

18th April 2019

PRESS RELEASE

A Quarry Bank couple's routine antenatal appointment at Russells Hall Hospital proved to be life saving for the dad-to-be after midwives spotted that he was seriously ill.

Sam Hutchins, 24, is now being treated in isolation in Russells Hall Hospital after being diagnosed with aplastic anaemia. Sam's mum Anne Groucutt, a nurse at the hospital, says he would not be alive if the midwives, Julie Hughes and Tracey Jones, had not taken action.

Sam and partner Paris Turner, 18, are now the proud parents of a baby girl, born on 17th April, but because Sam is so poorly he is unable to spend time with his little daughter. He had to be rushed from his ward to the maternity unit when Paris went into labour and missed the birth by five minutes – although he did get to cut the umbilical cord.

Doctors are searching worldwide for a bone marrow donor for Sam, who is a chef at Hickory's Smokehouse in Wall Heath. Anne says a transplant would be life changing and she is trying to raise awareness of how people can join the stem cell register.

"Sam and Paris had gone to Russells Hall Hospital for a routine antenatal appointment one evening when one of the midwives thought Sam looked ill. She asked a colleague what she thought, and they immediately told him he should get checked out," said Anne.

"He had woken not feeling very well and had got worse over the day. He had had a throat infection and admitted that he had a rash on his legs and feet. The midwives immediately thought of sepsis and got someone to take him to ED. He ended up having a blood transfusion.

"If it hadn't been for the midwives, Sam wouldn't be here today. They followed their gut instincts, and I cannot thank them enough."

Doctors discovered he has aplastic anaemia – a rare condition in which the bone marrow stops making new blood cells. He spent a week on a drip having treatment but at the end of the course became even more poorly. He suffered bleeds behind the eyes which have left him blind in one eye with severely limited sight in the other – Anne says they do not know if his vision will return.

"The best treatment would be a bone marrow transplant which, if it is a good enough match, would cure him for life. It's such a simple thing, really. His brother and sister

aren't matches and they are searching the worldwide register for a suitable donor. If they can't find one, they can use me or his father, but we are not good matches and he would need top-ups throughout his life.

"At the moment we don't know if he will recover. We don't know if he will see his daughter grow up."

As well as raising awareness, Anne, who is a staff nurse on surgical outpatients, is having her head shaved on April 26th. She is raising money for breast care and the Georgina ward, where Sam is being treated.

For more information on joining the stem cell register, go to www.dkms.org.uk

*** ENDS ***

For more information, please call Alison Ashmore, Communications Officer for The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, on (01384) 456111 extension 4414 or email Alison.ashmore1@nhs.net

Approved by: