

Surprises in the pipeline for children's hospital this December

A PIPE band which is dedicating its time to entertaining kids in hospital at Christmas has officially launched a living advent calendar at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children (RHSC).

Haddington Pipe Band has been revealed as the first surprise behind Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity's (EHC) advent calendar which will come to life every day from 1st-24th this month as part of the Big Christmas Door Appeal.

The band performed tunes such as Scotland the Brave and Highland Cathedral for the children outside the main entrance of the RHSC, kicking off a three week spectacle to entertain the children there.

Fraser Wilkinson, 25, is a veteran piper of Haddington Pipe Band and has been playing with them since he was 10.

He said: "It was great to see kids and the community sing and hum along to our tunes – it was a fantastic way to start the month.

"We're keen to do anything we can to help the kids, parents, nurses or doctors get into the festive spirit – Haddington Pipe Band is also a charity and we like to do what we can to help others out."

Some of the entertainment behind the calendar doors that the children have in store are visits from the Edinburgh Rugby

squad, Hearts and Hibs football teams and the Scottish Ballet troupe in their Cinderella costumes.

ECHC is encouraging local businesses to get behind the campaign and contribute towards the living advent calendar to make it as special a Christmas as possible for the children.

Amy Ford, Corporate Fundraiser at ECHC, said: "Christmas is a special time for children and young people, and being in hospital shouldn't mean that they miss out.

"That's why we're doing all we can to make the hospital an exciting place to be this Christmas so those receiving treatment there can be child first and patient second.

"There are many ways to get involved and support our vital work this Christmas and we'd love to welcome businesses and individuals to help out."

From bucket collections at Christmas events to volunteering for supermarket bag packs and sponsored cycles, walks or runs, there are many things you can do to ensure children at the RHSC don't miss out on Christmas.