



15 members of staff from Leeds-based Surgical Innovations ('SI'), a leading creator of innovative medical technology addressing unmet clinical needs in minimally invasive surgery, are aiming to cycle the first Stage of the Tour de France in a bid to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust.

'Team SI' will be covering approximately 135 miles over the two day charity cycle challenge. They will, where possible, be following the official Stage 1 route of the Tour de France, although adjusted to start and finish at the SI head office.

SI Design Director Mike White, said "The idea came from David Main, one of our Senior Design Engineers, who has embraced the spirit of the Tour de France starting in Yorkshire this year. David has pretty much single handedly arranged the whole event, from accommodation through to team kit and fundraising.

"He's created a company challenge with a real buzz from the shop floor through to our office staff. Many of the people in 'Team SI' have not ridden a bike for years, but over the last few weeks they've all been pushing themselves to the limit with some strenuous training practice. The team is determined to complete this challenge and raise as much money as we can for charity."

'Team SI' has chosen to raise money on behalf of The Sick Children's Trust, which provides free high-quality 'Home from Home' accommodation for families whose children are seriously ill in hospital. The charity has a house in Leeds attached to the Leeds General Infirmary Hospital. One of the people who has benefited from their support is Julia Price, who works in the Surgical Innovations Communications department.

Julia's daughter, Maisie, was born three years ago on the day Princess Anne visited Surgical Innovations, but 17 hours later she stopped breathing as a result of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, ('SIDS'), more commonly known as 'cot death', and was put on life support.

Julia and her partner Will, live in Sheffield so Eckersley House, the 'Home from Home' at the hospital, meant they could both stay in Leeds at Maisie's bedside, 24 hours a day, and also be with other parents whose babies were also in intensive care.

Mike added: "It provided a 'home' for them giving comfort and support when they needed it most. As a company we are delighted to be supporting such a worthwhile charity and hopefully our contribution will help other families in similar situations."

Although the 'Home from Home' is free of charge for families it costs the charity nearly £30 to provide a room for a family for just one night.

Jane Featherstone, Head of Fundraising at The Sick Children's Trust, commented: "Hearing stories like Julia's shows just how important it is for parents to be able to stay at their child's side in times of ill- health. As a charity, we support around 3,500 families every year, but we rely entirely on voluntary donations to do so. The money raised by 'Team SI' will go directly towards helping families at Eckersley House; I'd like to say a huge thank you and good luck to everyone involved."

The challenge will take place from 2pm on Thursday 5th June and all day on Friday 6th June. Team SI will be waved off from their Leeds premises on Clayton Wood Bank by everyone at Surgical Innovations and members of the Sick Children's Trust.

To sponsor 'Team SI' and support the work of the Sick Children's Trust please visit their Just Giving web page: <https://www.justgiving.com/SurgicalInnovations> and show your support via Twitter using the hashtag '#TeamSI'