

Read about the impact you have made to the lives of patients and staff at Leicester's Hospitals.

Autumn 2024 Newsletter



Leicester
Hospitals
Charity

New library trolleys help volunteers bring comfort to patients like Sallie



Inside:

♥ Pages 2-3

Cold cap technology gives chemotherapy patients an empowering choice

♥ Pages 8-9

New trolleys help volunteers deliver the cherished library service across Leicester's Hospitals

♥ Pages 4-5

'Highs and Lows' support group help children and families with type 1 diabetes

♥ Pages 10-11

New care packs bring comfort to vulnerable patients at Leicester's Emergency Department

♥ Pages 6-7

New walkers bring a new sense of confidence for physiotherapy patients

♥ Page 12

Become a friend of Leicester Hospitals Charity

Giving patients like Karen a choice, so she feels empowered in her care

Patients like Karen have a greater sense of control during their care, thanks to the arrival of cold cap therapy that helps to prevent hair loss during chemotherapy.

Because of incredible support from people like you, more patients can now choose to receive treatment to prevent hair loss during their chemotherapy. Ten new cold caps along with three new cooling systems are now available to patients who can choose the therapy during their chemotherapy infusion.

This simple therapy consists of a cap attached to a cooling system, which circulates coolant liquid around the inner cap, reducing the temperature of the scalp. **This helps to protect the hair follicles and limits the damage caused by chemotherapy drugs.**

Karen, from Uppingham in Rutland was diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer in May 2024. “It was out of the blue, **a complete shock**. I went into a spiral, googling everything to find out what was going to happen,” she recalls.

During her extensive research Karen found out about the cold cap therapy and asked about them during her initial appointment. “The breast care nurses explained how it would work, and the oncology nurse sent me a link to the website, which had videos and stories about the therapy” Karen explained.

Karen is an A Level Biology Teacher, and this fuelled her need to understand the therapy in detail. She felt able to make an informed choice about something that felt **deeply personal**. “When you think about cancer, you think about hair loss. It’s not the be all and end all, but I didn’t want to be just someone with cancer. I wanted to meet friends and walk down the street without people staring and saying, **‘That’s the lady with cancer.’**”

Clair Burroughs is a Macmillan Lead Systematic Anti-Cancer Treatment (SACT) Nurse and emphasised the importance of providing patients with options like cold cap therapy. “It’s about mitigating the psychological impact that hair loss can have on patients. It’s valuable and empowering to give patients a choice, especially during a time when they don’t feel like they have many options.”

Kerry, a Clinical Aid explained, “It feels good to give patients the choice of cold cap therapy. It feels like we can give them a small sense of normality by offering a therapy that helps to reduce the possibility of hair loss – something that a lot of people struggle to come to terms with.”

It’s been several weeks since Karen first began her treatment, and the therapy is working, **Karen has been able to keep her hair.**

It is because of your generosity that patients like Karen can keep hold of their identity, **giving them the strength to carry on fighting.**





Cold cap therapy is helping Karen to hold onto her identity throughout her chemotherapy treatment

Highs and Lows: Building a community of resilient families

Thanks to your kind gifts, Aryan can meet other children just like him.

Just before he turned four, Aryan was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. His mum Rupa didn't recognise the symptoms at first, she didn't even know children could have diabetes and with no history of the disease in her family, **Aryan's diagnosis came as a complete shock.**

It was a struggle accepting the challenges of Aryan's illness, he didn't like the daily injections and Rupa found it hard to hold back tears when he resisted them. Aryan began to feel like he was different to other children, and he didn't want to wear an insulin pump because that would make him stand out even more. **He just wanted to fit in with the other children and feel normal.**

Sadly, this experience is all too common for families navigating the challenges of diabetes. Nobody knows this better than Katy Sparrow. As a Senior Specialist Dietician at Leicester Royal Infirmary, she saw firsthand how some of her patients and their families felt alone in their struggle. So, **Katy had a bright idea** - to create a group away from a clinical setting to bring children and families together.

And that's how the 'Highs and Lows' group began. Because of generous supporters like you, this special group of children and their parents can meet up four times a year for activities like bowling, picnics, crazy golf and even trampolining. The wonderful diabetes team of specialist nurses, psychologists and consultants volunteer their time during evenings and weekends to ensure the events are a success.

Katy said "It's wonderful to be able to help so many families find the support they need in each other. More and more families are joining the group for each session, allowing them to build connections, share experiences, and create a strong community of care and understanding."

The first time Aryan and Rupa attended, they met the group at mini golf. Aryan was a little shy at first, but as he started playing with the other children, **something great happened.** Spending time with other children like himself gave Aryan a sense of belonging he had never experienced before. And seeing other children wearing their insulin pumps gave him the **confidence to wear one himself.**

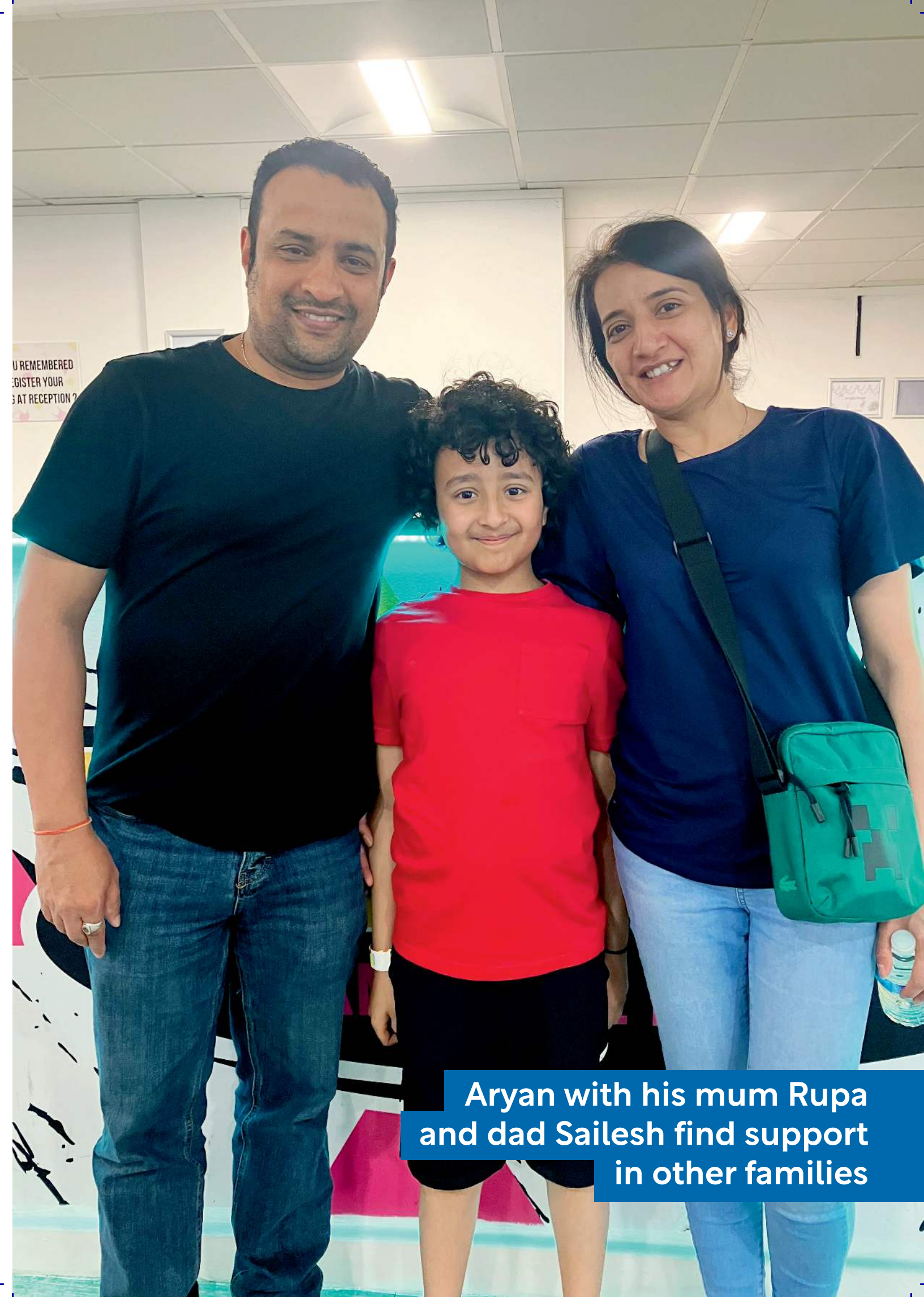
Now, at eight years old Aryan is passionate about helping other children with type 1 diabetes. He wants to start a YouTube channel and make videos teaching other children how to do finger prick tests, how to change their insulin pumps, and what to do if their blood sugars are low. **He even wants to be a Diabetes Doctor when he grows up.**

Aryan and Rupa are already looking forward to the next event, when they'll be joining the rest of the 'Highs and Lows' group for a picnic in the park.

Your generosity means Aryan and his friends can continue to meet up and inspire each other. Highs and Lows is so much more than a social event, it's helping to **build a community of resilient families who can find support in each other.**



The 'Highs and Lows' group
excited to bounce with friends at a
trampoline park in Leicester



**Aryan with his mum Rupa
and dad Sailesh find support
in other families**

Patients like George now have more confidence on their road to recovery

Two brand new hydraulic walkers are now in use on Leicester Royal Infirmary's trauma wards, only made possible by your generosity.

These top-of-the-range walkers help in the recovery of patients who have suffered a physical trauma through improved manoeuvrability and personalisation during physiotherapy.

The new walkers can be easily adjusted to suit each patient's individual needs. They feature hydraulic height adjustment, fully adjustable armrests, and adjustable foot brakes. These features ensure that each patient can use the walker in a way that best supports their mobility and comfort, providing a customised experience that **promotes independence during rehabilitation.**

George, from Groby in Leicestershire, recently experienced a fall and suffered a hip fracture. Following his surgery, the dedicated physiotherapy team on the ward have been helping him regain his strength and ability to walk.

Standard walking apparatus currently used for trauma patients are widely available on the wards and are adequate for rehabilitation. However, they do not offer as much personalisation compared to the new walkers. The added customisability and support of the walkers help to provide **even better care for hundreds of patients just like George.**

George shared his experience, saying, "I feel incredibly secure using the new walker, and I'm able to manoeuvre easily up and down the ward to do my exercises. The standard walkers on the ward are okay, but I feel much more restricted using them. **Thank you to the kind donors who helped to fund these new walkers for patients like me.**"

Emma Robery, Senior Physiotherapist at Leicester Royal Infirmary, emphasised the importance of the new equipment. "It's very important in the healing process that patients undertake physiotherapy and are able to manoeuvre in a safe and secure manner," she explained.

Emma added, "We have already seen **a really big difference in the confidence of our patients** who use the new walkers – even the first day after their surgery. This means that some patients find their physiotherapy easier and recover faster, allowing us to discharge them sooner to the comfort of their own homes. It would be great if we could have more of the walkers across the Trauma Unit."

It is only because of the generous gifts provided by people like you that patients like George now have access to the very best equipment that aids in their recovery, giving him more control, a better sense of security and confidence that was not possible before.

Your support is making a real difference in the lives of trauma patients at Leicester Royal Infirmary, helping them on their journey to recovery.



Emma and the team are delighted to help more patients with the new walkers and provide even better care



George using the new walker with confidence after his hip operation

Journey beyond the ward: How new book trolleys allow volunteers to bring patients like Sallie moments of distraction and relief

Thanks to you, patients like Sallie can find comfort in a book, immersing themselves in stories that provide solace during challenging times.

The hospital library service is offered weekly across Leicester's Hospitals, providing a wide selection of reading materials, including fiction, non-fiction, word searches, crosswords, magazines, and newspapers.

This cherished service has been made more efficient with **the introduction of three new library trolleys, funded by your generous support.** These trolleys are lighter and easier to manoeuvre through the wards, a significant improvement over the old trolleys that were donated from a local library years ago and allow the team of volunteers to get books easily on to the wards for patients to read. The old trolleys were heavy and difficult to steer, making it challenging for volunteers as they visited around **300 patients across ten wards each week.**

Across three hospital sites, a dedicated group of volunteers bring this joyous service to life. Each year, **they hand out over 1,600 books to patients,** ensuring that everyone has access to a world beyond their hospital bed. Volunteers, like Madonna and Marium, choose to spend their spare time making a difference in the lives of others. Both are known for their caring and professional approach, taking the opportunity when delivering the books to chat with patients, ask about their reading preferences, and even take requests.

The trolleys bring more than just books, they offer a unique way for the volunteers to engage with the patients and make meaningful connections.

Madonna is a recent graduate and has been volunteering for the last four months. She said "I feel incredibly privileged to bring a little bit of comfort to patients and see smiles on the faces of people who can sometimes be very poorly."

For patients like Sallie from Whitwick in Leicestershire, **the service has been a wonderful addition during her stay.** Sallie found herself in need of emergency care at Leicester Royal Infirmary following a serious fall. The news of a blood clot behind her knee was worrying, but the library service offered a welcomed distraction.

Sallie is deeply grateful for this service, which reminded her of the simple pleasures of reading during a challenging time. "There's nothing better than holding a book in your hands and becoming engrossed in a story. I was so pleased when the volunteers unexpectedly arrived to offer me some great books to read. It really took my mind off the bad news I received earlier" Sallie explained.

Thanks to your thoughtful gifts, our volunteers no longer need to struggle with outdated trolleys. This improvement has not only made their job easier but has also allowed them to spend more time engaging with patients, bringing moments of light relief and joy to those who need them most.



The new trolleys allow volunteers Marium and Madonna to bring distraction and relief for patients across the wards

Sallie was comforted
in finding a great book
to read during her stay
on Ward 36 at Leicester
Royal Infirmary



How your kind gifts are helping to provide additional support for vulnerable patients

Alastair Fawkes has been a dedicated Charge Nurse in the Emergency Department (ED) at Leicester Royal Infirmary for over a decade. We sat down with Alastair and heard about the exciting new initiative that is making a real difference to patients with additional needs.

What inspired you to become a nurse?

I chose to go into nursing because I wanted to help others. Whilst working as a Healthcare Assistant and Support Worker in the community, I developed a passion for supporting people with additional needs.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

The most rewarding part of my job is knowing that I have made a difference—whether it is helping a patient feel better during a tough time or supporting a staff member through a challenging situation. Seeing the positive impact I have on others is incredibly fulfilling.

What does a typical day or night shift look like for you?

Every shift is different, which is one of the things I love about my job. I am often in charge of ED or leading a specific area within it. This involves managing the team and ensuring that all patients receive the best care possible. The diversity of tasks and the fast-paced environment make each day unique.

Can you tell us about the ED care packs and why they were needed?

We realise that accessing ED can be incredibly stressful for patients with additional needs. I had been looking for ways to make their experience better for some time, and the care packs seemed both simple and effective. The items within the care packs range from stress balls to fidget bracelets that provide a simple way for patients to find some comfort and relief in a stressful situation.

How have these packs made a difference for patients?

These packs have truly been a lifeline for our patients, particularly those who are vulnerable. The bright lights, constant noise, and the overall intensity of the ED environment can be overwhelming. These packs offer a sense of calm amid that storm. The difference they have made is profound; they have brought comfort and reassurance into a situation that can often feel intimidating.

Have these packs also helped colleagues deliver better care?

Definitely. The packs are quick to hand out and accessible for colleagues, making it easier to overcome barriers to care. Sometimes we want to do more for our patients, but we are limited in what we can offer. These packs are that 'something extra' that allows us to provide even better care.

Is there anything you would like to say to supporters of the Charity who made these packs possible?

I want to express my deepest gratitude. Your contributions have created something that has such a positive impact on both our patients and colleagues. You really have helped to make a great thing happen. Thank you.

The care packs include ear defenders, an eye mask, stress ball, a sensory bracelet, an adult colouring book with pencils and patient information.



Alastair and the team have care packs on hand to help provide comfort for vulnerable patients

Have you considered a monthly gift?

Become a friend of
Leicester Hospitals Charity



NHS

University Hospitals
of Leicester
NHS Trust

£10
A MONTH

could help to fund new equipment for volunteers to help comfort patients like Sallie

£15
A MONTH

could help to fund groups like 'Highs and Lows' that help children like Aryan find other children just like him with type 1 diabetes

£50
A MONTH

could help to fund new technology like cold caps that help to reduce hair loss for patients like Karen who need chemotherapy



Phone

Call us on:
0116 258 8709



Online

Visit online at:
**LHCharity.org.uk/
givemonthly**
or scan the QR code:



Post

Send your donation form to:
Leicester Hospitals Charity,
Belgrave House,
Leicester General Hospital,
Gwendolen Road,
Leicester, LE5 4PW.

Find us on:    