

Clowndoctors deliver smiles and laughter to the children and young people who need them most. Six days a week, we visit hospitals, hospices, and schools for learners with additional support needs, right across Scotland. Behind the Clowndoctors programme is the charity, Hearts & Minds. www.heartsminds.org.uk

Clowndoctors help children and young people in hospital by:

- reducing stress, anxiety, boredom and feelings of isolation
- encouraging movement, communication and interaction with others
- encouraging engagement as individuals and families
- supporting mental health and wellbeing through play and laughter
- giving access to the performing arts and musical activities
- providing gentle distraction during minor medical procedures such as dressing changes, injections or blood samples
- supporting physiotherapy through play that assists with mobility, walking, breathing or coughing

Get in touch!

To find out how we can help the children in your care, please email us at info@heartsminds.org.uk or call us on 0131 229 4037

Photographers: Eoin Carey, Delphine Porcé, Kelman Greig-Kicks



Hearts & Minds
Improving lives one **smile** at a time

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Hearts & Minds is a Registered Scottish Charity No.SC027040
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Clowndoctors

Delivering smiles and laughter across Scotland and a lot more besides...



Clowndoctors
Delivering **smiles & laughter**

Have you seen a bright yellow coat and a small red nose recently?

Clowndoctors visit young people (between the age of 6 months and 18 years) and their families in hospital. We wear a bright yellow coat and a red nose, always visit in pairs and are therapeutic clowns. What this means is that a unique visit from us can have a therapeutic effect – the visit might make the participants feel better, less anxious, more positive and give lots of happy, long-lasting, hormones from laughing. We visit on the same day of the week so that staff and young people know when to expect us. We fit into ward routines and are very flexible, understanding that things can change at any minute!

Professional performers with specialist training

Each Clowndoctor is a professional performer with specialist training in clowning, music, improvisation and how to clown in healthcare environments with children and young people who might be feeling ill, vulnerable or anxious, or have disabilities or life-limiting conditions. The clowndoctors are also trained in some medical vocabulary, the pathologies we might encounter and hygiene procedures.

Relationships and referrals

We work in close collaboration with staff on the ward. In fact, good clown-staff relations help to ensure the success of the Clowndoctors programme. Information regarding each young person's condition, and their likes and dislikes, helps us to deliver the best possible interventions. A brief verbal referral is indispensable as it lets us know if anything significant has happened to the young person that day as well as their level of pain, communication difficulties and any hygiene precautions we should observe. This information allows us to tailor our interactions appropriately and is, of course, treated in the strictest confidence.



A 'made to measure' approach

Each intervention is 'made to measure' and improvised. Empathy, authenticity and playfulness sit at the heart of our approach and while interventions might involve music, singing, magic, puppetry, slapstick or imaginative play, we always put the child's needs first. When infection control requires it, we can even visit children through the window to their room!



Communication and feedback

Before changing into costume at the start of each visit, we check in with the appropriate staff to see which children we should visit that day and how they are. We record the successes or developments of each interaction and provide feedback and helpful information on each child's wellbeing, based on their responses to us. All referral documents and details are treated in the strictest confidence and our Clowndoctors sign a confidentiality agreement.

It's important to be direct. If the Clowndoctors' presence is ever inappropriate (for example, in a medical emergency) please just let us know. Hospitals are assigned a Unit Lead who's responsible for carrying out an annual review to make sure that everything is running smoothly. This is the ideal opportunity for detailed feedback, questions and to discuss any specific issues.

As a parent, if you are keen for your child to see the Clowndoctors feel free to ask us directly or talk to the play team. Alternatively, if you don't want visits, please just let the Clowndoctors or play team know.

