

Children get hundreds of books delivered

Families with vulnerable children who are shielding at home in Edinburgh have had hundreds of books delivered to their doorsteps thanks to a new charity partnership.

Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity (ECHC) – which supports the Royal Hospital for Sick Children – has teamed up with Edinburgh City Libraries to help children and their siblings who are shielding for 12 weeks.



Edinburgh City Libraries & Information Services has filled a Book Bus with around 1800 books for children and young people. The bus is stationed at the ECHC office and volunteers collect book packages for delivery. The families who get the book

packages are those known to the Sick Kids. ECCHC is trying to bring fun and distraction to the children and help improve their mental wellbeing during lockdown.

Baillie Gifford has sponsored the book delivery service.

Caroline Leishman has been shielding her family of three boys for eight weeks as her youngest son Finlay is having treatment for Leukaemia.



She said: “Coming up with new and exciting ways to keep everyone occupied and distracted while also looking after a clinically vulnerable child becomes a little bit harder as each week goes by.

“It was such a relief when the book parcel from ECHC arrived on our doorstep. The kids were so excited to open it and discover all the new books they had to read which gave us some much needed breathing space!

“Books are such a wonderful resource for children who are shielding. They let their imaginations run wild so they can go on all sorts of fantastic adventures without ever leaving the safety of home.”



Roslyn Neely, CEO of ECHC, said: "We know from our work in the hospital that taking part in fun and creative activities that feed the imagination is the best way to take away children's fear and feelings of isolation when they are unwell."

“It must be unimaginably tough for children and their siblings having to shield at home when they already face significant health challenges. We know the power of storytelling and the benefits that brings to children in hospital so we’re positive it will have the same effect in the home.

“We believe that nothing should get in the way of being a child. Even though they can’t physically be out and about in the world right now, children have a huge appetite for adventure and there’s a whole world of creativity and magic in their imaginations.

“Bringing books to their doorsteps through this wonderful partnership with Edinburgh City Libraries is a great way to ensure they still have access to that. We’re also so grateful to Baillie Gifford for their sponsorship and to all our volunteer drivers for making this possible.”

City of Edinburgh Council Leader Adam McVey said: “We’re delighted we can help families known to the Sick Kids and thanks to our library team who have been superb. One of our mobile libraries is filled with about 1,800 children’s books so what better way of putting these books to good use.

“Books are a wonderful resource and will really help families having to self-isolate in their homes for 12 weeks. Reading as a family is a joy and can help to improve wellbeing – a recent study found that six minutes of reading can reduce stress levels by 60%. This is a great example showing how working together with partners in the city can respond to the needs of our communities.”

Book deliveries are one of a number of things that ECHC is doing to support children and families during the pandemic, all of which are being delivered safely in line with government restrictions during this time. All books that are returned to the Book Bus will be held on board for 72 hours for infection control before being recirculated.

The charity is also distributing Emergency Care Packs of food and essential supplies, toiletries and arts and activity items.

Families known to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children who would like any of the emergency care packs on offer are asked to contact Leigh at ECHC on 0131 668 4949 or leigh.drake@echcharity.org

Donations to ECHC's Emergency COVID-19 Appeal can be made online [here](#)

Although City of Edinburgh Council libraries are currently closed the public can still borrow e-books, e-audio books, e-newspapers and e-magazines online using their library card. If you're not already a library member, you can join online [here](#)

