



**Children's
Cancer North**

Our Impact 2021



**Making life better for
children with cancer**

childrenscancernorth.org.uk



Introduction

Children's Cancer North is an independent charity with over 40 years of heritage in supporting individuals and families affected by childhood cancer.

Newly formed in 2021, from the marriage of North of England Children's Cancer Research and Children's Cancer Fund, our charities have collectively raised over £40m to support children with cancer in the North East and Cumbria since 1979.

Our mission is simple. We are dedicated to making life better for children with cancer.

With a fresh name and with a huge family of supporters and fundraisers by our side, we have ambitious plans ahead. We will increase our investment into critical childhood cancer research which makes a difference now and for future generations. And we will support more children and families affected by this disease, helping to improve and significantly enhance their lives both in and out of hospital.

Help us improve children's cancer survival rates and keep families together for longer.

For every £1 donated we spend 72p on fighting childhood cancer.

For every £1 we spend on fundraising we raise £4 to help make life better for children with cancer.

Message from the Chair

It is an unimaginable feeling to find out your child has cancer. As a childhood cancer survivor myself, I know first-hand how difficult life is both as a patient, and for parents and siblings. It is what drives me and the charity to make life better for those going through now what I and my family did 40 years ago.

I am therefore delighted to be able to lead the merger of North of England Children's Cancer Research (NECCR) and its sister charity, the Children's Cancer Fund to form this brand new charity.

Having worked closely with the trustees of both charities for many years, it has always been clear that our aims to dramatically improve the lives of children with cancer were core to us all and so it has felt entirely natural to join together now.

By coming together we can be more efficient, have greater impact and be a driver for change because we will have more influence, a 'bigger' voice and ultimately do more to improve lives of children with cancer.

Having donated over £40m since the legacy charities began, Children's Cancer North will look to double down on fundraising. Our next target is to raise £2m in three years to continue funding revolutionary research and to transform the children's cancer wards at the Great North Children's Hospital – to bring the latest technology and interactive play areas to help make life a bit easier for those going through the toughest of times.

It's ambitious, but we have a great team of staff and trustees and with your support I know we will achieve it.



Chris Peacock,
CCN Chairman

Children's Cancer North purpose

Our mission is simple. To make life better for children with cancer.



With 40 years' experience of helping families survive childhood cancer, we aim to make life better for children suffering with cancer through providing dedicated family support and funding revolutionary research.

Around 100 children are newly diagnosed in our region each year, 100 families whose lives are changed forever.

Our innovative approach in bringing both the world-class research and treatment together under one roof, through partnering with Newcastle University and the Great North Children's Hospital, means that children across the North get access to the very latest trials and quality treatment available to speed their recovery and improve chances of survival.

Our focus is to ensure children and their families are fully supported throughout treatment, both in and out of hospital, delivering a better experience and an enhanced quality of life, helping make their lives better one day at a time.

Where your money goes:

- Research projects
- Support to children and families
- Raising funds
- Running costs





What we do

Our focus at Children's Cancer North is to improve the lives of young people and families affected by childhood cancer, helping more children survive cancer to live long and happy lives.

Children's Cancer North funds valuable work being led by the Centre for Cancer at Newcastle University. The facility provides a centre of excellence where expert clinical and research teams come together to advance their understanding of how to treat childhood cancers. This unique approach directly links clinical professionals at Great North Children's Hospital with University academics and scientists, enabling patients across the North of England and beyond to participate in early-stage trials.

Scientists are currently conducting clinical trials to develop new therapies to improve survival rates and treatment for patients with leukaemia – the most frequent cancer affecting children. Funded by Children's Cancer North, this ground-breaking work is leading the discovery of less aggressive medical approaches to treating childhood leukaemias. Research has also been analysing ways to provide individualised treatment to children with an aggressive type of brain cancer to ensure the final outcome is as positive as possible.

The funding of early-stage trials and critical research staff in particular by Children's Cancer North has enabled the team to increase its work tenfold in the last ten years – revolutionising the treatment of childhood cancer and enabling many more families to receive specialist treatment. Newcastle's childhood cancer research team is now one of the leading authorities worldwide and is recognised as an international centre of excellence.

Our funding in this area has been transformative – and we have ambitious plans to further increase our support. Newcastle is now the largest children's cancer research unit in Europe hosting over 100 childhood cancer research specialists.

Fifty years ago, three-quarters of children diagnosed with cancer died; today more than three-quarters survive. Our work has been instrumental in driving these positive recovery rates across the UK.

“The increases in survival rates for childhood cancer nationally have been one of the great successes in cancer research over the last 40 years. Over 80% of children with cancer now survive their disease and Newcastle's research team has been integral to these advances. Over this period, our team in Newcastle has grown from small enthusiastic beginnings to a body of experts of over 100 researchers and specialists, leading the way nationally and internationally. Our ongoing focus is to continue to find new cures and to develop kinder effective treatments.”

– Professor Steve Clifford,
Director of Newcastle University Centre for Cancer

Children from across the North, from Cumbria, Teesside, County Durham, Tyne and Wear and Northumberland all travel to the Great North Children's Hospital for their cancer treatment, as in-patients, and then return for many years as out patients.

Life can be very tough for these children and their families. It involves hours of gruelling treatment, worry and boredom. Support for the children and families on the wards is particularly important to help counter isolation. So, we deliver activities and initiatives which significantly improve their quality of life at this difficult time.

We will fund specialists to deliver on-ward activities including music therapy, and animation, celebrations such as parties and social outings for teenagers – all of which contribute to a more positive ward experience. Dedicated information packs developed specifically for parents will also give practical information and signposting to services for families who have had a child newly diagnosed.

Our first big ambition as Children's Cancer North is to transform the environment on the children's cancer unit at the Great North Children's Hospital – a fresh appeal for support will launch later this year.



Cancer in numbers

100
children are newly diagnosed in our region each year.



1 child in 500
will develop some form of cancer by the age of 14 years.



The incidence of childhood cancer is on the rise in the UK, increasing by **15%** between 1993-1995 and 2015-2017.



More than 8 in 10
(82%) children diagnosed with cancer in Great Britain survive their disease for five years or more.



240
children in the UK, aged 0-14 years, lose their lives to cancer every year.



Childhood cancer is the **primary cause** of non-accidental death in children in the UK.

Over the last decade, mortality rates for cancers in children have **decreased by 27%** in the UK.



What we have achieved

Offered over **£25,000** in financial support to bereaved families every year.



Helped over **3,500** children and their families who have been affected by childhood cancer.



Raised over **£40 million** for research into childhood cancers.



Provided over **£2 million** towards childhood cancer research projects carried out in the region since 2016.



Funded **1,300** creative hours of animation work per year with children who are in-patients on the children's cancer unit.



Provided **£500,000** to help establish the Wolfson Childhood Cancer Research Centre and Children's Cancer North laboratories in 2016.



Funded the first researcher dedicated to childhood cancer in the region, with **over 100** dedicated researchers now based here.





Supporting families

Dylan's story by mum Manuela:

Dylan Williams from Jesmond, Newcastle, had just turned 12 when he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a cancer of the lymphatic system.

"I cannot praise enough the work carried out by the nurses and doctors who worked tirelessly to improve Dylan's conditions and reassure him. The superb support offered in particular by his consultant, by the psychologist and the play nurse specialists got him, and us, through those challenging circumstances."



Katie's story from dad Paul:

Seven-year-old Katie Bain from North Shields was just two-days-old when her parents learned she had Down's syndrome. At 20-months-old, after a routine blood test, nothing could prepare them for Katie's Acute Myeloid Leukaemia diagnosis.

"The threat of losing your child is something that is very hard to deal with. It is something that stays with you from the day of diagnosis, and never goes away. I decided to begin fundraising for the charity to help support the clinical trials taking place in the North East that help to develop new therapies to improve survival rates and develop less aggressive forms of treatment. To us this was an easy decision, as throughout Katie's time at the RVI there is only one thing we clearly wanted and that was a cure."



Rebecca's story by mum Tracy:

Rebecca was diagnosed with the rare soft tissue cancer Alveolar Rhabdomyosarcoma in February 2014. Since her initial diagnosis and treatment Rebecca has relapsed three times, and is now on her fourth course of treatment.

"The trials are what have kept Rebecca with us, they have saved her life three times. If it hadn't been for those trials she would not be with us. We feel so grateful that we've been able to access it within our country, being able to come home and sleep in her own bed is so important. It would be very scary to have to do this away from home."



Caroline's story by mum Lucy:

Caroline Brown from Northumberland was an outdoor loving seven year-old when she was diagnosed with the rare cancer Rhabdomyosarcoma in the head. The tumour, due to its position, is inoperable so Caroline needed intensive chemotherapy.

"We couldn't believe our luck when we discovered that the RVI has the highest survival rate of paediatric cancer in UK. We felt so blessed to be at that hospital. For me, as well as the incredible doctors and staff, that success must be down to the research that's going on in the background. Chemo is the most horrific thing to watch your child go through, it destroys them. Research is vital to make this less aggressive and if possible, more tailored to each child."





Coronavirus impact

There is no doubt that the Covid pandemic has had a significant effect on all organisations focused on cancer treatment and survival, and has made the challenge much harder.

Across the country, there has been disruption to testing and treatment, clinical trials have slowed and many people have gone undiagnosed. The NHS continues to make enormous efforts to continue the high quality of care for cancer patients, and we are working closely with our partners to ensure children and their families across the North East and Cumbria continue to be supported.

For Children’s Cancer North, the lack of major events and opportunities for fundraising has made a dent in our income levels by about 60%. However, our very prudent approach has meant we remain financially stable and, despite the challenges, we have committed over £300,000 to research in the coming year.

The proactive support we provide to families on the wards has remained constant, and clinical services have been maintained throughout, although visiting restrictions did limit numbers and contact was reduced, which has meant increased isolation for many families at a time of great need.

“When the pandemic started, we didn’t know how much of a risk it would be for our patients. What we did know was that children’s cancer wouldn’t stop. It’s one of the leading causes of death for children and we can only combat this with the precise, timely and intensive therapies we use. It’s hard to overstate the importance of clinical trials for young cancer patients. We meet with children and young adults with cancer every day and we know what these new treatments mean to them.”

— Dr Quentin Campbell-Hewson,
Lead for Clinical Trials and Consultant Paediatric
Oncologist, Great North Childrens’ Hospital

Governance

Children’s Cancer North is a charitable incorporated organisation, so complies with statutory reporting and accounting requirements. The organisation has a Board of Trustees who are required to set and oversee the strategic development, and are required to report on its accounts and financial performance each year. It manages how the charity meets and finances its obligations and how it works to further its charitable objectives, while remaining financially strong. The Trustees include clinical staff directly involved in the care of children, survivors of childhood cancer and parents whose children have been through treatment for cancer.



The year ahead

Our most urgent focus for 2021 and 2022 will be in support of recovery post Covid. Children and families facing cancer need ongoing support, which has been limited in the last year, and we are committed to improving their lives both throughout treatment, at home and in the community.

This will include the expansion of children’s activities at Great North Children’s Hospital, refurbishment of important playroom facilities on site, and development of a financial support ‘hardship’ fund for families in need.

While we have continued to guarantee funding to research initiatives during the pandemic, our long-term commitment to the Wolfson Childhood Cancer Research Centre remains strong. We will continue to support and significantly expand the team’s work through extending the research portfolio we fund by the end of 2022 which includes support for important early-phase trials.

As restrictions ease, we also have ambitious plans to step up our fundraising plans and rollout new innovations. The Children’s Cancer Run will return including a new initiative for schools, and a new fundraising drive will launch in the autumn where we’re looking to raise £2m to expand our important research and help transform the children’s cancer ward at Great North Children’s Hospital.

Over the coming five years we will:

Improve

the lives of young people and families affected by childhood cancer.



Invest

in childhood cancer research which makes a difference now and for future generations.



Be greater

than the sum of our parts and be the leading children’s cancer charity in the region.





How can you support us

There are so many ways you can help support our work and get involved – make a donation, volunteer, set up your own event or choose us as your charity of the year. Your support will help us to achieve our ambition to transform the experience for children on the wards and fund research that makes a real difference to young lives.

Donate – giving a regular or single donation, whatever you can afford, will make a huge difference and help us to save young lives.

Volunteer – volunteering at the Children’s Cancer Run or one of our other events offers a fantastic opportunity to gain new skills, meet new people, make a difference and have fun. You could also volunteer as a Children’s Cancer North Ambassador, helping to represent us in your local community.

“I’d say to anyone considering volunteering (for Children’s Cancer North) that the whole team will make you feel welcome and appreciate what you can bring to this amazing research charity in its fight against childhood cancer.”

– Sheila Davies, Volunteer

Fundraise – from abseiling and aerobics to a yoga-thon and Zzzzzz (sponsored sleep!), just do your own thing! There are hundreds of ways you could do activities with your family and be sponsored to help raise funds for Children’s Cancer North.

Participate – in one of our own (or partner) events. Did you know that the Children’s Cancer Run is the charity’s flagship event and has been running for almost 40 years?

Corporate partnerships – your employer could get involved in your fabulous fundraising ideas by matching what you have raised, or donate a prize for a raffle.

Or as a regional employer, you could nominate Children’s Cancer North as your company’s chosen charity of the year. There are many ways you and your staff across the North could support our fundraising.

About Children’s Cancer Run

- The **biggest single charity fun run in the UK**.
- Raised **over £7.5 million** for childhood cancer research since it began in 1982.
- Over **9,000 runners** and over **80 schools** from across the region take part each year.
- Over **20,000 miles run** at the event every year by children, young people and their families.
- Over **300 volunteers** at every Children’s Cancer Run. 96% of our workforce for the event.

“We are just so, so proud to be associated with the Children’s Cancer Run. It is a lovely thing for us and it makes us feel fantastic to be making a contribution.”

– Richard Hutton, Finance Director of Greggs.

For more details and to get the very latest updates on the **Children’s Cancer Run** and our plans for the **Great North Run**, visit our website childrenscancernorth.org.uk.



Help us make a difference

£15

pays for a blood sample.



£25

pays for a chemo duck soft toy to help a child understand their treatment through play.



£50

pays for a film and pizza night on the ward for teenage patients.



£75

pays for a professional animation session to bring a child’s ideas and talents to life.



£100

pays for a test which enables researchers to understand why some children are resistant to certain leukaemia treatments.



£250

will conduct a small scale gene screening to match a child to the right clinical trial.



£500

will fund one iAMP21 test to find out if a child with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia needs the most intensive treatment.



£600

pays for a whole term of materials for amazing creative activities on the ward.



£1000

pays for a great venue decked out for festive fun for our children’s Christmas party.





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