



The Tomes Family

Warwickshire Fire & Rescue

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In 2003, retained firefighter George Tomes received a diagnosis that would change his life, when doctors told him he had the degenerative disease, Multiple sclerosis, which led to him having to give up work. His wife was also diagnosed with fibromyalgia.

Hoping for a fresh start the family moved to Bournemouth. But the reality was very different from how they'd imagined, and they soon felt isolated in an unfamiliar community. On top this their daughter, Jade, was diagnosed with renal failure and placed on the transplant list.

“It felt like we had nothing,” says George. “People saw us as a benefits family, so we were stigmatised. We knew we had to come back to the Midlands, but we had no money and were stranded.”

A family friend suggested contacting the Welfare Services team in The Fire Fighters Charity. Not long after reaching out for help, George and his family were told the Charity could fund their move back to the Midlands, putting them among their network and closer to hospital for Jade's appointments.

“I couldn't believe it,” he says. “By the time I spoke to the Charity, I hadn't set foot in a fire station in years. But that didn't matter, they helped us anyway. Coming home was exactly the right thing to do, and as soon as we got out of the car, it felt right. We knew there would still be bumps and hurdles, but the biggest one had been managed, so everything else could be as well.”

“I'm a typical bloke, I don't like to admit stuff. But being down there, it really hurt a lot and I couldn't cope. I was struggling to keep my family together and we were in pieces. This whole thing has taken its toll on us, physically, mentally and financially. I am so grateful to the Charity for helping us when they did. I never thought I'd be able to benefit from their help, but they've saved my family.”

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/the-tomes-family

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