New Life Charity buys premature baby mannequin for Barnstaple neonatal unit

Monday 7 March, 2022

When babies are born prematurely it goes without saying that they require specialist care, interventions and often surgery from specially trained medical staff. These critical skills must be taught and practised to optimise results. The neonatal department at Barnstaple hospital recently took delivery of a very special piece of equipment, a tiny mannequin of a preterm 25-week old baby, known as 'Premature Anne' funded by the charity New Life Special Care Babies.

'Premature Anne' which costs £2500, enables staff to hone their skills including resuscitation techniques, intubation, and IV access used in general day to daycare as well as procedures when undergoing heart surgery. 'Premature Anne' facilitates this training.

New Life CEO Trevor Goodall said "I was delighted to be able to help after I received the call from staff on the neonatal unit. I have built very close relationships with suppliers over the years and can usually make the call, place the order, and deliver the item within a very short time. I know how important this specialist equipment is to staff on neonatal units and what a difference it makes to their job and the care of these tiny premature babies."

New Life supplies specialist equipment and items speedily to neonatal units across the UK because of the very unique way it works. Consultants and other neonatal specialists submit requests to the charity, often for equipment that would otherwise take months to source through the NHS. Some equipment that the charity has supplied is not available through NHS funding.

Senior Neonatal Staff Nurse Janet Hutchins said 'We are so grateful to Trevor and the charity for funding Premmie Anne for us. She will be put to very good use and will enable us to run simulations and training sessions with the multi-disciplinary perinatal team, which includes, midwives, obstetricians, paediatricians, neonatal nurses and theatre staff. She will also be used on SCBU to teach and train staff in some of the many tasks and skills associated with the care of a preterm baby.

Thank you for all you do and for fundraising and helping units like ours obtain the equipment needed to care for our little patients and their families.'

New Life Special Care Babies was set up 26 years ago by Mr Goodall when his twin boys were born prematurely at 24 weeks but sadly died a week later. A 'one off' charity golf day then turned into regular fundraising events, and so the charity was born. In 2021 it reached the huge milestone of £1million which has helped thousands of families and numerous hospitals across the UK.

The charity has a full calendar of social events and sporting challenges throughout the year. Vital funds are also raised by individuals, corporate sponsorship and regular giving.

"Without this ongoing support from families, businesses and neonatal staff around the UK," said Mr Goodall, "the charity would not be able to make a difference to the lives of so many premature and very sick babies."

The charity would love to hear from any other families or medical staff who have benefited from their equipment or who would like to organise an event or challenge to raise money. 2022 is set to be an important year too, as the charity is hoping to find a well-known or influential figure to come on board as its Ambassador.

To contact the charity, email trevor@newlifebabies.org.uk

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