

In 2020 we fell pregnant with our first baby and I had a wonderful and "easy" pregnancy. At 26 weeks and 4 days, we travelled to visit family when my waters broke unexpectedly. I didn't know what was happening and actually thought I'd maybe just wet myself. The local hospital where we were visiting confirmed this likely happened and I was sent away.

After a few hours I was in so much pain so returned to the hospital to be told I was in labour and had in fact lost my waters. I was closely monitored overnight and visited by nurses from the neonatal unit to explain what may be in store for us but to be honest, it all felt ridiculous and like it would never come to that. My pregnancy had been so straightforward, how could it go wrong now?

The next morning we were transferred by ambulance to Wishaw Hospital as they have a neonatal unit which can care for very small and sick babies. I continued to labour all day and night but things were actually looking like they may pause.

However, the next morning on the 19th October 2020 at 7:57am, our beautiful baby boy, Brodie, was born. He weighed only 1lb 11oz. He was taken from us straight away before we could even see or hear him. I had to be taken for surgery to remove the placenta while my husband was allowed to go and see Brodie.



When out of surgery, Brodie's doctor came to tell us that Brodie was very sick and had a long and difficult journey ahead and that he may not survive. He had severe brain bleeds on both sides and his lungs and heart were struggling. I had honestly never heard of a

baby dying in this country so to me it never even felt possible that we could lose him. I was so sure that no matter what, they would save him. I finally got to go along to see my baby that evening, he was tiny and fragile and absolutely amazing. I couldn't believe the love I could feel for someone so instantly.

The journey ahead was such a rollercoaster. We were supported by the most amazing neonatal nurses and doctors and given a place to stay on hospital grounds so we could be close to our son. When we would be resting in our accommodation the nurses would send us photos and updates using Baby Diary. They all showed so much love for us and Brodie through their kind words, cards and photos.



Brodie fought incredibly hard to stay with us. After an extremely difficult first week, he really was showing signs of improvement in week two. We were given lots of time to cuddle him when he was strong enough, we could change his nappies, clean his eyes and feed him my breast milk through a tube. The skin to skin time was so special to us all.

Things took a turn on his third week. He developed necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), his lungs were collapsing and his brain bleeds worsened. Everything that could go wrong was.

Brodie tried so hard to hang on and fight but it all became too much for him. He passed away in my arms and holding his daddy's hand at 00:05 on the 8th November 2020. The pain of this moment will live with us both forever.

The hospital moved us to a room in the neonatal ward where we could stay with Brodie for as long as we needed. They kept him in a cold moses basket where we could finally see him without his wires and tubes and we could hold him without permission. The nurses organised for a photographer from Remember My Baby to come and take the most beautiful photos of our son, photos which we would never have otherwise. Doctors and nurses visited us and made us all feel so loved and important. One doctor even offered to stay with Brodie while he was transferred to Glasgow for his post mortem. The kindness we were shown was extraordinary and still means the world.

When it was finally time to go, we were so heartbroken but the neonatal staff were with us every step of the way and spoke to us about our next steps in organising funerals and getting support.

We opted to bury Brodie in Falkirk where our family all is and where we are likely to live one day too. We visit him as much as we can, as do friends and family. We speak about Brodie and take time to go through his photos and things often. This is all part of the grieving process for us, which we have had a lot of support from the local SANDs counsellor to work through.

Losing Brodie has changed our lives forever and we never feel like we will be the same people as we were before experiencing all the trauma that comes with premature labour, a neonatal journey and the death of a baby. We have since welcomed a daughter, Maisie, into our family in October 2022. She too was born early but we got to 35 weeks, thankfully. Maisie will grow up knowing all about her incredible and strong big brother.