

Hoist Gives Family New Lease of Life

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For most people, a simple walk, car journey, or public transport access can get you from A to B without any worry or thought at all. However, for some people, especially those who are wheelchair users, the thought of travelling is too stressful to comprehend.

Since Caitlin was born, she has had numerous hospital admissions, surgeries and health conditions which put her life at risk. Now aged 16, Caitlin has finally been diagnosed with a Mitochondrial Disorder, affecting her kidneys, stomach and feeding. Caitlin is unable to walk or talk and relies solely on her family for all her care needs as well as mobility around the house. Transferring Caitlin can be extremely difficult and hoists are needed to enable the safety of both Caitlin and her parents when manoeuvring her.

"Caitlin is wheelchair dependent and we have hoists all around our house to help us move her, but we faced so many problems taking her outside. I'm 5ft 4 and with Caitlin being a teenager, it is almost impossible for me to move her safely from where she needs to be. I've also suffered from back pain and had a pelvic organ prolapse due to all the lifting over the years and so we run into so many issues with transport. It really affects where we can go" said Michelle, Caitlin's Mum.

After continually struggling with daily transfers and confined to their house, a portable hoist was recommended by Caitlin's Occupational Therapist, which could be used outside. However this essential piece of equipment is extremely costly and unavailable through the local authority and it was impossible for Caitlin's family to obtain.

With all other avenues exhausted, Michelle contacted React, a children's charity which provides vital equipment to children living with life-shortening illnesses.

"The hoist has been a life-saver for us. We don't have to worry when we leave the house now and we can access everything so easily. This Christmas, we were able to visit my oldest daughter for the first time and Caitlin was able to come too. We are even planning to go on holiday, something we would have never imagined we could be able to do."

Notes to editor:

*There can be no greater tragedy than to be told your child lives with an illness which will shorten his or her life. **React** (**R**apid **E**ffective **A**ssistance for **C**hildren with potentially **T**erminal **I**llness) exists to improve the quality of life for children with life-limiting illnesses who are living in families experiencing financial hardship.*

React works to give these children comfort, dignity and where possible, greater independence. React provides a wide range of equipment from specialist wheelchairs, beds, baths, and mobility aids, to essential everyday items like washing machines and tumble dryers. React can also offer mobile home holidays in the UK and sometimes, sadly funeral and memorial expenses.

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