

The Sick Children's Trust

Bridlington family finds refuge in The Sick Children's Trust 'Home from Home'

A Bridlington family have been helped by The Sick Children's Trust while their baby son receives vital treatment miles from home in the RVI hospital in Newcastle.

Kimberley and Dan, have been staying in Crawford House, The Sick Children's Trust 'Home from Home' at the RVI for a few months while their new born baby son Hugo is in hospital.

Hugo was born 13 weeks prematurely on May 11th 2008 in Scarborough by emergency caesarean section, weighing less than 2lbs. Kimberley and her husband Dan had to wait 5 hours before they could see him and he was so tiny.

Due to his prematurity they were told Hugo would have to be transferred to the James Cook hospital in Middlesbrough that night. But Hugo was becoming more and more critical as time went on and was diagnosed with a TOF, which meant his oesophagus was connected to his trachea, so every time Hugo took a breath the air he was breathing in got trapped in his stomach and the contents of his stomach (stomach acid) went into his lungs.

Kimberley and Dan were told he needed surgery to save his life and so would have to be transferred to the RVI in Newcastle. They spent just 10 minutes with him before the Newcastle team took him onto the RVI. They followed on 6 hours behind Hugo, but while they were waiting for transport, the surgeons phoned to explain the operation that Hugo needed and to ask for permission. Kimberley says 'we were told not to expect Hugo to survive. We had only spent a matter of minutes with our newborn baby son and we were already close to losing him'.

Thankfully when they arrived in Newcastle, they were offered a room in Crawford House, The Sick Children's Trust 'Home from Home' based at the RVI. Kimberley says 'I was still recovering from having the caesarean, so I couldn't have been more grateful'.

Kimberley continues 'our newborn baby son needs us with him at all times, but our family home is miles away from Newcastle; so we have been staying in Crawford House since Hugo was admitted ten weeks ago and in all honesty I don't know how we would have coped without it.

'My husband Dan has been able to transfer his job with Tesco to a local store and works 5 nights each week. Obviously it's essential that he keeps working, because even in this difficult situation we still have bills to pay at home. Staying in Crawford House means that we can have home-cooked meals together in the sanctuary of the 'Home from Home' and deal with our emotions in privacy, away from the public and busy ward. It also means that Dan and I are able to catch up on much needed sleep, knowing the ward can contact us day or night and we are only ever a few minutes away from Hugo'.

Both Kimberley and Dan have found it to be a real comfort speaking to other families staying in Crawford House 'they understand the medical jargon which has become part of our daily conversation, we can relate to them and vice versa'. In short, Kim explains that it has 'become a great relief to speak to someone else who just 'knows', no explanation necessary'.

Hugo is a fighter and survived the first operation; in fact he's going from strength to strength weighing an impressive 5 1/2lbs now. But he was recently also diagnosed with a hole in his heart and also has other surgical problems, so Kimberley and Dan don't know how much longer they'll be staying in Crawford House.

But however long they stay, they say Crawford House has 'really become our 'Home from Home' and we can't thank The Sick Children's Trust enough for helping us to stay close to our newborn baby son'.

The Sick Children's Trust runs seven Homes from Home at major hospitals around the country where families can stay free of charge, for as long as they need whilst their child is undergoing treatment. There is a growing demand for our 'Homes from Home' as children must increasingly travel long distances to get the specialist treatment they need. To date we have helped more than 30,000 families. To run our 'Homes from Home' we rely entirely on voluntary donations; we need to raise nearly £1million this year to keep them open.

For further information please contact Anna Nason on 020 8348 1844

or email anna@sickchildrenstrust.org

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