

Press Release

‘Making Christmas Special’ for Older People spending Christmas Day in hospital

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Older people spending Christmas in one of Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland’s hospitals will once again receive a gift bag this year, donated by the generous local community.

‘Making Christmas Special’ is a collaborative campaign between Leicester’s Hospitals, Age UK Leicester Shire & Rutland and Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT). Every year, there are patients too ill to leave hospital and spend Christmas Day with their loved ones. ‘Making Christmas Special’ aims to spread a little festive cheer to older patients who will be spending Christmas in one of Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland’s hospitals. Now in its sixth year, the campaign is encouraging the local community to donate a small gift bag that will be distributed by hospital staff and volunteers to older patients on Christmas Day.



In 2017, the public of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland showed a fantastic amount of generosity by donating over 1,500 gifts. In past years, the campaign has been so successful that donated gifts exceeded the need in Leicester’s Hospitals and were shared with community hospitals. There are gift tags to download and packaging and gift guidelines on the Leicester’s Hospitals website.

Carolyn Fox, Chief Nurse for Leicester’s Hospitals, said: “The ‘Making Christmas Special’ campaign highlights a real community spirit and

we would be delighted if people once again decide to give a little to make a big difference to our older patients spending Christmas in one of our hospitals, instead of at home with their families. Receiving a gift on Christmas Day that has been generously donated means so much to our patients.”

Tony Donovan, Executive Director at Age UK Leicestershire and Rutland, added: “This campaign makes an enormous difference to older patients who have to spend Christmas in hospital and the generosity of the community always brings a smile to their face. We’re delighted to be working with Leicester’s Hospitals and Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust to bring the Christmas spirit to what could otherwise be a lonely time. Our shops and resource centres will act as donation points across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for anyone who would like to offer a small gift.”

Alison Reynolds, Volunteer Services Co-ordinator for Leicester’s Hospitals, explains: “Nobody wants to spend their Christmas in hospital but unfortunately many are not well enough to go home. The generous donations of gifts from members of the public, staff and people from community groups and businesses make it possible for us to provide patients with some Christmas cheer. We have an amazing team of volunteers who help to check sort and count all of the presents and then deliver enough to each ward for every patient to receive a gift on Christmas morning. We do have guidelines for anyone wishing to donate

gifts - these are available on our website. Thank you to everyone who supports us to Make Christmas Special.”

Nikki Beacher, Head of Service for Community Hospitals, from Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust said “Our patients were thrilled to receive presents last year through the ‘Making Christmas Special’ campaign. It made a big difference to their experience of being in hospital at this time of year. We would like to thank all those who made donations last year and to those who will contribute this year. It really is appreciated by our patients.”

So how can you donate?

It’s really simple!

1. Visit the website of Leicester’s Hospitals (www.leicesterhospitals.nhs.uk) or Age UK (www.ageukleics.org.uk) to download and print a gift tag
2. Write your message on the gift tag and tick whether the gift is suitable for a man, suitable for a woman, or suitable for anyone.
3. Attach the tag to a small **gift bag** containing **unwrapped gifts** such as lip balm, hand lotion, slipper socks, bed socks, biscuits, sweets, cereal bars, hot chocolate or coffee sachets, pens, pencils, and puzzle books. The websites have a full list of what could be donated and what we cannot accept.
4. Take your gift bag/s to the main receptions at the Royal Infirmary, General or Glenfield Hospital or to any Age UK Leicester Shire & Rutland shop or resource centre in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
5. Donations can be made throughout November and up until **Friday 14 December 2018**.