

Celebrating hospital's first birthday at Little France this week

NHS Lothian's Royal Hospital for Children and Young People is ready to celebrate a very special birthday on Wednesday 23 March – marking one year since the new hospital fully opened.

The services moved to the new site from the old 'Sick Kids' gradually, with outpatients arriving in July 2020, CAMHS in January 2021 and finally the remaining services including inpatients and A&E in March that same year.

To commemorate the birthday, activities have been arranged with both patients and staff in mind, and with generous support from a range of partners including Edinburgh and Lothians Health Foundation, Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity and Ronald McDonald House. This includes the distribution of birthday-themed craft boxes with decorations for all wards, a birthday-themed projection on to the building, a drop-in photo booth, a birthday party with stalls, activities and live performances, complementary therapy and pampering sessions for families staying at Ronald McDonald House and treats for all staff which will be distributed across each ward.

Allister Short, Service Director, Women's and Children's Services, NHS Lothian said, "The Royal Hospital for Children

and Young people offers one of the most modern and best-designed children's healthcare facilities in the world. I hope over the last twelve months, both patients and their families have been able to see what this means and the positive impact it has both for patient care and wellbeing."



Robyn with Play Specialist Lorna Galbraith Photo – Chris Watt
For the Simpson family from Torphichen near Bathgate, the facilities on offer not only help to provide a degree or

normality but make a huge difference to the happiness of daughter Robyn.

Mum Michelle explained that the family have been in and out of hospital with Robyn ever since she was born, with the longest stay being four months. She said: "It is really hard to have a child that is unwell. It places a real strain on you both physically, mentally and emotionally. Coming to the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People makes things just that bit easier – it's bright, spacious and airy – feeling more like a hotel than a hospital.

"There are so many spaces especially for children and so many activities that they can get involved in – from art and craft to music. Seeing Robyn happy, even though she is in hospital, is incredible. It enables her to be a child rather than just a patient."

Allister said: "The facilities on offer across the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People are truly incredible, however the services wouldn't be anything without our talented and dedicated staff. Day-in-day-out they deliver so much to ensure the children and young people attending the hospital receive the very best care and support."

Michelle added, "I can't thank the staff enough. They offer so much support and reassurance as well as incredible care. It really does help to make it feel like a home from home whenever we're here."

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