rotas and flagging any gaps.

## Out on the ward

From there, Lucia heads to the wards. One of those wards is G3. Each year, more than 1,000 young patients come through G3’s doors. Some arrive with broken bones after a tumble. Others face life-changing surgery or need ongoing treatment for complex conditions such as cerebral palsy and neuromuscular disorders. No two days - and no two children - are ever the same.

“The day can go in any direction,” she says. “Supporting an anxious family, solving a practical problem, or working with colleagues to improve the way we do things.”

## Behind the scenes

Then comes the problem-solving. A colleague wants advice. A room needs reorganising to better suit a young patient’s needs. The work is constant and largely invisible to anyone outside the ward.

“The teams here are incredibly resilient,” she tells us. “A big part of my job is removing barriers and looking after the people who look after our patients.”

## The difference funding makes

As we walk the ward, the impact of charitable funding is easy to see. Originally built in the 1970s, G3 was once dark and dated. Thanks to funding from Southampton Hospitals Charity, it has been completely transformed.

The Charity has also recently funded a Halo Gravity Traction Wheelchair and Walker (purpose-built devices for children with severe scoliosis). These allow a child fitted with halo traction after surgery to sit upright and move around, using their own body weight to provide gentle, therapeutic traction during recovery.



“Being able to provide child-friendly spaces and state of the art equipment has such a positive impact on patients and their families, in what can be a really emotional and challenging time.”

Lucia Lazzeri-Gray,  
Child Health Matron



# Running for our youngest patients

## The Paediatric Radiology team swapped scrubs for trainers at the ABP Southampton Marathon Festival 2026.

The ABP Southampton Marathon Festival returned this Spring, and we are thrilled to continue our partnership as the lead local charity partner. Fundraisers from across our community have signed up in support of patients and families at University Hospital Southampton.

Among them was a very special team - Simone, Luke, Grace and Hannah from the Paediatric Radiology Department. On 3 May, the team took on a 10K together in support of patients and families at the hospital.



"We chose to run to raise money for this charity as we want to do the most that we can in support of our patients and facilities at UHS. The Charity does amazing work to help patients and staff, from providing supportive spaces for parents, to supporting the research that helps to improve care. I myself might not be the best at running, but with good company and a great charity incentive it was hard not to enjoy it!"

**Hannah, Paediatric Diagnostic Radiographer**

Thanks to all our runners for their support!



### Support the team



Scan the QR code to visit the team's JustGiving page and support their fundraising.

At Southampton Hospitals Charity, we bring people together to raise life-changing funds for University Hospital Southampton. From specialist services to pioneering research, our incredible supporters improve care, experience and outcomes for thousands of patients each year.

For more information or to make a donation, contact us on:

 **023 8120 8881**

 **hello@southamptonhospitalscharity.org**

 **southamptonhospitalscharity.org**

### **Southampton Hospitals Charity**

Ocean Village Innovation Centre, Oceans Way, Southampton, SO14 3JZ.

  Southampton Hospitals Charity UK  @charity\_shc



All information is correct at the time of printing. We hope you enjoy hearing from us but if you ever change your mind, please let us know by calling 023 8120 8881.

©Copyright Southampton Hospitals Charity 2026

Southampton Hospitals Charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (Company No: 15421829, Charity No: 1206909). Registered Address: Southampton Hospitals Charity, Ocean Village Innovation Centre, Oceans Way, Southampton, SO14 3JZ.