

Little George and the Dragon

NHS

Alder Hey Children's
NHS Foundation Trust



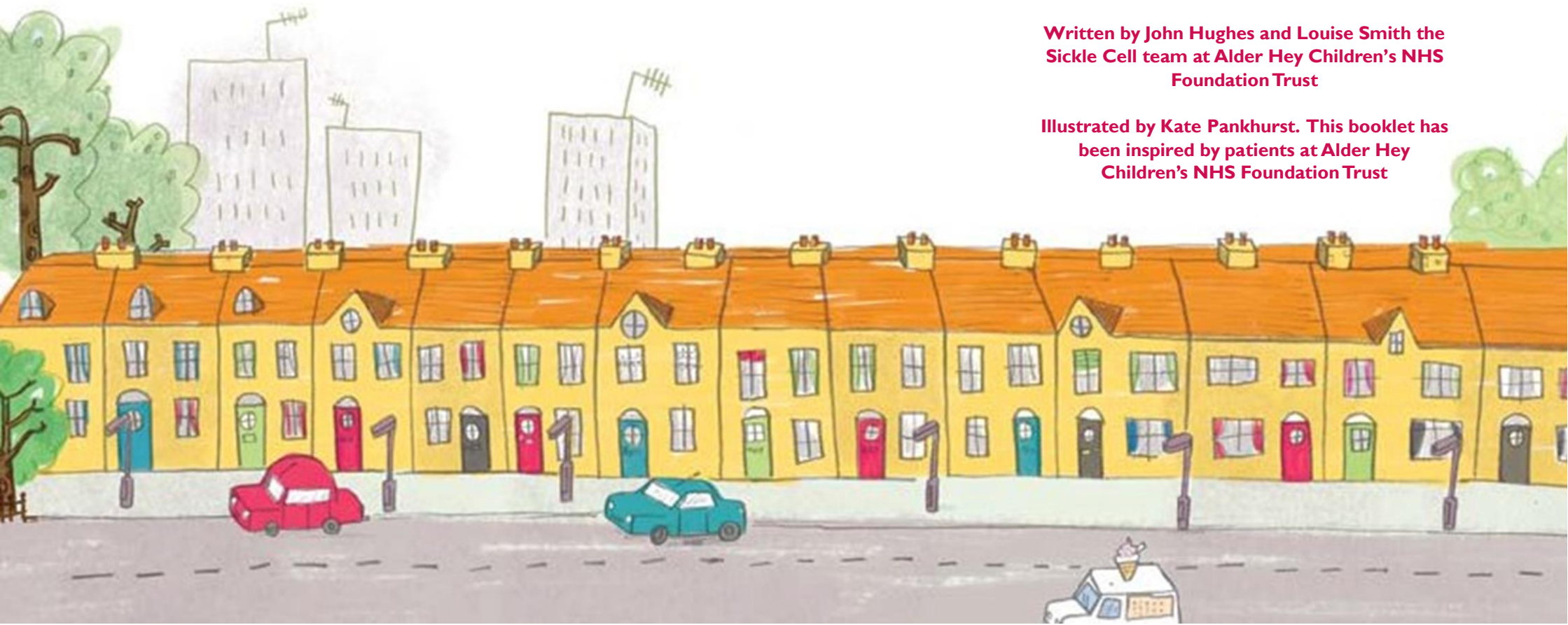
**An information booklet about Sickle Cell Anaemia
for Children and Young People**

Little George and the Dragon

An information booklet about Sickle Cell Anaemia
for Children and Young People

Written by John Hughes and Louise Smith the
Sickle Cell team at Alder Hey Children's NHS
Foundation Trust

Illustrated by Kate Pankhurst. This booklet has
been inspired by patients at Alder Hey
Children's NHS Foundation Trust



When a great big dragon landed in the middle of Waggle Avenue, most people were quite annoyed.

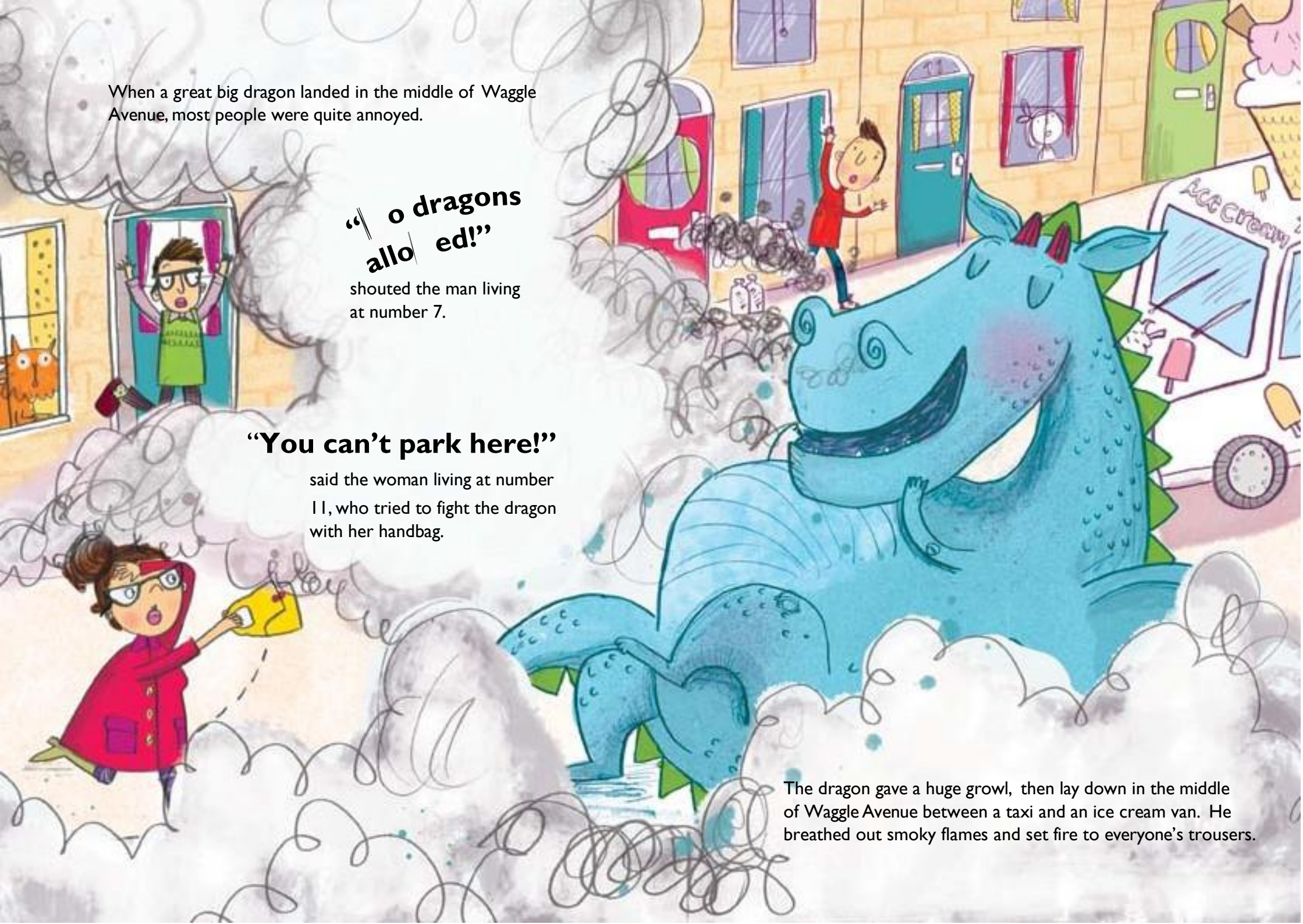
“No dragons allowed!”

shouted the man living at number 7.

“You can’t park here!”

said the woman living at number 11, who tried to fight the dragon with her handbag.

The dragon gave a huge growl, then lay down in the middle of Waggle Avenue between a taxi and an ice cream van. He breathed out smoky flames and set fire to everyone’s trousers.



“Will you lot stop fussing, please?” said the dragon. “Get me some food now or I shall eat you all and set your houses on fire.”

“You can’t do that!” shouted the woman living at number 11. “That’s evil and wrong, and I’ve just decorated the kitchen.”

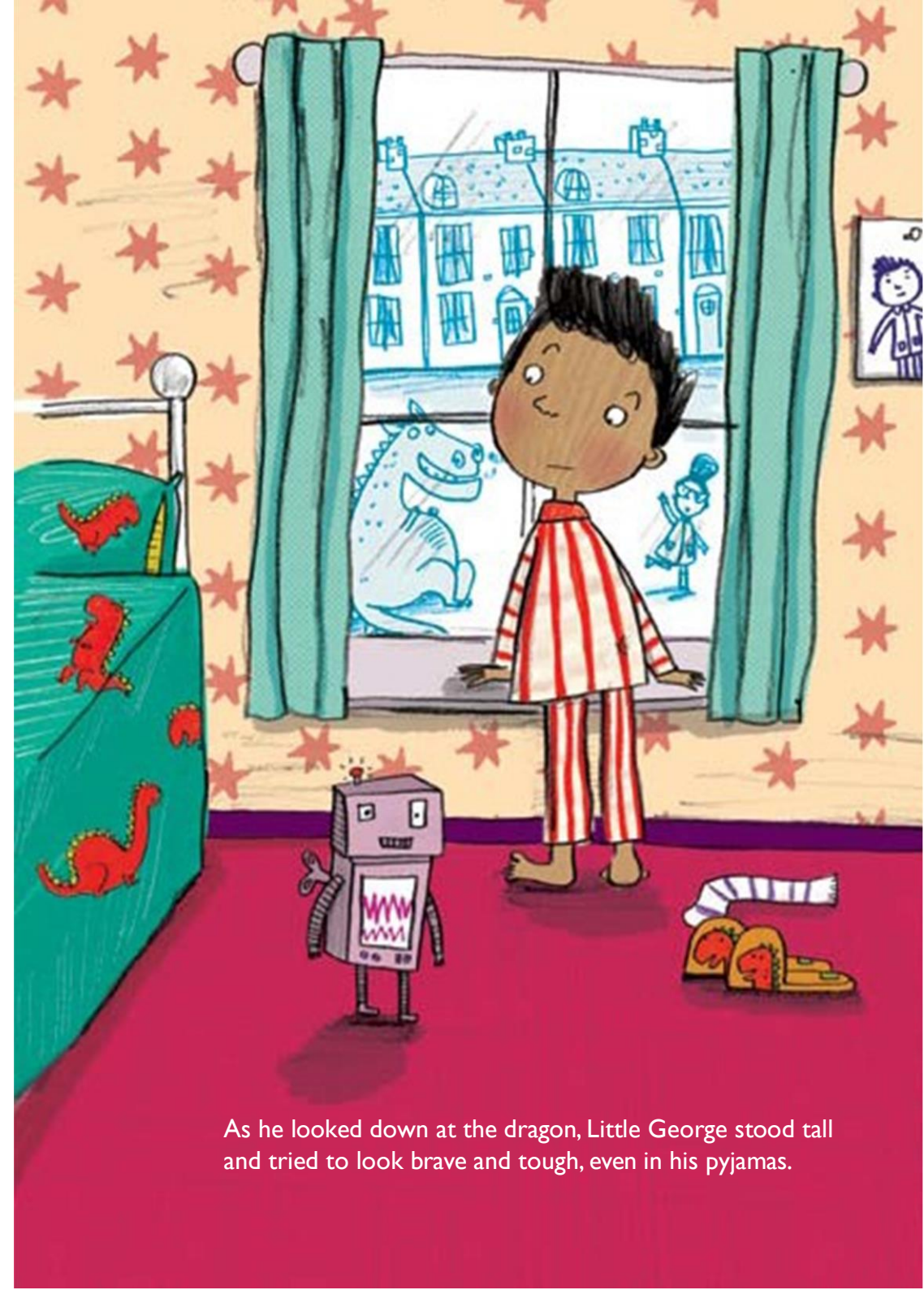


When the dragon ate the woman’s handbag, most grown ups said things like, “Oh. Um. Right. I suppose we should see what we’ve got in the fridge.”

At number 4 Waggle Avenue, Little George was watching all this from his bedroom. Little George was sticking his tongue out and pulling faces. This wasn't because he was being rude to the dragon. It was because he had just taken his medicines that he had to take for his for Sickle Cell.



“That tasted yucky,” said Little George, but he knew that the medicine was doing him good. He took a medicine called penicillin to keep nasty infections away and a vitamin called folic acid to help his body produce red blood cells.



As he looked down at the dragon, Little George stood tall and tried to look brave and tough, even in his pyjamas.

Outside, a few grown-ups were trying to fight the dragon, but the dragon kept on growling, setting fire to peoples trousers and demanding more food. The dragon had pains and was feeling very cross and scared. He wanted the pains to go away but didn't know how to make them.

Everyone was looking very worried now. Food was running out and there was a shortage of decent trousers.



When Little George stepped outside, standing tall and brave in his pyjamas, the neighbours weren't impressed. Neither was the dragon.

"A small child in pyjamas can't fight a dragon," said the dragon.

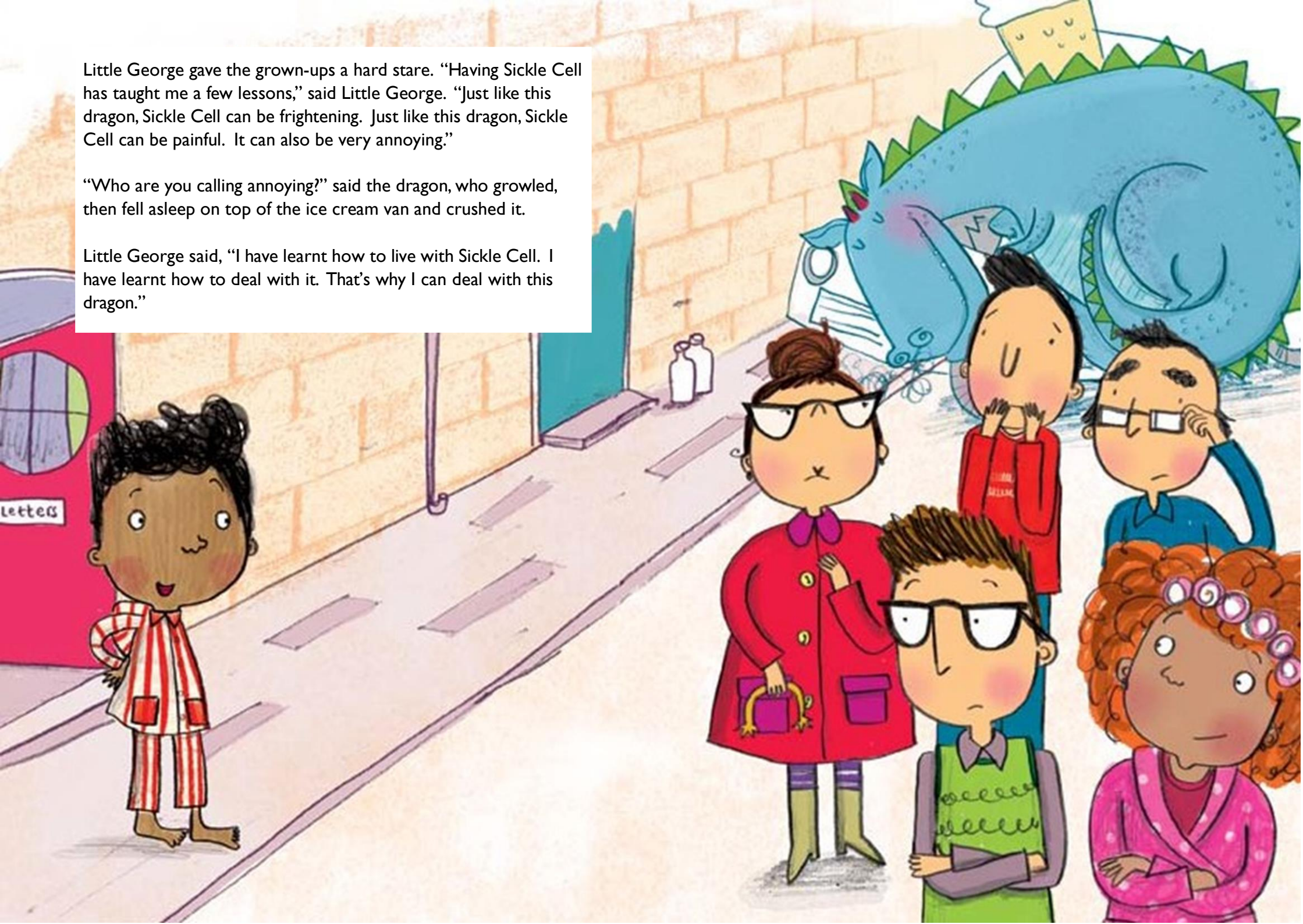
"That's even sillier than hitting the dragon with a handbag," said the woman who had been hitting the dragon with a handbag.

"And this child has Sickle Cell," said the man living at number 11. "How can he deal with a dragon?"

Little George gave the grown-ups a hard stare. "Having Sickle Cell has taught me a few lessons," said Little George. "Just like this dragon, Sickle Cell can be frightening. Just like this dragon, Sickle Cell can be painful. It can also be very annoying."

"Who are you calling annoying?" said the dragon, who growled, then fell asleep on top of the ice cream van and crushed it.

Little George said, "I have learnt how to live with Sickle Cell. I have learnt how to deal with it. That's why I can deal with this dragon."

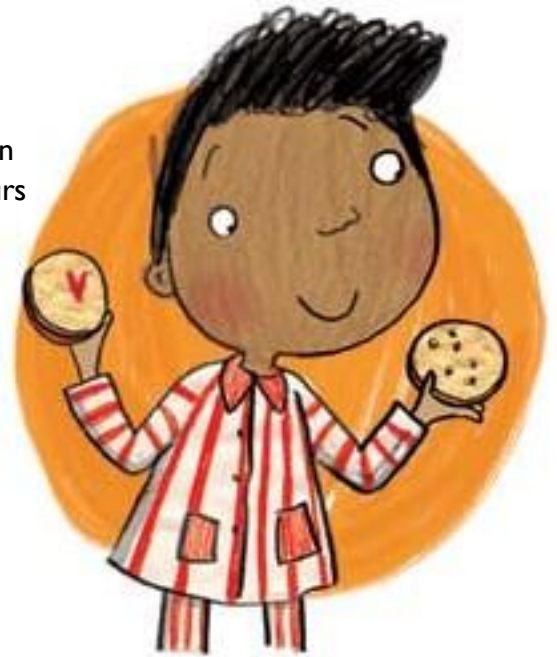


As the dragon lay sleeping on top of the crushed ice cream van, Little George went on talking to his neighbours. Thankfully, his mum had a hidden supply of biscuits, so everyone cheered up.



Little George said, “When my mum found out about my Sickle Cell, she was very frightened. All my family were frightened but we have learnt how to manage my sickle cell.”

Little George explained that all people have lots of tiny red cells in their blood. He told his neighbours that most red blood cells are circular, like round discs. “A bit like this biscuit,” said Little George, “only much, much smaller.”



He picked up another round biscuit, and then gently tapped the two biscuits together. “Round blood cells,” he said, “can easily flow through blood vessels together transporting oxygen to muscles and tissues so that they can work.”



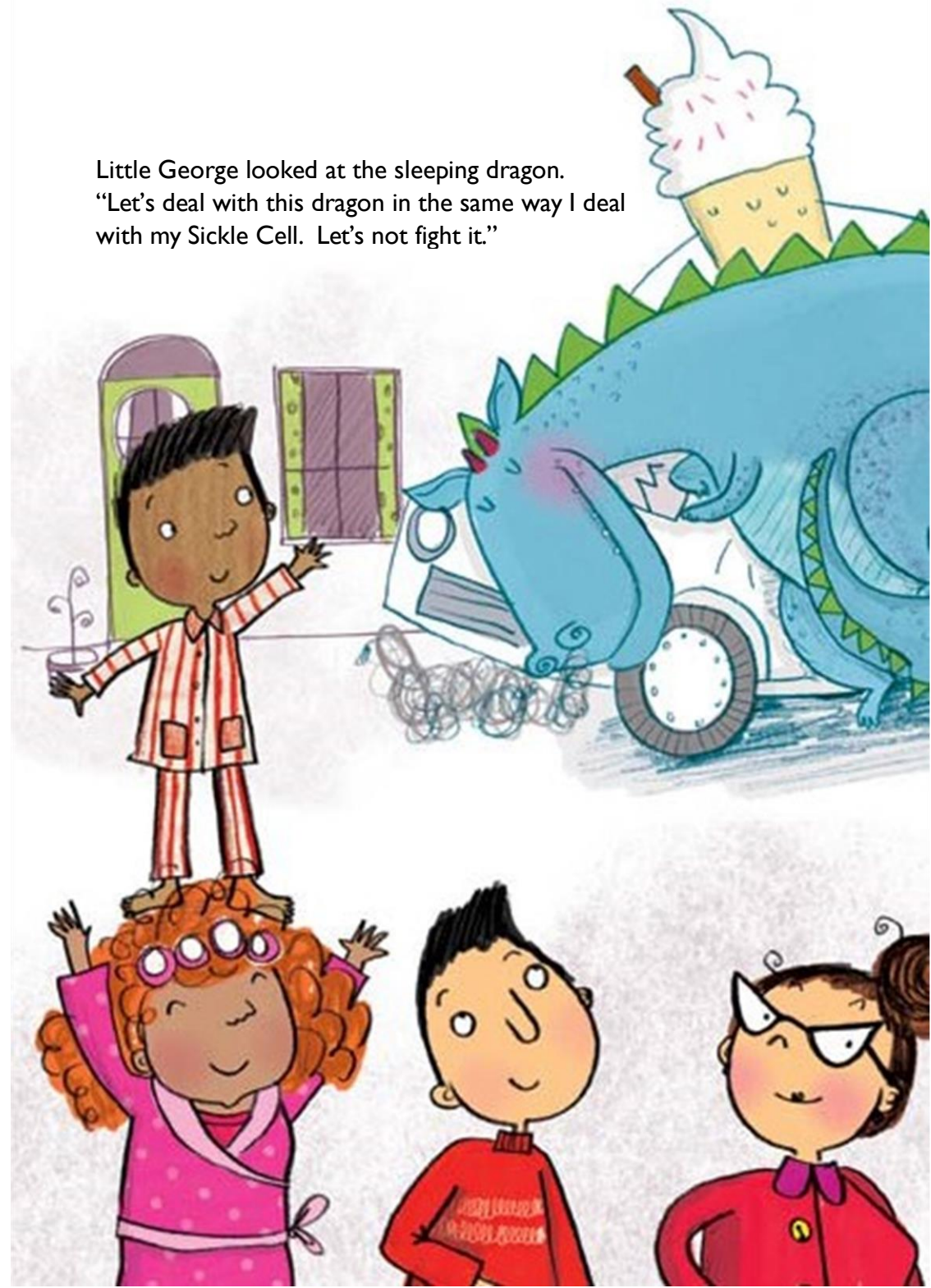
Little George then took a bite out of each biscuit, and then held them up again. He explained that if you have sickle cell your red blood cells change to a different shape if they don't have enough oxygen in them. "A bit like this biscuit after I've taken a bite out of it," said Little George, "only much, much smaller."



As his neighbours took a bite from their biscuits, Little George said, "Sickle red blood cells don't flow together as easily as round blood cells because of their shape. This stops the oxygen getting to muscles and tissues and causes me to have pains in different parts of my body. This is called a sickle cell crisis."

"There are lots of things that can cause your body not to have enough oxygen in it and trigger a crisis. Things such as not having enough to drink, getting cold, infections and getting too tired."

Little George looked at the sleeping dragon. "Let's deal with this dragon in the same way I deal with my Sickle Cell. Let's not fight it."





When the dragon woke up, Little George gave the dragon healthier food and a big drink of water served in someone's bath.

"This might make you feel less grumpy," Little George said to the waking dragon. "I always have plenty to drink, because it gives my body a good amount of fluid and makes my red blood cells less sticky."

The dragon had the drink, trying not to eat the bath.

"I also have to make sure that I keep myself warm" said Little George. "Keeping warm means that my blood vessels don't become too narrow and cause my sickle cells to get stuck."

"Pain can make you sad and grumpy" said Little George. "If you take the right pain medicine you might feel a little less sad and less grumpy. When I have pains my mummy gives Paracetamol and Ibuprofen regularly to make me feel better."

"We dragons do get lots of annoying pains. That's why we tend to growl a lot."

"If you still get pains after those medicines then there are some other pain medicines that can help," added Little George. "If the pains get really bad my mum has to take me to the hospital. Sometimes the doctor tells me that I have to stay in hospital so that they can make me feel better. They give me some special medicine to take away the pain and a drink through a drip to give me plenty of fluid."

“I often see a doctor,” Little George told the dragon. “I see lots of experts and specialists. That way, I get the right medication. They also support me and my family through good times and tough times.”

Little George spent a lot of time talking to the dragon, feeding him the right food and giving him plenty to drink. Eventually, the dragon agreed to see a special dragon doctor and stop setting fire to everyone’s trousers.



“Oh, and there’s one more thing that can make you feel better,” said Little George with a wide smile. “Fun! Playing games and jumping and throwing and catching! That can make you feel better, too.”

“I’ll give it a try,” smiled the dragon.

As Little George and the dragon started playing, the man living at number 7 watched. “That dragon is still very scary,” he said, ducking to dodge its tail.

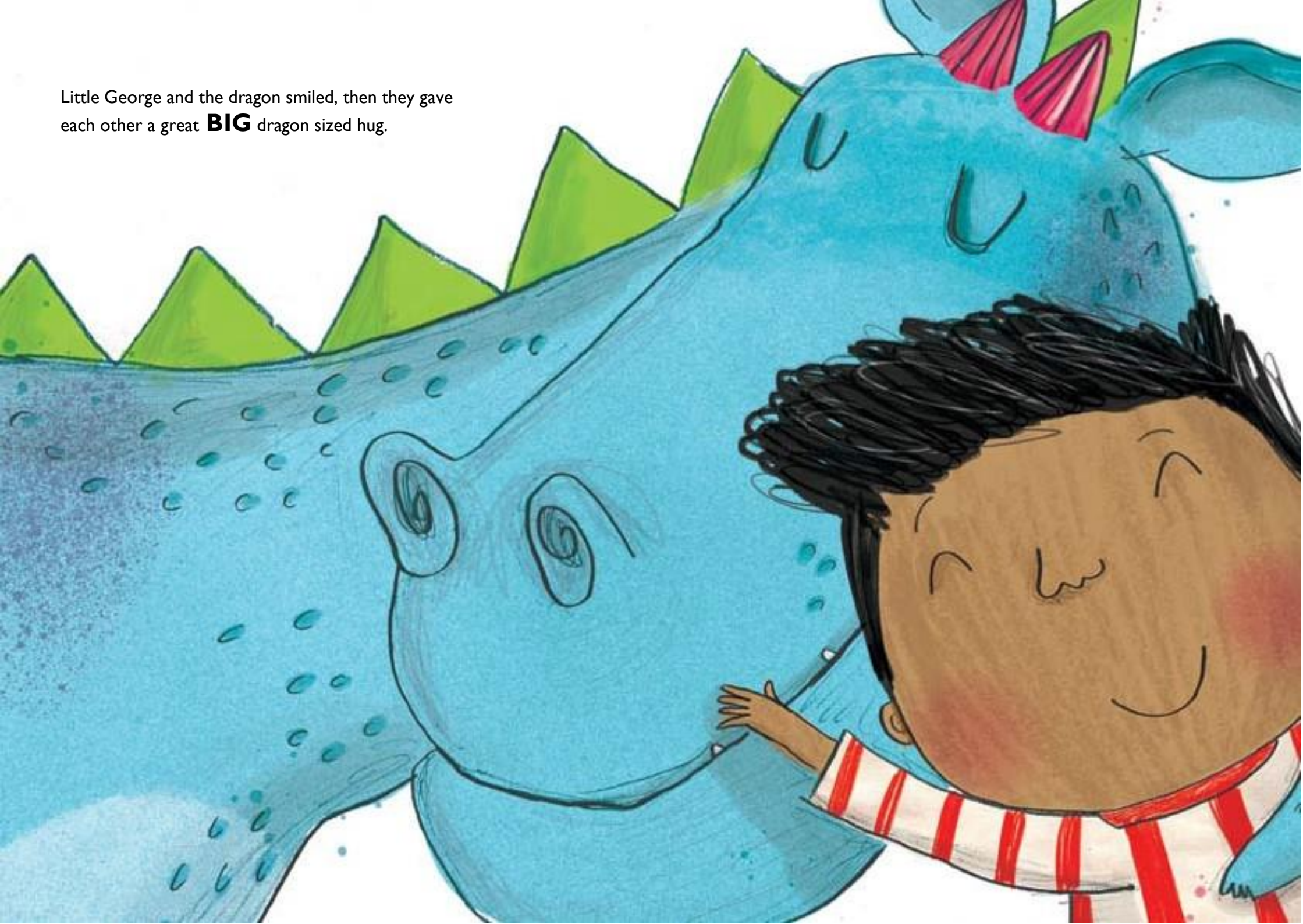
“And he’s still very annoying,” said the woman at number 11, “but I think we can learn to live with him.”

“Just like I have learnt to live with my Sickle Cell,” said Little George, patting the dragon.

The man at number 7 nodded. The woman at number 11 decided it was safe at last to buy a new handbag.



Little George and the dragon smiled, then they gave each other a great **BIG** dragon sized hug.



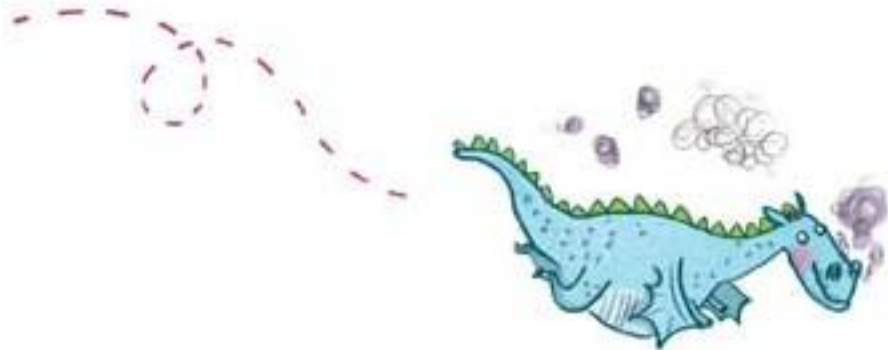
This booklet has been produced by the Sickle Cell team and Arts for Health team.

Text by John Hughes, Louise Smith and the Sickle Cell team.

Illustrations by Kate Pankhurst.

With many thanks to all of the patients who took part in this project.

We are grateful for the generous support of the Roald Dahl's Marvellous Charity and Burdett Trust for Nursing in making the production of this booklet possible.



You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff.

This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust, Eaton Road
Liverpool, L12 2AP. Tel: 0151 228 4811. www.alderhey.nhs.uk

© Alder Hey © Text John Hughes © Illustrations Kate Pankhurst

Review Date: July 2024

PIAG: 40



Alder Hey Children's
NHS Foundation Trust

