

## Joe Chant – Fundraising for ‘Bister’s Big Build’

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Registered Charity Number 1163021



# Case Study – Fundraising for ‘Bister’s Big Build’

*Joe’s family have kindly documented their process during their fundraising with Sullivan’s Heroes, and their adaptation project, for this Case Study.*

## Goal

- To ensure that Joe can be cared for at home safely and with dignity, with ample space for him and his equipment.
- To raise enough money to add to Joe’s Disabled Facilities Grant so that our house adaptation could be completed without compromises.

## Background

After a straightforward pregnancy, in June 2013 Joe was born, weighing 5lb 5oz. Shortly after Joseph’s birth, we found out that he had a serious brain injury. Unbeknown to anyone, Joe had suffered a massive stroke in the last 12 weeks of the pregnancy and was lucky to have survived.

As a result of the stroke, Joe has complex needs including epilepsy, severe visual impairment, cerebral palsy and severe learning difficulties. It was during his first month, all of which was spent in the Special Care Baby Unit, that we nicknamed him ‘Mister Bister’.

The idea of converting our garage into a downstairs space for Joe began in late 2014. Securing a DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant) was a lengthy process in itself, requiring many meetings and discussions about how best to meet Joe’s needs. In the interests of spending public monies wisely, there is a cap on the value of a DFG.



The DFG would only provide funding for the ‘Best Value Scheme’ which met Joe’s needs for sleeping and washing – without taking into account the storage of Joe’s equipment; Joe’s sensory needs; Joe’s younger brother Samuel’s needs; or any of the aesthetics.

We knew that unless we supplemented the DFG, this cap would result in frustrating compromises and poor design features. The most significant of these was being forced to lose our dining area and therefore eat every single meal in the lounge.

At this point, the charity Sullivan’s Heroes came into the picture. Sullivan was a friend of Joe’s via a preschool playgroup at Shooting Star Chase Hospice. When Sullivan passed away in January 2015, his parents set up the charity Sullivan’s Heroes – the only charity in the UK to provide support for families who need to adapt their homes to meet the needs of a disabled child.

## Fundraising

1. Sullivan’s Heroes provided us with loads of advice and first-hand experience about moving from the Best Value Scheme to our Preferred Scheme. We quickly coined the phrase ‘Bister’s Big Build’ and immediately set up our Fundraising Project Page on Sullivan’s Heroes’ website and began to contemplate raising thousands of pounds. It was months later, after meetings, drawings, specifications and more meetings that vague expected costs came in. At this point, we were thankful that we’d started the fundraising early!



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## Case Study – Fundraising for 'Bister's Big Build'

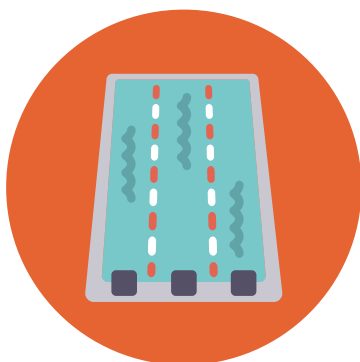
**2.** Stuart (Joe's Daddy) made a video montage of our house, Joe and the concept of Bister's Big Build. In the video, he invited others to get involved if they could, by helping to fundraise on our behalf. This video was shared via social media and YouTube, together with the link to the Sullivan's Heroes Fundraising Project Page where direct donations could be made to our project.



**3.** That's when our friends, families, community, local businesses and network of connections stepped up – in a way we could never have predicted. People from all areas of our lives donated money, undertook sponsored challenges, donated materials for the build and fundraised on our behalf.



**4.** Two local secondary schools ran a tutor group challenge called 'Grow a Fiver' where the Year 8 tutor groups were given a five pound note and encouraged to use their social enterprise skills to convert it into as much profit as possible. Many of our friends took the opportunity of completing a physical challenge for Bister's Big Build, including the Three Peaks Challenge; Coast to Coast Cornwall; a 5km Colour Run; the Dart 10km swim and a 10km Midnattsloppet (Midnight Run).



There were many smaller events running too, such as cake sales and 'Name the Bunny' pub raffles.



**5.** In the background, I spent much of my 'spare' time keeping social media up to date, thanking our generous supporters and ensuring that the Big Build grass didn't grow too long. We completed many applications to local charities and wrote to local businesses for their support.

As Sullivan's Heroes explains "Many charities and organisations cannot help an individual's project directly, but are able and much more willing to do so via a registered charity. As a referring charity, Sullivan's

Heroes can support the individual's application, and provide a receipt to the organisation for donations and grants received, which is beneficial for their accounting purposes and financial records.

"Families which Sullivan's Heroes are supporting have had a lot of success with achieving funding from additional sources once set up with us."

**6.** Sullivan's Heroes provided a grant towards the works required.



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### Outcome

We have been overwhelmed by everyone's generosity and we feel so humble. We never expected to be able to raise so much money and it's so touching to think about all the people who care about Joe. In under a year, the Big Build fundraising total reached over £23,000.

In September, with some fundraising still in progress, we employed the services of Steve Jenkins. A member of the Facebook group 'Alton & Bordon Mums' recommended his work to me, and this chance suggestion led to a fantastic working relationship with an everyday hero.



At every stage of Bister's Big Build, Steve was sensitive to our family's needs and made sure that both our children could live a safe and normal life at home. He and his team have completed the project to the highest standard and we're thrilled with the finished result. I'd even go so far as to say that Steve is now a friend of ours. Much of the success of the build is down to him, and we owe him an enormous thank you.

Steve and his team have completed several significant changes to our home:

**1.** Converting our garage into Joe's new downstairs bedroom. There is plenty of space for Joe's wheelchair and standing frame, as well as his profiling bed. He can be safely hoisted from his bed into a variety of positions.

**2.** Building Joe a small extension for his ensuite wetroom, which includes a fold-down shower stretcher, specialist sink and ceiling track hoisting. Joe can be washed every day without the dangers of lifting him in and out of a bath, and might one day learn to use his new toileting chair.

**3.** Building a new smooth landing platform at the front of the house, and path from the driveway to the back door, so that Joe can be wheeled from the car directly into the house. The new back door has level-access, which means that Joe can be transported from the car, via the garden, through the back door and into his new bedroom without any changes in level.



**4.** Levelling the whole back garden so that it is entirely accessible to a wheelchair, directly from the new patio. This gives the whole family more space and freedom, and allows Joe to be fully involved in family life.



### Learnings

**1.** The support of Sullivan's Heroes with its charity status and practical support was second to none.

Affiliation with a registered charity gave our project legitimacy. It allowed us to claim Gift Aid for the charity, and approach local charities for their support.

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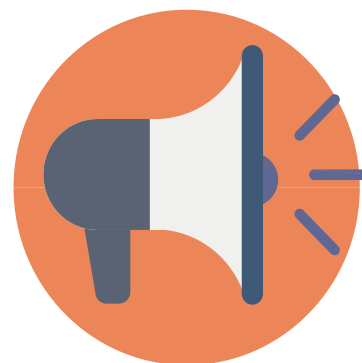
As Sullivan's Heroes advises "Channelling all fundraising through Sullivan's Heroes allows the charity to claim Gift Aid which is used to cover JustGiving fees on donations made to the child's fund, increasing the value of donations the family receives. The Gift Aid is also used towards operational costs and assisting other families ongoing with grants."

**2.** Don't be intimidated or overwhelmed by the target required. Chip away at it, one £10 at a time. Even the small events like a raffle in a local pub might surprise you with how much money comes in and how many contacts you make.



Then approach the local supplier and say what we wanted, and how much of it and who it was for. Then ask them if they would be willing to support the project by contacting the manufacturer on our behalf, or by offering us a discount.

**5.** Local charities and local businesses are often more helpful and more interested than larger national organisations – especially if you can offer the local organisation something in return such as a Facebook review, or photos of the work for their website or free advertising, plus recognition and promotion of their organisation via Sullivan's Heroes.



**6.** Keep your social media and fundraising campaign up to date. It keeps everyone interested if there's a weekly update on events that are running or what Joe has been up to or what stage the build is at.



**7.** Make plans and decisions in advance, even if it seems early. Building works don't always proceed in the way you'd expect and some items have a long lead-time for delivery. Negotiating a discount or donation can take a few weeks, so by getting organised in advance and planning your finishing touches such as lighting and flooring, you can avoid stressful delays.



**4.** Ask people directly. Sometimes businesses want to help but they can't give money or freebies. We found that it was best to decide what we wanted, for example, a particular floor tile.



**3.** Talk to everyone about your project – build up a web of contacts and make sure your local community all know what is going on. A feature in the local newspaper can help.

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### Gallery

Funds were raised for Joe's project via numerous events, including a Christmas Raffle with generously donated items ...



... and a Summer Golf Day organised by Joe's family and friends.



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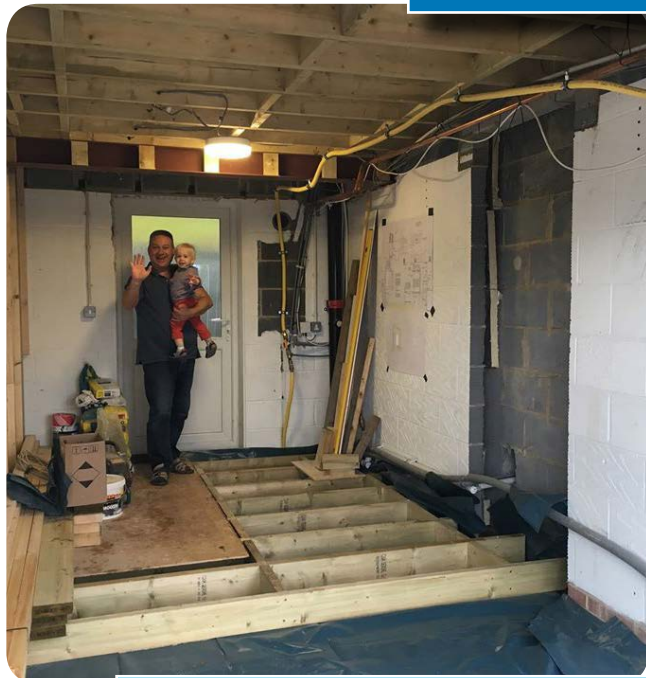




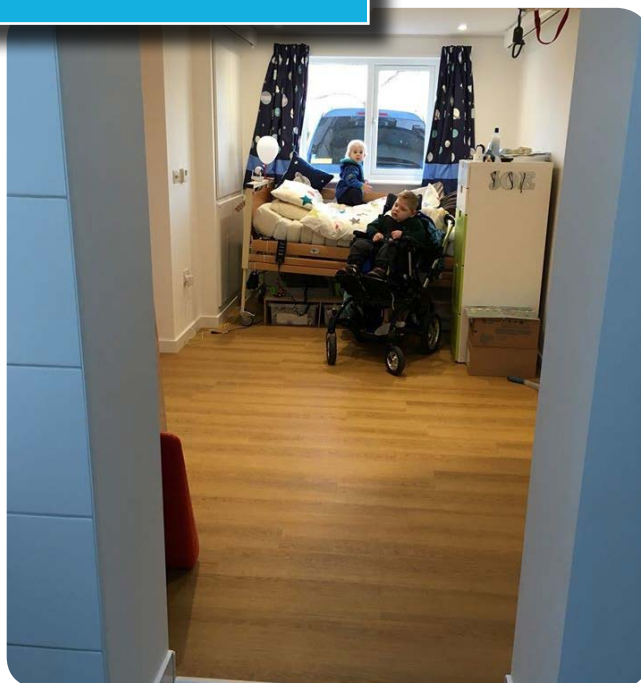


## Case Study – Fundraising for 'Bister's Big Build'

Work commences to turn the existing garage into Joe's new bedroom ...



... providing plenty of area for Joe's mobility equipment and his profiling bed. Free-flowing space throughout the downstairs has created space for sibling time, and interacting with his younger brother Samuel too.



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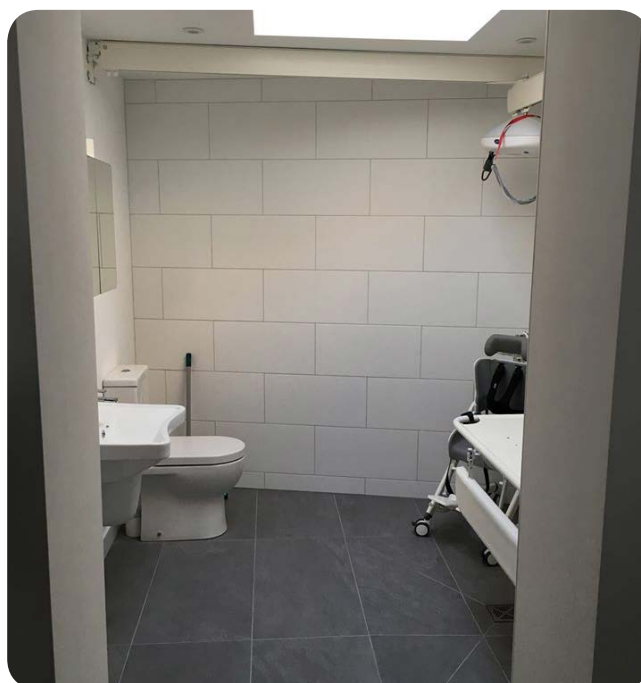






## Case Study – Fundraising for 'Bister's Big Build'

The extension to the rear of the house gets underway, which will house Joe's new accessible wetroom ...



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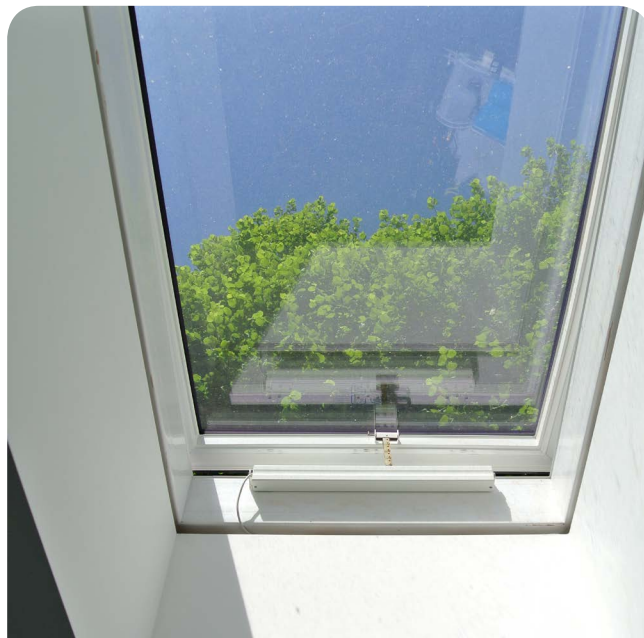
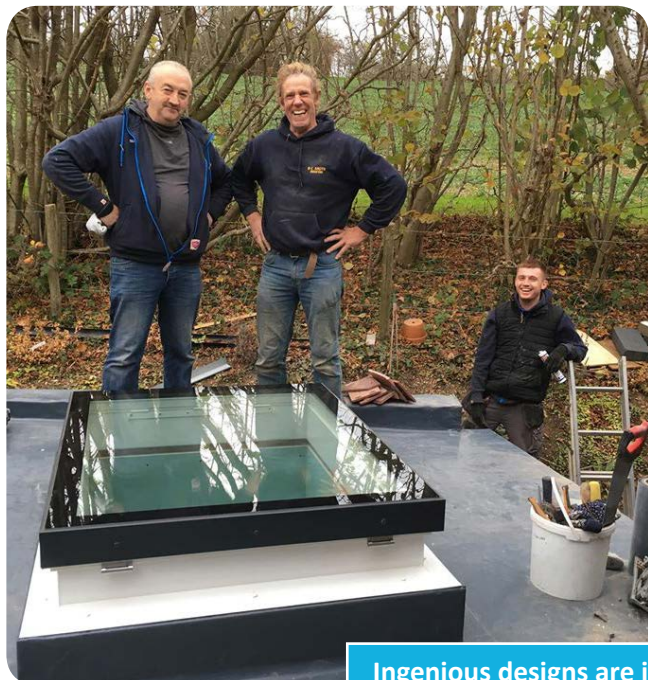
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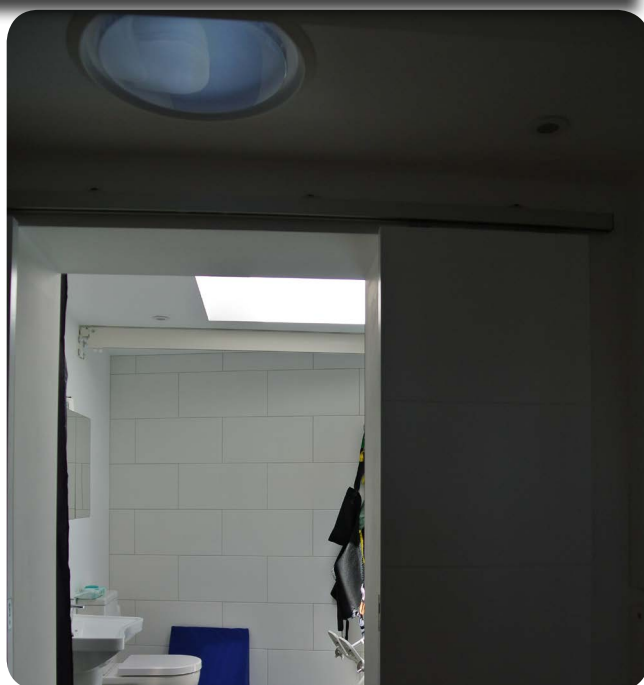




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Ingenious designs are incorporated into the wetroom such as a skylight and light tube in the ceiling to allow natural light to enter from above – whilst maximising valuable wall space by removing the requirement for windows.



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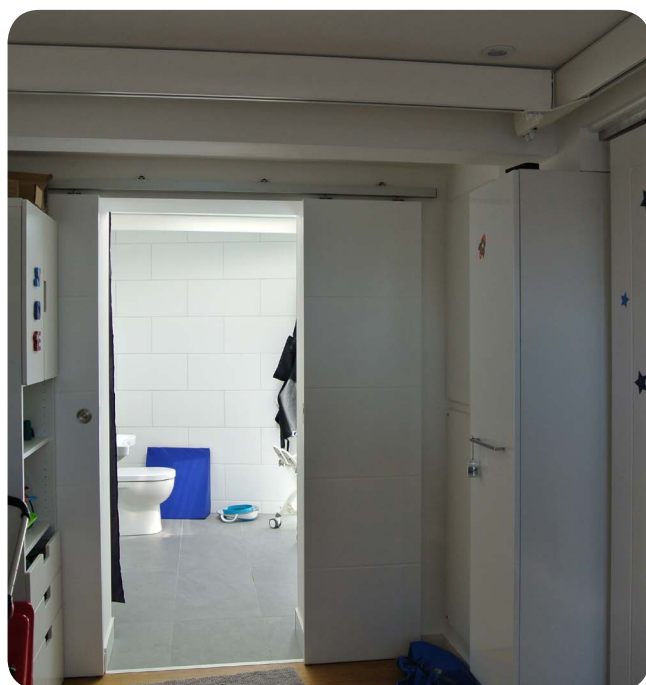
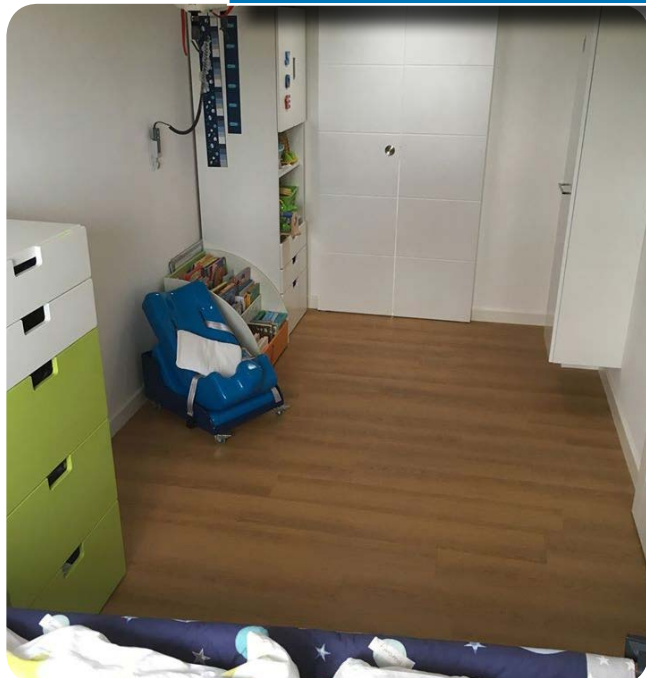
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Installing sliding doors on Joe's bedroom and wetroom doorways allow for plenty of space for access and manoeuvring.



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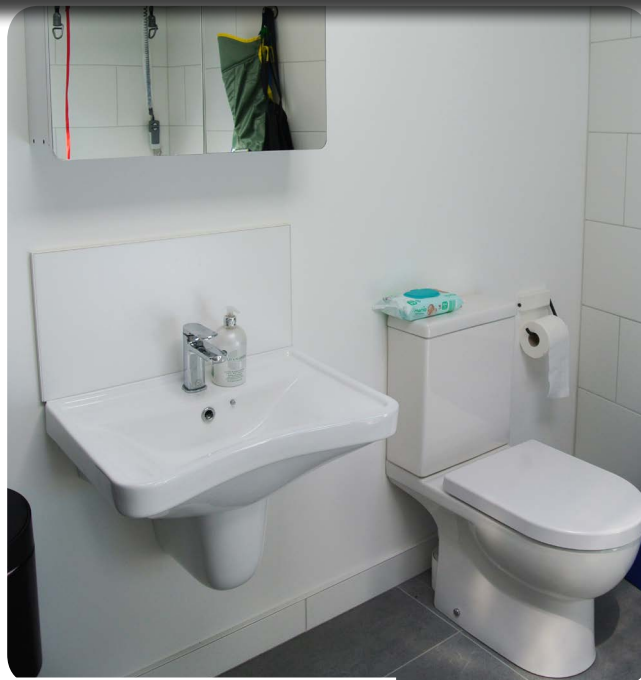






## Case Study – Fundraising for 'Bister's Big Build'

Building Joe a small extension for his ensuite wetroom facilities make washing and changing Joe safer and more dignified. The new wetroom which includes a fold-down shower stretcher, specialist sink and ceiling track hoisting means Joe can be washed every day without the dangers of lifting him in and out of a bath.



Bathing Joe used to be a 2-person task and lifting him out of the bath was unsafe. Now Joe can have a shower with just one adult to support him, rather than two, and there is space in his new wetroom for a toileting chair which he will be able to learn to use.



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Getting in and out of the house previously was a physical effort due to a huge step at the front door. The new flat platform in front of the house with the new path from the driveway to the back door now make it safer, quicker and easier to wheel Joe directly from the car to the house.



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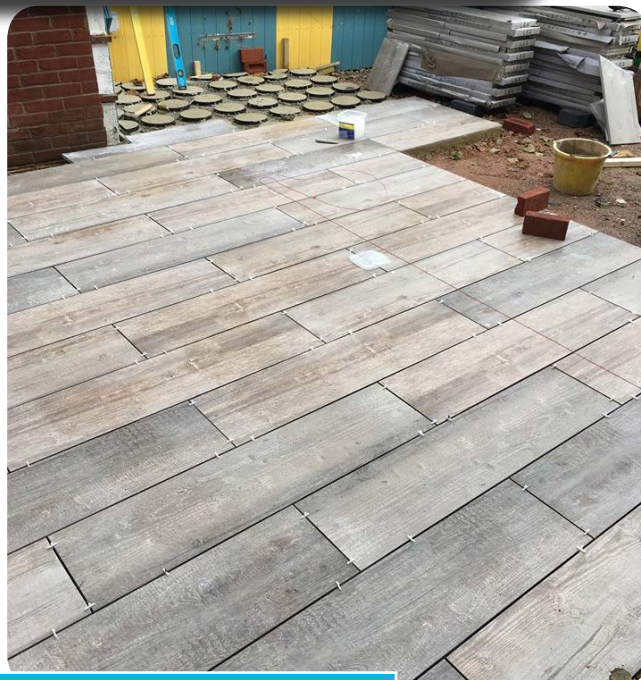






## Case Study – Fundraising for 'Bister's Big Build'

The new back door has level access and the whole back garden has been levelled, plus a new patio laid, to make it wheelchair accessible. This means that Joe can now be transported from the car, through the garden and back door and into his new bedroom without any changes in level.



This new accessible space has given Joe freedom and allows him to be fully involved in family life.



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Joe's house adaptations have made a huge difference to his life, together with that of his parents and carers. The adaptations including hoisting, new back door, garden ramp and downstairs conversion mean there is no more lifting required. Moving Joe is now a safer and more comfortable experience. All of Joe's needs are met on the ground floor, so there's no need to move equipment up and down the stairs. Hoisting throughout Joe's bedroom and wetroom means he can be safely hoisted from his bed and moved into a variety of positions.



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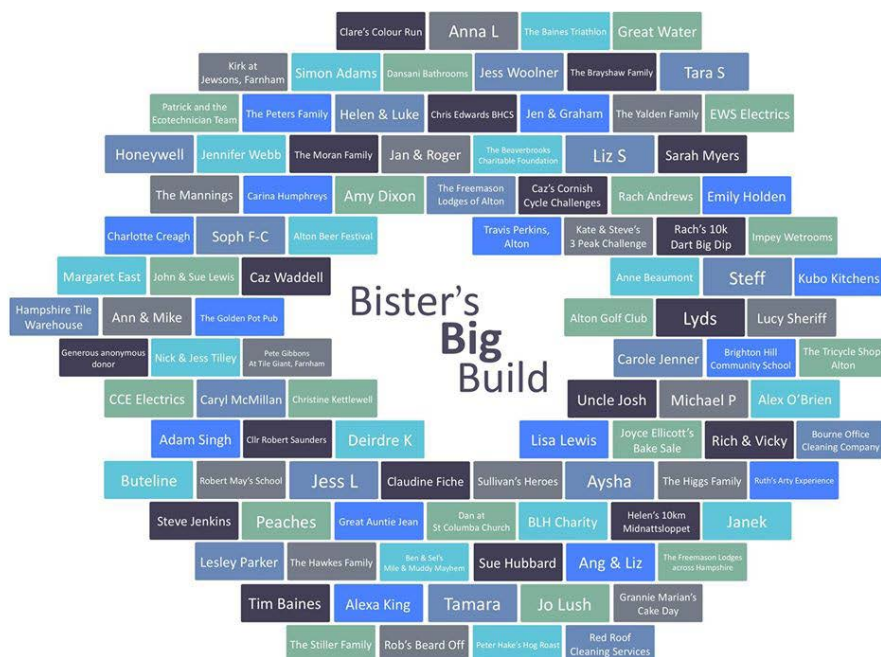
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## Case Study – Fundraising for 'Bister's Big Build'



Almost exactly a year after the build started, the final finishing touch is added to Joe's fantastic new room! This beautiful piece of artwork, designed by one of the many fundraisers involved in 'Bister's Big Build', details everyone that supported the project from start to finish. What a lovely, lasting memento of all those involved in creating Joe's amazing new space, and making such a positive difference to his life.



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