

# Sunderland Echo

By [Rob Freeth](#)  
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Sports-mad Calum Andrews has overcome leukaemia to win gold at the British Transplant Games. The 11-year-old, from Hendon, took first place in the obstacle course event and followed that success with a silver in the table tennis tournament.



Mum Joanne said when Calum was diagnosed with the disease in 2000 she thought he would never take part in any sport, let alone win something.

"He just got so weak from the chemo and radiotherapy," she said. "The leukaemia itself came completely out of the blue.

"One day he had a bit of stomach pain and felt poorly so I took him to the doctor.

"The disease was diagnosed immediately and the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle became our home for the next five years.

"Calum had a relapse in 2001 and a bone marrow transplant in 2002."

Calum, who lives with his mum, dad Leighton, and nine-year-old brother Conor, has steadily improved in the last few years.

"He is doing really well," said Joanne. "He's not the strongest of lads, and he knows that.

"But he's now able to play football for the under-12s at Seaburn and he never misses a training session.

"It might be that he can only play five or 10 minutes, but his face lights up when he's on the pitch and you know he's happy."

The transplant games, this summer in Edinburgh, have become an annual event for the family.

"We go every year and it is one big happy family occasion," said Joanne.

"All the youngsters there have had a transplant of one sort or another and seeing them makes you forget all your worries."

Calum's future looks bright as he now goes back to hospital only once a year for tests.

"The results have come back good each time," said Joanne. "So we are keeping our fingers crossed."

Joanne is keen to thank the many people who have helped her and her family in the last few years.

She said. "We live in a good community and there are too many people to thank individually, but we are grateful to everyone who has helped and supported us."