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Media Release

Organ Donation Week – leave your family certain of your decision

This Organ Donation Week (20th to 26th September) NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) and the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust are calling on people in the Bath area to talk to their families about organ and tissue donation – and **leave them certain** about their decision.

Around 46,108 people in the Bath region are already on the NHS Organ Donor Register. However, NHSBT says people should ensure their family supports their decision, if occasion to donate does arise and they are approached about organ donation by a specialist nurse in hospital.

Over the last year, 16 people's lives were transformed through the gift of organ donation from the RUH.

Alison Ryan, RUH Trust Chair, said: "Although organ transplant operations do not happen here at the RUH, our teams play an essential role in identifying potential donors and supporting their families through the process. We're really grateful to of our teams in the Emergency Department, the Intensive Care Unit and Theatres for their hard work and dedication and sensitive handling of this very important and personal issue.

"We hope this year's Organ Donation Week message from potential donors to their to families – to leave them certain about your wishes – will further increase the number of donors we identify and lead to more lives being saved or enhanced."

The RUH now works in partnership with NHS Blood and Transplant, Tissue and Eye Services as a key donation site, aiming to offer the option of tissue donation to bereaved families as part of normal end of life practice. One tissue donor can potentially help up to 50 individuals.

Marion Jones, Regional Nurse for Tissue Donation, said: “Evidence indicates that people are positive about tissue donation and that family members gain comfort from the act of donation. Though last year was a challenging year, there was an increase in referrals for tissue donation at the RUH by 12% and an increase in donation by 10%, leading to potentially more than 40 life-changing tissue transplants.”

This year, organ donation has also been added to the National Curriculum for the first time, so family members, whatever their age, are being encouraged to get together to talk about their own organ and tissue donation decisions.

The RUH is supporting the campaign this week by lighting up the hospital in pink, sharing information on our social media sites and joining Bath Rugby Club on Saturday 25 September for an event encouraging families to talk about organ donation and to log their known decision on the organ donor register.

Joanne Pattemore, RUH Specialist Nurse Organ Donation said: “We need more people in Bath to talk about organ donation to increase the number of lifesaving transplants.

“These conversations are especially important for local residents from Black and Asian backgrounds. People from these communities are more likely to need a transplant, but often have to wait longer as the best chance of a match will often come from someone of the same ethnicity.

“Your loved ones will still always be consulted before organ donation goes ahead. Please don’t wait. Speak to your family about organ donation and let them know your decision today.”

To find out more and register your decision, visit the NHS Organ Donor Register at www.organdonation.nhs.uk and share your decision with your family. Users of the NHS app can also use this to record, check or amend their details or decision.

ENDS

Note to editors:

Joanne Pattemore is available for interview. Please contact the RUH communications team ruh-tr.communicationsteam@nhs.net or call us on 01225 826230

The law around organ donation changed in England in May 2020. All adults are now considered as having agreed to donate their own organs when they die, unless they record a decision not to donate, are in one of the excluded groups or have told their family that they don't want to donate.

However, relatives will still always be consulted before organ donation goes ahead and, each year, opportunities for transplants are missed because families aren't sure what to do.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.

The Trust provides 759 beds and a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

Chair:
Alison Ryan

Chief Executive:
Cara Charles-Barks



In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, cancer related fatigue and fatigue linked to other long term conditions such as multiple sclerosis.

The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust has opened the purpose-built RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre and is now working towards the new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk

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