A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair and skin, wearing a white shirt, holding a newborn baby. The baby is sleeping with its mouth slightly open. The background is softly blurred, showing other people in a hospital or clinic setting. The image is partially overlaid by a large magenta and blue graphic shape at the bottom.

Impact report 2023/24

Tommy's

The pregnancy and baby charity

About us

We're the leading UK charity stopping the heartbreak and devastation of baby loss and making pregnancy and birth safe – for everyone.

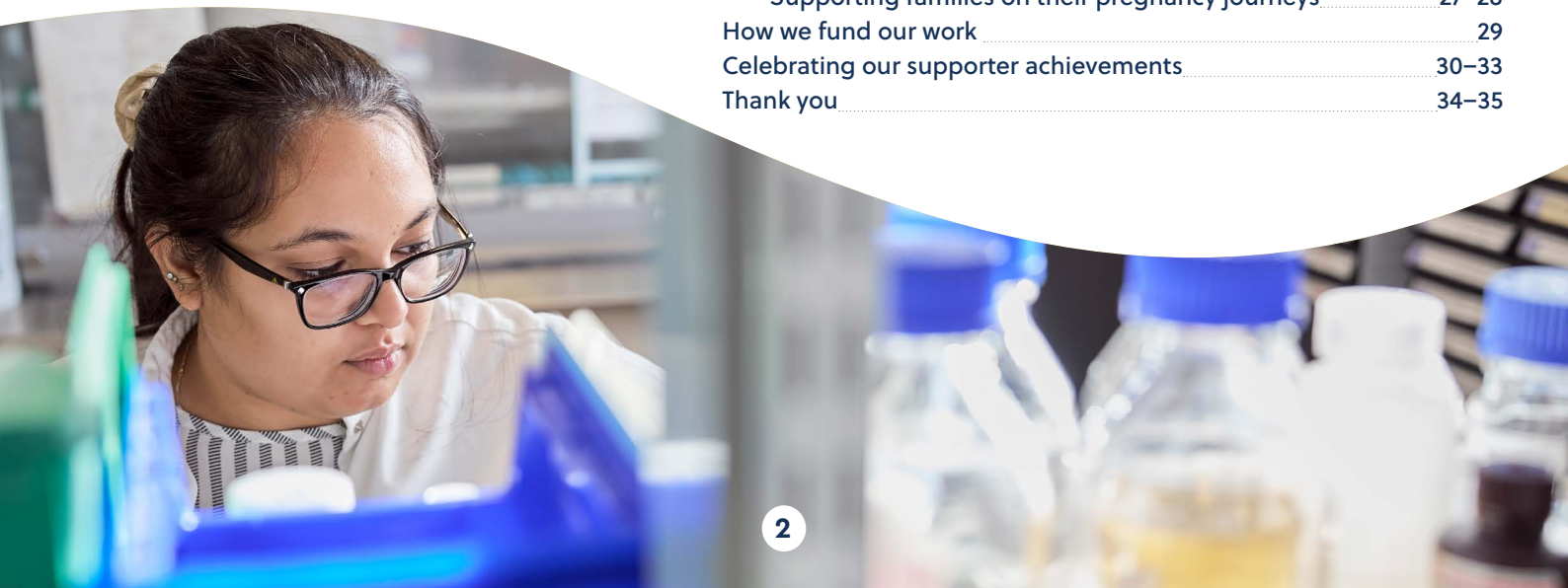
We do this in a number of ways. We fund world-leading research to grow the evidence and find new tests and treatments to reduce miscarriage, stillbirth and premature birth. We also provide free evidence-based information to support people throughout their pregnancy journeys, including those facing complications or baby loss, and we mobilise a powerful community to raise awareness and drive change.

We couldn't do this without supporters like you. Each page of this impact report is testament to every pound raised, message shared and campaign signed.

Thank you for helping us save babies' lives.

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Our goals

The work we do reflects our strategic goals, the 4 pillars that guide us in making the greatest impact.

Grow evidence: because baby loss and pregnancy complications aren't 'just one of those things'



I'm proud of the work we've been doing this year to grow the evidence needed to reduce the number of babies who are stillborn. Building our understanding of how and why this can happen is crucial to developing new tests and treatments, which we're able to offer families in our research clinics and save more babies' lives.



Professor Alex Heazell,
Director of Tommy's Maternal and Fetal Health Research Centre

- Understanding early-onset pre-eclampsia (page 9)
- Launching our new Centre for Preterm Birth Research (page 10)
- Meet our early career researchers (page 13)

Improve care: because everyone should be provided with the best care and support



Our team has been working hard to gather learning from the implementation of the Tommy's Pathway across participating early adopter hospitals. The upcoming PARTNER trial will enable us to investigate the impact of the tool on care and support across a wide range of hospitals in England, and its potential to improve maternity care for everyone.



Professor Basky Thilaganathan,
Director of Tommy's National Centre for Maternity Improvement

- Working with healthcare professionals (page 15)
- The MifeMiso trial (page 17)
- Transforming workplaces (page 18)

Tackle inequities: because everyone deserves the same opportunities for a healthy pregnancy and birth



It's very important that the research we do makes a difference to real people in communities throughout the UK, and people with lived experience will influence what we're doing at the highest level. Through our varied programme of research, we can better understand why different groups experience worse pregnancy outcomes, and work together to improve this.



Professor Catherine Williamson,
Director of Tommy's National Centre for Preterm Birth Research

- Understanding the genetics of premature birth (page 20)
- Creating partnerships to provide tailored support to Black women and birthing people (page 21)
- Our Joint Policy Unit (page 23)

Mobilise for change: because together, we will make pregnancy safer and save babies' lives



Our pilot of the Graded Model of Care has shown that we can make a difference to outcomes and experiences for women and birthing people experiencing miscarriage. The next step is using these findings to transform care at a national level, and the passionate Tommy's community plays a vital part in helping us have the biggest impact possible for families affected by miscarriage.



Professor Arri Coomarasamy,
Director of Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research

- The Graded Model of Care (page 25)
- Supporting families on their pregnancy journeys (page 27)
- Supporter achievements calendar (page 30)



A year of saving babies' lives



Over
12 million people
accessed pregnancy information and baby loss support

16,525 members
of our baby loss support groups

189 messages
of hope shared by the community to those finding Mother's Day difficult

44,374 people
took part in a fundraising activity for Tommy's

99 businesses
committed to supporting their employees as members of our Pregnancy and Parenting at Work training programme



More than
440,000 engagements
with our Baby Loss Awareness Week activity



More than
1,200 people
took part in a clinical trial

More than
5,375 families
cared for in our clinics

Support provided
8,814 times
by Tommy's Midwives through our helplines and email service

2,247 Team Tommy's runners
in the London Landmarks Half Marathon



More than
45 research papers
published



£11.6 million raised

Welcome from our Chair and Chief Executive



Joe Chambers
Tommy's Chair



Kath Abrahams
Tommy's Chief Executive

Half of all adults in the UK have either experienced baby loss themselves or know someone who has. Tommy's is here to change that, and we hope this report highlights some of the significant progress we made last year.

We know that the impact we're making is only possible thanks to you, our wonderful supporters, fundraisers and partners. We're so grateful that you choose to support Tommy's and work alongside us so that we can make these breakthroughs, drive change and save babies' lives.

We saw a big step forward in our award-winning Miscarriage Matters campaign, with the independent Pregnancy Loss Review specifically referencing the Tommy's Graded Model of Care approach in its recommendations to the Government.

In March we launched the Tommy's National Centre for Preterm Birth Research, a milestone moment in our mission to reduce the number of babies born too soon. Tommy's began life when Dr Ian Fergusson and Dr Anthony Kenney, obstetricians at St Thomas' Hospital, started a campaign with patient Lucy Nelson to fund more research into premature birth. A little over 30 years later, we were thrilled to welcome our founders to the launch event for this new world-leading research hub that will give a new generation a better start in life.

We hope you enjoy reading about our new centre and other important developments in the report.

Despite the progress we're making, we're very conscious of the continued challenging landscape surrounding maternity care in the UK. Through our Joint Policy Unit, a collaboration with Sands, we've continued to hold the Government to account as we know the UK is still not on track to meet targets around reducing rates of stillbirth, neonatal death and premature birth. We remain particularly concerned about inequities in complications and loss for some communities. Addressing these disparities is central to our work, from research and policy through to information and support.

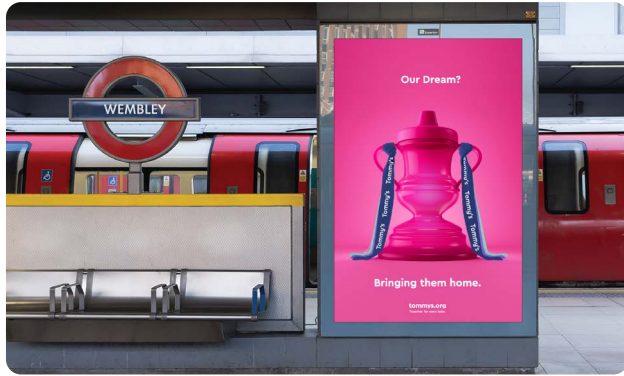
While our policy efforts aim to drive change on a national level, we have also begun to do more to build alliances with healthcare professionals and other partners, working collaboratively with those providing front-line services to improve care and make pregnancy and birth safer for communities most at risk.

There's still so much more for us to do but we know we can succeed with you alongside us. Thank you for your continued support on our journey to stop the heartbreak and devastation of baby loss and make pregnancy and birth safe – for everyone. The impact we can have together is great.

Moments that mattered

May 2023

Let's Bring Them Home campaign launched at the 2023 Women's FA Cup Final, uniting football fans under one goal.



July 2023

Minister for Women Maria Caulfield (2022-2024), Olivia Blake MP and Tommy's Ambassador Myleene Klass visit the Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research in Birmingham to learn more about the Graded Model of Care pilot and meet families from the Tommy's clinic.

" I truly believe if it wasn't for Tommy's, baby William wouldn't be here today.

Laura, who joined the visit with her partner Aaron and son William



The independent Pregnancy Loss Review was published with 73 recommendations made to Government to improve the experiences and care of those who lose a baby before 24 weeks. The Government responds in support of our Graded Model of Care. See page 25.

Leading premature birth specialist Professor Andrew Shennan OBE appointed as Tommy's Chair of Maternal and Fetal Health at King's College London, building on the achievements of outgoing Chair Professor Lucilla Poston CBE.



" We created this position to drive forward research into pregnancy complications and premature birth, and ultimately stop the devastation of baby loss. We're delighted that Professor Shennan has agreed to take up the role and are immensely thankful to Professor Poston for her phenomenal contribution over almost 3 decades.

Kath Abrahams, Chief Executive of Tommy's

November 2023

Our community comes together for Baby Loss Awareness Week, culminating in the Wave of Light.



October 2023

Rainbow Baby Day celebrates babies born after loss.



NICE guidelines for the management of missed miscarriage updated to reflect research findings from our National Centre for Miscarriage Research. See page 17.



August 2023

December 2023

We respond to MBRRACE-UK's new report saying care gaps may have cost babies' lives.

February 2024

The House of Lords Preterm Birth Committee opens its inquiry into the prevention and consequences of premature birth. Our Chief Executive, Kath Abrahams, is invited to give evidence and outline some of the core challenges.



The Government launches the baby loss certificate scheme, allowing parents who lost a baby before 24 weeks to apply for recognition of their loss.

“ I ordered the certificates of life for my twins as soon as I could, and decided to name them Arlo and Orla which gave me great comfort.

Katie, who used the scheme

NHS England announces its new pregnancy and baby loss people policy for NHS Trusts to adopt, allowing up to 10 days of paid leave for employees.

As part of our Mother's Day campaign, We See A Mum, a YouGov poll for Tommy's reveals that 59% of mums didn't share their journey to becoming a parent with their own mum. Our campaign encourages mums to share their story, whatever challenges they face.

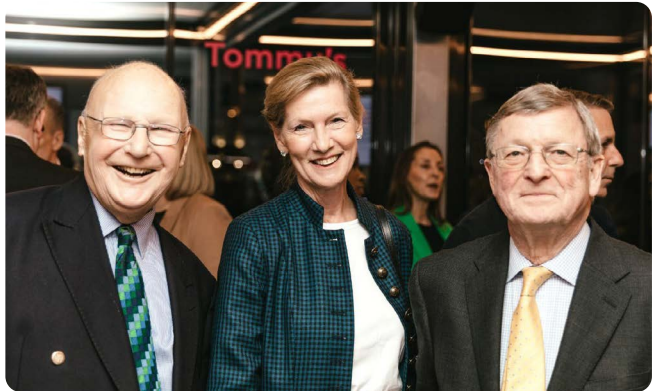
59%
of mums

didn't share their own journey to becoming a parent with their own mum.

*YouGov poll, 2190 adults (663 female parents) January 2024



Our new National Centre for Preterm Birth Research is launched, bringing together world-leading experts to reduce the number of babies born too soon. See page 10.



Tommy's founders Dr Ian Fergusson, the Hon Mrs Lucy Nelson and Dr Anthony Kenney at the launch event for our National Centre for Preterm Birth Research.

March 2024



Chapter 1

Growing evidence

Together, we can improve our understanding of early-onset pre-eclampsia

When pre-eclampsia develops early in pregnancy, there is a high chance it will happen again. Our scientists in Manchester have been looking at cells in the lining of the womb to find out why.

What is early-onset pre-eclampsia?

Pre-eclampsia is a condition that causes high blood pressure in pregnancy. Early-onset pre-eclampsia is where this develops before 34 weeks and can be particularly dangerous for both mum and baby, increasing the risk of stillbirth. There's also a high chance that early-onset pre-eclampsia will happen again in future pregnancies.

We don't fully understand how pre-eclampsia develops, but we know that it's linked to problems with the placenta. For the placenta to develop properly, the embryo needs to correctly implant itself in the lining of the womb. But before this can happen, the womb lining must change to prepare for pregnancy. If this doesn't happen correctly, it can affect the way the placenta forms, leading to conditions like pre-eclampsia.

What have we been doing?

Over the last 3 years, Dr Olivia Moran – an obstetrics & gynaecology doctor and PhD student at Tommy's Maternal and Fetal Health Research Centre in Manchester – has been looking at blood samples and womb cells from people who had early-onset pre-eclampsia in a previous pregnancy. By studying these samples, Olivia noticed that there were differences in the immune cells present in the lining of the womb during early pregnancy, compared to those from a healthy pregnancy. She also showed that these differences can continue between pregnancies, making pre-eclampsia more likely.



We've made huge strides in understanding how the development of the placenta early on in pregnancy can be affected by the mother's immune system and how this can lead to a higher risk of pre-eclampsia. This evidence means we can start to develop treatments that could prevent it, and in the future, we hope to be able to treat high-risk women and birthing people before pregnancy to reduce their chances of developing pre-eclampsia.

Dr Olivia Moran, PhD student at Tommy's Maternal and Fetal Health Research Centre

Tommy's would like to acknowledge the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation's kind support of this project.

Running our Maternal and Fetal Health Research Centre is made possible thanks to our amazing supporters – like our 186 Team Tommy's runners who raised a staggering £494,548 in the London Marathon, which could fund the centre for nearly an entire year!

"At 26 weeks pregnant I started to feel very unwell. I was diagnosed with pre-eclampsia, and I was admitted to hospital so they could bring it under control. But I kept getting worse, and they couldn't stabilise me. My blood pressure hit 250/140 and we were told my baby would have to be delivered in order to save my life. Jon and I were terrified."

Tara and Jon's son Ethan was born weighing just 1lb 12oz and had to stay in hospital for 89 days.



Together, we can give a new generation a better start in life

Launching our National Centre for Preterm Birth Research

Premature birth, where a baby is born before 37 weeks, can be incredibly distressing for families. It can create lifelong challenges and health problems and is the leading cause of death in children under the age of 5.

Across the UK, **1 in 13 babies are born prematurely** – that's **nearly 8%** of all live births and around 6 babies every hour. This is higher than the average across Europe and critically, the UK is not on track to meet Government targets of reducing premature births to 6% by 2025.

This is simply unacceptable and now is the time to act. That's why we were so proud to open our new National Centre for Preterm Birth Research in March 2024. The centre brings together leading researchers in premature birth from 5 universities – Imperial College London; University College London; King's College London; Queen Mary University of London; and the University of Leeds.

They're working collaboratively towards a better understanding of the causes of premature birth, creating tools to predict and prevent them, and bringing new treatments out of the labs sooner to make a difference to the lives of families across the UK.

The percentage of premature births has increased from **7.5% in 2021 to 7.9% in 2022**



To mark the opening of the centre, we were joined by more than 140 supporters including our founders, Tommy's Ambassadors and members of the Patient and Parent Involvement group whose own experiences shaped the development of the centre's research programme.

Broadcaster Leah Boleto, who has lived experience of premature birth herself, hosted a panel discussion with Professor Catherine Williamson, Professor Andrew Shennan, and supporters Ben and Sarah Mee, whose daughter Olive was born at just 26 weeks.



I think it's important that families are offered explanations because giving birth prematurely is frightening and there's so much to contend with. Tommy's exciting new research centre is the place that will investigate and find out what's happening and why these babies are arriving so much earlier than they should be.

Leah Boleto, broadcaster

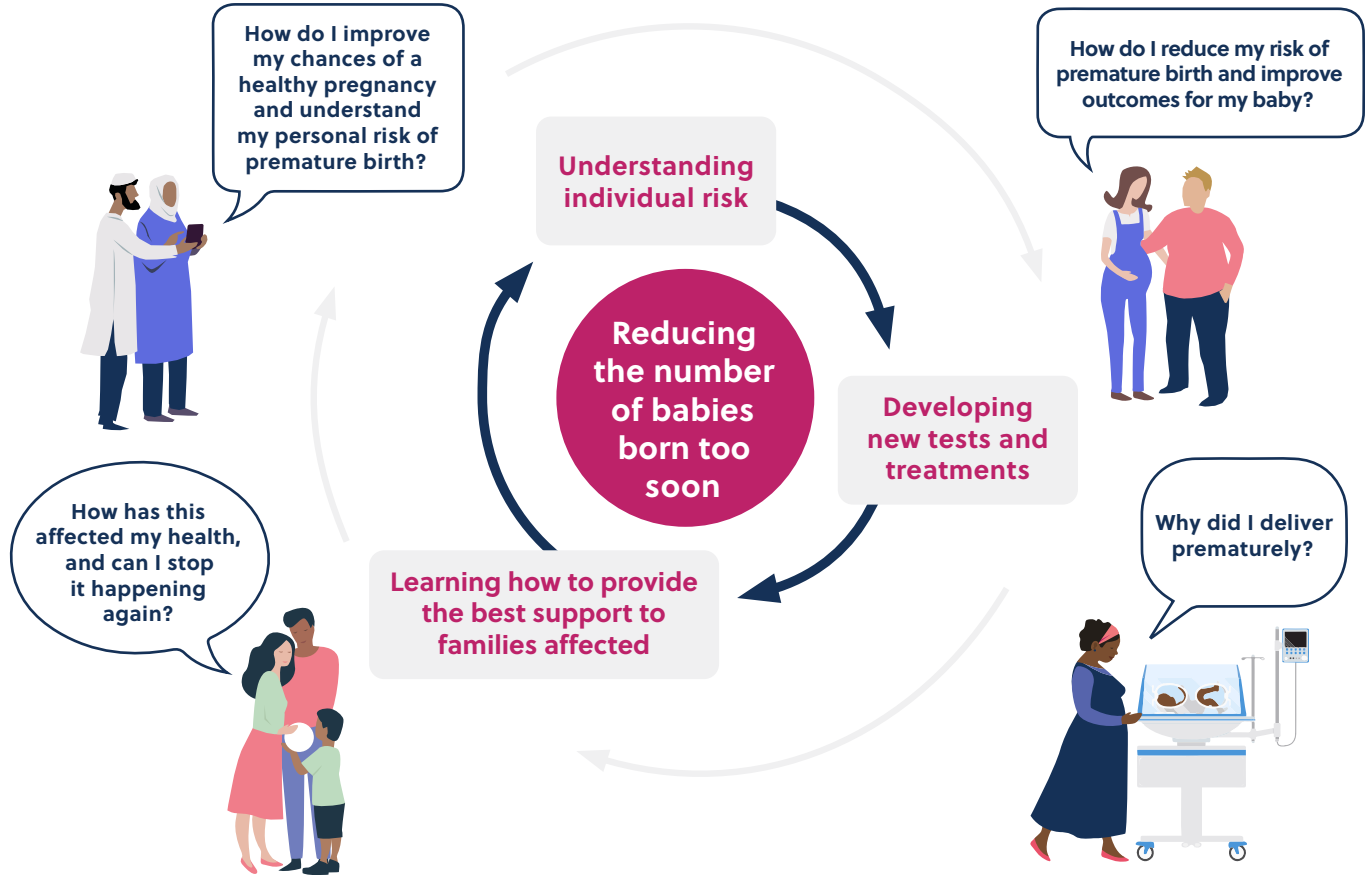


I will always be so grateful to Professor Shennan and his amazing team who have looked after me so well in my pregnancies over the last 5 years.

Katie Bonful, Tommy's Ambassador

Tommy's Ambassador Katie Bonful with Professor Shennan, who supported her through 3 healthy pregnancies after she lost her first 2 baby boys at 17 weeks.

How will the centre make change?



What's next for the centre?

The centre is working on more than 20 research projects, investigating issues including:

- The causes of cervical shortening, which increases the risk of premature birth.
- Understanding the mechanisms that cause labour to start, and how these might be going wrong in premature birth.
- Improving how parents are involved in decision-making during premature birth and in the care of babies who are born extremely early.



Our new centre is also working to increase our understanding of how best to support women and birthing people who have a transabdominal cerclage, a stitch around the neck of the womb which reduces the chances of premature birth. This work is only possible thanks to our supporters – including the 612 people who signed up for Tea for Tommy's, raising a fantastic £19,741 across 45 different events, which could go towards this vital work.

Together, we can shape research that answers real-life questions



We have to hear what is important to people with lived experience so we can design and deliver research that will improve their experiences.

Professor Catherine Williamson

To make things better for families who experience premature birth, we must understand things from their perspective. We wanted to make sure the voices of people affected by premature birth were reflected through the process of choosing our new research centre, guiding our decisions and helping to make the centre the best it can be. That's why we established our PPI (Patient and Public Involvement) group.

Meet Michelle and Kay from our PPI group

Michelle's daughter, Audrey, was born at 26 weeks after she experienced pre-eclampsia and HELLP syndrome, a condition that affects some women and birthing people in pregnancy. "It was totally unexpected and all happened very quickly" says Michelle, and it resulted in Audrey spending 131 days in hospital. She is now a happy and healthy almost 5-year-old. Michelle feels strongly that the voices and stories of those who have been through premature birth are essential in making sure that we see the real families behind the statistics.



I'd love to see the centre making breakthroughs that enable fewer babies to be born early and to find better ways to identify and support those who may be at risk of premature birth.

Michelle

Kay told us she felt very privileged to be part of the PPI group. "I was a premature baby nearly 40 years ago and in the last few years, I have experienced 2 premature births with my son (born at 33 weeks) and daughter (born at 34 weeks)." Kay believes patient involvement should be key in research: "You don't truly understand the situation unless you have walked in the shoes of that person. I hope my involvement can have a positive impact for families in the future."

Meet Zing, patient advocate



My role is to be that person in the room representing the interests of patients. To do this, I'll be bringing in my own experiences – not just as someone who has been through premature birth, but also from my own perspectives as a Black, Afro-Caribbean woman from a low socioeconomic background. Through this, I'll be amplifying patient voices to support the research, making sure it's more robust, representative, effective – and just better!



I was a patient at a Tommy's clinic when I had my daughter 13 years ago and now, here I am full circle, working with the same people in this new research centre. The impact is profound – I am one of those people who can stand up and say I'm someone who not only has benefited from Tommy's work around premature birth, but actually it's changed the trajectory of my life.

Nzinga Gardner, patient advocate at the National Centre for Preterm Birth Research



Hannah, Michelle, Caroline and Kay, members of our patient involvement group

Together, we can nurture the next generation of researchers to stop the devastation of baby loss

At Tommy's, our research is funded by donations from our wonderful supporters and donors. We simply couldn't achieve our aims without the support of our community.

We know that for every £1 spent on maternity care in the NHS, only 1p is spent on pregnancy research, so your support has been more vital than ever to fund the research needed to drive new discoveries and improvements in care to help make pregnancy safe for everyone.

One of the most important investments in this area is funding those earlier in their careers, and we currently support 28 PhD students, research midwives and scientists across our 4 centres.

We funded 28 early career researchers in 23/24.
By research centre:



This year we received £512,256 in funding towards our early career researchers from the UK Government's Medical Research Charity Support Fund (UKRI/MRC). This transformative grant funded more than 15 of our early career researchers, supporting their work and continued development into the leaders of tomorrow in pregnancy research.

Meet some of our early career researchers



Chloe is a postdoctoral researcher at our Maternal and Fetal Health Research Centre in Manchester, focusing on chronic histiocytic intervillitis (CHI), a rare condition of the placenta which causes miscarriage or stillbirth and has a devastating impact on families.



My research looks at particular treatments to reduce the severity of CHI and stop it coming back in later pregnancies. Receiving funding has meant I've been able to see the first-hand impact of my work through introducing new treatments for families affected by CHI at the Tommy's Rainbow Clinic. Knowing I'm making a difference to parents who have lost babies is incredibly rewarding.



Moonsun is a PhD student at our National Centre for Preterm Birth Research, based at Queen Mary University of London. Her research focuses on using data analysis to understand which risk factors for premature birth need to be monitored most closely in pregnancy, and whether these should trigger earlier intervention to improve outcomes for mums and babies.



We know that thousands of babies are born early every year, and this can have long-lasting impacts on both physical and mental health. Data-driven research like mine can help inform health policies, allowing policy makers to make the best decisions to inform clinical practice and new research funding.



Chapter 2

Improving care

Together, we can support those on the front-line

This year, we've been looking at more ways to share our tools, information and tailored support with midwives and other healthcare professionals to help them improve care for those at highest risk of pregnancy loss and complications.

We did this with exhibition stands, through speaker slots and poster presentations and by promoting our free resources. In doing so, we connected directly with healthcare professionals to share how we can work together to make pregnancy and birth safer for the women and birthing people they look after. Our Tommy's Midwives all work in the NHS themselves and understand the pressures services are under.



8

key healthcare conferences attended



130%

increase in sign-ups to our dedicated healthcare professional newsletter



5,000

contact cards for our Black and Black Mixed-Heritage helpline shared

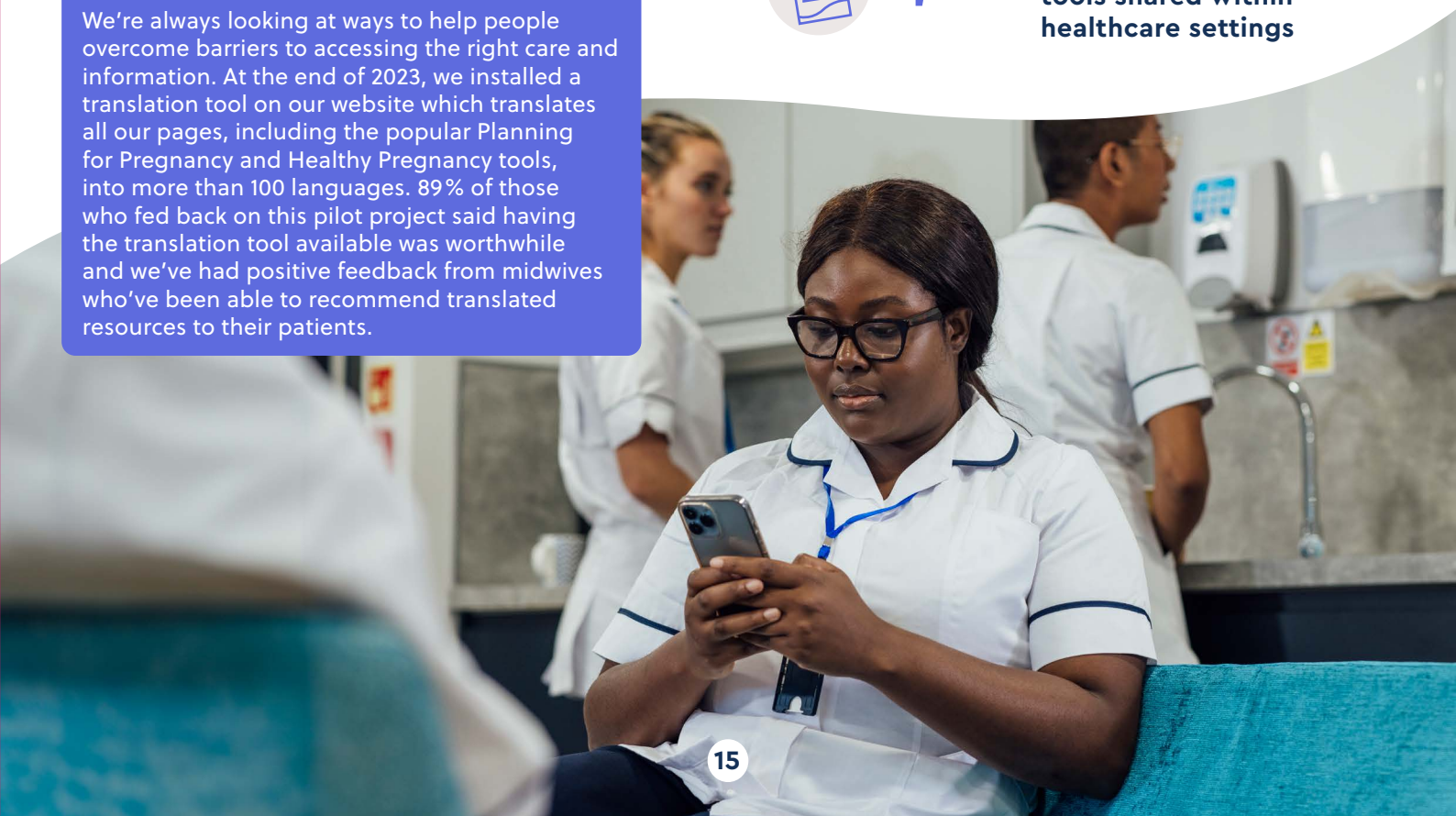


1,000

posters detailing safety messages and support tools shared within healthcare settings

Making our information more accessible

We're always looking at ways to help people overcome barriers to accessing the right care and information. At the end of 2023, we installed a translation tool on our website which translates all our pages, including the popular Planning for Pregnancy and Healthy Pregnancy tools, into more than 100 languages. 89% of those who fed back on this pilot project said having the translation tool available was worthwhile and we've had positive feedback from midwives who've been able to recommend translated resources to their patients.



Continuing to develop the Tommy's Pathway Clinical Decision Support Tool



The work we're doing on the Tommy's Pathway is crucial because of the stark inequity in the UK, with stillbirth and premature birth rates varying widely across the NHS by up to 20%. We offer the potential for each woman and birthing person to be given the right care at the right time, no matter where they give birth.

Professor Jane Sandall

The Tommy's Pathway is a clinical decision support tool that uses information gathered routinely during maternity care to assess each person's chance of premature birth or of developing problems with the placenta, which can show as pre-eclampsia and/or prevent the baby from growing, and offers care recommendations in line with national clinical guidelines accordingly.

Understanding the chance of these problems developing earlier in pregnancy supports healthcare providers to offer care in line with recommended national clinical guidelines to help lessen the chance of these problems occurring.

Women and birthing people can also use the tool to access their care recommendations directly as well as an information hub linking to trusted sources of evidence-based information and guidance, with the aim of supporting them to make informed decisions about their care.

Thank you to all the donors who funded this work.



Who is using the Tommy's Pathway

The Tommy's Pathway has been successfully implemented across 3 early adopter NHS hospitals in England since 2021. The team at Tommy's National Centre for Maternity Improvement have refined the implementation procedure and the tool itself based on learnings from evaluation of early adopter implementation. This will inform wider implementation of the Tommy's Pathway in the forthcoming PARTNER trial, which will take place across 26 NHS hospitals in England.

Hannah Wilson, Project Midwife for Digital Development and Implementation, has been working at the Tommy's National Centre for Maternity Improvement since 2020. She works with pregnant women and birthing people, clinical teams and digital developers to optimise the development and implementation of the Tommy's Pathway.



I see the Tommy's Pathway as a route to ensure that all pregnant women, birthing people and healthcare professionals have access to the best available and relevant evidence, because it's in the palm of their hand. I'd like to see the Pathway recognised by healthcare professionals as the definitive and trusted tool for assessing each individual's needs during pregnancy and supporting them to offer the best available care. I'm looking forward to seeing the Pathway introduced to more maternity units as part of the PARTNER trial so we can learn how to continue to improve it for the benefit of more women and birthing people and the healthcare professionals who care for them.



Together, we can transform how miscarriage is managed

In August 2023, the NICE guidelines for the treatment of missed miscarriage were updated to reflect breakthrough findings from our MifeMiso research. NICE guidelines provide the latest evidence-based recommendations for health and care in England and Wales.

What was the MifeMiso trial?

After a missed or incomplete miscarriage, women and birthing people usually have the option of natural, medical, or surgical management. In some cases, medical management, where a drug called misoprostol is given, isn't completely effective and women may need further treatment, sometimes including surgery, to remove any remaining pregnancy tissue.

The MifeMiso trial, led by Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research and published in 2020, showed that taking two medications, misoprostol and mifepristone, was more effective for the medical management of miscarriage than taking misoprostol alone.

How will this improve care?

We wish nobody had to experience a missed miscarriage, but when it does happen, we want to make sure they receive the best care possible. The update to the NICE guidelines based on our MifeMiso research means we've been able to drive change across the UK – and we estimate 2,800 fewer women and birthing people each year will need surgery as a result.

To help people better understand the options available to them, we created an animation explaining the MifeMiso trial and a decision aid leaflet about miscarriage management. This is downloadable from our website. As well as working with experts to produce this information, we spoke to a focus group of women with lived experience to find out their questions and needs.

A missed miscarriage is where a baby dies in the womb without any symptoms of a miscarriage



7 translations available of the decision tool

43,600 leaflets sent to healthcare professionals at all 218 Early Pregnancy Assessment Units in mainland UK



I think taking part in the MifeMiso project was subconsciously very healing and I'm really glad I was able to contribute. Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

Focus group participant



Together, we can create more inclusive workplaces

Launched in 2021, our Pregnancy and Parenting at Work training programme helps workplaces support their employees through any pregnancy journey, from planning and parenting to complications and loss.

As well as providing training on what can be complex and sensitive situations, we also support organisations in enhancing HR policies around fertility, pregnancy and baby loss to create more inclusive workplaces.

In September 2023, we were pleased to be able to offer free access to the programme for businesses in England with fewer than 250 employees.

Within the first 6 months of launching our free programme for small businesses we had 79 new organisations signed up to participate and over 1,300 individuals had engaged in related activities. Every course taken, policy changed, and conversation had is a positive step towards changing attitudes around pregnancy complications and loss.



I learnt a lot from the training when it came to IVF and baby loss. I was unaware of the rights people have when it comes to work and leave after baby loss, and it also opened my eyes to how it may impact their lives and the struggle of returning to work. I would've felt uncomfortable approaching this subject previously, however now I feel confident should this be a matter I have to face in the future.

Ellena, Lifehouse Spa & Hotel



Free access for small businesses was supported by the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Fund, part of a partnership programme between the Department of Health & Social Care, NHS England and the UK Health Security Agency



Chapter 3

Tackling inequities

Research that reflects and benefits everyone

In England and Wales, the percentage of premature live births varies significantly depending on ethnicity.



We know that Black and Asian women and birthing people are disproportionately affected by premature birth and inequalities in pregnancy outcomes are stark. While this is a complex problem that requires many issues to be addressed – such as systemic racism, discrimination and cultural barriers in care settings – it’s also important to understand the role genetics plays in premature birth.

Several studies have looked at the genetics of premature birth in people of European (white) ancestry, but very few have looked at other ethnicities. In fact, 86% of the genetic data available globally comes from people of European ancestry.

To get a complete picture of premature birth, we need to collect genetic data from people of diverse ethnic backgrounds to help us understand whether there are any additional risk factors relating specifically to genetics. We can then develop better ways to prevent premature birth for those most at risk.

Tommy’s PhD student Alex Bracanovic is working in partnership with Genomics England to study DNA samples from UK women and birthing people, particularly those of African and Asian origin. This vital work will identify genes that are associated with pregnancy length and premature birth in this population, while also ensuring that genomic data is more representative of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.



Alex’s research into genomic information is made possible by the efforts of our incredible supporters, such as the 19 runners who took on the Brighton Marathon for us, raising an amazing £19,830 which could fund his work.

Together, we can provide tailored support when people need it most



I think it's really important that Tommy's have the Black and Black Mixed-Heritage helpline service for women like me. Just knowing that you can speak to someone who knows the issues we face, understands our situation and our concerns, is so beneficial.

Bola, caller to our specialist helpline

In 2022, we set up the Black and Black Mixed-Heritage helpline in partnership with Five X More to provide better support for these women and birthing people who are currently 4 times more likely to die or lose their baby during pregnancy or birth. Five X More, a dedicated Black grassroots organisation, are committed to highlighting and changing Black maternal health outcomes in the UK. As our partner for the helpline since its launch, they have provided invaluable insights and community engagement. Recognising the importance of this service, we're committed to funding it indefinitely.

In February 2024, we launched a partnership with Petals, the baby loss counselling charity, to provide additional, tailored support to Black and Black Mixed-Heritage women and birthing people who have experienced the heartbreak of baby loss. Through this partnership, we have been able to fast-track referrals from our Black and Black Mixed-Heritage helpline to Petals bereavement counselling, and referred 15 people between February and April 2024.



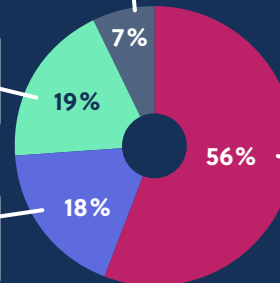
In October 2023, 233 people came together for our Walk for Hope around Battersea Park. Participants carried lanterns to signify those they had lost and together raised an incredible £45,340. This could help keep the Tommy's Midwives' helpline service running for 4 months, providing vital advice, reassurance and support to women and birthing people wherever they are on their pregnancy journey.

Ethnic origins of people referred to Petals counselling

Mixed - Black and White Caribbean

Black/Black British - Other

Black/Black British - Caribbean



Black/Black British - African

Data source: Petals



I want to express my deepest gratitude for your support and guidance. Your words of wisdom have been instrumental in helping me navigate and overcome some of the darkest times. I truly cannot thank you enough and I am genuinely grateful for the positive impact our time together, although short, has had on my healing journey. Your help has made a significant difference, and I feel ready to move forward.

Feedback shared after Petals counselling following a referral from Tommy's



Working in partnership

We have collaborated and partnered with a number of grassroots organisations to increase the support we're offering to Black and Black Mixed-Heritage women and birthing people.

The Motherhood Group is dedicated to sharing and supporting the Black maternal experience, bridging the gap between the community and the system, and empowering Black mothers. In March 2024 the Motherhood Group carried out a piece of commissioned insight work for Tommy's to better understand how our Miscarriage Support Tool can support Black and Black Mixed-Heritage women and birthing people.

As we implement these recommendations, the Motherhood Group continues to sit on our steering group to oversee developments. We worked closely with Sandra Igwe, the founder of the group, for Maternal Mental Health Week to develop an animation about the effect of mental ill-health in the perinatal period.

We have been pleased to be able to support and partner with numerous grassroots organisations, including Motivational Mums Club and LGBT Mummies, providing speakers and resources for external events, and working with groups to co-produce materials, reaching as many women and birthing people as possible.



Together, we can identify where change is needed most

A partnership between Sands and Tommy's, the Joint Policy Unit is focused on using evidence to identify the key changes needed to save babies' lives, reduce inequities and improve outcomes.



Systemic issues need to be addressed

Listen to parents:

In 2023, 1 in 5 felt concerns raised during labour and birth were not taken seriously



Support staff:

In 2023, 58% of midwives in England felt unwell in the last 12 months because of stress



Learn lessons:

In 2023, half of action plans developed following the death of a baby were "weak"



Follow **nationally agreed standards of care** and make **investment** which recognises scale of change required

Using evidence to guide change

In May 2023, we launched our first Saving Babies' Lives Progress Report. This report brought together data from different sources for the first time to show the extent of pregnancy loss and baby deaths across the UK. Using existing evidence on the state of maternity and neonatal services, we drew attention to gaps in the evidence and set out areas where further work is required to reduce rates of miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth and neonatal death. Our report focuses on systemic issues in maternity and neonatal care and services, with clear areas for change.

Working with policymakers

Sadly, we are not on course to meet Government ambitions to reduce rates of stillbirth, neonatal death or premature birth, and there continue to be stark and persistent inequalities in rates of pregnancy and baby loss by ethnicity and deprivation.

We attended party conferences to meet and discuss these issues with MPs and candidates, and Georgia Stevenson, the Joint Policy Unit's Data Evidence Lead, discussed findings from our progress report on a panel at the Liberal Democrat Conference.

What's next?

In March 2024 we published our priorities for the next Government, setting out what we believe they must do to deliver safer maternity and neonatal services, so that fewer babies die and inequalities in loss are eliminated. We will continue to campaign for improvements to maternity care and to reduce the inequities faced by some communities.

1. Renew the national maternity safety ambitions
2. Eliminate inequalities in pregnancy and baby loss
3. Deliver a fully funded workforce
4. Put in place a system that supports safe care
5. Provide the best possible support throughout pregnancy and following loss



Chapter 4

Mobilising for change

Together, we can drive change on a national level

This year, we saw a huge step forward in our landmark Miscarriage Matters campaign as the care and support available around pregnancy loss became a topic of national conversation.

What is Miscarriage Matters?

Miscarriage Matters is our award-winning campaign to improve miscarriage care at a national level. It followed the landmark series of articles of the same name published in the prestigious medical journal, The Lancet, by leading experts from our National Centre for Miscarriage Research. While it started in 2021, our campaign work is ongoing to drive much needed change, and we wouldn't be where we are now without the passion and support of our community.

In July 2023, we welcomed Maria Caulfield, Minister for Women (2022-2024), to the Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research in Birmingham. Along with Olivia Blake MP and Tommy's Ambassador Myleene Klass, they met the team piloting our Graded Model of Care – led by Centre Director Professor Arri Coomarasamy – along with some of the families who had recently been helped by our recurrent miscarriage clinic team.



The Tommy's team were always trying to help us find an answer and give us hope for a way forward. I remember the compassion they showed after my miscarriage. It made such a difference to be treated like this.

Jenene, who took part in our ministerial centre visit

What is the Graded Model of Care pilot?

With the generous support of the Peter Sowerby Foundation, Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research has been piloting the Graded Model of Care, which is designed to make sure people are given appropriate support and treatment after each miscarriage.

The Graded Model of Care



First miscarriage

Guidance on optimising health for future pregnancy and accessing mental health care, if needed. Information on progesterone for any potential future miscarriage.



Second miscarriage

Seen at a miscarriage clinic with nurse or midwife. Alongside care after first miscarriage, given blood tests and health checks, and reassurance scans offered at next pregnancy.



Third miscarriage

Seen at a miscarriage clinic with a consultant. Alongside care outlined after first and second miscarriage, detailed ultrasound scan given, and blood and genetic tests are offered.

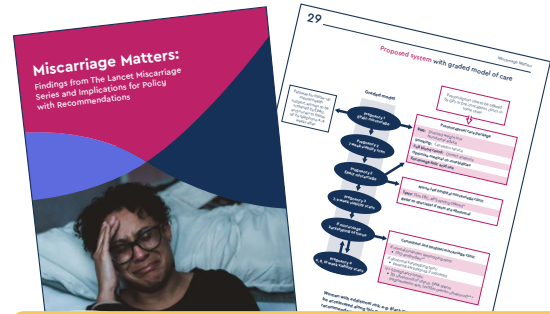
The 3-month pilot study of the Graded Model of Care took place at Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital between November 2023 and February 2024, and the team are now evaluating its success. To do this, they are exploring the experiences of families and healthcare professionals who took part in the pilot, and understanding the outcomes of women who took part, including the effects the miscarriage had on their life, work, and use of health services, as well as whether they have gone on to have a successful pregnancy. This will help inform the NHS and Government about any challenges that need to be overcome before the Graded Model of Care can be rolled out nationally.

Crucially, by keeping in touch with the women and birthing people who took part in the pilot, our team can work out whether the Graded Model of Care helps to prevent miscarriage.



I am so grateful to the team for everything and hope that all women who experience loss are as fortunate as me to be able to access this service.

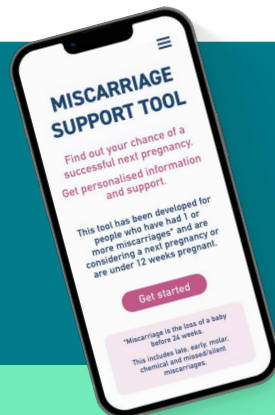
Participant in the Graded Model of Care pilot



Charlotte, her husband Milo, and her parents Katie and Hugh held fundraisers in the UK and Hong Kong to mark Baby Loss Awareness Week 2023. Charlotte and Milo lost their baby Finn earlier in 2023 at 28 weeks pregnant, so Tommy's is a cause very close to their hearts. They raised a massive £46,000, which could go towards funding Dr Nina Parker, Tommy's researcher, who's investigating how to provide better mental health support after loss. Thank you, Charlotte, Milo, Katie and Hugh!



Minister for Women Maria Caulfield (2022-2024), Olivia Blake MP and Tommy's Ambassador Myleene Klass visit the Tommy's National Centre for Miscarriage Research



The Tommy's Miscarriage Support Tool tells you your chance of a successful pregnancy after a miscarriage, and gives you personalised information and support wherever you are in the UK. Thanks to the generosity of Poundland's colleagues, customers and suppliers, we received a one year grant to help ensure that the Miscarriage Support Tool becomes a permanent part of our support for women and birthing people.



Together, we can change the story for families across the UK



Tommy's felt like a beacon of hope, and I dared to believe that I might just take my rainbow baby home.

Meet Hayley, Jack, Andreas, Andonis and Theadora

Hayley first became pregnant in 2014, not long before her wedding to Jack. They were over the moon, but sadly 2 weeks later she began to spot blood which then became heavier. "It was a few days before my dating scan, so at the appointment I explained I'd been bleeding. They saw a little baby measuring 7-weeks, so the sonographer said I may have got my dates wrong. I was clutching at straws, so I accepted her explanation whilst waiting for a repeat scan 2 weeks later. But if I'd been thinking straight, I would've known my dates couldn't be that off." At the repeat scan, Hayley and Jack received the devastating news that they'd had a missed miscarriage, without an obvious cause.



The following year, Hayley got pregnant again, and the couple welcomed their son Andreas in 2016. But Hayley struggled with anxiety and fear throughout her pregnancy. Because of her loss, followed by postnatal depression after Andreas was born, they weren't sure they would try for any more children: "I thought if I had a baby it would ease some of the pain of my loss, but it wasn't the 'fix it' I thought it would be. I came to realise you cannot fill that hole grief maims you with."

In 2019, Hayley and Jack decided to try for a sibling for their son. They got pregnant very quickly, however, a few months into pregnancy, Hayley was found to have high blood pressure and started medication to manage it. At her 20-week scan, it was clear she was not well. A detailed scan showed her baby, another boy, wasn't growing properly. Over the next 6 weeks, she bounced between home and hospital every time her blood pressure increased. "I was becoming more and more unwell and regular scans showed my baby's growth was still slowing, but the doctors said it was too early for pre-eclampsia. We named him Elias and he fought the hardest fight he could, but devastatingly he died at 26 weeks. I delivered him 2 days later, and while he was tiny, he was perfect in every way."



The loss of our baby, who we named Gabriel, took me to a really dark place. I would sob walking into a supermarket passing the baby aisle and divert my vision from baby bumps. Finding Tommy's gave me some answers to my questions about my loss.

After Elias' death, Tommy's became a lifeline for Hayley. She researched pre-eclampsia, used our social media support groups and became involved with the Tommy's community. "Without this support", says Hayley, "I don't think I would have made it through."

MAVi Clinic

Hayley was advised not to consider getting pregnant again for her own safety, and baby's, but accidentally fell pregnant again during the COVID-19 lockdown. She had seen that Tommy's offered specialist clinics for pre-eclampsia and rainbow babies, so she requested a referral. Our team at Manchester supported with additional screening and appointments, telephone calls from nurses, home blood pressure monitoring and close management of her medication.



Professor Jenny Myers and her team at the MAViS Clinic became my saviours. They treated me with such care and reassurance, for the first time since my first baby loss I felt safe and that my baby inside me was also safe.



Professor Myers confirmed what Hayley had suspected: she'd had early-onset pre-eclampsia in her previous pregnancy. She got to 32-weeks before her healthcare team decided it was time to deliver her baby for both their safety. Their son Andonis was born exactly a year to the day they lost Elias. "We saw this as a sign from his angel big brother that he was going to be okay and we'd get to take him home."

3 years later in 2023, Hayley and Jack decided to expand their family again, confident in the knowledge that Tommy's would be there every step of the way. Under the care of Tommy's, her pre-eclampsia was carefully managed and, following a c-section at 32 weeks, their daughter Theadora was born.

To give back to Tommy's, Hayley took part in the PARROT trial and also donated her placenta for research. She says she'll never forget the babies she's lost and talks about them often.



I know if it wasn't for Tommy's and the work they do, my eldest son would be an only child, and we would not have the beautiful family we have today. I feel forever in their debt, as nothing I could ever do would thank them enough for my rainbow babies.



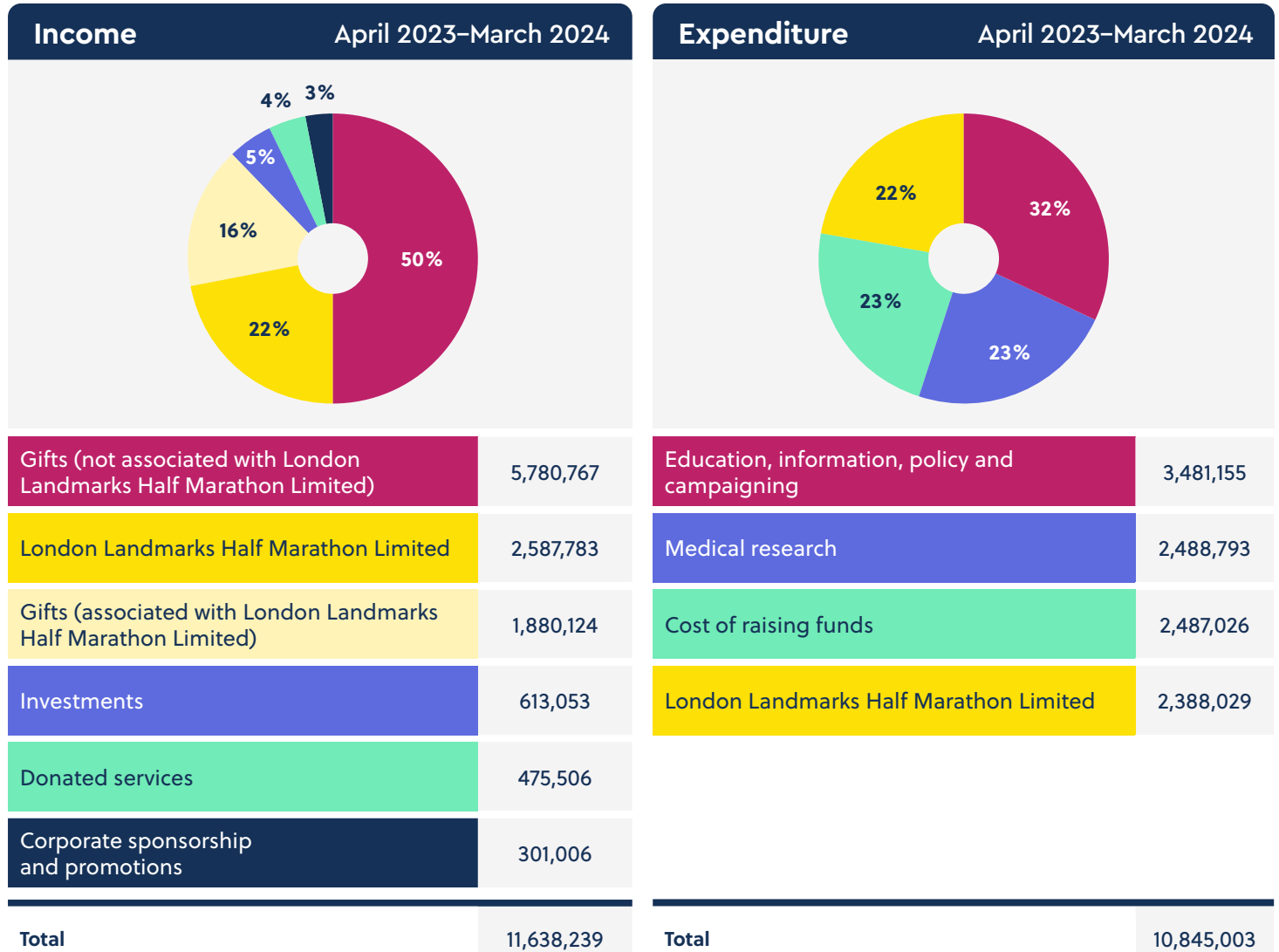
How we fund our work

Fundraising

We invested £2.5m in our fundraising, which brought in £6.1m in donations and corporate sponsorship. The investment also helps us to deliver further income in the years to come.

London Landmarks Half Marathon Limited

We invested £2.4m in delivering and growing our event business, and raised £1.9m in donations for Tommy's and £2.6m in income from the sale of event places, advertising and merchandise.



Supporter achievements calendar

April 2023

London Marathon 2023

One of our 186 incredible London Marathon runners this year was Perri Shakes-Drayton, former Team GB Olympian who experienced an ectopic pregnancy in March 2022.

Until it happens to you, you don't really believe it will.

She'd never heard of ectopic pregnancy before going through it herself and chose Tommy's for her marathon journey to share her story and raise awareness. Our runners raised a fantastic **£494,548** for us.

London Landmarks Half Marathon

The sixth edition of the London Landmarks Half Marathon (LLHM), an event organised by Tommy's, took place on 2 April with over 17,000 runners. It was an amazing day and this year we added a new cheer station along the route by St Thomas' Hospital, celebrating where Tommy's was founded. The event raised **£3.6m** for Tommy's and £11m across all 450 charity partners. This brought the grand total raised since the first event to an incredible £39.5m.

£3.6m

raised for Tommy's at the LLHM provides critical funding for our work to stop the heartbreak and devastation of baby loss and make pregnancy and birth safe – for everyone



My highlight was definitely crossing the finishing line with my 5-year-old daughter! We never would've had her if it wasn't for Tommy's amazing work!

James, a Team Tommy's runner

Making LLHM an event for everyone

Being inclusive is one of our core values, and it's very important that the LLHM is an event that is welcoming to all.

This year, we were delighted to open up the race to wheelchair participants for the first time. We also worked with a fantastic range of diverse community groups and welcomed runners from Black Girls Do Run; London Frontrunners; Sikhs in the City; A mile in her shoes; Black Trail Runners; London Otters; Emancipated Run Crew; ASRA Run Club; and Fly Girl Collective.



We had 2,247 runners in Team Tommy's, including those with lived experience of loss and complications, or other connections to us as a charity.



June 2023

The Weekly Win launch

In June we launched our Weekly Win lotto, and more than 800 players had come on board by March 2024. One of our players, Buki, reached out after she'd won to let us know about her personal connection to Tommy's, having been supported first by a Tommy's Midwife and later by a Tommy's clinic after her first pregnancy sadly ended in stillbirth.

"If we didn't have the support of Tommy's, we don't think we'd have our baby now. Tommy's are doing real work with the money they raise and making a difference – I have lived and breathed that support. It changes families' lives.

Buki, whose first pregnancy ended in a stillbirth in 2020

Players of the Weekly Win have raised an amazing **£17,572** so far.



August 2023

Rainbow Challenge

"I'm taking part in the challenge to show people that there is hope, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.



After 2 devastating losses, Obiélé was supported by Professor Shennan and his team at our London clinic to welcome her rainbow baby Tetteh-Kwei, and her 'pot of gold baby', Ayélé-Tia. The 3 of them were among the 178 families who took part in our Rainbow Challenge, raising a massive **£21,126**.



September 2023

London Landmarks Skyscraper Challenge

In September 2023 we staged the Skyscraper Challenge and we're very grateful to the Tommy's supporters who took part in the day and raised a staggering **£819,797** for Tommy's.

Great North Run 2023

246 Team Tommy's fundraisers took on the Great North Run, raising a phenomenal **£118,965**. This includes Amanda, who lost her son James in 2016.

"Tommy's helped me and my husband over the weeks and months after we lost our sleeping angel James, and when we were very lucky to discover we were pregnant again we looked at Tommy's to support and ease our concerns.

Manchester Rainbow Race

Organised by the staff at Tommy's Maternal and Fetal Health Research Centre, the Rainbow Race takes place every September in Platt Fields Park, Manchester. Families, many of whom have personal connections to the Rainbow Clinic, run, hop, skip or walk 1km and this year raised **£9,826**.



To give back to those who helped us, we ran the Tommy's Rainbow Race. We were joined by 8 of our friends from our antenatal group. Between us, we've lost 10 babies, and many of us have gone on to have rainbow babies. The event raised an amazing amount of money and we're so grateful to have been able to support Tommy's research and care.

Jess and Jim, cared for by our Manchester clinic after losing their son Louis in 2022

October 2023

Walk for Hope

233 people joined us for the first Tommy's Walk for Hope, an accessible 2.5K and 5K walk event through Battersea Park on 7 October. A further 845 supporters took part in our 5K a Day Facebook challenge. Together, they raised an extraordinary **£173,981**.



Felt so good getting out in the fresh air remembering my lost baby, all the other babies and remembering why I'm doing this!

Laura, who took part in the 5k a Day challenge for Tommy's



Royal Parks Half Marathon 2023

One of the 212 Team Tommy's runners who joined us for the Royal Parks Half Marathon was Teddy, who was running in memory of his daughter Mavi-Mae. Mavi-Mae was born 17 weeks prematurely in October 2022 and devastatingly passed away after 8 days. With the event taking place in the same month as the anniversary of his daughter's birth it was an emotional day, with many friends and family out to support him. Together they have raised over **£8,000** in Mavi-Mae's memory so far. Our wonderful runners raised a total of **£150,402**.



Baby Loss Awareness Week

For the fourth year running, our partners Plum & Ashby sold their beautiful Wave of Light candle ahead of Baby Loss Awareness Week, with 100% of profits supporting our work. The awareness week culminates in a global Wave of Light, where families and loved ones light candles to remember much-missed babies. This year, Plum & Ashby raised an amazing **£41,915**.

November 2023

Tommy's Ambassador Marina Fogle, with support from committee members Flora and Laura Montgomery, and George Whitefield, hosted a magical Tommy's Children's Carols event at St Mary Abbots Church in Kensington, raising **£21,265**.



December 2023

Festive Tea for Tommy's



Sadly in 2019 our beautiful daughter Georgina was stillborn at 40 weeks and 5 days. The support from Tommy's after Georgina's death really helped us as a family. Festive Tea for Tommy's seemed like a great opportunity to raise some more money at a time that is often so very difficult for bereaved families.

Elle, who held a Tea for Tommy's

By hosting a Festive Tea for Tommy's at her work in memory of her daughter Georgina, Elle raised **£225** – enough to fund our midwife helpline for a day and a half, providing much-needed support to other families facing pregnancy loss or complications.

612 people signed up to take part, with more than 40 events held and a massive **£19,741** raised!



The Big Give

Tommy's annual Christmas Appeal 2023 raised **£109,478** for our lifesaving research and care. A **£25,000** donation by The Reed Foundation and a further **£25,000** pledged by 10 generous donors allowed us to match fund all public donations (up to £50,000) over the 7 day appeal.



March 2024

Mother's Day

For the second year running, Bloom & Wild donated £1 from every special Mother's Day Hope bouquet sold, raising **£15,000** to support our life changing work. Bloom & Wild shared messages of support and hope with their community for anyone who might find the day difficult as part of our We See A Mum campaign.

Splashathon

The 'Better starts, brighter future' Splashathon was held in partnership with Water Babies national swim school. Babies and toddlers were sponsored to complete a swimming challenge in fancy dress. This year the event was fundraising for both Tommy's and the Water Babies foundation the Children's Alliance. 4,285 fundraisers raised a remarkable **£701,807** in total split between the 2 charities.



8,000 Steps a Day in March for Tommy's



I got a matching 'little helper' t-shirt for my 4-month-old daughter who will be helping (obviously from the comfort of her pram) whilst I'm on maternity leave. We're ready for tomorrow in memory of my first pregnancy which ended in a miscarriage.

Fiona, who took on the 8,000 steps challenge

Fiona joined 753 others for our 8,000 Steps a Day in March challenge, altogether raising an astonishing **£121,195**.



Thank you

We know every penny counts when you're saving babies' lives. Thanks to generous supporters like you, we're able to continue finding research breakthroughs, supporting families throughout their pregnancy journeys and making sure everyone who experiences pregnancy complications and baby loss is cared for. We are eternally grateful for the support of our Founders: The Hon Mrs Lucy Nelson, Dr Ian Fergusson and Dr Anthony Kenney and our Patrons: Sir Ron Dennis CBE and Sally Tennant OBE. Their vision and commitment have enabled us to become the charity we are today.

Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who has helped Tommy's raise funds, including:

Companies:

Besins Healthcare UK, Bloomberg LP, Bloom & Wild, Careys Foundation, Chiesi Limited, Hologic, MAM UK Ltd, Mondelez UK, Newline, Never Fully Dressed, Norgine Pharmaceuticals Ltd, The Poundland Foundation and Poundland's colleagues, customers and suppliers, Plexus Corp UK, Plum & Ashby in collaboration with Elle Wright of Feathering the Empty Nest, Smyths Toys, Teneo, TFP Fertility UK, The Positive Birth Company, Thrive Tribe, Tufton Investment Management, and Water Babies.

We are grateful to the companies that provided grants to support our information service. These companies had no editorial control or input into our services.

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Individuals:

Paulo & Melinda Almeida, Kate & David Beck, Trudi & Gareth Boardman, Gerald Carroll & Sasha Wright, Joe Chambers, Kalpana Desai, Steve Edge & Jane Fogg, Dominic & Claire Freemantle, Nikki & Bruce Hodges (Metrow Foods), Oliver & Johanna Hudson, Chloe & Archie Hunter, Richard & Hannah Jeens, Brian Meredith, Stephen & Benetta Morant, Lesley Norris, James O'Brien, Ioannis Papagiannakopoulos & Michaela Vergottis, Dominic & Lindsay Proctor, Julia Rosier, Bjorn Saven CBE, Ian & Carol Sellars, Kassie Smith KC, Alesandro and Sophie Alagna, Charlotte Tottenham and Milo Belamy and family.

We would also like to thank Marina Fogle and her committee for organising the Tommy's Children's Carols.

Statutory grants:

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UK Research and Innovation.

VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance - Department of Health & Social Care, NHS England and UK Health Security Agency.

VCSE Health and Wellbeing Fund - Department of Health & Social Care, NHS England and UK Health Security Agency .

Landmark Events:

Westminster City Council, The City of London Corporation, TfL, The Great Run Company, The Leadenhall Building, 30 St Mary Axe, The Aviva Building, Threshold Sports, and Control Descent.

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We are very grateful to all our donors who prefer to give anonymously.



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Chief Executive Kath Abrahams

And our Tommy's Ambassadors for their constant support:

Katie Bonful, Dr Ria Clarke, Ben & Marina Fogle, Will Greenwood MBE, Amanda Holden, Myleene Klass, Caro Tasker, and Elle Wright.



Together, we can fund ground-breaking research, support families throughout their pregnancy journey and transform care.

Together, we can save babies' lives.

To support our work, please visit

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