New Life supports Newborn Life Support courses

Thursday 15 December, 2022

Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK), with the support of New Life Special Care babies, has developed a pre-hospital Newborn Life Support (NLS) Course to decrease newborn mortality rates and adverse clinical outcomes.

The course is targeted at those working in the pre-hospital setting, such as paramedics, nurses and community midwives, who have limited opportunities for bespoke training to support them in caring for very sick or premature newborn babies.

The pre-hospital NLS Course, which is an extension of the Newborn Life Support Course – undertaken by 7,000 healthcare professionals yearly - focuses on areas such as thermal care, airway management, resuscitation, critical team working and communication skills.

Two ‘test courses’ were supported by New Life Special Care Babies and held in November in Exeter; the courses were positively evaluated by those who attended.

Dr Joe Fawke, Consultant Neonatologist and Chair of the Resuscitation Council UK’s Newborn Life Support Subcommittee says, “The new Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) Pre-Hospital Newborn Life Support course builds on their longstanding, successful Newborn Life Support course and draws on the strengths of pre-hospital experts and experts from RCUK. It provides vital skills in stabilising babies born at home and safely transporting them to hospital when needed and will support paramedic and community team training. We are delighted to be working with New Life, who have supported the evolution of this new course and with the College of Paramedics. This course will help babies born outside hospital that need assistance to get the best start in life.”

Dr Sarah Bates, who was part of the course development group, says ”Paramedics and other pre-hospital practitioners rarely get the opportunity to do focused training on specialist newborn life support, and yet South West Ambulance crews attend at least one baby a week who is unexpectedly born at home, babies who might be premature or sick needing stabilisation. Community Midwives attend hundreds of births at home across the Southwest every year. Some are planned home births where the baby unexpectedly needs resuscitation, and some are unplanned, unexpected home births where the baby might need significant extra lifesaving support.

Simple interventions, like keeping preterm babies warm, are so hard to do in pre-hospital settings. For any of these poorly babies born outside of a hospital setting, having lifesaving resuscitation skills delivered by a highly trained team really makes a difference to their survival and their long-term outcome.”

New Life charity has had a long relationship with the hospital and its Neonatal Consultants and team after twin sons of CEO Trevor Goodall, Joshua and Samuel were cared for having been born at 24 weeks. Sadly, both boys died a week later. Mr Goodall has made it his life’s work to raise as much money as possible for premature and very sick babies across the UK and, having reached £1 million in 2021, is now focusing on reaching £2m.

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

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Notes to editors

Each year around 80,000 babies are born prematurely according to statistics published by Bliss. This

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means that over 2 million premature babies have been born in the UK since the charity began 26 years ago.

The charity was set up in 1995 after Trevor's twin boys, Joshua and Samuel were born prematurely sadly dying shortly afterwards.

For more information, please visit newlifebabies.org.uk.

Resuscitation Council UK is saving lives by developing guidelines, influencing policy, delivering courses and supporting cutting-edge research. Through education, training and research, we're working towards the day when everyone in the country has the skills they need to save a life.

For more information, please visit resus.org.uk or contact us at courses@resus.org.uk.

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