

Impact Report 2023/24



Helen & Douglas House

your local children's hospice

Impact Report 2023/24



I'm delighted to share our latest Impact Report which shows the impact you have made over the last year, helping local terminally ill children and their families.

I wanted to take this opportunity to showcase many of the different ways the public have supported Helen & Douglas House, and the differences these have made to our services and the families we care for.

This report contains many of the successes which you have made possible, including increasing our bed nights by 39% and being able to support 120 more hospice admissions. We also continue to get overwhelming positive feedback from families using our services.

We have had cause for celebration with our 'Outstanding' rating from our regulator, the Care Quality Commission, as well as receiving a silver accreditation by Investors of Diversity. We celebrate diversity of the children and families who use our services as well as ensuring we are an inclusive organisation for staff and volunteers too.

I am very proud of what we have achieved this past year and I would like to thank you, our amazing supporters, for helping us achieve this. Without you none of this would have been possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Long". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Jane Long
Chief Executive Officer

Supporting animal therapy through celebration donations



Harriet and Miriam

Animal therapy has a calming effect, distracting a child from their anxiety or pain symptoms. It also gives families a chance to make memories together, whilst offering siblings the opportunity to enjoy their time at the hospice too. We also arrange for special animal visits for end-of-life wishes.



Elliot with Thelma the chicken

Harriet and Miriam selflessly chose to ask for donations to Helen & Douglas House for their 6th birthday instead of presents which raised £336. This was enough to pay for Farmer Gow to bring 6 animals to visit the children at our Easter party at the hospice.

Thank you for helping 580 children, parents and siblings this year.



About us

We support families with children with life-shortening conditions who live in the Thames Valley area. We provide care during the child's short life to help them live life to the full. Then after their child dies, we are there to help families through their grief.

We continue to offer 24/7 access to specialist medical advice, in line with NICE guidance. Our medical team now includes three part-time consultants, as well as senior



associate specialists from a range of backgrounds.

We contribute to research within the field of paediatric palliative care and support related education for professionals of all disciplines throughout the region.

The services we offer families



End-of-life care

Symptom management & pain management stays

Specialist support at home

Supportive stays at the hospice

Social worker support

Siblings support

Stay and play days

Bereavement support

The Little Room where a child can stay after they die

Transition to adult care

Physiotherapy

Supporting siblings to live well by organising an event



One of the sculptures at the Kingham Sculpture Exhibition

At Helen & Douglas House we provide support for the whole family. Often siblings feel isolated and anxious because they have no one to talk to and no one who understands how they are feeling. So, we offer 1:1 sessions, group sessions, activity camps and trips, to help siblings cope and to form peer to peer relationships with others going through a similar experience.



Siblings at an activity camp

Kingham Lodge is a private house and garden that has hosted a fabulous sculpture exhibition biennially in aid of Helen & Douglas House since 2012. Last year, this wonderful event raised another £12,000 for the charity, enough to pay for 8 siblings to be supported for a whole year.

An Appeal to support our Outreach Services



Our Christmas Appeal

Our Outreach Service provides a seamless link for children and their families between the hospice, the hospital, their GP and home. Our nurse specialists and doctors visit families in their own homes and are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with help and advice over the phone.



Daniel with sister Hannah and brother James at home

Over Christmas, we asked our supporters to come together to help accelerate this area of our service. This appeal raised an incredible £45,015 from 774 wonderful donors. We were delighted to also receive funding for this from The Childwick Trust and Peter Harrison Foundation.



It cost nearly £6m last year to provide our specialist care and support to local children and their families.

Meet Riley

Stanley and Riley have been coming to Helen & Douglas House since 2015. Sadly Stanley died in 2022 but Riley still loves coming for his supportive stays.



Riley and mum Shailza at the hospice Christmas party

"I always look forward to our Helen & Douglas House stay. It is because I know Riley is going to be looked after to my standard and we are going to have a good rest, sleep and time for ourselves. Without them I would be tired, emotionally drained and very stressed. Just the thought of not having the hospice makes me feel sad."

Shailza, Stanley and Riley's mum

Supporting bereavement care through partnerships with local companies



Ultimate Activity Camps fundraising



Lily-Mae died in 2020 and Leanne and her family were supported by Helen & Douglas House before and after her death

We offer individualised bereavement support to families, for up to two years, following the death of their child. We help them through these difficult days, weeks and months. This includes support from a bereavement support worker as well as groups and events for bereaved parents, siblings and other families members.

Ultimate Activity Camps began a two-year corporate partnership with Helen & Douglas House in 2023. Not only have they raised £4,610 but they also help us in other ways; providing 20 free camp days for siblings we support and organising fundraising activities at their camps. This was enough to pay for 36 hours of bereavement counselling.

Meet Nathan

Nathan was born in 2011 with a severe life-shortening condition. Nathan loves coming to Helen & Douglas House.

"It's the only place I will leave Nathan. The care he receives at Helen & Douglas House, both physically and mentally, is brilliant."

Jenny, Nathan's Mum



Supporting play through donated share capital



Play not only brings joy to the children and their families creating precious memories, but also offers an alternative way for children to explore and express themselves.

Helen & Douglas House is delighted to have a number of supporters who donate unrestricted gifts to the charity. This allows us to spend their donations on any area of work that is of immediate priority. Gifts can be made in many ways.



Donation of shares



Jesse at music time with play worker Chloe

One of our long-time supporters Ann Edwards kindly donated £57,000 in shares to us. We have a process in place to ensure the transfer of shares is as easy as possible and allows Helen & Douglas House to put the money to the most impactful use straight away. This gift of shares was enough to pay for two of our play specialists for almost a whole year.

What you have helped us achieve in 2023/24

580 Children, parents and siblings were supported
⬆️ **35%**

1,240 Bed nights of care
⬆️ **39%**

40 Children supported to die in their place of choice
⬆️ **33%**

825 Bed nights for supportive stays were provided
⬆️ **53%**

127 Bed nights for children at the hospice for end of life care
⬆️ **101%**

5,214 Hours of support provided by the Community and Family Support team
⬆️ **29%**

58 New families came for first stays
⬆️ **over 100%**

Supporting our nurses through gifts in Wills



Do you have a Will?

Nurse Lucy with Habibou

Our Nurses provide holistic family-centred, one-to-one care for the children staying at the hospice. They have the expertise to do what matters most – helping children with life-shortening conditions create treasured memories and make the most of every day.

Throughout the year we received an incredible £627,000 from 30 people who chose to leave us a gift in their Will. This is an incredible choice to make and leaves a lasting legacy of impact for these people and their families. This was enough to pay for 10 of our incredible Nurses like Lucy for a year.

What families have told us

Every year we ask our families for their views and use their feedback to improve the services we provide. Here are some of the results from our family survey conducted in April 2024.

83% said we gave them time and space to just be a parent and to make precious memories together*

“You help manage our child’s symptoms so we are able to do things as a family and our child can do things independently.”†

“Sibling support has been so wonderful helping my other children to manage following their sibling’s death.”†

87% said there was always enough help available to meet their child’s personal care and nursing needs**

“It is hugely reassuring to know there is a team there who have the time and expertise to support us.”†



93% said they were always treated with respect and dignity by staff**

The survey also showed us evidence that our care gave children and their parents these benefits:

- Improved their and their child's quality of life
- Gave them the confidence to care for their child at home
- Improved their social relationships
- Supported families physical and mental health

92% said they felt safe leaving their child under our care**

"We are really grateful for the bereavement support sessions which have been a great help to get us through this desperately difficult time."†

87% said their overall experience of our service was very good**



Supporting hospice renovations through grants and gifts in kind



Last year, we identified a need to renovate some of our unused space to create an additional suite that could be used to support families staying at our hospice for end-of-life care. We wanted to ensure that we had family accommodation that was both fully-accessible and met their needs for it being a relaxing and luxurious space to spend difficult times in at the end of their child's life.

The creation and re-development of our new flexible family space and Little Room would not have been possible without donations from Ian and Mave Richens, B&Q Foundation,



Our new flexible family space bedroom for parents



The Little Room where a child can stay after they have died

Shanly Foundation, Syder Foundation, Edward Gostling Foundation and the Englefield Charitable Trust. We are also so thankful to JT Interiors who gave a huge amount of pro bono support, and gifts in kind from Holifield Decorators, Sanderson Design Group, Cotswold Outdoor Solutions, Rich Newman Joinery, Blue Glo, Nicholls, Oxford Stone Craftsmanship, Gallery Direct, Thorngate Upholstery, Sunbury Designs, Debbie Reynolds, Kershaw Transport, Flat Pack Stanley, Sherfeild Flooring, Karndean Wooden Flooring, Edmund Bell, Wemyss Fabric, Jones Interiors, Mark Johnstone.

Thank you for helping us provide these new services



New or extended services for local families



Positive impact on local families

Stay and play days	These reduce parents' isolation and loneliness by meeting other families. It also brings them joy having a day out and creating happy memories with their own families. They are great for families who can't manage overnight stays.
Music sessions are running at least once a week	Music helps our children relax, reduces anxiety and can distract them from pain. They also improve verbal communication, social interaction, and the quality of parent-child relationships.
New Keepsake Circle bereavement service where songs are written and produced in a child's memory	This helps parents work through their grief sharing happy memories of their child after their death.
Investment in new entertainment and gaming technology to help more young people including making music with minimal movement	This provides opportunities for social interaction between children and is an enjoyable distraction for many children experiencing pain.
New flexible end-of-life family space and redesigned Little Room where a child can stay after they die	Families can spend time close to their child at the end of their life and when they die, helping treasure every last moment with them.
We now offer support to families experiencing the unexpected death of their child who we have not supported prior to their death	Families do not feel alone and unsupported because our team are there take care of them at this difficult time.
New support group for grandparents	Reducing anxiety and helping grandparents cope with witnessing the grief of their son or daughter as well as their own loss.

Helping to buy medical equipment by taking on a personal challenge



Mary Skydiving

Our services couldn't function without the medical supplies we need to give the children the expert care they need. This could be anything from medicines or syringes to oxygen or dressings. Many of the families we have looked after chose to fundraise in memory of their child. "Angel mums" Nicky, Rachel and Mary who met at a Helen & Douglas House bereavement group, took part



Alessia with one of our Nurses

in a tandem skydive last year raising an incredible £7,195. This was enough to pay for medical supplies at the hospice for three months. We run a number of events throughout the year, including runs, cycles, skydives, family fun days, and firewalks. We are so grateful to everyone who challenged themselves to take part in these and in doing so, raised money for Helen & Douglas House.

Supporting our Nurses and Community and Family Support Services by shopping with us and Gift Aiding your donations



Our Marlow shop

One of the reasons we can offer such high quality support to families is our one-to-one care. Whether it be a Nurse at the hospice or one of our Community and Family Support Services team, we are able to offer individualised care tailored around each families needs.



Some of our amazing nursing team

Last year our 24 shops raised a massive £1.4m which is the highest amount raised ever so thank you for shopping with us. This was enough to pay for our entire nursing team as well as all our Community and Family Support Services team for a year.



87% of our funding came from donations, legacies and our shops – so thank you to everyone who has fundraised, donated or shopped with us.



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*Thank you for helping
local terminally ill children
live life to the full*

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