

Leith Toy Hospital – making masks means business growth

During lockdown and the related economic downturn, staff at Leith Toy Hospital have managed to buck the economic trend by using their sewing skills.

Staff started crafting hand-made, reusable face masks from a range of upcycled fabrics and materials.

Their masks have proved hugely popular with customers all over the UK. Over 1700 masks have been produced and sold in the past five months, providing continued employment for staff at the Toy Hospital. In addition they have taken on an additional twenty talented sewers, all based in Leith to meet the demand.

Mari Jones, director of Leith Toy Hospital, said: 'It's been so nice to build relationships with the local sewing community. We've been delighted by the fantastic feedback our masks have received and are really grateful for the support that people have given to a local Edinburgh business. Based on customer feedback, we keep refining the design of our masks.

"They all include nose wires to stop glasses from misting over and also have cloth pockets for filters. The masks come in a range of sizes for adults and children. We also offer custom printed masks and even a 'cocktail mask' which has a hole for your straw and a flap to cover it over. We're trialling lip reading masks as well.'

Masks can be purchased from Leith Toy Hospital in person, by

phone or online.

The Leith Toy Hospital is the only one in Scotland now. Mari Jones began a company called Picture to Puppet making soft toys to order and the hospital grew from there. Mari said: "With a 'teddy surgeon' seamstress and 'plastic surgeon' doll specialist on staff, the variety of repairs we are called upon to perform is far-ranging and always keeps things interesting! There used to be a lot of toy hospitals, and our customers often tell us about ones that used to exist in Edinburgh. Now they're much rarer, and there's always a demand for our services. We're generally treating about 50 patients at any one time."

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Hours: Monday-Saturday, 10-6

