

# Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

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Source Christian Institute

A baby born at 23 weeks and not expected to live has just celebrated his first birthday.

When Hector arrived more than four months early, parents Marie Clare and Angus had to wait 42 days before doctors at Edinburgh's Royal Hospital for Children and Young People were able to say that they thought he would survive.

In the UK, it is legal to have an abortion for most reasons up to 24 weeks, or up to birth when the unborn child is thought to have a disability.

## **Labour pains**

Marie Clare went to hospital complaining of "sharp pains" just before reaching the 23rd week of her pregnancy.

Having been told that she was in labour, Marie recalled the medics then went on to explain to her that "there was a very slim chance of survival under 23 weeks".

She continued: "I looked at my watch and it was one minute to midnight and so I said in one minute I will have reached 23 weeks." Hector was born 1 hour 14 minutes later.

Speaking to BBC Scotland, Marie Clare said: "I saw him when he was born and gave him a kiss and then he was wrapped in plastic to keep him warm and rushed to the resuscitation department."

## **Family**

Hector, who still faces challenges, including hydrocephalus — a build-up of fluid on the brain — and chronic lung disease, was finally allowed to go home in April, more than five months after his birth.

Since then Hector has had 15 operations. His mum commented: "Everybody at the hospital is behind Hector, the nurses, domestics, clerks, doctors, physios, it's like one big family."

On his first birthday, Marie Clare said: "He was born at 01:14 so we stood at his cot at that exact time one year later and had a quiet moment just so grateful he is here."

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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