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Teesside Woman Describes Stillbirth Heartache

A Teesside woman who is still struggling to come to terms with the devastation after her son was stillborn two years ago has backed a national campaign to raise awareness of birth trauma.

Kendra Chilver, from Billingham, hopes National Birth Trauma Awareness Day, on Saturday, August 15th, will help raise awareness of the heartbreaking impact that birth trauma can have on families.

Mrs Chilver and her husband are convinced that their son Jonathan would be alive today had mistakes not been made during the labour – the couple has now instructed Angela Kirtley, associate solicitor at the north east office of law firm Irwin Mitchell, to investigate a claim against North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust.

Mrs Chilver was delighted when she fell pregnant for the first time in January 2007. The pregnancy progressed without problems until she went into labour on September 25th 2007.

There were complications as the labour developed over the next 48 hours, as Jonathan's heart rate became erratic.

Mrs Chilver and her husband became concerned that not enough was being done by medical staff to help. She was eventually given a drug, Syntocinon, to accelerate the birth, but Jonathan was tragically stillborn at 2:02 am on September 27th 2007.

And now Mrs Chilver says she hopes increased awareness of the problems that sufferers of birth trauma endure will help others in her situation.

Media Information

She said: “I was left shattered by the experience – it has been a terrible two years. I was able to return to work gradually last September 2008, but I still attend counselling sessions to help me come to terms with what happened.

“What is most difficult, particularly initially, is seeing other couples with healthy newborn babies – it really emphasises everything we lost.

“What makes it more distressing still is the idea that what happened could have been prevented. David and I aren’t medical experts but we could see something was going badly wrong as Jonathan’s heart rate kept on plummeting – yet it took far too long for a doctor to be called.”

Angela Kirtley said: “Traumatic births are sadly far more common than people realise. Although the outcomes of birth trauma are varied, they are all deeply distressing for the people involved.

“Our clinical negligence team handles scores of cases involving traumatic births, often where the babies have either been stillborn or left severely disabled. In both cases, huge levels of support are needed to help people through it.

“Not everyone can be helped by a legal claim for damages – there needs to be better levels of support available to everyone who finds themselves in situations like Mrs Chilver. Birth Trauma Awareness Day is an excellent way of highlighting this.”

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Irwin Mitchell

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