

## Poppy

***At just one year old, Poppy was diagnosed with a rare anomaly which meant she often choked any time her parents tried to feed her. Fast forward three years and she was able to eat her first Christmas dinner, thanks to Alder Hey.***

Four year old Poppy was referred to Alder Hey in the summer of 2016 when she was just one year old. She was diagnosed later that year with congenital oesophageal stricture, which prevented Poppy from being able to eat lumpy or solid foods. She would choke any time her parents tried to feed her with anything other than 4-6 month baby pureed food. This time was distressing for Poppy and her family and anyone who witnessed her gagging or choking on anything she attempted to swallow.

Poppy required major oesophageal resection surgery which took place in May 2017. This was followed by numerous monthly operations to stretch open the oesophagus following the resection surgery, eventually allowing her to eat solid foods from the age of 3 years old. Poppy will require further surgery in the future to create a closure to her stomach called a fundoplication but until this time, Poppy remains on different daily medications which she will continue for the rest of her life.

Mum Helen said “The older Poppy got the more she wanted to eat more and more and the more she would get distressed at seeing other children eat especially at parties when she couldn’t eat any cake.

“She had to be fed pureed food at nursery where all her other toddler friends were able to sit chomping sandwiches, and pizza. Poppy used to role play with her baby dolls in the bath and it broke my heart one day when she bent her baby over her knee, patted it’s back and scooped from its mouth saying ‘spit it out, spit it out now.’ Poppy’s major surgery took place in May 2017 and it was life-changing; she was finally at nearly 3 years old able to have her 1<sup>st</sup> Christmas Dinner that year and her first Birthday cake on her third birthday. We couldn’t be happier.”

Alan is an operating department practitioner at Alder Hey and plays an important role in preparing any operation such as the one which Poppy had. His role entails assisting the surgeon in the operating theatre and he is also responsible for ensuring that the instruments are prepared and sterilised.

Dr Sarang is a consultant in gastroenterology and looked after Poppy at Alder Hey. Dr Sarang headed the team which investigated and diagnosed Poppy’s condition as well as helped her get better.

Poppy has a huge personality, is very caring and funny. She loves to sing and dance and you can often hear her in the kitchen instructing “Alexa” to play Beauty and the Beast.