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National Play in Hospital Week

Dorset County Hospital celebrates NAHPS' and Starlight's National Play in Hospital Week

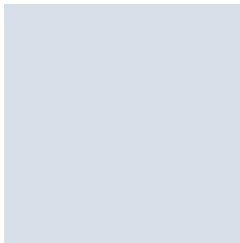
Young patients and staff at Dorset County Hospital have been demonstrating how play helps the medicine go down in celebration of National Play in Hospital Week.

The annual initiative, which runs from 8th to 14th October, was founded by National Association of Health Play Specialists (NAHPS) and has been organised for a second year by national children's charity Starlight Children's Foundation. The objective of National Play in Hospital Week is to raise awareness of the benefits of play in the treatment of poorly children across the UK and it has been funded by Starlight, which grants wishes for seriously and terminally ill children and provides entertainment in hospitals and hospices across the UK. Patients on Kingfisher Ward have been expressing how play helps them to cope with any pain and fear while they are in hospital by making pumpkin artwork for a Halloween display. This comes as part of a week of play-related activities, which have been funded by Starlight and include Play Doh and painting parties, teddy bear hospital, karaoke, hospital bingo and Where's Wally, which has been sponsored by Talking Tables. Julie Goodall, who is a Play Specialist at Dorset County Hospital, said, "National Play in Hospital Week is an excellent opportunity for us to raise awareness of the benefits of play, while organising a really fun week of activities, games and entertainment for our patients. Being unwell can be very distressing and scary for children and play really does help to distract them from any pain and anxiety they might be feeling, which in turn can help them to better engage with their treatment."

Neil Swan, Chief Executive of Starlight Children's Foundation, said, "As a national charity that brightens the lives of over half a million poorly children

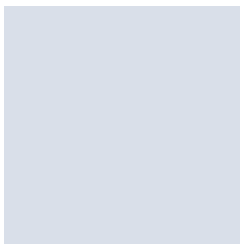
in the UK each year, we are really proud to sponsor National Play in Hospital Week. The work of NAHPS and the health play specialist community is invaluable in the treatment of poorly children and we are delighted to support it.” Irene O’Donnell, Play Services Manager at UCLH and Vice Chair of NAHPS, added “We know that good quality play and recreation opportunities can enhance mental health and the importance of children and young people’s emotional and psychological health is also recognized as having an impact on their physical health. It is important that we highlight these benefits so that play continues to be recognised as a key element in paediatric treatment.” National Play in Hospital Week is an annual event organised by Starlight Children’s Foundation for National Association of Health Play Specialists (NAHPS). For more information, please visit <http://www.starlight.org.uk/play-in-hospital-week/>

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