



Impact Report 2025

www.littleheroesni.org



LITTLE HEROES

The Charity for The Royal Belfast
Hospital for Sick Children





Welcome to our 2025 Report



Ivan Martin
Chair of the Board of Trustees

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first Little Heroes Impact Report. 2025 marked our first full year as Little Heroes following the rebrand from Helping Hand in November 2024. This was an important step for the Board, recognising the need to develop from our past and create a charity that is sustainable, contemporary and reflective of the changing needs of our community – one that can continue to support local sick children and their families long into the future. This was a year of establishing the charity, embedding the new brand within the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children and our local community, as well as building strong connections with supporters.

We have great confidence in the leadership and the small, dedicated team behind Little Heroes, especially in their ability to grow the charity's impact in the years ahead. Looking forward, we are excited to bring forward new projects in 2026 and to share our three-year strategy with you. Central to this will be continued listening – understanding the needs of our Little Heroes and their families and working in close partnership with the paediatric team to support their vital work.

We are enormously proud of what has been achieved during this challenging year and optimistic about what lies ahead, with your ongoing support.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Little Heroes, I would like to thank every individual, group and business that has donated to the charity during 2025, and to assure you that your support is making a real and lasting difference to the lives of local children and families who need it most.

A message from our CEO

Mary McCall
Chief Executive Officer



2025 has been a special and significant year for Little Heroes, a year when we focused on building strong foundations, while staying close to the children, families, and paediatric teams we support.

We have invested in creating a contemporary, forward-thinking charity that will provide sustained support for local sick children and their families. Alongside strengthening our finance, administration, and governance, we have remained focused on engagement and responding to real needs within the hospital.

During the year, we supported a variety of projects to enhance care and improve the hospital environment, while also providing access to a range of training and development opportunities across multiple specialisms. We have supported new equipment and technology, funded play resources and facilitated the social work team to respond to financial and practical hardship when needed at the hospital – and importantly we have made considerable progress towards the establishment of dedicated parent accommodation and improved facilities for families, with more to come in 2026.

We are proud to have created both visible and quieter moments of joy and significance – from staff appreciation initiatives; special visits to patients by our Ambassadors; through our support of the Memory Walk for bereaved families; to the many small and personal acts of kindness that made meaningful differences and created important memories for individual patients and their families throughout the year.

We showcased our innovation through the development of a range of digital fundraising and mass participation initiatives including a variety of first ever events such as the Easter 'Egg'sentials Appeal, the Belfast Marathon, Fair Head Abseil, and our Super Little Heroes Equipment Appeal, where we raised vital funds while also providing practical support to sick children and their families.

While the hospital is based in Belfast, our charity proudly represents young patients and their families from across Northern Ireland and we are grateful for the support we received during 2025 from throughout the whole region. We were also honoured to be named the Lord Mayor of Belfast's charity in our first year, which helped to raise our profile within Belfast and throughout Northern Ireland.

Sparkle Season brought a special lift to the hospital at the end of 2025, creating moments of connection and joy for children, families and staff, culminating in our inaugural Sparkle Ball and the debut performance of our fabulous Sparkle Choir – showcasing the incredible courage, talent and enthusiasm of children cared for at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

2025 was a landmark year for everyone involved in Little Heroes – a year of investment and growing momentum and engagement. As we look ahead to 2026 and the development and launch of our three-year strategy, we are confident in the extraordinary impact we can make in the years to come.

A huge thank you to our small but mighty team for their exceptional level of commitment and skill demonstrated during 2025, and to you, our generous community – together we can make sure that we put our Little Heroes first, always; and be there for all those who love and care for sick children throughout Northern Ireland.

We are only getting started, and the best is yet to come!

Mary McCall

Our Story

Established in 1997 by medical staff within the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, our charity began with a simple aim: to improve care for children and support families when they need it most.

In November 2024, we rebranded from Helping Hand to Little Heroes, putting children at the heart of our identity to recognise their strength, courage, and resilience. Today, we are proud of how this new identity is taking shape and how deeply we are now part of everyday life in the hospital.

We support children and families at every stage of their healthcare journey, facilitating immediate needs in hospital while investing in education, research and innovation to improve future paediatric care across Northern Ireland.

This Impact Report reflects the responsibility we carry. Every day, we respond to the real and urgent needs of children and families, made possible by the kindness and generosity of our supporters.



We put our Little Heroes First, Always

Our Charitable Objectives

- **Funding equipment and maintenance of the estate at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children**
- **Furthering Education and Research into the diagnosis and treatment of childhood illness**
- **Providing associated and complimentary services not available on the NHS (as directed by clinicians)**
- **Funding wellbeing initiatives for the paediatric team at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children**
- **Supporting patients, parents, siblings, and those who love and care for sick children**

Our Purpose

To inspire the generosity of our community to support local sick children, their families and the paediatric team at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

Every year, around 40,000 children and young people from across Northern Ireland are treated at the Children's Hospital. Many face serious or complex conditions, relying on the skill and commitment of specialist medical and multi disciplinary teams who work tirelessly to care for them.

Thanks to the support of our donors and fundraisers, we have been able to introduce a range of high impact initiatives within the hospital that help make that care even better.

With around 1 in 10 children in Northern Ireland requiring care at the Hospital, each year, our work supports the thousands of Sick Children from throughout our region, when they need it most.

10%

Of children in Northern Ireland will need care at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, approx each year.



Commitment to Public Benefit

Everything we do is focused on improving care, wellbeing and outcomes for children while supporting the families and staff around them.

We work closely with clinical teams to ensure every donation is used where it will have the greatest impact.

Our commitment is simple: to support the best health outcomes for our Little Heroes and be there to support their families.



Our Vision, Purpose, Mission & Values

Our Vision

A future where local children affected by illness have the best possible chance, whatever their future holds.

Our Purpose

To inspire the generosity of our community to support local sick children, their families and the paediatric team at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

Our Mission

‘We put our Little Heroes first, always’



Our Values

Our values guide how we work, how we make decisions and how we treat people.

H – Hope

We believe in the difference we can make.

E – Empathy

We listen, seek to understand and respond with compassion.

R – Respect

We treat everyone with dignity and kindness.

O – Openness

We are honest, approachable and accountable.

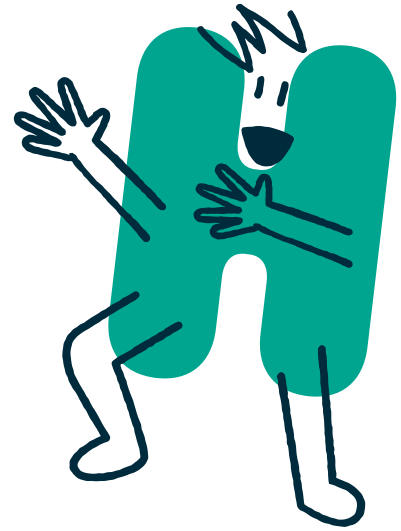
E – Empowerment

We encourage ourselves and others to make a difference.

S – Sparkle

We create moments of joy, celebration and hope.

HOPE
EMPATHY
RESPECT
OPENNESS
EMPOWERMENT
SPARKLE



An Independent Purpose for a Unique Hospital

Little Heroes is an independent charity, led by a Board of Trustees, raising funds solely for The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

Known by many families simply as “The Children’s”, the hospital is located just one mile from Belfast city centre. It is the only specialist children’s hospital in Northern Ireland, caring for young patients from right across the region.



The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children A Year in Numbers

For over 150 years, the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children has cared for generations of families, providing expert treatment and a place of support during some of the most difficult times in a child’s life. Today, it remains at the heart of children’s healthcare in our region.

The scale of care delivered within the hospital is remarkable. Behind every number is a child, a family and a story of strength, care and compassion.

These numbers reflect not just activity and the significant numbers of children who are impacted by childhood illness, but also the extraordinary work of the paediatric team and the essential role the hospital plays in caring for children and families across our region.

REGIONAL HUB



The Regional Hub for Paediatric Excellence:

As Northern Ireland's only dedicated specialist acute hospital and center of excellence, the RBHSC's responsibility spans all paediatric medical and surgical specialisms, delivering expert care for complex conditions across the entire province.

No.1

Specialist Care

The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children is the only specialist paediatric hospital in Northern Ireland.



Outpatients

43,900

Daycases

3,357

A combined reach of 43,900 outpatient appointments and 3,357 daycase procedures, ensuring continuous care and diagnostic support for the children of Northern Ireland.

107 BEDS

Specialist Capacity

A dedicated 107-bed facility providing expert care for patients ranging from newborns to sixteen years of age.

6,681

Inpatient Stays

6,681 inpatient stays, representing complex, long-term, and acute medical treatments.

38,596

Emergency Care

38,596 during 2024/25 – attendances at the Emergency Department, serving as the first point of contact for acute illness and trauma.

No.1

Complex Critical Care

Home to the only Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) in the region, providing complex clinical care for the most seriously ill local children.



Specialist Areas in The Children's Hospital

The hospital serves as the regional hub for specialised paediatric medicine in Northern Ireland. From the precision of neurosurgery to life-saving intensive care and the breadth of rare and lifelong childhood illnesses, these specialist areas provide world-class treatment to children facing complex health challenges.

Paediatric Units

- Cardiology
- Diabetes
- Endocrinology
- Fractures
- Gastroenterology
- Haematology
- Infectious Disease
- Inherited Metabolic Medicine
- Medical Oncology & Haematology
- Medicine
- Trauma & Orthopaedics
- Nephrology
- Neurodisability
- Neurology
- Neurosurgery
- Plastic Surgery & Cleft surgery
- Respiratory
- Rheumatology
- Surgery
- Urology
- Eyes & ENT
- Dentistry



Every young patient is supported by a multi-disciplinary team of experts spanning physiotherapy, dietetics, and social services. At Little Heroes, we are proud to support these departments, ensuring that medical excellence is matched by the comfort, resources, and specialist equipment children and families need during their stay.

Little Heroes Impact 2025

These projects represent just a few of the many ways Little Heroes has supported children, families and the paediatric team at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children throughout 2025.

Together, these projects show the wide range of support Little Heroes provides; helping to improve care, support families and make a real difference every day.

Supporting equipment and hospital spaces

We invested in vital equipment and ward improvements to make the hospital environment more comfortable for patients and practical for staff.

- Replacement Parent Beds in Allen Ward, improving safety and comfort
- Specialist audiology equipment for more accurate hearing assessments
- Ward TVs across Belvoir Ward and PICU, to provide welcoming distractions
- Specialist lighting in Paediatric Intensive Care

Supporting education, training and research

Investing in professional development directly improves long-term outcomes for patients by keeping frontline teams supported by training, education and research to develop skills, share knowledge, and continue to deliver high-quality care.

- Support for the Paediatric Critical Care Conference in Belfast
- Funded specialist nursing places at the Paediatric Trauma Day (NIPATS)
- Advanced Paediatric Life Support (APLS) certification for frontline nurses
- Specialist neurodisability training to accelerate early diagnosis pathways
- Funding support for the NI Paediatric Education and Research conference





Providing additional support beyond NHS services

We provide resources identified directly by clinicians that sit outside standard NHS budgets but make a profound difference to recovery and wellbeing.

- Support for urgent treatment abroad for children with highly complex needs
- Specialised play therapy resources for developmental needs
- The “Mighty Movers” early physical rehabilitation programme in PICU
- Pre-surgical molding equipment to support infants with cleft conditions
- Specialised physiotherapy rehabilitation programmes for young people living with cystic fibrosis
- Financial funding for the play department to fund resources and visits

Supporting the paediatric team

Caring for staff is an essential part of caring for the children. In 2025, We funded initiatives that recognise staff dedication and foster a positive, collaborative workplace.

- Staff education and training events
- Hospital-wide staff celebrations and appreciation events
- Clinical Nurse Specialist forums
- Recognition events for long-serving staff
- Opportunities for teams to connect and share best practice

Supporting families and those who care for them

Our work extends to the whole family, providing practical and emotional stability during incredibly challenging times.

- Support for the annual Memory Walk, bringing bereaved families together to remember loved ones
- A dedicated social work support budget to assist families in immediate crisis
- Activity days for children recovering from burn injuries and their families
- Practical assistance with patient travel costs and educational devices
- Family experiences, wellbeing activities and provision of clothing and supplies to those in need



Impact in 2025

Working hand-in-hand with Medical Experts

Applications for support are submitted directly by the paediatric team via our dedicated portal. Each request is evaluated by our Board of Trustees to ensure every donation is directed where it will have the greatest possible impact.

Little Heroes Support: 100% of staff surveyed reported that Little Heroes funding was beneficial to their department.

Breadth of Impact: Support successfully reached a wide range of specialties including the Regional Cleft Team, Paediatric Intensive Care, Endocrine Department, Metabolic Team, and Surgical Wards.

Reach: Supported projects impacted thousands of children annually, with one supported department alone caring for over 2,000 patients.

*Data captured from the Little Heroes survey from funding recipients.

100%

Staff reported that Little Heroes support funding was beneficial to their department.

Firsthand impact of Little Heroes projects

Improving Patient Experience: The introduction of distraction tools like Virtual Reality (VR) headsets and sensory equipment has made medical procedures significantly less traumatic, reducing child anxiety and the necessity for sedation.

Supporting Families: Initiatives like the Endocrine Family Day have helped isolated families build long term peer networks. Additionally, providing essential equipment resources like hospital-grade breast pumps has removed major stress for mothers of infants undergoing in surgery.

Enhancing Environments: From specialist lighting in Intensive Care to child-friendly décor in family rooms, we have created welcoming spaces that support recovery and provide a sense of “home” within the hospital.

Supporting Staff: Beyond physical equipment, funding has enabled specialist nurse training and wellbeing initiatives that help our teams maintain morale and deliver world-class care.



Project Feedback



“Two of our patients were part of the Children’s Choir who performed at the Little Heroes Sparkle Ball; seeing them perform and have increased confidence was a really special moment for our whole team.”

Paediatric Staff Member

“I didn’t realise how alone I felt before until I met everyone (at a Family Day funded by Little Heroes). It was like she was describing my whole life... You have lifted a massive amount of weight off my shoulders that I didn’t know I was carrying. I’m beyond grateful.”

Parent of a child with a Bone Disorder



“The provision of DynaCleft enabled us to shape the nose prior to surgery... and having breast pumps available for mothers who wish to express milk takes away a lot of stress and worry at an anxious time.”

Regional Cleft Team

“Little things like a TV for a child or a diversion of any description is so important. These are amazing resources for our families that the NHS simply would not provide; we would have had to raise these funds ourselves.”

Paediatric Intensive Care Unit



Direct feedback from the paediatric team at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

“It is wonderful to have the Little Heroes Team in the hospital. They are focused on improving services and care for our wonderful children, but they also provide treats for the staff which is fantastic for morale. It is great to see the amazing things they do to raise funds.”

“The support means so much to our team personally because we are now able to enhance care in ways that weren’t previously possible. Little Heroes is seen as a progressive, dynamic change in the hospital.”



A message from the paediatric team to our donors and supporters

“The Children’s Hospital is an amazing place – with very clever, caring and dedicated staff. But the children and their families are the most important humans who come through the door every day. Your donations really make a difference. Thank you.”

“Your support is making a real and lasting difference. From reducing fear during treatment to improving environments and supporting families, your generosity is helping create a more compassionate hospital experience for children and their families.”

“Your support has made a truly meaningful difference, helping reduce fear, ease procedures, and create a calmer, more positive experience for families.”

“Your donations really make a difference. Thank you.”

Alex’s Story



Watch Alex’s Story at – www.littleheroesni.org/story/alexs-story

On the 8th of December 2023, Alex’s life took an unimaginable turn. While lying peacefully in her cot, Alex suddenly suffered a brain haemorrhage.

Alex is a child filled with adventure, curiosity, and playfulness. She soon set her sights on her next big challenge – learning to walk. With her K-Walker and the love and support of her family and friends, Alex embarked on a special journey in August called ‘Alex Goes Walking’.

Together, they set a goal to walk five miles, an extraordinary achievement for Alex, considering everything she had endured in her short life. They dedicated this journey to raising funds for Little Heroes, a charity that had become a lifeline for them.

The community has rallied behind Alex in ways that have touched the family deeply. Ryan’s employer, Used Cars NI, organized a fundraising walk along the North Coast, raising an incredible £4,205.25 for Little Heroes. The Chambers family’s ‘Alex Goes Walking’ event surpassed all expectations, raising an astonishing £13,148 – far beyond their original £8,000 target.



“I chose to volunteer for Little Heroes because my daughter is a patient at the hospital, so I’ve seen first-hand the difference the charity makes. Supporting Little Heroes feels incredibly personal to me, as it gives me the opportunity to give something back to a place and a team that means so much to our family.

A stand-out moment for me was at a recent event where I had the chance to hear directly from hospital staff about the impact of the charity’s work. Listening to their experiences really brought home just how important Little Heroes is, not just in providing resources, but in making difficult situations a little brighter for children and their families. It made me feel genuinely proud to be part of the team. Many of the businesses that support Little Heroes, support in practical ways too – decorating the wards, helping out with our events.”

Nadine, Alex’s mummy

Community Fundraising

Community fundraising grew significantly in 2025, driven by schools, families, workplaces and local groups across Northern Ireland.

From organised events to small everyday acts of kindness, every single effort helps us remain right where we need to be: by the side of patients and staff.

The Fairhead Abseil

On Saturday, June 21st 2025, over 50 brave participants descended the challenging 90-foot face of Fairhead Cliff. This event brought together a fantastic mix of doctors, nurses, hospital staff, parents, and corporate partners, collectively raising an incredible £42,000.



The Belfast City Marathon

Every mile covered was a beautiful display of community support. From parents running in heartfelt gratitude to our energetic corporate teams and individual supporters.

One of our favourite moments was seeing our “Big Cheer Squad” outside the Children’s Hospital, bringing patients, staff, and volunteers together on the pavement to cheer on the runners as a team.



Our Incredible Community



Even in a year of big internal changes, the heart of our charity never missed a beat. We are immensely grateful to the families, individuals, and businesses who drove our success this year.

While we wish we could name every single person who cheered us on, here are just a few stories that capture the incredible spirit of our supporters this year:

After receiving life-saving care as a baby, 10-year-old **Cathán** ran his very first 5K, raising a wonderful £2,540 for our Super Little Heroes Appeal.

Rachel Patton and her family hosted a Quiz Night in memory of their daughter, **Olivia**, raising £3,847 to help other families.

Oonagh McKenna took on a high-altitude trek to Machu Picchu in memory of her son **Ethan**, raising £10,060.83 through her incredible bravery and strength.

Inspired by the exceptional care their daughter **Indie** received during her surgeries, **Laura Holland** and her family raised £5,207.08 as a heartfelt “thank you” to the hospital team.

For five years, **Richhill Tyre Centre** has stood by us. In 2025, their annual car show raised a fantastic £7,015 to support our vital work.

Seven-year-old **Eoin** and his family climbed the Mourne Seven Sevens, raising a monumental £11,269 in gratitude for the care he received as a toddler. He proved that you’re never too small to be a hero!

We are so grateful to **James Brown & Sons** for their £1,250 donation. This funded a new CuddleCot for the Emergency Department, giving grieving families the precious gift of time and comfort.

To celebrate little **Isaac’s** brave recovery after ten weeks in intensive care, the community at **Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle** and friend **Sandra McArthur** raised a phenomenal £10,600.



Over 80 tractors took part as **Fergal and Anne-Marie McGovern** hosted a **magical Christmas Tractor Run** from Ballinderry to Coagh, raising an amazing £10,909.84 to support young heroes at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children!

These stories represent just a fraction of love and effort poured into Little Heroes during 2025. Every event, challenge, and donation, no matter the size, helps us stay right where we need to be: by the side of children and families at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.



Corporate Fundraising

We are incredibly grateful to the businesses and corporate partners who support Little Heroes. Their commitment over the past year has played an important role in helping us grow and reach more children and families.

These partnerships provide a strong and reliable foundation for our work. By supporting Little Heroes, these organisations enable us to enhance vital medical care, specialist equipment, and extra support that makes a transformative difference to children's experiences in hospital.

Go Pig

We are incredibly grateful to Go Pig Meals for delivering fresh, healthy, and nutritious meals to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) each week for parents and carers. When a child is critically ill, many parents refuse to leave their bedside even for a moment. This generous support ensures that families stay nourished and cared for during the most stressful and unimaginably difficult times. Thank you for bringing vital comfort directly to our PICU families.

Conveyortek

From conquering Fairhead Cliff to volunteering at the Belfast City Marathon and crafting a custom display box for our Easter Appeal, the incredible team at Conveyortek continuously goes above and beyond to support Little Heroes.



Together, we are helping to improve care and create better experiences for children and families across our region.



Championing Our Mission

While our gratitude extends to all who have contributed, we would like to specifically recognise several **key partners** whose extraordinary support has driven our success this year:

- Davy UK
- Hutchinson Engineering
- Kindred Collection
- Maurice Flynn
- Concentrix
- Digg Deep for Kids
- The Odyssey Trust
- Into Media



concentrix

IntoMedia



These partnerships and many others, ensure that we can continue to deliver world-class support to every child who passes through our doors.

"At Davy, we are proud to support Little Heroes and the incredible work they do for children and families across Northern Ireland. What makes our partnership particularly meaningful is seeing firsthand how fundraising and charitable support are transformed into projects that provide real comfort, hope and practical support to children and their families.

One of the most valuable aspects of our partnership has been the opportunity to hear directly from the healthcare professionals and families who experience the impact of Little Heroes every day. Hearing their experiences and the difference the charity makes to children and families brought its work to life in a way that statistics alone never could.

Through our partnership, we have gained a deeper appreciation of the challenges many families face and the difference that compassionate, community-focused support can make. Little Heroes has a remarkable ability to turn generosity into meaningful outcomes, ensuring families feel supported when they need it most, and we are delighted to play a small part in helping them continue that work."

Louise Burke, Assistant Wealth Manager, Davy Private Clients UK

"We chose to partner with Little Heroes because their mission resonated deeply with us, both as a business and as individuals. Their dedication to supporting children and families during some of the most difficult times in their lives reflects values we strongly believe in – care, compassion, and community.

One of our team members initially nominated Little Heroes, having seen firsthand the incredible difference they make. Their personal experience and passion for giving back really struck a chord with all of us, and it reinforced our desire to support a cause that has such a meaningful and direct impact.

From the outset, it was clear that Little Heroes makes a tangible difference. The impact of their work is not only meaningful but also visible. After visiting and hearing more about what they do, we were genuinely moved and inspired, which made it an easy decision to get behind their cause. We wanted to support a charity where our efforts would truly matter, and where we could clearly see the positive outcomes of our involvement.

Equally important is the way Little Heroes brings people together. Their work has inspired our team, encouraged participation across the business, and given us a shared purpose beyond our day-to-day roles. Choosing to partner with them has allowed us to contribute to something bigger than ourselves, and that's something we value immensely"

Louise McSparran, HR Administrator, Hutchinson Engineering

"We are immensely proud to have worked with Little Heroes to support, promote, and champion the charity's invaluable work across Belfast and beyond. Supporting those in our local communities is central to The Odyssey Trust's charitable aims, and Little Heroes is the perfect example of an organisation that is making a genuine difference to people's lives."

Laura Small, Relationship & Business Development Manager at The Odyssey Trust



The Super Little Heroes Appeal

The Super Little Heroes Equipment Appeal 2025 was a proud landmark moment for Little Heroes. As our first-ever public equipment appeal, we set out with a big vision: to raise £300,000 for life-saving and life-changing equipment at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

Backed by Our Community, The Fantastic Five & Digg Deep for Kids

When we invited Northern Ireland to step up and become superheroes for our Little Heroes, the public answered in full force.

Leading our online campaign were five well-known content creators, collectively known as **The Fantastic Five**:

Nathan Anthony: Best-selling author and creator of Bored of Lunch.

Emma Kearney: TikTok sensation and beauty creator.

Ibe Sesay: Q Radio presenter.

Olivia McVeigh: Hair & beauty creator and podcaster (recognised as one of BBC's 100 Women in 2024).

Anna Corry: Parenting and lifestyle creator behind Blossoming Birds.

We were also delighted to partner with Caroline O'Neill and the team at Digg Deep for Kids for the first time, who played a key role in using their reach to rally local support.

Our community responded with extraordinary generosity. Every single donation ensured that young patients across Northern Ireland receive the best possible care, from faster diagnoses and smoother treatments to safer recoveries.

Together with the families, businesses, and supporters who gave what they could, they proved that you don't need a cape to be a superhero.

The Impact

Some of the items on the list that were requested:

- Rapid Infusers for emergency fluid delivery
- Gastro Scopes & Portable Ultrasound Devices for rapid, accurate bedside diagnoses
- High-Flow Oxygen Systems to support acute respiratory cases
- Diagnostic Neurophysiology Kits to monitor nervous system activity
- Simulation Tools for PICU to train clinical teams on complex procedures

To everyone who donated, shared, and supported our very first public appeal:

Thank you for helping us give our Little Heroes the exceptional care they deserve.

Patient to Fundraiser

This year, we were deeply moved by the many “Little Heroes” who, even while facing their own health journeys, chose to step forward and help others.

By turning their own experiences into a force for good, these children are helping to fund the future of medical care and family support. They are so much more than patients; they are our most inspiring partners. They prove to us every single day that you are never too small to make a massive difference.

Cody: BBC ‘Young Hero’ nominee Cody and his family raised **£5,500** in gratitude for the care he has received since infancy.

Cora: The Drumquin community and O’Kane’s Irish Dancing School raised a combined **£8,608** through local events and a festive appeal to support Cora’s ongoing journey.

Grace: Following specialist surgical care, Grace and the Clarkhill Farm community donated **£720** to support the nursing teams at the RBHSC.

Annie: After recovering from a cardiac arrest in the PICU, Annie raised **£1,000** through her creative “25 Days of Christmas” awareness campaign.

Evie: To mark Evie’s recovery and resilience, the Ardstraw Community Playgroup raised **£1,060** for the PICU and Barbour Ward.



Noah: Inspired by Noah’s courage through multiple brain surgeries, his father Kris raised nearly **£27,000** by completing a series of ultra-marathons.

Croía: In appreciation of the 6.5 weeks Croía spent in neonatal care, her parents Aimee and Ronan raised **£2,500** via a community coffee morning and raffle.

Cadain: To support our Metabolic Nurse Specialists, Cadain and the Convent of Mercy Nursery School hosted a “Stripey Socks Day,” raising **£900**.

Indie: Supported by Teconnaught GAC and the Down Triathlon Club’s marathon relay team, Indie and her family raised **£1,400** for the charity.





The 'Egg-sential' Easter Appeal

During the Easter period, Little Heroes launched the **'Egg-sential' Appeal**, a province-wide campaign inviting the community to donate practical, essential items for children and families facing hospital stays. The initiative was officially launched at the Royal Belfast by **Olympic Gold Medallist and Little Heroes Ambassador, Rhys McClenaghan**, whose involvement helped amplify our message to schools, businesses, and community groups across Northern Ireland.

To ensure the comfort and well-being of our patients, we focused exclusively on the collection of new, essential items that make a clinical environment feel more like home.

The campaign was brought to life by the creativity of the local business community; **TREECO** generously donated their time and resources to create a bespoke **Giant Easter Basket**, while **Conveyortek** designed and manufactured a custom secure display box to house the donations within the hospital, Belfast Storage donated a lock-up unit for the year to store the stock, and **Z Removals** provided vital transport support.

This collaborative effort ensured that throughout the year, we were able to provide immediate, practical support to families during their most stressful moments.





Sparkle Season: Lighting Up the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

Christmas in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children is always special. In 2025, our Sparkle Season was our most ambitious yet, with one simple aim; to make sure every child in hospital felt the warmth, joy and spirit of the season.

Bringing the Outside In

There was a real sense of excitement across the hospital as Q Radio broadcast live from the wards, sharing festive music and messages with listeners across our region. It was a special way for our Little Heroes to feel connected beyond the hospital.

We were also delighted to welcome our incredible charity ambassadors and special guests to the hospital wards this year, bringing a welcome distraction and lasting memories to families. Actor Anthony Boyle brought smiles to the bedsides while reading stories to the children, Conor Glass, captain of Derry GAA took time to lift spirits across the entire hospital, and Olympic Gold Medalist Rhys McClenaghan delighted young patients by bringing in his historic gold medal for them to see and hold.

Sponsor a Sparkle

Our community came together in a new way through Sponsor a Sparkle. Supporters were invited to light up our virtual Christmas tree in honour of someone special or a Little Hero. It was a simple idea that created a powerful sense of connection, showing the support that surrounds the hospital.



Christmas at W5

Little Heroes is incredibly proud to have been named as one of two official charity partners for The Odyssey Trust for the 2025/26 season. In this partnership, one of the highlights of the season was our special event at W5 Science and Discovery Centre. Over 300 children, families and members of the hospital team enjoyed exclusive access to the centre for an evening of fun and celebration.

Away from the hospital setting, families had the chance to relax and spend time together. With festive treats, activities and a visit from Santa, it was an opportunity to create happy memories and simply enjoy being together.

The Sparkle Ball

The season concluded with the Sparkle Ball, bringing together partners, supporters and friends of Little Heroes. It was a celebration of everything that has been achieved and the difference our community continues to make.

The support shown during the evening will help us continue our work into 2026 – ensuring that the impact of Sparkle Season is felt long after the decorations come down.

The evening featured an unforgettable, first-ever performance by The Sparkle Choir—made up of children cared for at the children's hospital alongside the Belfast School of Performing Arts, which was so deeply moving it brought the entire room to a standing ovation.

Social Media Interactions

Through vibrant storytelling and transparent reporting, we have reached more people across Northern Ireland than ever before. Every share and comment helps amplify the needs of the Children's Hospital, turning digital interaction into tangible support.

Our platforms allow us to keep our community "deeply rooted" in the daily life of the hospital, proving that the spirit of Little Heroes extends far beyond the hospital walls.



Make sure to follow us!



Facebook: [littleheroesni](#)



Instagram: [littleheroes_ni](#)



Linkedin: [Little Heroes](#)



2026 – Looking Ahead

While 2025 was a year of building, 2026 is a year of doing. Our Trustees and the Little Heroes team are now focused on:

Growing our support through creative and sustainable new ways to fundraise.

Building relationships with local businesses and partners who share our vision.

Growing our family by expanding our volunteer and ambassador networks.

Making every penny count, ensuring every pound raised brings real comfort and care to the children, families, and staff at Northern Ireland's only specialist children's hospital.

Little Heroes enters 2026 with a renewed sense of purpose and a clear promise: to ensure every child at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children has the very best care, comfort, and support.



The Charity for The Royal Belfast
Hospital for Sick Children

A Heartfelt Thank You!

We are incredibly grateful for the community that surrounds our Little Heroes. Your support makes everything we do possible.

To the paediatric team at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children and everyone who works behind the scenes – thank you. Your care, skill and dedication make a difference to children and families every single day. It is a privilege to support you in your work.

To our Board of Trustees – thank you for your time, guidance and commitment. Your leadership helps ensure we remain strong, focused, and ready for the future.

To our Little Heroes team and partners – thank you for your dedication and professionalism. You go above and beyond to make sure we are there for families when they need us most.

To our supporters and volunteers – thank you. Your generosity and kindness are at the heart of everything we do, helping us fund vital equipment, support families, and improve care.

And finally, **to our Little Heroes and their families** – thank you for your strength, courage and trust. You are the reason we are here, and you inspire everything we do.



**Give
a little,
support
our Little
Heroes.**

littleheroesni.org





The Charity for The Royal Belfast
Hospital for Sick Children

www.littleheroesni.org

T: +44 (0)28 9027 8872

E: support@littleheroesni.org

Registered Address:

Little Heroes, 3rd Floor,
Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children,
180 Falls Road, Belfast, BT12 6BE

