Hoddesdon family to feature in BBC Lifeline appeal to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust

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A Hoddesdon family, who were supported by The Sick Children's Trust after the birth of their premature son, are featuring on national television in BBC Lifeline to raise awareness for the charity.

The Ledster family will appear in BBC Lifeline on Sunday 21 January at 3.15pm, in an appeal presented by renowned actor and President of The Sick Children's Trust, Michael Crawford CBE.

Helen Ledster, 38, gave birth to Flynn at just 27 weeks on 2 May 2016 at The Rosie Hospital in Cambridge. He was immediately ventilated and admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for lifesaving treatment.

Over the next 16 weeks Helen and her husband Dan watched their baby son fight for his life in the specialist hospital. Whilst Flynn was undergoing treatment, his parents and older brother Bradley, now eight years old, were supported with free 'Home from Home' accommodation at Chestnut House, run by The Sick Children's Trust, located just below NICU. **Helen, who spent six months away from home while Flynn received lifesaving treatment, says:**

"The Sick Children's Trust is an amazing charity. Chestnut House enabled us to be together as a family, especially on weekends. I was away from home for six months altogether, spending four of those with Flynn in Cambridge. Chestnut House was really beneficial during this time not just for me, but for my older son, Bradley.

"Bradley was only six at the time so it was very important that he could come and stay with us. He really looked forward to coming to see Mummy and Flynn and he loved the playroom and the attention he received from the wonderful staff at Chestnut House.

"Abi, the House Manager, was a huge support. When Dan wasn't there I would go to her, sit down with a cup of tea and have a chat which made all the difference. Not only was the emotional support important, but so was the practical support. Without Chestnut House we would be in debt as we would've had to pay for hotels. Because when your baby is seriously ill in hospital, you're not worrying about money, all you're thinking about is if your child will get through the next day."

"I will always be grateful that I didn't have the additional stress of money, being away from Flynn and travelling every single day when he was so poorly.

"Please help us to support The Sick Children's Trust by watching Sunday's BBC Lifeline appeal to see just how vital the charity's work is to families like us who have seriously ill children in hospital."

The Sick Children's Trust relies entirely on voluntary donations to keep its ten 'Homes from Home' running. It costs the charity £30 to support a family for one night and every year it supports around 4,000 families with seriously ill children in hospital, keeping them just minutes from their child's hospital bedside. **President Michael Crawford CBE, who has been supporting the charity for over 30 years, says:**

"The Sick Children's Trust is a remarkable charity in both the simplicity of its mission and the huge impact its work has on families and children.

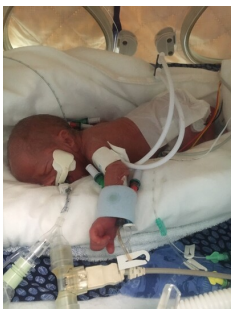
"I still remember to this day being left alone on a hospital ward as a child after I underwent surgery to remove my tonsils. I was terrified as I waited for my mother to collect me, a wait that felt like an eternity. The relief when she walked through the doors and gave me a kiss and a hug was overwhelming. That worry is a feeling I do not want any child to ever have to endure.

"That's why I support The Sick Children's Trust and remain so committed to this cause. As a charity, we are working towards a future where every child will be able to have their family by their side as they undergo treatment in hospital.

"Thank you to everyone who watches the BBC Lifeline appeal and helps us provide such vital comfort to

Media:















so many children across the UK.”

Watch The Sick Children’s Trust BBC Lifeline appeal on Sunday 21 January at 3.15pm and visit the BBC website to find out more about the charity and the families it supports.

For further information visit http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09pw6gp

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