

Annual Report 2023



Abigail's 

"Footsteps no matter how small,
always leave a big impression on the heart."

Liz Astor, Baroness Astor of Hever, Patron – Abigail’s Footsteps



“2023 was a remarkable year for Abigail’s Footsteps, to note a few of their achievements; delivering training to over 1,600 healthcare professionals nationwide, counselling for more than 100 families and Abi cooling cots delivered to 46 hospitals and hospices. The charity continues to grow and strengthen its governance, with the appointment of a new Chair. Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year, with your continued support we can make a difference together.”

David Ward – Co-Founder and Trustee, Abigail’s Footsteps

“After 10 years of support, we waved a fond farewell to our Treasurer Trevor Adams, who had also stepped up to temporary Chair this last year. Trevor will be greatly missed, and we thank him for everything he’s done to get the charity to this point. In his place, it is with great pleasure, we welcome Susan Robinson to Chair our Board of Trustees. We embrace her appointment as the guiding force of our charitable endeavours, Susan’s leadership will elevate our aspirations, and her presence will bring a renewed energy that will undoubtedly inspire us all. Welcome aboard, and let us forge ahead, in our commitment to helping support baby-loss families in our community.”



Susan Robinson – Chair, Abigail’s Footsteps



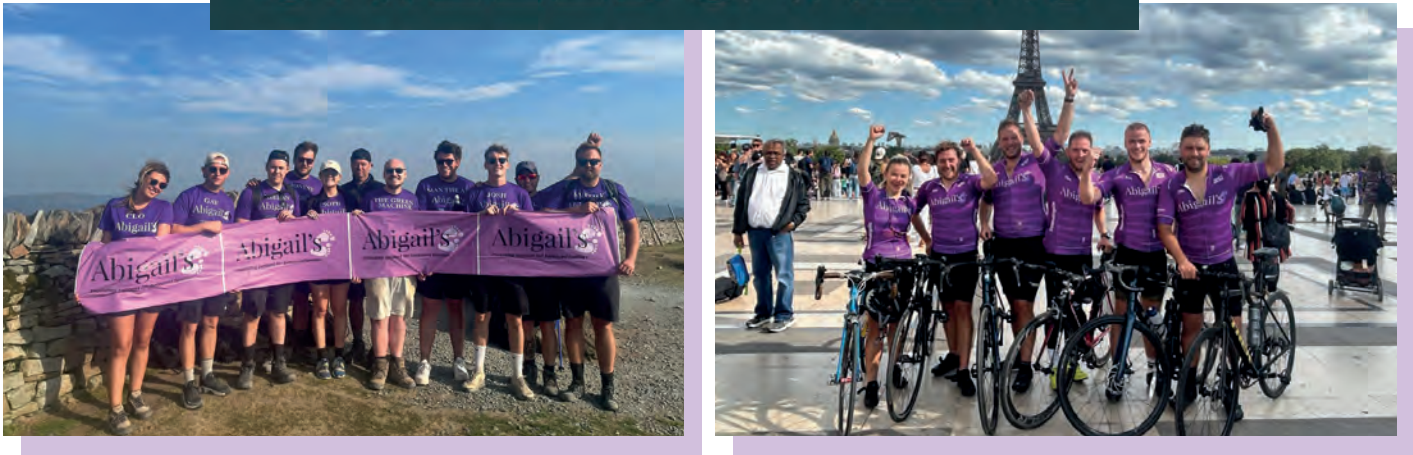
“I first encountered Abigail’s Footsteps in 2015. Understanding what they were doing and why was very heart-wrenching. Over the years I have watched them grow and develop, reaching out to help so many families, but also working to improve the environment families find themselves in through education and support. I feel very privileged to be taking on the role of chair as the charity continues on its incredible journey.”



Skilled Careers chose Abigail's Footsteps as their Charity of the Year for 2023.

The team took on many challenges including the **National 3 Peaks Challenge**, the **London to Paris Cycle**, a quiz night and monthly dress-down days adding to their grand total of **£22,502.77!**

SKILLED CAREERS



Matt Jones, Principal Consultant said, "Six of us from Skilled Careers took on the truly amazing and challenging London to Paris cycle, raising money for Abigail's Footsteps. We had crashes, punctures, brake issues, torrential rain, high winds, glorious sunshine, horrendous hill climbs and super quick declines and we took them all in our stride! The emotions at the end can't be explained!"



"It's wonderful to be supported by a great company like Skilled Careers. Being nominated as their charity of the year makes a real difference to the families we support. Working in partnership to raise vital funds

and awareness about our cause." said David Ward, Abigail's Footsteps Co-Founder, who visited the Skilled Careers office to present the team with a certificate.

January

With thanks to the National Lottery Community Fund, we were able to expand the team and welcome Kate Harrison as Digital Marketing Manager. Kate joined Abigail's with a wealth of knowledge, experience and a background in communications. On joining the team, Kate said, "I'm very happy to be part of this charity. I'm looking forward to sharing my knowledge and helping it grow."



Kate Harrison



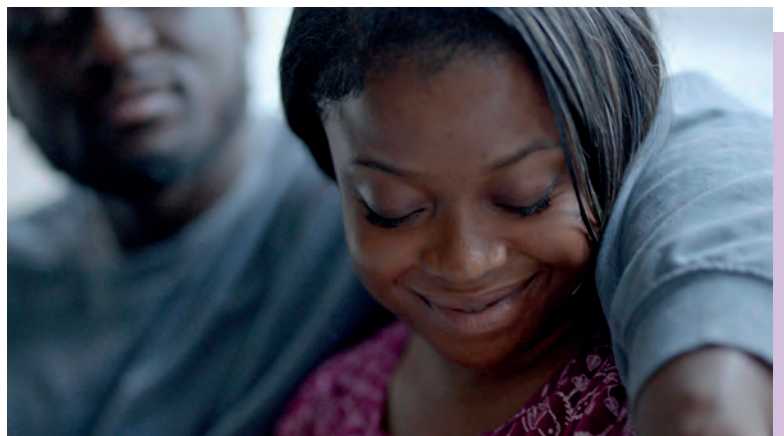
Holly Dewale

Holly Dewale organised two wreath-making workshops at Luddesdown Court, raising £310. Thank you to everyone who took part. We also received £298 from All Roofs UK, generously donated by their customers for putting up their Christmas lights.

February



We were delighted **Say My Baby's Name; Pregnancy After Loss** was shortlisted for the best charity film at the Brand Film Awards. The film produced by Inner Eye Productions is used to enhance our bereavement training programme. Becky & Faye went to the awards in London.





Trish Brown, Naomi Marston & Jenny Bradshaw.

Due to an increase in demand, we welcomed another qualified counsellor, Trish Brown to our counselling team expanding our service. Trish said, *“I’m delighted to join the Abigail’s Footsteps team. Baby loss is such a unique experience of loss, and I believe it’s important to offer parents time and space to talk about what has happened for them. As an experienced bereavement counsellor, I feel privileged to be working in this specialist field.”*

Lead counsellor Naomi Marston said, *“Our counselling service has continued to be a great success, as we continue to give parents the options of online or face to face counselling. I know Trish will be a valuable addition to the team, helping us support more bereaved parents in a wider geographical area.”*



In March, George Tyson climbed Mount Snowden with close family and friends, raising **£3,164** to donate an Abi cooling cot, in memory of his daughter Rosie.

George said, *“It was full rain and wind the whole time, but we all made it and did it for our girl.”*

Stephanie Fretter, Bereavement Midwife from the Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth said *“Having the Abi cold cot available enables families, at a really difficult time, to spend valuable time with their baby and not having to rush away, as they know their baby is being cared for in a purpose made cot”.*



April

31 runners took part in the **London Landmarks Half Marathon** on Sunday 2nd April led by our amazing Vice President, Cheryl Baker.



Thank you to Alyssa Ely-Cook for running the mascot dash as Abigail Bear and coming third. Abigail Bear joined the charity cheer station on the Embankment to support all our runners as they headed to the finish line.



Left picture: Miky Zanirato. Middle picture: Katherine Harrington, Tom Gower, Ben Perrin, Nicola Everett, Dave Kennedy, Sam Fawcett & Lauren Porter. Right picture: Phil Nash.

Team Abigail's raised a whopping **£26,806**. Thank you to **TMC3** for sponsoring the post-race reception drinks and to our 2023 running top sponsors.

We had 4 ballot-place runners in the **London Marathon** this year. Well done to Fuat, Joe, Alice & Dan, and our ambassador Anthony who ran the virtual marathon, collectively they raised **£8,888!**





Three teams took part in the 5K Inflatable Challenge at Brands Hatch. The teams raised **£2,015**. This is a fantastic day out - perfect for team building or just a fun event to do with family and friends.

6 riders took part in the RideLondon-Essex 100 miles. This was the first year we had entered this event and would like to say thank you to **LMS Security Consultants** and **GPM** for sponsoring the teams' cycling jerseys.

Well done to Anthony, Rob, Andy, Robert, Richard & Marcus for raising **£6,834**. Due to the success of the event, next year we have 13 Abigail's riders.

Sponsored by



Abigail's Angels, our charity netball team was set up by supporter Sarah Ridout.

Captain Fay Whybrow, who was awarded Player of the Season said, *"I love playing every week and don't care if we don't win. It's about coming together away from the stresses of the world."*

June

We held our very first baby loss conference on 12th June, kindly hosted at the London offices of **Fieldfisher**. Thank you to **The Bond Group** for sponsoring the event which was attended by 100 healthcare professionals.

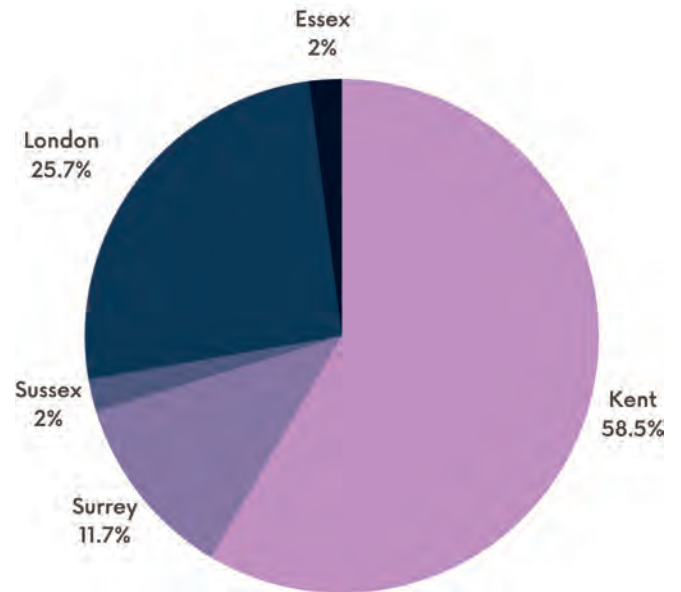


The conference **'Learning from the National Health Service Maternity Reviews'** was hosted by **Rob Smith** and speakers included keynote speaker Dr Bill Kirkup, Professor Ranjit Akolekar, Kate Harris & Sandra Igwe from The Motherhood Group. Parent speakers Sarah Conroy & Helen Gittos shared their personal experiences.



Abigail's Specialist Baby Loss Counselling Programme

Since our counselling programme was established in 2019, we have delivered over 2,000 hours of counselling to over 300 families and grown our counselling team to 3 qualified professionals. Our geographical reach is Kent, London, Essex, Surrey and Sussex.



kentmentalwellbeingawards.org.uk

CHAMPION 2023

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"If it wasn't for Abigail's for us, I think I would have been in a very dark place, for a very long time, they've continued to be a support, nearly 6 years on for me, I wish that Abigail's could be everywhere, because the support has been paramount in our journey." Bereaved parent

Our counselling programme wouldn't be possible without the support of these Trusts.

The National Lottery Community Fund, The Brian Mitchell Charitable Trust, The Whitehead Monckton Charitable Foundation, Colyer Fergusson Trust, Kent Community Foundation, The Postcode Lottery, The Mount Trust, Linda Hogan Community Fund and Henry Smith Trust.

Thank you on behalf of all the families we support.

In 2023 we proudly delivered 46 Abi cooling cots

East Surrey Hospital, in memory of Lottie, 7 August 2021

Royal Berkshire Hospital, in memory of Rose, 27 February 2022

Royal Stoke Uni Hospital, in memory of Lottie, 7 August 2021

Queen Elizabeth Hospital, in memory of Minnie, 26 March 2021

James Cook University Hospital, in memory of Delilah

Medway Maritime Hospital, donated by East Kent Freemasons

Bolton Royal Hospital, in memory of Austin, born 11 November 2022

Chesterfield Royal Hospital, in memory of George, 3 March 2022

Bradford Women's Unit, in memory of George, 3 March 2022

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, in memory of Mia

Barnet Hospital, in memory of midwife Shelley Fitzsimons

Great Western Hospital, in memory of Cruz, 3 January 2022

The Royal London Hospital, in memory of Cruz, 3 January 2022

Tunbridge Wells Hospital, donated by Maidstone Lions

Royal Derby Hospital, in memory of George, 12 November 2021

King's Mill Hospital, in memory of Acklie, 27 September 2022

Colchester General Hospital, in memory of Willow, 4 January 2023

Ipswich Hospital, in memory of Willow, 4 January 2023

Airedale General Hospital, in West Yorkshire

North Manchester General, in memory of Harrison, 19 January 2023

Darent Valley Hospital, in memory of Oliver, 31 January 2018

Queen Alexandra Hospital, in memory of Rosie, 11 November 2022

Croydon University Hospital, in memory of Evie, 16 April 2022

Queen's Hospital, in memory of Sophie, 19 October 2022

Royal Derby Hospital, in memory of Cruz, 3 January 2022

St Mary's Maternity Unit, in memory of George, 30 April 2023

Ormskirk and District General Hospital, in Lancashire

Princess Royal University Hospital, in memory of Stephen

Colchester Hospital, in memory of Ellie-May, 10 April 2005

Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, in memory of Aiden, 3 September 2022

Shooting Star Children's Hospice, in memory of Stella, 7 December 2022

Royal Oldham Hospital, in memory of Jack, 24 May 2022

Homerton Healthcare Trust, in memory of Lacey, 28 August 2009

St Helier Hospital, in memory of Ariyah, 19 April 2023

Epsom Hospital, in memory of Ariyah, 19 April 2023

James Cook University Hospital in memory of Hattie, 16 May 2023

Princess Anne Hospital, in memory of George, 30 April 2023

Croydon University Hospital, in memory of Noah

The Royal Lancaster Infirmary, in memory of Terry Junior, 17 Marcy 2023

Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, in memory of Harry, 25 June 2022

West Cumberland Hospital, in memory of Alice, 21 June 2023

Northwick Park Hospital, in memory of River, 6 April 2023

Warwick Hospital, in memory of Rose

Queen Elizabeth Hospital, in memory of Noah

Derriford Hospital, in memory of Brian Knight

Leicester Royal Infirmary, in memory of Jasmine, 28 April 2022

Abigail's Angels Bereavement Training Programme

Since starting Abigail's Angels Bereavement Training in 2020 we have provided training to well over 4,000 professionals. This year we delivered 58 Abigail's Footsteps funded training sessions. We funded training for 1630 people, with an average attendance of 28 people per session. Our online training programme continues to be popular, we delivered 27 online sessions to 648 people.



Paula Abramson from Bereavement Training International said, "We have now completed our third year of Abigail's Footsteps funded training and we believe that together we have created a very successful training programme, appealing to a wide range of healthcare professionals across the UK."

'Say My Baby's Name' Training Roadshow

176 healthcare professionals attended our training roadshow between July-October visiting Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester, and Kent, ending in London during Baby Loss Awareness Week.

"I just wanted to pass my heartfelt gratitude and thanks for giving us the opportunity to have this valuable workshop free of charge. Paula was amazing yesterday as always. We had 37 attendees from different clinical backgrounds. From nurses, and midwives to counsellors, obstetricians and researchers. It was a fantastic day and all of us learned a great deal about baby loss and bereavement." said Zahra Famili, Specialist Bereavement Midwife, St Thomas' Hospital.





Becky & Faye joined the students of Gravesend Grammar Boys School on their annual sponsored walk, the whole school walked 13.1 miles and raised over **£1,000** towards the Bereavement Garden at Medway Maritime Hospital.

Abigail's

Annual Charity Golf Day 2023

22 Teams took part in our Annual Charity Golf Day at the prestigious Rochester and Cobham Park Golf Club course, raising an incredible **£13,125**. Special thanks to Ambassador Adam Smith, Vice President Craig Chalmers and sports company Ping for kindly donating prizes for the raffle and auction.



Images on the day by Rachel Luckhurst Photography



Thank you to Natalie Warren from Travel Counsellors, Allen Dadswell Construction Consultants and All About Technology for sponsoring the day.



The golf day is one of our most successful events. Well done to this year's winners Mark, John, Peter and Jason from St James's Place.

July

We were included in the customer vote for a **Tesco Community Grant (Stronger Starts)** in our local stores. We were delighted to be awarded first place and receive **£1,320** which funded 4 families through bereavement counselling. Thank you to all the supporters who voted.



This year 10 fundraisers have taken to the skies to jump out of a plane. Simon, Aimee, Ceri, Ken, Ethan, Brian, Graham, Mike, Lee & Joanne were all very brave to take on a skydive challenge, raising **£10,302** as a team. .

August

September

This year we were pleased to double our team in the **Great North Run**. 11 runners took part in this event cheered on by Abigail the Bear, who enjoyed seeing the sights of Newcastle with Ambassador April Ward. Collectively they raised **£6,112**.



October



Doubling our runners in the Royal Parks Half Marathon this year, we cheered on 10 fundraisers, who raised **£6,188** as a team.

During **Baby Loss Awareness Week**, we held our annual Wave of Light service at Rochester Cathedral. We also launched our first series of podcasts. Thank you to everyone who took part and a special mention to Nicola Everett for hosting the series.



To listen to the podcasts, scan our unique QR Code:



Abigail's Athletic football team played their first match against Forever Finley winning 8-7. Thank you to Danny King from 3K Electrical for kindly sponsoring the kits.

Annual Gala

Thank you to everyone who came to **Abigail's Annual Gala** on 25th November at the beautiful **Rochester Corn Exchange**. We raised a fantastic **£13,139** which will be going towards **Abigail's Garden** at Medway Maritime Hospital.



Nicola Everett – Ambassador, MC.



Adam Smith – Ambassador, Auctioneer.



John Hopkins greeted guests dressed as Abigail Bear.



Thank you to our sponsors, because without them the





The night wouldn't have been possible without; singer Katie May, Ground Zero AV, Balloon House, JH Sound & Events, Forks and Corks, Spectrum Signs, Frame-Us Memorabilia, RTS Vehicle Graphics, Marsh Graphic Design, PAPCOM Print Specialists, All About Technology, Jascom Electrical Suppliers, Bowden PR, Bereavement Training International, M4 Facilities Management, and all the generous individuals and companies that donated raffle and auction prizes, and Dale Hill Hotel & Golf Club for our lucky squares star prize!

A special mention to our volunteers; Naomi, Sarah, Nadene, Colette, Michelle & Emma.



Thank you to Steve James Photography for the images which perfectly captured the fun of the evening.



evening wouldn't have been such a huge success.



Ambassadors

We were delighted to welcome April Ward, Adam Smith, Poppy Howard, Jack Jeffery & Keeley Emmett as Ambassadors for the work they've achieved.



April has been involved with the charity from the very beginning. Her support to champion the work we do, makes April a huge asset. We're delighted April agreed to be an Ambassador..

Jack has been a fantastic supporter. This year we were blown away by his efforts to raise awareness of Abigail's during Baby Loss Awareness Week, by splashing our logo across billboards up and down the country.



Adam is always happy to get involved and makes every effort to raise awareness for the charity. He generously gives his time as an expert auctioneer at our annual Golf Days and Galas.

Poppy has raised much-needed awareness of the charity amongst the younger generation of fundraisers, taking part in the 5k inflatable challenge and nominating us for her school walk.



Cheryl Baker, Keeley Emmett & Matthew Hoe

Keeley nominated Abigail's Footsteps for charity of the year with her employer Taylor Rose, and we were delighted to be awarded **£42,320.31**. Cheryl Baker visited the Taylor Rose offices to say thank you for this generous donation that will help many families.



Thank you to everyone who has supported Abigail's Footsteps, we hope to have your continued support to make a difference together.

"As a small team, we feel we have achieved so much this year. We have increased our training and counselling programme, reaching more beneficiaries in our community than ever before and our first conference was a huge success. We are looking forward to supporting more families in 2024, with many great projects and new challenges on the horizon."

Faye, Becky & Kate, Abigail's office team.



Faye Hill
Head of Operations
& Events



Becky Hopkins
Fundraising & Events
Manager



Kate Harrison
Digital Marketing
Manager

There are many people we would like to thank for their support, hard work and dedication.

Our patron, vice presidents and trustees for giving their time, guidance and support.

Our fundraisers, supporters and volunteers for never failing to amaze and humble us with their extraordinary determination, devotion and commitment.

Finally, to our sponsors and donors, for their continued goodwill, generosity of spirit, time and resources. Our sincerest gratitude to all of you for everything you do to make what we do possible.

Abigail's

Providing support for bereaved families

www.abigailsfootsteps.co.uk