

# Children's Hospices

Useful information



**Chloe**

*Chloe said when she comes to the hospice she always feels happy.*

## What is a hospice?

Some children and young people have an illness that cannot be cured.

A children's hospice is a place where trained people provide a break for children and parents. Staff at a hospice will work with children and young people to help them feel better. It also provides end of life care for children and young people with life-threatening conditions.

People at the hospice give free care and support to children and young people who have an illness from which they will not get better.

Hospice workers want to help children and young people to be as well as possible for as long as possible. They provide physical and emotional care throughout the child's and family's journey.



## **Aims of the children's hospice**

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The hospice aims to care for children and young people in a calm, friendly and relaxed way and to provide holistic, specialist, palliative and end of life care.

Hospices usually work in partnership with other people and other organisations wherever possible. They also act as a champion for the cause of palliative care for children and young people.

Services are free to families, and some families may have occasional contact whilst others may use the services regularly.

## **How hospices can help children, young people and families**

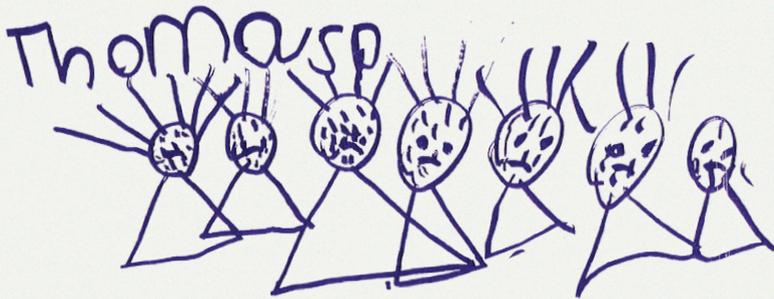
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Children's hospice services can provide a range of services including short breaks, emergency support and end of life care to children and young people who are life-limited and life-threatened.

They offer a lifeline to these children, young people and their families, helping ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances to cope with the challenges of daily life.

They usually provide a range of flexible, practical and free support at home and in the hospice to the entire family, often over many years and at any stage of the child's illness.

This support includes short breaks and daytime activities enabling families to get a rest; help to make the child or young person feel better; and support for family members, including brothers and sisters.



*My people at home are frightened*

When the time comes for the child or young person to die, children's hospice services are there to provide end of life care and bereavement support for as long as it's needed, helping families and friends approach death with dignity and peace.

All children's hospice services are charities, relying overwhelmingly on public generosity to continue to provide their services to children, young people and their families who need their care and support.

## Resources

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Most hospices have a huge selection of the latest DVDs and music to listen to. They also have plenty of space for those seeking some quiet time.

All hospices have lounges for young people which have flat screen TVs, computer consoles and games, games and more games!

There are all kinds of opportunities for arts and crafts or just chatting and spending time in the garden.

Often young people will book stays with the friends they have made at the hospice.

There are experienced skilled staff who have time to listen to concerns and worries. There are play therapists to help children and young people to have fun; art therapists to help with drawing and painting; and people who will listen when they want to talk and ask questions about their illness.

People can choose how they receive their care such as a long soak in the bath, a late night film and pizza or a lazy lie in the following day.

Most hospices have the opportunity to join in group chats for people to say what they do and don't like about the hospice and what we should do in the future.



*keep out of my life.  
I have enough going on without you...*

There are often themed weekends and special activity events which range from girly weekends with make-up, make-overs and pampering to James Bond weekends.

Mobile phones and laptops can be used in the hospice and there are computers with access to the internet.

Many hospices provide the opportunity to watch films, take part in media workshops and themed food nights. They also play board games, visit the cinema, and go shopping!

Children and young people usually have their own private bedroom in the hospice, with its own TV and DVD player.

Hospices have kitchen staff who pride themselves in providing really tasty food to cater for all different and varied tastes including vegetarians, people who only eat halal, curry dishes to American style dinners!

*“It’s nice to get out of the house. The staff are lovely and the food is great...”*

## Emotional care and support throughout the child, young person and families journey

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The Hospice Community Nurse will work with the patient and people involved in their health care.

When children and young people die from their illness there is bereavement support and advice for their families.

Usually patients and families can phone the hospice at anytime for more information and advice.

Where appropriate, independent advocacy services can help children and young people to find things out, consider their options and support them to voice their views, choices and opinions.

Please remember that in circumstances where there is no family or other form of non-professional support available to young people aged 16 and above who are assessed to lack mental capacity, there may be a legal duty to involve an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate in relation to decisions around end of life care.

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Artwork kindly provided by Erica Brown, Acorn's Children's Hospice and Donna Louise Children's Hospice Trust, Trentham.

# Contact

Sue Read

Professor of Learning Disability Nursing,  
School of Nursing and Midwifery,



Keele University,  
Clinical Education Centre,  
UHNS, NHS Trust,  
Newcastle Road,  
Staffordshire, ST4 6QG.



01782 679653



s.c.read@keele.ac.uk



Keele University



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April 2011

First Edition