

Charity delivers vital sonographer training at Leeds GI where CEO's daughter received life-saving open heart surgery

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Thanks to a partnership between charities Children's Heart Surgery Fund (CHSF) and Tiny Tickers, sonographers at Leeds General Infirmary are receiving vital training to help them detect the signs of serious heart conditions in babies at the 20-week pregnancy scans.

With the support of CHSF, Tiny Tickers will deliver hands-on, hospital-based cardiac screening training for sonographers throughout the Yorkshire region. The training covers the most up-to-date NHS recommendations on what sonographers should look for when examining the heart as part of the 20-week scan.

Tiny Tickers is the only national charity dedicated to improving the early detection, diagnosis and care of babies with congenital heart disease (CHD).

The charity's CEO, Jon Arnold, is also a heart parent and his daughter, Zoe, received life-saving open heart surgery at Leeds General Infirmary said: "Early detection of CHD can help save lives and we're very proud of the part we've played in helping make sure more babies than ever before are being detected prior to birth. "

Zoe was born 14 years ago with a congenital heart defect. Zoe's heart condition was picked up at Jon's wife, Andrea's, 20-week pregnancy scan at Leeds General Infirmary. Jon says, 'Zoe was diagnosed with a complete atrioventricular septal defect – a big hole in the middle of all four chambers of the heart, and one valve where there should be two. We also learned at the scan that she would have Down's Syndrome. She is Daddy's little princess. A very precious little princess.'

Jon continues, 'Early detection of congenital heart defects in babies greatly improves their chances of survival – and this is where Tiny Tickers comes in. We're dedicated to helping sonographers do the very difficult job of detecting heart defects during the 20-week scan and we're delighted that CHSF are supporting us in our aims.'

A baby is born with a serious heart condition every two hours in the UK and congenital heart disease (CHD) is one of the biggest killers of infants in the UK. **Around half of congenital heart defects are picked up during routine antenatal scanning**, but approximately 1,000 newborn babies leave hospital each year with their heart defect undetected. These babies are at serious risk of heart failure and death if their condition is not diagnosed in time.

To find out more about the work of CHSF and Tiny Tickers, visit www.chsf.org.uk and www.tinytickers.org

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