

# North East tech sector rallies around much-loved figure after serious accident

The North East tech sector has rallied behind one of its key figures following a serious accident that left him in intensive care.

Jamie Hardesty, who is head of communications at Sunderland Software City and well known for his support of tech firms in the region, was hiking alone on the Welsh mountain Tryfan when he fell about 30ft, sustaining serious injuries.

A gofundme page set up by Laura Partridge of Innovate UK to support Mr Hardesty and his wife Sammy, who is at his bedside each day in Liverpool, has raised more than £11,000 from 260 people across the North East and beyond.

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The couple, who live in Newcastle, were on holiday at the time but Mrs Hardesty had decided not to join her husband – who is an experience hiker – on the day as she was feeling unwell. The 31-year-old's fall was seen by other hikers nearby who stayed with him until mountain rescue and air ambulance teams arrived.

He was airlifted from Tryfan to Aintree University Hospital where he was told he had suffered a broken spine, collapsed lung and multiple broken bones among other injuries.

Since the accident Mrs Hardesty, 29, who is self employed, has been staying in Liverpool to be close to her husband. He has now left intensive care for a hospital ward and the couple are taking it day-by-day in the hope he can be moved back to a North East.

She said: “We’re hoping now to get him moved to Newcastle and then he will eventually be moved to Middlesbrough’s James Cook Hospital that has a dedicated spinal rehab centre.”

She added: “We don’t know how it’s going to be moving forward, and we don’t know what’s going to happen with his legs. We need all his bones to heal and to see how the physio goes first.

“He runs a minimum of four times a week. He goes to the gym and he hikes – that kind of active lifestyle has definitely helped his recovery so far. He’s really determined.”

Mrs Hardesty said her husband is passionate about his job and that has been reflected in the outpouring of support for him.

She added: “It’s amazing to see how many people have messaged. A lot of companies across the region have been in touch with me to wish him well and all that fund raising will help with whatever comes next, and my accommodation costs at the moment.

“To see how many people care about him is amazing and I keep going in to tell him someone else has messaged and it does make him feel better.”

She added: “The hospital staff here have been amazing, but it would be nice to get him closer to home – especially so more people can come and see him. It’s a bit tough being a three-hour drive away from everyone.”

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