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Media Release

Will you give the gift of life this Organ Donation Week?

This week (18-24 September) is Organ Donation Week and the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, working alongside NHS Blood and Transplant, is calling on local people to register their donation decision and support the campaign to recruit 25,000 new organ donors nationally.

Throughout the week, everyone, including the staff at the RUH, are being encouraged to go pink – the colour of the NHS Organ Donor Card - to show their support for the campaign. This could be by wearing a pink item of clothing, baking pink cakes or perhaps even colouring your hair pink.

RUH staff will also be joining in the national Race for Recipients, which aims to encourage us all to get fit and celebrate the gift of organ donation. Participants can choose an activity like walking, running, cycling or swimming to reach their individual or team targets. For example, travelling a distance of 9km over the week to represent the nine lives that can be saved by one donor all the way up to 7,000km to represent the 7,000 people currently waiting for a life-saving transplant in the UK.

The University of Bath will be showing support for Organ Donation Week by lighting up its library pink and the RUH will also be lighting up its Combe Park site for the duration of the week.

Alison Ryan, Chair at the RUH, said: "Around 46,000 people in the Bath area have already declared their decision through the NHS Organ Donor Register, which is fantastic, but we want to see this number grow further.

“We need more people in BaNES and Somerset to register their decision and talk with their loved ones about organ donation to give them the certainty they need to support their organ donation decision.

“It’s really important that people tell their family to help ensure they support their decision if they are approached about organ donation by a specialist nurse in hospital. When a family are approached, 9 out of 10 families will agree to donation if they know their family member was on the Organ Donor Register and talked about their decision.

“My late husband was given 18 years of life because of the generosity of an organ donation so I know first-hand the real difference it makes and the deep feelings of gratitude and respect for the donor which lives in the recipients’ families forever.

“I’m looking forward to seeing lots of people at the hospital and in the local community going pink for Organ Donation Week and encouraging even more people to register their decision and give the gift of life.”

The RUH 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.

The RUH is recognised as one of the best hospitals in the country for supporting organ donations and last year 21 people received life-saving or life-changing transplants as a result.

This means it is still just as important as ever to register your decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register and ensure your friends and family know what you want.

Joanne Pattermore, RUH Specialist Nurse for Organ Donation, said: "Organ donation saves lives, so by signing up to the NHS Organ Donation register you truly are giving the gift of life.

“We want even more people in Bath and the surrounding areas to talk about organ donation to increase the number of life-saving transplants, so please speak to your family about organ donation today and let them know your decision.”

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.

Find out more about Organ Donation Week and how to get involved at <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/get-involved/organ-donation-week-2023/>

Ends

Notes to Editor:

At the RUH we're proud to put people at the heart of what we do, striving to create an environment where everyone matters. Everyone means the people we care for, the people we work with and the people in our community.

We provide a wide range of services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

We also provide specialist services for rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME via the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases which we acquired in 2015.

In 2021, we acquired Sulis Hospital Bath, an independent hospital that provides care for both private and NHS patients. This has enabled us to provide more care for NHS patients, as well as continuing to provide private care to those who choose it. Any additional income earned through private care is reinvested in services for the benefit of the people we care for at both Sulis and the RUH.

We're currently building a new Cancer Centre at the RUH. The Dyson Cancer Centre, which is set to open in autumn 2023, will help transform the care we provide for patients, families and carers.

We work closely with other health and care organisations as members of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board. We strive to improve the health and wellbeing of the people in our community by working together build one of the healthiest places to live and work.

We are rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

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