



University Hospitals Dorset  
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University Hospitals Dorset  
NHS Foundation Trust

# SPRING

Supporting parents and relatives through baby loss



## NEWSLETTER

Summer 2023

Fundraising News



### Abi Cot in Memory of Andrew

Full story on page 11



SPRING News



Real Stories



What's On



Sunday 16 July 2023



**SPRING**  
Supporting parents and relatives through baby loss

If you have used the SPRING service or having support, please join us to celebrate 25 years of SPRING.



# About SPRING

The SPRING service is funded by University Hospitals Dorset NHS Charity to ensure parents and families are supported through the loss of a baby at any stage of pregnancy or just after birth – whatever the circumstances and however long ago.

Established in 1998, this service brings parents and medical professionals together to ensure bereaved parents and families are treated with sensitivity and the best possible care.

The loss of a baby is something most of us cannot ever imagine. Our service is here to ensure bereaved parents and families in Bournemouth, Poole and the surrounding areas get the professional support needed during this devastating time. If you need our service, you are not alone.

## How we can help

The loss of a baby can feel overwhelming. We offer a range of services and support to help bereaved parents and families along this devastating journey. Not everyone will need or want to make use of everything we offer. But it is here if you need it, now or in the future.

## Emotional and practical support, at the point of loss and beyond

### Bereavement support

We work closely with the Maternity Bereavement Support Service and Early Pregnancy Units at Poole and Royal Bournemouth Hospitals.

Specialist bereavement support midwives and nurses offer information, advice and signposting to help parents and families make informed choices, and will continue to offer support at home, if required.

### Professional counselling

Counselling is available for all bereaved parents and relatives following the loss of a baby. SPRING and Poole Hospital counselling services provide sessions with fully qualified counsellors who adhere to British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy guidelines (BACP).

Counselling provides a safe, non-judgemental environment. Referrals are via medical professionals or self-referral.

Contact maternity counselling service on: 0300 019 8752 or email: [maternity.counsellors@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:maternity.counsellors@uhd.nhs.uk)

### Monthly open support meetings

SPRING runs monthly open support meetings for informal peer support.

They are facilitated by fully qualified counsellors.

The meetings are friendly and relaxed and open to anyone who has experienced the death of a baby, either in pregnancy, at, or shortly after birth.

Further details can be found in What's On section.

### Rainbow pregnancies

We are also here to support parents and families through subsequent 'rainbow' pregnancies. (A rainbow baby is a baby born following the loss of a previous baby).

## SPRING places

### Bereavement suites and SPRING garden

The SPRING Moon and Star bereavement suites at St Mary's Maternity Unit, Poole, provide space for parents and families to spend precious time with their baby before saying goodbye. Safe and private, these very special places mean parents and families receive specialised support as they go through the loss of their baby – away from the main maternity wards.



## Contact SPRING

### SPRING admin and fundraising enquiries

Telephone: 0300 019 8084

Website: [www.uhdcharity.org/spring](http://www.uhdcharity.org/spring)

Email: [spring.support@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:spring.support@uhd.nhs.uk)

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn @SPRINGsupport



### Maternity and bereavement counselling services

Telephone: 0300 019 8752

Email: [maternity.counsellors@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:maternity.counsellors@uhd.nhs.uk)

c/o St Mary's Maternity Unit, St Mary's Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 2JB





Welcome

# Vice Chair's Chat

Welcome to this edition of the SPRING newsletter.

by Louise Chissell, SPRING Vice Chairperson

Firstly, I hope you and your families have been keeping well.

Since the last issue we have held our three annual remembrance events with the first being the Wave of Light in October. Whilst it was a different location due to another event being held at Poole Park, we were still able to all come together to remember our babies at St Mary's R.C Church in Oakdale, however, we are pleased to confirm that this year, our Wave of Light event will be back in Poole Park as normal.

Our Christmas event was held at St Mary's Church, Longfleet. It was so lovely to be able to hold this special remembrance service again to remember our babies at Christmas and come together with so many of our SPRING families.

We were also very lucky with the weather at our February's Snowdrop Walk at Upton House and Country Park. This beautiful place provided such a wonderful backdrop as families came together to plant snowdrops in memory of their lost loved ones.

We have also continued with our monthly support group meetings and coffee mornings. You will find a member of the steering group at each of these meetings and if you would like to be put in touch with someone before attending, please contact us and this is something that can be arranged.

Looking forward this year sees SPRING reaching 25 years! We will be holding a celebration in July to commemorate this special anniversary - keep reading for more information! We are also busy planning the Wave of Light in October and the Christmas event for later in the year.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has fundraised for SPRING, those who have written their stories to share with others, and to everyone who volunteers to help set up and run our events - without you we wouldn't be able to do what we do. If you would like to get in involved with volunteering, please contact us to find out more.

Take care

*Louise x*

## Contents Contents

About SPRING .....	2
Vice Chair's Chat .....	3
Fundraising Update.....	3

### SPRING NEWS

Celebrating 25 Years of SPRING.....	4
How Did SPRING Start.....	4
Our SPRING RAINBOW Baby Is Getting Married.....	5
Rosie Lambert .....	5
Garden Makeover .....	6
Remembering our babies at Christmas .....	6
Rev James Taylor .....	6
Wave of Light .....	7
Snowdrop Walk .....	7
Baby Loss Awareness Week .....	7

### REAL STORIES

Baby Orla .....	8
Baby Everleigh.....	9

### FUNDRAISING NEWS

Walk for Wards.....	10
Running Pair.....	10
Ironman Owen .....	10
Chloe and Joe .....	10
Samantha Prewett Photography.....	11
In Memory of Andrew.....	11
Charity Nearly New Sale.....	11
Great North Run.....	11

### WHAT'S ON

SPRING's open support meetings ..	12
Coffee Mornings.....	12
SPRING'S 25th Anniversary.....	12
SPRING's Wave of Light.....	12
Christmas Service.....	12
Snowdrop Walk.....	12

# Fundraising Update

by Zoë Wood, SPRING Fundraising Officer



Hello and welcome to the summer edition of our newsletter!

The six months has flown by with some hosting some small and meaningful remembrance

events for families across Dorset such as the Wave of Light, our Christmas Service and SPRING's Snowdrop Walk. We have also been supporting our amazing supporters who have taken their valuable time out to dedicate themselves to raising awareness of SPRING and fundraising for other families who will be affected by baby loss in the future.

We have also been in reflective mode as SPRING reaches its 25th anniversary!

Helping us to celebrate this special year are the founding members and first service users of SPRING who have kindly written some articles for this issue along with

joining us at Merley House as we mark this 25th anniversary on 16 July!! Read on for more news about this event.

As always, this newsletter contains some moving stories from those who have experienced the loss of a baby - thank you so much to the families who have shared their painful and personal stories.

And finally, I would also like to thank all our fundraisers and supporters who have done some wonderful fundraising - you continue to inspire with the challenges you take part in and the events you organise, we are truly grateful for every penny raised for SPRING!!

Zoë can be contacted on  
0300 019 8084  
or by email:  
spring.support@  
uhd.nhs.uk

*Zoë x*



# Celebrating 25 years of SPRING.

**2023 is a very special year for SPRING marking 25 years since its creation!**

SPRING (Supporting Parents & Relatives in Neo-natal Grief as it was known then) was set up in March 1998 by founder, Heather Domeney (midwife and counsellor). Heather recognised that vital professional support was needed for bereaved parents following the loss of a baby during pregnancy, at, or just after birth. Following a lot of hard work and dedication from Heather along with several professionals, the first SPRING meeting was held in October 1998.

Over the years, SPRING has supported many families through baby loss, and as we reach this significant milestone, the SPRING team have been reflecting on the incredible work that has been undertaken and the impact that the SPRING service has had on the lives of hundreds of families. Feedback from those who have been supported by the wonderful bereavement midwifery team, or who use our specialist counselling service continues to move us, as clients tell us of the impact our service has had on their lives and helped them through the darkest of days.



## How did SPRING start

**Hello, my name is Heather Domeney - I am a trained nurse and midwife.**

In 1988 I returned to Poole Maternity where I trained. After attending an hospital course, I became very aware of all the traumatic and emotional feelings around pregnancy and delivery which were not being supported. I decided to train as a counsellor to try to address this vital need.

My training took 3 years and I managed to persuade my managers to let me start a counselling service based at the maternity unit.

It started slowly, but then it took off and I had trainee counsellors doing their practice with me.

I met many parents whose babies had died, and they expressed the wish to have a support system and group locally to help them at this very traumatic and difficult time. I gathered other professionals together who had thought this was a need that had to be addressed and we set about forming a charity fundraising through the existing Poole Hospital Charity by setting up a fund. One of the parents thought of the name SPRING Supporting Parents and Relatives In Neonatal Grief and it stuck.

Many parents and relatives were keen to help, and this soon enabled SPRING to start to meet the needs that parents

and relatives were telling us about. Gradually things were put into place, such as the bereavement suite, snowdrop remembrance garden and special training for midwives to facilitate better support and understanding.

Remembrance services at Christmas along with Snowdrop Walks were introduced alongside regular support meetings for parents. Training for parents was put in place to help facilitate these support meetings. All this was funded by parents and friends organizing events to raise money. Every time I heard about a new need my managers used to say "Good idea, but there is no money..." but, this didn't stop us!

In August this year, one of our first RAINBOW babies is getting married. Her grandmother, Kate Ward was the first chairperson of SPRING and the whole family were very involved with fundraising and putting support in place.

25 years on and I am so proud that SPRING is so active with more specially trained midwives in post giving 24/7 cover. This has meant that these midwives can help parents spend precious time with their babies making memories that have to last



a lifetime along with the much-needed support meetings and counselling paid for by SPRING.

I am sad the need is still here but so glad that SPRING is still there for people. It has been difficult to put the full history of SPRING down in a few words and it would never be here now without all the help and support that I encountered along the way to help put it in place.

Along this journey I have had the privilege to meet and know many parents and their babies. If what we have managed to put in place has helped them through their pain and grief I am so, so pleased and grateful.

My love and care to you all

*Heather x*



# Our SPRING RAINBOW Baby is getting Married

**I am writing this article to tell you about my experience with SPRING and life after the loss of our daughter, Jessica.**

Jessica was born at 27 weeks weighing just 1lb 13oz after Sally, my wife, was rushed into hospital with pre-eclampsia. Both mum and baby were very poorly, and Jessica sadly died after just seven days. This was in April 2000.

I think we got through the first few days of her passing, in a haze and it wasn't until probably after Jessica's funeral that the enormity really struck home; how do you cope with the loss of your baby?

I suppose I immersed myself in my work, and I had to tell anyone and everybody of our loss. I know from Sally's viewpoint it was a lot more difficult and intense. I know she took a lot of comfort from her mother's incredible support.

Her mum, Kate Ward, regularly read the Bournemouth Echo, and one day she found an article written by Heather Domeney, explaining the rise of SPRING and the counselling services SPRING could offer. From that day, as a family we became avid supporters of SPRING and were involved in many, many projects ranging from



the setup of the Bereavement Suite to the baby's cemetery at Poole and numerous fundraising events etc. Kate became Chair of SPRING and with Heather drove the cause - and from small acorns a mighty Oak grew.

Back to us, we were both desperate to have a child together, and we were both delighted when Sally became pregnant again in October 2000. Given Sally's past medical history, the hospital kept a close eye on her and due to high blood pressure again, she was taken into hospital at 33 weeks, and they managed to protract the birth to 35 weeks.

Ellen Grace Mullins (Ellie) was born on 13th June 2001, weighing 4lb 10oz, by C-section.

## Rosie Lambert

**Dominic was born 14 December 2001 at 17 weeks and 4 days gestation.**

During my pregnancy I was quite sick; I was in and out of hospital for a couple of months with a condition called hyperemesis gravidarum, or in English, severe morning sickness. Even though this wasn't pleasant, it was tolerable because I knew I was going to end up with a new baby and I would definitely stop being sick when he was born, if not before.

Life was challenging at this stage because we were in the process of moving to a new house, and my oldest son, Ryan was just coming up to three. With me stuck in hospital, my poor husband ended up running around like a headless chicken trying to juggle caring for our child, work, visiting and packing. It's a wonder he didn't have a nervous breakdown! I left hospital on Thursday 6 December, and we moved house on Friday 7 December. On Saturday 8 December I stopped being sick. Things were improving, and I was looking forward to getting well again, enjoying the second half of my pregnancy and settling into my new house.

**“A visit to the midwife a couple of days later ended up with a precautionary scan being booked because she couldn't hear the baby's heartbeat. We went for the scan on 13 December and that's when my world fell apart – there was no heartbeat. My baby had died.”**

A visit to the midwife a couple of days later ended up with a precautionary scan being booked

<https://www.uhdcharity.org/spring>

because she couldn't hear the baby's heartbeat. We went for the scan on 13 December and that's when my world fell apart – there was no heartbeat. My baby had died. That wasn't part of my plan at all. I couldn't get my head around it; it didn't seem real. I kept hoping I would wake up, but it wasn't a dream. All I could think was, “why?”

Dominic was born in the bereavement suite at Poole Maternity Hospital. It was a brand-new suite and we were the first family to use it. I was given some information leaflets whilst I was in hospital. One of them was offering counselling through a charity called SPRING, which supports parents and relatives through baby loss. I didn't think I needed counselling, but my attention was drawn to the fact that the counsellor was also a midwife. I decided to phone because I hoped she might be able to answer some of my questions. I booked an appointment for the beginning of January and that was my introduction to counselling and SPRING.

It was only when I went for my first counselling session that I found out the bereavement suite existed purely because SPRING had raised the funds to put it in place. It soon became clear to me that SPRING was providing an invaluable service for people in my situation struggling to come to terms with the loss of a baby.

I only have one scan picture of Dominic; no photographs, hand or foot prints. This has been one of the hardest things for me to come to terms with over the years. I know that what's happened can never be changed, no matter how much you long for it to be different. I'm not good at outwardly expressing my feelings so I tend to bottle everything up and tell myself that I'm fine even when deep inside I know that I'm not.

About a month after Dominic was born I wrote a poem in his memory. I only ever meant to write one, but as time passed I found that poetry was

For me this was a nightmare time. I was gowned up and taken into theatre and it was déjà vu. However, this time with a happy ending. It brought back so many memories.

We are so proud of Ellie, our RAINBOW BABY (yes, she was a bit spoilt!!!) and what she has achieved in her 22 years. She excelled at school which took her to Bournemouth School for Girls and on leaving she went to Bournemouth University for three years passing with a First Class Honours as an Operating Department Practitioner based at Salisbury Hospital, where she currently works.

In 2019, she met her Fiancé, Liam and they are soon to marry later this year and I'm sure one day will continue to add to the family tree.

Believe it or not, Ellie attended her first SPRING event at 2 weeks old! It's important to start them young!

Now, I'm not saying that our story could not have been achieved without SPRING, but the love, support and empathy certainly smoothed the way for the both of us.

It's amazing that SPRING still survives after 25 years, and it is comforting to know that all the hard work that we put in at the start has gone somehow to pave the success of the charity.

Congratulations, SPRING.

*Richard & Sally Mullins x*

the one true way I could express myself and let my feelings and grief out. My computer didn't pass judgement or feel sorry for me. I just sat in front of the screen for hours trying to process and understand my emotions.

I have shared some of my poetry with other bereaved parents and written poems specifically in relation to events organised by SPRING. It is comforting to know that if my words help others through their journey, then Dominic has made a difference and left his tiny footprint on the world.

### Dominic

(By Rosie Lambert)

*You are my child, a part of me  
Your life cut so short, the world you didn't see  
You were so tiny, held in my hand  
Why you had to go, I don't understand  
No chance for me to show my love  
You've left this place for one above  
I hope in your heart you can forgive  
I let you down, you didn't live  
It is so hard to sleep at night  
I can't let go, there is no light  
I feel the tears behind my eyes  
It hurts so bad, I just can't cry  
I want you with me, so very much  
But now I'll never feel your touch  
I'll never get to see you smile  
It makes me wonder if it's all worthwhile  
I need a reason I can believe  
To ease the pain, then I can grieve  
But nothing can stop me wondering why  
Was you, my baby, who had to die  
I know deep inside that life still goes on  
For all those I love, I will be strong  
Because although your life's been taken from me  
In my heart you'll always be a precious memory*





## Garden Makeover

Back in November, our lovely little SPRING garden which provides a special private space for our families, received some much-needed TLC courtesy of James Dean Creative Landscapes Ltd.

Following a power wash and a paint refresh along with some new fencing to increase the privacy of our garden for families, the garden was looking fabulous and winter ready. The bereavement team would like to thank James Dean and his colleagues for all their hard work on refreshing the SPRING garden. It looks wonderful!!



## Remembering our babies at Christmas

SPRING's annual Christmas service took place at St Mary's Longfleet Church on Saturday 26 November 2022. Around 200 bereaved parents, families and friends gathered together to honour and remember our babies in this beautiful setting.

Christmas can be a particularly painful time of year, and this event allowed those in the baby loss community to come together to reflect, love and remember.

The wonderfully poignant service included carols, readings, a special candle lighting along with performances by some amazing singers, followed by refreshments, providing the opportunity for families to take some time to come together as a community.

We would love to thank Anjelica and Gillian

for their beautiful performances, Declan, the hospital chaplain for attending, along with everyone else who read at this special service.

Thank you all for making it such a meaningful and heartfelt event.

We would also like to thank all our bakers who provided such a delicious array of festive goodies for afterwards – your generosity was truly appreciated.

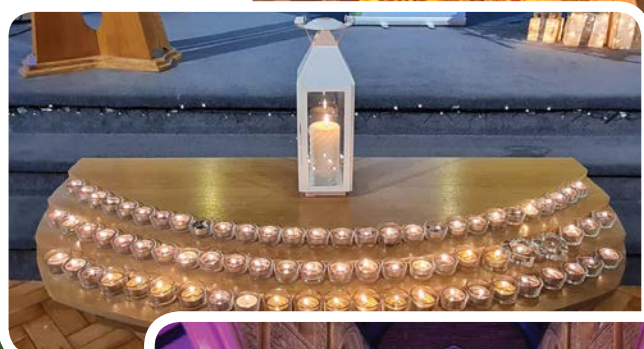


## Rev James Taylor, Hospital Chaplain

"I joined the Chaplaincy Team of University Hospitals Dorset in 2020 and was quickly introduced to the important work of SPRING. The bereavement midwives will sometimes feel that newly bereaved parents would benefit from being offered the opportunity to talk to the chaplain or for a naming and blessing service for their baby. We are always ready to come over and visit them at the SPRING 'Moon' and 'Star' bereavement suites.

*“Engaging with bereaved parents at this sensitive moment has been some of the most rewarding and heartfelt work in my time as a chaplain.”*

**James Taylor** - Chaplain







# Wave of Light

Last autumn SPRING hosted a Wave of Light memorial event on Saturday 15 October at St Mary's RC Church, Poole, providing a shared space for bereaved families to remember their babies, and to mark the end of Baby Loss Awareness Week.

Families were welcomed and invited to write their babies' names and messages on tags adding them on to lanterns. After lighting the lanterns, which were placed on the steps of the altar creating a beautiful wave of light and a focal point for the ceremony, we had readings from SPRING's Steering Group members and bereavement midwives from the maternity unit at University Hospitals Dorset NHS Trust.

It was a moving service with a moment's silence for everyone to remember and reflect, followed by refreshments, giving families the chance to meet and support each other. Thank you to everyone who came along to this event.

We would also like to say a special thanks to the team at the church for offering the use of their space for this emotional occasion. It truly meant so much to be able to hold our event in such a lovely setting.



# Baby Loss Awareness Week



As part of Baby Loss Awareness Week, Zoe from SPRING attended the UHD Women's Network event at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital.

It was a great opportunity to meet hospital staff from the hospital and raise awareness of the service SPRING offers as well as meeting with other attendees to discuss the impact of baby loss.

A huge thank you to Samantha Murray and Jasmine Sharland from the UHD Women's Network for the invite and for organising the event.



# Snowdrop Walk

Every year in February, families who have experienced the grief of the loss of a baby at any stage of pregnancy, join us at SPRING's Snowdrop Walk as a way of remembering their loved ones.

This year, we came together at Upton House and Country Park where we wrote our babies' names and messages on tags, listened to some special readings, and had a moment of quiet reflection at the winter borders. As a simple way to remember the life of lost ones, SPRING provided some beautiful snowdrops for planting by our bereaved families before heading back to the Drawing Room for refreshments and the opportunity to connect with those who have travelled a similar path.

Thank you to everyone who joined us - it was a beautiful day for reflection, sharing and to remember our special babies.

## Little Snowdrop

(Author unknown)

*The world may never notice  
If a Snowdrop doesn't bloom,  
Or even pause to wonder  
If the petals fall too soon.*

*But every life that ever forms,  
Or ever come to be,  
Touches the world in some small way  
For all eternity.*

*The little ones we longed for  
Were swiftly here and gone,  
But the love that was then planted  
Is a light that still shines on.*

*And though our arms are empty,  
Our hearts know what to do.  
For every beating of our hearts  
Says that we love you.*



St Mary's Longfleet Church





# Baby Orla *by Charlotte Neal*

My partner Andy and I found out we were expecting our first baby in February 2021 and were over the moon.

We found out at an early scan we were having a daughter; she was also the first grandchild in both of our families and we were all so excited to meet her.

My pregnancy was normal until around 30 weeks when I started experiencing swelling in my hands and feet. It gradually got worse until 36 weeks when I began getting headaches and high blood pressure. I was diagnosed with pregnancy induced hypertension (PIH).

In the early hours of 17 September 2021, I woke up in excruciating stomach pain and went straight into hospital. The pregnancy induced hypertension had become severe preeclampsia and was causing a placental abruption. Our precious daughter Orla died later that morning on the antenatal ward.

*“...her birth was extremely special and is a treasured memory...”*

Despite knowing that Orla had passed, her birth was extremely special and is a treasured memory for Andy and I. Our midwife prepared the room as I had asked on my birth plan which meant so much to me. Although I was critically ill with pre-eclampsia and HELLP syndrome, I felt so

time in the SPRING suite and garden; taking photos, reading stories and introducing Orla to her grandparents.

Losing Orla was heart breaking and devastating. Our longed-for little girl was taken from us so suddenly and unexpectedly, it was very difficult to cope. Thankfully I was able to access counselling support through SPRING. Sumiyo, my therapist, gave unwavering support during the hardest time of my life and the impact of our sessions were truly life saving for me.

We didn't know if we would be lucky enough to have a rainbow baby after I was diagnosed with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome early in my pregnancy with Orla. Amazingly though, in April 2022 I found out that I was pregnant again. It was a total mixture of feelings: shock, fear, excitement and hope all rolled into one.

It was hard to enjoy being pregnant as I felt the threat of pre-eclampsia hanging over me with every passing week. I continually checked my hands and feet for swelling and monitored my blood pressure at home. As time passed and I remained well, we started to allow ourselves to dream that our rainbow might be coming home.

*“...we started to allow ourselves to dream that our rainbow might be coming home.”*

Returning to St Mary's where Orla died was extremely triggering and I experienced panic attacks on several occasions. We knew the SPRING midwives Michelle, Emma and Jo well as we had kept in contact since losing Orla. As soon as I became pregnant, they offered their help and were absolutely amazing. Through them, I had lots of support put in place which made such a difference to my mental health and enabled me to cope whilst accessing my antenatal care. I couldn't have got through



*“He has brought light back into our lives and given us many reasons to smile once again.”*

it without their understanding, kindness and compassion.

On 30 November 2022 our rainbow baby Benjamin was born. He arrived by planned c-section weighing 7lb exactly. It has taken a while to believe that Benjamin is here to stay but with every week this gets easier. He has brought light back into our lives and given us many reasons to smile once again.

I often think about my life with my children as following two parallel but separate paths. The grief, despair and sadness of not having Orla with us and watching her grow up is still very raw and something I feel every day. However, there is now another path running alongside those feelings. A path that is hopeful about the future and can feel joy when watching Benjamin grow and flourish.

Orla is always remembered and celebrated in our family. Her ashes are in her toy bunny so she can come with us on family days out and be in family photos. She was even in theatre with us to watch her little brother come into the world! Benjamin is so lucky to have his wonderful big sister looking after him from the stars. We love both of our children to the moon...and back



empowered during labour and birth, finding the strength from somewhere to bring her into the world. Orla was born at 8.19pm weighing 7lb 10z.

She was absolutely perfect and the double of her daddy!

As I was so unwell, Andy had lots of cuddles with Orla as I underwent emergency surgery that night. By Sunday afternoon, I felt well enough to meet Orla properly. We spent lots of special family





# Baby Everleigh

by Adale Jones

My name is Adale and this is my story... a story that no one should ever have to go through, but here I am telling you some of my darkest moments and how I hope this will help ease somebody else's pain to show them that they are not alone.



After trying for a year for our first child I finally fell pregnant in early August 2019. We were so happy to finally start a family we decided to have a private gender scan and were over the moon to find out we were having a daughter, I had always dreamt of having a daughter, and now starting life as a family of three.

My pregnancy started fairly normally however I did suffer with carpal tunnel and towards the end I had to have some growth scans as my baby was measuring big, obviously in the last few weeks I struggled with how big I became but I knew this was all part of the pregnancy.

My due date was 9 April 2020. Around a week before I had my last growth scan which showed a large baby, I was told that if she hadn't arrived before, I would be induced on my due date due to the possibility of shoulder dystopia.

6 April 2020, three days before my official due date I remember going to bed wondering what motherhood would be like and feeling some lovely movements, it was the most amazing feeling knowing I was growing our child and we would be holding her very soon, but sadly not in the way I imagined.

The next morning (7 April 2020) we were getting prepared. Whilst food shopping, I couldn't remember if I had felt baby movement's yet that day. It didn't concern me as I was on the go a lot, so I had a drink and thought that would wake her up.

We got home and called the maternity unit straight away, I told them I hadn't felt her move today and had no memory of movements since the night before. We went straight to the maternity unit and because of Covid-19 and lockdown my partner, Alistair, was not allowed in.

After waiting what felt like forever, I was called to be checked. I laid on the bed not too concerned. Maybe in the back of my mind I knew she was gone but how could that be true? I was so close to meeting her. The monitor was placed around my bump and we waited ... silence... this was the first time I had experienced monitoring, so I

wasn't sure what to expect? The midwife told me not to worry and would get a doctor to scan me.

The doctor came in and started to scan me, he was quiet, and it felt like forever. Another doctor was called in, they had the screen facing away from me and this is when I became worried. I felt someone grab my hand and say the words no one should ever have to hear, "I'm sorry, there is no heartbeat."

I was alone and had never felt so vulnerable in my life, no family were there to hug or support me with the worst news of my life. I remember saying "So what are you trying to tell me?" It had not sunk in!!

I felt everything turn black, I couldn't see, I couldn't hear and when I came round I was telling myself to wake up as I thought it was a dream. I heard faint voices telling me to control my breathing, I didn't even want to breath knowing my girl was gone.

I had to phone my partner Alistair, how could I tell him our daughter had died before we had even met her? The midwives called him, and I gave him the sad news on his arrival, we both broke down and couldn't believe that our girl was gone. Before we left the hospital, I was given a tablet to turn off the pregnancy hormones and induce labour, we were in shock! How could I birth our girl and not hear her first cry at the end of it. I knew I had to be strong for her, for us but life would change.

Light contractions started that evening and after my waters broke at home, we went back to the hospital at 0300-0400. After hours and hours of pain and emotional hell, our daughter Everleigh Grace Violet Palau was born at 7.29pm the following evening on the 8 April, one day before her due date, weighing 8lb 5oz and 50cm long. I was so proud to bring her into this world, but we had to face the fact that she was gone, and we would never get to see her grow up.

We stayed in the hospital that night and had her next to us in a cold cot, I sat there staring and singing to her, telling her about her family and her dog Tazzy and how much

I would miss her. She was also blessed in the hospital.

My family and I visited her three weeks later to say our final goodbyes and I was so glad my mum and sister got to meet her even in these circumstances. Due to Covid-19, it's restrictions really affected me in a lot of ways. I know SPRING have a lovely place for bereaved parents and families and I was unable to be placed there due to Covid-19 patients of which I do understand. There was also a limited number permitted at Everleigh's funeral, and just having to go through so much of this experience alone.

I want to say a huge thank you to the bereavement midwives, Ali and Jo, for their support to me and Alistair throughout our time at the hospital, my labour and the aftercare, all of which was impeccable, also Karen from SPRING's counselling support. I have no idea what I would have done without them all. Also, a special thanks to Tyler's Friends charity who gave me great support with Everleigh's funeral.

We will never ever come to terms with the loss of our baby girl and some days the grief can be so unimaginably painful.

We were told that there was no reason that they could find for Everleigh's passing at full term, I'm not sure which is worse, a reason as to why our child died and possibly not being able to have another? Or being told there was no reason for a perfectly formed beautiful little girl to die. How can she just die with no cause? I will never understand and sometimes I always wonder could I have done anything differently? Been healthier? Been stronger? Been more aware? I had no warning signs.

We went on to have Everleigh's baby sister, Eleanor Grace. I always felt so guilty becoming pregnant again so soon, how would I tell people that three months after losing my daughter I am having another? The guilt was unimaginable, the pregnancy was mentally challenging, with lots of scans and monitoring, daily blood thinning injections as a precaution and always wondering if she would make it. However, she was born by emergency section three weeks early on the 22 March 2021 and is the one thing that has gotten me through the awful dark days, she has given me hope and strength and without her I wouldn't be the person I am today.

She is now a happy healthy two-year-old and will always know about her big sister Everleigh, who will always be remembered and loved.

We love you Everleigh Grace Violet Palau.





## Walk for Wards

Despite the cancellation of the University Hospitals Dorset (UHD) NHS Charity's Walk for Wards event following the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, Team "Archie's Stars" wished to continue with the planned 10km route raising nearly £600 for **SPRING** in memory of Anna's little boy Archie!

Anna said "We really enjoyed our walk and **SPRING** has helped us so much in our time of need. We are delighted to have been able to raise a nice amount of money for such a worthy cause." Thank you to Anna and her family for their amazing support!



## Running pair

Racing into action to support **SPRING** in the London Marathon 2022, were Adam Russell and Amy Moody.

Not fazed by being put through their paces, both Adam and Amy made it across the finish line. Adam raised £2,400 and Amy raised £1,000 for **SPRING**. Thank you so so much to you both – it truly was a marathon effort!



## Thank you Fundraisers!

*We are so incredibly grateful to our supporters who raise money and awareness for **SPRING** – thank you*

Some people do amazing things – running, baking, cycling and more, so here is a roundup of what you have been up to over the last 6 months!

## Ironman Owen

In September, Owen Hammett took on the Weymouth Ironman 70.3 to raise funds for **SPRING**!

Showing us, tri-mendous spirit, Owen swam, cycled and ran his way through the Jurassic Coast and raised over £2,000 for **SPRING**.



## Chloe and Joe

Wonderful news! Chloe and Joe, two of our amazing supporters, got married last August. Chloe, you looked beautiful, and the weather looked glorious for you both.



**SPRING** is close to Chloe and Joe's hearts, and we would like to congratulate them both and thank them for inviting us to be part of their special day with the inclusion of our pins as wedding favours along with Snowdrop Bear! Thank you so much for a truly lovely and kind gesture.

We would also like to thank Chloe and Joe's family and friends for their generous donations in lieu of wedding gifts, raising a wonderful £504 for **SPRING**!

<https://www.uhdcharity.org/spring>





# Samantha Prewett Photography

Thank you to Samantha Prewett Photography – Newborn & Family Photographer in Poole for inviting us to her Poole Baby Events at the Dolphin Centre in Poole.

At each of her events, Samantha has done a wonderful job organising a tombola for SPRING raising nearly £500!! With the support of SPRING's Steering Group and Zoe, these tombolas have raised not only a fantastic amount but have also provided the opportunity to meet so many members of the local community and raise awareness of the valuable service provided by SPRING!



## In Memory of Andrew

We would love to thank Natalie Warren and Natalie Pieri who have very generously donated an Abi Cot to our SPRING rooms, in memory of Natalie Warren's precious son, Andrew.

Natalie lost Andrew, nearly 17 years ago whilst 32 weeks pregnant, and in honour of his 16th birthday, Natalie and her best friend, Natalie, decided to host a "Family Fun Day" on 16 July to raise the £2,900 required to purchase an Abi Cot.

Between the event and the generosity from local business connections, enough donations were made to purchase this special and valued item for our SPRING suites.

This special cot will truly make a difference as it will enable families who suffer the tragedy of their baby being born prematurely or stillborn to spend longer time with their baby to grieve, create precious memories, and to say goodbye as a family.



We would like to thank both Natalies' for all their hard work in organising this event along with everyone who took part or donated!



## Charity Nearly New Sale!

Over the last seven years, the Charity Nearly New Sale ladies have been supporting SPRING with their tombolas, raffles and their nearly new sales – raising well over £6,000!! What an absolutely fantastic amount!

They are continuing to support our service with further nearly new sales every other month through the remainder of 2023 at Broadstone Methodist Church, selling pre-loved baby and children's clothes, maternity, toys, books and puzzles – so its always worth popping in to grab yourself a bargain!

Thank you so much to Charity Nearly New Sale for your continued support in raising funds and awareness for SPRING!

(Charity Nearly New Sale is holding its next table top sale on 08 July, with further details on their Facebook page)

<https://www.uhdcharity.org/spring>

## Great North Run

Alex completed his Great North Run on what was a super-hot day raising over £600 for SPRING!

Alex said despite suffering from some early blistering he made it over the finish line (albeit half an hour slower than he wanted!) But he was really pleased - and although he stated beforehand he's hanging up the running shoes, we have been informed that don't be surprised to see them dusted off again in the future!



## SPRING's open support meetings

You are not alone.

SPRING offers open support meetings for those who have experienced baby loss, held on the first Wednesday of each month, 7.30pm - 9pm, at St Mary's Longfleet Church Centre, Kingston Road, Poole, Dorset. BH15 2LP.



Each session is facilitated by one or both SPRING's counsellors offering the chance to hold conversations and share thoughts and feelings in a supportive and private space.

We recognise it can be emotional to come along, so if you would like to join us, we are offering a befriending service to

ease any apprehensions prior to the session.

If this is something you feel you would benefit from then please do get in touch as we really want to be there for you.

Contact us on 0300 019 8084 or email us: [spring.support@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:spring.support@uhd.nhs.uk)

## Coffee Mornings

Come along to SPRING's coffee morning and join us for some gentle chat and refreshments!

Our coffee mornings offer bereaved families the opportunity to meet with others who have also suffered baby loss within an informal and relaxed setting.



Hosted by a bereaved parent from our Steering Group at Wesley's Café, these mornings provide those who have experienced the loss of a baby the space to chat, share experiences, make friends and to know that you are not alone. Children, family members and friends are very welcome to join us for coffee (or tea!) and some cake. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Wesley's Café, The Spire, High Street, Poole, Dorset. BH15 1DF - the third Saturday of each month.**

**For more information or support – or to make a donation – contact SPRING:**

**Call 0300 019 8084 Email: [spring.support@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:spring.support@uhd.nhs.uk)**

**c/o St Mary's Maternity Unit, St Mary's Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 2JB**

SPRING is part of University Hospitals Dorset NHS Charity. Registered Charity No. 1057366



Registered Charity No 1057366

## SPRING's 25th Anniversary



**11am – 2.00pm Sunday, 16 July 2023**

**Merley House, Merley House Lane, Wimborne, BH21 3AA.**

We invite you to join us as we mark 25 years of SPRING at Merley House. Plans are underway to make this day as memorable as possible. Stay tuned to hear all the details over the coming weeks on our social media channels.

## SPRING's Wave of Light

**6.30pm - 7.30pm Sunday, 15 October 2023**

**Poole Park by the War Memorial.**



Bereaved parents, families and friends are invited to join us at our Global Wave of Light event as we mark the end of Baby Loss Awareness Week.

## Christmas Service

**3pm – 5pm Saturday, 25 November 2023**

**St Mary's Longfleet Church, Longfleet Road, Poole, BH15 2JD.**



You are invited to join us for an uplifting service to remember our special babies at Christmas time, followed by tea, coffee and cake.

## Snowdrop Walk

**11am Saturday, 10 February 2024**

**Upton House and Country Park, Poole Road, Poole, BH17 7BJ.**



Bereaved families and friends are invited to come along where there is the chance to write messages, walk and talk with others, followed by refreshments in the Drawing Room.



**Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn**

**Search for us at SPRING Support**



**SPRING**  
Supporting parents and relatives through baby loss