# Baby Boy Expected Not To Survive 48hrs Celebrates First Christmas

**Thursday 22 December, 2016**

The parents of a baby boy who were told they may have to turn off his life-support machine at just two days old are celebrating their first Christmas together at home.

Parents Natasha and Ashley Elley from Basildon, were told to prepare for the worst when their baby, Toby, was born at just 25 weeks.

When he was born, Toby was resuscitated immediately and rushed to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital, before even having a cuddle with his parents. Toby was so seriously ill that at just ten hours old he was transferred to The Rosie Hospital, Cambridge, for lifesaving treatment. But when he was just two days old, his parents were told to consider turning off their son's life-support machine.

However, Toby started fighting and spent 105 days on NICU desperately trying to survive. Within days of being born, the brave baby battled a deadly bowel condition, necrotising enterocolitis (NEC) and underwent life-saving surgery. He also had two significant bleeds on the brain, which required draining when he was just weeks old, and his plight continued for the following three months as Toby battled a serious lung infection which resulted in ventilation, and numerous lumber punctures.

Despite this, and it being predicted he wouldn't survive, Toby was allowed home two weeks ago, just in time for Christmas. **Sick Children's Trust Ambassador, Natasha says:**

"To be out in time for Christmas is beyond what we ever expected. Toby has been very poorly and there were so many times we were told he wouldn't survive. Being asked to consider turning off your baby's life-support is devastating, it's more than devastating; it shatters you into a million pieces.

"Ashley and I were so scared and confused. Our baby was tiny and we feared we were losing him. His first two weeks were especially horrendous, we were delivered blow after blow and all we could do was hope he'd pull through. His little body was put through the wars, but remarkable he made it.

"This year we will be making Christmas extra special and cherishing every moment with our son."

Toby is now back at home, getting ready for a visit from Father Christmas. During his treatment at The Rosie Hospital, his parents were supported with free 'Home from Home' accommodation run by The Sick Children's Trust. Natasha and Ashley stayed in the charity's Chestnut House for 60 days until Toby was well enough to go home. **Natasha continues:**

"Basildon is miles away from The Rosie Hospital, so I don't know what we would have done without Chestnut House. There was nowhere else we wanted to be but by our son's side. It was a huge worry, but thankfully Chestnut House took care of that worry for us by giving us free 'Home from Home accommodation just minutes from our son's hospital bedside."

The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home', supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital and this Christmas, the charity will be busy in every 'Home from Home' across the country. **Chestnut House Manager, Abi Abdel-aal says:**

"It was wonderful to wave goodbye to Toby and his parents just in time for Christmas – we hope they have a very magical celebration back home.

"For many families this year, instead of being at home opening presents around the Christmas tree, they will be in hospital, hoping their sick child will get better. The Sick Children's Trust will be there for them, with free 'Home from Home' accommodation, so these families can stay together during every minute over Christmas by their sick child's hospital bedside."

It costs The Sick Children's Trust £30 to support a family for a night in one of its 'Homes from Home'.

For further information about The Sick Children's Trust, please visit http://www.sickchildrenstrust.org/

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