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A couple who pedalled 150 miles in three days have raised £1000 for The Sick Children's Trust - a charity that has supported their friends with free accommodation at Leeds General Infirmary so that they could be close to their sick baby.

Hannah Smith and Steph Ley, both 34 from York, took on the renowned Coast-to-Coast cycling challenge from Whitehaven to Tynemouth to show their support to friends Amy and Dickie Inman. The Imans have a two-month-old daughter, Florence, who was born with a number of complications which have kept her in hospital since birth.

During this short time, Florence has already undergone one operation and is expected to have further surgery over the coming months for her various conditions; this includes a bowel condition, a hole in her heart, dysplastic kidneys and a malformed vertebrae in her spine. The Sick Children's Trust provided accommodation for Amy and Dickie at their 'Home from Home' Eckersley House, so that the parents can be just minutes away from their daughter's bedside.

Following the high praise of the charity for its 'phenomenal' support by Florence's parents, the two novice cyclists decided to do what they could to raise awareness of the charity's work. **Hannah says:**

"Amy and Dickie are good friends of ours and we want to support them through this difficult time. There was nothing we could really do on the day-to-day front, so we thought we'd take on something that was going to be challenging and raise funds for The Sick Children's Trust.

"Neither of us are fitness fanatics, in fact, before we started training in April we'd never even cycled five miles! So getting to grips with the training was a challenge in itself.

"On the route, the hardest part was the second day when we cycled 68 miles. It was gruelling. We had a five mile climb which was so tough – but it was over for us in an hour and was nothing compared to what Florence has gone through so far and will go through over the next couple of years. That's what kept us going, Florence kept us going."

Eckersley House is one of ten 'Homes from Home' The Sick Children's Trust runs for families with seriously ill children at hospitals across the country. The house provides families with a private bedroom, shared bathroom, cooking and laundry facilities, but most importantly a warm, homely environment just minutes away from their child's bedside.

Jane McHale, Eckersley House Manager, says: "It's great to see the amount of support that Amy, Dickie and little Florence are receiving from their friends and family. Hannah and Steph showed pure determination and commitment to raising money for us and for that we are incredibly grateful."

Hannah continues: "Amy and Dickie keep saying how comforting it's been to be in the house, not only having the facilities, but the emotional support from the team and others around them going through a similar experience. Steph and I are quite fortunate that we've never been in that situation, but we're aware it happens to others on a daily basis. So, if there's something we can do to help raise awareness of what The Sick Children's Trust does, we will."

To find out more about Hannah and Steph's Coast-to-Coast challenge, visit https://www.justgiving.com/letourforflorence/

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