

Photo caption: Four-year-old Drew Howard-Carter, from Evesham, who is being treated for leukaemia, is encouraging people across Worcestershire to Give Up Clothes for Good to help more children like him survive cancer.

For immediate release

Insert date

COURAGEOUS DREW URGES EVERYONE TO GIVE UP CLOTHES FOR LIFE-SAVING RESEARCH

THIS September – Childhood Cancer Awareness Month – a four-year-old boy from Evesham is urging people across the region to clear out their wardrobes to help more children and young people like him survive cancer.

Instead of starting school as expected this September, Drew Howard-Carter is currently undergoing intensive treatment for leukaemia. Despite his illness, the brave youngster is backing TK Maxx's Give Up Clothes for Good campaign, in support of Cancer Research UK for Children & Young People.

Drew and his family are encouraging the public to donate any pre-loved quality fashion and homeware they no longer need to their nearest TK Maxx store.

When sold in Cancer Research UK shops, each bag of items donated could raise up to £25 to help fund research into children's and young people's cancers.

Drew was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL) just after his fourth birthday in May this year, but his birthday party was marred by the fact that he felt tired and feverish.

After the party, Jason Howard-Carter and his wife, Su, took their son to the GP **multiple times** where he was initially diagnosed with an ear infection, **then throat infection**. But two different types of antibiotic had no effect, and Drew became paler and paler, with fevers and sweats at night.

He was eventually referred to Worcester **Royal** Hospital for blood tests and Jason and Su were given the devastating news that doctors strongly suspected leukaemia. Drew had a blood transfusion in Worcester and was then transferred to Birmingham Children's Hospital where the diagnosis was confirmed.

Jason said:

"The first few days were brutal. He had so many **medicines**, needles and tubes in his body, he had a central line put in, he had bone marrow biopsies, lumbar punctures **under aesthetic, all within the space of hours / days** – even an adult wouldn't have coped.

"Drew **developed an absolute fear of** the nurses and doctors; **in his eyes, everyone who came near him did something horrible to him**. It was **extremely** overwhelming as parents, and of course we were thrown into this world where

we were dealing with all this medical jargon when only a few days beforehand our lives had been completely normal.”

“Our elder son, Jude, became frightened that Drew was going to die. At one point he said he wished he could have leukaemia instead of Drew, because Drew was too little for it. That was heartbreaking because Jude himself is only six.”

Since May, Drew has been in and out of hospital in the early phases of a two-year treatment plan for his ALL. Recently, he has just begun a more intensive phase of chemotherapy, which means he is unable to start school this September as he should have done.

Mum Su said:

“Drew was looking forward to starting school at St Andrew’s CE School in Evesham. He enjoyed nursery and he knew he was going to Jude’s school, so he was excited.

“The school has been great and we know Drew will catch up – it’s just going to be a bit of a journey. On the whole we feel quite positive. We know we are lucky. Drew is getting the best treatment and his type of cancer is curable: not every parent is as lucky as us.

It’s thanks to research that Drew is here today. That’s why raising money for Cancer Research UK for Children & Young People is so vital.

“Drew and I will be having a good clear out at home to find clothes and things to donate and we hope our experience will inspire others to do the same. Their unwanted items really could save lives.”

In Worcestershire and the West Midlands around 160 children are diagnosed with cancer every year*.

Cancer Research UK celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2022. However, its history dates back to the founding of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund in 1902.

Thanks in part to the charity’s work, children's cancer survival in the UK has more than doubled since the 1970s when just over a third of children diagnosed survived beyond ten years. Today, it's around 8 in 10** - but there’s still much further to go.

That’s why Cancer Research UK has funded pioneering research into understanding different types of childhood leukaemia, which has improved the way children are treated today, meaning more children like Drew survive.

The West Midlands is home to Cancer Research UK’s Children’s Cancer Trials Team in Birmingham, the only one of its kind in the UK. The team puts the city at the forefront of children’s cancer research and coordinates groundbreaking clinical trials in many centres across the UK, including Birmingham Children’s Hospital. These

trials make innovative new treatments available to children with cancer, giving them the chance to benefit from the latest discoveries.

Cancer Research UK has funded pioneering research into understanding different types of childhood leukaemia, which has improved the way children are treated today, meaning more children like Drew survive.

Our doctors led an important clinical trial testing a treatment for children with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL) that had come back. Thanks to this trial, hundreds more children with this disease can now expect to survive their disease.

Cancer Research UK spokesperson for Worcestershire, Jane Redman, said:

“We’re so grateful to the Howard-Carter family for their support at a time when Drew himself is undergoing intensive treatment.

“Cancer in children and young people is different from cancer in adults – from the types of cancer to the impact of treatment and the long-term side effects survivors often experience. So, it needs more research which campaigns like Give Up Clothes for Good help to fund.

“We want to help ensure more people under the age of 25 in Worcestershire, and across the UK, survive cancer with a good quality of life. That’s why we hope as many people as possible will show their support and donate any quality clothes or goods to their local TK Maxx store in Evesham, Worcester, Stratford upon Avon or Cheltenham.

Not only could they help to save lives, they’ll also be reducing their environmental impact by giving their pre-loved items another lease of life.”

TK Maxx is the biggest corporate supporter of Cancer Research UK’s research into children’s and young people’s cancers. Since 2004, the retailer has raised over £40 million to help improve survival and reduce long-term side effects for youngsters.

Give Up Clothes for Good is one of the UK’s longest running clothes collections and people can donate at any TK Maxx store, all year round, including Evesham, Worcester, Stratford on Avon and Cheltenham.

Supporters can also help by wearing a gold ribbon badge – the awareness symbol of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month – available from Cancer Research UK shops and selected TK Maxx stores during September.

Find out more at cruk.org/childrenandyoungpeople

FACT FILE

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH: SAVING YOUNG LIVES

In the West Midlands, around 160 children are diagnosed with cancer every year.* But more youngsters in the region – and across the UK - are surviving than ever before.

Cancer Research UK's breakthroughs have played a part in preventing almost 30,000 deaths for under 25s in the UK, since the 1970s.***

As it marks its anniversary year, the charity is paying tribute to its supporters for helping to fund key research highlights such as:

- **2006** – A decade-long clinical trial found that giving chemotherapy before surgery reduces the side effects caused by treatment for Wilms tumour.
- **2010** – A ground-breaking trial of a drug called mitoxantrone, showed how it could dramatically improve survival in children whose acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL) has returned. This revolutionised the way some children with ALL are treated.
- **2018** – The SIOPEL-6 clinical trial showed that giving sodium thiosulfate with cisplatin chemotherapy almost halves the risk of hearing loss for young patients with hepatoblastoma, the most common childhood liver cancer.

But there's still much further to go to help ensure more children and young people survive cancer with a good quality of life. That's why, during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, Cancer Research UK is calling on the public to show their support.

Find out more at cruk.org/childrenandyoungpeople

ENDS

For media enquiries, please contact: Jane Redman on 07918 650670 or email centralpress@cancer.org.uk

Notes to Editors

**Average annual number of new cancer cases of all cancers combined excluding non-melanoma skin cancer (ICD10 C00-C97, excl. C44) diagnosed in children and young people aged 0-14 years in the West Midlands in 2015-17. This data was extracted from the Public Health England's Cancer Analysis System, snapshot CAS1902. Accessed 16/03/2022. This work is only possible because of data from the cancer registry, which is routinely collected by the NHS as part of patient care.*

***1971-75: National Cancer Intelligence Network. National Registry of Childhood Tumours Progress Report, 2012. 10-year actuarial survival for children (aged 0-14) in Great Britain diagnosed with cancer (all cancers combined). 2007-11: Public Health England. Children, teenagers and young adults UK cancer statistics report 2021. Population-based 10-year survival for children (aged 0-14) in the UK diagnosed with cancer (all cancers combined).*

****Calculated by the Cancer Intelligence Team at Cancer Research UK, 2020. Estimated number of deaths avoided in children aged 0-14 and young people aged 15-24, based on number of deaths which would have been observed had mortality rates remained at their early-1970s peak, compared with number of deaths actually observed. Based on method set out in Siegel R, Ward E, Brawley O, Jemal A., *Cancer statistics, 2011: the impact of**

eliminating socioeconomic and racial disparities on premature cancer deaths (link is external). CA Cancer J Clin. 2011 Jul-Aug;61(4):212-36.

About Cancer Research UK for Children & Young People

- Cancer Research UK is the world's leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research, influence and information.
- Cancer Research UK for Children & Young People is the part of Cancer Research UK dedicated to supporting research into cancers affecting 0-24-year-olds.
- Around 4,200 children and young people (aged 0-24) are diagnosed with cancer every year in the UK; that's around 350 cases every month, 81 cases each week and 12 cases each day.
- More than 8 in 10 children and young people (aged 0-24) diagnosed with cancer in the UK now survive their disease for at least ten years.
- Together with its partners and supporters, Cancer Research UK for Children & Young People's vision is to improve survival and reduce long-term side effects for children and young people with cancer.
- Money raised through Cancer Research UK for Children & Young People will be ring-fenced to fund research into cancers affecting children and young people (aged 0-24). Donations will be used to fund research to help more 0-24-year-olds survive cancer and do so with a good quality of life.
- For more information, please visit www.cruk.org/childrenandyoungpeople or follow us on [Facebook](#).

About TK Maxx supporting Cancer Research UK for Children & Young People

- TK Maxx's support of Cancer Research UK for Children & Young People is part of a year-round fundraising partnership which includes their clothes collection campaign, Give Up Clothes for Good.
- The Give Up Clothes for Good campaign runs all year round and donation points are available in all TK Maxx stores.
- The items collected go to Cancer Research UK shops where they will be sold to raise funds for Cancer Research UK for Children & Young People.
- TK Maxx is the biggest corporate supporter of Cancer Research UK's research into children's cancers.
- Since 2004, TK Maxx customers and associates have raised over £40 million for Cancer Research UK's research to improve survival and reduce long-term side effects for children and young people with cancer.
- In 2022, TK Maxx won the Better Society Award for best 'Partnership with a Health Charity – Children' in recognition of its partnership with Cancer Research UK for Children & Young People.
- TK Maxx is also the lead sponsor of the Cancer Research UK for Children & Young People Star Awards.

About TK Maxx

- TK Maxx is Europe's leading off-price apparel and homeware retailer selling a huge assortment of big names and designer labels, top brands, up-and-coming labels and exciting gems at up to 60% less than the RRP and at a significant discount to the price in a department store or on the high street, every single day.
- TK Maxx offers a unique treasure hunt shopping experience where customers can find something special at a great price, every time they visit.

- The average TK Maxx store receives several deliveries a week. The rapidly changing mix of high-quality merchandise creates the treasure hunt experience that customers love.
- Opportunistic buying, established relationships with vendors and a no frills operation means TK Maxx can pass huge savings onto customers.
- TK Maxx is committed to being a responsible retailer whether in the community, as an employer, in the supply chain or in the environment.
- As of May 2022¹ TK Maxx has 618 stores in six countries across Europe: the UK, Ireland, Poland, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands and is online at www.tkmaxx.com.

TK Maxx is part of TJX Europe which comprises the TK Maxx and Homesense brands. TJX Europe is part of The TJX Companies, Inc. (NYSE:TJX).

¹TJX Companies, Inc. Q1 FY23 results