

GEORGE'S STORY

CASE STUDY



George, age 8



The aim of Wooden Spoon funded projects is to enhance the lives of children and young people with disabilities or living in disadvantage in local communities across the UK and Ireland.

HOSPITAL MULTI-SENSORY ENVIRONMENT IS A DREAM FOR YOUNG PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

"We have spent a large part of George's life in hospital and you need support and things that just take some of the pressure off."

George Hinkins was born with a very rare and complex congenital heart defect called Ebstein's Anomaly which meant that the right-hand side of his heart would not work. In his mum Jane's words he was a 'baby with half a heart'.

At just 36 hours old, brave George underwent his first open heart surgery.

By the time he was six years old, he had gone through three major open heart surgeries – making the Leeds Congenital Heart Unit a second home for George and his family.

This is where the generous fundraising of Wooden Spoon comes in.

Wooden Spoon helped fund the Ambient Experience Interventional Suite in 2019, in response to a fundraising campaign by Children's Heart Surgery Fund, a charity which supports people with congenital heart disease in Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire.

Situated in the hybrid children's heart theatre, the suite is a multi-sensory environment providing some calm and relaxation to its young patients.

The response to the unit has been overwhelmingly positive from patients, parents and clinicians – a fact backed up by Jane.

"Any investment in helping to advance cardiac surgery for young people is a dream for families like us. As a family, we are eternally grateful to all the fundraisers at Wooden Spoon."

Jane Hinkins - George's Mum

She said: "As a parent, seeing your son in hospital is really traumatic. Going into the hospital and having to hand your son over to medical staff, when he is crying, is the worst thing ever. But the sensory room has made it a more exciting experience for George."

"We first saw the sensory room when George was in hospital for investigative surgery as a four-year-old. The first time he saw it, he was told that he was going in a spaceship and he even packed his rocket slippers and chose the music."

"Thanks to the amazing charity and the fundraisers, George ran in and thought everything was so cool. It was all so different to when he was in hospital the first time."

"Anything that distracts him from the reason why he is in hospital is a really good thing. The sensory room is exciting and creates a little bit of adventure."

Now eight years old, Jane described her son as "hilarious and very confident".

She added: "He has learnt to live with his condition in such an amazing way."

"Any investment in helping to advance cardiac surgery for young people is a dream for families like us. As a family, we are eternally grateful to all the fundraisers at Wooden Spoon."