



Bethany is now having the time of her life playing her favourite games.

Her Mum was worried that Bethany's cerebral palsy would prevent her from playing games like all her friends and peers. Because of continuing Covid restrictions, SpecialEffect met the family via video call to see how we could help.

Bethany really wanted to play Mario, Pink and Paw Patrol. Having determined what might work, we loaned adaptive equipment and carefully talked Mum through setting it up. We included a large joystick for Bethany's left hand and a range of button switches for her affected right hand - all fixed onto a special lap tray to keep it stable, enabling Bethany to play successfully alongside her family. ***"It's great to be able to play like everyone else!"*** Bethany's Mum is so excited she can now play independently: ***"There aren't enough words to describe how amazing SpecialEffect have been."***



Olcán

Six-year-old Olcán was diagnosed with a very rare blood disorder called aplastic anaemia after his parents noticed bruising over his body. Up to then Olcán had been a normal boy who loved football, playing with friends and four-year-old brother, Hunter. A bone marrow transplant is the only



known cure but Olcán has a rare bone tissue type, meaning finding a donor is incredibly difficult.

Because of his compromised immune system, SpecialEffect have been supporting Olcán to attend school remotely from his home or hospital bed via a cute desktop robot through our BubbleBusters project. 'Sitting' in a classroom at school, the interactive robot follows the teacher and class around each day, keeping Olcán safe and allowing him to continue treatment, without missing out on vital education and inclusion with friends. The BubbleBusters robot also enabled Olcán to attend his Auntie's wedding in December, making sure he was part of the big day, albeit virtually. Olcán is isolating in Ireland with Mum while virtually attending his old school in Gloucestershire.



theincredibleolc @specialeffectteam @_noisolation the face of pure joy 😊 the AV1 was a complete success. Thanks so much to Mick, Sally, Jess and the rest of the team.



Olcán's parents Sam, a farmer and former retained firefighter, and Genevieve, a senior project manager in the healthcare sector: "He's the most wonderful boy, who misses football, his friends and play fighting with his brother". After a huge appeal, the most wonderful news is that a donor has just been found.



Ava

Our newly released Snakes & Ladders game gained a big fan in Ava, a Canadian girl with Rett Syndrome who uses eye control technology. It's one of her favourite games but up to now she's not been able to roll the dice herself. But now she can!

Snakes & Ladders is the latest free-to-play online game on SpecialEffect's Eye Gaze Games website, currently being enjoyed by disabled gamers in over thirty countries worldwide.

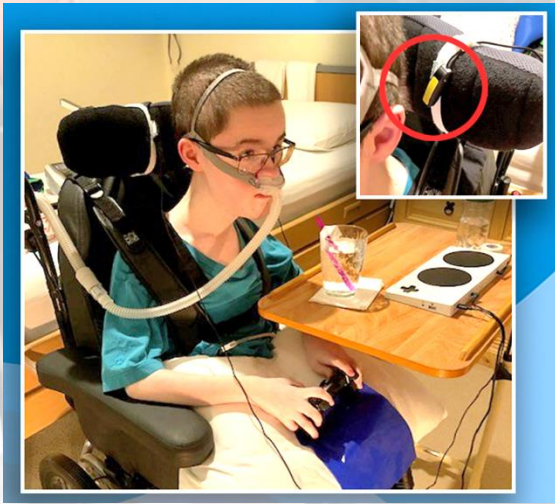
"It's a HUGE hit!" said Ava's Mum, Jennifer. "Ava is so excited to be playing with us as a family! It's so great that she can see the board easily while playing and the animations are adorable and engaging. I love everything about this!"

You can climb the ladders (which have been made into wheelchair-friendly ramps) and avoid the snakes just by eye movement alone using an eye gaze camera, or you can use other inputs too.

Bill Donegan, our Projects Manager, said *"Snakes & Ladders is one of ten different games on the site which enable players using eye gaze technology to play a range of games with friends and family, in person and online. While our work often focuses on access to existing mainstream titles, creating our own – completely free - games with a focus on accessibility for eye gaze players allows us to make sure there are games available for players using this technology, who often cannot play in any other way."*

We aim to remove as many barriers to play as possible, for players all around the world.

**We thank YOU for such wonderful support, making all this possible.
We so appreciate your kindness.**



Chris has Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Following our support, his Dad said it's **"A godsend for Chris and his sanity."**

"It's so thrilling that David can access games again," said his foster mum. **"Once he's set up he's pretty independent..."**



"SpecialEffect have given Charlie an entrance to many worlds that he loves," said his father. **"He now lives to join in."**

"It's great to be able to play like everyone else!" Bethany's Mum is so excited she can now play independently: **"There aren't enough words to describe how amazing SpecialEffect have been."**

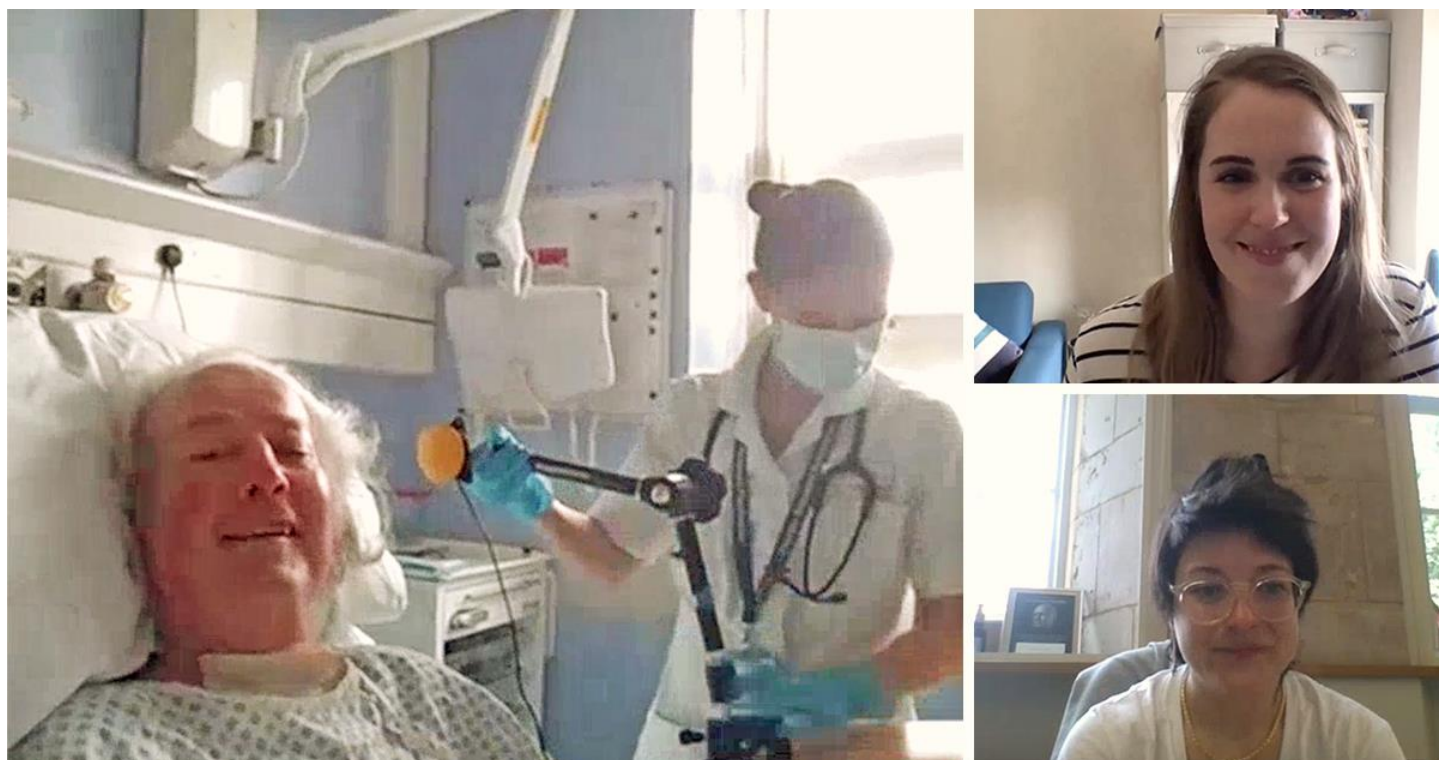




“I can’t express what a difference it made”

Life for Steve was turned upside-down when Guillain-Barré syndrome suddenly left him in intensive care on a ventilator with very limited movements of all four limbs. His independence was gone, and he was facing the isolation and uncertainty of many long months of rehabilitation.

The hospital got in touch to see if we could help, and after working together to assess Steve’s abilities via video calls, Liz and Hannah from our StarGaze team sent a carefully selected range of access equipment and personalised software that had the potential to provide a vital degree of independence



“The SpecialEffect team were introduced to me by the hospital OT team at a time when I was almost totally disabled,” explained Steve. “They were lovely to talk to and immediately understood my situation. They came up with a solution using push buttons attached to a computer that I could operate with my head and my one working foot.”

“It was life-changing. I was able to listen to my radio stations, read my eBooks and watch YouTube. It gave me back the first little bit of independence and control over my life, something I could mentally grab hold of and build on. I can’t express what a difference it made. I’ll never forget what the team did for me.”

We continued to support Steve when he moved on to rehabilitation. His mobility improved ‘til he was eventually able to access his computer without the specialist equipment, and we’re currently helping him to access Minecraft and other PC games comfortably and independently as he regains finer movements.

We’re so happy Steve’s quality of life has been boosted by our support and loan equipment. As always, we’ll be there for Steve throughout, as his abilities and needs change during his recovery.

Photo: Hannah (top) and Liz from our StarGaze team on a remote support call working alongside the hospital team to direct the careful positioning of the switches that enabled Steve’s independent computer access.

SpecialEffect are constantly fundraising and we are absolutely indebted to many wonderful Trusts, Foundations, individuals, businesses, schools and community groups for such incredible support who help us in so many different ways.

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