

Little Princess Trust

Annual Review 2020/21





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Principal Address and Registered Office

The Hannah Tarplee Building,
22-25 Berrington Street,
Hereford
HR4 OBJ.

Registered Charity Number

1176160

Company Number

CE012589

Auditors

Godfrey Wilson Limited
Chartered accountants and statutory auditors
5th Floor Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol
BS1 4QD

Bankers

National Westminster Bank PLC
12 Broad Street, Hereford, Herefordshire
HR4 9AH

Investment Managers

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2nd Floor
St James House
St James' Square
Cheltenham
GL50 3PR

LGT Vestra
Fourteen Cornhill
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Board

Trustees

Timothy Wheeler – Chairman
Timothy Lowe
Simon Tarplee
Robert Pizii
Tania Hudson (resigned in September 2021)
Kate Bliss
Sarah Woodall (appointed in October 2020)
Lauren Murrell (appointed in January 2021)
Liz Finan (appointed in January 2021)
Dr Francis Mussai (appointed in October 2021)

Vice President

Wendy Tarplee-Morris

Chief Executive Officer

Phil Brace

Key Management Personnel

Philip Brace,

Chief Executive Officer

Wendy Tarplee-Morris,

Director of Service and Impact

Nadine Schofield,

Finance Manager

Katie Price,

Governance Officer

Ian Morris,

Marketing and Communications Officer

The Chair and The Chief Executive Reflect On An Astonishing Year.

As we reflect on the year, it is always difficult to recall every moment and to crystallise both the challenges and achievements but an accurate summary of our activity over the past 12 months might best be expressed by the words ‘adjustment’, ‘astonishment’ and ‘best’.

Determined to make a positive difference

When the global pandemic began in the previous financial year, a statement was made to all of our team that we would go in together, come out together and that, ultimately, we would be stronger. We collectively discussed how we would use the time, whilst working from home, to adjust and improve our systems, create new processes and ensure that we, as an organisation, would be the best that we could be in all that we did.

As individuals, we discussed how we can be our best selves during a period of adjustment and potential personal trauma. We ensured that we could be there for every child and young person that needed our service; we would be innovative, build greater links with the cancer community, and develop a research strategy that would be among the best in the sector.

“Listening to understand, not to reply”

To ensure that we meet one of our aims, ‘listening to understand, not to reply’, we engaged further with the community which we help and asked how we could improve. We spent time with our staff asking the same question and spent time with one of our founders, Wendy, to fully understand the values and the journey of the charity in detail. It was only then that we could rewrite our values, our vision and mission statements and engage with our staff on clarity of purpose.

It was following these meetings that the decision was made to appoint Wendy Tarplee-Morris as Director of Service and Impact. We were all very aware that Wendy has such significant skills and knowledge and, above all, that she has both the necessary empathy for our values and a wholehearted commitment to the impact of our actions.

She is driven purely by a wish to ensure that we can reach more children and young people with our wig provision service whilst ensuring that it is always simple and always appropriate; there is no one better placed to impact directly on our service, our reach and our achievements.

In her new role, she will also ensure that we can measure our funding investments in childhood cancer research and work closely to better understand the needs and funding gaps within the research community.



Celebrating our achievements

In a year when we grappled with navigating a straight course through seemingly endless changes and adjustment, we are proud to be able to report that The Little Princess Trust has been able to provide wigs to children and young people at a level that has exceeded any previous years.

We are also proud, not to mention completely astonished that, thanks to the amazing support that we received from our supporters and fundraisers, we nearly doubled our income. In short, this has been our best year.

We are proud and, again, astonished that The Little Princess Trust was one of the most significant charity funders of children’s cancer research in this financial year. We don’t really deal in trophy statements but, at the same time, achievements of this kind don’t just happen and it is right that they are both noted and celebrated.

“In short, this has been our best year.”

Our commitment to the childhood cancer research community

We are more aware than ever of the significance of our research funding and its importance to the paediatric research community. This year we were pleased to complete and, more importantly, begin to deliver on, our first published research strategy. In a year when funding from other charities has been particularly challenged, we have been able to more than double our financial commitment to research.

Our new home

During a year so significantly impacted by covid with lockdowns, tiers, bubbles and curves, our trustees took the decision to push ahead with our proposed new build. The site had been purchased in the previous year and the plans and tenders were complete.

On the 3rd of January 2021, our builders moved on to site and commenced work. Although managing the build was labour intensive for our CEO, seeing the appropriately named Hannah Tarplee Building take shape was another astonishing moment.

The new building, once fully finished, will allow the charity to provide improved services, to fit and style wigs in our new salon and to facilitate conferences which bring together the research community, along with allowing operations generally to be more efficient. The trustees are to be complimented on their vision and commitment for the future.

Fundraising records

During the financial year, we put the finishing touches to, what we like to think, is the best fundraising pack in the sector – and it has certainly played a big part in making this our best year.

We wanted to ensure that the pack was engaging, positive, motivating and mobilising and the fact that income revenue doubled over the past 12 months proves that we met our aims and objectives.

Further proof of the effectiveness of the new fundraising packs came with acknowledgement from Just Giving that we had broken some of their records on performance and activation.

Great credit for the fundraising pack goes to Ian Morris, our marketing and communications officer, and to our outsourced creative agency.

Our values – and what they mean

We are, as an organisation, totally focused on our published constitutional objectives, not because they are written down in a document but because each and every one of us, from our trustees to all our staff and partners, fully believes in our purpose.

In a world where we are reminded of the need for kindness and consideration, it is important to us that our published values are described with words such as ‘friendly’, ‘considerate’, ‘positive’, and ‘reassuring’. These values are the headers for greater detail on how we communicate to the children and young people we help, how we communicate to the hospital staff, salons and key partners who deliver our service, and how we communicate with our supporters and fundraisers, without whom we would not be able to achieve anything.



Our fantastic fundraising pack



Darcy Crothers was one of the legion of supergrowers to donate long locks to The Little Princess Trust.

It can seem invidious to highlight the work of individuals, but we must complement our finance manager, Nadine Schofield, who has created best process, delivered on the many SORPs and generally created a fit for purpose, well-run and efficient finance department.

We would also like to highlight the work of Katie Price, who is The Little Princess Trusts governance officer. Katie now has oversight of all policies and procedures, constantly bench-marking against the expectations from the Charity Commission and all other regulatory bodies. Her professionalism and diligence have had a significant impact on The Little Princess Trust as we strive to be the best that we can be.

Working together to make amazing things happen

In summary, this report simply demonstrates the astonishing support we have benefited from throughout the UK and, indeed, overseas.

For this support we are eternally grateful, and it is something which we will never take for granted. We hope that this report demonstrates everyone’s undisputed commitment to serving the children and young people who are in need of our support. In what has been a year of adjustment like no other, we have continued to seek to be the best that we can be.

One of our value statements is ‘you can trust us’. We know just how important the trust of our supporters is for us to continue our vital work and that is why we will continue to work together to make amazing things happen.

We wrote our vision statement and mission in the year and clarified our values, and it falls to the CEO to ensure they are adhered to. However, there is no leadership required when our team are so in tune with and so committed to our purpose.

We, of course, must ensure that our commitments do not just become good intentions but remain measurable and good actions. We are delighted to report that our culture and behaviour are fully aligned and that our collective moral compass signals clear progress.

Thanks to our staff

It would be remiss not to make reference to our astonishing staff. On a daily basis, they inspire us with their commitment and purpose. Through the covid months, we have ensured that they are supported and treated as individuals, with differing requirements and needs, and they have collectively demonstrated that they understand our direction of travel, and they continually demonstrate ability and commitment beyond our expectations.



Phil Brace
Chief Executive



Tim Wheeler MBE
Chair of Trustees

We have delivered our service to the highest standard

One of The Little Princess Trust's founders describes how she has seen the charity go from 'strength to strength'

As a founder of The Little Princess Trust, this has been yet another year which has made me incredibly proud while surpassing my wildest expectations. The legacy of my daughter Hannah is personified through the work and growth of the charity and, of course, those who we help.

As Director of Service and Impact of The Little Princess Trust, it is extremely pleasing to be able to say that without a doubt, we have continued to deliver our service to the highest possible standard and significantly increased our impact throughout the past year.

Despite the ever-changing landscape, we have maintained our ability to provide a reliable, consistent service to our wig recipients at a time when their world has been turned upside down. This remains our most fundamental objective and our priority always.

Equally, the paediatric cancer research world has been challenged with funding cuts caused by the pandemic. The Little Princess Trust has been able to 'step up' to some degree to try and counter some of these cuts by more than doubling our research commitment. This, in turn, has resulted in us forging an even greater level of collaboration within the research community to ensure that we fund work of the highest priority and greatest need.

Our ability to turn a negative into a positive is unfaltering. For example, when our wig stock levels dropped due to manufacturing difficulties caused by Covid-19, we were able to focus our efforts on the formation of The Little Princess Trust UK Wig Making Co-Operative. This gives us the ability to increase our production of wigs and to breathe new life into the UK wig industry while also giving greater resilience for the future.

This is just one example of the obstacles which have been faced and overcome recently, which takes the charity from strength to strength.



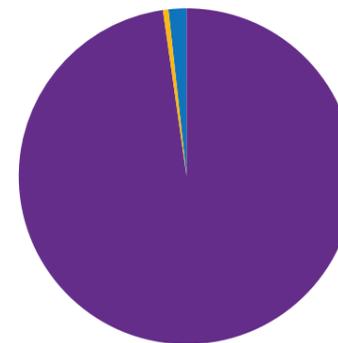
Wendy Tarplee-Morris
Director of Service and Impact

“ We’ve countered the cuts by more than doubling our research commitment”

Wendy Tarplee-Morris | Director of Service and Impact

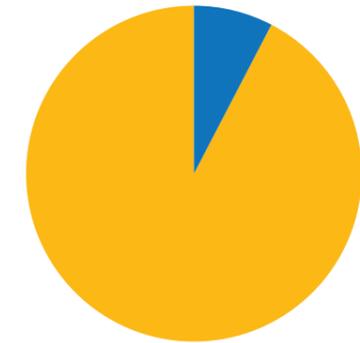
Activities: How funds are raised and spent

Income



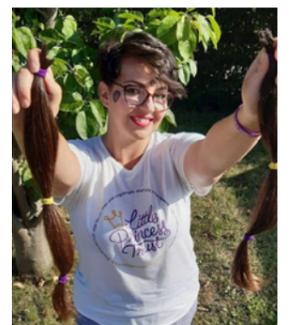
Donations and legacies	£8.90m
Other trading activities	£17.64k
Investments	£172.42k

Expenditure



Raising funds	£591.84k
Charitable activities	£7.22m

Data for financial year ending 31 July 2021



The Little Princess Trust receives support from a wide cross-section of the community.

Objectives & Activities

The Little Princess Trust seeks to improve the life of every child and young person with cancer.

The charity's primary objective is to give real hair wigs, free of charge, to every child or young person experiencing hair loss due to cancer treatment.

The charity also provides wigs in the UK and Ireland to those who have suffered hair loss due to other conditions such as alopecia, and continues to explore extending provision of its service for children with cancer to countries outside the UK where there is no service available.

The charity works with specialist suppliers and experienced wig fitters who offer wigs tailored to the individual child's needs to give the most realistic look and feel as close as possible to their original hair. The charity puts parents and carers in contact with wig fitters as local to them as possible.

Parents or carers can contact the charity themselves by using the relevant contact information from The Little Princess Trust website or, alternatively, the child's treatment centre can make the initial contact.

The charity arranges for the manufacture of its own range of wigs from donated hair. However, if the charity does not have a wig suitable for a child or young person, it will purchase one from a commercial supplier.

In addition to wig provision, the charity funds research which aims to deliver kinder and more effective treatments for all childhood cancers.

In addition to wig provision, the charity is committed to funding vital research which aims to deliver more effective and kinder treatments for all childhood cancers. The charity invites applications for funding from academics and organisations involved in researching the causes of paediatric cancer.

The charity engages with the Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group (CCLG) to facilitate this process under the guidelines from the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC).

The Trustees have paid due regard to the charity commissioners' guidance on public benefit in deciding what activities are undertaken to further the charity's charitable purposes for the public benefit.



Celebrity hairdresser Andrew Barton is one of the many LPT ambassadors.

Impact & Innovation

More wigs, more revenue and more research: a record year

The Covid-19 pandemic has once again been the dominant feature of the past 12 months but, thanks to the strenuous efforts and commitment of staff, the expertise provided by our Trustees and the selfless acts of our volunteers, The Little Princess Trust has been able to fulfil its key aims and objectives.

Our top priorities during the Covid-19 pandemic were to continue to deliver our free wig provision service and maintain our funding of childhood cancer research whilst also ensuring the safety of our employees.

It has been heartening to hear from so many of the children and young people we have helped, and from their parents, praising the charity's staff and partners for the way in which we continued to provide wigs, especially when the country was in lockdown and so many other services were closed.

Not a single member of staff has been placed on the Government's furlough scheme while all our employees rose to the challenges posed by Covid-19 with great professionalism and resilience.

At different periods throughout these 12 months, many of our staff followed Government guidance to work from home but their diligence, initiative and versatility saw our wig provision service reach more children and young people than ever before while fundraising revenues, remarkably, increased to record levels.

The amount of money given to childhood cancer research projects also increased to levels unprecedented in the charity's history, making The Little Princess Trust one of the most significant charity funders of paediatric research in the UK.

The combination of 'more wigs, more revenue and more research' makes this year one to remember for a charity determined to fulfil its key objectives.



£8.9m
Total funds raised from donations and legacies



1,769
Wigs provided this year



£5.88 m
Given to research projects this year



32
Research projects supported this year



0
number of staff placed on furlough leave

Did We Do What We Said We Would Do?

AIM: To continue to provide wigs free of charge and make wigs closer to home

We will continue to explore ways to manufacture high quality wigs from donated hair, both in the UK and overseas.

ACTION:

The desire and need to establish a wig-knotting network close to our Hereford home was highlighted by distribution issues brought about by both Covid and Brexit.

The consequences of these two contrasting challenges saw the charity's wig manufacturers in the Far East provide a lower number of wigs to The

Little Princess Trust than in previous years. Thanks to the excellent efforts of our wig referrals team and our salon partners, requests and appointments for wigs were maintained and so demand for our wigs remained as before the pandemic.

In response to these challenges, we were delighted to see major progress on the UK wig-knotting partnership which the charity has initiated. Rapid progress meant that the first wigs were produced by our freelance wig-knotters during the course of the year and the aim is that more skilled people will be welcomed to the network and that a greater number of wigs will be made by this exciting partnership in the years to come.



Wig-knotters receive training from our partners at Banbury Postiche in Oxfordshire.

AIM: Move into our new headquarters

As well as centralising the charity's operations under one roof and improving efficiencies, the charity will move to a new headquarters by the middle of 2021, featuring a salon that will enable children to have wigs styled and fitted on site. There will also be a wig-making facility and space to host conferences and events.

ACTION:

Due to the challenges posed by Covid-19, the move to our new premises was delayed. However, work had progressed to such an extent that the charity was preparing for all staff to be in The Little Princess Trust's new home by the middle of August, 2021.

The charity has welcomed the support from many of its corporate partners who have agreed to sponsor certain areas of the new headquarters to significantly reduce costs. For example, the new wig-fitting salon is being paid for by Sally Beauty while Monpure has agreed to pay for the solar panels.



Phil Brace and Wendy Tarplee-Morris check on the progress of our new home.

AIM: Continue to fund new research

The charity remains committed to fulfilling its research strategy and plans to commit additional funds to research for 2020-21, particularly in the light of the reduction in funding from other sources brought about by the disruption caused by Covid 19. We will continue to work towards achieving our own AMRC accreditation.

ACTION:

This year, the charity more than doubled its research spend, committing almost £6M to childhood cancer research projects. Also, The Little Princess Trust's first research strategy was completed and published in October 2020.

The charity started the year with three members of the Research Strategy and Funding Committee and a new member was appointed in November 2020; Dr Francis Mussai from Birmingham Institute of Immunology and Immunotherapy, Clinical Senior Lecturer in Paediatric Oncology and Honorary Consultant in Paediatric Oncology.

A fifth potential member has also been identified with a view to adding as a fifth member imminently, which will meet the required levels to submit our AMRC membership application.

This application is nearing completion and a positive decision is hoped for before the end of the calendar year.

AIM: Further refine our message regarding hair length

We will continue to emphasise our message that we need donations of longer hair. We will also explore further whether there are ways to make ethical and environmentally friendly use of donations of hair which are too short to be used in the making of wigs but might still benefit the charity's work.

ACTION:

The charity's marketing team has made great efforts to encourage supporters to donate at least 12 inches of hair and, if possible, to wait until they have at least 16 inches of hair to cut before they make their salon appointment.

A 'Let it Grow' campaign was also launched on social media and supporters were given free T-shirts if they joined and followed the message to become a 'supergrower'.

The wording on the hair donation forms was also changed to reflect the need for longer hair donations and given greater prominence on the FAQ and 'Donate Hair' section of the website. These efforts have resulted in a higher percentage of longer hair lengths donated to the charity. The year saw 52% of donations received measure 12 inches and above while the figure for the previous 12 months was 40%.

The charity has continued its dialogue with companies and not-for-profit organisations who may be able to find new environmental purposes for any hair which is not able to be used in the manufacture of wigs. However, this dialogue remains at an early stage and has yet to progress past initial research.



There has been an increase in donations of longer hair.

AIM: Continue to seek new partnerships

We will continue to reach out to others within the sector to try and establish good partnerships and strong relationships which will benefit both those affected by childhood cancers and those involved in the paediatric cancer research community.

ACTION:

The planned improvement in supporter relationships has extended to the way the charity works with large organisations and Kim Musson was recruited from the Hereford Times to work with corporate partners.

The introduction of this new position has created a more consistent and professional approach to how the charity deals with its business partners, who include local, national and international organisations.

AIM: Becoming More Diverse and Inclusive

We aim to meet the needs of every child or young person suffering from cancer who needs a wig. We will continue to challenge ourselves on inclusivity and diversity, and seek to be truly representative, reaching out to all communities to establish links and build relationships which can inform our practice and bring about further improvement. As well as increasing the diversity of our board, our trusted advisers and our ambassadors, we will also monitor the research which we fund as we aim to recognise the diversity of our community in all that we do.

ACTION:

The Little Princess Trust has made huge advances in terms of inclusivity after working with Raoul Wigmakers in London to produce wigs made from Afro-textured hair.

The charity has always offered wigs made in an Afro style but these wigs were made from straight hair donations which were later styled according to the requests of the recipient.



One of the first new wigs to be made from Afro-textured hair donations.

Despite making great efforts to find a wig manufacturer capable of working with Afro-textured hair, the charity had previously been unable to locate one and, sadly, was therefore not in a position to accept curly hair donations from supporters.

This all changed thanks to the new partnership with Raoul Wigmakers and, as well as now being in a position to accept Afro-textured hair from supporters, this means we can now also offer a greater choice to black and mixed-race children and young people suffering with hair loss. We were delighted to welcome Liz Finan on to our board of trustees as her expertise in wig-making as well as her all-round knowledge of the black hair industry will be invaluable to us.

Cynthia Stroud was another key person in helping the charity make progress with its Afro-textured hair wigs. The entrepreneur has a mixed-race son, and having made a wig from his hair, was able to offer advice to the charity. She is now an ambassador for The Little Princess Trust and has given interviews to the media about our work with Afro-textured hair.

AIM: Continue to develop and improve governance

We will continue to seek best practice in all that we do. We will publish an updated Vision, Mission and Values statement along with our next strategic plan.

ACTION:

The Vision, Mission, Values statement was written and approved after consultation with all staff and Trustees. It will soon be uploaded to the charity's website and has been incorporated into the charity's Brand Guidelines. It is anticipated that printed copies will be published and provided to all staff in the Autumn of 2021.

Preliminary work has also begun on forming the charity's first Youth Representative Board in order for The Little Princess to gather feedback from this key part of our demographic.

Providing free real-hair wigs to children and young people

The continued challenges presented by the pandemic, Covid-19, had a substantial impact on the activities of many charities and The Little Princess Trust was no exception.

Our wig provision service

The continued challenges presented by the pandemic, Covid-19, had a substantial impact on the activities of many charities and The Little Princess Trust was no exception.

This 12-month period saw two national lockdowns which brought about significant changes to normal working practices.

The Little Princess Trust continued to receive just as many requests for wigs as in the years before the pandemic but, with many in our salon network closed due to Government guidelines, we had to work differently to fulfil one of our main objectives: to provide real hair wigs to young people who had lost their hair due to cancer treatment or other conditions.

When the country entered the first national lockdown in March of 2020, the charity's Wig Referrals Team worked quickly and efficiently to create 'virtual wig fitting appointments', with WhatsApp, Skype, FaceTime and Zoom utilised to link up our wig fitters with those receiving wigs in a safe and convenient manner.

With little known at the time about the virus, the charity's immediate priority was the health and well-being of wig recipients but the charity was equally determined to continue to provide wigs to any young person requesting one.

“Thank you so much for providing me with this wig and thank you to all the people who donate their hair.

“It really does make a big difference and brings smiles to the faces of children like me.”

Holly, aged 9, wig recipient.



The Little Princess Trust provided 1,769 wigs last year to children and young people with hair loss.

Therefore, these virtual appointments provided the answer to how to continue the wig provision service while complying with strict social distancing measures and ensuring that anyone undergoing treatment, particularly with a weakened immune system, would not come into contact with anyone with Covid-19.

The decision was taken to continue to give young people the option of virtual appointments, alongside a salon fitting, when the UK left the first national lockdown. The well-being of our wig recipients was – and always will be – our primary concern and, with Covid numbers still high, technology was still used by our skilled wig fitters to communicate with the young wig recipients.

Nicola Wood, from The Wonderful Wigs Company in Sunderland, and Chris Baguley, from Baguleys of Cheshire, were among those who, like The Little Princess Trust's own wig fitter Liz Pullar, held many virtual wig fitting appointments.

These online meetings between the wig recipient and wig fitter continued right through the year and the decision to keep these in place was reinforced when the UK entered a third national lockdown in January of 2021.

Nicola Wood, a member of the LPT salon network, also produced videos showing people how to take care of their wigs and how to take measurements to request the correct wig size which were published on our website and social media pages.

Numbers continue to increase

The continuation of the virtual wig-fitting appointments, combined with the dedication of the Wig Referrals Team, saw the charity provide more wigs to young people in this 12-month period than ever before.

In total, there were 1,769 referrals which compares with 1,614 for the 12 months previous and 1,523 in the year before that.

The incremental annual rises in the number of wigs provided saw the charity reach the landmark of providing its 10,000th wig in late July of 2020 and this moment was marked on social media, the charity's website and in the regional media the following month.

Rise in number of wigs provided to boys

The charity is constantly looking at ways to highlight the fact that its wigs are for people of all genders and the Wig Referral Team has seen an increase in the number of wigs provided to boys.

Different tools have been used to try to promote the charity's inclusive nature with, for example, new messaging on our social media pages.

Lenticular cards, which were designed in the first half of 2020, have also received excellent feedback. The result has been an increase in the number of wigs provided to boys of 5% and the hope is that this figure continues to rise in the years to come.



Kiya Kanani was one of the many people to receive a wig from The Little Princess Trust this year.



Kai Kellie wears the wig he received from LPT

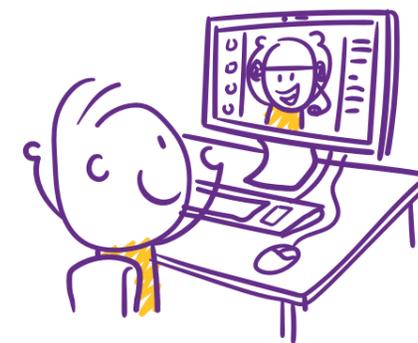
New and improved wig care gift box

The Wig Referrals Team also worked on new wig care gift boxes to make the moment of receiving a wig extra special for each recipient. The boxes now contain shampoo and conditioner and a wig care card to advise each young person of the best way to look after their wig. A hairbrush donated by Manta is also included, as is a wig stand, general brochure and an LPT teddy bear.

The Wig Referrals Team has received wonderful feedback from the families of wig recipients who comment that the gift box has been such a positive way to approach the sensitive subject of hair loss with children and young people.



Hairbrushes donated by Manta are included in the wig care gift box.



LPT wigs are not to hide treatment but to crown the courage and bravery of the young people we support.

Provision & efficiency increases

1,769
Wigs provided since 2020



1,614
for 12 months previous

1,523
The year before that

The percentage rise in the number of free wigs provided to boys from the past 12 months was **5%**



Rise in hair donations

The two national lockdowns caused significant challenges for our logistics department, which manages all the hair donations arriving at our Hereford headquarters.

The logistics team was the only department which continued to work at our office throughout the year as they play a vital part not only in sorting incoming hair donations but also in making sure the wigs are sent out to their intended recipients.

During the first national lockdown, the team had implemented a quarantine system so that any post delivered to the charity's offices remained stored and unopened for 72 hours.

The logistics team continued with this process as the second national lockdown was enforced while also closely following the charity's Covid-risk assessment and making use of hand sanitiser, masks and gloves provided in the office.

The charity is very fortunate to have a number of volunteers who support the logistics department with duties such as sorting incoming hair donations and making up fundraising packs.

With volunteers unable to work in the office during the two lockdowns and with salons across the country closed, the decision was taken to ask supporters to refrain from sending their hair donations to us - and instead to let their hair grow longer to help the charity meet the demand for longer hair lengths.



Donated hair is sorted into different colours and lengths by our logistics team.

Hair and Hope

Isabel Swan donated her hair to The Little Princess Trust after beating cancer.

She was just three when she was diagnosed with Leukaemia and she underwent chemotherapy for several years, which led to her hair falling out. Isabel received one of our wigs, saying that it made a big difference to her self-esteem.

“The wig was made for me and matched my hair colour,” she said.

“When I was wearing my wig it made me feel like my hair didn’t fall out at all. It made me feel normal and happy.”

Now aged seven and with her cancer gone and her beautiful blonde hair back, Isabel wanted to help children experiencing what she went through.

And so, to help support our wig provision service, Isabel also set up a JustGiving page to have her big cut sponsored by friends and family which raised a massive £2,260.



Isabel Swan received a wig from The Little Princess Trust before donating her own hair to us.

“When I was wearing my wig it made me feel like my hair didn’t fall out at all. It made me feel normal and happy.”

Isabel Swan

Funding vital research

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic bringing increased costs and delays, much progress has been made this year.

Currently, the charity's typical research funding year is made up of:

2 x General Open Calls for Project Grants

- Ranging from £25K - £250K per project
- Multiple grants awarded each round

1 x Innovation Grant

- Open budget up to circa £1 Million
- Single or multiple grants awarded

Two project grants rounds have been awarded during the financial year as planned, along with the charity's Innovation Grant.

In December 2020, 15 project grants were funded totalling £2,329,043.75 and in July 2021, a further 13 project grants were funded totalling £2,001,465.07.

These project grants covered a wide range of paediatric cancer types and values per grant ranged between £34,765 and £249,723.

The Innovation Grant resulted in two awards being granted to very worthy projects totalling £1,460,533.96 and, both through the Institute of Cancer Research.

Dr Alejandra Bruna was awarded £499,912.00 over 3 years for her project: Tracing the evolution of genomic and transcriptional landscapes in NMYC-driven neuroblastoma to advance innovative and mechanistically-targeted combination therapies.

Professor Steven Clifford and his team were awarded £960,621.96 over 4 years for his project: Developing and delivering small molecule drug and immunotherapy combinations for MYC-driven medulloblastoma: Efficacy, evolution and exploitation.

There is no doubt that these open calls are increasing in 'popularity' with the number of applications received being double or sometimes triple what they were a few years ago.

The Little Princess Trust tries to overlap these so that the charity has something open for applications for as much of the year as possible to minimise the length of time between funding opportunities.

Although there have still been obvious difficulties in face-to-face visits, the charity has endeavoured to keep in touch with its funded researchers through online and virtual means.

By getting closer to grant holders and those carrying out the research, it helps the charity to get under the layers and learn what needs to be funded. It also ensures that the charity is not a faceless funder and helps to shape rounds to facilitate the very best work which is out there.

The Little Princess Trust is committed to working with the research community to achieve greater funding levels next year.



Donated over £5.88 million to research projects this year

Research Strategy Published

Although this is an important and essential document for the charity as a research funder, great efforts were made to keep it with the LPT style and to keep it as simple as possible. The aim is that anyone who picks it up, whether they are a member of the research community or any member of the public, is able to understand what it is that the charity does. It outlines The Little Princess Trust's research priorities, which are:

1. Improved survival and treatment
2. Kinder and less toxic treatments
3. Progressing research from the lab to a clinical setting
4. Broadening and deepening knowledge of childhood cancer

With an overarching focus on improving outcomes for children and young people with cancer.

The Little Princess Trust has always worked very closely with CCLG who advertise, do much of the administration and provide all of the scientific and peer reviews. This relationship is incredibly important to the charity and works extremely well for so many reasons.

It gives the charity access to the research community through their membership and contacts to advertise LPT calls. The charity has the benefit of the expertise of CCLG's scientific advisory board and research advisory group to review LPT's applications, which ensures the charity is funding the best quality research of the highest priority. Plus, they collect and monitor the progress reporting to keep abreast of the many projects which are ongoing.

It would make no sense or be in the best interest of the charity and the charity's fundraisers for LPT to re-create or duplicate all of the services provided by CCLG. Not least, because it allows the charity to channel its funds towards research, rather than the costs of this resource and the resource required to manage it.

The collaboration is endorsed by AMRC, who are fully supportive of the application, based on this joint approach using the CCLG processes and policies to meet their requirements. Whilst maintaining a nimble, yet very robust funding process.



The Research Strategy and Funding Committee (RSFC)

As part of the charity's ongoing development of its research funding, The Little Princess Trust identified a need for additional expertise within its own RSFC. The committee consisted of three members, but the aim was to increase this to five.

It is important to note that the RSFC's job isn't to review applications scientifically, but purely examine their strategic fit and suitability for LPT funding. However, it was felt that it was important that those within the research community, who are applying for our grants were represented on our Research Committee.

Frank Mussai joined the RSFC in November 2020 and has added immense value with his knowledge and experience. Also, a further member with complimentary skills has been approached with a view to enrolling before the end of the calendar year.

The Little Princess Trust is fully committed to supporting the research community and funding the most worthy and impactful research into all childhood cancers. The charity's aim is to increase funding even further in the next financial year and find new ways to stimulate and provoke innovation.

The Little Princess Trust will utilise its new conference facility to bring together the research community to help to foster these new ideas and share their knowledge.



Statement regarding research funding and the management of conflict of interest.

Scientists who serve as trustees or on the Research Strategy and Funding Committee may not participate in decisions that relate to the funding of either research projects in which they have a direct interest or institutions with which they are associated.

Dr Francis Mussai was appointed a member of the Research Strategy and Funding Committee in November 2020, and appointed as a trustee on 9 October 2021. Previous to this, in December 2019, a 36-month grant to the University of Birmingham was awarded on which Dr Mussai was the lead investigator. The payments for this grant will be made annually until the grant award end date in December 2022. In August 2021, a 24-month grant was awarded on which Dr Mussai was the lead investigator. The payments for this grant will be made annually until the grant award end date in August 2023.

“We strongly believe every child deserves the best chance of survival, regardless of their cancer type.”

LPT funded research aims to improve survival rates in Tanzania

One of the many projects supported by The Little Princess Trust this year was research to help child cancer patients in Africa.

Researchers from Systems Biology Ireland (SBI) believe their study will improve survival rates for young people in Tanzania.

LPT has provided £78,300 to fund the project that will look at the genetics of children with leukaemia in East Africa.

It is hoped the findings will close the gap between countries where cancer treatment has advanced more quickly, and lower income countries where resources, training and simple logistics continue to limit treatment options.

Wendy Tarplee-Morris, Director of Service and Impact for The Little Princess Trust, said: “As a charity with a strong focus on improving outcomes for children with cancer we are very proud to have funded this exciting and extremely important work.

“This is a fantastic example of what can be achieved through good collaborative working of dedicated experts.”

The project named SALAMA will see Professor Jonathan Bond and Dr Peter McCarthy, from SBI, work in partnership with the international NGO, WeAreTLM. SALAMA stands for Studying Acute Leukaemia Mutations in Africa and is also the Swahili word for “safe and well”.

According to Professor Bond, much of the success of modern leukaemia treatment in Ireland is down to understanding the mutations, whether they are low or high risk, and targeting the treatment accordingly, which has not been the case to date in Tanzania.

He hopes that this collaboration, combined with modern innovations, will now make the same level of treatment a reality for patients in Tanzania.

Part of the ongoing dilemma with cancer treatment in places like Tanzania is the limited amount of genetic information available, a problem that Professor Bond and his collaborators hope to tackle.

To do this, Professor Bond plans to use the technology of next-generation sequencing which has “completely changed how we can look at the genetic landscape of cancers in general and leukaemias in particular,” he said.

“No one has ever looked at the genetics of kids in East Africa with leukaemia,” said Dr. Trish Scanlan, COO of WeAreTLM and long-time colleague of Professor Bond.

This entirely new line of genetic analysis is one of the key aspects of the project, and part of what makes it so exciting.

“This will be completely transformative,” Dr Scanlan added.

She explained how the planned genetic “snapshots” will help the team to predict treatment going forward, leading to an ultimate goal of being able to offer the same standard of care, and same survival rate, to children with leukaemia in Tanzania, as there is for children in Ireland and other more prosperous countries.



The Little Princess Trust funded the research project to help children in Tanzania. Photo: WeAreTLM.

Highlights From The Year

The Hannah Tarplee Building

The charity had hoped to have moved into their new premises - named The Hannah Tarplee Building - by the middle of the year.

However, complications caused by Covid-19 and two national lockdowns brought about inevitable delays and put the expected move date back to the end of August.

Despite the timing setbacks, the new premises continued to take shape with the external structure completed. The interior layout could also clearly be seen while staff and visitors could see just what a huge benefit the new home would be to the charity once the building project was complete.

In addition to centralising the charity's operations under one roof and improving efficiencies, the new headquarters will include a salon, which will enable children to have wigs styled and fitted on site, and also a wig-making facility.

The new premises will incorporate a training and seminar suite to host paediatric cancer treatment and research conferences with the charity's funding partners and laboratories.

The move to a new headquarters owned by the charity will also eliminate the rental costs it currently pays while establishing firm roots in The Little Princess Trust's home city of Hereford and will give the charity a much more visible presence.

The development has already been noticed and there has been great interest from the Herefordshire community as the building takes shape. One example of this was a visit from The Lord-Lieutenant of Herefordshire, Edward Harley OBE, and his wife Victoria, who were shown around the new premises by the charity's Chief Executive, Phil Brace.

Progress made with Afro-textured wigs

A positive development from the past 12 months has been in the charity's work with curly and Afro-textured hair.

The Little Princess Trust has always offered curly and Afro-style wigs to its young recipients using straight hair which was later curled into the requested style. However, for many years, the charity was unable to find a wig manufacturer able to use donations of curly and Afro-textured hair. This was something the charity dearly wanted to change.

The charity's management team spoke to many wig professionals and carried out a great deal of research to search for a solution. Thanks to the combined efforts of our staff, supporters, young hair donors our Ambassador Cynthia Stroud and the expertise of Raoul Wigmakers in London, a breakthrough was made and wigs have been made with curly and Afro-textured hair donations.



Poppy Lee-Burrowes was one of the first people to donate Afro-textured hair to The Little Princess Trust after the first wigs were made by Raoul Wigmakers in London.

This now enables The Little Princess Trust to give greater choice to all of our wig recipients and improved inclusivity for our hair donors.

The new wigs received a great deal of attention both on social media where more than 2.7million people saw our Facebook post announcing the news, and in the traditional media where the charity was featured on national television and in the printed press.

Importantly, the new wigs mean that, as well as giving our wig recipients a wider choice, the charity can now accept Afro-textured hair knowing that these donations can be used in wigs.

Arrival of new ambassadors

The charity has made great strides to not only increase its number of ambassadors but also to welcome people of all ages and from diverse backgrounds.

The new appointments have helped to promote the charity and to raise the profile of The Little Princess Trust to make our service and work visible to a new audience.

The new ambassadors included Kimberly Wyatt, from The Pussycat Dolls, rugby player Guy Thompson, wig recipient Teiva Collins, television baker and food judge Cynthia Stroud, and Princess Diana's nieces Lady Amelia and Eliza Spencer.



Kimberly Wyatt, pictured with her family, is one of the famous people who became an LPT ambassador this year.

UK partnership makes its first wigs

The Little Princess Trust has helped to give a major boost to wig making in the UK after leading an exciting new partnership.

The charity has long wanted to source more of its wigs closer to its Hereford home and is delighted to have begun working with Banbury Postiche, Raoul Wigmakers and hair specialists Aderans on the new project.

Banbury Postiche in Oxfordshire was chosen by The Little Princess Trust to handle the knotting and finishing of the hair pieces, which will be destined for the charity's young wig recipients, due to its experience, all-round knowledge of wig-making and for its logistical capabilities.

Months of talks were held by the co-operative's key partners, who worked on a knotting method, before the first hand-made wigs were made by the new partnership in June, 2021.

Setting records with JustGiving

The charity was informed that it had set new records with the online crowdfunding platform, JustGiving.

The highlighted area concerned the charity's activation rate which is defined by the percentage of people using and receiving donations to the page they have set up.

A total of 88% of pages set up to support The Little Princess Trust saw income generated which, according to JustGiving, is unprecedented and is even greater than for events such as the London Marathon.

The result of the high levels of activity saw the charity's income from JustGiving rise by 41% in 2020.

The charity puts these remarkable statistics down to its commitment to engage, encourage and thank its supporters via both new and traditional channels.

Becoming a More Effective Organisation

Tackling environmental issues

The Little Princess Trust has developed an environmental policy and all staff are aware they have a duty to follow it.

The charity also encourages its supporters to be environmentally aware and considerate when sending hair donations.

The charity is always seeking to improve its commitment to the climate and the last 12 months has seen The Little Princess Trust engage with Ashley Webber from Balanced Energy.

The aim is that Mr Webber, who was appointed as a trusted advisor, will help the charity to measure and reduce its carbon footprint.

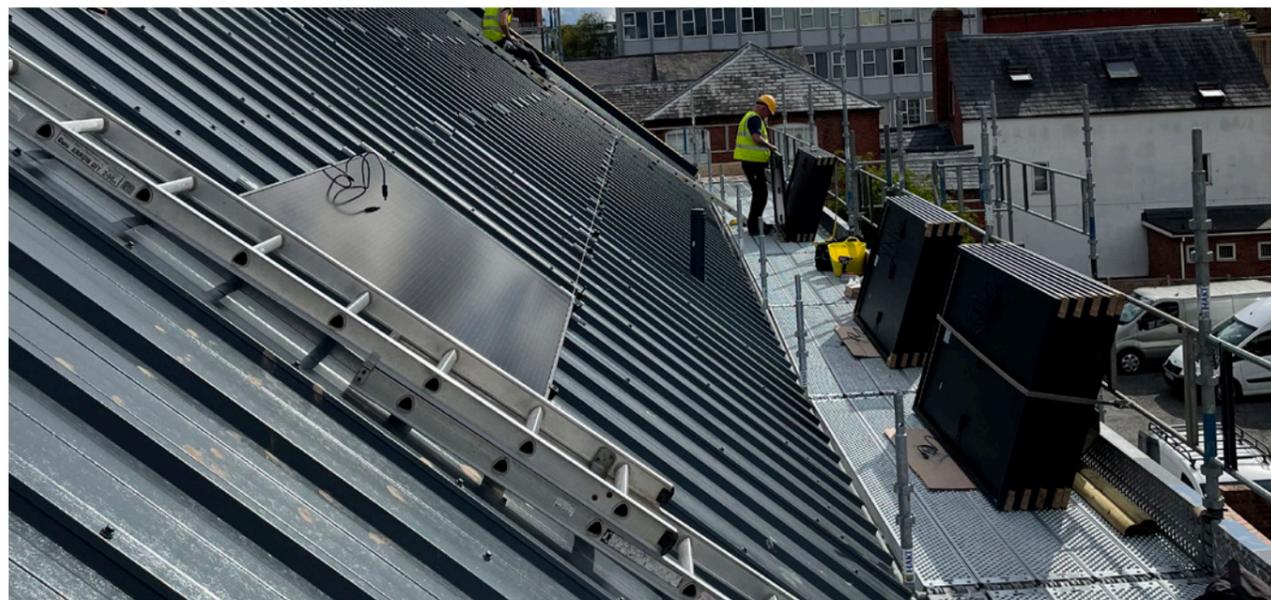
Balanced Energy will also provide The Little Princess Trust with environmental metrics and on-going emission reporting, to help the charity become more sustainable.

The move to a new headquarters will also significantly improve the charity's environmental credentials and each aspect of the new building has been designed with climate impact in mind.

As much of the former building remained in place as possible as part of an ambitious 'upcycling' project while a fresh air system has been developed to naturally create a flow of air around the two-storey site.

Meanwhile, solar panels have been installed on the roof after Phil Brace, The Little Princess Trust's Chief Executive, approached Caplor Energy for advice and support in using a suitable solar PV system.

And thanks to financial support from Monpure, one of the charity's corporate partners, the panels were installed on the roof of The Hannah Tarplee Building which will reduce the charity's carbon footprint and reduce energy bills.



Solar panels are put on to the roof of The Little Princess Trust's new home.

An in-house computer system

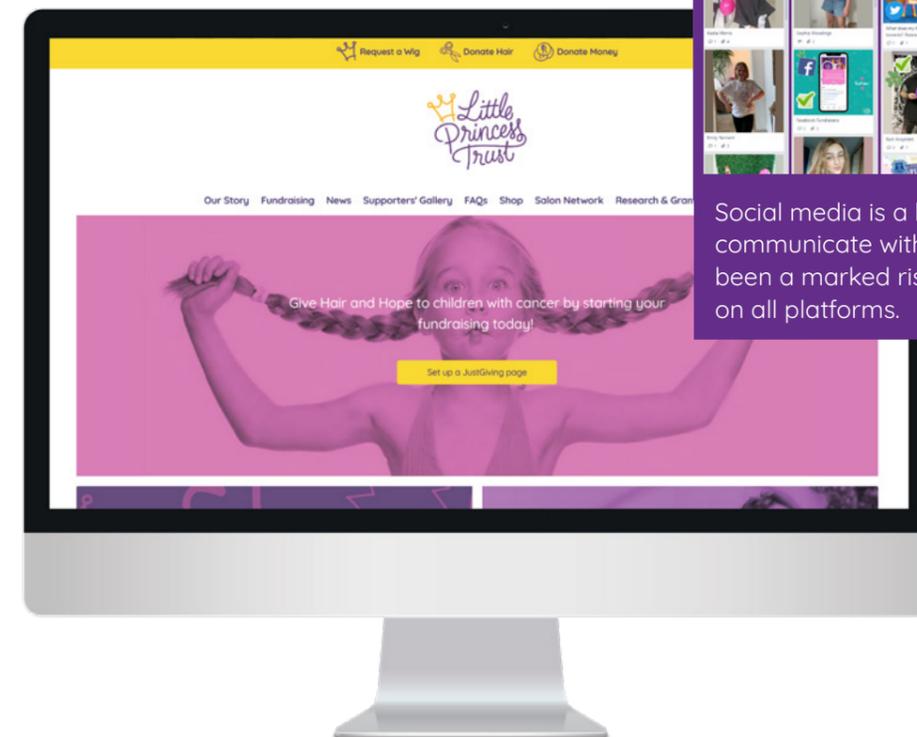
Phil Watts, The Little Princess Trust's IT and Innovation Manager, has been working on in-house software called CHAS (Cases, Hospitals and Salons) to develop a new system to more effectively manage the charity's data and improve monitoring so the charity can fulfil its aims of reaching every child that could benefit from its service.

It is hoped that, by January, 2022, CHAS will be in use and feature powerful filtering and reporting features to break down metrics such as gender, age, condition, referrals by hospital and wig fittings by salons that will also allow the charity to make increasingly well-informed decisions based on statistics.

New website goes live

The Little Princess Trust's new website went live at the turn of the year. It is more mobile friendly and takes into consideration the fact that the vast majority of those visiting our website do so from a smart phone.

The website has an improved layout and increased content with specific focus on giving potential supporters the information they need to donate hair and to fundraise for the charity.



Importance of social media

The charity is fully aware of just what a crucial tool social media is to communicate with supporters to relay its key messages.

Knowing this, the charity's marketing department has made great efforts to increase engagement and interaction on its social platforms, and has seen a rise in followers.

As of July 26, 2021, The Little Princess Trust had 88,748 followers on Facebook, 58,336 followers on Instagram, 14,183 followers on Twitter and 2,045 followers on LinkedIn.

The Little Princess Trust's Social Media Specialist Beth Sherwood has also invested time on TikTok. The platform is the preferred option for many of the charity's younger supporters and it was vital the charity had a presence on this platform.

There is a wealth of LPT user generated content which the charity has been able to use to promote its work and the charity's page now has 2,323 followers.



Social media is a key tool for the charity to communicate with its supporters and there has been a marked rise in the number of followers on all platforms.

Future Plans

Develop our next five-year strategy plan

The charity will be engaging with a third party to create a detailed strategy document. Every department will work with the appointed organisation to help formulate the charity's short and long-term objectives over the next five years.

Develop new fundraising campaigns

The charity is aware that it is heavily reliant on donations from sponsored haircuts for the vast majority of its income and would like to develop fun ways for supporters, who might not have sufficiently long hair, to still be able to help through other fundraising means. Participation in events, such as half marathons and cycle rides from London to Paris, have previously been explored and will still feature on the charity's fundraising calendar.

However, the marketing department will invest time to explore other ideas and campaigns which will help to support the work of the charity.



The charity takes part in events such as the Cardiff Half Marathon to raise income and profile.

Grow the charity's influence within the childhood cancer research community

The Little Princess Trust is now one of the biggest charity funders of childhood cancer research in the UK. Budgets for the years ahead signal an increased commitment to fund research searching for kinder and more effective treatments for childhood cancers.

But the charity wants to do more than just fund research and, as soon as it is in its new headquarters, we will invite the childhood research community to The Hannah Tarplee Building's conference room to share and discuss ways of working together.

The hope is very much that the charity's new home will become a permanent hub for childhood cancer researchers to meet, exchange ideas and explore new ways of working together to make advances in the sphere of paediatric oncology.



Ruman Rahman has received funding from LPT to study childhood cancer.

Increase the commitment to the environment

The charity receives support from its corporate partners at Cotswold BMW who provide the charity with a fleet of branded cars for staff to carry out journeys around the UK. It is hoped the fleet of cars will be replaced with electric vehicles from Cotswold BMW, while plans are in place for electric charging facilities outside the charity's new HQ to further reduce The Little Princess Trust's carbon footprint.



The Little Princess Trust receives support from its corporate partners at Cotswold BMW.

Hospital marketing collateral

The charity is determined to offer its service to every child and young person who has lost their hair through cancer treatment. To inform young people of its service, the charity wants to increase the type of printed products available so these can be displayed in hospital departments to inform greater numbers of the wig provision service.

The 'request a wig' section of the charity's website will also be developed and enhanced to give viewers a greater understanding of the choice and variety of wigs on offer - with the intention of seeing the number of wig recipients rise.

Expand UK wig-knotting partnership

With the first group of wig-knotters trained, efforts will be made to find others who can join the freelance team and benefit from the specialist expertise offered by Banbury Postiche and The Little Princess Trust. The target for the next 12 months is for the partnership to make a total of 60 wigs.

Encourage longer hair donations

The Little Princess Trust has, for the past two years, encouraged supporters to donate longer lengths of hair to help meet the demand for the most popular length of wig. Progress has been made but further efforts will be made to see if the message of longer donations can help the charity reduce the amount of 7-to-11-inch hair donated and increase the amount in excess of 12 inches.



The charity is encouraging its supporters to grow their hair to longer lengths before reaching for the scissors and making their donation.

Get in touch

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Keep in touch



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