



Annette & James's Story

James and I hadn't planned for a baby but when we found out we were expecting in August 2007, we were scared and excited at the same time. Unfortunately, my pregnancy was ectopic and it ended in me losing my baby and my left Fallopian tube. James and I were told that we now had a 50% chance of conceiving and would need to plan carefully for another pregnancy. We were left with little knowledge and nowhere to turn.



The weeks that followed were pretty dark for me. I was not informed of any support groups or offered any form of counselling by the NHS. I felt angry, sad, useless and most of all alone. I had lots of people around me but none of them had experienced losing a baby so no one really knew what to say to me and often said nothing. I was driving up High Street one day and noticed SCIM so decided to look it up when I got home. I was amazed that this place existed and it wasn't made common knowledge by the NHS. I knew I needed to speak to someone so called the office and immediately felt at ease when I began to speak to my counsellor. My counsellor informed me that all counsellors at SCIM had experienced the loss of a baby, I immediately knew she really understood how low I was and felt that she knew exactly what I was going through. We arranged an appointment and I felt like I was taking a step in the right direction. I began meeting with my counsellor regularly and slowly but surely, started to come to terms with what had happened. I started to get my relationship back on track and felt in a much better place and in 2008, James and I were blessed with a beautiful baby girl, Aimee. My counsellor was there for me anytime I needed to talk about my fears or concerns throughout my pregnancy, support I didn't have from any health professionals. Even after having Aimee, my counsellor and I remained friends. In 2012, James and I found out we were expecting again and could not wait to bring another baby into our family. At 6 weeks, I began to bleed and sadly lost our baby. Once again, we were given little support from our Early Pregnancy Unit and was told to wait for a few days and repeat a pregnancy test. If it was positive, I was to attend a scan. If it was negative, I had miscarried. I was not happy with this and visited my doctor and was sent for blood tests which confirmed a miscarriage. James and I were devastated and once again, I felt completely heartbroken but James and I decided to try again and fell pregnant very quickly. Sadly we lost our baby at 6 weeks again.

I was giving up hope when I found out 7 months later that we were again expecting! An early scan was scheduled and we made it to 7 weeks! We were very excited by this and attended our scan at our local Early Pregnancy Unit. At the scan, we were told that everything looked ok but the baby was only measuring 5

weeks. In my heart, I knew that something was wrong as I knew my dates were correct and I should be 7 weeks. Another scan was scheduled for 2 weeks later. At the scan, I was told that my baby was only measuring 6 weeks and that the heartbeat was very weak. I had to ask what this meant and was given very little information other than I would probably miscarry but I should attend a week later for another scan. My baby was declared dead at the next scan as no heartbeat was seen and we were ushered into another room to be asked how I would like to manage the situation. I opted to go in to hospital for an ERPC and was given a date for 2 weeks later!!! I was told that the baby would probably pass naturally before this date. Two weeks passed and I was left with no contact from anyone and attended the hospital the day before my procedure for a scan which confirmed that the baby had not passed. I went into hospital the next day to be told I had not been booked in as I had attended hospital the day before for a scan so they assumed I was still pregnant! I was extremely distressed and it was eventually sorted for me to have the procedure that day. The whole situation was handled horribly and I was treated with very little respect and left with very little dignity. We were told that we had experienced some really "bad luck" and the only consolation was that we now "qualified" for medical testing to see if there was a medical reason for the miscarriages. All tests showed that there was no medical reason for the miscarriages which was good news for the medical professionals but not so good for us as it left us unsure about our future - should we try again? Would we keep miscarrying? After testing, we were basically left to get on with our lives and received no further support from the hospital.

The only outside agency that was there for us was SCIM and I continued to see My counsellor throughout the whole experience. We laughed together, she listened to my problems and fears and helped me pick myself up even when I felt at my lowest. She threw me a lifeline and I'll forever be grateful for the support she gave me. I firmly believe that my relationship would have failed if I had not found SCIM and got the help I needed as I was very bitter and struggled to come to terms with what had happened. SCIM helps people like me to realise that it's ok to be sad, it's ok to miss our babies and it's ok to want to talk about these things. The service they offer should be mentioned by the NHS to all women that lose a baby. Their information should be displayed in all pregnancy units and women should not be left to source support on their own like I was. It also saddens me that SCIM has to rely on donations and fundraising to continue offering their service. The support they offer is priceless and vital to any family dealing with pregnancy loss. The good news is that James and I completed our family in April this year as I gave birth to another beautiful baby girl. I remain friends with My counsellor and know I always will be friends with her as she helped me through the darkest times in my life and I'll never forget the support she offered. SCIM will always have a special place in my heart and I am so glad I found them.

Regards,

Annette & James

