**Press release**

**For immediate release**

**Refurbished ‘Home from Home’ Rainbow House welcomes families**

Families with seriously ill children at Great Ormond Street Hospital can stay close to their child in newly-refurbished accommodation. Rainbow House is one of The Sick Children’s Trust’s ten ‘Homes from Home’ around the country.

The refurbished house was opened on Thursday 2 May 2019 by actress Anita Dobson, who is Vice President of The Sick Children’s Trust. Also in attendance were families who had previously stayed at Rainbow House, the generous individuals, trusts and foundations who had donated to the renovation, and celebrity ambassadors Sian Welby, Christina Johnston and Tim Downie.

Rainbow House has been supporting families since 1984 and is based just three minutes away from Great Ormond Street Hospital. The warm, welcoming accommodation can house up to eight families at one time, and last year supported 159 families with a child in the paediatric hospital.

After 35 years of use, Rainbow House was in need of some serious renovation. Building work began in January 2019 and the house re-opened its doors to families in April. Works included completely gutting and re-building the large communal kitchen, four house bathrooms, and the office where house staff are on hand to support families.

During the renovation work carpets and linoleum flooring were replaced throughout the house and all eight family bedrooms had vanity sink units installed. The facility now has all-new furniture and kitchen appliances and a renovated laundry. For families with a seriously sick or injured child, simple things like being able to have a cup of tea or share a home-cooked meal can make a huge difference. Residents at Rainbow House can receive some well-needed respite from the wards, with staff from The Sick Children’s Trust on hand to provide practical and emotional support when needed.

The Hughes family returned to Rainbow House for the re-opening. They stayed at the accommodation for almost a year while their three-year-old daughter Esme needed a heart transplant. Mum Lisa said: “Rainbow House was absolutely perfect. The front room made all the difference to being able to keep to a routine with Esme and our son who was only seven months old at the time. We live two hours away in Reading, but we were able to stay five minutes from the ward. London is one of the most expensive cities in the world, but The Sick Children’s Trust meant we didn’t have to worry about where to stay.

“We were at Rainbow House for 11.5 months – until Esme came home in August last year. Being in hospital for a long time is not good for your sanity, but one of us was always able to be there to put her to bed and be there with her when she woke up. The hospital is amazing, but there are other people who also make it possible to make that journey – like Louise and Tina at Rainbow House. It was really good for Esme that we were there all that time and it wouldn’t have been nearly as simple without the Sick Children’s Trust.”

Children from across the UK come to Great Ormond Street Hospital for their life-saving paediatric care. Our free accommodation means families can focus on being there for their child during their recovery, without the cost and worry of having to travel, or find somewhere to stay nearby. All rooms come with a phone line direct to the ward, so parents and siblings know they can be by the hospital bedside in moments.

Award-winning actress Anita Dobson said, “The Sick Children’s Trust gives invaluable support to families going through the most difficult times. I’m delighted to be opening the newly renovated Rainbow House which is a calm, friendly ‘Home from Home’. It helps to ensure families are able to stay near their seriously ill child at such an important time.”

Ayla Besser, Head of Fundraising at The Sick Children’s Trust said: “We are so grateful to everyone who made this refurbishment possible. We now have modern and welcoming accommodation for those families who need a ‘Home from Home’ when their child is seriously ill.”

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

**Ends**

**For more information**: Please contact [publicity@sickchildrenstrust.org](mailto:publicity@sickchildrenstrust.org)

**Notes to Editors:**

**About The Sick Children’s Trust**

The Sick Children’s Trust is working to a future where every family with a seriously ill child in hospital will be able to stay together, just minutes from their child’s bed during their treatment.

We believe keeping families together significantly improves the recovery of seriously ill children. We provide free, high-quality ‘Home from Home’ accommodation, as well as emotional and practical support, to families with sick children in hospital in the UK.

The Sick Children’s Trust was founded in 1982 by two paediatric specialists Dr Jon Pritchard and Professor James Malpas. Today we have ten ‘Homes from Home’ at major hospitals around the country where families can stay free of charge.

We support 4,000 families every year, and there is a growing demand for our support as children must increasingly travel long distances to get the specialist treatment they need. [sickchildrenstrust.org](http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org)