

HOW DONATIONS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

ACT MEMBER **PAUL SHAFTOE** DESCRIBES THE IMPACT THAT DONATIONS FROM FELLOW MEMBERS HAVE MADE ON THE CHARITY WELLCHILD

Some readers may remember the name of WellChild, the UK's charity for seriously ill children, as the designated charity at the ACT Annual Dinner in 2009 and again in 2010. My involvement is somewhat more recent, having joined the team at the start of 2018. I'd like to share a little about the amazing work we help facilitate at WellChild and report back on how those much-valued donations have helped transform the lives of sick children and their families by funding specialist nursing posts across the UK.

The model used to deliver these nurses has an attractive simplicity that appealed to my treasurer's mindset. The reputation of our highly trained, specialised and focused nurses now speaks for itself across the NHS – and many more trusts apply for a WellChild nurse than can be funded. The genius comes in the obligation, a fully knocked-in option if you will, on the trust to retain that post in perpetuity. With the help of corporate and individual donors, nearly 40 vitally important posts have been created.

Children and families such as Noah have benefited from the significant sums raised at the ACT dinners. Noah, from Huddersfield, has a condition so rare he is the only baby in the UK to have been diagnosed with it. At two weeks, the family was transferred to Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool where Noah had further investigation – the family stayed for 10 months.

Noah's parents then met WellChild nurse Elaine O'Brien, who supported



Katie Booth (right) with Jill and Noah

them in arranging all the necessary measures to be able to bring Noah home. O'Brien provided professional guidance, including training them in using a ventilator, and managed all aspects of Noah's move home.

Noah's mother, Jill, said: "Elaine spoke to us in a language that we understood and provided amazing practical and emotional support, making sure our voice was heard with all the different health professionals and carers involved in getting Noah home."

During her induction period, new WellChild nurse Katie Booth gradually became more involved in Noah's care and took responsibility for the momentous task of coordinating the multiple different services, agencies and professionals required to establish the care needed for the family to move back home from the hospital environment, where they had lived for nearly a year.

This was initially a frightening prospect for Jill, who did not relish having to liaise with a totally new set of people to explain Noah's situation and make sure every last detail was in place. Fortunately, her WellChild nurse was able to take that burden from her and devoted the necessary hours in negotiating and

coordinating the care that Noah needed at home.

Our nurses are uniquely positioned to act as the fulcrum between the complex network of support and bureaucratic functions, which, although all vitally important in isolation, regularly prevent the patient from getting the best treatment in the best environment. Noah, now seven, has benefited hugely from ACT members' generosity.

To continue to deliver such care, we rely heavily on the support of partner businesses that can provide direct financial, practical and staff fundraising support, as well as assisting in delivering our Helping Hands projects, which convert bedroom and garden spaces, easing the transfer from hospital to home.

If you think your company could help support WellChild, please don't hesitate to get in touch. ❤️

This year's ACT Annual Dinner will take place in the Great Room at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London on 14 November. For more information, visit www.treasurers.org/annualdinner

If you would like to find out more about ACT charity partner opportunities, please contact Melissa Brittain at mbrittain@treasurers.org

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Paul Shaftoe AMCT is a treasury consultant for WellChild. He can be reached at paul@redlandstresury.co.uk