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## MEET SOME OF THE INSPIRING PARTICIPANTS TAKING PART IN THE 2022 TCS LONDON MARATHON

- Former detainee **Anoosheh Ashoori**, released from an Iranian prison in March, running with son **Aryan**
- **Ukrainian couple** who fled to London participating to raise awareness of conflict in homeland
- **Cousin of schoolteacher Ashling Murphy** taking part in her memory

Thousands of participants will take on the 2022 TCS London Marathon on Sunday 2 October, each with their own powerful reasons to run, but for some the event holds even more poignance and significance.

Here is a selection of inspiring stories from some of this year's participants:

### **Anoosheh Ashoori, 68, and son Aryan Ashoori, 33, from London**

#### ***Charities: Amnesty International and Hostage International***

Anoosheh is an Iranian-British dual national who, like Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, was arrested in Iran in August 2017 and in 2019 was sentenced to 12 years in jail, accused of spying.

While in captivity, Anoosheh dreamt of running the London Marathon during the small windows of exercise allotted to him.

He said in one of his journal updates: "I run for an hour at least every day. I have a plan, or a dream, that I will participate in the London Marathon after my release. The time restrictions in the gym do not allow me to test myself to discover the unexplored boundaries of my existence, but I hope, dear reader, you will be with me to help me when I run in London."

Anoosheh will be taking part with his son, Aryan, who now works at Amnesty International after all the help the charity gave the family during the time Anoosheh was imprisoned.

### **Kostiantyn Bidnenko, 35, and Viktoriya Kiose, 29, from Ukraine, now living in Tower Hamlets, London**

Kyiv residents Kostiantyn and Viktoriya awoke to bombs falling in their city at 05:00 on February 24 and immediately packed up and fled.

Kostiantyn registered to join Ukraine's military but was unable to sign up because of a very rare genetic disease called alkaptonuria, which occurs when the body can't produce enough of an enzyme called homogentisic dioxygenase, causing pain in weight-bearing joints.

The couple fled Ukraine on a long journey to the UK which involved stops in Hungary, Poland, and Italy.

Kostiantyn needed treatment for his condition and learned the Liverpool Royal Hospital had specialists in this area, but he had to be a British citizen to be treated. Staff at the hospital told them about the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which is how they ended up living in the Canary Wharf flat of former Tower Hamlets councillor, Andrew Wood.

The couple have been running around London since arriving here, and decided they wanted to run the TCS London Marathon to raise funds for United 24, an initiative launched by Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky to collect charitable donations in support of the country.

### **Dylan O'Shea, 24, from London**

#### ***Charity: Laureus Sport For Good***

Dylan's cousin Ashling Murphy was a schoolteacher who died following a fatal assault in January 2022, while out jogging in her hometown of Tullamore, Ireland – sparking outrage across Ireland and the UK.

Dylan said: "She did everything right, she went out at 16:00 when it was light, on a crowded canal where it is seen to be safe. I am running the TCS

frustration, and pain to feel my long run.

Dylan is running for Laureus Sport For Good – a charity that uses the power of sport to empower the next generation of females to participate in activity, to feel safe in underprivileged communities and to learn life skills they otherwise wouldn't have.

#### **Hannah Delmas, 25, from London**

##### ***Charity: Young Lives vs Cancer***

Hannah is a junior doctor working in East London who, in April last year, was diagnosed with a rare germ cell tumour and immediately paused her medical training to start chemotherapy.

She completed four rounds of chemotherapy followed by a laparotomy (major abdominal surgery) and an ICU stay to remove the tumour. Six weeks after her final treatment was completed, she was back at work caring for patients once again.

Hannah said: "Running the TCS London Marathon is a wild idea and be under no impression that I am a runner. Especially after having stayed in bed for almost six months during my treatment.

"However, six weeks post major surgery I was back at work full time as a junior doctor, and I am still on track to finish my training with my original cohort thanks to the support network around me."

#### **Maria Keen, 42, from Kent**

##### ***Charity: British Heart Foundation***

Maria, a physiotherapist from Kent is taking on the 2022 TCS London Marathon for this year's Charity of the Year, the British Heart Foundation (BHF) inspired by her husband's battle with cancer and heart disease.

In 2017, just months after getting married Maria's husband, Jason, was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, aged 29 years old. Jason subsequently underwent chemotherapy and radiotherapy, which badly damaged his heart. In December 2018, aged 31, Jason suffered a heart attack and as a result underwent a triple heart bypass operation to save his life.

Maria has also seen heart and circulatory disease tear apart her wider family. Tragically, she lost both her paternal grandparents to stroke, her maternal grandparents to heart disease and other members of her family to heart conditions. Maria ran her first marathon for the BHF back in 2008 and is looking forward to taking on the challenge again to raise money for regenerative research.

#### **Jade Laura, 19, from Herne Bay, Kent**

##### ***Charity: Missing People***

In 2018, Jade lost her ability to walk due to being in a coma with a tracheostomy. While recovering she joked to a nurse that she would run a marathon when better – and now she is.

At the end of lockdown Jade started running and went from struggling with 100 metres to completing her first marathon in February. Jade was told she would never fully recover, so she feels extremely lucky to be here today and able to walk, let alone run.

Jade said: "It has been so hard, but I gave it my all every day and didn't give up when things got rough. I suffer from severe chronic illness at just 19 years old, but I don't let it stop me. I even complete my runs with a feeding tube and glucose monitor! It's not about what has happened, it's how you heal that matter"

#### **Ian Johnson, 39, from Liverpool**

##### ***Charity: Alzheimer's Society***

Ian Johnson is the grandson of Liverpool FC legend Ronnie Moran – the former captain and coach who worked for the club for 49 years and twice served as caretaker manager in the early 1990s.

Ronnie passed away suffering from Alzheimer's in 2017 and his wife Joyce died earlier this year (2022) with the same condition.

Ian said: "To see your loved ones fade away and not remember the lives they've had is very sad, so hopefully the money I raise for the charity will help towards their research and hopefully, one day, a cure."

#### **Bradley Winstanley, 43, from Southend-on-Sea**

##### ***Charity: Great Ormond Street Hospital***

Bradley's sons Austin and Freddie were born in August 2014 at 25 weeks, weighing just 1lb 10oz and 1lb 11oz each, with less than a one per cent chance of survival. Due to such extreme prematurity, both boys had a bleed on the brain at birth: Freddie's cleared, but unfortunately Austin's didn't.

Austin and Freddie spent many months in intensive care, coming home for the first time on December 31, 2014. At just five weeks old, weighing a tiny 2lb, Austin had his first emergency brain surgery at Great Ormond Street Hospital.

In his short life, Austin has endured seven lifesaving brain surgeries, two other major operations and a life-changing/pioneering operation called SDR to give him the best chance of walking and an independent life.

had been warned Austin would never walk, but he did. Well, in the 'Austin' style, with his pure determination and the amazing support of Great Ormond Street, Austin now attends mainstream school, walks with just the aid of splints and smashes life in general."

Bradley is leading a team of seven runners called 'Austin's Next Big Step' with the aim of raising as much money as possible for Great Ormond Street Hospital.

#### **Aaron Kerr, 25, from County Down, Northern Ireland**

Assisted wheelchair user Aaron Kerr will be able to compete in the London Marathon for the first time after a change in entry rules for 2022 to make the event more inclusive.

Aaron, his father, David, and mother, Sandra, from Annahilt, Northern Ireland, have completed 48 marathons together. They started in 2015 and have always dreamed of running the London Marathon. They helped to review changes to the rules so that wheelchair users who require help from others will be permitted to take part.

Aaron is non-verbal and is affectionately known throughout the running community for his hugs and headlocks. At the 2016 Dublin Marathon he was awarded the Lord Mayor's Medal, voted for by his fellow runners: the first person with complex needs to receive this award.

#### **Tommy Price, 26, from Huddersfield**

##### ***Charity: Keswick Mountain Rescue Team***

Fell runner Tommy Price 'clinically died' in the Lake District in January and is taking part in the 2022 TCS London Marathon to raise money for the mountain rescue team who saved him.

Tommy was found showing no signs of life by Keswick Mountain Rescue Team on Hall's Fell, Blencathra, on January 6, 2022, and was airlifted to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Newcastle.

It was touch-and-go for Tommy, who had suffered a cardiac arrest caused by severe hypothermia. On arrival at the hospital, his core body temperature was 18.8°C – one of the lowest ever recorded. Normal core body temperature is 37.7°Cs. Tommy is running to say thank you to the rescue team that saved his life.

#### **Kim Holcroft, 37, from Bolton, Lancashire**

##### ***Charity: The Miscarriage Association***

During lockdown 2020, Kim found out she was pregnant with her second child. However, at 10 weeks into her pregnancy she received the news that her baby no longer had a heartbeat and she had experienced a silent miscarriage.

Kim had to wait two weeks to see if her body would recognise that she had lost her baby, saying: "It was so difficult for me to get my head around as I was still experiencing pregnancy symptoms."

After this time, she was admitted to hospital to medically manage the pregnancy as it hadn't happened naturally. Kim had to attend all her appointments alone without her partner, Alex, due to Covid-19 restrictions, which was heart-breaking. She was helped by family, friends and The Miscarriage Association charity.

The following year she fell pregnant again and wanted to feel excited, but was so anxious that the same thing would happen again. It wasn't until their beautiful, happy, and healthy boy Cooper arrived that Kim's worries fully went away.

Kim was able to defer her London Marathon place from April 2020 to October 2022 and has been training while juggling looking after her two children, and is excited to take finally part in the marathon and raise funds for The Miscarriage Association.

For more information on the featured stories please contact the London Marathon Press Office on [media@londonmarathonevents.co.uk](mailto:media@londonmarathonevents.co.uk)

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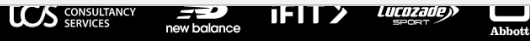
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#### **About the London Marathon**

- The 2022 TCS London Marathon will take place on Sunday 2 October.
- The London Marathon was first held on 29 March 1981 and the millionth finisher in the history of the event crossed the line in 2016.
- Since the first London Marathon in 1981, the event has raised more than £1 billion for charity.
- British Heart Foundation is the Charity of the Year of the 2022 TCS London Marathon
- London Marathon Events gifts its surplus each year to The London Marathon Charitable Trust.
- Since 1981, [The London Marathon Charitable Trust](#) has awarded grants totalling in excess of £97 million to more than 1,500 projects in London and across the UK.
- For more information, visit [tcs.londonmarathon.com](https://tcs.londonmarathon.com)

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