

 Little
Princess
Trust

Annual Review
2023/24





Giving Hair and Hope to children and young people by providing wigs and funding vital research into childhood cancers.



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The Chief Executive and Chair reflect on the year

Improving the ways in which we help children with cancer

This year has been one in which great progress has been made across all areas of the charity. Now happily settled within our new headquarters, The Hannah Tarplee Building, the past 12 months have provided us with a period of stability and given us the foundations to review each section of the charity. We have thus been able to identify areas where we could develop and introduce efficiencies to further improve our services for children and young people with cancer.

Although there is not one single dominating headline, this has still been a very busy and productive year, with many highlights and moments to treasure and remember. The challenge this year is, therefore, selecting which aspects of our work deserve particular praise and attention over others when we have received so many plaudits from people we have worked alongside and so many messages of thanks from those who have benefited from our wig provision service and childhood cancer research funding.

It is, we believe, a sign of the confidence and trust that the public has in our approach as a charity that our income rose by 12.5% in spite of a cost-of-living crisis coupled with high levels of inflation. We are continually grateful for the simply astonishing support that we receive.

This income is, of course, vital because The Little Princess Trust's funding model is

12.5%

The rise in income this year



Libby is one of the many young people to have received a wig from The Little Princess Trust this year.

based almost entirely on donations from the public to fund our free wig provision service and our support for childhood cancer research.

We are always cautious when presenting the number of young people we have helped with a wig in the knowledge that, behind the raw statistics, there are children and families facing immense challenges. However, as our mission is to offer a free, real hair wig to every child or young person experiencing hair loss due to cancer treatment, it is reassuring to know that the number of wigs provided in the past 12 months was among the highest we have recorded.

In total, there were 1,910 wig referrals this year, and we know from speaking

to wig recipients just how much this free service provides comfort and support at what can be an incredibly challenging time in a young person's life.

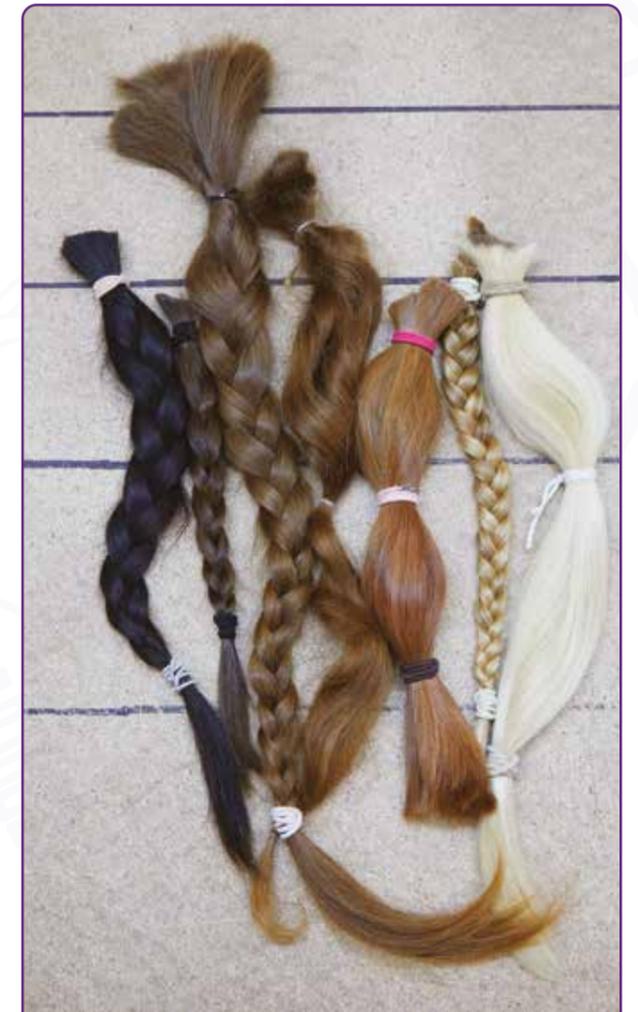
Our free wig provision service is our number one priority and it gives us great satisfaction to know that the hard work going on behind the scenes is having such a significant impact.

We know, for example, that our new, wig collection brochures – complete with professional photographs of models wearing our wigs – are having a positive impact on showing young people the type of free support we can offer. This new addition to our marketing collateral has seen the number of boys receiving a wig rise to a record number and led to a sizeable drop in the number of commercial wigs we have needed to provide.

“Our free wig provision service is our number one priority and it gives us great satisfaction to know that the hard work going on behind the scenes is having such a significant impact.”

To maintain the highest standards within our wig provision service, improved links have been made with our overseas wig fitters. In the UK, increased communication with the many fantastic hairdressers who support the charity has seen a decrease in the number of shorter hair donations and a rise in the percentage of longer lengths of hair, which are needed to help us meet the demand for our longer wigs.

Our constant dialogue with our key partners has also seen a rise in the percentage of hair donations that are accompanied by fundraising, and this has ensured we can continue to support those from the world of childhood cancer research searching for kinder and more effective treatments for all childhood cancers.



There has been a rise in the percentage of longer hair lengths donated to the charity.

Recognition of The Little Princess Trust's growing reputation within the world of childhood cancer research was in evidence when we were highly commended at the Third Sector Awards for our collaboration with the Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group (CCLG). With input from The Little Princess Trust co-founder, Wendy Tarplee-Morris, we lead on many activities within the world of childhood cancer research. We are more active than ever before, and we are now seeing our objective of greater levels of collaboration within the world of research come to fruition.

We continue to operate our project grant rounds and New Ideas round whilst always maintaining a position of being opportunity driven and of being proactive on recognising funding gaps. Scientific excellence, of course, remains essential and our approach sits alongside a clear burden of responsibility to ensure that our funders' money is spent appropriately and that we fund, through thorough analysis, the best research and activities possible that will lead to demonstrable impact.

The project to endow a professorial post of paediatric oncology at Oxford University has made great progress and we are eagerly anticipating the launch of this position at one of the most respected academic institutions in the world.

Other highlights from a year of research include our funding partnership of the Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre Network (ECMC) entering its second year. It has been a real privilege to visit so many of the centres within the programme and we are continually discussing improvements and working to ensure our objectives are met.

These advances in our funding of childhood cancer research, coupled with the improvements made to our wig provision service, demonstrate another year of growth, development and advance for the charity, underlining our commitment to fulfil our vision to give Hair and Hope to every child and young person with cancer until there is no longer a need for what we do.



The commitment to fund scientist searching for kinder and more effective treatments remains as strong as ever.



Emily Swann was one of the many kind people who donated their hair and raised money for the charity this year.

This year of progress and development has seen considerable time spent on ensuring that we are operationally efficient, on training our staff and on reinforcing the message that our values are central to all that we do.

We recognise and very much appreciate the trust that the public, health professionals, families, supporters and the children and young people we support, have in our charity – and we remain highly focused on ensuring that this trust is always fully deserved.

It has once again been an exciting year and it is, as ever, a privilege to be a part of The Little Princess Trust.



The Little Princess Trust's support for childhood cancer research was recognised at the Third Sector Awards.



Phil Brace
Chief Executive



Tim Wheeler MBE
Chair of Trustees

A year of continual progress helps us deliver the very best service for children and young people

Wendy Tarplee-Morris, The Little Princess Trust's Director of Services and Impact, reflects on a year of progress for the wig referrals team



One of the original aims of The Little Princess Trust was to make the process of requesting a wig an easy and simple one for every prospective wig recipient.

This has been a constant over the years and remains an absolute priority. The experience of requesting a wig from the charity is as simple as it possibly can be for children and young people with cancer, with no forms to complete, no means testing and most importantly no questions over acceptance and eligibility.

However, in the background things have continually evolved, developed and improved to make that service better and better.

The new assets which have been created, such as the Wig Collection Brochure and Wig Fitter Handbooks have been a great development this year as they highlight just how accessible and attractive our service is to potential wig recipients.

Both products contain professional images of young models wearing wigs and give greater assurances of what can be achieved through our free wig provision service.



We have also continued to work closely with our wig fitters through site visits while we also hold group workshops at our headquarters.

Furthermore, in the next financial year, the Salon Relationship Coordinator will become a full-time role to manage and visit all wig fitters within our network to promote the best practice of our service.

The handbook, which was completed this year, will be an excellent tool for the Salon Relationship Coordinator as it provides easy to follow, engaging content clearly outlining our service expectations for our accredited wig fitters and what they can expect from us in return. It also includes all terms and conditions in a digestible format, including the signing of the essential compliance agreements.

All these improvements ensure we are delivering the best and most consistent service possible, without making it any more difficult for our wig recipients.

Significant drop in the number of commercial wigs used

The Little Princess Trust's wig referrals team will always try to provide a child or young person with a wig that closely resembles the hair they lost before they began cancer treatment.

On occasions, due to the length or colour of the wig being requested, the charity does not have an available wig within its own stock to match the request being made by the child or young person.

When this happens, the charity can order real-hair wigs from a commercial supplier to fulfil the child or young person's request.

However, the priority is always to supply wigs made from hair donated by Little Princess Trust supporters and knotted by the charity's official suppliers.

It was very pleasing, therefore, to see a substantial rise in the percentage of wigs being supplied from The Little Princess Trust's own stock and wig-knotting partners.

The total stood at 96%, up from 84% in 2022/23 and 93% in 2021/22. Commercial wigs had peaked at 16% the previous year, primarily due to the knock-on effects of the Covid-19 pandemic at the charity's overseas wig manufacturers and so it was pleasing to see a significant fall in the percentage of commercial wigs supplied this year.



Wig fitters and wig stylists are invited to LPT's headquarters for regular workshops.

Percentage of commercial wigs used

2023/24	4%
2022/23	16%
2021/22	7%

The installation of the Dynamics CRM system has helped with the management of the wig stock and, coupled with increased wigs arriving from the charity's own suppliers, has helped to reduce costs associated with the purchasing of commercial wigs.

Number of wig referrals is second highest ever recorded

The Little Princess Trust's key objective is to provide free, real hair wigs to children and young people who have lost their hair due to cancer treatment.

Our free wig provision service is underpinned by three main goals: to be accessible, sensitive and simple.

Great efforts have been made by the wig referrals team to meet these key targets and ensure our service gives children and young people the best available replacement for the hair they have lost while making the process of requesting a wig as straightforward as possible.

The logistics of providing almost 2,000 wigs each year to young people undergoing personal challenges involves many individuals and varied institutions, and a constant presence from the past 12 months has been a desire to make improvements, no matter how small, to ensure our service is there for every child who has lost their hair due to cancer treatment in the UK and Ireland.

This means that training has been given, visits to hospitals and wig fitters have been made and work has taken place with the charity's marketing team to improve communication to all those involved in the provision of wigs.

The result of this work saw 1,910 wig referrals in the past 12-month period. This is the second highest number in The Little Princess Trust's history and only 21 below the record number of 2022/23.

Year	Total number of wig referrals
2023/24	1,910
2022/23	1,931
2021/22	1,747
2020/21	1,769
2019/20	1,614
2018/19	1,523

The charity's key objective is to provide free, real hair wigs



The Little Princess Trust makes the process of requesting a wig as straightforward as possible

1,931
the number of wig referrals this year

Launch of wig brochure highlights range and quality of options



The new literature has been added to the wig referrals library and is a valuable asset to promote the charity's key objective.

Research carried out by the wig referrals team shows that the young people receiving wigs find out about The Little Princess Trust from a diverse range of sources such as the charity's website, other charities, hospital literature and hair professionals.

Great efforts are, therefore, made to ensure the information being passed on to young people by the charity's partners and third-party organisations is consistent and correct.

One way to help achieve this is to produce printed products which convey the charity's aims and goals – and this year saw two substantial books added to The Little Princess Trust library.

The 24-page Wig Collection brochure features professional photographs showing young models wearing Little Princess Trust wigs and is an excellent tool to show children the quality of the wigs that are freely available to them. It also contains key information on how to measure one's head and how to request a wig.

The glossy brochure has been distributed to the charity's accredited wig-fitting salons and helps salon staff respond to many of the frequently asked questions posed by future wig recipients and their families.

Models volunteered their time to take part in a professional photo shoot at the Hannah Tarplee Building and images from this day featured in the magazine.

The photographs from that shoot have also been utilized to great effect by the charity's social media team to promote its free wig provision service.

More guidance is given to these key partners that are a vital part of the charity's wig provision service in another brochure entitled the 'Wig Fitter Handbook'.

This contains information on service standard agreements, invoicing and what is required for wig fitters to become a gold-accredited salon.

Percentage of boys receiving wigs continues to rise

As part of its mission to provide wigs to children and young people with hair loss, the wig referrals department has several key objectives to ensure the charity's wig provision service is fully inclusive.

One aim is to ensure that all genders are aware that the charity's wig provision service is available to them and great efforts have been made to communicate this to hospital staff and all key partners.

A common misconception is that the charity's wigs are 'only available for little girls' and so the wig referrals teams were pleased to see the percentage of boys receiving a wig rise to 10% of all wig recipients this year. This was up from 8% in the previous 12 months and 7% in the year before that.

The charity's communications team will continue to promote the fact that the free wig provision service is available to all genders.



The Little Princess Trust also offers a wide range of shorter wigs to children and young people.

Achieving the charity's key objective

While the total number of wig referrals fell by 21 from the previous 12 months, the number of new cancer referrals did rise by 39 from the past year.

Providing wigs to children and young people who have lost their hair due to cancer treatment is the charity's number one objective.

While the charity does also make its wigs available to young people who have lost their hair to other conditions, seeing the total number of new cancer referrals rise from 1,026 to 1,065 showed that the diligent work promoting the charity's free wig service in so many different areas and ways was working.

This was further underlined by the fact that the charity received 200 wig referrals in July 2024; that figure is the highest number of referrals in a single month in the charity's 19-year history.



Savannah is one of the young children who received a wig after undergoing cancer treatment.

Number of international wig referrals continues to rise

The charity has, since 2019, followed a policy to help children who have lost their hair due to cancer treatment and live in countries with no wig provision.

Partnerships were previously established in Sweden, Germany, Portugal and Bulgaria - and the past year saw documents signed with an official wig-fitting partner in Slovenia.

A trip to the country to finalize details and ensure quality control also saw Phil Brace, CEO of The Little Princess Trust, and Wendy Tarplee-Morris, Director of Services and Impact, interviewed on live television in Slovenia.

Further links were made with the Cutters salon in Sweden who, as well as collecting hair donations for the charity, began publicising the fact that The Little Princess Trust's free wig provision service was freely available in the Scandinavian country.

Leaflets were translated into Swedish and resulted in the number of wig referrals rising from two to eight in Sweden.

Little Princess Trust leaflets were also translated into Portuguese to help publicise the availability of



Arminda Vaz, one of the key people who has helped The Little Princess Trust to offer its free wig provision service in Portugal, tells television viewers about the charity's work.

the wig provision service in Lisbon and Porto. A visit from the charity, which involved a meeting with the Portuguese children's cancer charity, Acreditar, also built on already strong links in the Iberian country.

Efforts with our key partners overseas saw the number of international referrals rise from 123 in 2022/23 to 152 in 2023/24 and this 12-month period also saw the first wigs sent to children and young people in Australia, Spain and Italy.



Phil Brace and Wendy Tarplee-Morris met Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob when they were invited to a VIP reception to recognise the charity's work in the European country

Providing extra help for hospital staff

A total of 47% of wig recipients in the past year said they requested a wig after either reading a hospital leaflet/card (21%) or being referred directly by hospital staff (26%).

This valuable feedback underlines the important role hospitals – and their staff – play in letting children and young people know about the charity’s free wig provision service.

Leaflets and lenticular cards had, in previous years, been designed by The Little Princess Trust’s communications team to assist nurses in passing on the charity’s key messages of how to request a wig.

To make the job of hospital staff easier, new toolboxes were purchased to ensure that all the charity’s marketing products could be securely stored in one place.

Seventy-five boxes were this year delivered to hospitals around the UK containing leaflets, booklets, posters and small charity promotional products to increase The Little Princess Trust’s presence within hospital settings.

New items such as playing cards and soft beanie hats, have also been designed and produced this year to be included in the toolkit boxes.

47%

percentage of wig recipients who contacted LPT after reading a hospital leaflet

Building stronger links with our key partners

Although not directly employed by The Little Princess Trust, hairdressers and wig fitters work very closely with the charity as part of the wig provision service.

They come into contact with young people receiving wigs and the many kind people donating their hair and so it is vital that they have knowledge of the charity’s working procedures so that any communication passed on is correct.

Printed leaflets and emailed correspondence are an excellent way to maintain good lines of communication but the charity also strongly believes in face-to-face visits.

To help build new contacts with hair professionals and improve communication with its many partners, the charity’s salon relationship co-ordinator visited 42 locations around the country this year.

In addition to this, the Wig Referrals Team organised two wig fitters’ workshop days at the charity’s headquarters in Hereford. Wig fitters from around the country attended to hear the latest news, see wig-knotting demonstrations and ask any questions about The Little Princess Trust’s service.

Personal visits were also carried out by the department’s Charity Outreach Representative who went to 83 hospitals in the UK in the past 12 months.



Liz Pullar is a Little Princess Trust wig fitter and stylist.

Reputation and influence continue to grow within research community

The last 12 months highlighted once again The Little Princess Trust’s vast commitment to childhood cancer research.

More than £5.9 million was given to fund scientists seeking to find kinder and more effective treatment for childhood cancers.

This was the fourth consecutive year that the charity has committed more than £5million to research and means that, since 2016 when The Little Princess Trust first began funding scientists, the total amount has surpassed £33 million while the total number of individual projects supported stands at 141.

The charity is repeatedly being told by scientists that the support provided by The Little Princess Trust is becoming ever-more vital as there are few other sources of funding available for certain areas of paediatric research.

These words are, at the same time, both inspiring and worrying as they reaffirm the very importance

of the charity’s vital backing to childhood cancer research funding in the UK.

With so many different projects supported at so many hospitals and universities across the country, the reputation of The Little Princess Trust continues to grow within the scientific world.

Recognition came this year at The Third Sector Awards for The Little Princess Trust’s partnership with CCLG while the charity’s funding was also frequently referenced at major cancer research conferences both in the UK and overseas.

Finally, it is hard for all associated with the charity to express the pride felt in the agreement to fund a professional post of paediatric oncology at the University of Oxford.

Working with one of the oldest and most respected academic institutions in the world represents an enormous achievement and brings hope and expectation that the work funded will improve the lives of many children and young people.

“The Little Princess Trust is supporting innovative projects which could be game changing in the future for children with cancer.”

Alejandra Bruna



LPT funding for childhood cancer research

Recognition from experts at Third Sector Awards

The Little Princess Trust's reputation within the world of childhood cancer research was strengthened when the charity was recognised at the much respected and long-established Third Sector Awards.

The awards give praise to the UK's leading charities and all associated with The Little Princess Trust were delighted to see the charity's successful partnership with the Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group (CCLG) listed among the finalists.

The two charities were Highly Commended in the Charity Partnership of the Year category at the awards and news of this was to later feature on the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) website.

Working with CCLG has ensured The Little Princess Trust can support so many researchers and scientists searching to find kinder and more effective treatments for all childhood cancers.

Award judges praised the way the partnership has saved so much on time and resources and said it has also acted as a road map for other charities to follow by showing just how much can be achieved when different organisations come together.

The partnership began in 2016 when The Little Princess Trust Trustees wanted to expand its remit to fund childhood cancer research.

However, with little previous experience of working with the research community, the charity wanted to gain a greater understanding of what was then an unfamiliar world.

There was a particular interest to not only follow legal guidelines but, importantly, ensure that only the best quality research, likely to have the highest impact for children with cancer, would be selected for funding.



Working together: Ashley Ball-Gamble (left) from CCLG, with Phil Brace, from The Little Princess Trust

This led to conversations between The Little Princess Trust and CCLG to explore how the charity could fulfil its goal of funding research that would find kinder and more effective treatments for childhood cancers.

It soon became apparent that the charity and CCLG shared many goals and the advice, guidance and extra administrative support from The Little Princess Trust's new partners has allowed the charity to expand its objectives to fund research.

By sharing knowledge and resources, The Little Princess Trust has given a huge boost to childhood cancer research in the UK and, as a result of the collaboration with CCLG, the charity has given more than £25 million to pioneering institutions and experts leading the way in researching paediatric cancers.

Judges praised the way the partnership has saved so much on time and resources and acted as a road map for other charities to follow

Funding of a professorial post at the University of Oxford

There was a hugely significant moment in the charity's history when The Little Princess Trust began an exciting partnership with the University of Oxford to fund a Professorial post of Paediatric Oncology.

The Little Princess Trust has pledged to support one of the world's oldest universities with a unique project that will aim to change the trajectory of a child's life when they are given the news of a cancer diagnosis.

The University of Oxford wishes to bring together its research programs to strengthen paediatric oncology and become a global centre of excellence in childhood cancer studies.

To achieve this goal, the university said it was necessary to recruit a senior clinician-scientist to lead this area of work before a detailed proposal was developed for a new professorial post of Paediatric Oncology with the support of The Little Princess Trust.

The University of Oxford is focused on three areas that will impact that prognosis: discovery research, new drug development and delivery of experimental medicine, with a particular focus on immunology.

Trustees from The Little Princess Trust visited Oxford's Institute of Developmental and Regenerative Medicine and saw the laboratory where the professor, who is yet to be recruited, will be based.

As part of the visit, Trustees also learned more about Oxford's expertise in basic science, and how the new partnership will build on the capacity to provide clinical trials.

"The project aims to change the trajectory of a child's life when told of a cancer diagnosis.."



Trustees from The Little Princess Trust during their visit to the University of Oxford

First anniversary for new partnership supporting clinical trials

In the previous year, The Little Princess Trust joined forces with groups such as Cancer Research UK to almost treble the financial support going to the paediatric network of Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres (ECMCs) across the country.

This year, it has been rewarding to hear of the many developments as the first anniversary of the new funding partnership was marked.

The Little Princess Trust's involvement saw the research network budget increase from £2.3million to £6.6million.

It was a busy first year for the network that uses clinical trials to check the efficacy and safety of new cancer drugs and, among the highlights from an important 12 months, were:

- The launch of the DETERMINE trial at 19 UK sites to see if drugs, including those licensed for more common cancers, could also benefit rare cancer types.
- The opening of a new paediatric ECMC network in Cardiff. Among the clinical trials running at the Welsh site is a study investigating acute myeloid leukaemia.
- The Therapeutic Drug Monitoring programme has been increased to 17 centres. More than 300 young patients have been recruited and 12 drugs studied to increase scientists' knowledge of various cancer types.
- Evidence-based carboplatin dosing guidelines for newborns and infants have been published in the British Journal of Cancer and there are now treatment guidelines in place for carboplatin for many tumour types.



The Cardiff team within the ECMC network

- A new website has been set up for anyone to access helpful information for dosing in newborn patients.

As the new five-year funding commitment enters its second year, the hope remains that the support from The Little Princess Trust, CRUK, the National Institute of Health and Care Research in England, the Chief Scientist's Office in Scotland, Health and Care Research Wales and Northern Ireland's HSC Public Health Agency, will ensure more children can take part in clinical trials close to their own homes.

Dr Guy Manakin, a consultant paediatric oncologist working in Manchester, said one of the achievements of the ECMC network is to "have experimental trial options available more widely".

"Fifteen years ago, you probably had to go to London and we had lots of families going to other countries to access drugs," he added.

"Now, there are experimental treatments available somewhere reasonably close to you so you don't have to travel."

New Ideas Grants continue to inspire innovation

The charity's New Ideas Grants have continued into their second year and received a number of high-quality applicants.

Introduced to replace the previous Innovation Grant, The Little Princess Trust invites researchers to explore unconventional and forward-thinking concepts to improve the treatment and well-being of young cancer patients.

The funding amounts for the New Ideas Grants are smaller than for the Innovation Grants but give scientists far more freedom to pursue projects and areas of research that have never been previously explored.

The Little Princess Trust works with CCLG to select the projects aiming to gather early evidence for ideas that could transform the way children with cancer are treated in the future - and this year seven projects were chosen.

Phil Brace, CEO at The Little Princess Trust, said: "The expansion of our New Ideas grant scheme demonstrates our commitment to advancing children's cancer research.

"It is especially exciting to see so many projects this year that take a multi-disease approach.

"These initiatives have the potential to benefit the entire childhood cancer research field and, we hope, improve outcomes for many more young patients."

Meanwhile, Ashley Ball-Gamble, CEO of CCLG, said: "The New Ideas projects highlight the importance of LPT's unique funding schemes, with the potential to inspire significant future research and make a real difference for children with cancer."

"These initiatives have the potential to benefit the entire childhood cancer research field."

The 2024 New Ideas Grants were as follows:

- Rewriting cancer cell messages to slow down tumour growth: Professor Karim Malik at the University of Bristol.
- Understanding how a new drug can selectively fight childhood cancer cells: Dr Igor Vivanco at King's College London.
- Understanding how immune cells around the brain project childhood ependymoma tumours: Dr Elizabeth Cooper at the University of Cambridge.



Dr Igor Vivanco and his team at Kings College

- Understanding how childhood cancers spread: Dr Madhumita Dandapani at the University of Nottingham.
- Cracking the code - understanding how neuroblastoma and immune cells join forces to improve treatment: Dr Alejandra Bruna at the Institute of Cancer Research.
- Fighting circular DNA as a new way to prevent relapse in acute lymphoblastic leukaemia: Dr Joan Boyes at the University of Leeds.
- Making an 'off-the-shelf' CAR-T cell treatment for children with solid cancers: Professor John Anderson at UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health.

Expanding our knowledge by making new contacts overseas

Committing substantial sums of money to childhood cancer research comes with a responsibility that the funds must always go to the right places.

The charity's relationship with CCLG ensures that this is the case, but The Little Princess Trust staff have a commitment to always keep learning and understand the latest developments within the world of cancer research.

Attending international conferences is an excellent way to not only hear of the latest advances but also forge new relationships with the leading scientists performing incredible work within the sector.

This year, staff from the charity attended the annual congress of the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP) in Ottawa, Canada and SIOP's European event in Milan, Italy.



Phil Brace and Wendy Tarplee-Morris met some of the leading childhood cancer researchers at the Accelerate conference in Brussels

Another excellent opportunity to learn came at the Accelerate Paediatric Oncology conference in Belgium while many other meetings were held with research partners closer to the charity's UK headquarters.



The reputation of The Little Princess Trust within the world of childhood cancer research was further enhanced at the SIOP conference in Canada

Scientists uncover the 'Rosetta stone' of sarcoma research

Work funded by The Little Princess Trust has formed part of the first and largest encyclopaedia of protein alterations in soft tissue sarcomas - opening the door to a new era of understanding and treatment for this group of rare cancers, which account for around 4,000 cases in the UK each year.

Building on funding from eight different charities, including The Little Princess Trust, this pioneering encyclopaedia of sarcoma biology compiles a wealth of information that could help untangle the protein changes driving sarcomas' growth, spread and survival.

The findings, published in Nature Communications, will allow researchers to tap into the potential of immunotherapy in this cancer type. It could also identify people at higher risk of relapse and provide new ways to personalise treatments.

The encyclopaedia, developed by a team of researchers and clinicians led by The Institute of Cancer Research, London, comprises data from 321 people - including children, teenagers and adults - with 11 different types of sarcoma tumours. Some patients with sarcoma currently face limited treatment options.

Researchers looked at patient samples to uncover the 'proteomic profile' of the sarcoma tumours. These proteomic profiles are snapshots of all the different proteins in different tumours, which help researchers better understand how the proteins are functioning and driving them.

Since most approved cancer drugs work by targeting proteins, understanding more about the proteins driving sarcoma could lead to new targeted drugs.

The new insights have also uncovered new immunotherapy targets, including proteins involved in the complement cascade - a key part of patients' innate immune system.

The new targets could ultimately lead to new ways of treating "immune cold" sarcomas, which are not properly recognised by the immune system and do not respond well to current immune checkpoint drugs.

The encyclopaedia has also allowed researchers to identify proteins that can be measured to help predict which tumours are particularly high-risk and aggressive. This could, in the future, pave the way for more tailored treatment for individuals, for example by identifying patients who may benefit from more aggressive treatment.

The researchers were also able to categorise tumours into a series of interconnected biological networks called 'proteomic modules'. They identified 14 different modules, which can act as 'signatures', or clues, that could help researchers and clinicians to better understand tumours, predict outcomes and assess clinical risk to improve patient care.

Study leader Dr Paul Huang, Team Leader of the Molecular and Systems Oncology Team at The Institute of Cancer Research, London said: "Our 'encyclopaedia' of protein alterations is a vital resource - a Rosetta Stone of sorts that will help us unravel the complex language of sarcoma tumours.



Dr Paul Huang said the funding allowed his team to 'explore new avenues of personalised treatment'

Genetic code of rare kidney cancer cracked

The Little Princess Trust helped to fund the first study of a genetic code of a rare form of kidney cancer, called reninoma.

Findings in a paper, published in Nature Communications, highlighted how researchers at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, Great Ormond Street Hospital and The Royal Free Hospital revealed a new drug target that could serve as an alternative treatment if surgery is not recommended.

There are around 100 cases of reninoma reported to date worldwide, and it is among the rarest of tumours in humans.

Although it can usually be cured with surgery, it can cause severe hypertension or it can spread and develop into metastases.

There are no existing medical treatments for reninoma and management involves surgery alone. Until now, it had been unknown what genetic error causes reninoma.

In the new study, funded by The Little Princess Trust, researchers found that there is a specific error in the genetic code of a known cancer gene, NOTCH1, that is behind the development of this rare cancer.

The team examined two cancer samples — from a young adult and a child — with advanced genomic techniques, known as whole genome and single nuclear sequencing.

Their findings suggest that the use of existing drugs targeting this specific gene is a possible solution to treating reninoma for patients where surgery is not a viable option.

Dr Sam Behjati, co-lead author of the study, said: “Rare cancers are exceedingly challenging to study, and patients with such tumours may therefore not benefit from cancer research.

“Here, we have a powerful example of cutting-edge science rewriting our understanding of an ultra-rare tumour type, reninoma, whilst delivering a finding that potentially has immediate clinical benefits for patients.”



Dr Sam Behjati is the co-lead of the study

Achievements across so many areas help to drive on our mission



Great praise: The Little Princess Trust's free wig service

Charity praised for helping aesthetic well-being of others

The Little Princess Trust's free wig service received a global award from academics in Scandinavia.

The Finnish Society for Aesthetics highlighted the charity's “long-standing and praiseworthy work” by awarding the charity with the Global Aesthetic Achievement of the Year prize.

Previous winners of the award, which is given to a person or group who have raised a discussion about art, beauty, and aesthetic values, include the World Health Organization.

The society praised The Little Princess Trust for promoting a discussion about the “dimension and relevance of aesthetics in everyday life and its connection to ethics and personal identity beyond commercial interests and influences”.

“The Little Princess Trust has diligently highlighted the importance of being able to express one's identity in a way one chooses regardless of age, state of one's health, and financial status,” the judges said.

“Additionally, relying on donations, The Little Princess Trust has brought attention to the duty of social care we all share in our everyday lives and to the potential low threshold actions, such as donating hair, that can improve the aesthetic well-being of others.”

The award was announced at a ceremony at the Kirpilä Art Collection in Helsinki. Organisations are unable to nominate themselves and are, instead, selected by the society's committee.

Launch of printed Funky Hair Funday campaign

The charity is very aware of how reliant it is on fundraising donations that come via sponsored haircuts.

For a long time, there has been a wish to develop a fun campaign that allows people who do not have long hair, or did not wish to cut their long locks, to still be able to support the charity in an inclusive way with others.

The Funky Hair Funday campaign was created two years ago as a way for people to support the charity by styling their hair – or head – in the most imaginative way possible.

It began as a digital campaign whereby the assets that could help supporters to organise their own Funky Hair Funday could be downloaded from The Little Princess Trust's website.

Despite being heavily promoted on the charity's social media pages, take-up numbers for the digital offering were low and the charity's communications team reviewed each digital asset before making changes and turning them into a printed set inside a newly-designed Funky Hair Funday envelope.

The fundraising packs can be requested, for free, from the charity's website and it has been pleasing to see so many schools and businesses hosting their own Funky Hair Fundays.

The age ranges and different demographics organising events show this campaign can be enjoyed by anyone and has opened up a new income stream for the charity.



There has been a big increase in Funky Hair Fundays following the launch of the free printed pack



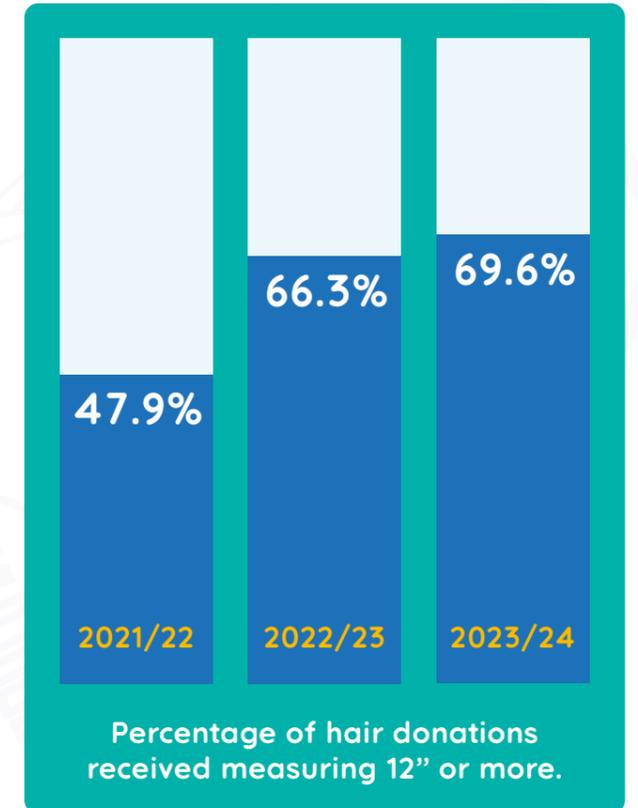
Rise in the percentage of longer hair donations

The Little Princess Trust first began to heavily promote the need for longer hair donations during the first Covid-19 lockdown through its 'Let It Grow' campaign.

Progress has been made with the percentage of supporters donating more than 12 inches of hair increasing year-on-year and further efforts have been made to reinforce the message that, when it comes to donating hair, it is a case of 'the longer the better'.

As well as social media posts and website blogs explaining that the charity already has a good stock of shorter hair donations, increased communication with the many salons that support The Little Princess Trust has amplified this message.

The combined efforts from different departments have had the desired effect of increasing the percentage of longer hair donations sent to the charity. The percentage of hair that measured above 12 inches stood at 69.6% which was up from 66.3% in 2022/3 and 47.9% in 2021/22.



Importance of sponsored haircuts

While the charity is grateful to every single hair donor, its unique fundraising model that relies on the financial support from the public to provide wigs and fund research means that income from sponsored haircuts is vital.

It was welcoming, therefore, to see the percentage of hair donations with fundraising rise from 18% to 23% over the past two years.

The charity maintains a softer position than many others in terms of its fundraising approach. Instead of 'rattling tins' or using unsolicited mail, the charity prefers to update supporters of how their financial support makes a difference to children and young people.

One such avenue where this content is published is within the fundraising pack. Requests for the free pack rose significantly this year from 16,470 requests to 24,016.

Supporters who do request a pack are encouraged to gather fundraising on the JustGiving platform and given advice on how they can promote their page to friends and family.

A lot of work has taken place to update supporters on the revised amounts that it costs the charity to provide one wig to a child or young person and it was pleasing to see the average JustGiving page value rise from £476 in 2022/23 to £530 in 2023/24.

£530

The average amount raised on a JustGiving page



The percentage of people who donate hair and fundraise has risen from 18% to 23% over the past two years.



The generosity of young supporters helps the charity achieve its key aims and objectives

Reaching a larger audience via email and social media

The Trustees are fully aware that getting The Little Princess Trust's key messages to large numbers of people is something that can bring many benefits to the charity.

For example, clarifying the most important points for hair donors is one area where clear and concise communication helps.

It is important that both the young person donating their hair and their parent or guardian sending their hair off in the post, understand the best ways for the hair to be cut and how associated fundraising can help LPT achieve its objectives.

The charity knows that different means of communication can be used to their full potential to ensure each demographic has a clear understanding of the charity's priorities, goals and policies.

The past 12 months has seen the charity send out more emailed newsletters than ever before by using the Mailchimp software.

The Little Princess Trust now has more than 75,000 subscribers to its e-shots and these have proved an extremely effective way of keeping supporters involved and franchised in with the charity.

The various social media pages are also an increasingly useful tool as each platform is favoured by a different age group and the content is changed to reflect this.

As of July 2024, The Little Princess Trust had 105,936 followers on Facebook (up from 101,661 the year before), 79,729 followers on Instagram (up from 74,152), 14,961 followers on X (down from 14,968), 5,392 followers on LinkedIn (up from 4,668) and 13,459 followers on TikTok (up from 12,589).

One notable development on social media has been an increase in video content. The key platforms are giving greater prominence to moving content and the charity's social media team has taken action to take advantage of this change.

The results can be seen in the number of views on the charity's TikTok page which rose from 278,211 views in 2022/23 to 409,840 in 2023/24. Meanwhile, the reach of the charity's Instagram posts - boosted by more video content - increased from 2,693,458 to 3,991,732. These numbers reaffirm once more the power of social media for the charity to reach new audiences.

Year	Views
2023/24	409,840
2022/23	278,211

Rise in TikTok video views.

105,936

The number of people following the charity's Facebook page

Improved the offering in our online shop

The charity started an online shop in 2020 that stocked a small number of branded products such as T-shirts, tote bags, pens and baseball caps.

The aim of the shop was primarily to raise the profile of the charity as many supporters shared photos of themselves on social media while wearing the branded items and having their hair cut or taking part in sporting events.

A thorough review of the shop was undertaken in the past 12 months that looked at both the design of the online website as well as the products sold.

As a result, design changes were made to the look of the online shop while additional items were added to the store.

The hope is that the new items will continue to raise the profile of the charity while also creating an additional income stream.



Build and nurture relationships with supporting salons

The charity is incredibly grateful to receive wonderful support from people working in salons across the UK and Ireland. Many of these salons are small, independent businesses and yet many of them offer free haircuts to their clients who are donating their hair to The Little Princess Trust.

Other hair professionals run fundraising days while the charity is aware that others employed in the hair industry help to promote the charity's wig provision service by putting the charity's posters, stickers and leaflets on display.

An opportunity to formally recognise the support of an industry that has clear links to the charity was identified and the charity's communications team led this project.

The result was a campaign called 'Hair for each other' that celebrated the many links between hair professionals and The Little Princess Trust's free wig provision service.

A free salon pack was created for the campaign that came complete with window stickers, mirror clings and printed leaflets and letters outlining how hairdressers and hair stylists can support The Little Princess Trust.

Celebrity hairdresser and Little Princess Trust Ambassador Andrew Barton was one of more than 500 hair professionals who received one of the new packs two months after the launch of the campaign.

He encouraged his fellow hairdressers to follow his lead and help the charity to continue supporting children with cancer by giving them a free, real hair wig.

"Hair for Each Other is the perfect opportunity for hairdressers, barbers and stylists to support The Little Princess Trust," he added. "Please get involved!"



The salon packs were sent out to businesses across the country



The campaign was promoted heavily on the charity's social media pages

Promoting diversity of wigs and offering a truly inclusive service

A key aim of The Little Princess Trust is to offer wigs to children and young people that closely resemble the hair they have lost.

To do this, the widest range of real hair wigs is needed – featuring different colours, varied lengths and all hair types.

To ensure each individual wig recipient's heritage is fully respected, much work has gone on behind the scenes over the past few years with Raoul Wigmakers in London to make wigs from Afro-textured hair donations.



This partnership has continued to develop over the past 12 months, and it has been very rewarding to see children – and their parents – praise the quality of the wigs provided.

Natasha Gausi Twee, the mother of wig recipient Diamond, said her daughter did not stop smiling after having her wig styled 'exactly as she wanted'.

Meanwhile Stefanie Ruth, Savannah's mum, said her child's face 'lit up with a smile that melted my heart' when she first wore her wig.

The charity is keen to increase its knowledge of Afro-textured wigs and attended a major conference in London that had many speakers discussing hair loss within the black community.

Organised by trichologist Lorna Jones, C & Hair welcomed dermatologists, oncologists, and consultants with the aim of advancing conversations on cancer.

Afro hair specialist Verona White gave a live wig-making demonstration while consultant dermatologist Dr Sharon Belmo spoke in detail about Afro-textured hair care and hair loss.

There were also presentations from Codilia Gapare, the inventor of Eylure C-lash, consultant oncoplastic breast surgeon Carol Norman, and Jeff Thompson – the founder of Cancer Don't Let It Win.

Ian Morris, Communications Manager at The Little Princess Trust, was there, too, and told guests about the charity's partnership with Raoul Wigmakers.

He took along two of the charity's wigs that had been made from Afro-textured hair donations and there was huge interest – and praise – from guests for the quality of the wigs.

Ian returned from the conference with hair donations after guests generously cut off their curls to help the charity's wig provision service while Lorna very kindly made The Little Princess Trust the conference's chosen charity, meaning that £320 was given to the charity at the event.



Ian Morris and Lorna Jones at the C & Hair event.

Receiving support from businesses both large and small

The Little Princess Trust has built up an increasingly valuable number of corporate supporters who have given their backing to the charity.

The loyalty from companies such as Sally's, Cloud Nine, Great Lengths and Starpowa is very much appreciated by all at The Little Princess Trust and their long-term commitment to support the charity has contributed to a generous source of income.

This year saw a new partnership formed with the hugely influential, Wella Company. The world's number one colour brand has already pledged to donate shampoo and conditioner for the charity's wig care gift boxes while the company's salons will also be promoting The Little Princess Trust to their customers across the UK and Ireland.

Janus Henderson Investors is another company making a valuable contribution towards the charity. The global asset management specialist has pledged to donate tens of thousands of pounds in the next financial year as part of the company's week of giving.

The charity also received substantial support from smaller businesses and a great example of the generosity shown towards The Little Princess Trust came from Burghill Valley Golf Club.

Pete Griffiths raised thousands of pounds during his year as captain of the golf course. He held various competitions throughout the year and organized a unique raffle when golf balls were purchased before being dropped from a helicopter in a nearest-the-pin-wins contest.



Phil Brace and Wendy Tarplee-Morris take to the stage as part of the Wella and Little Princess Trust partnership



The Little Princess Trust's Kim Musson (second from the right) and Eleanor Crump at Burghill Valley Golf Club before the unusual fundraiser

Famous faces help to raise our profile

The Little Princess Trust is incredibly fortunate to receive support from tens of thousands of individuals every year.

These huge numbers undoubtedly ensure more people find out about the charity and help young people with hair loss discover that the charity is there to support them.

In an ever-changing digital world, some supporters can – thanks to their social media profile – help to raise the charity’s profile even further.

In previous years, the charity has received huge attention after celebrities such as Harry Styles, Jesse J and even the Duchess of Cambridge donated their hair.

This year again saw some famous faces promote the charity after they either donated their own hair as was the case with England cricketer Rory Burns or they supported the efforts of friends and family as happened with actresses Dame Judy Dench and Dani Harmer.

The Little Princess Trust once again received many column inches in the regional and national press and featured on national television when BBC Morning Live interviewed the charity’s Director of Services and Impact Wendy Tarplee-Morris and wig recipient Kiya Kanani at the Hannah Tarplee Building.

It is worth stating that as well as being a Little Princess Trust Ambassador, Kiya is one of the few wig recipients that has spoken publicly about her experience with cancer.

The charity always puts the priorities of its wig recipients first and never approaches wig recipients to speak to journalists.

The few wig recipients that are featured in the media have made the initial approach to help with such enquiries.

Even so, the charity’s Communications Manager always carries out due diligence on any media request to ensure that the young people supported by The Little Princess Trust are not put in an awkward or sensitive position.

This approach has seen some media opportunities lost but the well-being of the charity’s wig recipients is the only consideration.



TV presenter and chef, Romy Gill, interviews LPT ambassador Kiya Kanani for BBC Morning Live.



England cricketer Rory Burns donated his hair.

Rise in donations make year one of the most successful in charity’s history

The Little Princess Trust had one of its most successful financial years to date with total income surpassing £9 million.

This figure was made up from donations and fundraising, investments and almost £800,000 from a UK Government’s post Covid support fund.

It was particularly pleasing and encouraging to see donation income rise significantly on the previous 12 months despite the continuing and challenging external economic environment and cost of living crisis.

The total from donations and legacies stood at £7,679,047 – meaning a 26% rise on the past financial year.

This has been achieved without employing any specific full-time fundraisers or using any external fundraising teams.

Income received from so many generous individuals ensures the charity can meet its two key objectives: to provide real hair wigs, free of charge, to children and young people; and to fund research focused on finding kinder and more effective treatments for all childhood cancers.

High on impact, low on overheads

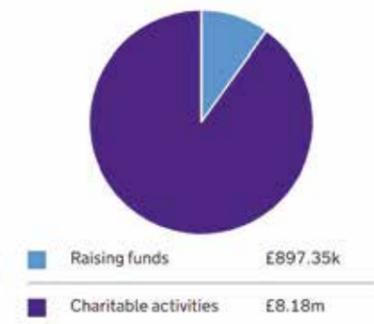
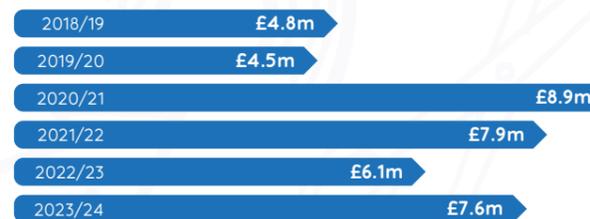
The charity endeavours to keep the cost of raising funds to a minimum where possible. The cost of raising funds was £897,347 compared to £676,692 in the prior year.

This increase was mainly due to higher donation site fees caused by increased donation income. Other reasons behind the rise included costs related to the increased volume of fundraising material requests, and additional staff time spent on fundraising activities.

However, we were pleased to see expenditure on charitable activities remaining high at 90% of total expenditure.

Overall, total expenditure for the year remained consistent with a slight increase from £9,049,346 in 22/23 to £9,064,572 in 23/24. Total expenditure includes research grants and, during the year, a total of £5,911,238 in research grant funding was approved compared to £4,411,732 in 2022/23.

Income from donations and fundraising



Sponsorship from hair donations remains key driver behind fundraising

The total income from donations and fundraising for the 12-month period stood at £7.6m. This was up from £6.1m in 2022/23.

Just as in the previous 12-month period, sponsorship directly linked to hair donations remained the principle source of income for the charity.

While successful efforts have been made to diversify fundraising by, for example, increasing communication with corporate supporters and promoting sporting events, the substantial sums raised by those cutting their hair for The Little Princess Trust is the key revenue generator.

The Funky Hair Funday campaign is one area where the charity has attempted to broaden its appeal to supporters.

The fun events can be enjoyed by anyone – no matter their hair length – and the charity has been pleased to see significant numbers of its new printed Funky Hair Funday packs be ordered by people of all ages and from many different sections of society.

The charity also benefitted this year from a £793,235 UK Government Post Covid Recovery Medical Research Charity Support Fund which will directly contribute to future research funding

The remaining source of income was in the form of investments and totalled £572,336 for the 12-month period.

£7.6 million

Total income from donations and fundraising



Staff at Mountfitchet House Care Home were among those to hold a Funky Hair Funday event.



Will Ford cycled from London to the charity's Hereford home to raise hundreds of pounds for LPT.



The charity continues to be supported by huge numbers of schools and colleges such as Hereford Cathedral School.

Identifying ways to develop and grow over the next year

The Little Princess Trust is always looking at new ideas to improve its key service and fulfil its aim and objectives in the best ways possible. The forthcoming year is a milestone moment and the following areas have already been identified as part of the charity's planning for the future

Mark the charity's 20th anniversary

The year 2025 will be the 20th anniversary of The Little Princess Trust.

The charity will be marking this special moment by looking at its impact and achievements, and the many inspirational people that have both played their part in its story and benefited from its work.

People will also be encouraged to promote this special moment in the charity's history and branding, such as logos, a strapline and digital assets perfect for social media, will be created to help supporters raise The Little Princess Trust's profile while highlighting their backing for the charity.

It is hoped that events and campaigns will run throughout the 12 months of 2025 to not only raise the profile of the charity but also increase fundraising too.



The year 2025 marks the 20th anniversary of the charity.

Explore new opportunities to increase storage capacity

As The Little Princess Trust increases its stock of wigs to ensure the supply is sufficient to match every request as soon as it is received, the logistics team is constantly looking at the best ways to keep its stock of wigs securely stored.

Increases to the charity's printed marketing collateral and a rise in the number of items on The Little Princess Trust online shop have also impacted

on the storage capacity at the Hannah Tarplee Building.

One solution could be to rent or purchase a property close to the charity's existing two premises in Hereford city centre.

Staff will monitor potential opportunities in the area and explore the financial implications of any purchases should they arise.

Offer a wig to every child or young person who may need one

As the charity's mission is to offer a free real hair wig to every child and young person experiencing hair loss due to cancer treatment, a constant goal is to ensure that every young person up to the age of 24 knows of the availability of The Little Princess Trust's wigs.

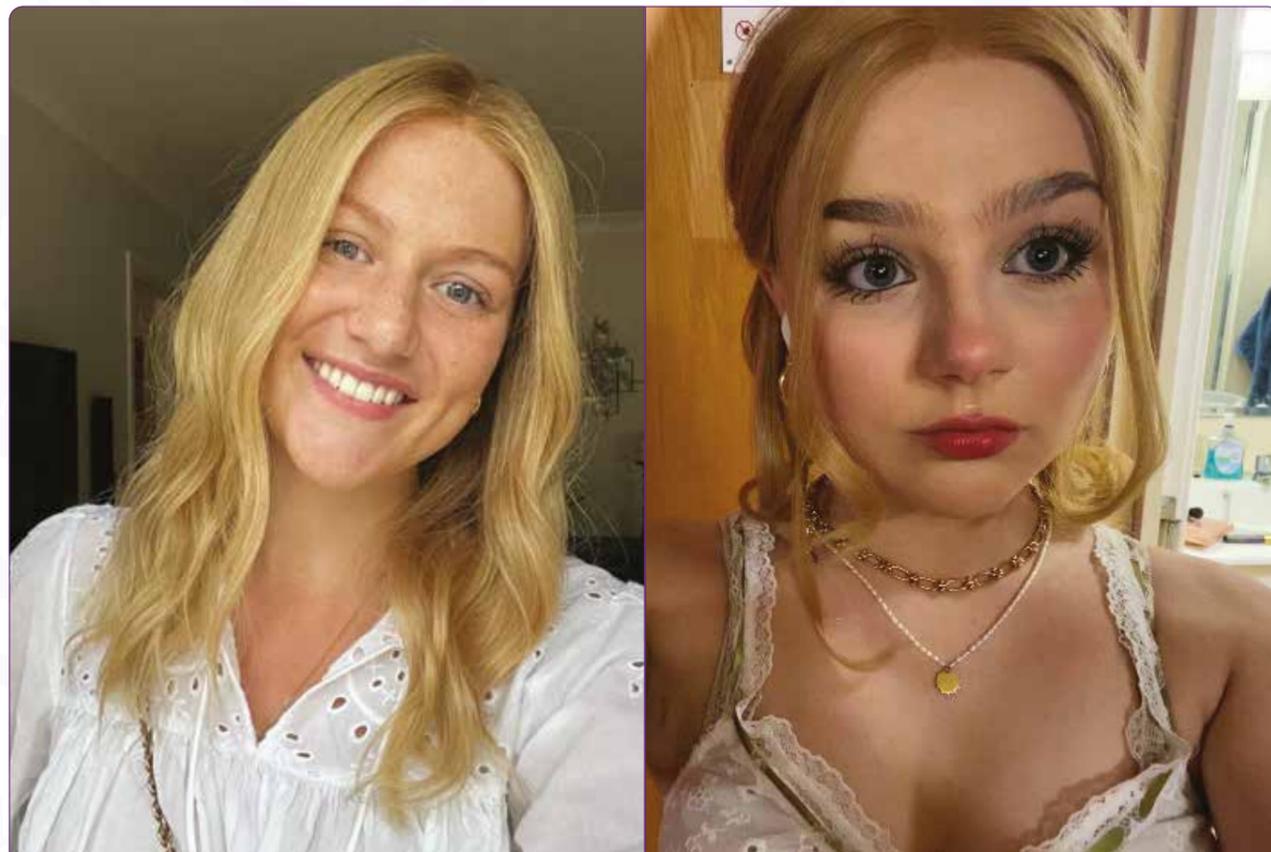
The work, therefore, with our key partners never stops and all future strategies will prioritise the need for links to be strengthened with children's hospitals and cancer charities.

This will mean developing already strong contacts with hospital departments and looking for new ways to make the process of requesting a wig as simple and straightforward as possible for young people.

The charity will review the way wigs can be requested in a digital setting as the referrals department's own statistics show that requests from websites are increasing in popularity.

The communications team will also look to get more professional photos of the charity's wigs taken to highlight the variety of wigs that are freely available.

The aim is that these new images will be used to update existing printed booklets and brochures and be used on the charity's website and social media pages to educate a new and growing audience.



Sara Titchen and Nellie Dougherty are two of the young people who have received wigs from The Little Princess Trust.

Work more closely with schools

As an organization that receives so much support from young people, the charity has begun exploring ways to create greater links with schools.

This would make young people more aware of the free wig provision service and educate children on how they can support The Little Princess Trust.

Links have been made with 1decision, a company that makes specialist resources which cover the statutory elements of 'Health and Relationships Education'.

1decision has many years of experience working with schools and the charity would like to build on previous developments by creating new digital lesson and assembly packs which can be made freely available on the company's website.



The Little Princess Trust received great support from schools

Have greater representation at established sporting events

The benefits of entering Little Princess Trust sports teams have already been felt in previous years.

The Cardiff Half Marathon and the London to Paris cycle ride are two of the events where substantial fundraising and profile has been raised for the charity.

A great sense of camaraderie and a wonderful community spirit is also generated by people going the extra miles while wearing the charity's colours -

as well as creating emotive experiences which help to generate long-term support.

With the aforementioned 20th anniversary approaching, the charity would like to explore the possibilities of entering more teams in sporting events, with a greater number of participants.

The policy would build on previous planning of entering teams in events organized by established companies.



The London 2 Paris cycle ride was a great event both in terms of raising funds and raising profile for the charity

Grow our numbers and influence on social media

The Little Princess Trust's Facebook and Instagram pages have been brilliant tools for the charity to get across its key messages to supporters and grow its profile.

Reach and engagement numbers increased significantly last year as the charity's social media team doubled its daily output on The Little Princess Trust's two most prominent platforms.

As recognised across the world of social media, the importance of moving content is growing and greater emphasis will be placed on the creation of in-house video clips for the charity's Facebook, Instagram and TikTok pages.

The young demographic of so many of the charity's supporters means that social media remains a vital communication asset and time will be spent to develop in-house video skills as this is a more effective use of both the charity's time and its financial resources.

The last year has also seen an increase in the audience of the charity's emailed newsletters.

Ages of this audience differ from the social media followers and offer the charity a great opportunity to communicate with a different demographic and so more efforts will be made to increase the output to the tens of thousands of people who open the charity's email newsletters every month.

"The demographic of the charity's supporters means social media remains a vital asset."



Social media posts are a great way of communicating with supporters



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