Mum's epic running challenge in support of The Sick Children's Trust

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A Sunderland mum is taking on an epic running challenge to raise funds The Sick Children's Trust, the charity that supported her during her daughter's emergency heart surgery.

At her 20 week scan, it was discovered that Charlotte McKenzie's unborn daughter had a blockage in her heart. At 35 weeks pregnant, Charlotte had another growth scan which showed that Lily's heart rate had decreased rapidly and she was transferred straight to Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary for an emergency caesarean the next day. However, Lily stopped moving in the night and Charlotte was rushed down for surgery in the early hours.

Lily was then transferred across Newcastle to the Freeman Hospital where she had surgery to be fitted with a pacemaker at just 12 hours old. Charlotte was briefly able to see her baby before she went into surgery and this was when she was told that she had a place to stay at The Sick Children's Trust's 'Home from Home', Scott House, located just a stone's throw away from Lily's hospital bedside. Now to thank the charity for its support Charlotte is fundraising by running a total of 62 miles throughout January. **Charlotte said:**

"When I was told that Lily needed to be born right then and there, I had no idea what to expect. I didn't even know if Lily was going to survive. It was so difficult being away from her while she was being prepped for surgery, but my mum was there and she was giving me updates the whole time. When I could finally travel over all I cared about was how Lily was doing. I hadn't thought about where I was going to stay so it was absolutely amazing when I was told everything had been sorted and we could stay at Scott House.

"We stayed at Scott House for six days until Lily was well enough to be transferred back to our local hospital in Sunderland. She will need check ups to monitor her pacemaker but she is still running all over the place and having a very active childhood.

"I wanted to thank the charity by covering the cost of my stay, as it costs The Sick Children's Trust £30 to support a family for one night. I set myself the challenge of running 62 miles throughout January to raise £180 which I have already raised and the donations are continuing to come in. I didn't know anything about The Sick Children's Trust, but I wouldn't have been able to look after Lily without the charity and I want to make sure that other families in a similar situation to me can receive that same support."

The Sick Children's Trust supports families with a seriously ill child in hospital with a comfortable place to stay close to their bedside across its ten 'Homes from Home'. **Linsey Borough, Scott House Manager, said:**

"Lily had a difficult start to life but we are so pleased to have been able to keep Charlotte and her mum close to her hospital bedside as she recovered. It's wonderful to see her doing so well now.

"Due to the pandemic we are expecting to lose 25-30% of our income which is why fundraisers, like Charlotte, and the donations they receive are so important as this will help to keep our 'Homes from Home' open. Any donation you can make will go a along way to keeping a family with their child when they need them most."

More information about Charlotte's fundraiser can be found on her Just Giving page https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/charlotte-mckenzie5

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