




Theodora Children's Charity **2024 Impact Report**



**“The Giggle
Doctors are like
real doctors
because they made
me feel better but
in a different way”**

Rory



Welcome!

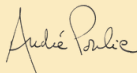
In 2024, we were thrilled to celebrate 30 years not only of Giving A Giggle to children in hospital, but increasing their opportunities for play and supporting their mental health, wellbeing, and development.

Since 1994, Giggle Doctors have brought moments of joy and playful encounters to hundreds of thousands of children and young people in hospital.

For each child, Giggle Doctors also benefit their families and the hospital staff around them. Including these groups brings our total number of beneficiaries in 2024 to a whopping estimated 61,179 people! It all represents a huge amount of joy and relief which we achieve together. You can read more about our impact on these additional beneficiaries towards the end of this report.

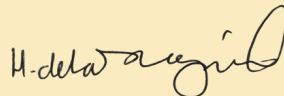
In 2024, we welcomed 4 new Trainee Giggle Doctors who have followed a year of rigorous training equipping them to support the evolving needs and interests of the children they encounter in hospital. These new artists are helping us reach more even children as they become fully established members of our Giggle Doctor team.

I hope you will find joy in discovering more about some of our many wonderful supporters in the pages of this report. We wouldn't be able to deliver these precious moments without the generous support of all of our funders – thank you with all our hearts!



André Poulie

Co-Founder and Volunteer Director



Holly de la Nougerède

Interim Chief Operating Officer

2024 at a glance!



In July, we celebrated **30** years of Theodora Children's Charity!

We started the year with regular visits at **13** hospitals, quickly increasing to **14** with our return to our first hospital partner - Great Ormond Street!



In March, **4** new Trainee Giggle Doctors joined the charity



By the end of 2024, we'd visited
15,687 children
45,492 parents, carers, siblings
and hospital staff during **3,820**
hours on the wards



In November, we
celebrated **10** years of
visits at Leeds General
Infirmary and **15** years at
Bradford Royal Infirmary
See pg 7-8 for more!

Lily's Story

“Lily met a Giggle Doctor once before whilst we were waiting for an appointment over on the Gastro ward – she really enjoyed this meeting as she was made a flower balloon and got to have a little play before her appointment.

Meeting the Giggle Doctors definitely helped Lily's stay at the hospital. It brought some normality to the day rather than being stuck in her hospital room and it was nice to see her interacting with the play team too after her surgery.

The Giggle Doctors really do really cheer the mood up of being in hospital! As a parent, seeing Lily interact with the Giggle Doctors is very heartwarming, it made me feel so happy.”

Words by Nicole, Lily's Mum



“The patient is a very talented pianist, so I had found a keyboard to keep him busy, and he began playing to us all. Dr Hunky Dory accompanied on his guitar, I played the drums on the hospital bedside cabinet, Dr Ding Dong sang harmonies along with Mum, who was on joint lead vocals with the patient.

It was a moment I will remember for a long time, and lifted the spirits of both the patient, Mum, and staff that could hear us along the corridor!”

Louise Oliver, Play Leader at Southampton describes a visit



“Dr Hunky Dory played guitar while my little pet fish swam around, and we played musical statues for this kid – except it was more like musical fish: when the music stopped the fish fell down. It was very cute and was just the sort of thing that got this little girl giggling, very simple, just watching us play a silly game just for her and her family.”

Dr Scribble describes a visit at Great Ormond Street Hospital

Let's Celebrate!



Not only did Theodora Children's Charity celebrate an important anniversary in 2024, we also celebrated 10 years of our partnership with Leeds General Infirmary and 15 years of Gigggle Doctors at Bradford Royal Infirmary.

“Who would have thought that 15 years on since 2008, we would still be visiting here every week, bringing miles of smiles and tons of Giggles to children in hospital!”

Ken Robertshaw, Theodora Children's Charity Trustee who was instrumental in establishing Gigggle Doctor visits at Bradford



Sarah's Story

“Her name was Sarah Angel, she was an angel on earth. She wasn't needy, but craved attention and thrived off people.”



Ellie and Andy, and their son Dane, fostered Sarah from when she was one day old, going on to adopt her when she was three. Sarah had a rare genetic kidney illness which resulted in her having many long stays at Leeds General Hospital. It was here that she met the Giggle Doctors. Ellie remembers their first encounter:



“Dr Nic Nac was just full of slapstick, Sarah laughed and laughed! I loved seeing Sarah loving it, it was great. We had not seen her laugh and be so interactive for a long time...A lot of people just don't understand the boredom and isolation your children experience in hospital.”

This was the first of many happy Giggle Doctor visits both in the hospital, and through Virtual Visits during the Covid lockdowns. These moments created special memories for the whole family.

Very sadly, Sarah passed away when she was just eight years old. Inspired by her memory, Ellie and Andy have continued to support Theodora Children's charity. We're so grateful for the whole family's incredible fundraising efforts and their commitment to bringing the magic of Giggle Doctor visits to other children in hospital and their families.



Click here to read about when
Andy helped with our Radio 4 Appeal

New Giggle Doctors

We have been piloting a new approach to training new Giggle Doctors which includes a globally recognised diploma in Giggle Doctoring!

Our 4 new recruits from 2024 have completed almost 12 months of training to learn vital skills on how to creating playful encounters no matter a child's illness, disability or complex need.



In 2025 they will continue to hone their skills in hospital as Junior Giggle Doctors for several months before becoming fully fledged members of the Giggle Doctor team and helping us reach even more children and young people in hospital.





HUGHJAMES

Hugh James Solicitors have supported us for the past five years. We caught up with Deborah Sleightholme, Partner and Head of Strategic Relationships to hear about what our partnership means to them.

“We have a long history of supporting people who have been seriously injured and bereaved and believe in empowering people at the worst time of their lives and helping them move forward.

We recognise that charities like Theodora Children’s Charity have a vital role to play and can make a huge positive difference to the children and families, and anything that can be done to bring a smile to the faces of children undergoing treatment in hospital and make the experience that little bit less scary is always going to tug at the heart strings!

Knowing our support has helped bring a smile and make a difference to a child and their family going through something most of us can’t imagine is very humbling and makes you want to do more to help raise awareness of what Theodora does so even more children can benefit from the programme.

We have held 2 comedy nights now to raise funds for the charity which aligns very well to the cause. Smiles and laughter sit alongside learning more about the important work the charity does. As a corporate donor, we want to be pro-active, and make sure as many people as possible know about Theodora Children’s Charity and its Giggle Doctor programme.”



Scan here to read the whole interview with Debs!



Meeting the Moosies!

Moose Toys have supported us since 2023 donating over £35,000 which has supported many Giggle Doctor visits, as well as the recruitment and training of new Giggle Doctors. We caught up with Kate, Foundation Manager at the Moose Toys Happy Kids Foundation.



Tell us a little bit about Moose Toys and the Happy Kids Foundation.

Our foundation has been funding and supporting organisations right around the world for ten years!

Our mission is to make kids 'Superhappy', bringing smiles, laughter and brightness to their lives, and all of the partnerships have an element of this alongside other strategic priorities around creating Opportunity, Inclusivity, and promoting Wellbeing for children – which is where our work with Theodora Children's Charity fits perfectly!



We're so grateful for your ongoing support – what drew you to Theodora Children's Charity initially?

The work Giggle Doctors do in hospitals and with kids and families is exactly what Giving Superhappy is about – it's about those pure joyful moments in what are extremely challenging environments for kids.



As our corporate supporter, do you have a hope for the future of our partnership and what we can achieve together?

Over the next 12-18 months we are really leaning into our GiveSuperhappy movement - we know that bringing happiness to kids all over the world needs more than just us and our toys. We need the help of all our partners who are on the ground creating these moments of Superhappy with kids who really need it.

And finally, why do you feel that play in hospital is important?

Personally, I've had a son who had to spend a bit of time as an outpatient at a children's hospital. At first, he didn't really know why we had to keep visiting and then began to associate these visits with a bad experience and it was tough on him and on us. But when he got to be in the different play spaces at hospitals and meet special people like the Clown Doctors [a version of our Giggle Doctors] it made it far less daunting a lot more fun. It also meant that the medical doctors could do what they needed to do, because he wasn't so stressed.

Luckily my family doesn't need to visit hospital that much anymore. But there are so many kids who are in hospital a lot. The pure happiness that the kids feel when the Giggle Doctors come and visit is exactly what GiveSuperhappy is all about. They get a moment of their day to forget why they are there, and what is hard about being there.



Ripple Effects:

Exploring Our Impact on Secondary Beneficiaries



Theodora Children's Charity's mission is to improve children's experience of hospital and healthcare settings, however, children do not exist in isolation. Children in hospital are at the centre of a web made up of their parents and carers, the medical staff who treat them, the housekeeping and catering staff, and the hospital environment itself.



“...it isn't just some play or jokes or fun, it's like the whole mood of the space is lifted and you can feel it just be great for everyone. A few of the times mentioned above I remember staff like nurses, cleaners, and porters stopping by the door or ward and watching, it's like everyone gets the ripple effect of the fun!”

Dr Scribble



In 2024, we focused on gathering more data about the scope of our impact on secondary beneficiary groups. We monitored how many parents or carers, siblings, and hospital staff members (in all roles) Giggle Doctors encountered during a shift. Very often, Giggle Doctors encounter secondary beneficiaries during a playful interaction with a child in their hospital bed or a play room, but Giggle Doctoring doesn't stop between wards, and Giggle Doctors also share many joyful moments with staff and members of the public as they walk the corridors between wards, jump in the lift, or pass through public waiting areas.

We monitored the number of secondary beneficiaries across seven shifts at seven different hospitals across England which generated an average figure of **2.9** secondary beneficiaries per child who receives a Giggle Doctor visit.

15,687 children and young people

45,492 estimated secondary beneficiaries

61,179 estimated total beneficiaries





“Dr Muddy Puddle visited our 14 month old son a few days after he woke from an induced coma. He was a very apprehensive little boy who'd become scared of doctors and nurses, but Dr Muddy Puddle managed to get a few smiles.

He was soon pointing at Merv, changing the colour of the moon, and gasping with delight. His very anxious parents also enjoyed Dr Muddy Puddle's visit and we loved seeing our son have fun again! Please pass on a huge thank you to Dr Muddy Puddle!”

Vicki, Casper's Mum



THEODORA
Children's Charity

Much more than Laughter

Follow us on social
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@GiveAGiggle

We are proud that our Giggle Doctor visits are free for all children and their families, because everyone deserves a giggle!

Thank you to everyone who has supported us by sending donations, as shown in this report, your impact is far reaching. Please help us continue to #GiveAGiggle by scanning the QR code to donate.



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