Charity launches 'Stop Cancer Destroying Teenage Lives' fundraising appeal to prevent crisis for future generations

Thursday 14 September, 2023

Teenage Cancer Trust is launching its ‘Stop Cancer Destroying Teenage Lives’ fundraising appeal to ensure young people with cancer receive urgently needed specialist care and support, in the face of mounting pressures on the NHS and the spiralling cost of living crisis.

The current healthcare crisis is impacting young people with cancer. Cancer waiting times across the board are at an all-time high and getting a diagnosis is taking longer.

These delays - combined with external pressures such the cost of living crisis - can have devasting long-term impacts on young people’s physical and mental health, if they do not receive the right care and support from the moment they are diagnosed.

Cancer kills more teenagers and young adults in the UK than any other disease.

Cancer rates in young people in the UK have gone up by a quarter since the early 1990s. By 2030, it’s projected that the number of young people living with a cancer diagnosis will be 65% higher.

Every day, seven young people aged 13-24 are diagnosed with cancer. But by 2030, this number is projected to rise to 10.

Each young person who is diagnosed with cancer will need specialist age-appropriate nursing care and support to get them through it. Teenage Cancer Trust is the only UK charity dedicated to meeting this vital need.

With more young people being diagnosed with cancer, combined with current healthcare challenges, the ‘Stop Cancer Destroying Teenage Lives’ fundraising appeal comes at an important time.

Money raised from the appeal will help to provide tailored care and support designed specifically for young people with cancer.

Paul McKenzie, Director of Engagement at Teenage Cancer Trust, said: “It is an increasingly difficult time for teenagers and young adults who are diagnosed with cancer in the UK today.

“Young people with cancer are navigating a complex healthcare system while grappling with economic challenges. They need specialised care now, more than ever, to prevent a future crisis.

“Support from Teenage Cancer Trust ensures that young people have someone in their corner who understands their individual needs, both medically and personally.”

As part of the appeal, people who have been supported by Teenage Cancer Trust will share their experiences, highlighting the impact that receiving specialist care has had on their lives.

They will also talk about the potentially devastating consequences if this care and support was not available.

To donate to the appeal visit: Teenage Cancer Trust | UK Cancer Charity

Why this is a critical time for young people with cancer?

- **More young people are getting cancer.** Every day, seven young people aged 13-24 hear the words “you have cancer”. By 2030 that number will be closer to 10.
- **Cancer hits young people hard.** More teenagers and young adults in the UK die from cancer than any other disease. And for those who survive, going through it without the right support can cause lifelong physical and emotional damage.
- **With healthcare services stretched, waiting times for cancer diagnosis and treatment are at an all-time high.** These delays can compound the impact of cancer on young people’s physical and mental health. Getting the right support now is crucial to prevent a crisis for future

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generations.

- **Life is already tough for young people.** A cancer diagnosis can compound this. Research by The Prince's Trust reveals almost half (46%) of young people in the UK report economic uncertainty makes them feel hopeless about the future and that their mental health is at an all-time low.

Why is cancer different when you're young?

Facing cancer is incredibly hard at any age. But there are lots of reasons cancer can hit young people even harder.

- **Getting a cancer diagnosis in the first place is harder.** Although cancer in teenagers and young adults is more common than you might think, it is still relatively rare, and symptoms can often be mistaken for growing pains or infections. In a 2022 survey, nearly half (47%) of teenagers and young adults diagnosed with cancer had to see their GP three or more times before referral – the most out of any age group

- **Cancer treatments can be less effective for young people.** The physical changes and rapid growth we go through during puberty and young adulthood can negatively affect how the body metabolises chemotherapy drugs, for example, or can lead to more severe side-effects with a higher risk of short and long-term complications

- **Accessing clinical trials can be harder.** Clinical trials help researchers find new and better treatments. But many trials are designed for children or older adults, meaning teenagers and young adults might not be eligible to join or won't get treatment tailored to their age group. And because there are lots of different types of cancer that can affect young people, patient numbers for each cancer type are small, which makes it harder to recruit and run trials.

Relate

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