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Issue 15 Winter 2015/2016

# London Mums



**The  
Shopaholic  
Special**



Sophie Kinsella

**Star  
Dad**

**Peter Andre  
EXCLUSIVE:**

**'I love Strictly,  
food and  
my special  
Christmas  
cheesecake'**

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# London Mums



**The Shopaholic Special**



**Peter Andre**

**Star mum**

**WORLD EXCLUSIVE!**

**Best-selling author Sophie Kinsella reveals her latest craze, Shopaholic tendencies and her new obsessions**

# BE INSPIRED

## Editor's letter



memorygate.co.uk

Dear London Mums

2015 is drawing to an end and I reflect on what a wonderful year has been with highlights including meetings with George Clooney, Wolverine aka Hugh Jackman and the Horrible Histories' cast.

As Winter drifts along, we look forward to Christmas lights on the London high streets and late shopping with our girlfriends. When I listen to myself saying this I feel a bit like Becky Bloomwood from the Sophie Kinsella's Shopaholic bestselling novel series. London Mums are extremely at ease and happy when shopping and pampering ourselves. Aren't we all? This is why together with a lovely group of contributing mothers and children I have produced This Shopaholic Special issue.

You will agree with me after reading our fun and glam interviews with Mrs Shopaholic in person Sophie Kinsella and super Popstar Dad and now Strictly Come Dancing star Peter Andre. They both bring glitz and glam to our special double cover issue. We could not choose between Sophie and Peter for the cover so we have placed them on the cover back-to-back. For the first time we have a dad on the front cover.

The Christmas Gift guide pages are filled with lots of Shopaholic inspiration for your seasonal shopping and beyond.

Shopaholics also take a trip to Italy and show you how to enjoy La Dolce Vita.

But London Mums also do serious stuff and to prove it to you our child reporter Diego and I took a first aid course and reported back on how it all went.

Enjoy reading our Shopaholic issue as much as we have enjoyed making it!

Keep your eyes on our website [londonmumsmagazine.com](http://londonmumsmagazine.com) for the latest London events, films and books' releases. Also check our Shopaholic deals with West End theatres and London attractions at super discounted tickets through the dedicated site [londonmumsmagazine.entstix.com](http://londonmumsmagazine.entstix.com)

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*Monica*

Editor in chief, Founder of London Mums & mum of nine-year-old Diego  
Let me know what you think of this issue at [monica@londonmums.org.uk](mailto:monica@londonmums.org.uk)  
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## LONDON MAYOR



**'London Mums' forum is invaluable for forging new relationships, sparking ideas and providing advice in an easy, accessible way!**

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson

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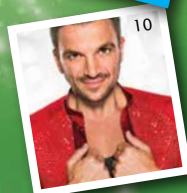
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# BEST-SELLING AUTHOR SOPHIE KINSELLA REVEALS HER LATEST CRAZE, SHOPAHOLIC TENDENCIES AND HER NEW OBSESSIONS

WORLD EXCLUSIVE! BY MONICA COSTA AND MONICA MAZZARI

**Editor Monica Costa and Shopaholic super-fan contributor Monica Mazzari were dying to interview the ultimate born and bred London Mum Sophie Kinsella for ages. With her wit Sophie did not disappoint them.**

Sophie doesn't need much introduction. She became a success overnight with her first novel in the best-selling Shopaholic series, *Confessions of a Shopaholic*. The book's heroine, Becky Bloomwood – a fun and feisty financial journalist who loves shopping but is hopeless with money – captured the hearts of readers worldwide.

Becky has featured in six further bestselling books, before the latest Shopaholic to the Rescue, published this month.

Last Spring Sophie turned to teen fiction with a novel titled *Finding Audrey* inspired by her experience as a mother of five children.

Sophie is – without a doubt – a London mum ad honorem with five children (boys aged 18, 17, 10, five, and a three-year-old daughter), a husband-manager she seems still very much in love with, a job she loves doing (she writes 1000 words every day) and a great sense of humour. She certainly knows a lot about mums' life.

We wanted to find out her secrets to a happy life and also know a bit better the author of the novels, which will keep us good company during the grey winter nights to come.

She is so convincing and so close to us all and knows how to get us close to Becky's adventures, make us laugh and sometimes make us feel melancholic, providing moments of real evasion and freedom from the daily mummies' worries.

The compulsive obsessive shopping – which is so typical for most women particularly new mums – has hugely contributed to the success of her novels. There will be queues to get her latest comeback Shopaholic book, *Shopaholic to the Rescue*.

We cannot wait!

**Q:** Some have defined you as a chick-lit writer? Do you agree? Will you ever explore other narrative genres in future?

**SK:** If the 'chick-lit' label makes it easier for readers to find my books then I'm OK with that. I like 'wit lit' and 'romantic comedy' too. Writing YA was really enjoyable, and when I wrote under my real name Madeleine Wickham, those books were more ensemble pieces, so I wouldn't rule out exploring other styles too. I've always secretly wanted to write a thriller!

**Q:** Are you a bit like Becky Bloomwood who loves shopping and has 100+ hidden places where to keep money for extra shopping for emergency situations? Or have you been inspired by one of your friends/family for this character?

**SK:** I do have, what I like to call 'shopaholic tendencies', but I'm not sure I shop quite as much as Becky...! There are parts of me in her, but my sister and friends also inspired her character.

Sophie's first young adult's novel *Finding Audrey* strikes many cords with London Mums. It begins with a mother who has been driven crazy by her teenagers and throws her son Frank's computer out of his bedroom window in an attempt to eradicate his online gaming. She has lots of personal experience and again she manages to convey all these contemporary themes into witty and feel-good stories for young adults.

Audrey is a teenage girl suffering from Social Anxiety Disorder. She has experienced bullying, and as a result has become virtually a prisoner in her own home. This is the story of her journey to recovery, with the help of a boy named Linus. It's sad in places, but funny and romantic too.

**Q:** There seem to be quite a few teen novels out there at the moment about troubled teenagers (such as Audrey). Does this reflect a suffering generation or is it pure fiction?

**SK:** Audrey is pure fiction, but she and Linus and Frank do reflect the real struggles that teenagers are going through. I've always written what I see around me, and I see lots of teenagers facing difficulties we never had to face up to a few years ago. Everything can feel very frustrating and intense to teenagers, and I wanted to convey that – as well as the magic of teenage first love.

I hope that you will find the story of Audrey and her chaotic family a funny and uplifting one. Audrey is brave, charming and resourceful girl and I hope she will inspire you as much as she has inspired me. I always fall in love with my heroines, but with Audrey I feel a special protective fondness, too.

**Q:** Are you an avid reader of the Daily Mail like Audrey's mum? Do you have much in common with her? Or is your mother like her? Where did you get the inspiration for such a hilarious character?

**SK:** There are, ahem, some similarities between Anne (Audrey's mum) and me! Anne constantly worries about her family, trying to make sure she's keeping everyone alive and healthy. I think I have some of that in me too. I recently started making fruit and veg smoothies in the morning for my family, and that might have turned into a bit of an obsession!



**Q:** Are you planning more Young Adult novels or a sequel to Finding Audrey?

**SK:** The truth is I don't know myself yet. I do have some ideas but it always takes me time to decide whether there's a story there I want to tell. Becky normally comes knocking, so you never know, that might happen with Audrey too...

**Q:** What is your parenting style?

**SK:** I'd like to say collaborative, reasonable, loving, encouraging and positive. Would my children agree? Err... ☺

**Q:** You are the ultimate London mum: you are super multitasking and have 5 children in all age groups. You seem so content and efficient. And when we met I sensed that the amazing partnership with your husband is essential to keep you sane. What's the secret of making marriage work so well?

**SK:** I feel very lucky that my husband and I enjoy working together – that's not to say we don't go through tricky times, but we try to keep our sense of humour and not take everything too seriously. Our older children are now grown up enough to help out with the little children, too. But it's a crazy, chaotic existence – like it is for most London mums I imagine!

**Q:** If you were Queen of Britain what would you do first?

**SK:** Abolish homework till you're at senior school. I didn't do any homework till at least age 11 and it left me with so much more time to enjoy childhood.

**Q:** In your online videos you tell us a lot about yourself. We know that you love the jewels at the Tower of London, fashion designer Alexander McQueen, your favourite holiday destinations... Is there an exclusive anecdote you could share with London Mums?

**SK:** My new craze is healthy food gadgets! As well as a Nutribullet, I've bought a spiraliser and I hoped to pass off 'courgetti' as pasta to my children. They were seriously unimpressed!



Finding Audrey is available now in hardback and will be published as paperback in the Spring 2016.

**Q:** What is your guilty pleasure?

**SK:** Too many! I'll say reading Agatha Christie in a nice hot bath.

**Q:** You went to Putney High School in Putney. London Mums HQ is also in Putney. Please share with us a Putney memory... We love Putney too!

**SK:** I used to love blackberrying on Putney Heath. Our mother would send us out with Tupperware containers and we were expected to come home with a haul!

**Q:** What are you up to next?

**SK:** I have just been in Brazil to meet readers at a literary festival. Now I will be busy promoting my new Shopaholic book, which comes out in October, and it's been such a joy coming back to Becky.



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# PETER ANDRE REVEALS HIS LOVE FOR STRICTLY, FOOD AND A VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS CHEESECAKE

Editor Monica Costa meets super dad, singer, television presenter and now Strictly Come Dancing star Peter Andre who talks about his love for food, family and singing.

These days the Mysterious Girl heartthrob is a very busy dad with a newly wed wife, a baby, two lively school children and lots of commitments including his dancing training for BBC1 show Strictly Come Dancing and his role as Iceland Brand Ambassador. In 2014, he joined the Iceland family and has since starred in a series of TV and radio advertisements for the company. Most recently, he has led Iceland's drive to raise awareness of the Power of Frozen. Peter is a vocal supporter of healthy eating and a genuine advocate of frozen food who likes to hone his cooking skills at home with ingredients such as Scallops and Ostrich Fillet.

I did not know what to expect from this meeting but Peter managed to impress me with his genuine charm and likeability. You know now whom I will be supporting on Strictly this year! Before meeting Peter, I asked a group of London Mums what they wanted to ask him. Here are the answers to the questions.

**Q:** How do you feel about being a contestant on Strictly Come Dancing?

**PA:** Strictly is an incredible show. I've always loved watching it on TV and I'm really flattered to have been asked to take part before, but due to work commitments I was never able to. Now the timing is right to give it a go. Everything has just clicked into place to do it this year. Wish me luck, please...

**Q:** What would you recommend to parents who recognise some musical talent in their children? How would you encourage them to go into singing? It's a tough industry...

**PA:** Indeed the music industry is tough. My brother was telling me today – 'Junior has got a passion for music and singing' and 'you should get him into acting school and nurture his talent. If someone just wants to go and sing it's very difficult. But maybe if you put him in the right atmosphere to learn more, they will keep learning. Let them do piano lessons and all the little things they want to do, because that practice is going to be good for them later.

But despite all the work he does, Peter does not delegate the cooking at home and likes very much getting his hands dirty in the kitchen. As a Mediterranean foodie myself I was keen to talk to Peter about his love for food.

**Q:** As a hands-on dad what is your favourite food recipes to cook with your children?

**PA:** It's very strange because being of Greek heritage a lot of people would think that I love Greek food and I do, but my favourite food is Italian. And the



reason for this is that with the pasta you can do so many different things and it's so quick. I can do everything from Fettuccine Alfredo or a Carbonara to a Bolognese but made from scratch. And I love cooking scallops and linguini, beautiful. Because Pasta is my staple, I cook everything around my pasta. My kids love it. Pizza is also good but I always tend to go to pasta, I don't know why. Maybe the bread is heavier than the pasta.

**Q:** You love the Mediterranean diet. Do you also get inspiration from Greece – Cyprus cuisine for your family meals?

**PA:** I love the fact that they use olive oil. I always use olive oil. I don't think our culture is scared of a bit of butter or a bit of salt because it adds so much flavour. If you are cooking healthy food you can afford to put a bit of butter or oil. It's when you are frying, deep frying things and then adding salt, that's when it's tough on your health. I love my food.

I met Peter at a very special launch at Iceland's Christmas In July event when it was revealed Iceland limited edition cheesecake, a delicious treat with a very special purpose. The Luxury Salted Caramel Cheesecake (1000g / £5) will raise 25p per sale which will be donated to Cancer Research UK's Peter Andre Fund. The yummy baked cheesecake is made



Peter cooking with Chef Richard McGeown





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with British cream and British soft cream cheese on a digestive biscuit base and topped with a salted caramel sauce. It's hand-finished with two Belgian chocolate square decorations and will be available to buy in Iceland stores across the country from 4th November.

Peter sharing  
his charity  
cheesecake with  
Iceland CEO  
Malcolm Walker.



Peter, who launched the Peter Andre Fund in 2012 to support Cancer Research UK's life-saving work, said: "I'm thrilled to think that anybody treating themselves to this Iceland cheesecake will be supporting my Fund to help beat cancer sooner. As many people know, the loss of my brother Andrew in 2012 was devastating for me and my family. That's why we're passionate about doing anything we can to support Cancer Research UK's work; we want to help prevent more families losing the people they love the most. The British public is incredibly generous all year round but there's no better time than Christmas for us to think about others. I hope these special cheesecakes fly out of the freezers so that we can raise lots of money!"



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# Happy Star Wars - and more!

By Film Critic Freda Cooper

If the Disney publicity machine is to be believed, there's only one film to see this Christmas – Star Wars: The Force Awakens. But it's not the only one, says our film critic, Freda Cooper.



Whether or not you've seen Star Wars, there'll be no escape from the latest arrival in the franchise and the first from Disney, Star Wars: The Force Awakens. This is billed as episode seven in the series, and comes complete with the return of both Han Solo (Harrison Ford) and Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill), as well as star names like Oscar Isaac, Oscar winner Lupita Nyong'o, Simon Pegg and Andy Serkis. The trailers promise something spectacular, so it should appeal to fans and newbies. It's released on 17 December, but no doubt the merchandise will be on sale earlier.

In the run-up to Christmas, there's a couple of mighty films, including another one from Disney. The Good Dinosaur, released on 27 November, comes from its animation team and asks the question: what would have happened if the asteroid that changed life on Earth forever missed the planet and dinosaurs never became extinct? The film's title gives you something of a clue. The week before sees the arrival of the final part of the biggest YA franchise of the lot. The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2 is the final showdown between Katniss Everdeen and President Snow. Place your bets now.



Keep your eyes on your local listings as well for another piece of animation. The Little Prince, inspired by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's masterpiece, doesn't have a confirmed release date so far, but it opens around the world in November and December, so the UK will be there or thereabouts. An exact translation of the original novel it isn't, but it does have the voices of Jeff Bridges, Marion Cotillard, Paul Rudd and no less than Ricky Gervais.

One of the world's favourite cartoon characters – and his dog – comes to town in glorious 3D on 21 December. Snoopy And Charlie Brown: The Peanuts Movie will be a hit with the whole family, regardless of age. After all, who can resist a beagle with all that personality?

One thing's for sure. Christmas cinema for this year won't just be a one hit wonder!

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# TOY TRENDS

**BRATZ ARE BACK AND A NEW GENERATION OF DOLLS IS BORN**

By Editor Monica Costa

I make no secret of my love for fashion dolls and treasure my collection of 300+ fashion dolls. Call me crazy, call me infantile but I cannot resist the charm of Barbie, Bratz, Moxie Girlz, Steffi and Cindy. When I have a little bit of time, I love dressing them up for my own photo-shoot and make-believe games with my grown up girlfriends.

When I heard that Bratz were back in time for Christmas and re-launching in 28 different countries, I jumped for joy because Bratz are fun and quirky dolls with personality and could only make my fashion dolls' collection more colourful.

I recently met Andrew Laughton, MD of MGA UK and asked him about dolls' trends and a few tricky questions on the healthy body image debate.

**Q: What is your position in the ongoing competition between Bratz versus Barbie dolls?**



**AL:** Bratz is offering something different to other fashion dolls. When they launched it was something that was totally, ground-breaking, diverse culturally, stylistically fashion-wise. It was before it's time in 2001. But now it's for this time because kids now are far more socially aware of different ethnicities, changing cultures, their styles like iconic people such Rita Ora, Rihanna. We don't want to turn kids into anything. We just want them to be themselves. That might change from one season to another as fashion changes. We have to sell toys but we have to make it relevant to today and perhaps in 2001-2002 kids didn't have that opportunity to view what was going on in the fashion market. They were just used to a certain style and that was it. There were no social networking, no real internet for kids to access. Kids are far more aware and savvy now of what's going on around them. That's why Bratz are more relevant now than it ever was. We have waited a number of years to come back with new dolls' characters and modern themes (selfies etc).

Barbie is an iconic toy and it will be like that forever. We don't want to compete with that so we offer a different choice of fashion dolls.

**Q: Are Bratzlillaz the answer to Monster High dolls?**



Andrew Laughton, MD of MGA UK, shows the new generation Bratz



**AL:** Monsters

was a trend but now we are looking at what is relevant to today. We are adults creating toys for children. We cannot get away from what the Bratz brand stands for with the iconic styling but we have to make it relevant to a bigger group of people as possible. We know that Bratz is a Marmite brand: either you love it or hate it. We understand that and that's why it's very important that we communicate to the parents and grandparents as well why we are doing this now and the subtle changes we have made to overcome some of their concerns about our dolls. Soon we will be launching an app where the dolls and the app will be linked. The online content connected to the toys will contribute to the 'Bratzification' (giggle) of the fashion dolls' market.

**Q: What's the vision for the future of dolls?**

**AL:** The future is about managing a brand. We are not in for a fast buck in 2015. We are projected in the future. We are following the trends, the kids who tell us what they want to be or what they aspire to be. Barbie makers follow their route and we follow our route to be relevant to today's children. Emoji culture, for example, is a hot trend at the moment among young people but it hasn't been picked up in the toy arena yet. That's where we bridge the gap between fashion and toy. You'll notice emoji in some of our new Bratz products.

**Q: With all the sexualisation of dolls and the healthy body image debate what is the future of dolls? Where does Bratz stand on this debate in 2015? The normal size (not skinny) fashion doll by Lammily doesn't seem to pick up really....**

**AL:** The healthy body image debate is beyond our control. Our dolls are caricatures. This is the main difference between Bratz and Barbie. Barbie is meant to look like someone who is real

but Bratz dolls are caricatures of real people and they have, for instance, big feet compared to their body size. We promote strong female characters and we focus more on the individuality. We have just launched another doll called MC Squared that come with experiments, some content that you can use household material in order to do scientific experiments and is trying to promote science for girls. MC Squared will have its own TV content on Netflix too. Bratz is a fashion brand, while MC Squared is an educational geeky brand. You cannot pigeonhole kids these days. We promote the freedom to be yourself and comfortable in your own self. It's not un-cool to be clever!





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# THE IMPORTANCE OF FIRST AID TRAINING FOR CHILDREN

Editor Monica Costa and Child reporter Diego go to first aid training

After my uncle's sudden death a few years ago, I have felt the need to be more confident in emergency situations which occur more frequently when you have a family with young children. So for the second time in three years I have taken the three-hour Emergency First Aid with First Aid for Life ([www.firstaidforlife.org.uk](http://www.firstaidforlife.org.uk)) run by successful London Mum and mumpreneur Emma Hammett. But this time I have brought my 9-year old son Diego along.

As well as providing the ability to be the difference between life and death, first aid training at a young age helps to build confidence and self esteem as well as teamwork and communication skills.

Our course was designed for young people (and adults) to learn both to keep themselves safe and to help others in an emergency situation.

Older children and teenagers want to exert their independence, look to push boundaries and do not naturally take risks. The practical session on the importance of the recovery position was particularly useful considering it may come in handy when kids start experimenting with alcohol.

Under the supervision of a retired policeman who is an experienced first aid trainer, we practised how to care for the unconscious adult, child and baby who is either breathing, or not-breathing as well as the treatment of commonly occurring accidents and illnesses. We learnt in detail about choking, head injuries, spinal injuries, burns and scalds, poisoning, bleeding, breaks and sprains, acute allergic reaction and fitting.



Diego was at ease even during challenging sessions when we learnt how to perform CPR as well as choking rescue scenarios.



As you can see from our pictures, Diego and I are proud of our Certificates and will make sure we will do a refresher course after it expires in 3 years time.



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*"Thanks to First Aid for Life  
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# Shopaholic & sleeping babies

Mums love their babies, especially if they sleep nicely – here are London Mums favourite sleeping outfits



Slumbersac Muslin Sleeping Bag, available in 4 sizes from £15.99



Slumbersac Baby Winter Sleeping Bag Long Sleeve  
Avail. in 4 sizes from newborn to 3 years  
RRP: starting from £19.99



SlumberTag Baby Comforter Fire Engine  
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Slumbersac Travel Wrap Princess  
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Slumbersac Travel Wrap Pirate  
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## LONDON MUMS CHRISTMAS PARTY 20 NOVEMBER 2015

Join our annual Christmas party, an unmissable tradition with famously rich goodie bags and cool entertainers. This year the creative and full of soul Funky Moves and a break-dancing guest star SPIDERMAN will be on hand to burn up some pre-Christmas calories with their funky street dance workshop. We will watch them dazzle and wow us with their incredible dance routines and break dancing skills – we will then learn how to do the moves ourselves in a fun and relaxed style! Their entertainment promises to be out-of-this-world. Kids will then meet Santa and receive the first Christmas presents.

### Booking info

Time: 5-7pm

Tickets: £9 per child (including a light meal, all entertainment and amazing goody bags for mums and kids for each mum+child ticket)  
£1 per adult – Babies under 8 months go free

### Venue: Eddie Catz PUTNEY

68-70 Putney High Street,  
1st Floor – London SW15 1SF  
Tel. 0203 475 5268



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and we will send you bank details.



## SHOPAHOLIC LOVES USEFUL GIFTS

*Deep down we love useful gifts. Here is  
London Mums' top selection of practical  
presents for this Winter 2015/2016*



Brando Brogues in black  
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[www.youngsoles.co.uk](http://www.youngsoles.co.uk)



My BuddyTag  
RRP £44.99  
[www.kiddicare.com](http://www.kiddicare.com)



Rosie T-Bar shoes in navy  
RRP from £65  
[www.youngsoles.co.uk](http://www.youngsoles.co.uk)



The Splash About Happy Nappy Wetsuit  
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Available from [www.splashabout.com](http://www.splashabout.com)



Bamboo Belly Bandit  
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# Shopaholic **LOVES** Christmas

Add fun to your Christmas shopping and go for trendy gifts – here is the Shopaholic Guide to Christmas 2015



Hedgehog Plush Wheelybug  
(suitable for 1/3 years)  
£64.95  
[www.hippychick.com](http://www.hippychick.com)



Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Christmas Jumper  
RRP £39.99  
Available from [www.nickelodeonstore.co.uk](http://www.nickelodeonstore.co.uk)  
and Forbidden Planet  
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Paw Patrol Book and DVD  
Action adventure pre-school series from Nickelodeon  
RRP £9.99  
Available from [www.nickelodeonstore.co.uk](http://www.nickelodeonstore.co.uk)  
and Smyths Toys and other toy retailers.  
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Zinc Flyte Case Scooter  
RRP: £69.99  
Suitable for children aged 4 – 8 years  
Flyte can be used as a cool case, swift  
trolley or sturdy scooter  
[www.zincflyte.com](http://www.zincflyte.com)



Sand Sculpt Medieval Castle (HGL)  
Includes 1kg sand, 6 castle moulds, play tray, figure  
cut-out cards and 4 piece sculpting tool set.  
RRP £9.99  
Available through Toymaster stores  
and The Works.



Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Apron  
RRP £18.99  
Available from [www.nickelodeonstore.co.uk](http://www.nickelodeonstore.co.uk)  
and Forbidden Planet  
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Generation Dolls from  
John Crane Ltd.  
RRP £14.99 up to £39.99  
for the Deluxe dolls,  
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prices vary.  
Available in Hamleys,  
Amazon, Smyths, and  
most toy stockists.

Dora and Friends™  
Talking Dora and  
Smartphone  
RRP £29.99  
Available from Amazon,  
Smyths toys,  
the Entertainer,  
all good toy stores  
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Train Trax Super Looper (HGL)  
Adult assembly required.  
RRP £19.99  
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all good toy retailers.



Hero in a half shell Mikey  
Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles from Nickelodeon  
Suitable for ages 3+  
Available from all good toy stores at £7.99 to £25  
[www.flairplc.co.uk](http://www.flairplc.co.uk)  
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*Rachel*

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