

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188
Source Christian Institute

Bulletin No.2- K07

A baby who underwent pioneering in-womb spina bifida surgery has celebrated her first birthday at home in lockdown.

Kieron and Bethan Simpson from Essex refused to have an abortion after their daughter was diagnosed with the condition.

Bethan described Elouise as “happy and smiley” and said her future is as “bright as any baby”.

Operation

Spina bifida affects the nervous system and can cause paralysis, but surgery can significantly alleviate the various effects.

Bethan underwent a four-hour operation at 25 weeks, during which her womb was opened and a series of tiny stitches were used to close the gap in Elouise’s spine.

The surgery was funded by a charitable trust before the NHS made it routinely available in April last year.

‘Joy’

Elouise’s regular progress checks have been postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak but she has been developing normally.

“We certainly didn’t expect we’d be marking today in the middle of a pandemic,” Bethan said.

“There is a lot of negative information around spina bifida. Without being fully informed as parents, Elouise would not be where she is now.”

She added that her daughter is “full of joy and love” and always “babbling little sentences”.

Pressure

Under UK legislation, babies affected by spina bifida can be aborted up to birth.

Last year, a mother shared how she refused to have an abortion when doctors offered it ten times after diagnosing her baby with spina bifida.

Natalie Halson said doctors “made out like an abortion was my only option and explained that if I went ahead with the pregnancy my baby would be wheelchair bound and have no quality of life.

“When I got off the phone I went and did tonnes of research and found out that there were options for my little girl – I felt suddenly really angry that they’d made out I had none.”

Bernard Holden MBE JP

If you do not wish to receive these bulletins please let me know by email

<http://ksc188.weebly.com/publications.html>

Please feel free forward to others you feel may be interested in the contents of this bulletin.