

## Background

Patients, families and staff on a paediatric oncology ward were asked what prevented and supported them to engage in physical and daily activities (PA and DA). 77% of the open ended responses related to the environment, specifically:

- Lack of opportunity/space/resources/accessibility
- Lack of role modelling
- Lack of promotion or culture

## Method

Joshua Tarrant Trust, a Cambridgeshire charity dedicated to supporting children with brain tumours, funded a 2 year fixed term band 4 post in the NHS to create an "Activity Coordinator" for the oncology ward. Aims:

1. To improve opportunity, accessibility and resources for PA and DA on an individual and group basis
2. To empower parents and carers with the knowledge and confidence to role model PA and DA
3. To educate and promote awareness of PA and DA

Job plan, person specification and competencies were created. A training package was provided and supervision is offered regularly.

## Results

Below shows the projects achieved 1 year into the project.

Initial data gathering from 9 families:

- Do the activities encourage your child to be more active? 100% yes
- Do the activities help your child's well-being and mood? 100% yes

## Challenges

- Establishing role within the ward and the MDT, confusion over role overlap: needed better transparency and wider understanding of aims and scope of this new role before starting
- Securing ongoing funding. Most data collected is objective, more robust data collection methods are needed.

## Conclusion

The benefits of remaining active for paediatric oncology patients is well documented, however the environment can be a primary barrier. Our initial data shows that an Activity Coordinator has the potential to increase participation in PA and DA among inpatients on an oncology paediatric ward by focusing on improving the environment at a targeted and universal level. Further evaluation is required to measure impact and feasibility.

"It got my son moving more and helped with his mood"



Providing additional "movement" sessions for those known to OTPT e.g. practising transfers to chair for PAT dog visits, setting up daily bath routine with specialist seating

"The families are receiving more guidance on activities that they are able to do with their child in hospital"



Organising school holiday challenges and events for the ward: e.g. cycle challenge, CYP cycled 135km, family members 130km

"An important part of my child's overall wellbeing and engagement in her rehabilitation"



Bringing group activities into barriered rooms for children that wouldn't otherwise receive

ADL equipment organising and up-keep, both specialist seating and universal paediatric equipment such as commodes and cutlery

Daily ward wide "ADL check" ensuring all patients have the equipment they need to wash, eat and play.

Clarifying isolation rules to maximise activity and empower parents

Supports parents own exercise and self care to model to their children

Organising an annual oncology activity day

"Takes his mind off the treatment and just feels normal for a change"

Specialist

Providing opportunity for activity for those who wouldn't meet OTPT thresholds e.g. sourcing larger wheelchair for teenager to visit gardens, supporting toilet training for younger child

"My child was happy that her muscles worked a lot!"



Targeted

Bringing external entertainers in to ward and encouraging movement: so far magicians, fairies, footballers and theatre groups!

"My son loves music and dancing, this gives him the opportunity to let of steam and be in his happy place"

Supporting play and school to create groups from specific cohorts e.g. teenage boys game out of bed!



Universal

Providing education to families, patients and staff on the importance of activity.

Organises quarterly "activity meetings" with medics, nursing, AHPs and play staff

"She manages to find a way into bringing engagement and exercise to even the most withdrawn children"

Ad hoc reassurance, practice and promotion of walking to toilet, food out of bed, bath in bathroom etc. Provides advice and support with wires.



"She made me get out of bed quicker because I wanted to impress her!"