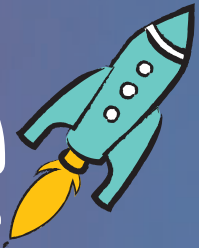


# inspire

Your supporter magazine



Autumn 2024



## Inside

- William's story
- Celebrating 40 years
- Focus on hydrotherapy

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

# Welcome



This edition of *inspire* marks a big milestone for The Children's Trust. We are celebrating 40 years as a charity helping children who have experienced a brain injury.

**I want to say a massive thank you.** Over the years, supporters like you have helped us make a life-changing impact to the lives of children with brain injury and neurodisability.

Tadworth Court in Surrey, just outside of London, has been where our specialist school and our national rehabilitation centre are based. It is also what many of our residential children and young people call their permanent home. As well as the children coming to us, we also offer support in homes and schools via our community teams working across the UK.

I'm fortunate to meet many wonderful children and their families who tell me just how much

we have helped them through the most challenging times of their lives. **You can read some of their inspirational stories in *inspire*, including William's – who is featured on our front cover.**

Since our doors opened in 1984, we've transformed thousands of lives. I joined the charity in November 2023 with a determination to drive our ambition to help many more children in the future. **I do hope you will stay together with us on this exciting journey, we can't do it without you.**

Best wishes,



**Mike Thiedke**  
Chief Executive

P.S. Playing our Weekly Lottery is another way you can support us. For just £1 a week you'll have the chance to win £25,000!

Play now. Visit [lottery.thechildrenstrust.org.uk](https://lottery.thechildrenstrust.org.uk) or call **0330 123 1475**.

On our front cover is William – read about him on page 10.



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



01737 364 349



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



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**

Stay in touch, follow us on:



@childrenstrust



@childrens\_trust



@childrens\_trust

TCT\_1994 August 2024

Registered charity number 288018

# Making an impact

**Thanks to your support, we have helped thousands of children with brain injury and neurodisability over the last 40 years.**

## Did you know?

Every year, around 40,000 children experience a brain injury through an illness or accident – that’s one every 30 minutes.

Source: NHS England

## Children’s recovery

**83%**

of goals set were achieved as expected, or better than expected

**84%**

returned home, without needing equipment or their home adapted

**81%**

went back to their school and friends

Source: The Children’s Trust Impact and outcomes report 2021-2023, Rehabilitation service

From our Friends & Family Survey April 2024:

**‘Excellent medical care.’**

**‘Understanding, compassionate, supportive.’**

**‘The staff are amazing.’**

## Family focus

Apr 2021 – Dec 2023

**95%**

**of families would recommend The Children’s Trust**



Stroke	22%
Inflammation	10%
Head injury	20%
Tumour	11%
Other	19%
Spinal cord injury	1%
Lack of oxygen	17%

# Fun-filled learning



**We believe that learning happens everywhere, not only in the classroom. During school holidays we organise and run fun outings and activities for pupils from our school and those attending rehabilitation.**

Children have the opportunity to explore new activities and expand their horizons. Our teams put a lot of imagination and creativity into making enrichment weeks fun, dynamic and inclusive – as you can see from our May half term adventures!

## **Enriching outings and activities**

Our first trip was to Swingbridge Community Boats, who run cruises along the River Wey. Travelling along at a gentle pace, the children enjoyed the tranquillity of the water and being close to nature.

We also invited Kingswood Shetlands and Friends to come and meet the children.

They introduced them to animals including rabbits, insects and a bearded dragon. They learned about their habits, diets and unique characteristics.







### Annual Art Festival

Enriching outings and activities happen all-year around. Another highlight is The Children's

Trust School Annual Art Festival, where children get hands-on, exploring and immersing themselves in art.



Zac (pictured above) who was supported by The Children's Trust five years ago after his own brain injury, came in to spend time with teenagers currently in rehabilitation.

The finale to an amazing week was a festival with family, staff and volunteers! The children enjoyed creating glitter tattoos, playing games, doing crafts and more.

### Top marks from Ofsted

At a recent Ofsted visit, inspectors were impressed with our activities and said: *"Staff here are determined that pupils should experience life in all its richness, regardless of their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)."*



### Your donations count

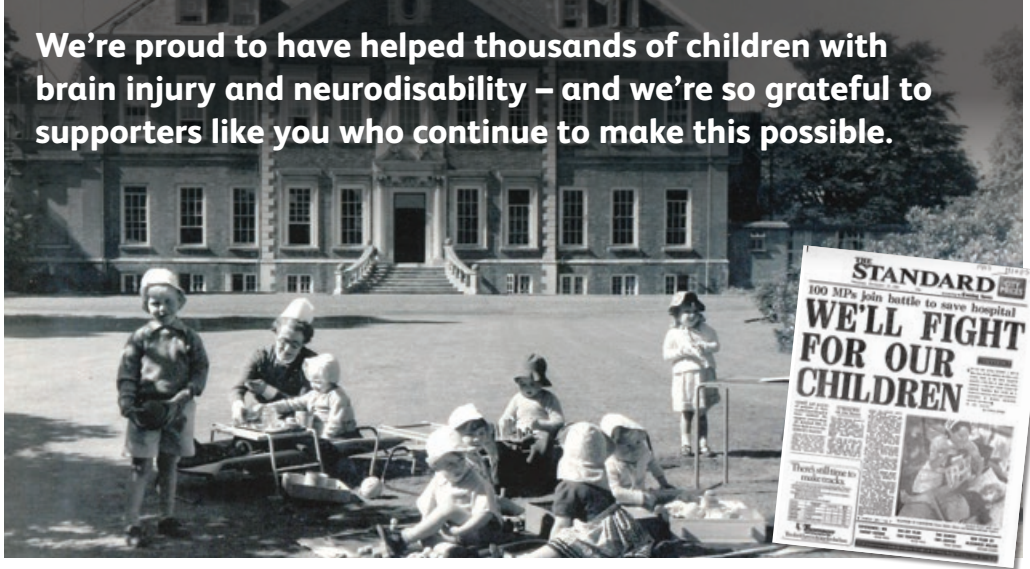
Together we're making sure that children with brain injury don't miss out on the fun of childhood. Help us give children more of these amazing opportunities – please donate at

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate-inspire](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate-inspire)



# Celebrating 40 years

We're proud to have helped thousands of children with brain injury and neurodisability – and we're so grateful to supporters like you who continue to make this possible.



2024 marks forty years since The Children's Trust first became a registered charity.

## Where it all began

In 1927 Tadworth Court was purchased by Great Ormond Street Hospital to become its country branch, thanks to a legacy of £20,000 left by a Mr Peter Reid. It had over 106 beds and became an important training facility for nurses.

## High profile campaign

In 1982, only 40 beds remained and the future of Tadworth Court was under threat. The local community, nurses, children, parents and

celebrities joined together to prevent its closure. National media took up the cause and a 'Save Tadworth' campaign raised £80,000 in just five months. Tadworth Court became a trust and was registered as a charity.

## Known and trusted

We were officially established as The Children's Trust Charity in 1984. Today we are the leading centre of excellence for children with brain injury, known and trusted for our expertise. Our reach extends beyond Tadworth, with community teams supporting children all over the UK.

1927

Legacy from Mr Peter Reid secures purchase of Tadworth Court by Great Ormond Street Hospital

1960s

Tadworth Court has 106 beds, operating theatre and training facility for nurses

1970s

Growing costs of medicines and surgery put Tadworth Court at risk of closure

1980s

National campaign to save Tadworth – led by nurses, parents and children, together with the local community and celebrities

## Help make a difference to children with brain injury long into the future

When Mr Peter Reid left his legacy in 1927, he could not have anticipated what amazing work it would go on to achieve. His legacy can be felt to this day. We hope you'll consider leaving us a gift in your Will.

### To find out more visit

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/something-special](http://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/something-special)

### The Friends of The Children's Trust

was established almost 40 years ago as an independent charity. Their support stems from the original fundraising team for The Children's Trust and their dedicated committee has worked tirelessly to raise money through events, and by inspiring the local community to support us and the children we help.

We're incredibly grateful for everything they have done for us and for the difference they have helped us make to the lives of children with brain injury and neurodisability. Most recently they have generously funded summer outings for the children and young people we support.



Tadworth Court



Archie Norman House



New Cheyne Centre



Tadworth Court Gardens

**1984**

Management transferred to Tadworth Court Trust – now known as The Children's Trust

**1990s**

New specialist centre for children with acquired brain injury opens

**2000s**

New residential rehabilitation centre Archie Norman House opens

**2010s**

New parents' accommodation was opened to support more families

**2020s**

Achieved 'Outstanding' from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted





**Abbi Songhurst, one of our highly specialist speech and language therapists, tells us more about her work.**

## About my role

I provide therapy, support and care for children who have difficulties with communication, eating, drinking and swallowing after a brain injury.

I specialise in working with children with complex communication needs where there may be a need for an alternative or augmentative communication system to support or replace spoken language. This may be using signing, paper-based systems or through use of technology. I also work with some children on their production of speech (sounds) or their understanding and use of language (words and how we put them together into sentences).

## What I do

My day starts around 8am when I catch up with the nurses who've been looking after the children in the evening or overnight.

I work within a multi-disciplinary team including (but not limited to) physiotherapists,

occupational therapists and psychologists to provide a tailored rehabilitation programme for each child working towards specific goals set with the child and their family. I often integrate my therapy and support into other sessions such as school lessons or music therapy.

We involve parents and carers in the therapy programme, so that they can continue to support their child at home. When a child's rehabilitation placement comes to an end, I work with my colleagues, the child's community team and school to ensure the right support is in place going forwards.

## An example of therapy

My work can have a significant impact on a child's independence and their ability to communicate their wishes. There was one particular child I worked with, who found it difficult to make himself understood due to problems coordinating the muscles for speech. He had a history of learning difficulties and communication had always been a struggle for him.

First, I put in place a communication book to support his functional communication. This consisted of symbols which he pointed to in order to communicate. We then trialled him with an electronic communication device which contained the same symbols, however there was voice output, so the device 'spoke' the words and sentences. He would then imitate this with his own voice. We worked on his speech clarity alongside the use of technology. His ability to make his wants and needs known increased alongside his confidence, socialisation and his independence in making choices and decisions.

It was lovely to see the boy communicate with his dad and the joy it brought them both. His



## Why is speech and language therapy needed after brain injury?

Communication is about how we understand language, express ourselves and interact with those around us – it is an essential part of everyday life and one most of us take for granted.

Communication is complex and involves a combination of physical, cognitive and language skills and relies on many areas of the brain working together.

When a child suffers a brain injury, it can affect these areas of the brain and how these areas work together to communicate.

This can result in difficulties:

- Producing intelligible speech sounds
- Finding the right words to say and organising these words into sentences
- Understanding language they hear or keeping up with conversations
- Interacting with their family and peers.

Speech and language therapy also supports with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties as these skills can also be impacted following a brain injury.

dad told me that it was the first time he had been able to have a conversation with his son and fully understand him.

You can read more about how my work supports children in William's story on the following pages.

### Why I work at The Children's Trust

The Children's Trust offers therapists time to build relationships with the children and their families and time to offer meaningful, individualised support. Thanks to our

supporters, we have access to a range of quality assessment tools and equipment that we can use to assist our therapy.

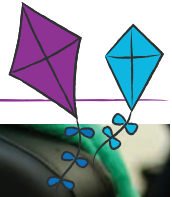
### What I love about my job

Communication is integral to our daily lives and something we often take for granted. It is so rewarding seeing the progress in the children we support. Being able to communicate is so important for children, for their wellbeing, socialising and so that they can communicate their choices and decisions.



Abbi helps William with his communication skills

# Finding William



**It felt as if William had lost everything when he had a severe brain injury. But our specialist rehabilitation team helped him find new ways to be himself again.**



William had been born prematurely after experiencing a suspected stroke in the womb. After this difficult start in life, William was unable to communicate verbally, or to eat or drink without help. Despite his challenges, William was happy, active and thriving at a school for children with special needs.

## **A seizure left William unconscious**

But in April 2023, at the age of 12, William had a prolonged seizure. He suffered a cardiac arrest, kidney failure and damage to his gall bladder and pancreas. The effects of the seizure were so severe, that it resulted in a brain injury. In hospital, William was unconscious for ten weeks. His mum Michelle and dad Paul were told that William might not survive.

## **Referred for specialist rehabilitation**

Fortunately, William's condition stabilised and after eight months in hospital, he came to The Children's Trust in Tadworth for intensive rehabilitation. It was an upheaval being hundreds of miles away from the family home,

but William's mum Michelle was able to stay on site for the next 12 weeks.

In hospital, his parents had never had the chance to talk with doctors about William's brain injury. Our psychological support team, using their in depth knowledge, spent time with his parents to help them make sense of what had happened and understand his needs.

Our whole team supported William with 24-hour care, medical support and rehabilitation therapy.



William in a therapy session with Abbi

### Expertise that made the difference

William's parents desperately wanted him to regain some mobility and be able to communicate. After a traumatic time in hospital where William had suffered pain and had been very scared, they longed more than anything to see his smile and for his personality to shine through again.

Abbi Songhurst, our highly specialist speech and language therapist, worked with William for more than 12 weeks focusing on communication and eating.

### Finding new ways to communicate

Abbi helped William to gesture and nod for 'yes' or look away for 'no', and to work on his sounds. Michelle told us: "He plays games where we say 'ready, steady' and he makes a sound for 'go'. We've even had a 'ma' for Mum. It's huge."

As William's movement in his limbs improved, Abbi was able to teach him how to use switches attached to his wheelchair to communicate 'yes' or 'no'. With repetition and rewards, such as switching on his favourite cartoon, he made great strides. "We know more about what he's thinking, it's a real breakthrough," says Paul "they've tapped into something we always knew was there".

### Eating for the first time

William had never been able to experience the joy of eating food because he'd always been fed through a tube.

Our speech and language therapist Abbi took William on a remarkable journey of food discovery, gradually introducing him to different flavours and textures and giving him the chance to smell, see and taste.

He was very cautious at first, but Abbi soon built his trust. With the help of the switch,

William was able to communicate his favourite foods and ask for more. "It was such a breakthrough to have him confidently eating each day and enjoying it," says Abbi.

### Future looking brighter for William

Our team showed Michelle and Paul how to help William, so they could carry on his rehabilitation at home. Abbi has been in close contact with William's local community team, ensuring they have the knowledge, equipment and therapy in place to support him at home and at school.

Read more about the family's story –

[www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk/williams-story](http://www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk/williams-story)

### Thank you for helping William

Your donations help us buy equipment like the switch to enable children like William to communicate. Make a difference for more children at:

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate-inspire](http://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate-inspire)



Physiotherapy on the Innowalk machine helped William to work on his movement

# Making a splash



**Take one look at our hydrotherapy pool and you can see why children love coming here for their therapy sessions.**

Our on-site hydrotherapy centre is one of the most used facilities at The Children's Trust. Children from both the rehabilitation centre and the school have a weekly session to support their physical development, rehabilitation and wellbeing.

The purpose-built pool is warm, colourful and inviting, and music adds to the fun and sensory experience. Children who have lost strength or movement in their limbs enjoy the sensation of being able to move around more freely, which is wonderful for their confidence and wellbeing.

## Specialist therapy

Our team of physiotherapists and support assistants have specialist aquatic training so they can maximise each child's potential in the pool with carefully planned activities.

Hydrotherapy maximises children's ability to move. As the water takes their weight, they can focus on strengthening their muscles, building stamina and improving balance.



Zac moving independently in the water



## Top 3 benefits of hydrotherapy

1

Buoyancy of the water reduces pressure on muscles and joints and allows for greater freedom of movement.

2

Heat of the water increases circulation and helps ease pain and stiffness.

3

Viscosity of water provides resistance to build muscle strength and supports body weight to improve strength and balance.

Physiotherapist Charlie Williams who's based at The Children's Trust School loves taking the children for their regular hydrotherapy.

She says: "There are always lots of smiles and laughter at the hydrotherapy sessions. Many of the children are in wheelchairs, so being in the pool gives them a wonderful sense of freedom.

We often see them make extraordinary progress with independent movements that they're just unable to do on dry land."

## How your donations help

Each child is carefully lowered into the pool by a hoist system. Hoists cost £5,500 and the pool has multiple sizes to cater for different ages. We use your donations to fund our specialist support and equipment like this. Could you help today?

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate-inspire](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate-inspire)

Scan to donate



Finn enjoying his hydrotherapy session

# Sustainable retail

Find out more



Our network of charity shops across Surrey, Sussex and Kent are helping to protect the environment and promote more sustainable shopping. By buying, reusing and recycling pre-loved clothing, shoes, accessories, jewellery, homeware, books and toys, together we are stopping unnecessary landfill.

Last year, our 14 charity shops raised **£2 million** to support children with brain injury. To shop and/or donate, visit: [thechildrenstrust.org.uk/shops](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/shops)

## Find your local shop:

- High Street, **Banstead**, Surrey
- Nork Way, **Banstead**, Surrey
- St Peter's Street, **Canterbury**, Kent
- North Parade, **Chessington**, Surrey
- High Street, **Dorking**, Surrey
- Manor Road North, **Esher**, Surrey
- South Road, **Haywards Heath**, W. Sussex
- Gabriels Hill, **Maidstone**, Kent
- Belfry Shopping Centre, **Redhill**, Surrey
- Bell Street, **Reigate**, Surrey
- High Street, **Sevenoaks**, Kent
- The Broadway, **Stoneleigh**, Surrey
- Cross Road, **Tadworth**, Surrey
- Tattenham Cres, **Tattenham Corner**, Surrey

# Valuing volunteers

Since we became a charity 40 years ago, volunteers have played a vital part in our work. In June, we invited volunteers to Tadworth Court to celebrate our Volunteers' Week. There were awards in recognition of long service and the opportunity to connect with other volunteers and staff.



Volunteer retail assistant Danielle has a personal connection to the cause. Following her brain injury, she was supported by The Children's Trust.

## Helping children live the best life possible

Our 1,300 amazing volunteers dedicate 3,960 hours a month to support our work. From helping in the day-to-day running of our shops, to driving children to vital medical appointments and on fun trips out, our volunteers make a massive difference.

# Support our work



Every year 40,000 children in the UK suffer a brain injury. Many are left with devastating side effects that can impact the child for the rest of their life. So many families are unable to access the specialist rehabilitation and support their child needs to live the best life possible.

## Make a donation

Please make a one-off donation today or set up a monthly gift.

[thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate-inspire](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate-inspire)  
or scan this QR code



## Join our volunteers

Whatever your skills and experience, no matter how much time you can offer, we have a volunteering opportunity for you.

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

Drop us an email to

[volunteering@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)



## Register for an event

Find out more about our events programme at [thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events](https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events) or email us at [events@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:events@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)

## Upcoming events:

- Elf Fun – 8 November - 20 December 2024
- The Children's Trust Winter Festival – 7 December 2024
- London Landmarks Half Marathon – 6 April 2025

## Make a life-changing difference

Every child has one life, and we are determined to make it the best one possible.



**We can only achieve this with your support, thank you.**

 Santa's Grotto  Christmas market  Arts & crafts  Festive illuminations

Make this Christmas magical

with The Children's Trust

# Winter Festival 2024

Saturday 7 December 12pm - 7pm

Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5RU

**Find out more**

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

 [events@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:events@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**

The Children's Trust, Tadworth Court, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5RU  
Registered charity number 288018. TCT\_1970\_07/24

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