

THEO'S STORY



Theo, age 11



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.

THEO'S LOVE OF THE WATER SUPPORTED BY INCLUSIVE BEACH

From the first moment they saw Benone beach, the family of Theo Tasker knew what a difference it would make.

A fully-inclusive beach in County Londonderry was created for young people like Theo to experience days out at the seaside.

It is something many take for granted, but for 11-year-old Theo and his parents, Dee and Gary, it is a lifeline.

Dee explained: "Anyone who has a child with a disability knows how difficult a trip to the beach can be. There can be accessibility issues as well as remembering the right medicine, clothes and toiletry requirements.

"But the Benone beach has changed all that. It is safe and stimulating, it gives us peace of mind and allows Theo to have fun just like any other child.

Wooden Spoon Ulster was proud to support the plans by the Mae Murray Foundation with a £18,000 donation which helped fund specialist kit including hoists, changing benches, beach chairs, special matting and even, at the time, Northern Ireland's first surfboard for wheelchair users.

"He absolutely loves the water and he can now go into the sea just like other children. It has been hard for us, physically, to get him into the sea, but we have great support at Benone."

Dee Tasker - Theo's Mum

Dee said: "The buggies are just amazing. Theo cannot walk too far, so the buggies help him see a lot more of the beach.

"He absolutely loves the water and he can now go into the sea just like other children. It has been hard for us, physically, to get him into the sea, but we have great support at Benone. The staff at Mae Murray staff and the Benone beach staff are both amazing."

"He gets so much joy and delight from the big waves and he also loves to see us having fun with him.

"Theo is just a bundle of joy who thrives on having fun. He has cerebral palsy and epilepsy which means there are some activities that aren't available to him.

"But the beach has just been an amazing experience and opportunity for Theo – he absolutely adores it."