



Epsom Hospital braces for flu spike

Hospitals serving Epsom, St Helier and St George's are warning of a potentially severe flu season as national data reveals the number of deaths linked to the virus in England more than doubled last winter.

Figures from the UK Health Security Agency show 7,757 flu-related deaths were recorded in 2024-25, compared with 3,555 the previous year. Child deaths rose from 34 to 53 — a 56 per cent increase — while fewer people took up the offer of a flu vaccination.

Last winter, local hospitals faced intense pressure from flu alongside RSV, Covid and norovirus outbreaks, which closed wards and stretched Emergency Departments to capacity. With flu cases now rising again after the school half-term, health leaders fear a repeat.

Chief Nursing Officer for St George's, Epsom and St Helier hospitals, Elaine Clancy, urged residents to act now. "Last flu season was particularly nasty and we're very concerned that this year could be even worse — we're preparing for a spike of flu onto our wards," she said. "We see people dying every year from flu and sadly thousands more will likely this year. I strongly recommend booking your jab now, as it takes up to 14 days to fully kick in."

Local mother Amy Clare, from Sutton, knows how dangerous flu can be. Her five-week-old son Jonah was rushed to Epsom Hospital's Emergency Department with the virus in December 2022.

"What started as a fever quickly escalated," said Amy. "When the doctor told us we'd be spending Christmas in hospital, I was devastated. But he was in the best place to get better. The care we received from the moment we walked into A&E was fantastic — the staff immediately knew something wasn't right and were with us every step of the way."

Jonah was discharged the day after Christmas but continued to receive daily treatment until the New Year. "The care Jonah received saved his life," said Amy.

Pregnant women are strongly advised to have the flu jab at any stage of pregnancy. It protects both mother and baby, but uptake remains low — only around one in three expectant mothers in England were vaccinated last year.

Those eligible for a free NHS flu vaccination include:

- everyone aged 65 and over
- people under 65 with long-term health conditions such as diabetes or heart problems
- children aged two and three, and all primary school children
- some secondary school pupils (Years 7 to 11)
- residents in care homes
- carers and those receiving carer's allowance
- people living with someone who has a weakened immune system
- frontline health and social care workers

People can book or amend their flu vaccination appointment online: Book, change or cancel a free NHS flu vaccination at a pharmacy — NHS.

Sam Jones — Reporter



Bourne again Christmas lights

Bourne Hall is delighted to announce the return of its much-loved Christmas Lights Switch-On event, taking place on Saturday 29 November from 4pm until 7.30pm.



This free, family-friendly celebration invites the local community to gather for an evening filled with festive entertainment, seasonal treats, and holiday cheer.

Event highlights include:

Live Music & Performances: Enjoy a lively programme of performances from local musicians and dance schools on the main stage. Special guests include Santa Claus and the cast of this year's Epsom Playhouse Pantomime, Aladdin, bringing a sprinkle of theatrical magic to the festivities.

Market & Craft Stalls: Browse a variety of stalls featuring handmade crafts, unique gifts, and festive products – perfect for early Christmas shopping.

Food & Refreshments: Indulge in delicious seasonal fare from The Flying Saucer Café, offering warm treats and tasty bites throughout the evening.

Santa's Grotto Grand Opening: Be among the first to visit the newly opened Santa's Grotto, where children can meet Father Christmas and experience the joy of the season.

Christmas Lights Switch-On Ceremony: Be there for the magical moment at 5.15pm, when The Deputy Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Santa and beloved festive characters illuminate Bourne Hall with a dazzling display of Christmas lights.

Speaking of the upcoming event, Councillor **Clive Woodbridge** (RA Ewell Village), Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee, said: "We're absolutely delighted to welcome back the Christmas Lights Switch-On at Bourne Hall – a cherished tradition that brings our community together in the most magical way. This year's event promises festive fun for all ages, with music, entertainment, and of course, the grand illumination that marks the start of the holiday season in Ewell. I encourage everyone to come along and share in the joy."

This outdoor event is free and open to all, promising a heartwarming celebration for families, friends, and neighbours. Attendees are encouraged to dress warmly and arrive early to enjoy the full programme of festivities.

Visit Bourne Hall from 29 November for a whole host of festivities.

Bourne Hall Christmas Lights Switch On

Saturday 29 November, 4pm – 7.30pm. Free event.

A day of festive fun including:

- Live music and performances
- Market and craft stalls
- Food and refreshments
- Santa's Grotto Grand Opening
- Christmas Lights Switch On 5.15pm – The Deputy Mayor of Epsom & Ewell and Santa switch on the Christmas lights at Bourne Hall.

Santa's Grotto – Saturday 29 November to Saturday 20 December

Step into the magic of Christmas at Bourne Hall's enchanting *Santa's Grotto*!

Please note that Santa's Grotto is free to visit during the week but Saturday visits cost £1 per person

Grand Opening – Friday 29 November

Celebrate the launch of the grotto with a special evening of festive cheer!

Opening times on Saturday 29th November only:

- 16:00–17:00
- 18:00–19:30
- Entry: £1.00 per person (card payment only, payable at the door) due to the high footfall on this date, there is no pre booking option available, we will operate a first come first serve basis during the two time slots.



Pre-Book Your Visit - Saturdays 6, 13 & 20 December

Reserve your time slot online to guarantee your child's magical moment with Santa.

Spaces are limited, so book early to avoid disappointment!

Tickets are £1.00 per child and can be booked online by following the links below, please select the link for your desired date, this will take you to the booking page where you can select a ticket for your desired time slot:

Saturday 6 December: https://sessami.co/events/meetsantabounrehall?utm_medium=website&utm_sou...

Saturday 13 December: https://sessami.co/events/6529dc6f-1b2e-4c07-bd35-48c0c157cdde?utm_mediu...

Saturday 20 December: https://sessami.co/events/45c92d02-ab10-48c4-8e69-7836930592d4?utm_mediu...

Weekday Visits - Monday to Friday 10:00-16:00

Enjoy the grotto scenery at your leisure with **free entry** during the week.

Take festive photos, soak in the decorations, and write a letter to Santa to post!

Whether you're booking a weekend visit or popping in during the week, Bourne Hall's grotto is the perfect way to celebrate the season and make lasting memories.

For more information or to get involved, please contact bhevents@epsom-ewell.gov.uk or visit bournehall.org.

Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell, Surrey KT17 1UF. 020 8393 9571. Bourne Hall is open Monday - Saturday, 10am - 5pm.

<https://www.bournehall.org>

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council



Image: Courtesy Bourne Hall Facebook - Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Music and dance for Ukraine at Epsom Methodist Church

The 13th Ukraine Music Evening took place on Saturday 25th October at Epsom Methodist Church, organised by Lionel Blackman with the support of the Epsom Refugee Network and Surrey Stands With Ukraine. Extra seats were brought in as the Church filled to the brim.

The Worshipful Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Councillor Robert Leach (RA Nonsuch), opened the event with words of welcome and appreciation for the town's ongoing solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

For the first time, the programme featured a Ukrainian dance ensemble — **Stephania**, choreographed and led by **Alina Luts** — whose performances introduced vibrant movement and colour between the musical sets.

The modern section of the programme offered a change of mood. Epsom-based performers **Helin Konyar** (vocals), a graduate of Epsom's Laine Theatre Arts and **Vladislav Voloshin** (saxophone) presented three songs: *Almost There* (Anika Noni Rose), *Dream a Little Dream* (Robbie Williams) and the Ukrainian favourite *Stari Fotohrafy* by Skryabin, combining contemporary and national influences with confident stage presence.

The evening continued with **Vadym Perig**, an alumnus of the nearby Yehudi Menuhin School, who travelled from his new home in Vienna to perform **Robert Schumann's Violin Sonata No. 1**, accompanied by the accomplished Ukrainian pianist **Svitlana Kosenko**. Their expressive partnership recalled the high standard of the first Ukraine Music Evening in 2022, in which both artists also appeared.

Pianist **Maria Zhornikova** returned to Epsom with a refined interpretation of **Enrique Granados' Eight Poetic Valses**,



followed by **À Giverny**, a short composition by the organiser Lionel Blackman. Projected images of Monet's gardens accompanied the performance, and the Mayor's purchase of the sheet music contributed to funds for Surrey Stands With Ukraine.

Further performances by **Stephania** included traditional Ukrainian dances such as *My Kyiv*, *Polka*, and *Chycheri*, performed by a talented ensemble of soloists.

As is now tradition, the evening concluded with the **Renaissance Choir** under the direction of **Nataliia Zadorizhna** and conductor **Dana Kuhlyk**, singing the Ukrainian National Anthem and a selection of beloved folk songs — *Oh, in the Cherry Orchard*, *Why Didn't You Come*, *Why, Why, My Land*, and *Hey, Falcons*.

All proceeds from the concert went to support the professional musicians who continue to share Ukraine's rich artistic culture with audiences in Epsom.

Nina Kaye

Epsom Methodist Church launches new Story Club and Warm Wednesdays

Epsom Methodist Church (EMC) is organising two exciting ventures for local people and families this autumn.

First out of the blocks is a new Story Club for parents and toddlers that is now meeting every Monday morning at 11am in the community café at the Church in Ashley Road, Epsom. Christa Schoeni, an experienced children's practitioner, is leading 30 minutes of reading, rhyme time and singing for children up to age five. Parents and carers are able to borrow books to read with their children during the week.

"Our aim is to foster a love of reading. With tablets and other electronic devices so commonplace today there is a risk that children miss out on the value of listening, sharing stories with their parents and having their imagination fired by imaginary worlds," said Christa Schoeni.

And EMC's Warm Wednesdays starts a new chapter in its life. For a fourth year the church is open every Wednesday starting on 5th November.

Robert Hill commented: "Every Wednesday we provide a warm space where people can come and chat, join in with quizzes and games, enjoy free teas and coffees and a lunchtime snack of hot soup and a roll. On the first Wednesday of every month we have an expert who comes and provides practical help and advice on reducing energy costs and dealing with gas and electricity bills. Surrey County Council has also provided us with some warm clothing and accessories to help stay warm over the winter months and we will be distributing these supplies to local residents.

"Every Wednesday afternoon from 3.30 our warm space becomes an after-school club with craft activities for children and parents and a chance for older children and adults to hone their table tennis skills. We end our day with everyone enjoying a hot meal together cooked by a great team of volunteers.

"As a town centre church, we see it as our role and mission to serve the local community. We love having hundreds of people coming through our doors each day. We hope that Warm Wednesdays will provide a place not just to be warm and get help with staying warm, but a place where warmth also means friendship and a generous welcome."

Surrey Uni show AI systems based on the human



brain's save energy

Artificial intelligence (AI) could soon become more energy-efficient and faster, thanks to a new approach developed at the University of Surrey that takes direct inspiration from biological neural networks of the human brain.

In a study published in *Neurocomputing*, researchers from Surrey's Nature-Inspired Computation and Engineering (NICE) group have shown that mimicking the brain's sparse and structured neural wiring can significantly improve the performance of artificial neural networks (ANNs) – used in generative AI and other modern AI models such as ChatGPT – without sacrificing accuracy.

The method, called Topographical Sparse Mapping (TSM), rethinks how AI systems are wired at their most fundamental level. Unlike conventional deep-learning models – such as those used for image recognition and language processing – which connect every neuron in one layer to all neurons in the next, wasting energy, TSM connects each neuron only to nearby or related ones, much like how the brain's visual system organises information efficiently. Through this natural design, the model eliminates the need for vast numbers of unnecessary connections and computations.

An enhanced version, called Enhanced Topographical Sparse Mapping (ETSM), goes a step further by introducing a biologically inspired “pruning” process during training – similar to how the brain gradually refines its neural connections as it learns. Together, these approaches allow AI systems to achieve equal or even greater accuracy while using only a fraction of the parameters and energy required by conventional models.

Dr Roman Bauer, Senior Lecturer at the University of Surrey's School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering, and project supervisor, said:

“Training many of today's popular large AI models can consume over a million kilowatt-hours of electricity, which is equivalent to the annual use of more than a hundred US homes, and cost tens of millions of dollars. That simply isn't sustainable at the rate AI continues to grow. Our work shows that intelligent systems can be built far more efficiently, cutting energy demands without sacrificing performance.”

Surrey's enhanced model achieved up to 99% sparsity – meaning it could remove almost all of the usual neural connections – but still matched or exceeded the accuracy of standard networks on benchmark datasets. Because it avoids the constant fine-tuning and rewiring used by other approaches, it trains faster, uses less memory and consumes less than one per cent of the energy of a conventional AI system.

Mohsen Kamelian Rad, a PhD student at the University of Surrey and lead author of the study, said:

“The brain achieves remarkable efficiency through its structure, with each neuron forming connections that are spatially well-organised. When we mirror this topographical design, we can train AI systems that learn faster, use less energy and perform just as accurately. It's a new way of thinking about neural networks, built on the same biological principles that make natural intelligence so effective”

While the current framework applies the brain-inspired mapping to an AI model's input layer, extending it to deeper layers could make networks even leaner and more efficient. The research team is also exploring how the approach could be used in other applications, such as more realistic neuromorphic computers, where the efficiency gains could have an even greater impact.

Surrey University



Epsom and Ewell Times asked ChatGPT to explain the above press release from Surrey University and this is what it wrote:

“Artificial intelligence models like ChatGPT rely on vast numbers of digital connections between “neurons”, mimicking how the human brain works – but they use enormous amounts of electricity to do it. Researchers at the University of Surrey have developed a new way to wire these networks that could make them dramatically more efficient.

Instead of connecting every artificial neuron to every other, the Surrey team copied the brain's habit of linking only nearby or



related neurons. Their method, called **Topographical Sparse Mapping**, cuts out unnecessary connections, saving energy while maintaining accuracy. A refined version, **Enhanced Topographical Sparse Mapping**, even “prunes” the network during learning – like the brain trimming unused connections as it develops. The result is AI that can train faster, use less memory and consume less than one per cent of the energy of current systems.

If this approach proves scalable, it could mean greener, cheaper and quicker AI – taking inspiration not from bigger computers, but from the extraordinary efficiency of the human brain.”

Calculating the cost of care in Surrey

Surrey residents and their families can now benefit from a simple new online tool to help them be prepared for the costs of care, if they become less able.

Many of us don’t realise that we are likely to have to pay for some or all of our own care, especially if we have savings over £14,250. And while most people who need care tend to be older, support needs can emerge at any age due to illness or injury.

Surrey County Council’s new **Care Cost Indicator** allows people who arrange and pay for their care to see how much it may cost to stay in a typical residential / nursing home compared to receiving care or support in their own home. Using a simple slider to choose the number of weeks, months or years they wish to plan for, people can judge how long their savings or assets may last.

Once people know the costs, it’s easier to prepare, or see how spending some money now can help avoid more expensive care further down the line. Simple equipment, new technology or small changes to people’s homes can make the difference between living independently and needing assistance.

Research with Surrey residents in January 2025 highlighted:

- 81% were concerned how they would pay for their care
- Only 13% have sought or plan to seek independent financial advice about care costs

Furthermore, a **recent study into care home residents by the independent health and social care champion Healthwatch Surrey** showed only 33% of people interviewed had actually planned for the costs involved.

The new indicator, which was designed and tested with local people, aims to prompt residents to plan ahead. The online information features lots of useful tips to help with preparation and ensure that future arrangements are affordable.

Figures show that Surrey residents live longer than most other parts of the country. But the same reported data shows that at least a decade is likely to be spent in poorer health, increasing the likelihood of care being required.

While homeowners in Surrey might think they can always use the proceeds from a house sale to fund any care they need, even this is not certain. Based on an **average house sale of around £590,000**, if a couple both needed to move into a care home, their nest egg could easily be used up in a little over three and a half years.

Sinead Mooney, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care at Surrey County Council, said: “No-one knows what the future will hold for us or our loved ones, but understanding the costs of care is complex and many people are shocked to learn the true figures.

“Doing what we can to stay independent and live in our own home is most people’s goal, and receiving care at home from a visiting provider can be more cost-effective than a move into a residential facility. But we also need to be aware that our needs may change – and discuss our wishes with our families.

“Every year we see people who are ‘self-funding’ run out of money, at which point their families may have to step in to help them stay in a more expensive care home, rather than face the upheaval of moving. Planning ahead can lessen the chance of that happening, which is why appreciating the price you can expect to pay for care is so important.”

The Care Cost Indicator can be found at **www.surreycc.gov.uk/carecostindicator**

It supports Surrey County Council’s nationally commended **Planning for your Future** campaign which is run in partnership with local charity, Age UK Surrey. The campaign aims to help people prepare for later life, and have an early conversation with family



about their plans.

Surrey County Council



Walk brings the wonders of the Solar System to Nonsuch Park

Epsom & Ewell, Saturday 25th October 2025 — Visitors to Nonsuch Park can now enjoy a journey through the Solar System thanks to the successful launch of the Nonsuch Park Solar Walk, officially opened on Saturday in a well-attended community event celebrating science, nature, and local heritage.

The Solar Walk is an engaging, scaled model of the Solar System stretching through one of Epsom & Ewell's most loved green spaces. Each planet is represented by an informative plaque showing its relative distance and size in comparison to the Sun — helping visitors of all ages experience the vastness of space in an accessible and educational way.

Developed in partnership with the Ewell Astronomical Society (EAS), the project combines outdoor recreation with science learning in a fun and interactive way. The EAS provided their astronomical expertise and educational input, helping to bring the concept to life for residents and visitors alike.

"Anyone visiting the park can now experience the scale and vastness of our Solar System whilst enjoying the beautiful surroundings of the historic park," the Society explains on its website.

The launch event saw local councillors, community volunteers, and families take part in guided walks, children's activities, and talks from members of the EAS.

Cllr Steven McCormick said: "The Solar Walk is a fantastic addition to Nonsuch Park — blending education, exercise, and the beauty of our surroundings. It's ideal for families, schools, and visitors of all ages, and it's a perfect activity to enjoy together this half term."

The Solar Walk encourages everyone — from young children discovering the planets for the first time to adults curious about astronomy — to explore the park, learn something new, and stay active outdoors. It's a great way to spend quality time with family and friends during the half-term break.

Nonsuch Park continues to be a cherished green space for Epsom & Ewell residents, offering a mix of recreation, history, and natural beauty. The Solar Walk adds a new dimension for visitors — quite literally — to walk among the planets.

For more information about the Solar Walk, including trail maps and learning materials, visit the Ewell Astronomical Society website.

Space walk launch Nonsuch Park. Featuring Epsom and Ewell Mayor Cllr Robert Leach (2nd from right) and Cllr Steven McCormick (RA Surrey County and EEBC Woodcote and Langley ward)

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Remembrance and



Armistice Day activities 2025

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is proud to announce that Remembrance and Armistice Day memorial services, parades and activities will take place across the borough to honour those who have died in the service of their country and give thanks to those past and present who have served **in** the armed forces. Formal Acts of Remembrance will include the council's annual Garden of Remembrance at Bourne Hall Park on 5 November, Remembrance Day wreath laying and procession on 9 November and an Armistice Day Service on 11 November.

Garden of Remembrance: Wednesday 5 November

On Wednesday 5 November at 10.30am, The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, the Chief Executive of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and local schoolchildren will officially open the Garden of Remembrance. Children will perform songs and poems and place poppy tokens to honour and remember all those who have died in the service of their country. **The Garden will be open to the public until the end of November**, giving people the opportunity to visit, and take time to reflect.

Remembrance Sunday: 9 November

At 9.30am the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell will lay two wreaths at the War Memorials in Ashley Road, Epsom. This will be followed by a Remembrance Day procession from the Army Reserve Centre at Welbeck Close and ending at St Mary's Church, Ewell - followed by an Act of Remembrance service, wreath laying and a church service.

Armistice Day Service (11/11/11): Tuesday 11 November

Members of the public are invited to join a ceremony at the Clock Tower at 10.40am in Epsom Market Place. The Mayor, Chief Executive and elected Councillors will join the Royal British Legion, armed forces, veterans and local schools at the service which ends with observation of the nationwide Two Minute Silence at 11am.

Jackie King, Chief Executive, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, said: "In this moment of remembrance, we pause to honour the service and sacrifice of our Armed Forces. We remember with deep gratitude those who gave their lives in defence of our freedoms, and we honour those who continue to serve with courage and commitment. We will remember them."

Other Remembrance Day activities

Large poppies, kindly donated by the Royal British Legion, are being placed in Epsom High Street, Ewell High Street and Stoneleigh Broadway alongside other poppies placed around the borough.

Events and activities also taking place will include:

- **Bourne Hall Museum: World War I Walk on Saturday 8 November at 10am (free event)**
The public can join Tim Richardson for a walk around Langley Vale First World War Centenary Wood. More information can be found [here](#).
- **Museum Kids club at Bourne Hall: Meet Captain Townsley on Saturday 8 November at 1pm to 2pm (£6.50)**
Children can come along and hear about tales of the war and handle real equipment and uniform. More information can be found [here](#).

For more information on Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Remembrance Day activities - Remembrance in the borough of Epsom & Ewell | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council



Photo: 2024 Remembrance Event Epsom Market Square, led by then Mayor Cllr Steve Bridger - credit Epsom and Ewell Borough Council



Is there a neat solution to struggling Epsom Common Club?

The long-established Epsom Common Club remains closed but not forgotten, as a handful of volunteers continue restoration work and urge fellow members to help decide whether a partnership proposal could bring the venue back to life.

Emails circulated by the Club Committee since late September set out a potential arrangement with **NEAT**, a local community organisation best known for transforming the disused bowls pavilion in Court Recreation Ground into “NEAT HQ”. Founded by two former Chelsea Foundation coaches, NEAT provides wrap-around childcare, alternative schooling for pupils unable to remain in mainstream education, and a wide range of family and youth activities.

Under the plan, NEAT would rent the rear hall of the Club’s premises for use during the week and contribute to finishing both the front and back halls. The Club explains that this could secure a steady income stream, remove the need to rent the front room to outside hirers, and revive the building as a “community hub”. However, it would also mean losing the existing snooker room and restricting member use of part of the premises.

The Club’s emails emphasise that the idea is still a proposal only. “Before it could proceed to this stage it would require members’ consent and this was stressed to NEAT as non-negotiable,” wrote the Club Secretary, Mr C. O’Neil, in response to Epsom & Ewell Times.

Three rounds of consultation emails have been sent to roughly 220 members—about three-quarters of the Club’s recorded list—but only around seven per cent initially replied. Later reminders lifted the total response rate, producing an approximate three-to-one majority in favour of exploring talks, though still short of what organisers regard as a clear mandate.

With no formal committee now in place and the Club being managed informally by the Secretary and one assisting member, progress has been slow. The handful of volunteers who meet on Saturday mornings to carry out repairs are credited with keeping the building from dereliction. “If this idea is allowed to wither on the vine it could well be last orders for your Club,” one circular warned.

Mr O’Neil told the *Times* that if members give approval, formal negotiations would follow to settle details such as rent, permitted uses, and neighbour consultation. Any final agreement would then be put to a members’ meeting for ratification. Questions about parking, noise, and the possible need for planning or licensing changes would be addressed at that stage.

For now, the Club remains closed to new memberships while restoration work continues. “The work is currently being undertaken by a few valiant members and any member wishing to assist would be welcomed,” said Mr O’Neil. Volunteers can make contact via the Club’s email address: **clubeventsecwmc@gmail.com**.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Epsom Common Club – Google Maps

Epsom Hospital’s support for bereaved mum of baby

A Tadworth mother whose baby died tragically from a rare infection aged only eight days has praised the nurses and midwives who supported her family during “the darkest time in our lives”.

Jodie Picknett gave birth to baby George at Epsom Hospital in April 2023. Shortly afterwards, he returned to hospital to be



treated for jaundice but became suddenly very unwell and lethargic. At just seven days old, he was admitted to the Special Care Baby Unit.

That night George deteriorated, and despite the determined efforts of the neonatal nurses, he sadly passed away. A post-mortem later revealed that he had contracted a severe enterovirus — a condition usually mild for most people but which can prove deadly for newborns.

For Jodie and her family, the care and guidance of Specialist Bereavement Midwife Lydia Baker and the Maternity Bereavement Team at Epsom Hospital were a vital source of strength. The team liaised with the coroner and post-mortem services and connected the family with funeral directors experienced in compassionate bereavement care.

Jodie, 37, said: “Lydia supported us through every step – from looking after George and making practical arrangements to simply being there when we needed her. Her compassion and understanding made the hardest moments that little bit more bearable.”

Thanks to funding from Epsom and St Helier Hospitals Charity, Lydia and her team can provide detailed 3D ‘memory castings’ for bereaved families. The casts capture each tiny feature of a baby’s hands and feet, offering parents a lasting, tangible connection. Previously, families received only basic prints, but the charity’s support now enables the team to create intricate castings from the twenty-sixth week of pregnancy onwards.

Lydia said: “When a baby dies, families don’t have a lifetime of memories, so creating something tangible in that moment is vital.”

Jodie is now fundraising for the hospital charity so this work can continue. She is inviting people to donate ribbons that will form a memorial display at their local church, with proceeds supporting more bereaved families.

“After George died, the bereavement team helped guide us through the darkest time in our lives with empathy and respect,” Jodie said. “By fundraising, we hope to help Lydia and her team continue their vital work, ensuring more families receive the same compassionate, specialist care. Our ribbon display is a small gesture, but it offers a space for others to remember their babies too. It’s a way to say: your baby mattered, and they are not forgotten.”

For Jodie and her husband Ben, 41, Epsom Hospital holds special meaning. Their daughter Alice was born there in August 2021 and their third child, Lucy, in May 2025.

Jodie added: “We think about our son every day – he is part of everything we do. We will never get to see George take his first steps, say his first words, or start school. That loss is felt every day. So being able to say his name and honour his memory publicly is incredibly important to us.”

Molly Simpson, Head of Charity and Fundraising at Epsom and St Helier Hospitals Charity, said: “Losing a baby is devastating for any family and we are very proud to support the teams who help them through their grief. We’re grateful to Jodie and her husband Ben for sharing such a personal story and know it will inspire others to give what they can – your generosity will mean our exceptional teams can continue to support bereaved parents when they need it most.”

Jodie is sharing her story during Baby Loss Awareness Week, which offers a space for anyone affected by pregnancy and baby loss to share their experiences.

Donations can be made via Jodie and Ben’s JustGiving page.

St George’s, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group

Photo: George with mum Jodie and sister Alice