

# For Every Family

Our  
strategy

2023-2026

One  
year on



/// I'm so grateful  
to Shooting Star  
Children's Hospices  
for all that they do  
for families. ///

Charlotte, Jacob's mum

"The Trustees of Shooting Star are immensely proud of the outstanding progress made on our strategic objectives during the first year of our *For Every Family* strategy. A robust foundation is now in place to enable our team to achieve our ambition of supporting every family."

**Andrew M Coppel CBE,**  
Chair of Trustees

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# About us

We support families who have a baby, child or young person with a life-limiting condition, or who have been bereaved, across north-west London, south-west London and Surrey.



## The families we support are facing the unimaginable.

We can't change a child's diagnosis, or their prognosis, but when the unimaginable happens we will be there – at one of our hospices, in a family's home or at a local hospital.

## Our care is not just at the end of a child's life.

From diagnosis to end of life and throughout bereavement, we provide a free-of-charge holistic service supporting families with a range of nursing, practical and emotional care. This includes overnight respite stays at our Guildford hospice, Christopher's, which is rated outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), symptom management and pain relief, specialist nursing in the community and a comprehensive range of therapies, groups and specialist clinics from our Outreach, Therapy and Family Support Centre in Hampton, Shooting Star House.

"The family could not express their gratitude enough for the support and seamless way Shooting Star Children's Hospices provided services. They were so touched by the various teams who rallied around them as a family and stated that they felt their child was so well cared for. If they had to replay it again, there is absolutely nothing they would change. Thank you again for allowing us to be a part of this phenomenal joined-up working."

Hospital nurse

"Through the various hospice refurbishments that we have supported, many of us have seen first-hand the incredible work and support that Shooting Star Children's Hospices provides. This has been the driver for us to continue to support and fundraise for this charity for the past 11 years."

Gary Chandler,  
CEO of Fourfront Group

"Shooting Star Children's Hospices has allowed us to navigate through death in a positive way, allowing me and my family to go through it in a much lighter way that I never thought was possible and I will be forever grateful."

A bereaved parent

"Since working here, I've gained lots of new skills and had the opportunity to do things I've never done. You can really make a difference and get involved in every aspect of a child's care."

Georgia, nurse  
at Shooting Star Children's Hospices

"There is so much support for your child and the whole family – the services offered are like scaffolding, literally holding up your life so you can keep going. Knowing we have that safety net is just crucial."

Britt, Zoe's mum

## Underpinning everything we do are our PRIDE values.

These shape how we work today and how we will deliver our strategy:

- Professionalism** – we will safeguard our families, each other and our organisation by working to ethical and professional standards at all times.
- Respect** – we will treat each other with the utmost respect.
- Integrity** – we will be honest and transparent in all that we do.
- Diversity** – we will respect individuality and ensure inclusion and fairness to all.
- Excellence** – we will strive for excellence in all that we do.

We're a lifeline to local children and families, providing bespoke medical and holistic care.

# A message from our Chief Executive

Shooting Star Children's Hospices has a tremendous history of supporting children with life-limiting conditions, and their families. For 25 years, working alongside local healthcare providers, we have given holistic, expert care.

When we launched our strategy last year, in 2023, we set some challenging, but realistic goals about what progress we wanted to make over the three years and how we wanted to move towards meeting our ambition of supporting every family with a life-limited child or whose child has died, when they need us.

These included offering support to a much wider range of families whose child has died, offering all families a choice about where end-of-life care for their child is provided, and ensuring we're making the best use of the resources we have. One year into the strategy, I'm pleased to say that we've made great progress towards these already; our commitment to delivering exceptional care and building a sustainable future has been unwavering.

The dedication of our trustees, staff, volunteers and supporters has seen us expand our bereavement service to reach families of children who have died suddenly or unexpectedly; partner with local community nursing teams to provide round the clock access to end-of-life medical support; increase our nursing numbers to open another bed at Christopher's; design an interactive communication

tool for young people transitioning into adult services; co-design and co-deliver an elearning placement with Kingston University, the first collaboration of its kind in the UK; start working with neonatal intensive care units to provide expert palliative care to babies; recycle 62% of the waste across our sites; and refresh our logo to increase awareness. But there's always more to do.

Our *For Every Family* strategy has two important principles – to provide the very best care to children and families across Surrey and west London, and to recognise that many families aren't currently getting the support they need. We know that we can't do this alone. We're part of a complex healthcare system, so working in partnership with local authorities, health boards and hospitals is incredibly important. And, of course, we also couldn't provide outstanding care without the thousands of supporters – individuals, companies, local groups and trusts – who generously donate their time and money year in, year out.

I said last year that what brings all of us together is our passion to support families going through the most traumatic experience they will endure. And I truly believe that. The progress we have already made is testament, and we can, and will, **make every moment count for every family facing the unimaginable.**

Paul Farthing  
Chief Executive

# Our purpose and ambition

## Our purpose

We believe every life-limited or dying child and their family should have the opportunity to make every moment count and get the support they need.

## Our ambition

We will support every family with a life-limited child or whose child has died, when they need us.

## Our goals

-  **Co-create:**  
Build partnerships that add value
-  **Do more:**  
Help more children and families
-  **Grow income:**  
Ensure our work is sustainable
-  **Do better:**  
Be seen as outstanding
-  **Grow people:**  
Be proudly chosen by staff and volunteers



# Our stakeholders

At the heart of our strategy are the children and families we support, those who refer children and families to us (our clinical partners), those who help us to deliver our work (our system partners), our supporters and our staff and volunteers – collectively they make everything we do possible.

From forums to feedback to phone calls, our stakeholders helped to shape our strategy. We're so passionate about involving the people we're here to support, who work as part of our team or partner with us, that one of our strategic goals is centred around co-creation.

Sharing with us what they felt a children's hospice should be, what their needs were and how we could work with them was central to building a strategy that puts the different groups of people we work with front and centre.

At each stage of developing this strategy, the statements opposite were at the heart of our planning and decision making. And they shall remain at the forefront of our work as we move through our strategy.

## The children and families we support

- "Their support and safe, expert care is there when I need it"
- "I feel safe, understood and part of a community"
- "They advocate on my behalf and amplify my voice"

## The nurses, GPs and medical professionals who refer families to us

- "I know and can access the real value Shooting Star Children's Hospices brings to a family"
- "I have confidence in the Shooting Star Children's Hospices team and their work"

## Other hospices and healthcare settings who provide similar services

- "I feel Shooting Star Children's Hospices is an active part of the health and social-care system"
- "I see Shooting Star Children's Hospices providing best-in-class leadership in the children's hospice community"

## Our donors, fundraisers, local companies, Vice-Presidents, Patrons and Ambassadors

- "I feel inspired to do something to help these children"
- "I know exactly where my money goes and the difference I make"

## Our staff and volunteers

- "I get the opportunity and tools to do my job and grow"
- "I feel the organisation cares about me, my values and I know the part I play"



# Our impact in 2023/24

**1,767**  
family members  
received support



**258**  
bereaved families  
accessed our specialist  
bereavement care



**544**  
children with life-limiting  
conditions were supported

**15,134**  
face-to-face and  
telephone contacts  
were made to families



**1,474**  
care nights  
were provided

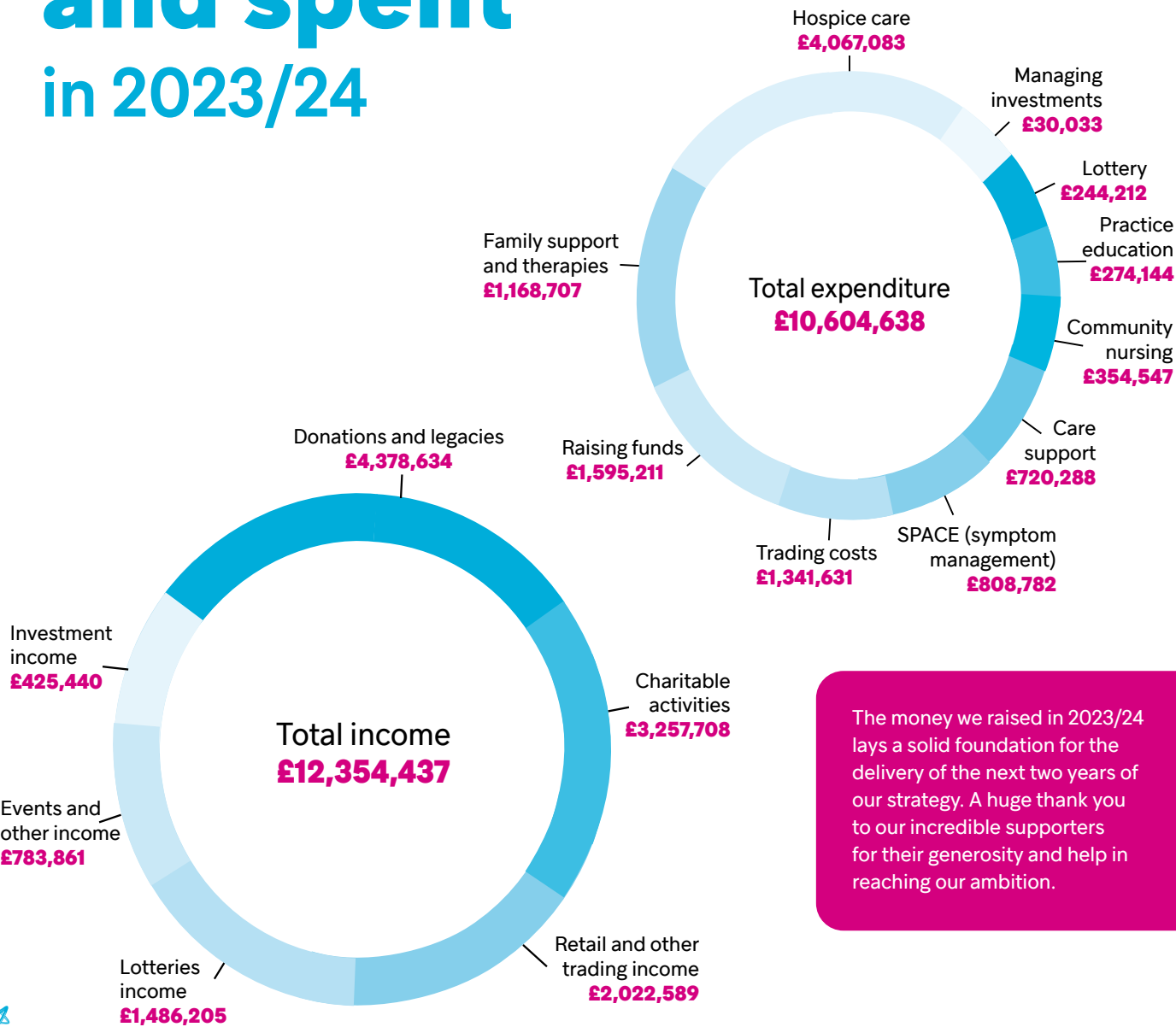


**151**  
new referrals  
were accepted

**62%**  
of the waste across  
our sites was recycled



# What we raised and spent in 2023/24





# Do more: Help more children and families



For over 20 years we have been providing outstanding care to children living with life-limiting conditions, and their families. In 2022 we successfully retained our outstanding CQC rating at Christopher's, our Guildford hospice, but there is always more we can do.

The devastating impact the death of a child has on a family is something we're highly skilled in. We believe that every person grieving a child, brother or sister, or grandchild, including families of babies or children who have died suddenly and not just those previously known to us, should have access to specialist long-term support.

This is a huge step change, and it won't happen overnight, but saving the lives of families after their child dies is something we're passionate about; we won't stop until all families living the unimaginable across north-west London, south-west London and Surrey have access to bereavement care.

As part of this work, we want to further develop how we use Shooting Star House so that it's not only our Outreach, Therapy and Family Support Centre, but a social and community hub that provides a safe space for the families we support: somewhere they can access therapies, spend time together and a place where they know they can openly talk about bereavement and grief.

We want to continue to work in collaboration with specialist teams at the Royal Marsden Hospital, Evelina London Children's Hospital and Great Ormond Street Hospital, offering expert medical and nursing care to every family – whether they choose to receive that care at home, at our hospice or in hospital. We know that prevalence data shows there are more children living with life-limiting conditions, and more children dying, in north-west London. We want to develop our physical presence in this area and work closely with the local community to offer care and support to families who desperately need it.

Finally, to further support the development of our end-of-life care provision and ensure we can support as many families as possible with planned and emergency respite, we will increase the number of beds available at Christopher's.

## Key initiatives

- Seek to offer bereavement support to every family whose child has died.
- Work with others to fill the gaps in provision for the last year of a child's life.
- Ensure our services are accessible across the areas we serve, notably creating a physical presence in north-west London and developing the use of Shooting Star House as our Outreach, Therapy and Family Support Centre.
- Increase our nursing and care team to maximise our overnight respite opportunities.
- Work with others to improve the experience of young people transitioning to adult services.

## Our measures of success

- Offer bereavement support to all families of children who have died across Surrey, south-west London and north-west London by 2026.
- Offer end-of-life care to more babies, children and young people who are dying by 2026.
- Open eight hospice beds and ensure each is being used 90% of the time by 2026.

## What we achieved in year one

- 119 newly bereaved families accessed our specialist bereavement care.
- 77 babies, children and young people received palliative care at our hospice, in their home or in hospital.
- Our hospice beds were occupied for 1,475 nights of the year (78% occupancy).



# Do better: Be seen as outstanding



We pride ourselves in working to the highest standard – from the care we provide and how we fundraise, to how we take care of our people and manage our finances. Excellence is one of our values, but to reach our ambition we can't rest on our laurels.

We can always do better, and we must continue to strive to be outstanding. Whether that's ensuring the highest levels of safety in the care we provide, listening to and learning from the children and families we support, providing a professional and personal fundraising experience, using data and insight to underpin decision making, continuing to improve and develop The Care Database, or being the go-to expert for child death in our area.

**Key initiatives**

- Engage with National Standards and develop the processes and behaviours that ensure all of our work is safe, compliant and fit for purpose.
- Ensure that our decisions are evidence-based through robust data analysis and insight.
- Continue to work on ensuring that all of our stakeholders have an excellent experience in their contact with the charity.
- Become a leading research hospice to help define and share best practice.
- Embrace emerging technologies to improve outcomes for children and families.
- Better identify the numbers and needs of life-limited children and their families in our area.

**Our measures of success**

- Ensure that all children and young people, and their families, have access to appropriate service provision.
- Become a research active hospice.
- Be the go-to expert for child death in our area with end-of-life referrals increasing by 2026.

**What we achieved in year one**

- 33% of bereaved families and 48% of families with a life-limited child accessed our services quarterly.
- Three research papers were authored.
- 58 end-of-life referrals were made.

# Co-create: Build partnerships that add value



Our strategy is ambitious. It needs to be. But we recognise that we're a small part of a very big system and we can't do what we need to alone; we need to work with partners who share our vision.

We also need to ensure that the people our charity was created to help – children living with life-limiting conditions, and their families – are given the opportunity to help shape what we do at every possible opportunity. We must ensure their voice is always heard and amplify their voice by influencing and advocating to help improve the services they are accessing.

**Key initiatives**

- Embed robust child and family participation and engagement, so that their voices are heard, their opinions respected and they influence the decisions we make.
- Work closely with clinical and system partners to collectively identify issues and co-design solutions that provide better outcomes for children and families.
- Build effective, productive partnerships with supporters that enable them to understand their role in delivering our purpose.
- Educate and advocate effectively with a range of audiences in order to help meet our strategic objectives.

**Our measures of success**

- Increase the number of children with life-limiting conditions, and their families, who use our service by 2026.
- Build strong health, local authority and political partnerships – be 'creating the agenda'.
- Measure our 'likely to recommend' score across supporters, volunteers, families and partners and increase the average by 2026.

**What we achieved in year one**

- 72 children living with a life-limiting condition, and their families, were referred to us.
- We have representatives on the advisory councils for Together for Short Lives and Hospice UK, as well as the Health and Wellbeing Board in Surrey. We have also set up a VCSE Bereavement Network and are leveraging the support of local MPs.
- The average 'likely to recommend' score was established as eight (out of ten) and will inform our success measure in 2024/25.



# Grow people: Be proudly chosen by staff and volunteers

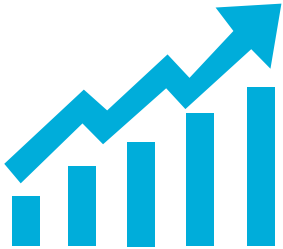
The expertise, energy and passion of our staff and volunteers are key to realising our purpose. We want to invest in our people and provide them with the opportunity to continually develop their knowledge and skills because we know that this will only further improve the service we provide to babies, children and young people.

We want to ensure that the people who work and volunteer for us are happy and proud to be part of Shooting Star Children's Hospices.

We're also committed to equity, diversity and inclusion and want to build a workforce that reflects the areas we serve. We know that without a laser-focus on this, we can't reach the many families that need us, but are not yet accessing our services.

### Key initiatives

- Create empowering career and development opportunities for staff and volunteers to grow, including our approach to leadership in the charity.
- Grow an innovative, respectful and listening culture that rewards and recognises contribution and encourages staff to work collaboratively.
- Build a workforce representative of the communities we serve and grow stronger relationships with minoritised communities.
- Work with volunteers to increase their role in delivering our strategic priorities.
- Understand and measure our impact on the environment and communities we operate within and move towards our net zero carbon goal.



### Our measures of success

- Provide every staff member with opportunities for training and growth.
- Increase volunteering hours by 10%.
- Measure our 'likely to recommend' score across employees and increase the average by 2026.
- Reduce staff turnover by 10% over the strategy's lifetime.

### What we achieved in year one

- A new learning and development academy, Starlight Academy, was launched and a new success measure will be established in 2024/25.
- Whilst we were not able to measure volunteering hours, an incredible 522 volunteers supported us – in Q2 2024/25 we plan to implement a new volunteering database to better track volunteering impact.
- An all-staff Birdsong survey ran with 92% of staff stating they were proud to work at Shooting Star and 97% happy to recommend Shooting Star to friends or family should they need to.
- Staff turnover has decreased to 18.5%.

# Grow income: Ensure our work is sustainable

As a charity, a core part of what we do is raising money; without the incredible support of our donors, supporters and statutory funding partners we simply could not deliver our care service. A core part of our strategy is therefore ensuring we have a sustainable funding model by diversifying our income streams and building on the partnerships that provide us with statutory funding.

To do this successfully though, we also need to educate – educate our audiences on what a children's hospice really is; on the incredible level of care we are providing; on the impact of bereavement on the whole family and how the work we do with bereaved families supports their mental health. And we need to inspire – inspire the public and funders to believe passionately, like us, that children's hospices change lives.

### Key initiatives

- Tell engaging and inspiring stories that share the need and our impact powerfully with supporters and other partners.
- Work with partners to deliver services that are valued by families and commissioners and ensure that we share the financial impact.
- Embrace opportunities in our use of technology to improve supporter experience and increase income.
- Invest in building awareness and understanding of our work across the communities we serve.
- Invest in insight and in new product and service development to drive new income opportunities.
- Expand our trading operations to increase income and our connections with local communities.
- Invest in the development of The Care Database to sustain its position as a leading technology partner for children's hospices.

### Our measures of success

- Grow and diversify our voluntary income by 2026 in order to meet our plans.
- Seek to increase the value and proportion of our statutory income against overall income by 2026.
- Increase retail income and profitability year on year.
- Increase income from The Care Database year on year and remain the primary choice for children's hospices.

### What we achieved in year one

- Our voluntary income increased to £6.6m.
- Statutory funding increased to £3.3m.
- Retail income increased to £1.2m.
- The Care Database income increased to £0.9m.





We know that we can only achieve our goals and make every moment count for the families we support by working in partnership with others.



"They were the only professionals who were there to support us after Milan's death emotionally ... There will never be enough words to describe all they have done for us as a family."  
**Phoebe, Milan's mum**



"Shooting Star Children's Hospices helped us – not only by looking after Spud [Humairaa], so we could have time with Mum, but also making sure that as siblings we were being thought of."  
**Tam, Humairaa's sister**



"It's so reassuring to know they're there – Shooting Star Children's Hospices is our peace of mind."  
**Sanna, Hadi's mum**



"We honestly couldn't have got by without Shooting Star Children's Hospices, that's the 100% truth."  
**Karen, Jake's mum**





If you share our ambition to be there for every family who needs our support, and you'd like to find out more about what we do or how you can help, please visit  
**[shootingstar.org.uk](https://shootingstar.org.uk)**

To read our annual report for 2023/24, please scan the QR code.



**Shooting Star Children's Hospices**

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