**Call for papers**

**Symposium on ‘Charity and Children’s Hospitals: Exceptionalism, Experiences, and Welfare’**

**Event date: 8th December 2023**

**Abstract submission deadline: 20th August 2023**

**Abstract**

Children’s wards and hospitals, and children as hospital inpatients, can be considered ‘exceptions’ both from a historical standpoint and in contemporary contexts. In Britain, amid high infant mortality rates that would persist beyond the beginning of the 1900s, the earliest dedicated children’s hospitals were slow to be established, with the earliest ones set up in the late 18th Century. In the UK, given their origins as charitable institutions, a strong legacy of fundraising still exists in children’s hospitals: children’s hospitals continue to receive more public attention and support than other hospital types and charitable causes, they receive and provide unique types of charitable support, and children’s hospitals often retain charitable arms independent from those of their ‘parent’ NHS organisation. In other parts of the world, and regardless of the health care system in place in different nations, children’s hospitals and wards are often sites of charitable and/or voluntary intervention compared to other health care domains. Examples include [Starship](https://starship.org.nz/foundation/about-the-foundation), New Zealand’s national children’s hospital, and [Finland’s New Children’s Hospital](https://www.uudenlastensairaalantuki.fi/hanke/).

In this one-day symposium, we will explore – and welcome contributions that address – questions such as:

* What does exceptionalism mean specifically for children's experiences of hospitals?
* What causes the exceptionalism of children’s hospitals? (e.g. experiential/sensory aspects of the hospitals; social perceptions of and attitudes towards ‘childhood’)
* What fundraising strategies do children’s hospitals employ? Who are the primary givers to and supporters of children’s hospitals? What is the role of elite connections, social networks, and celebrity supporters?
* What are the consequences of the exceptionalism? (e.g. for other hospitals or charities, for children, for policymaking etc.)
* Are children's hospitals more part of the mixed economy of healthcare than other hospitals?
* Why do children’s hospitals receive exceptional levels of charitable support?
* Is ‘exceptionalism’ a useful tool for framing research in the medical humanities and beyond?

Contributions could address children’s hospitals both past and present. We welcome submissions from across disciplines, including sociology, social policy, medical humanities, history, childhood studies, anthropology, and philanthropy studies. We welcome contributions from all researchers including PhD students at any stage in their research. As well as academic contributions, the symposium will bring together key stakeholders from the charitable sector to share insights on policy and practice related to contemporary children’s hospitals fundraising.

This event is generously funded by the Wellcome Trust as part of the research project ‘[Border Crossings: Charity and Voluntarism in Britain’s Mixed Economy of Welfare since 1948](https://more.bham.ac.uk/border-crossings/)'. This is a collaborative project between the University of Strathclyde, University of Birmingham, and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

**Where:** Technology and Innovation Centre, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

**When:** Friday 8th December 2023. This will be a full-day event.

**Cost:** There is no registration or attendance fee for participating in this symposium. Travel bursaries (to cover transport and/or accommodation) of up to £200pp are available for up to eight Early Career Researchers (current PhD students and those within 8 years of completing their PhD[[1]](#footnote-1) - date degree awarded will be taken as date of completion). Priority for bursaries will be given to ECRs presenting at the symposium – the remainder will be on a first-come-first-serve basis.

**Abstract submissions**

If you would like to present at this symposium, please complete our [online abstract submission form](https://forms.office.com/e/m4fYaMhRN8) by midnight on Sunday 20th August 2023. You will need to provide a title and abstract of 300-500 words.

Applicants will be notified the outcome of their submission by 31st August.

**Outputs**

We intend for this symposium to lead to an edited journal collection. If you are unable to attend the symposium but would like to be kept informed with a view to contribute to a written output, please get in touch with Francesca Vaghi: [francesca.vaghi@strath.ac.uk](mailto:francesca.vaghi@strath.ac.uk)

1. In line with UKRI definition. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)