Parents of girl born weighing half a bag of sugar show support for charity

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The parents of a little girl who was born weighing as little as half a bag of sugar are supporting The Sick Children's Trust's Pyjama Party as thanks for giving them free accommodation when their baby was seriously ill.

Kirsty Farmer and Ben Cameron, from Barnsley, were elated when they found out that they were having a baby girl. However, a later scan revealed that their baby, Grace, was at risk of having a chromosome disorder. At just 28 weeks, it was discovered that Grace was in serious danger and Kirsty needed an emergency caesarean, but it would have to take place at Bradford Royal Infirmary as the couple's local hospital couldn't care for Grace's specialist needs.

In just the first few moments of her life, Grace needed emergency CPR and was placed on a machine to keep her airways open. When she was five days old, Grace was rushed from Bradford to Leeds General Infirmary (LGI) as she was suspected to have the bowel disease necrotising enterocolitis and sepsis. Grace underwent several blood transfusions and spent two weeks on anti-biotics before it was discovered she had a bleed on the brain. The brave youngster spent 97 days in four different hospital before being allowed to go home. While she underwent treatment at LGI, Kirsty and Ben were given free 'Home from Home' accommodation at Eckersley House.

Sick Children's Trust Ambassador Kirsty says: "We didn't find out we were expecting until I was over three months pregnant, fortunately my first scan showed that everything was fine. But as time went on, we found out our daughter may be very poorly.

"During the 97 days Grace was in hospital she fought really hard – especially for such a tiny little baby. Grace went through seven blood transfusions, regular brain scans and eye tests along with many other procedures before she was discharged and sent home on oxygen. The doctors explained that any effects from the bleed on the brain would not be noticed until she was much older, so we're still playing the waiting game."

Kirsty and Ben are now calling on the nation to help raise funds for The Sick Children's Trust by getting involved in Pyjama Party. Pyjama Party is a fun filled day where children are sponsored to come to nursery or playgroup dressed in their favourite pyjamas and take part in various activities. **She adds**:

"For the time we were at LGI, we were so lucky that we didn't have to leave Grace. The Sick Children's Trust's Eckersley House was so close to the hospital that it enabled us to spend all our time with her, while also easily being able to go back to the house for some time to ourselves, without being too far away. There was a direct telephone line to the ward in our room at Eckersley and this number was kept in Grace's notes, meaning we could be contacted during the night (or day) if there were any problems. The house provided us with the facilities to look after ourselves, enabling us to care for Grace as best we could."

The Sick Children's Trust runs ten 'Homes from Home' across the country, supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital. **Eckersley House Manager, Jane McHale says:**

"We're so pleased that Grace is now back at home and doing really well. It means the world to us that Kirsty and Ben are supporting the Pyjama Party. It costs us £30 to support a family for one night at Eckersley House, so the more people who can get involved by popping on their favourite pair of pyjamas and helping to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust will make a huge difference to the families we support."

Pyjama Party takes place from Monday 17 October to Friday 21 October. For more information on The Sick Children's Trust's Pyjama Party, please visit: http://bit.ly/2bpm0ls or email fundraising@sickchildrentrust.org.

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