

# Happening

## 90 years of enabling potential

See our  
commemorative  
pull-out timeline  
on **page 12**



**Queen Elizabeth's  
Foundation for  
Disabled People**

Enabling Potential

A QEF  
love story  
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Paying it  
forward  
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# Welcome to our 90th anniversary special issue

It's a real honour to welcome you to your commemorative issue of *Happening*.

It's almost a century since QEF started its work to enhance the lives of disabled people. The training college for disabled people set up by Dame Georgina Buller and Stanley Evans was officially opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother (then Her Royal Highness the Duchess of York) on 27 June, 1935. Our work has continued and evolved ever since – and everyone reading this message has played a part in us supporting disabled people to this day. All I can say is thank you for your generosity and dedication.

In this special issue, we take the chance both to share some memorable moments from our past and to look forward to what the future might bring. I'd definitely recommend making a cup of tea before settling down to read articles like Ray's extraordinary story of his parents meeting at QEF during the Second World War (and celebrating their Golden Wedding here 50 years later). I hope, as someone who makes such a difference to disabled people by supporting QEF, you'll enjoy reading how much our work has meant to Ray's family.

Today, as we celebrate our anniversary, we remain committed to our mission of delivering expert services that enable disabled people of all ages to achieve their potential, so they can be as independent as possible.

It won't surprise you, therefore, to hear that the last thing we intend to do is rest on our laurels. Instead, our future initiatives will continue to focus on innovation, inclusivity and expert service delivery – as has long been the case. But at this moment, I would simply like to say thanks once again to you – our supporters, partners, donors and volunteers. You make our work possible, and all of the stories you can read in this issue are your stories too.

Thank you,



**Karen Deacon**  
QEF, Chief Executive



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Prue shared stories and memories from her career as a chef, culinary entrepreneur and – of course – Great British Bake Off host. We owe Prue a huge thank you for her ongoing support.

Guests had the chance to have their photo taken with Prue and to get signed copies of her latest book, 'Life's too short to stuff a mushroom'. There was also a silent auction and a raffle with some fantastic prizes.

## Get Prue's QEF recipe!

As Great British Bake Off legend Prue Leith joined us for the first of our new 'In Conversation With...' events, she revealed a very special 90th anniversary recipe created just for us. And now you can try it for yourself...

QEF supporters joined us at Sandown Park Racecourse recently for lunch and a Q&A with none other than Dame Prue Leith.

Prue was even kind enough to create a special 90th anniversary dessert recipe for us. And if you'd like to cook it up yourself at home, it's not too late.

Donate £5 today to QEF and we'll email a copy straight to you. No soggy bottoms here!

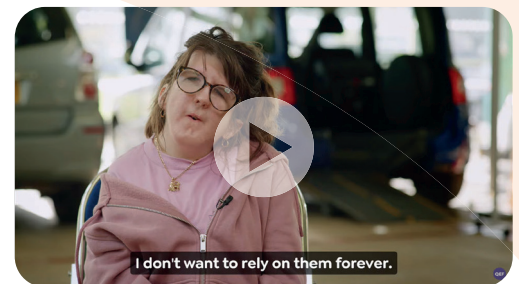


**To donate and get this celebratory recipe, go to [qef.org.uk/prue](https://qef.org.uk/prue) or call 01372 841 151. Thank you.**

Don't miss the next in our series of 'In Conversation With...' events. We'll be hosting a panel of expert gardeners, headed by gardening consultant, writer and broadcaster Peter Mills (BBC Radio Surrey) at Loseley Park in Surrey on 12th June. To find out more, email us at [events@qef.org.uk](mailto:events@qef.org.uk)

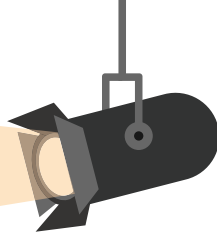
## Watch our new film

As part of our 90th anniversary celebrations, we've launched a short video to showcase the work you make possible. Please do take five minutes to see how you're supporting disabled people like Rocky, Ellie and Julian to achieve their potential. You can see their very powerful stories in the film and when you've done that, make sure you share it with everyone you know!



See the progress you're inspiring at [www.qef.org.uk](https://www.qef.org.uk)

Spotlight on...



# From wartime dates to a Golden Wedding

Bill was working as a QEF welding instructor in 1942 when he met Betty, a secretary in our office during the Second World War. As their son Ray explains today, for the next 50 years their connection to QEF never dimmed.

Ray's family connection with QEF stretches all the way back to 1935. That year, the man who would become his father – Bill,

then aged 17 – received a letter inviting him to what was then the Queen Elizabeth Training College in Leatherhead.

Bill was born with disabilities affecting his hands and legs, but was able to train with us to become a skilled welder. After completing his training, Bill moved to a job in Kent before returning to QEF during the Second World War. He learned new welding techniques that allowed him to work on high-security manufacturing to support the war effort, before becoming a welding instructor at the college himself. "He found the college welcoming and always looked back fondly on those early days," Ray remembers today.

**“Numerous people, like my dad, were equipped and inspired to take on the world, no matter how that world viewed them.”**

## A lifelong commitment

It was at this point that perhaps the longest love story connected to QEF began. Betty started working in the training college office in around 1943, and, Ray says, "Dad as an instructor no doubt had to visit the office, where mum would have been, and I also know mum spent a lot of free time on the lawn in front of the old original house, so no doubt their paths would have crossed many times".







Sure enough, Bill and Betty became a couple, and in 1948 they were married, a few months after Her Majesty The Queen Mother visited the college. And while their connection to QEF could have faded after Betty left when

Ray was born in 1949 and Bill moved on to work elsewhere, the opposite is true. In fact, Ray says, Bill's appreciation of the encouragement and acceptance he found at QEF grew throughout his life.

"Dad's amazing abilities were in no small measure due to his character and willpower not to be beaten by anything," Ray says. "But a big factor – which he always acknowledged – was the part played by the Queen Elizabeth Training College. This amazing college equipped him as a young man for life."

## Celebrating with us

More than 50 years after their first meeting at QEF, Betty and Bill chose to celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary at the college. They had been regulars at QEF's fundraisers and events for decades, and often brought Ray to visit our facilities. "To them, this was the only place to hold the celebration", Ray says.

It was when Bill passed away in 2014 that Ray truly came to understand how much



Bill outside QEF in later years

QEF had meant to the whole family. "For a long time I never realised how deeply the college had touched me," he says. "But the success of those early days of the training college provided the bedrock for the QEF we have today, as it continues its amazing work."

"And dad's story, amazing as it is, is just a tiny element of what this college achieved," Ray adds. "Numerous people, like my dad, were equipped and inspired to take on the world, no matter how that world viewed them."

**“Dad’s amazing abilities were in no small measure due to his character and willpower not to be beaten by anything. But a big factor – which he always acknowledged – was the part played by the Queen Elizabeth Training College.”**

**We’d like to thank Ray for sharing his story. For 90 years, our community has changed lives in ways that will never be forgotten.**

# Paying it forward

Benjamin and Colin both received support at QEF to regain independence after devastating brain injuries. And – like so many people in our 90 year history – they have now made the generous decision to support QEF themselves.



## Benjamin: back behind the wheel

I'm a journalist and I was covering the Ukraine conflict in March 2022 when our team was attacked by Russians. I lost my right leg, my left foot and had a traumatic brain injury. I was in hospital for seven months.

Eventually I wanted to start driving again, so I came to QEF to see how I might be able to drive. Initially we spoke about how I could move and what I could do

**“Having QEF's private track really helped to build my confidence when I wasn't ready to drive on the road.”**

and decided that I could try driving around QEF's private track with a car that used hand controls.

I wasn't certain when I first came to QEF that I would be able to drive, but the team were so reassuring, and we went at the pace I wanted. I was put in touch with instructors who had specifically adapted cars and after several sessions I was driving again. And it felt great – amazing! I have so much more freedom now.

**Since being supported at QEF, Ben shared his experiences at our Guinness and Oyster event in London last year. We can't thank him enough. You can read his full story at [www.qef.org.uk/story/benjamin](http://www.qef.org.uk/story/benjamin)**



## Colin: determined to walk again

Last April, I fell down the stairs at Tower Hill Tube station. It was a nasty fall – they almost shut the station because of the incident.

I had a stroke whilst in hospital, and the surgeon told my wife that I might not make it. It took me a long time to accept it wasn't just a dream.

I spent about eight weeks in hospital before being moved to the Care and Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) at QEF for rehabilitation.

I had physio every day. My right arm, which wasn't moving at all when I arrived, gradually became as good as my left.



“I spent about eight weeks in hospital before being moved to the Care and Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) at QEF for rehabilitation.”

I hope to walk again, but if I can't, I might need adaptations to my car and house. I'm determined to live and regain my independence as much as I can.

Over the past year, Colin's family has offered incredible support to QEF. Two of his sons, Rory and Jeremy, have raised over £2,600. Rory ran the London Marathon and Jeremy's employer, West Chiropractic, made us its charity of the year. Thank you so much.

## Will you become a friend of QEF?

Whether you already support us or have been supported by us, it's a brilliant way to take a more active role in our work. Find out more by emailing [community@qef.org.uk](mailto:community@qef.org.uk).

## Team90 needs you!

To celebrate our 90th anniversary, we're inviting supporters nationwide to join Team90, to help raise an additional £90,000 and take on an unforgettable challenge for QEF.

Throughout 2025, we're launching new challenges and events right across the country. And whatever you love to do – there's bound to be something for you.



**Adrenaline junkie?** Why not try a skydive?



**Prefer something more down to earth?** How does an inflatable obstacle course sound?



**Want to feel the heat?** A firewalk should do the trick.



**Like to get a sprint on?** Check out our range of running events.



**Prefer rides to runs?** Our cycle events should be just the ticket.



**Feeling peckish?** You'll love our fundraising lunches.

You can join in as an individual or as a team, and we've got corporate challenges too.

Whatever you choose to do as part of Team90, we'll be by your side with advice, encouragement and fundraising tips. So please join us and celebrate nearly a century of supporting disabled people to achieve their potential.

To find out more go to [qef.org.uk/team90](https://qef.org.uk/team90)



# Your support lasts a lifetime

Mark was eight when he first visited MERU for help with remembering to swallow. Today, he's an engineer here – and his story shows how your support can change lives forever.

Mark lives with a rare form of cerebral palsy called Worster-Drought Syndrome. When he was younger, it affected the control of his mouth, and meant he would sometimes forget to swallow.

**“My dream came true of wanting to work at MERU. They have been so supportive of me when my cerebral palsy was seen as an ‘issue’ to other employers.”**

So Mark came to see the team at MERU, MERU designs and builds assistive equipment for disabled children. Our engineers built a special timer for Mark's desk at school. The device lit up to remind him to swallow, and made such a difference



to his life that it inspired Mark to want to work at MERU himself when he was older.

Today he's employed as an engineer at MERU and also manages our team of volunteers. His story has come full circle – and now he's helping others to achieve their full potential too.



**Find out more about all of MERU's products at [qef.org.uk/service/meru](https://qef.org.uk/service/meru)**

## New QEF merchandise for our 90th year

We've recently launched a new range of QEF pin badges, trolley token keyring and fold-up pouch bags. They're perfect whether you're hitting the shops or simply want to brighten up an outfit, and every item sold will help disabled people live life more independently.

**Buy yours today at one of our 14 shops throughout Surrey. Find your nearest at [qef.org.uk/about/our-shops](https://qef.org.uk/about/our-shops)**



Please note, final designs may change



# “My relationship with QEF is continuous”

Super-volunteer Jo has given her time to QEF everywhere from the Wimbledon Championships to Thorpe Park. She says she's proud to celebrate our 90th anniversary with us – and hopes to celebrate our 100th too!

“I first volunteered at the Spring Ladies Lunch in 2023 and since then there have been so many amazing moments. I'll never forget listening to the journalist Benjamin Hall *[who shares his story on page six]* speak at last year's Guinness and Oyster luncheon. Honestly you could have heard a pin drop.

“Hearing stories like that has really taught me that QEF's work is continuous, so my relationship with them will be too. By supporting QEF today, you are supporting everyone who relies on their expert services to live life as independently as possible. I really do hope I'll still be volunteering at the 100th anniversary too.”

**We'd like to thank Jo and all of the amazing volunteers who have played a vital role at QEF since our earliest days.**



See all the ways you can volunteer with QEF at [qef.org.uk/volunteer](https://qef.org.uk/volunteer), or contact Hazel Drye, our Volunteer Coordinator, at [hazel.drye@qef.org.uk](mailto:hazel.drye@qef.org.uk) or 01372 841 135.





# News round-up

Every donation – of every size – makes a difference to disabled people

## Flying forward with BA

At the end of last year, we were thrilled to announce our three-year charitable partnership with British Airways, as part of the company's BA Better World Community Fund.

We have been working together for several years through our QEF Tryb4uFly assessment service, Accessible Aviation training and inflight equipment assessments. These are all designed to make air travel more accessible for people with physical and invisible disabilities.

Now, BA's additional support will help us guide many more disabled people through every aspect of flying. And the airline's commitment doesn't stop there. 13 BA staff have also joined Team QEF to take on this year's London Marathon. Good luck to you all and to everyone on our 28-strong team. We know you'll fly around the course!

**We'd like to thank BA, Toyota and all of our corporate supporters for their generosity in our 90th year. Would your business like to partner with QEF? Email us at [corporate@qef.org.uk](mailto:corporate@qef.org.uk)**



## Driving mobility with Toyota

Earlier this year, we were delighted to be chosen as one of Toyota's strategic charity partners. Toyota is focused on helping our Mobility Services grow. Together we'll support disabled people to become more independent, through driving lessons, driving assessments, accessible transport and adaptations to vehicles.

Toyota is also loaning us two electric minibuses as part of the partnership. This will benefit QEF in many ways, from helping us arrange days out for people we support, to making it easier to move stock and equipment between our 14 shops.

Scott Thompson, Toyota (GB) President and Managing Director, said, "Improving mobility for all is at the heart of everything we do at Toyota, so it's wonderful that QEF, a charity that is local to our head office in Epsom, will be making good use of our Proace Verso electric people carriers to support the great services they provide. We look forward to continuing to support QEF as one of our dedicated charity partners."





## Our Chairman's Circle is growing

Huge thanks to everyone who has joined our Chairman's Circle since its launch in August. Members, who make an annual donation of £1,000, are already receiving exclusive benefits. We've got big plans for 2025, including a


special member event later this year.


To find out more and give in this very special way, visit [qef.org.uk/chairmans-circle](https://qef.org.uk/chairmans-circle) or contact our Philanthropy Manager, Matthew Horton, by emailing [matthew.horton@qef.org.uk](mailto:matthew.horton@qef.org.uk) or calling **01372 841 212**.

## Trusts get behind Bugzis

Thanks also to the Trusts who have supported our Bugzis reconditioning project with over £47,000 raised since December, helping more disabled children live life to the full.

# Social media round-up







**Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People**

We have a lot of amazing people who will be running the London Marathon on our behalf this year. 🏃

Two of whom are Ed and Will Greig, having been inspired to support a disability charity by their grandfather, the late Edward Guinness CVO.

Thank you Ed and Will 💖



 Like  Comment  Share



**qefdp**




Last week we held our first Firewalk. 🔥

It was a brilliant evening, a massive THANK YOU to everybody who took part and made it possible.

A special thank you to UK Firewalk for putting on an amazing experience.

We can't wait to do it again next year 💖





**Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People**

Our activities coordinators have been doing some incredible work at the Care and Rehabilitation Centre. The energy at QEF has been so positive lately, and that's all down to our lovely clients and incredible team.

Amazing 💖



 Like  Comment  Share

## Follow us on social media!

Keep up to date with the latest news, stories, events and more from QEF:

**QEF:**  @QEFDp  @QEFDp  @qef.fundraising  @qefdp  
 @qefdp.bsky.social  queen elizabeth's foundation  
**MERU:**  @MERU.org **The Grange:**  @thegrange2016

# 90 years of enabling

By supporting Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People, you're part of a journey that began 90 years ago...



**1935**

Her Royal Highness the Duchess of York officially opens our employment training college for disabled people at Leatherhead Court.



**2012**

MERU joins the QEF group of services, providing specialist equipment for disabled children. Today, MERU's products range from Bugzi powered wheelchairs to adapted toys such as kaleidoscope lamps.

**1989**

Banstead Place becomes a specialist centre for people with acquired brain injuries. We've continued this expert work ever since.



**2012**

We create our pioneering Tryb4uFly assessment service, using a mock aircraft cabin to help disabled people feel less anxious and stressed about flying.

**2020**

The Grange in Kent becomes the latest edition to the QEF group of services, offering residential care and supported living services to people with learning disabilities.

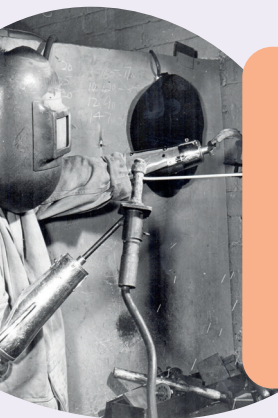
“If it wasn't for the Queen Elizabeth College, I would have felt isolated.”

Diane





# potential



**1940**

The college becomes part of the government's Munitions Training Scheme, training disabled people in engineering, welding and other essential skills for making munitions.



**1950**

We open our doors to female trainees for the first time. We've always been committed to inclusivity and increasing our reach – thanks to supporters like you.

“The support from QEF has been life-changing.”

Noah



**1982**

We open the UK's first Mobility Centre at our Banstead site, supporting disabled people, including QEF residents, to drive modified vehicles.



**2021**

Our state-of-the art Care and Rehabilitation Centre is opened by HRH The Countess of Wessex. It provides 24/7 support to help people regain core skills after brain injury, stroke, incomplete spinal injury and neurological illnesses.

“QEF helped me to overcome my physical impairments and to believe in my ability to learn new things.”

Roy

**2025**

With you by our side, we'll do everything in our power to support disabled people to achieve their potential – long into the future. Thank you for being part of the QEF community.



# 80 years of QEF news

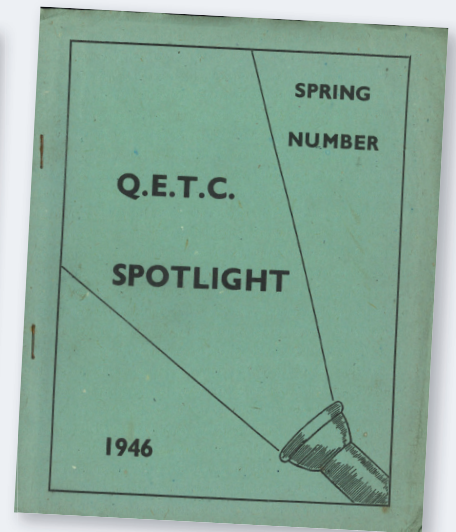
Keeping our supporters informed has always been very important at QEF. Our very first newsletter, Spotlight, was written in the early 1940s. However, due to wartime shortages of paper and ink, the first printed edition wasn't published until 1945. This marked the beginning of 80 years of newsletters - a tradition that *Happening* proudly continues today.

From hand-drawn covers to vibrant full-colour editions, the name and style of our newsletters have evolved over the decades. Yet, their purpose remains the same: sharing the life-changing impact of our work and celebrating supporters who make it all possible.

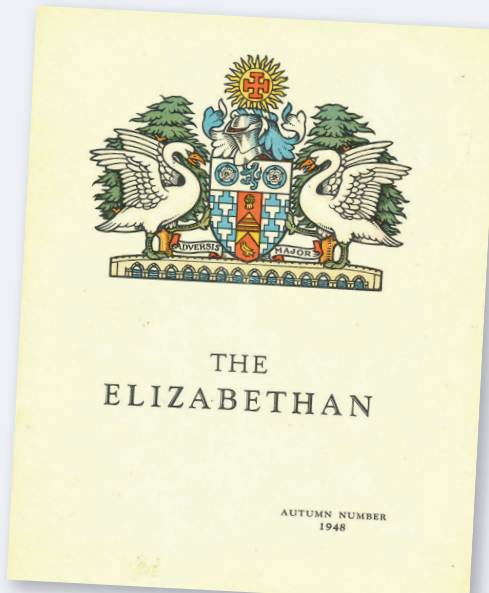
Take a look at how our newsletters have changed over the years.



1945



1946



1948



1977



1994



2004



2017



# Six ways you can support QEF

1

## Give a monthly gift

A monthly gift allows us to plan for the future because we know, day in, day out, that we will have a steady income stream that we can rely upon. Sign up at [www.qef.org.uk/dd](http://www.qef.org.uk/dd)

2

## Give a one-off gift

Every donation counts, no matter the size. We rely on the generosity of those who give large and small one-off donations every year to support over 10,000 disabled children and adults. Donate at [www.qef.org.uk/donate](http://www.qef.org.uk/donate)

3

## Attend/take part in an event

We have a busy calendar of events, including our Autumn Lunch in October. Or you could take on a challenge, like running the London Marathon or skydiving. More info at [www.qef.org.uk/events](http://www.qef.org.uk/events)

4

## Leave a gift in your Will

A third of our donated income comes from gifts in Wills. Leaving a gift in your Will to QEF, no matter the size, will help to provide expert care and rehabilitation and mobility services to disabled people. More info at [www.qef.org.uk/legacies](http://www.qef.org.uk/legacies)

5

## Volunteer with us

Whether it's hours, days or months, the time you give supports our work in many ways. Volunteer at one of our 14 shops, assist at one of our services or help out at our Head Office. We have lots of different opportunities to suit your needs. More info at [www.qef.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.qef.org.uk/volunteering)

6

## Shop with us

Pop into one of our 14 shops across Surrey and London, which sell a wide range of donated goods all at bargain prices. You can also donate your good quality items. We accept clothing, bric-a-brac, toys and games. Find a list of our shops at [www.qef.org.uk/about/our-shops](http://www.qef.org.uk/about/our-shops)

## Could you give to remember a loved one?

Giving in memory is a wonderful way to celebrate the life of a friend or loved one. Your donation will help their memory live on and enable more disabled people to

reach their potential. You can make a one-off donation, set up an online tribute fund, organise a funeral collection, or fundraise in memory.

To find out more about giving in this special way, please visit [www.qef.org.uk/in-memory](http://www.qef.org.uk/in-memory)

# Events calendar

Whatever you love to do, there's a QEF fundraising event perfect for you.

May–September 2025

## Tandem Skydive

UK-wide

**£395** | We've teamed up with Skyline Events to bring you this thrilling experience at airfields across all the UK.

10 May

## Inflatable 5k

Guildford

**Registration £16 | Sponsorship £150**

Jump, slide, and bounce your way to the finish line on this 5k inflatable course.

This is just a snapshot of some of the events on offer this year. Please visit [qef.org.uk/events](https://qef.org.uk/events) or email us at [events@qef.org.uk](mailto:events@qef.org.uk) for more information.

Three-day trip 15–17 May

Four-day trip 25–27 May

## London to

## Amsterdam Cycle

**Three-day registration £206.96**

**Sponsorship £1,800**

**Four-day registration £206.96**

**Sponsorship £2,200**

An unforgettable challenge taking you through Northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands, finishing in Amsterdam.

13 July

## Saucony London 10k run

London

**Registration £26 | Sponsorship £250**

Enjoy an incredible closed-road route through central London, past some of the City's most famous landmarks.

7 September

## Bacchus Half Marathon/10k

Denbies

**10K: Registration £15 |**

**Sponsorship £100**

**Half Marathon: Registration**

**£15 | Sponsorship £250**

A little bit of running and the opportunity to sample wines produced on the estate en route!

23 October

## Autumn Lunch

Epsom Downs Racecourse

**£75** | A shopping fayre, special guest speaker and two-course lunch

26 November

## Guinness and Oyster

Mansion House, London

**£80** | This City favourite celebrates its 60th anniversary this year.

**Yes, I'd like to make a donation to help disabled people live life to the full.**

Please accept my gift of: ☐ £15 ☐ £25 ☐ £35 **OR** my choice

Please make your cheque payable to QEF **OR** please charge my:

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Maestro ☐ CAF/Charity card

Card No:

Start Date:

Expiry Date:  Issue No (Maestro only):

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

I'm happy to receive calls on:

and emails at:

Please send me information on leaving a gift in my Will: ☐

Please complete and return this form in the prepaid envelope you received with this newsletter. If you prefer, telephone 01372 841151 or go to [qef.org.uk/donate](https://qef.org.uk/donate)

Your support allows us to deliver expert services to enable disabled adults and children to achieve their potential and live with greater independence. We really couldn't do it without you. We'd like to continue to contact you about our work. If you would like to change how you hear from us, please email [hello@qef.org.uk](mailto:hello@qef.org.uk) or call us on 01372 841151.

Remember our privacy policy sets out how we collect, use and store your personal information. You can read it at [qef.org.uk/privacy](https://qef.org.uk/privacy).

QEF, Leatherhead Court, Woodlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BN  
01372 841151 | [appeals@qef.org.uk](mailto:appeals@qef.org.uk)  
Registered charity No. 251051 | Ref: H-S-25

Please remember to include your name and address

### You could gift 25% more!

☐ I want to Gift Aid any donations made in the last four years and any I make in the future to QEF. I am a UK taxpayer and understand if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Gift Aid is reclaimed by QEF from the tax you pay for the current year. Please notify QEF if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

☐ No, I am NOT a taxpayer

Date:

giftaid it



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**