

Hibs launch keepie-uppie fundraising challenge for Edinburgh & Lothians Health Foundation

Hibs have launched a keepie uppie fundraising challenge for supporters to take part in and help raise money for Edinburgh & Lothians Health Foundation, the official charity partner of NHS Lothian.

The aim of the challenge is for fans to do a minimum of 50 keepie uppies a day for five days, and collectively achieve a target of 20,421 keepie uppies over the month of August. That's one keepie uppie for every seat in Easter Road Stadium.

Fans can get involved by signing up on the event registration site and setting up a personal fundraising page, where they can ask friends and family to sponsor them to take part, or join the challenge themselves. Final keepie uppie totals can then be submitted to Edinburgh and Lothian's Health Foundation – who will keep a tally and issue regular progress updates through their website and social media.



Alex Gogic of Hibernian Hibernian Player warm up for the new season at Hibernian Training centre PHOTO Alan Rennie

The challenge is open to fans of all abilities, with the option to choose how they complete their 50 keepie uppies a day; they can be done all in one go, or as chunks of five or ten. For those who feel they have mastered the art of keepie

uppie, they can challenge themselves to do a bit more, setting an increased daily target and trying to beat their personal best.

Fans are being encouraged to share videos and images of them taking part, helping to raise awareness of the campaign and raise as much money as possible to support the health and wellbeing of NHS Lothian staff as they face ongoing challenges and pressures as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The challenge marks the start of Hibs' season-long fundraising partnership with Edinburgh and Lothians Health Foundation following the launch of the new strip in April with the Thank You NHS logo on the front of the shirts. The club decided to take the opportunity to express the thanks of the entire Hibernian football community to the magnificent health service for their heroic, selfless and dedicated efforts of its staff during the Coronavirus pandemic. Fans could then opt to pay £5.00 to have the transfer on their own replica shirts. All the money raised through the transfers will be donated to Edinburgh and Lothians Health Foundation, providing vital funds to put in place ongoing packages of support for staff who have been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic.

The first consignment of strips was sent out in July, with the next round of strips due to be issued in September.

Whilst the first peak of the pandemic has passed, it has not gone away, and Hibs will be undertaking further fundraising throughout the season, with the football club expecting to hand over a six-figure donation by the end of the season. All fans are invited to participate in fundraising and donate whatever they can to help fund more initiatives to look after the wellbeing of the heroic NHS staff during and in the recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic.

Striker Kevin Nisbet, fresh from scoring a hat-trick in Saturday's 4-1 win over Livingston, said: "We're all proud to

wear the Thank You NHS message on the front of our strips and it's obvious our supporters are too given the number of pictures we've seen on social media.

"Hopefully they'll join in with the keepie uppie challenge and show us their skills for a great cause. It's a bit of fun and we'll see how they compare to the first-team boys. There are probably a few in the dressing room worried they'll get shown up!"

Head of Fundraising at Edinburgh and Lothians Health Foundation, Nicola Sinclair, said: "Good luck to all the Hibs fans taking part in the keepie uppie challenge and thank you for all your support. It makes a huge difference to our NHS Lothian colleagues, who are working tirelessly to save lives, to know that everyone is behind them.

"Your support helps us to fund initiatives that support the physical and emotional wellbeing of our amazing NHS Lothian staff as they work long hours in hot and uncomfortable PPE or provide vital, and often complex, care to patients at home. As we move from the peak of the crisis into recovery, staff will face new and difficult challenges and thanks to your support, Edinburgh and Lothians Health Foundation can be there now, and in the future, to help our NHS Heroes in the ongoing fight against Coronavirus."

One of the NHS Lothian team who has benefitted from the funding provided through the charity to support the setting up of staff wellbeing spaces and free foot massages, is Laura Thomson, Quality and Safety Improvement Manager at the Western General Hospital, Edinburgh. She said:

"You know when you're going really, really quickly and you're running from one thing to another? To be able to use your break to go to the Wellbeing Hub or get a foot massage from the complimentary therapists was great – just to ground you and make you take a moment to stop and pause and relax – I

actually felt lighter on my feet afterwards. Both myself and my colleagues want to thank everyone who has supported us so far and who continues to support us during these difficult times. It really means a lot.”