here are some of the ways our supporters have been fundraising and what that's meant to our children and families...

"Cirque du Soleil" Annual Ball raised £59,602 which funded the care and support of 5 families for 12 months.

Helping Hands: our business supporters gave 1,379 hours in 2015/2016.

Golf Day raised £13,815 which funded 13 respite stays.

10k & 5K Family Fun Run raised £25,170 which means we were able to deliver 40 sibling support groups, 10 sibling sleepover weekends and 40 youth club sessions.

The Robbie Williams FanFest raised £17,652, which funded music sessions throughout the year.

Friends group which raised £54,727 which kept the Hospice open for a week.

Challenge events raised £97,337, which funded the work of two nurses.

Our PDC Darts partnership raised £100,963 which funded counselling and emotional support for a whole year which meant we could deliver 911 counselling sessions.

"Quite simply put The Donna Louise is a lifeline and it’s our lifeline."
Welcome

I try to stay at The Donna Louise about three or four times a year, but I also come to the Youth Clubs whenever I can. Whenever I’m here I love taking part in the art therapy sessions with Kevin, The Donna Louise’s counsellor. I can talk about my feelings and express my emotions in my paintings. Kevin also comes to visit me when I’m in hospital; it’s always lovely to see him and great to have someone different to talk to.

“I’m so pleased that I’m still able to come to The Donna Louise after my 19th Birthday. There’s nowhere else like the Hospice. When I was approaching my 18th Birthday we started looking in to the other options available to me and there just wasn’t anywhere suitable.”

Charlotte, age 19

The hospice in Trentham is the main focus of our service, however we aim to provide the care and support for children and their families:

• WHERE they need it most
• WHEN they need it most

Charlotte, age 19

Right: Charlotte at our Annual Ball

We are delighted to present our latest Impact Report which demonstrates some phenomenal developments and successes over the last 12 months.

Our children, young people and families are at the heart of everything we do and we make it our mission to provide what they need, when they need it, where they need it.

We have listened and recognised that, on reaching the age of 19, our young people face an uncertain and challenging time without the support of The Donna Louise, often failing to access the care they deserve as young adults.

It is with great excitement that we share the good news that in January 2016 we made the decision to no longer discharge our young people when they reach the age of 19, but to continue to provide them with the care and support they need for as long as they need us.

Working with our children, young people and families, together with the wider children’s palliative care sector, we are currently developing a service for our young adults which will inevitably lead to the growth of our facilities. These are truly exciting times for the charity and we look forward to keeping you updated as our plans progress!

Alongside this strategic milestone, we are also determined to strengthen our existing services and provide additional support to those outside Stoke-on-Trent who find it more of a challenge to access the hospice facility.

There is indeed so much to celebrate but we also recognise that with these developments come many challenges. Our children, young people and their families remain our inspiration and motivation and it is with them at our core that we will face these challenges head on.

None of our achievements would be possible without the very generous and unwavering support of our supporters and volunteers, together with a dedicated staff team of whom we are very proud.

Together their support helps us to turn our vision into reality – a reality where we can ensure that we are here for our children, young people and their families when they need us the most.

For this we are truly grateful.

Sue Read
Chair

Mike McDonald
Chief Executive

Our vision is to be the centre of excellence for children and young people’s palliative care

A word of welcome from our Chair and Chief Executive

Our mission is to provide a quality palliative care service to children, young people, and their families, through effective partnership working aligned to our values.
Earlier this year we were excited to be involved in a TV advert with 16 other hospices to raise awareness of the work hospices do in the West Midlands. This was the first time that The Donna Louise had been involved in a television advert of this nature and it was great that we were able to work together with other hospices to drive it forward.

A number of our children and families took part in the advert. Filming day was really exciting for everyone at the Hospice; the process was a fantastic demonstration of what can be achieved by working together collaboratively as well as a perfect opportunity to help educate and break down perceptions surrounding hospice care.

On the day of filming the TV crew arrived bright and early and the families had their hair and make-up done by a professional stylist before the cameras started rolling. The film crew captured footage of the children enjoying different parts of the Hospice, including the music room, playground and sensory room.

The aim of the advert was to help dispel myths and fears about hospices and to raise awareness of palliative care. It shows how care and support is specialist and designed to meet each individual’s needs, wherever and whenever they need it. It also reflects the caring, supportive, happy, fun places hospices truly are and not simply institutions where people go to die.

The finished advert was broadcast on ITV over a 10 day period in February and received an overwhelming response from everyone. The ‘Love Your Local Hospice’ campaign reached 33,566 people from our Facebook profile alone giving us the opportunity to reach a wide audience, many of whom will never have heard of The Donna Louise before.
Charlotte's story

One young adult who was delighted by this news is Charlotte who has been using the hospice for more than five years. She regularly attends our monthly Youth Clubs and comes to the hospice for sleepovers.

“I try to stay at The Donna Louise about three or four times a year, but I also come to the Youth Clubs whenever I can. Whenever I’m here I love taking part in the art therapy sessions with Kevin, The Donna Louise’s counsellor. I can talk about my feelings and express my emotions in my paintings. Kevin also comes to visit me when I’m in hospital; it’s always lovely to see him and great to have someone different to talk to.”

Charlotte has made some great friends at the Hospice, especially her best friend Chloe, and the two are inseparable.

“Me and Chloe are best friends, we talk and text each other all the time and we love meeting up at The Donna Louise. We always co-ordinate our stays, along with our other friends, and we have so much fun.”

Charlotte has created some breath-taking paintings during her art therapy sessions. Some of them have been included in the art auction at The Donna Louise’s Annual Ball and have sold for huge amounts.

Charlotte said, “Whenever I hear that my paintings have been sold I’m completely gobsmacked. I’ve been able to meet some of the people who have bought my artwork, one person even told me that my painting is hanging in their home in France. I feel proud that other people are now able to experience the joy of my paintings.”

Under our previous eligibility criteria, Charlotte would no longer be able to use The Donna Louise after her 19th birthday. However, thanks to our ambitious plans to continue to offer care for as long as young adults and their families need us, she will continue coming to the Hospice for as long as she wishes.

This is something which Charlotte is delighted about: “The Donna Louise is not just about respite; they look after my whole family. My grandparents come here and do activities, plus there are youth clubs and sibling groups.

“When I was approaching my 18th birthday we started looking at alternative hospice options for me and there just wasn’t anywhere else to go. The only options were places for much older people which just wouldn’t be suitable. The news that I’ll still be able to come to The Donna Louise is amazing; me and my family are so happy.”

what The Donna Louise means to me

“Charlotte means a lot to me, I can’t go out very much, but when I’m here I’m looked after really well and everyone is really caring. There aren’t many places for me to go so I’m so glad I can come here.”

“I’ve been spending time at The Donna Louise for about ten years and I love playing on the Xbox and winding the staff up. We have a great laugh and everyone is so friendly, understanding and caring.

“I enjoy coming to the Youth Club and try to come every month, depending on my hospital appointments which are often in Birmingham. I’ve made loads of friends and it’s great to meet other people with the same condition as me. I can’t stay over as often as I would have school during the week.

“I feel safe when I’m at The Donna Louise, no-one picks on me, I know my way around and I have my friends around me.”

Chris, 19

Towards the end of 2015 we began a number of family focus groups to gather feedback which has helped to shape our strategy for the next ten years.

The focus groups made it very clear that transition – the move from child services to adult services – is a massive concern for all families. The process means that all the services and support families receive for their child change to adult services once their child reaches 19.

This change affects everything that the families know – from arranging medical and hospital appointments, to how they receive the equipment they need to care for their child. This process is terrifying for the families with one parent at our focus group saying:

“I almost hoped my daughter would die before she reached 18 so we didn’t have to go through transition.”

This sort of feedback about the transition process was instrumental in driving our decision at the end of 2015 to begin a twelve-month pilot to offer support and services for young adults over the age of 19. The pilot was welcomed by all our families, with one parent saying:

“This pilot is the best Christmas present I could have had, so no-one else has to go through what we did.”

The focus groups also provided valuable suggestions about what services and support young adults need. Suggestions covered all aspects of care – from counselling support to crisis care, respite stays to physiotherapy.

An exciting next step in the journey was taken by our trustees in the summer of 2016 when they agreed some ambitious service development plans which will include the creation of a purpose-built building for over-19s.

At this stage the stage the specific plans are still being developed but the Board felt able to make this decision because of their strong belief that, as an organisation, we are in a very stable position, consistently delivering what we promise, and that is helped by us being in our strongest ever financial position.

Over the coming months there will be lots of activity behind the scenes to confirm the details of the plans. These plans are part of an exciting future for The Donna Louise and we’re looking forward to sharing more details with you when we can.

1,485 of nights of respite stays provided during 2015/16, and 991 art/counselling sessions delivered

Above: Charlotte and Chloe at our annual Fun Run

Right: Chloe and Charlotte

The Donna Louise is like a hotel for children.®

FAMILY FEEDBACK
supporting our children, young people and their families

Phil is known as “The Music Man” within The Donna Louise. He uses music with everyone at the hospice and works with the whole family including the children, parents and siblings. The music room is a safe place within the hospice, somewhere families can go if they just want to let off steam. They don’t necessarily have to talk to Phil, they can just do their own thing which is often the case with families who are going through bereavement. Sometimes they just want to let out their frustrations by banging the drums.

Phil’s role covers a vast array of abilities so one day he could be working with a completely able child who attends a mainstream school but who is undergoing oncology treatment. For them music therapy is a distraction.

With children who have limited or no movement Phil uses a different approach. Where the child is able he might help them to simply tinkle the tone chimes, or he uses stories and songs with their name in them. It’s all about getting a reaction from them.

For parents and siblings, music is a chance to relax and a place to offload. We’ve hosted our own talent show in the hospice garden and have held karaoke competitions during sibling weekends.

Our social worker Angela joined The Donna Louise in July 2015. Her first challenge was to dispel the negative myths around social workers. The Hospice had not had an in-house social worker before and she wanted families to understand that she’s here to support them while always putting their child first.

On a day-to-day basis Angela supports families with benefits, housing, education issues, health and social care. A large part of her role involves helping families to access statutory services and checking that they are getting the benefits they’re entitled to.

Initially we needed to recruit at least 12 rowers to make the row possible, but we were so inundated with supporters wanting to take up the oars, that two crews of 12 began the challenge in London on May 25th. The Tower to Tower Rowing challenge saw the team tackle the gruelling 450-mile row from Tower Bridge in London to the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Fewer than 100 people have successfully completed this challenge in the past, which means many more people have stood at the summit of Everest than have conquered this unique challenge!

During the challenge, the team faced severe fatigue and sleep deprivation in an attempt to raise awareness of how hard it is to function physically, emotionally and psychologically on limited sleep. In addition, they dealt with sea sickness, rough seas, blisters on their hands, living in cramped quarters, aching muscles and sore bums – for six very, very long days.

At the end of the gruelling challenge, Tony Pulis said: “It’s been very hard but we were so inundated with supporters wanting to take up the oars, that two crews of 12 began the challenge in London on May 25th. The Tower to Tower Rowing challenge saw the team tackle the gruelling 450-mile row from Tower Bridge in London to the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Fewer than 100 people have successfully completed this challenge in the past, which means many more people have stood at the summit of Everest than have conquered this unique challenge!

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Volunteers play a massive role within our organisation and without them we simply wouldn’t function. Hospice care is supported by an army of dedicated, enthusiastic and skilled volunteers donating thousands of hours a year to support staff in all departments.

The Donna Louise alone now has a team of more than 200. They give their time to support in so many different ways, from fundraising, Saturday Clubs, HR admin and clinical psychology through to housekeeping, general maintenance and care team support.

We really wouldn’t be able to do what we do without them!

Volunteers

"As a parent, one feels vulnerable when your child is ill. Unless you have direct knowledge, one cannot understand the suffering families go through with terminally ill children."

Robbie Williams

"It’s a privilege for me to be a patron of The Donna Louise Children’s Hospice. It makes a real difference to these children, whose lives have been tragically limited and I will continue to lend my support."

The Lord Stafford DL

Registered with the Care Quality Commission – Number 1-101729348.

The Donna Louise Trust is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital under the Companies Acts 1985 and 1989 (registered number 3701610) and is registered with the Charity Commission as a Charity (registered number 1075597) under the Charities Act 1993.

how we pay for it

Total Income £3,350,632

Expenditure

Fundraising Costs £756,099
Governance £29,137
Care Service £2,100,755
Other £98,991

Total Expenditure £2,984,982

Fundraising Income Breakdown

Individual & Community £1,116,141
Grant Making Trusts £121,283
Companies £880,395
Legacies £631,488

£411,000 added to our cash reserves 2015/16

2015/16 financial summary

(for more details see the full set of Accounts available on our website)

Income

Fundraising Income £2,749,307
Activities for Generating Funds £61,957
Statutory Income £434,406
Charitable Activities £88,886
Investment Income £16,076

Fundraising Income £2,749,307

Volunteers

21,163 volunteer hours during 2015/16

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Thank you to everyone at Donna Louise, you are amazing, loving and caring people.”