# Friend running to raise money for family of little boy in desperate need of a new heart

**Monday 19 March, 2018**

A local woman will be running this year's Virgin Money London Marathon to raise funds for The Sick Children's Trust on behalf of her friends' son who has been desperately waiting for a lifesaving heart transplant for ten months.

Emma Ford, 43, a Zumba teacher from Stoke-on-Trent, is training hard to complete the gruelling race to raise £1,000 for The Sick Children's Trust. The charity, which runs free 'Home from Home' accommodation across the country, has been supporting her close friends, Tracy and Adrian Bloor, at its Guilford Street House in London whilst their five year old son, Alexander, waits in hospital for a lifesaving donor heart to become available.

At just eight weeks old, Alexander was diagnosed with a heart condition called dilated cardiomyopathy – in which the left ventricle of the heart is enlarged and unable to efficiently pump blood around the body. A regular check-up in June 2016 showed that his condition was worsening and sadly, just under a year later, his devastated parents were told that their son's only chance of survival would be a heart transplant.

Alexander was transferred from Alder Hey Children's Hospital to Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) last year where he was fitted with a mechanical heart pump, known as the Berlin Heart, to keep him alive. Unable to leave the hospital and over three hours from the family's home in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Alexander continues to undergo treatment at GOSH and will do so until a donor heart is found. **Emma, who along with her husband Rich, has known the Bloor family for years, says:**

"The Sick Children's Trust has been supporting Tracy, Adrian and their daughter Sophia for many months during this traumatic time. The charity's 'Home from Home' is so close by, which means they never have to worry about being separated from their son and are just a couple of minutes away from him.

"I really want to fundraise for the charity that is helping our close friends at this time and as mother to two young sons myself, Thomas and Samuel, I couldn't imagine being separated from them if either were seriously ill in hospital.

"Although I have run half marathons before, this year will be my toughest challenge because I want to do Alexander proud and run my first full marathon. I am aiming to complete the course in four and a half hours, but the enormity of the challenge ahead is just beginning to hit me. However, thinking of the Bloor family, hours away from home, but being provided with a free and comfortable place to stay during such a traumatic time, is good inspiration for me to embrace the race ahead!"

**Alexander's Mum, Tracy, has thanked Emma for choosing to run the marathon for The Sick Children's Trust, and says:**

"Whilst Alexander waits a new heart, which will save his life, we have to do the very best we can to stay strong and The Sick Children's Trust is helping us to do that.

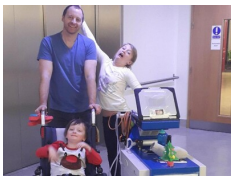
"In London we stay at Guilford Street House, which is free accommodation provided by The Sick Children's Trust. It's amazing and a real 'Home from Home'. Our nine year old daughter, Sophia, needs to come down to London to visit her little brother and being supported by the charity means that she can. Currently, Alexander's Dad and I alternate fortnightly between being at home and at GOSH. This means that on weekends when we swap, Sophia gets to come along to visit her brother and stay at Guilford Street House. These weekends are very precious as we are altogether for a couple of days every two weeks. When we are not at Alexander's bedside, we take time to sit in the comfortable lounge room in the evenings at Guilford Street House and most importantly get a good night's sleep in order to be strong for Alexander.

"I really do not know how we would cope without The Sick Children's Trust help. We would struggle financially to stay in a hotel in London if this was not provided. Knowing you have a good, comfortable and warm home to go to at the end of a long day in hospital is one less thing to worry about. We cannot thank The Sick Children's Trust enough for helping us during this extremely tough time in our lives.

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“We have been there for almost ten months already and have no idea of when all this will end, but are touched by the charity’s kindness and that Emma has chosen to take on such a huge challenge for Alexander.”

Emma will join 16 other runners as part of #TeamSCT to raise vital funds for The Sick Children’s Trust’s ‘Homes from Home’ across the country. Although accommodation is provided to families free of charge, it costs the charity £30 to support a family for one night. **Guilford Street House Manager, Tina Thake, says:**

“I am so pleased that we are able to continue to support Alexander’s family whilst they wait for a donor heart to become available and give them an opportunity to spend time altogether during this time.

“We are so grateful for the money that Emma will raise by running the London Marathon. It will go a long way in helping to support other families with a seriously ill child in hospital. I know that her generosity at such a difficult time means so much to the Bloor family.”

To help Emma reach her £1,000 target, please visit:

For further information about The Sick Children’s Trust, please visit http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org

**Ends**

**Company Contact:**