?Mum grateful for charity's support tells inspirational story about her little girl who is recovering from brain tumour

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A devoted mum has shared her daughter's inspirational story to raise awareness for The Sick Children's Trust as thanks for supporting her family with free 'Home from Home' accommodation for seven weeks.

Dani Spence, 26, from Louth in Lincolnshire, experienced every parent's worst nightmare when an MRI scan showed that her toddler, Lacey, had a brain tumour. The tumour, which was located deep on Lacey's cerebellum, was growing and doctors told Dani that her daughter needed a lifesaving operation to remove it at Sheffield Children's Hospital, over two hours from the family's home. Whilst Lacey was in hospital, The Sick Children's Trust gave Dani a room at its 'Homes from Home', Magnolia and Treetop Houses, minutes from her daughter's hospital bedside. **Dani, who was supported by the charity for seven weeks, says:**

"Home is over two hours away and I don't know how I could've managed the daily journey to Sheffield. Especially with the cost of petrol and I could not have afforded to stay in a hotel close to the hospital. It wasn't just the practicality of the 'Homes from Home' that was important, the emotional support I received from the staff was priceless. There are also other people's stories all over the walls, which gives you a sense of hope, as you can read what they've been through and the positive outcomes. You have to stay hopeful for your child, but it can be quite isolating, so reading stories and speaking to other parents in the house really helped.

"The doctors were concerned with Lacey's recovery following the operation. She was sleeping a lot and when she was awake she was having dreadful tantrums, which was very out of character. From a CT scan they identified she was suffering from hydrocephalus, an accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) on her brain around the cerebellum and attempted to drain it. It was a very scary time because the increase in pressure on Lacey's brain could have caused brain damage.

"At Treetop House the staff were always there to comfort me. The specialist was convinced the tumour was cancerous and that Lacey would need radiotherapy and chemotherapy, but by some miracle it was benign. It was the staff in Treetop House that reassured me that everything would be OK whilst I waited for the results. And it was the staff who were there as a shoulder to cry on when it all got too much. Without The Sick Children's Trust I would have been waiting alone, so I can't thank Ann and Nichola enough for being there for me."

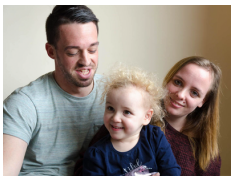
The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the country, giving families with seriously ill children free accommodation just minutes from their child's hospital bedside. The charity relies entirely on voluntary donations and it costs £30 to support a family for one night. **Magnolia and Treetop House Manager, Ann Wyatt, says:**

"It was a very scary time for Dani after Lacey's first operation and we all know how difficult it is to stay positive when your child is seriously ill. Being able to give her somewhere to stay, so close to her daughter was very important for both of them.

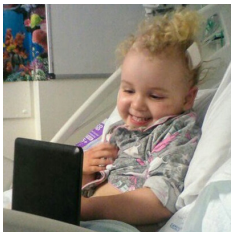
"The charity supports around 4,000 families every year, and there is a growing demand for our 'Homes from Home' as children must increasingly travel long distances to get the specialist treatment they need."

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

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