

Special treat for youngsters at Sick Kids as sports stars join them on video call

Children and young people at Edinburgh's Sick Kids hospital were treated to a Christmas surprise from some famous faces when players from Hibs, Hearts and Edinburgh Rugby joined them on a video call.

Players including Hibs' stars Ryan Porteous, Martin Boyle, Hearts duo Christoph Berra and Craig Gordon and Edinburgh Rugby's Grant Gilchrist took time out from their busy training schedules to Zoom with some of their biggest fans, tell festive jokes and answer all their Christmas questions.

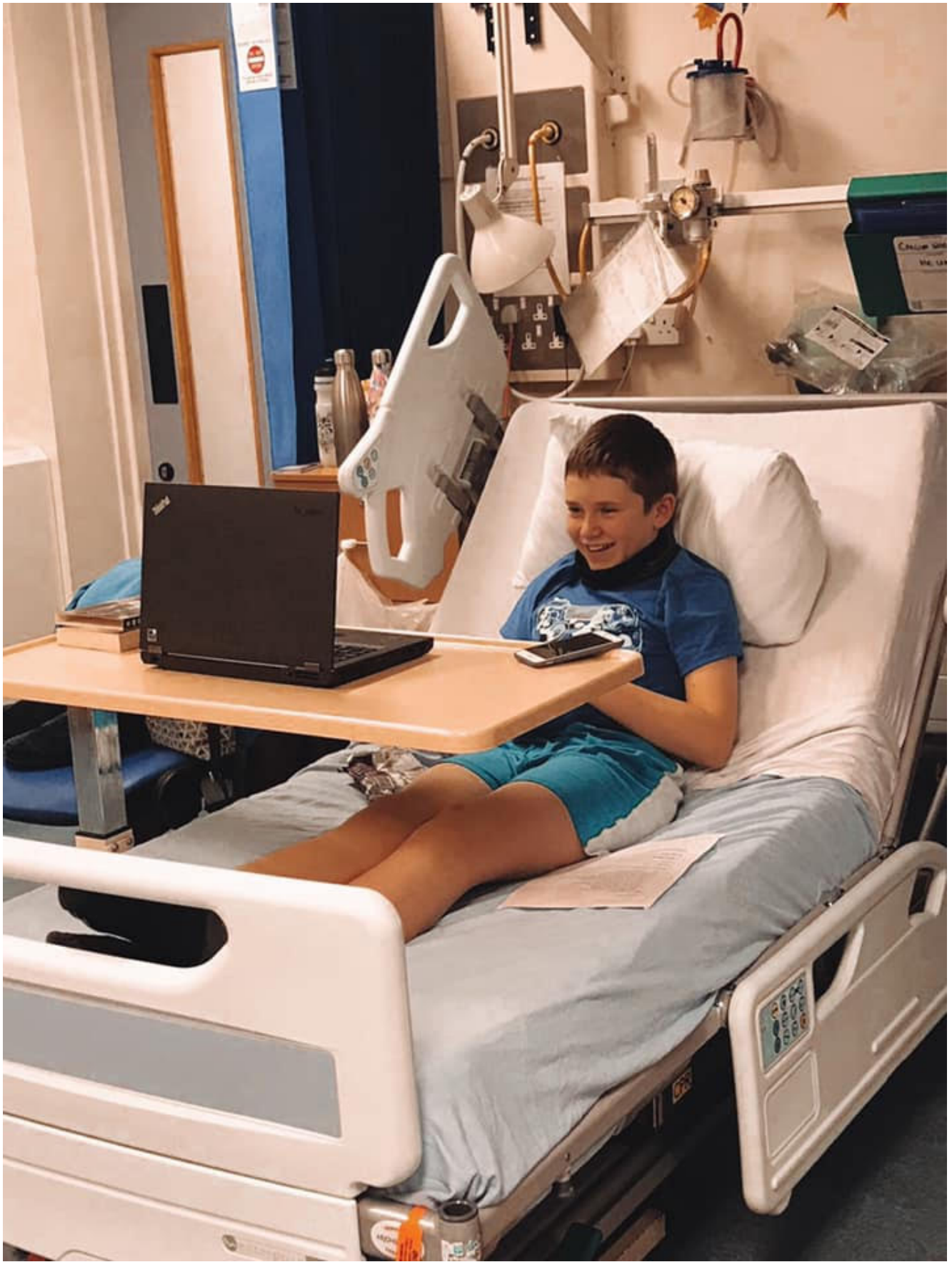




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The Zoom calls brought lots of smiles and laughter to the wards, thanks to revelations including and Ryan Porteous and Martin Boyle treating one young fan to a rendition of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer and Christoph Berra confessing that he is receiving a mop from his mum this Christmas.

The footballers and rugby players would usually visit the Sick Kids to meet children and their families in person in December, which is unfortunately unable to happen this year due to Covid restrictions.

The Zoom calls were organised by Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity (EHC), which supports the Sick Kids and works hard to

make Christmas magical for those visiting the hospital every year.

Fiona O'Sullivan, Arts Programme Manager at ECHC, said: "The hospital visits from Hibs, Hearts and Edinburgh Rugby are always a huge hit with the children and young people so it's a real shame these weren't able to go ahead this year.

"However, we would like to say an enormous thank you to the players for taking time out of their day to chat with some of the children and young people via Zoom. Some of the kids are massive football and rugby fans so it really made their day to meet their favourite players.

"Christmas is a very special time of year and we work hard to ensure no child or young person misses out on the magic of the festive season. This year has been harder than ever for those at the hospital, so we are incredibly grateful to Hibs, Hearts and Edinburgh Rugby for continuing to support us and for spreading so much joy and Christmas cheer with the calls."

ECHC runs a living advent calendar throughout December, which sees a different door in the hospital opened each day to reveal a surprise visitor or activity. The advent calendar activities are limited this year by restricted visiting; however, the charity is determined to make this Christmas as magical as possible for children and young people, with everything from a silent disco, a festive cinema experience and a visit from a real ballerina.

To donate to ECHC's Give Christmas Back appeal, visit www.echcharity.org/christmas