



News Release

6 March 2019

Hot new wheels spotted at Dorset County Hospital

You may spot some new wheels at Dorset County Hospital.

Thanks to the generous donation of a mini Tesla electric car by R Symons Ltd, children will now have the opportunity to drive themselves from Kingfisher Ward to the operating theatre before their surgery.

Jo Webb and Simon Jones from R Symons Ltd made the special delivery to the children's ward earlier this week.

The idea behind the Tesla is to make the hospital a much less daunting place for the younger patients, meaning they will arrive in theatre in a calmer state as they have had the distraction of the car on the way.

First behind the new wheels was eight-year-old Juno, who took it for a test drive around Kingfisher – and loved every second of it.

Juno's mum, Shelley Wilson, said: "Juno loved driving in the mini Tesla, it was a real high point in her stay at Kingfisher.

"It was an exciting distraction from feeling poorly and really lifted her mood. Afterwards Juno said she can't wait to get a car and learn how to drive."

Dr Jon Chambers, Consultant Anaesthetist at DCH, approached the Tesla Owners Club with the idea, having seen it work well in other hospitals.

He was delighted when R Symonds Ltd, based in Bournemouth, offered to help.

Dr Chambers said: "Going to an operating theatre is an anxious time for everyone, adult or child.

"With children, reducing the stress associated with having an operation is particularly important.

"To be able to turn what is a scary journey from the ward to the operating theatre into something fun can have a really positive effect on the children, both then and for the future.

“Our main challenge will be getting them out of the car when they reach their destination!”

The new red shiny car is a scale version of the Tesla Model S and is designed for children aged from three to eight. It recreates the feel of a real Tesla with a rechargeable battery, headlights and a horn.

It even has an MP3 sound system so children can listen to their favourite song as they drive themselves into theatre.

Richard Symons, from R Symons Ltd, added: “It was our absolute pleasure to provide this donation to Dorset County Hospital.

“Tesla owners all over the UK have contributed thousands of pounds from their own pocket to fund dozens of these cars.

“Owners have then stored them and distributed throughout the UK, all totally independent of Tesla themselves. It’s an amazing cause and we are very proud to be a part of it.

“I spent a fair amount of time in hospital myself when I was young so I know what’s it like. I trust this will bring a little joy at a difficult time.”

ENDS

PHOTOS:

Juno is the first behind the wheels of the new Tesla and takes it for a spin (video also attached)

Juno with Jo Webb and Simon Jones from R Symons Ltd, Dr Jon Chambers and staff from Kingfisher

For more information, please contact Communications Officer Meghan Hindley on 01305 253394 or email meghan.hindley@dchft.nhs.uk