Rays of Sunshine
Granting Magical Wishes Every Day

# A Journey of Joy:
# Our Impact 2025/26



# A Message from our Chief Executive and Chair of Trustees

**Every hour in the UK, another family receives the devastating news that their child is seriously ill. In some of life's darkest moments, Rays of Sunshine exists to bring light, creating moments of joy, hope and connection when they are needed most.**

As we reflect on 2025/26, we do so with **enormous pride in all that has been achieved, and heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has made it possible.** It has been a year of incredible impact, meaningful progress and renewed ambition for the future.

Together, we have granted **251** magical wishes, reached **8,670** children across **57** hospitals, and brought **1,291** people together through **33** Wish Community events. Behind every number is a child, a family and a moment that matters. Whether it's the excitement of a long-awaited wish, the comfort of a hospital visit or the connection found in a community of people who truly understand, these moments can make an extraordinary difference.

Our work is about so much more than a single moment. Serious illness doesn't end at the hospital doors, and neither should the support available to children and their families. Our **Journey of Joy** is our commitment to being there from diagnosis, throughout treatment and beyond, creating opportunities for happiness, connection and lasting memories at every stage.

Throughout this report, you'll meet families including **Melissa's, Alfred's, Summer's and Oscar's**, whose experiences remind us why our work matters so deeply, and the profound difference that a little sunshine can make.

This year has also marked an important chapter in the leadership of our charity. This year has also marked an important chapter in our leadership. After 23 years as Chair of

Trustees, Steve Allan OBE stepped down and became our first **Lifetime President**. We are immensely grateful for Steve's extraordinary dedication and vision. As leadership transitions to Jane as our new Chair of Trustees, we look to the future with fresh energy, building together on this remarkable legacy.

We are equally proud of the people who bring our mission to life every day. Being recognised as one of **The Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2026** is a wonderful reflection of the passion and commitment of our team, whose determination to make a difference sits at the heart of everything we do.

But none of these achievements would be possible without you. Our supporters, partners, volunteers and fundraisers are an essential part of every child's **Journey of Joy.** Your generosity does more than fund wishes and programmes. It creates hope, brings families together, restores a sense of possibility and reminds children that, even in the most challenging circumstances, there is still so much to look forward to. And as proud as we are of what we have achieved, we are even more excited about what lies ahead.

**We are entering an exciting new chapter for Rays of Sunshine.** With a new organisational strategy launching soon, we have a clear ambition to build on our momentum, extend our reach and deepen our impact. We are strengthening our foundations, investing in our people and developing new opportunities to ensure that even more children and families can experience the joy, hope and support they deserve.

Our vision is one where no child facing serious illness misses out on the magic of childhood. With your continued support, we are determined to make that vision a reality, creating more moments of sunshine, more lasting memories and a brighter future for thousands more children and families.

**Thank you for being part of our story, for believing in the power of a wish and for helping us make every moment count.**

**With heartfelt thanks,**





**Amy Chambers**
**Chief Executive Officer**

**&**

**Jane Sharpe**
**Chair of Trustees**

# Stephen Allan OBE appointed Lifetime President of Rays of Sunshine

**After more than two decades as Chair of Trustees, the appointment of Stephen Allan OBE as our first Lifetime President reflects his enduring connection to the charity.**

In 2003, Stephen co-founded Rays of Sunshine alongside six of his close friends: Timothy Allan, Daniel Coleman, Grant Fox, David Saul, Timothy Shaw, and Mark Shipman, who all shared a belief that every seriously ill child deserves moments of pure joy. Since then, we have granted over **9,000 magical wishes** and brought moments of joy and hope to **more than 100,000 children and their families** through our wishes, ongoing support in hospitals across the country and special community events that bring families together.

Under Stephen's leadership as Chair, what began as a small but determined charity has grown into a nationally recognised organisation, supported by an extraordinary network of celebrity ambassadors, corporate partners, patrons, and supporters.

In recognition of both his exceptional contribution to the media industry and his services to charity helping young people, Stephen was honoured with an **OBE in the King's 2025 New Year's Honours List** - a fitting acknowledgement of the profound impact he has had on thousands of young lives.

His appointment as Lifetime President is a fitting recognition of his extraordinary contribution to Rays of Sunshine and the lasting difference he has made over the years. We look forward to continuing this journey with Stephen and creating many more moments of joy for seriously ill children and their families.



Stephen Allan OBE

# The Sunday Times Best Places to Work

We were delighted to be recognised as one of **The Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2026**, celebrating the inclusive, supportive, and joyful culture that sits at the heart of our organisation.

For us, a strong team and meaningful impact go hand in hand. The Journey of Joy we provide for seriously ill children and their families is only possible because of a team who live our values of **kindness, integrity, joy, empowerment, and connection** every day. These values not only shape how we work together, but how we show up for the children and families we support.




This award reflects the culture our team has built together that gives our people the **support, confidence, and sense of purpose** to do their best work.

By investing in a team that is united by shared values, we are better equipped to deliver joy, hope, and magical moments for seriously ill children and their families.

**100%**

**of colleagues said they are proud to work for Rays of Sunshine**

> **This award reflects the inclusive, supportive and joyful culture we have built together. The same joy, energy and celebration of special moments that we bring to seriously ill children and their families is central to our team too. I would like to thank every member of our team for the passion, care and dedication they bring each and every day. This recognition belongs to all of them.**
>
> **~ Amy Chambers, CEO**

# Melissa - Parent Ambassador

**My name is Melissa, and I'm incredibly proud to be a Rays of Sunshine Parent Ambassador. I'm delighted to bring you this Impact Report on behalf of the thousands of families supported by Rays of Sunshine.**

I first came to know Rays of Sunshine in the hardest days of our lives, when my daughter, **Madeleine,** was diagnosed with leukaemia at just 18 months old. In the hospital that became a second home, we were handed a folder about the wishes Rays of Sunshine grant to seriously ill children.



In the depths of illness, just knowing there was something to hope for, some milestone Maddie could reach, where she could choose anything in the world she wanted to experience, helped keep our spirits up beyond measure.

I remember sitting with her on the hardest hospital nights, when we couldn't yet see any light ahead, holding on to that hope.

Over the following three years, Maddie's wish evolved alongside her, as she drew pictures and wrote down her ever-changing dreams, until she finally settled on a treehouse rainbow room. The Rays of Sunshine team took care of every detail, and what they created went far beyond anything we could have imagined.

Maddie now has her own **"safe treehouse bed"**, as she calls it, complete with a roof and steps. For the first time, she has somewhere she truly feels safe at night; an oasis of comfort in the middle of everything she has had to face.

What I have come to understand is that Rays of Sunshine's support does not stop with the child who receives the wish. **It reaches the whole family.** Maddie's brother, Benjamin, has been welcomed into the community just as fully as she has, invited to events and given opportunities we could never have dreamed of for him, including work experience



at a company he has dreamed of joining since he was small.

It is a community I never knew existed, and one I didn't know we needed until we found ourselves part of it. Families further along in their journey seem to instinctively look out for those still in the thick of it, and there is a real sense that everyone is quietly carrying a bucket of water for the family whose fire is still burning. Both of my children now sing in the **Rays of Sunshine choir**, far from hospital corridors and treatment rooms, and have made friendships with children who simply understand.

Benjamin, now 14, has started fundraising for Rays of Sunshine himself, wanting other children to have access to the experiences that brought so much joy back into our lives. I don't think there could be a clearer sign of the spirit Rays of Sunshine creates than a teenage boy moved to give something back.

Talking to other parents in the Rays of Sunshine community, the same thing comes up again and again: the relief of being somewhere your child can simply be a child again, and where you are not alone. When your family experiences a wish with Rays of Sunshine, you become part of something joyous and enduring, in a way that is hard to describe until you have lived it.

**Watching your sick child, and their sibling, laugh and smile and simply be children again, however briefly, is one of the greatest gifts we have been given.**

We will never be able to thank Rays of Sunshine enough for the memories we have made, and continue to make, as a family.

**On behalf of every family who has been part of this community, thank you!**



**Melissa Andrews**
**Parent Ambassador**

# Who We Are & What We Do

**Rays of Sunshine brightens the lives of seriously and terminally ill children and young people across the UK by granting wishes and providing ongoing support in hospitals and events within the community.**

## The Need

**When a child or young person is diagnosed with a serious illness, their whole world - and that of their family - is turned upside down.**



Family life is suddenly replaced by hospital stays, gruelling treatment and an uncertain future.

Every hour, another family receives the devastating news that their child has a serious or terminal illness - a moment that changes their lives forever and leaves them facing an uncertain future.



Every year, **8,000 children and young people** in the UK are diagnosed with a life-limiting or life-threatening condition*.

Behind every number is a child and family navigating the unimaginable reality of serious illness.

**That is why Rays of Sunshine exists.**



We bring back hope, happiness and precious moments of joy, helping seriously ill children and their families create memories and find light during some of the darkest times of their lives.

Our work is far from a 'nice to have'. It is an important source of positive distraction for children and families at a time when they need it most. In fact, **97%** of professionals surveyed agree that a wish has a **positive impact on a child's response to treatment****.

Today, more than **134,000** **children and young people** in the UK are living with a serious illness***.

The need for our work has never been greater. We are determined to reach more seriously ill children and families who are desperately waiting for our support.

*Source: Together for Short Lives, Children's Palliative Care in the UK: Facts and Figures / Make Every Child Count research

**Source: Make-A-Wish UK research using Global Burden of Disease data and Together for Short Lives, Children's Palliative Care in the UK: Facts and Figures / Make Every Child Count research

***Source: YouGov research

> **Raising a child to a much happier state which leads to a better outcome, that's what Rays of Sunshine do.**
>
> ~ Dr Warren Hyer, Consultant Paediatrician & Consultant Paediatric Gastroenterologist



# Our Journey of Joy

**We are the only UK wish-granting charity supporting seriously ill children, young people and their families from diagnosis, throughout treatment and beyond, delivering a continued Journey of Joy.**



## Sunshine in Hospitals

Our hospital and hospice work enables us to reach children earlier in their illness journey. Through creative activities, experiences and projects we provide **positive distraction** that reduces anxiety and isolation associated with treatment while introducing families to the **wider support we offer.**



## Magical Wishes

At the heart of our work are life-changing wishes that create **powerful moments of joy and hope** for seriously ill children. Each wish is shaped around the child's interests and shared with loved ones, creating meaningful experiences and memories for families when every moment matters.



## Wish Community

Beyond the wish itself, we bring families together through our **Wish Community Events and shared experiences**. These opportunities help children and families build confidence, form lasting connections and discover new possibilities for as long as they need us.

# Cissy's Story

**The Journey of Joy and the difference Rays of Sunshine makes for seriously ill children throughout treatment and beyond can be seen through stories like Cecilia's, or Cissy as we know her.**

Cissy was born with a congenital heart problem, and has survived heart and kidney transplants, and tumours on her spine and brain. At 10 years old, Rays of Sunshine granted her wish to meet her idol **Joe McElderry**. The singer visited her in the hospital and gave a special performance at her bedside - a day that Cissy remembers fondly and considers one of the most amazing experiences she's ever had.



Over the years, Cissy has participated in Wish Community Events and has performed as part of our Sunshine Choir. She says, *"One of the big things for me was to meet other children who had gone through similar things that I had. You make these amazing relationships when no one else really understands."*



We worked with Cissy to create a special film on her Rays of Sunshine journey, from her wish as a child, through key moments in her life, to the young woman she is today. We're proud to share that ***Cissy's Story*** **won the Best Charity Film Award in the Medium Charity category at the 2026 Third Sector Awards**, with Cissy there on the night to accept the award with our team.

From her wish, to the friendships, experiences, and memories she has made along the way as part of our Wish Community, Cissy's story beautifully reflects the Journey of Joy and lasting impact Rays of Sunshine provides for seriously ill children and their families.

**Watch Cissy's story here**

# Sunshine Snapshot



**57**

Number of **hospitals and specialist wards** reached



**8670**

Number of children reached by our **Sunshine in Hospitals programme**



**251**

Number of **magical wishes granted**

# 9247

**Total number of seriously ill children and their families we supported this year**







**33**

Number of **Wish Community Events** organised

**506**

Number of **wish children** attending Wish Community Events

**Over £2M***

Total **money raised** to fund our services

**All financial figures in this report are subject to final audit and may be updated in the published Annual Report and Accounts.*

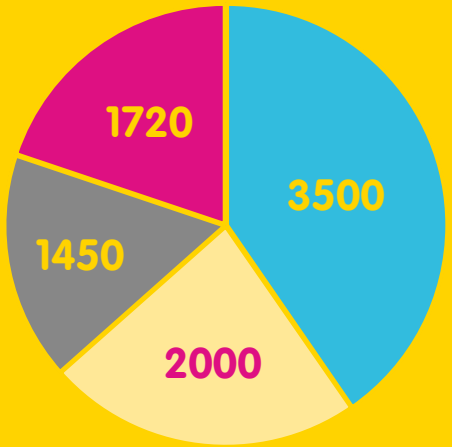
# Sunshine in Hospitals

**When a child is seriously ill, the hospital can become their whole world. Sunshine in Hospitals brings moments of joy, connection and normality back into that world.**

This year, our Sunshine in Hospitals programme brought joy to thousands of seriously ill children and their families across the UK through activity days, resources and practical support, creating moments of happiness and hope during some of the most challenging moments of their lives.

**57** Total Number of Hospitals/ Specialist Wards Reached

**8670** Total Number of Children Reached




Number of Children Reached by Activity

- Outreach & Hospital Activity Days: 1720 children reached
- National Teddy Bear Day: 1450 children reached
- World Book Day: 2000 children reached
- Sensory Bags: 3500 children reached

# Sunshine in Hospitals: Case Study

**The impact of the Sunshine in Hospitals programme is felt not only by the seriously ill children and families we support, but also by the healthcare professionals who see its difference first-hand.**

**Gemma Mussell**, Play Specialist at Hereford County Hospital, shares how the programme makes a meaningful difference to children and young people receiving treatment at the hospital.



Gemma says: *"Children who were feeling anxious before their medical procedures found great comfort in creating their bears. The teddies even served as soft little pillows for arms that were sore from repeated IVs."*

*"One child was seeking comfort after surgery but felt uneasy about being hugged by their parent, worried that the stitches would be disturbed. The bear, however, became the perfect cuddle companion, offering the comfort and reassurance they needed without causing any discomfort."*

On **World Book Day**, Gemma said: *"The families were all really pleased with the books received. It's helped them to take an interest in both the pictures and listening to stories, which in turn has helped with their overall listening skills with medical staff."*

**Read more about Sunshine in Hospitals**

> **When your child is sick, the hospital can be overwhelming and isolating. Rays of Sunshine brought joy back into our child's life and the Sunshine in Hospitals programme gave us precious moments of happiness.**
>
> **~ Parent of a child receiving support through our Sunshine in Hospital programme**

# Sunshine in Hospitals: Our Work in Action

**This year, working in close partnership with 57 specialist children's hospitals across the UK, our Sunshine in Hospitals programme was delivered through the following key initiatives:**



## Outreach & Hospital Activity Days

This year, we delivered **10 hospital activity days** and outreach events in specialist children's hospitals. These in-person events brought joy and positive distraction to children receiving treatment through arts and crafts, interactive activities and entertainers.

*"These vital days provide a welcome distraction during long hospital admissions, give our children something fun to focus on, and bring them together."*

**~ Play Specialist**

## National Teddy Bear Day

This year, we distributed **1,450 build-a-bear kits** to seriously ill children in hospitals across the UK, giving them the chance to create a furry companion of their own. National Teddy Bear Day offers children a precious opportunity to step away from the realities of treatment, enjoy some fun and creativity, and simply be a child.

*"A boy who had been very poorly was anxious about leaving his bed space. The opportunity to build his own bear gave him the encouragement to take those first steps. He was so proud of himself, showing how a simple moment of joy can make a meaningful difference."*

**~ Hospital Nursery Nurse**

## World Book Day

Each year, we bring the magic of World Book Day into hospitals, ensuring seriously ill children don't **miss out on a celebration that their peers are experiencing** at school.

Through engaging, literacy-focused activities and in-person hospital events, children can escape into stories, spark their imagination and enjoy a much-needed sense of fun and normality, while staying connected to their education.

*"One little girl was so upset that she couldn't go to school to celebrate World Book Day. We gave her a World Book Day pack and a Frozen costume, allowing her to join in the celebrations. She was delighted to feel included, almost as if she were celebrating at school alongside her friends."*

**~ Senior Play Specialist**

## Sensory Bags

This year we distributed **750 sensory bags**, filled with sensory interventions for medical teams to use during a child's treatment, helping reduce medical anxieties and alleviate pain.

**87%** of medical professionals strongly agree that the sensory bags have had a positive impact on children's overall wellbeing.

*"These sensory bags are really invaluable to our Play Service. The number of children attending the hospital who are neurodiverse or have a learning disability is increasing, and it's imperative that we can support them by offering them a calming, stimulating environment, so they have a more positive hospital experience. The sensory bags help us to do this."*

**~ Senior Play Specialist**

## Liquid to Tablets

This year, we began preparing to expand our pilot of Liquid to Tablets, our flagship, transformational project in partnership with Leeds Children's Hospital. The expansion, planned for next year, will reach **900 seriously ill children**. Through specially designed, child-centred kits, the programme supports children as they transition from liquid to tablet medication, helping to make this often-daunting milestone more manageable.

*"Before, our son was unable to swallow tablets. After a couple of sessions with the Play Specialist, he was able to do this. He was so proud of himself. For years we had been trying to get him to take tablets. We cannot believe the difference this has made to our son and us as a family."*

**~ Parent**

# Magical Wishes

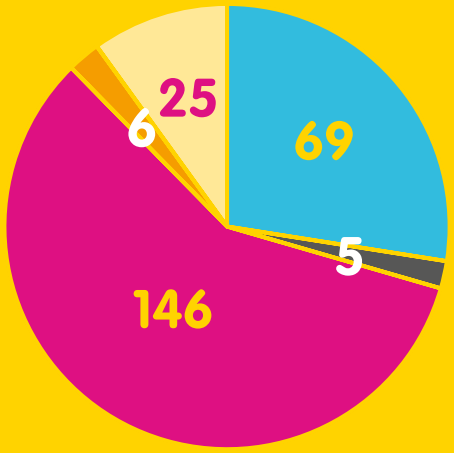
**Every day, Rays of Sunshine gives seriously ill children the chance to put their illness on hold and experience a moment of joy and escape through the power of a wish.**

A wish gives children and their families something positive to look forward to and a reason to smile when facing the unimaginable. It creates lasting magical memories that they can treasure long after the day, allowing them to focus on what matters most: the joy of seeing their heartfelt dreams become a reality.

**251** Total Number of Wishes Granted

**93%** of parents gave their child's wish a **5-star** impact rating
*(with the remaining 7% awarding it 4 stars)*

## Wishes by Type




- 'To Have/At Home' wishes: Including items such as iPads, laptops or new gaming console
- 'To Be' wishes: Including being a mermaid or a firefighter for the day
- 'To Go' wishes: Including UK holidays, Football Club experiences and days out
- 'Travel' wishes: Including family holidays to Disneyland Paris, Florida and other European destinations
- 'To Meet' wishes: Including meeting their favourite singer, actor or author

# Alfred's Wish

**Ten-year-old Alfred has undergone more surgeries than he's had birthdays, including two just this year. He lives with reduced vision due to glaucoma and a benign tumour around his right eye, caused by the genetic condition Neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1).**

His dad Darren said: *"Alfred's a true warrior and has been through so much in his 10 years. He takes it all in his stride, but we don't underestimate the impact that it all has on him, especially as he gets older and appreciates that his 'normal' is quite different to that of his friends."*




But amid the hospital visits and rounds of treatment, **music has always been a source of joy for Alfred**. When he was introduced to Rays of Sunshine, he knew exactly what he wanted his magical wish to be. Alfred has been a dedicated Coldplay fan since he first saw their concert videos four years ago. With his reduced vision, the concert's dazzling lights and vibrant colours hold a special appeal, making the chance to experience their spectacular show in person even more meaningful.




Seeing Coldplay live was everything Alfred had hoped for and more. He sang and danced his way through the concert, captivated by the fireworks, LED wristbands, and spectacular light shows. As the night came to an end, he had just one way to describe it: the *"best night ever."*

Reflecting on the wish, his mum, Catherine, said: *"He's missed a lot of school and so many fun things, that being able to have such an amazing time was emotional and allowed us all to let go of everything for a couple of days."*

**See Alfred's wish in action**

# Meet Georgia: A Day in the Life of a Wish Granter

**As a Wish Granter at Rays of Sunshine, no two days are ever the same. From the first conversation with a child and their family, to the moment their wish comes to life, every stage is an opportunity to bring joy, create excitement, and offer a welcome escape from the challenges of serious illness.**



Every wish begins with a conversation. I spend time getting to know each child and their family, discovering what makes them smile, what they love and, most importantly, what their one magical wish is. These conversations are often **full of anticipation and imagination**, but they also give me an insight into the challenges families face, from hospital stays and endless appointments to gruelling treatment.

For families facing so much uncertainty, a wish offers them hope and magical moments to look forward to together.

One wish that has stayed with me is that of **10-year-old Larna**, who was undergoing treatment for Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia. While receiving treatment at Great Ormond Street Hospital, her favourite princess, **Cinderella**, visited the ward. Larna desperately wanted to dance with her, like the other children were - but she was too poorly to leave her bed.

So, when it came to planning her wish, there was only one thing she wanted: **to dance with Cinderella.**





On the day of her wish, Larna arrived at a London hotel wearing a beautiful blue ballgown inspired by her favourite princess. She spent the afternoon playing games, laughing, and finally, fulfilling her dream of dancing with Cinderella.

For Larna and her family, this was about so much more than a magical day. Her mum described it as *"a true full circle moment"*, seeing Larna go from being so poorly to *"absolutely beaming."* After a period marked by the uncertainty of treatment, they were able to share a joyful experience together, focused on Larna's happiness and a dream finally coming true.

As a Wish Granter, I feel incredibly privileged to play a part in these experiences, and stories like Larna's demonstrate the profound value of a wish.

**Every wish is unique to each child, and the impact reaches far beyond the moment a wish is granted.**

**From the first spark of anticipation to the memories cherished for years to come, each wish offers an opportunity to bring joy, strengthen family connections, and create moments of light when they are needed most.**

Most importantly, our work at Rays of Sunshine gives a seriously ill child the opportunity to simply be a child: to dream, to feel excited, and to experience the joy of something extraordinary.



**Read more magical wish stories**

# Wish Community Events

**From the moment a wish is granted, families become part of our Wish Community and are invited to take part in our year-round programme of events, held online and across the UK.**

Our events bring wish families together to connect with others who have faced similar experiences. Designed to boost confidence and empower young people, they offer opportunities they may not have had access to before.

Free and fully accessible, our events provide a welcoming space where children and young people can feel comfortable, build meaningful connections and enjoy special moments. They also offer ongoing support and further opportunities to create joyful memories together.

## Events We've Hosted

**Circus trips** with National Centre for Circus Arts

**Comedy workshop** with Comedy Club 4 Kids

**Accessible horse riding** with Riding for the Disabled

**Accessible skiing** with Disability Snowsports UK

A trip to the **National Space Centre Leicester**

**Ferrari day** at Silverstone

**VIP Evening** at Clacton Pier

**Royal Horse Guards visit** at Hyde Park Barracks

**Teenage confidence event** at Woolwich Works

Rays of Sunshine **Annual Christmas Party** at The Underglobe

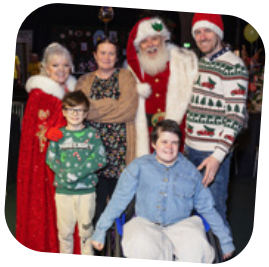
**33** Total Number of Community Events

**1291** Total Number of Attendees

**100%** of families said they would recommend to a family in a similar situation

# Summer & Oscar's Wish Community Story

**Siblings Summer and Oscar have been part of the Rays of Sunshine Wish Community for over four years, regularly attending community events and singing as members of our Sunshine Choir.**



Summer, now 14, lives with Spina Bifida and had her wish to have an iPad granted by Rays of Sunshine when she was 6. Since then, Wish Community Events have helped the whole family **stay connected to other families** with experience of serious illness.

Their Wish Community adventures have included parties, bowling, songwriting workshops, ice skating and Christmas celebrations. *"Summer and Oscar are buzzing to know what we're going to be up to next,"* says their dad, Shaun. As a full-time wheelchair user, Summer can sometimes miss out. *"She doesn't really get to go out and socialise like her friends,"* Shaun explains. *"It's so nice to sign her up for experiences she wouldn't otherwise have, while meeting other young people who've been through similar things."*



Shaun remembers Summer's grin after ice skating in her wheelchair for the first time, watching her learn acrobat tricks at the **National Centre for Circus Arts**, and seeing her performing with the **Sunshine Choir**. The events matter to Oscar too, giving him time with his big sister and the chance to try new things.

Shaun says the family deeply appreciates the care that goes into making Wish Community Events accessible. *"They put aside everything that is going on... and they just get to be children having fun,"* says Shaun. *"And it's not just when we're there, it's the build-up to it, the afterwards, the jokes and the memories. It all has such a far-reaching impact on the whole family."*

# Wish Community Events: Highlights



## Horse-Riding Event

*"More than a month after the event, he was still talking about it. Having never ridden a horse before, the day had clearly made a lasting impression. The toy horse he received at the event was so meaningful to him that he chose to take it with him during his most recent hospital stay."*



## Christmas Party

*"Hari and his sisters absolutely loved the event! There was so much to do, and every moment from start to finish was simply fabulous. Hari picked a gift he hasn't stopped playing with and was completely obsessed by the tabletop football game - he had an incredible amount of fun."*



## Confidence Event

*"It was amazing for my son to meet other teens who really understand what he's going through. He felt supported and less alone, and he hasn't stopped talking about the friends he made."*



## Skiing

*"It was wonderful to see Isaac having such a brilliant time, embracing an exciting new experience and showing such courage and confidence. I felt incredibly proud watching him thrive."*

# Sunshine Choir

**The Sunshine Choir is a vibrant community of wish children, united by their love of music and singing.**

Each month, members meet online with a professional choirmaster to learn new songs, take part in interactive music games and enjoy making music together.

Throughout the year, they also have opportunities to take part in songwriting workshops, record music and perform at special events.

Every member has a **lived experience of serious illness**, either as a wish child themselves or as the sibling of one. The choir provides a safe and inclusive space where they can build friendships with others who understand their experiences, grow in confidence and express themselves through music.

This year, **26 members** came together as part of the Sunshine Choir, creating connections, building confidence and sharing positive experiences through their shared passion for music.

A recent highlight was the recording and launch of the choir's single, **'Rainbow'** - a special achievement that brought members together to create something they could be proud of.

**Listen to 'Rainbow' here**



# Beyond the Wish

**For many seriously ill children and young people, Rays of Sunshine is so much more than a wish. It's about becoming part of a community where they feel connected, supported and that they belong.**

We are proud to create ongoing opportunities for those who have accessed our services to stay connected to the Rays of Sunshine community, continue to benefit from our support and play an active role in our work.




## The Sunshine Youth Panel

Children's voices are at the heart of everything we do. We think they should have a say in the services that affect them. The **Sunshine Youth Panel** is a vibrant community of wish children and young people aged 7-17, who help represent the voices of the people that we support. This year, we had 20 children and young people join the Panel.

For many children living with serious illnesses, treatment can mean having limited control over what happens to them and their bodies. The Sunshine Youth Panel provides an opportunity to experience that sense of agency: to influence decisions and make a genuine contribution to something that matters to them. By listening to our Panel and acting on their feedback, we are not only improving our services - we are creating a space where children and young people can know that **their opinions matter** and see the difference they can make.

*"The panel has helped me make more friends, be more confident when sharing ideas and be proud of the things we help the charity to do."* **~ Alfred, Youth Panel Member**

# Bright Board

The **Rays of Sunshine Bright Board** is a skills-based educational programme for former wish children aged 18-25, supporting them as they take their next steps into young adulthood. This year, 7 young people joined the programme.

For young people who have experienced serious illness, time spent in treatment can mean missing important educational and social opportunities, while the impact of illness can affect confidence and make the transition into adulthood and planning for the future more challenging.

Through **work experience, mentoring and practical skills sessions**, the Bright Board helps former wish children develop new skills, build confidence, explore their ambitions, and gain the knowledge and networks they need to take their next steps.

*"Bright Board has given me the opportunity to develop useful employability skills and improve my self-confidence. I now have a better understanding of what employers are looking for in a candidate like myself."*
**~ MJ, Bright Board member**

# Wish Ambassador Programme

For many seriously ill children and young people, Rays of Sunshine becomes an important part of their lives. We create opportunities for that connection to continue long after they have received our support, enabling those we have previously supported to stay involved.

Our **Wish Ambassador programme** brings together adults who have previously been supported by Rays of Sunshine and who choose to remain connected to the charity, sharing their experiences, skills and perspectives.



Our Wish Ambassadors play an important role across Rays of Sunshine. Through fundraising, supporting our services and helping shape the future of our work, they **use their voices and experiences** to champion the charity and help us continue supporting seriously ill children and their families.

# Fundraising

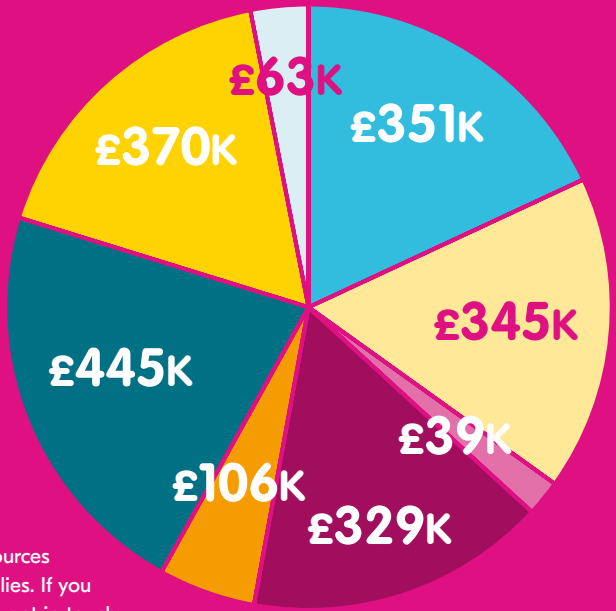
**We receive no government funding and are reliant on generous supporters to brighten the lives of seriously ill children**

**Over £2.0M***
**Total Funds Raised**

**£379K** Gifts in Kind

## Did you know?

Donating goods or services, also known as **Gifts in Kind**, helps to reduce our operational costs, ensuring more resources go toward brightening the lives of children and their families. If you work for an organisation that could provide Gifts in Kind, get in touch.




## Income by Source

- Philanthropy
- Special Events
- Individual Giving
- Challenge Events
- Communities
- Corporates
- Trusts & Foundations
- Legacies



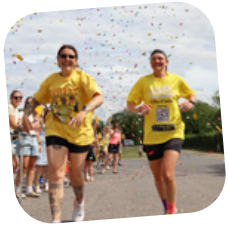
*All financial figures in this report are subject to final audit and may be updated in the published Annual Report and Accounts.

# Fundraising Highlights: Shining Bright Together

## London Marathon 2026

**Team Sunshine** turned the streets of London yellow once again for the TCS London Marathon, raising **over £250,000** to help grant more magical wishes for seriously ill children. Thanks to the dedication of our amazing runners and supporters, those funds will help us grant 169 wishes.

## Laura Bird's 31 Marathons in 31 Days



**Rays of Sunshine Ambassador Laura Bird** took on an extraordinary challenge, running 31 marathons in 31 days throughout May. Backed by hundreds of supporters every step of the way, Laura raised an incredible **£21,000** to help grant more magical wishes, while inspiring us all with her determination and positivity.

## Daz Black's Fright Before Christmas Livestream



YouTuber and **Rays of Sunshine Ambassador Daz Black** returned with a Fright Before Christmas livestream, bringing together thousands of viewers for an evening of festive fun, scares and generosity. The incredible event raised **well over £43,000**, smashing their target and doubling last year's total.

## The Big Give Christmas Challenge

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters and the power of match funding, our **Big Give Christmas Challenge** had another fantastic year. Every donation made twice the impact, helping to raise **£33,992.50** beating our £30,000 target, bringing more moments of joy and hope to seriously ill children and their families.

## Bacta: Celebrating 12 Years of Partnership

Together, Bacta and its members have raised **more than £800,000**, helping to create countless moments of joy and magical memories for seriously ill children. Highlights this year have included **VIP family days at Funstation locations** across the UK and our most successful year of **Whitehouse Leisure plushie fundraising**, raising over £43,000. We are hugely grateful for the continued support and generosity of the Bacta community.

## ICAP Charity Day



We were honoured to once again be part of **ICAP Charity Day**, where businesses, celebrity supporters and partners came together to raise vital funds. Ambassadors **John Terry**, **Jody Morris**, **Oritsé Williams**, **Lewis Fuller** and **Jolie Sharpe** all lent their support throughout the day. We also granted five-year-old Tommy's magical wish with the help of John Terry and Ben Black to meet **Billy Wingrove**.

## Property Dinner 2025

More than **300 guests** from the real estate and private equity sectors came together for our annual Property Dinner, raising an incredible **£370,000**. The evening was a wonderful celebration of generosity, demonstrating the industry's ongoing commitment to helping us brighten the lives of seriously ill children.

**Scan to read more about our fundraising**

## The Mark Benevolent Fund

Rays of Sunshine was delighted to receive a grant of **£19,325** from the Mark Benevolent Fund to support our sensory bags initiative, bringing moments of joy, comfort and distraction to children receiving treatment in hospital.

## The Clermont Hotel Group

A long-standing supporter of Rays of Sunshine, The Clermont Hotel Group has helped us grant many magical wishes over the years. **This year, we were delighted to formalise our partnership**, marking an exciting new chapter in our relationship. From volunteering and employee fundraising to exploring new ways to make a difference, we look forward to building on our shared commitment to bringing sunshine into the lives of children when they need it most.

## Smyths Toys




Now entering our fourth year of partnership, Rays of Sunshine is delighted to **continue receiving incredible support from Smyths Toys**. A highlight of our partnership is their role in helping us grant magical wishes for seriously ill children, creating unforgettable experiences tailored to each child's dreams. For Sia, this meant an extra-special VIP shopping spree, bringing her wish to life and creating precious memories to treasure.

## Blackstone Charitable Foundation



This year, Rays of Sunshine was honoured to be named a winner of the **Blackstone Gives Back Challenge**, receiving **$175,000** to help bring joy to children in hospital. The nomination was championed by Josh O'Sullivan, whose daughter Lilly inspired him and his teammates, Adam Dawson and Hrishi Lonkar, to put Rays of Sunshine forward and shine a light on our work. This generous funding will help us continue creating moments of happiness, hope and escape for seriously ill children receiving treatment in hospital.

# Volunteering

**3186** Total Hours Volunteered

**Thank you to all our amazing volunteers giving their time to brighten the lives of seriously ill children.**

Whether it's volunteering in your community, making wishes happen or supporting our fundraising efforts, **your support is vital** in helping us grant more magical wishes for seriously ill children.



"Volunteering feels, in a small way, like a means of giving back for the enormous joy that Rays of Sunshine brought to Ximena, and hopefully helping to create those same moments for other children and families who really need them.

- Victoria Turrent
**Wish Mum & Volunteer**




Scan to learn more about volunteering for Rays of Sunshine

# The Power of Corporate Volunteers

**47%** of all volunteer hours were contributed by our corporate partners

**Our corporate partners are an integral part of our work, generously sharing their time, skills and energy to help us bring moments of sunshine to children with serious illnesses.**

Their support takes many forms, from volunteering at our hospital and Wish Community events to helping prepare for our service delivery. This year, we also expanded our volunteering opportunities by bringing activities directly to our partners' workplaces, enabling more colleagues to get involved and make a difference to the children and families we support.

## The difference volunteering makes

**William Curtis, Associate at Hill Dickinson**, shared what volunteering with Rays of Sunshine means to him:

> One of the things I enjoy most about volunteering with Rays of Sunshine is how the charity makes everyone who wants to contribute feel genuinely involved in its work.
>
> It has built a wonderful community of families, children, supporters and volunteers, and it is inspiring to see how connected everyone feels. It has also been a privilege to see first-hand the impact that Rays of Sunshine has on the children and families it supports, and to play a small part in that work.



# Sunshine on the Horizon

Today, Rays of Sunshine touches the lives of one in eight children who could benefit from our support. Yet thousands more children and families are facing some of the darkest moments of their lives, without the joy, hope and connection we could bring.

**Now, we're looking to the horizon.**
**And our ambition is greater than ever.**

As we embark on an ambitious new five-year strategy, we have set ourselves a bold aspiration: **to double the number of children and families we reach by 2031.**

We believe that the magic of childhood should shine through even the darkest moments of serious illness, and that our role extends far beyond granting a wish.

But our ambition isn't simply to reach more children. It's to be there for them for longer.

We want to provide a continued **Journey of Joy** – reaching children earlier through our Sunshine in Hospitals programme, creating unforgettable moments through the power of a wish, and bringing families together through our growing Wish Community.

From diagnosis, throughout treatment and beyond, we want more children to experience joy, build confidence, make friends, discover new possibilities and simply enjoy being children.

Because serious illness may be part of their story.
**But it should never define their childhood.**

## Our five strategic priorities:

### Expanding our reach and impact

We will reach more seriously ill children and young people across the UK by granting more magical wishes, bringing sunshine into more hospitals and expanding our Wish Community. Together, these services will provide continued joy, connection and support from diagnosis, throughout treatment and beyond.

## Building a sustainable future together

Our ambition is only possible with the continued generosity of people like you. By welcoming new supporters, growing regular giving and developing lasting partnerships, we will build a more diverse and dependable income base. This will reduce our reliance on a small number of funding sources, ensuring we can support more children and families for generations to come.

## Making every pound count

We are committed to making your generosity go further. By investing in better systems, smarter processes and more efficient ways of working, we will make the best use of every pound entrusted to us. This will help us direct more resources towards supporting seriously ill children and families, bringing sunshine into even more lives.

## Empowering our people

Our people are at the heart of everything we do. We will continue to nurture a passionate, collaborative and values-led team, empowering everyone to thrive, work together and deliver extraordinary experiences for the children and families we support.

## Inspiring more people to join our mission

We will strengthen the voice and visibility of Rays of Sunshine, shining a light on the realities of childhood serious illness and the extraordinary difference our work makes. Through powerful storytelling and greater public awareness, we will reach more families who need us and inspire a growing community of supporters to join our mission.

### Our next chapter starts with you.

Our supporters have always been at the heart of making the extraordinary possible. Every wish granted, every smile brought to a hospital ward and every family brought together has been made possible by people like you.

**We've achieved so much together.**
**Just imagine what we could make possible next.**

As we look towards the horizon, we're excited to share more about our ambitious plans in the months ahead. We hope you'll continue to be part of our journey and help us make this next chapter possible.

**Together, we can help childhood shine through serious illness.**

# Thank You


ICAP
WE ARE
CHARITY
DAY!


Evelina
London
Children's Hospital




IZZIE
Rays of Sunshine
tcs
TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES
45744

# It wouldn't be possible without you










# Shining Bright Together

**Special thank you to all our partners and supporters who give generously to help us shine bright for seriously and terminally ill children**

## Corporate Partners

Bacta Charitable Trust
Funstation
Whitehouse Leisure International
Big Yellow Self Storage
Benjam West
Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP
Centre Parcs
Doughlicious
GamesAid
HFMC Wealth
Howden
Hill Dickinson
TP ICAP
Liquidnet
F.W. Smith, Riches & Co.
Polyteck
The Walt Disney Company & Euro Disney
The Fragrance Shop
The Football Association
MCD Heritage
Miroma
Salesforce
Savills
Smyths Toys
Clermont Hotel Group
Ubiquitous Taxi
WWCS

## Trust & Foundations

BBC Children in Need
Blackstone Charitable Foundation
Bright Side Charity
Goldman Sachs Gives -
Andrew Wilson Fund
National Lottery - Awards for All England
Norfolk Community Foundation -
Benny's Battalion Fund
The Cecil Rosen Foundation
The Cecil & Hilda Lewis Charitable Trust
The Geoff & Fiona Squire Foundation
The Raven Charitable Trust
The Potel Charitable Trust

# Patrons

## Angels

Graham & Georgie Edwards
Evans Management Ltd / Oliver Evans
Jane & Robert Sharpe
Yulia Rudko & Igor Tikhturov (YRIT Foundation)
Sanjay & Rita Vadera

## Godparents

Stephen & Hayley Allan
Sami & Nadine Aysoy
Marc & Lisa Boyan
Paul & Selina Burdell
Richard & Debbi Burston
Simon & Rhona Conway
Daryl & Michelle Foster
Alan Gabbay (ACAI Group)
David & Ruth Joseph CBE
Miles & Alison Levy
Jonathan Lewis & Alejandra Lewis
Jonathan Lourie
The Alan Mattey Charitable Trust
Harold & Nicola Pasha
The Gerald & Gail Ronson Family Foundation
Eli Shahmoon (Frank Capital Limited)
Bal Sohal (Seven Capital)
The Lord Leonard & Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation

## Guardians

Nigel Berney (NL Property)
Richard & Danielle Burns
Toni & Philip Chaimo (Apricot)
Aston Chase
DDRE Ltd
The Esfandi Charitable Foundation (Michael Esfandi)
Emil Fattal
Charles Gourgey
Tom Kemp
The Michael Lanitis Foundation (Christopher Lanitis)
Darren & Elise Leigh
Spencer & Lucy Leslie
Jonny & Karen Myers
Johnny Naggar
John Needleman & Grainne Lamphee
Justin & Caroline Randall
The Raven Charitable Trust
Edward & Melanie Rom
Simon Rusk
Tim & Andrea Shaw (Raven Charitable Trust)
Mike & Melanie Sherwood
Mark & Belinda Shipman
Jonathan Smith (UCG/Co Property Ltd)
Hilda Worth

## Friends

Tim & Claudia Allan
Andrew Barnett (Ubiquitous Taxis)
Mason Booth (Thirdway Interiors)
Lawrence & Michelle Brown
Simon De Friend
Paul Duval (Your Vision Wealth Management Limited)
Petr Esposito (Thirdway Architecture Ltd)
Nick Feldman (The Woosnam Foundation)
Steven & Jacqueline Fine
Clive & Karen Golanski
Ian Grabiner
Niten Handa (Kingsbridge Capital)
Richard & Alex Hatter (Maurice Hatter Foundation)
Patrick Hughes
Mehdi Khimji (Highgate)
The Gary Landesberg Charitable Trust
Adriel Lares
Johnny & Caron Matthews
Roger Nagioff
Gary Platt
Robert Rackind
Dominic Rowe
Joseph Shashou
David & Melanie Saul
Gaby & Glenn Unterhalter



# Get in Touch

/raysofsunshinecc

@raysofsunshinecc

@raysofsunshinecc

@raysofsunshinecharity

Rays of Sunshine Children's Charity

**raysofsunshine.org.uk**

**020 8782 1171**

**info@raysofsunshine.org.uk**

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

THE SUNDAY TIMES Best Places to Work 2026 SMALL ORGANISATION

Rays of Sunshine Children's Charity is a registered charity, Registration No. 1102529