

Spring edition | 2023

TEENAGE

CANCER

TRUST

Together

**YOUR
SUPPORTER
MAGAZINE**

“The nurses are probably a big reason why I’m still alive.”

Sehaasgar, Birmingham

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THIS EDITION**

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HELLO...

I'm Molly, and I'm excited to welcome you to this edition of Together!

Being diagnosed with lymphoma aged 15 was a huge shock. It was especially difficult because I started treatment in a hospital 100 miles from home.

But when I moved onto a Teenage Cancer Trust ward, it quickly became a home from home. The atmosphere was so welcoming, and the staff and patients became an extended family.

I joined the Youth Advisory Group because I wanted to help the charity that helped me and my family at our most vulnerable. It's enabled me to reflect on my own experience of cancer, and contribute to improving other young people's experience.

A massive thank you for supporting Teenage Cancer Trust. You've given people like me a safe haven within the brutal world of cancer, where we have such caring staff to help us flourish.

Molly



Got a question?

Get in touch

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teenagecancertrust.org

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YOUNG PEOPLE FIRST

Our Youth Advisory Group puts the voices of young people like Molly at the heart of our work.

Since launching in 2018, the group of around 30 young people with experience of cancer have played a key role in many different aspects of the charity's work.

They've helped recruit members of our senior leadership team, given feedback to improve our services, shaped our strategy and policy work, and spoken at events.

Recently they've been focusing particularly on how young people continue to be supported after their treatment ends, drawing on their experiences to inform our future approach to post-treatment care.

Lenny, our Youth Engagement and Participation Manager, says: "We listen to what young people have to say and look to involve them in



every big decision we make, because no one knows better than those who've been through it.

"As well as making a difference for young people like themselves, being part of the group means they get to develop teamwork, creative and communication skills by coming up with ideas, giving feedback and working alongside different people from the charity, including our Chief Executive, Kate."

**Sign up to our email
newsletter to stay updated:
teenagecancertrust.org**

SEHAASGAR'S STORY



Sehaasgar was diagnosed with T-cell lymphoblastic lymphoma aged 14. Pursuing his passion for making music helped him get through the gruelling treatment.

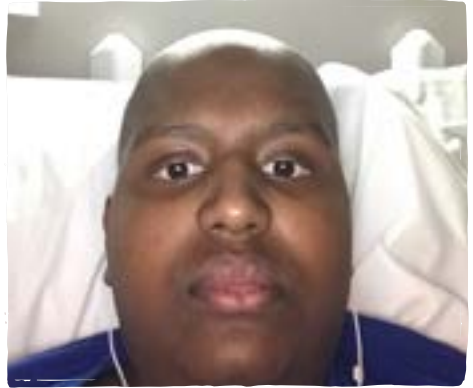
At first I thought I had a cold, but I'd been unwell for months.

One night I was struggling to breathe, and I could hear gurgling noises. It was like the sound of a kettle boiling inside my lungs.

I went to the GP, and then to A&E, and they had to give me a mask to help me breathe. The cancer doctor arrived and said none of my symptoms looked normal. They did a scan, and hooked me up with all these machines. The doctor knelt down and said, "You've got a tumour just sitting on top of your heart and T-cell lymphoblastic lymphoma."

I feel like my mum had it worse than me, because I went through the physical side of it, and she went through the emotional. My dad never cries, but when I was diagnosed that was the first time I ever saw him cry.

When I started on chemo, it made me bed-bound. My mum had to help me walk and even shower. I had seizures due to blood clotting, and suffered from pancreatitis, which is the most painful thing I've ever felt.



The thing that helped keep me going was pursuing my personal interests. Julie, my Youth Support Coordinator, knew that I played guitar and she put me forward to record a song. I got to go to the studio, meet the sound engineer and musicians and jam with them. I never expected to get an opportunity like that, so that's one positive that's come out of everything.

I've been to Teenage Cancer Trust events and it's good because you know you're not alone. Everyone's friendly and I met people that I still talk to now. It's a great experience.

The nurses are probably a big reason why I'm still alive. Whenever I go into the hospital, they feel like my second family.

MEET OUR FRONTLINE STAFF

Clinical Nurse Specialist Kirsten and her team work across Leeds General Infirmary and St James's Hospital, looking after young people with cancer aged 16-24. She told us about her role.



My role is all about ensuring young people have age-appropriate care that's focused on them.

Day to day, I might be dealing with medical things on the ward, doing safety checks for a young person's chemo, booking them in for their next appointment, or rearranging appointments to fit around their life so they can go to things like birthday parties.

My role means young people have someone who's 'their person', who'll listen to them and action what they say, and who they can speak to in confidence and say things they wouldn't say to their mum and dad or partner. They can come to us with any questions, and we'll find the answer if we don't know it already. If they want us to support their family, we can do that too.

The age range we support is really unique, and I think that's why our role exists. You've still got a balance of what you can make decisions about, and what your parents want to make decisions about. You don't want to be around them all the time. Your brain's still developing. You're not a child, you're not quite an adult yet. But hopefully by the time we've helped, you feel a bit more ready to take on adulthood.

I think the little moments where you make a difference are the best thing

about the job. Like when a young person has had something explained to them 1000 times that day and they still don't understand it, but you manage to explain it in a way that they get it.

“The age range we support is really unique, and I think that's why our role exists.”

It makes an incredible difference having a unit where young people can be with people their own age who know exactly what they're going through. Especially having gone through Covid when they've not had that, they're really appreciating it now they're with their peers.

Can you remember when you were a teenager or young adult, and how difficult it was just surviving the day-to-day? Then you add a cancer diagnosis - it absolutely blows your world up. I think any little thing you can do to support someone going through that is amazing.

CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Supporters around the UK have been sharing what inspires them to volunteer for Teenage Cancer Trust.

“We’ve volunteered at the Royal Albert Hall, our local Aldi and Dobbies stores, and the London Marathon. The atmosphere was just amazing. I’ve tried describing it to friends but to be honest you have to be there to fully appreciate it!”

Kevin and Julie





“After every event I’m completely buzzing knowing I’ve played a part in making a difference and because of who I meet on the day.”

Ben

“It’s great knowing we’re helping Teenage Cancer Trust support those who need it. We all have full-time jobs and families but if we can give a few hours of our time, it means the world.”

Darren, Kelly and Wayne

“My son Jon was diagnosed aged 16. The first hospital he was in had no idea how to treat a teenager with leukaemia, but the Teenage Cancer Trust unit was a safe haven. However, these specialist wards need funding to continue their amazing work.”

Janice and Colin



STAR BOOT SALE

Have you ever wanted to own a piece of celebrity history? Our annual Star Boot Sale auction gives new life to preloved items that have been donated by celebrities, as well as offering up some extraordinary experiences.



Teenage Cancer Trust ambassador Matty Lee said:

“I’m so happy to be supporting the Star Boot Sale again this year. Last year my trunks raised a huge amount of money for a cause I’m so proud to be involved with. There are some weird and wonderful things in the auction and your chance to own something really cool.”



Last year our supporters raised an amazing £30,000 by snapping up items ranging from a VIP Madison Square Garden trip to see The Who, to a pair of Olympic gold medallist Matty Lee's Team GB trunks!

This year's auction will run from **Friday 14 April until Thursday 27 April**, with items donated by acts from our 2023 Royal Albert Hall shows, including Kasabian, Underworld and Wet Leg.

Becky Inman, our Celebrity and Ambassadors Manager, says:

“Most items will start at just £25 so are really affordable, and there's something for everyone. We're so grateful to incredible people like Ed Sheeran, Holly Willoughby and Dame Helen Mirren who have supported this event to make sure no young person faces cancer alone.”

Check out the full auction at: teenagecancertrust.org/starbootsale



**GET READY
TO BID IN OUR
CELEBRITY AUCTION**

UNSTOPPABLE FUNDRAISERS

It's been amazing to see our supporters out in force over the last year, taking on challenges including the London Marathon, Great North Run and many more!



From bungee jumps to bike rides, your fundraising efforts go a long way towards making sure every young person with cancer gets the best care and support.





**JOIN OUR
UNSTOPPABLE
TEAM**

teenagecancertrust.org/join



YOUR IMPACT IN 2023

This year will see record investment in new frontline staff, and exciting developments to our services for young people – all made possible by your support.

One of our priorities for 2023 is to recruit an extra 30 Teenage Cancer Trust Nurses, Youth Support Coordinators and Multi-Disciplinary Team Coordinators across the UK. That's our biggest ever annual increase in frontline funded roles within the NHS.

This will help address the gaps in support that our services teams have identified, making it easier for every young person to access the best age-appropriate care, no matter who they are or where they're based.

We'll continue to invest in training and professional development for our funded staff, keeping their expertise at the forefront in the ever-evolving field of specialist teenage and young adult cancer care.

And we're leading an ambitious project to review, refurbish and futureproof Teenage Cancer Trust spaces in hospitals nationwide. We want to ensure our units and designated spaces remain world-leading while being adaptable to advances in cancer treatments, technology and the unique needs of young people.



We'll also deliver more peer support events in 2023, both digitally and in person. Both the Ultimate Backstage Experience at the Royal Albert Hall and our Find Your Sense of Tumour residential events will return this year, alongside some exciting digital developments to allow peer support and events to happen together.



Notably, we're planning to launch a new version of the Connect app. It'll offer an online community exclusively for young people with cancer, where they can access information and events, and connect with their peers safely and securely.

These are all steps towards our big goal that by 2040, young people with cancer in the UK will have the best outcomes and quality of life in the world. As always, we couldn't do it without you.



Sign up to our email newsletter to stay updated:
teenagecancertrust.org

THANK YOU!

GET INVOLVED

Inspired to do even more? There's a whole host of ways you can help. Scan the code below to visit our website and join the team!



RAISE MONEY



Whether it's a pub quiz, a bucket collection in a shopping centre or a sponsored walk, your support makes our work possible.

DONATE

A single or monthly gift will make a real difference for the seven young people diagnosed with cancer every day in the UK.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF



Hike, bike, jump, swim or run – whichever fundraising challenge you're inspired to take on, we've got it covered.

GET YOUR WORK INVOLVED

Nominate Teenage Cancer Trust as your workplace's charity of the year, or get your colleagues involved to raise money.

VOLUNTEER



There are loads of opportunities to spend a spare hour (or 20!) helping us out, across the UK and all year round.

Find out more:

teenagecancertrust.org/join



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