Together we care

The highest quality of care for extraordinary children

2024/25

Haven House children's hospice

"It has been an extraordinary year for our humble organisation: we have seen greater need than ever for our services with significant growth in end of life care demand."

CEO welcome

Haven House Children's Hospice exists for a simple but utterly compelling reason: to provide care and support to children and families living with serious illness, helping them to have the best possible quality of life, and where necessary the best possible support at the end of life.

It has been an extraordinary year for our humble organisation: we have seen greater need than ever for our services with significant growth in end of life care demand. And we have responded: we've provided more care than ever before in our hospice, more therapies than ever before, and more end of life support than in previous years. Our teams are working hard to meet the growing demand in our communities.

We have also raised our head above the parapet and become part of the national conversation about children's palliative care. We have hosted two princesses, two visits from the Secretary of State for Health, and the first ever visit to a children's hospice by the Children's Commissioner. Our services are developing in ways that shape the direction for children's palliative care across the country.

However, despite the vital role we play, we continue to face an uncertain future, like so many hospices. Our costs are rising, driven by inflation and policy changes such as the increase in National Insurance. The support we receive from the NHS is falling and the fundraising environment remains challenging. So, we need the support of our wonderful community more than ever.

Despite the headwinds we face, we are an ambitious organisation. We know we need to reach more families with our care and support, and we know we need to continue to expand the range of support we provide. Reaching more families at the end of life, developing a new offer for the young adults who are being left behind by the care system and harnessing our wonderful grounds at Haven House to provide nature therapy are all part of our future ambitions. We want to be the best and we need your help to achieve that.

The work we do is not possible without the amazing support of our staff and volunteers who I want to thank sincerely for their amazing commitment to our organisation. And it is not possible without you – our diverse and valued supporters. I hope you can help us lead the way in children's palliative care for many years to come.

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Children's hospice care is so much more than end of life

We know that children's hospice care is often misunderstood. It's not only about end of life support – it's about walking alongside families from the moment of diagnosis, offering expert care, therapies, and practical help throughout every stage of a child's journey.

We support seriously ill children to live as fully and comfortably as possible, for as long as they need us. Whether that means managing complex medical needs, giving families precious time to rest, or creating joyful experiences filled with play and connection - what we do is life-enhancing.

Above all, our care is rooted in equality and potential, not barriers. Every child we support is seen, celebrated, and encouraged to thrive in their own unique way. Our role is to help them reach for possibility - with compassion, expertise, and unwavering belief in what's possible.

Supporting every family, every step of the way

We provide care for seriously ill children and their families – from the moment of diagnosis, for as long as we're needed. Whether at our hospice, in the home, or out in the community, our services are designed to enhance quality of life, promote wellbeing, and offer strength through some of life's most difficult moments.

Great care doesn't just happen in a single place – or for a single purpose. That's why our team works flexibly and compassionately to meet each family's individual needs, with a focus on joy, comfort, resilience, and connection.

At the hospice

Our hospice is a place of care, but also of play, discovery, and peace. Children can come for day visits or overnight stays – whether for planned respite, step-down care after a hospital stay, crisis support, or end of life care.

Inside, we offer six welcoming children's bedrooms, a fully accessible sensory bath, an interactive discovery room, and space for creative therapies. Outside, families enjoy our woodland grounds, including a specialist playground designed for all abilities. Each visit is shaped around what matters most to the child and their family.

Care at home and in the community

Our nurses, healthcare support workers, and therapists provide expert care in the comfort of a family's own home or local community space. This support gives parents a break, helps manage symptoms, and reduces the need for repeated hospital visits – all while keeping children in familiar surroundings, surrounded by those they love.

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Sibling support

Brothers and sisters often carry invisible emotional burdens. Our sibling services offer group activities, creative outlets, and one-to-one support, helping siblings feel seen, supported, and part of a wider community. These programmes are a vital part of family resilience and healing.

Family support

We believe the whole family should be cared for – not just the child who is unwell. Our year-round family events include outings, coffee mornings, creative workshops and wellbeing activities, helping families make memories together, connect with others, and feel less alone.

Therapies

Our therapy team supports children to express themselves, connect, and build confidence – whether through music, play, yoga, or physiotherapy. Offered individually or in groups, our therapy sessions are tailored to each child's emotional, physical and social needs, improving wellbeing in a meaningful and lasting way.

Counselling

Emotional support matters just as much as medical care. We offer confidential counselling to parents, carers and grandparents of any child referred to Haven House. It's a space to talk, grieve, reflect and feel heard – with experienced therapists who understand the journey families are on.

Our year of impact: 2024/25

Headline achievements made possible by you

325 children supported by our services

131 siblings

1057 nights of care provided

20% increase from last year, and **24%** above target

Thanks to your support, more children received vital overnight care when they needed it most.

251 counselling sessions delivered

32% above target

We expanded this service beyond parents to include siblings, children, and those facing grief – reaching more people in crisis than ever before.

658 music therapy sessions

Care that adapts

With your help we were able to provide:

20% more nights of care, offering critical respite to families under strain

542 daycare and hospice at home sessions

11 end of life care provided to 11 children in the hospice or at home

Together, we stood with families through the hardest moments, delivering peace, dignity, and comfort.

Family support - stronger together

72 families supported with social needs

50 events (12 sibling and 38 family events) - giving families joy, connection and peer support

These moments of togetherness help families build resilience and memories that last.

Looking ahead

Building on a strong foundation in the year ahead, we are focused on:

- Expanding capacity for respite, end of life care, physiotherapy, and counselling
- Adapting yoga therapy for stronger engagement
- Strengthening partnerships with local authorities and hospital trusts
- Advocating for sustainable, long-term funding

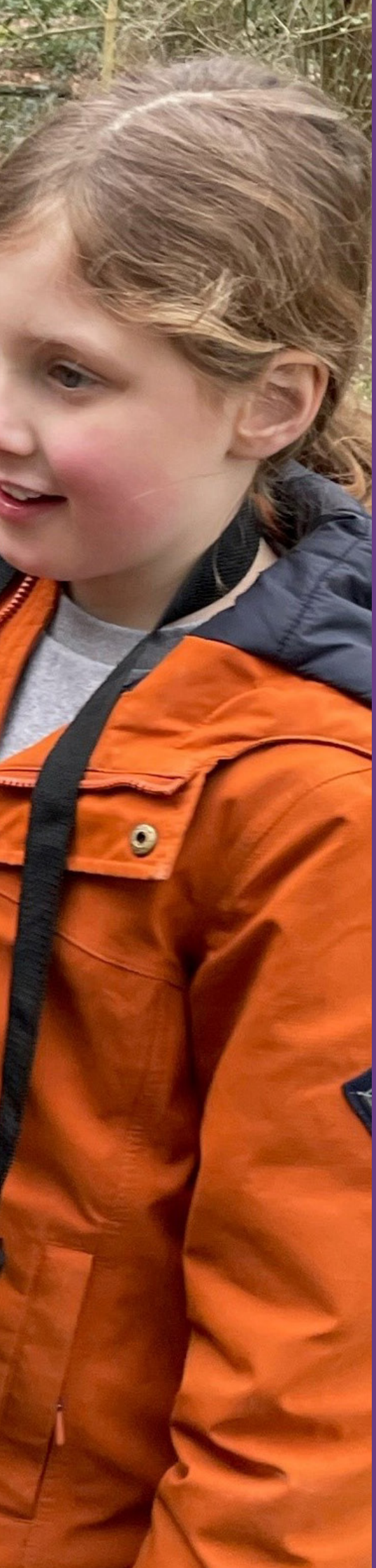
Thank You

This year, every family comforted, and every moment of care provided was made possible because of *you*.

You've helped us meet extraordinary need with extraordinary compassion. With your continued support, we'll keep being there – for every child, every sibling, every parent – with hope, care, and heart.

"Haven House gives us a safe place, where we can be relaxed and create family bonds - and that is priceless"

says mum Ananda



Through their eyes Meet Charlie and Dylan

We offer families a place to be together and create precious memories. Among those families are Charlie and his older brother, Dylan.

When Charlie was born, life changed unimaginably for his family. Following a traumatic delivery that required extensive resuscitation, Charlie was left severely brain damaged. Alongside their grief and the loss of the life they had envisioned, his parents faced the overwhelming reality of managing specialist care and financial pressures.

Thrown into the unknown, the family had to quickly adapt to a new life of tube feeding, oxygen management, and medication schedules, all while continuing to care for Dylan, who was just two years old at the time.

Haven House became a lifeline. It provided the vital support they needed to learn how to care for a seriously ill child and find their footing as a family.

Today, Charlie's joy is most evident during his one-to-one music therapy sessions at Haven House. Delivered by his dedicated music therapist, these sessions offer him positivity, encouragement, and the space to find his voice. Haven House has truly become Charlie's 'happy place.'

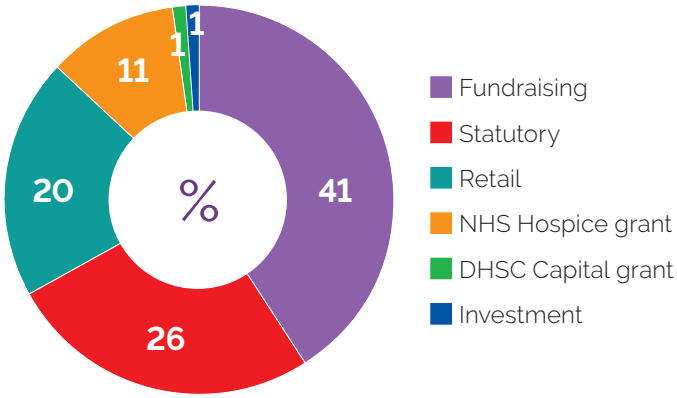
Scan the QR code to watch Charlie and Dylan explore Haven House.

You've made it all possible

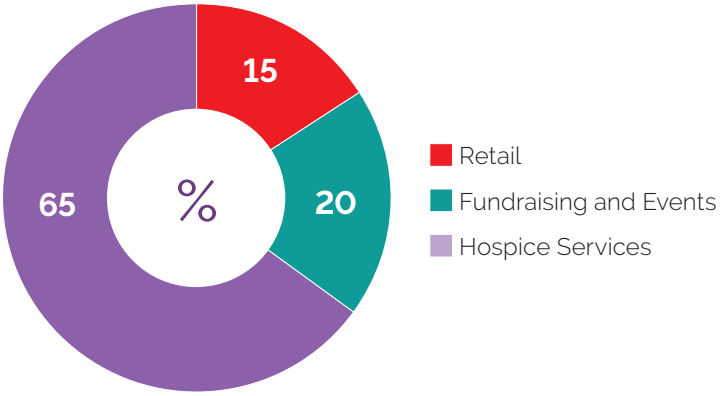
Haven House is funded through NHS contracts, local authority funding, fundraising activity, donations, legacies and generous support from our local community and businesses.

Income sources	£000K
Fundraising	2,442
Statutory	1,518
Retail	1,171
NHS Hospice grant	632
DHSC Capital Grant	88
Investment	87
Total income	**5,938m**

Income sources 24/25



Where we spent it 24/25



Our financial sustainability challenge

The care we provide offers a vital lifeline for our families, and we have clear ambitions to expand and improve our support to meet the rising demand in our communities. But, like many hospices, we face significant challenges with achieving financial sustainability:

Children's hospices receive an average of 24% of funding from the government, meaning they rely on voluntary fundraising and retail for the remaining three quarters of their income. For Haven House, that means raising more than £4m each year simply to keep our hospice running.

24% of funding from government

Hospices have faced significant increases in costs over recent years, driven by high inflation and the need to match NHS pay rates for clinical staff, which represented a 5.5% increase in salary costs last year. We also face new pressures such as the increase in National Insurance rates this year, which will cost Haven House an additional £125,000, or just over 2% of our annual running costs.

£125k extra cost this year from the NI increase

We welcomed the government's commitment to the sector and the announcement of £100m of capital funding for the hospice sector over two years, made by the Secretary of State in December 2024 while visiting Haven House. However, this funding cannot be used for staffing and other running costs so does not improve our revenue position.

Around £6m annual running cost

We face a significant challenge in achieving financial sustainability and delivering our ambitions for the future. However, we know that our amazing community of supporters will help us to go further and do more for the children and families that need us, and we thank you for that inspiring and vital support.

Innovation with impact: How Haven House is shaping the future of care

We are committed to leading change in children's palliative care through innovation, research, and practical solutions that respond to what families truly need. From rethinking how hospice care is delivered within hospitals, to transforming the way our nursing teams work, we are continually striving to offer more responsive, flexible, and high-quality care. In May 2025, we were proud to present two pioneering projects at the Together for Short Lives National Conference – showcasing how Haven House is helping shape the future of care for seriously ill children and their families.

One team, greater impact: A new model for nursing in children's palliative care

We understand that seriously ill children and their families need both carefully planned respite and urgent care at the end of life – often at very short notice. Meeting these needs requires a nursing team that is both compassionate and highly adaptable.

To achieve this, we've introduced a new Integrated Nursing Model – bringing together our community and hospice nursing teams into a single, unified service. This flexible approach allows us to respond rapidly to emergencies while maintaining continuity for families who rely on planned care.

In the first year of the new model, we've seen a 10% increase in nights of care delivered at the hospice – all while responding to a 220% rise in end of life care requests. Every family who needed end of life support received it in their preferred setting.

This approach is helping shape a more sustainable, responsive future for children's palliative care – and reflects Haven House's commitment to innovation, quality, and putting families first.

Re-imagining care: Hospice support in hospital settings

We believe children and families should have access to the right care, in the right place, at the right time. That's why we've partnered with Barts Health NHS Trust to become the first children's hospice to deliver care directly on site within their hospitals.

Through a new and flexible agreement, our team can now provide therapies like music, yoga, counselling, and respite support to children receiving hospital treatment – without the delays of traditional staffing contracts. This has enabled more responsive, holistic care at the bedside, supporting families during some of their most difficult moments.

The impact has been deeply felt by children, parents, and hospital staff alike. It's a simple innovation with powerful potential – and one that other NHS partners are now exploring.

This project reflects our commitment to leading change in children's palliative care: working collaboratively, thinking differently, and always putting families first.

Nature therapy

Nature has the power to soothe, connect, and heal. In the face of serious illness, time spent outdoors can offer moments of joy, calm, and meaning – for children, siblings, parents, and carers alike.

That's why we are developing a pioneering approach to nature-based wellness: integrating therapeutic outdoor experiences into our model of care to improve emotional well-being, reduce anxiety, and enhance quality of life for the whole family.

A life-enhancing programme for the future

Children who find indoor settings overwhelming can thrive in our Forest School sessions, where outdoor play builds confidence and joy. For children with profound disabilities, we offer gentle, sensory-rich experiences in nature that soothe and stimulate in equal measure.

Families coping with emotional distress or grief are supported through outdoor counselling – from reflective walks to quiet conversations under the trees. And parents and carers are finding space to rest and breathe through our guided forest bathing sessions, which promote mindfulness and reduce stress.

Together, these nature-based therapies create a more holistic model of care – one where the natural world becomes a source of comfort, strength and healing for every member of the family.

Therapeutic gardens: Where care comes to life

Many disabled children have limited access to safe, stimulating outdoor environments – yet nature offers powerful benefits for their physical and emotional well-being. We're working to change that, creating inclusive, accessible spaces where every child can explore, engage and thrive.

The **Garden of Reflection**, opened in 2023 in partnership with Greenfingers Charity and designed by Chelsea Gold Medal Award Winning Garden Designer, Tom Hoblyn, offers a tranquil sanctuary for children, families and staff. It is a place for quiet moments, grief support, and peaceful connection – a natural retreat from the clinical world where emotions can be safely felt and shared. We are planning to expand this area with new features over the next 12 months.

The **Sensory Garden**, set for a full transformation in **Summer 2025,** will become a vibrant, multi-sensory experience for children with complex needs. Designed by Hamzah Adam Desai and originally exhibited as the MS Amlin Peace of Mind Garden for MHI charity at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, it will invite children to explore colour, sound, scent and texture in ways that support development, stimulate the senses, and spark joy.

Our longer-term aspiration is the creation of a dedicated **Nature Therapy Garden**, designed by Jilayne Rickards. Our vision is to provide an open-air setting for counselling, movement therapy and emotional support. Thoughtfully structured with private, plant-sheltered areas and calming sensory features, the garden would offer children and families an alternative to traditional therapy rooms – a space to feel safe, be heard, and begin to heal.

Our future priorities for care

Looking ahead: Our priorities for the future

At Haven House, we never stand still. As the needs of children and families change, so must we – responding with compassion, creativity, and courage. Our priorities for the future reflect the reality of rising demand, the diverse communities we serve, and the ambition we hold to keep leading the way in children's palliative care.

Meeting rising need with compassion and agility

We are seeing an unprecedented 220% rise in demand for end of life care. Our priority is to remain responsive and resilient – ensuring every family who needs us receives expert, compassionate support in the place and manner they choose. We will continue investing in our Integrated Nursing Model and growing the flexibility of our clinical team to deliver this care with dignity and respect.

Driving digital innovation

We are embracing digital tools to enhance care, reach more families, and work more efficiently. From video consultations and virtual therapies to improved care planning systems and AI-supported workflows, we're exploring new ways to connect, communicate, and care - without losing the human touch that defines our work.

Expanding and deepening family support

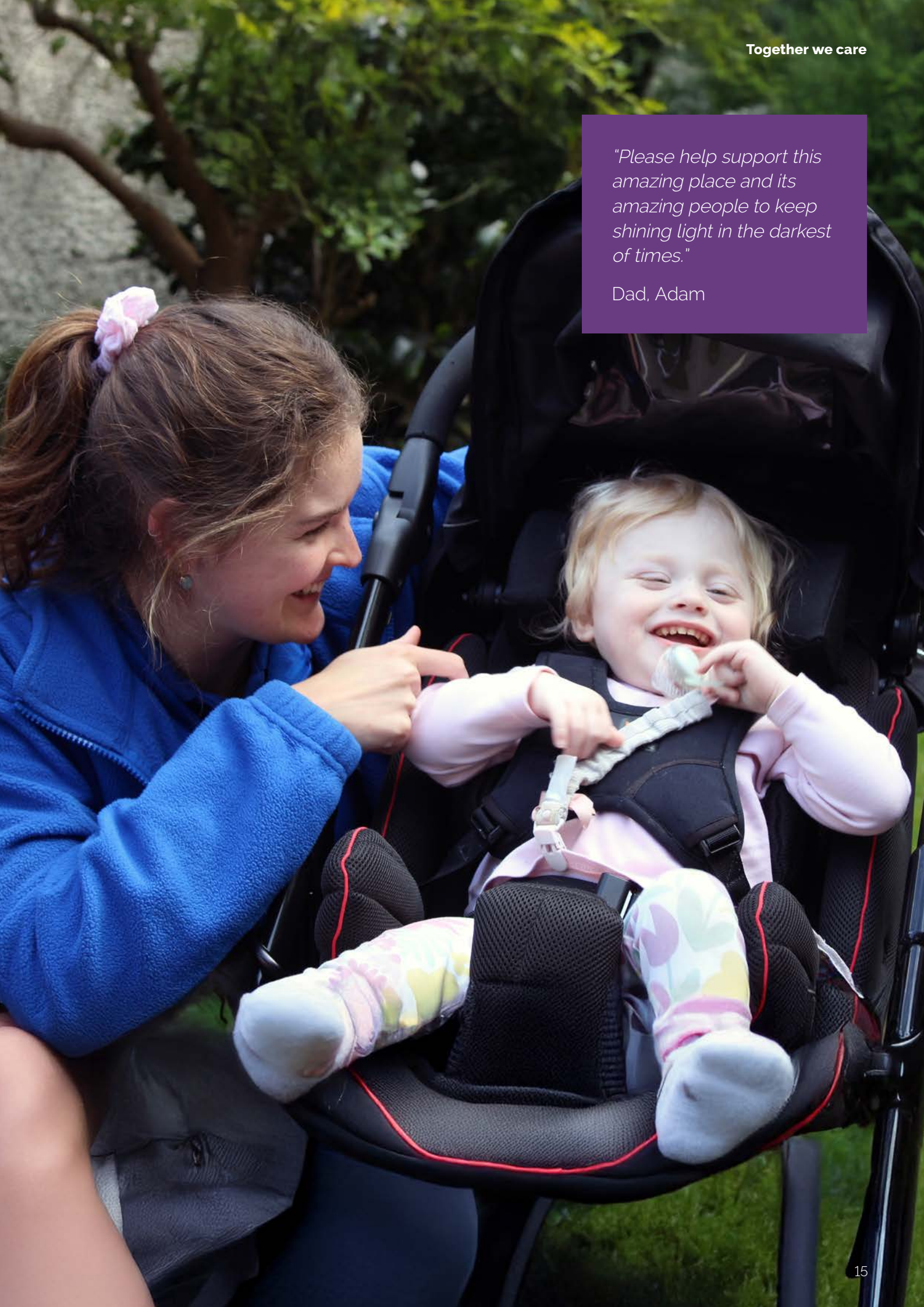
We are committed to expanding our support for the whole family – especially around mental health, wellbeing and emotional resilience. This includes:

- Growing our counselling and emotional support offer
- Increasing sibling programmes
- Prioritising culturally responsive support that reflects the beliefs, backgrounds and lived experiences of every family we serve

We believe this is fundamental to true equality in care – ensuring no family feels unseen, misunderstood, or left behind.

Supporting young adults into the future

Children are growing up with increasingly complex health needs – and they don't stop needing support when they turn 18. We're co-producing new programmes with sector partners to support young people as they transition from our care into adult services. These pathways will be shaped by the voices of young people and families themselves – ensuring continuity, choice, and confidence for the future.



"Please help support this amazing place and its amazing people to keep shining light in the darkest of times."

Dad, Adam

About Haven House

Our hospice first opened its doors in 2003, thanks to nurse Sue Irwin. With friends and colleagues, she founded the charity after recognising the need to help families looking after a child with a life-limiting and life-threatening condition. After years of dedication from Sue and her friends a lease was acquired on The White House in Woodford Green. Haven House Children's Hospice has been delivering the best quality care for extraordinary children for more than 20 years. For two decades Haven House has provided round-the-clock care at our hospice, surrounded in beautiful grounds and woodland and through our outreach services in the family home and local community. We provide day care, over-night stays, end of life care and bereavement support, as well as life enriching activities such as sensory play, music therapy, yoga and physiotherapy.

Scan the QR code
to find out more.

havenhouse.org.uk

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