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Media Release

Confirm your decision to save lives this Organ Donation Week

This Organ Donation Week (23 – 29 September) NHS Blood and Transplant and the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust are celebrating the fact that the NHS Organ Donor Register has been saving lives for 30 years through the gift of organ donation.

Since its creation in 1994, thousands of lives have been saved thanks to people agreeing to donate their organs after death by confirming their decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register.

However, more people than ever before are in need of a life-saving transplant across the UK, with more than 7,600 people on the active waiting list, including 16 in Bath and North East Somerset – so it's vital that people confirm their organ donation decision to save lives.

The law around organ donation now assumes that unless you have 'opted out' you will be considered for organ donation after your death. However, families are still asked for their consent and they are more likely to give it if you have formally 'opted in' by joining the register.

Alison Ryan, RUH Trust Chair, said: "Confirming your decision to donate on the NHS Organ Donor Register makes it clear to your family that you want to be an organ donor, leaving them certain of your decision at what is a difficult and emotional time.

"We need more people in our local community to confirm their decision on the register today to save more lives now and in the future.

"More than 44,000 people in Bath and North East Somerset have already declared their decision through the NHS Organ Donor Register, which is the best way for their family to know what they want. Nine out of 10 families will support organ donation if their loved one had confirmed their decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register.

“My late husband was given an additional 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.”

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

In addition to its work with organ donation, 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 with the gifts of healing, sight and relief of pain.

To mark the start of Organ Donation Week, Trust Chair Alison Ryan and Betty Muiyang, Intensive Care Unit Junior Sister, visited wards and departments across the hospital to thank staff for supporting tissue donation. Each team was given a certificate as well as cupcakes spelling out ‘thank you’.

Throughout Organ Donation Week the RUH is supporting 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 and there will even be an exercise bike in the hospital’s Atrium all week for staff and visitors to join in the Race for Recipients.

Those taking part can set themselves targets, for example travelling a distance of nine miles over the week to represent the nine lives that can be saved by one donor or travelling 7,500 miles as part of a team to represent the 7,500 people currently waiting for a life-saving transplant in the UK.

The hospital will also be lit up pink all week – the colour of the NHS Organ Donation card. Other local buildings also lighting up in pink include the American Museum & Gardens’ Manor House, University of Bath’s library, the Museum of Bath Architecture and Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute. RUH staff are also being encouraged to wear pink to show their support.

There will also be wellness walks, information stands and some sweet treats for staff to thank them for their support for organ donation.

Anthony Clarkson, Director of Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation for NHS Blood and Transplant said: “Thanks to the support of the RUH during Organ Donation Week, we can get the message across to more people that organ donation saves lives.

“With more people, both adults and children, waiting for transplants, it’s more important than ever to confirm your organ donation decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register. We urge everyone to take a moment this Organ Donation Week to register and confirm your decision.”



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

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.

Our new Dyson Cancer Centre brings together many of the RUH's cancer services under one roof to provide a cancer services hub for over 500,000 people in the South West. The centre includes the RUH's oncology, chemotherapy and radiotherapy services, a 22-bed inpatient ward, a dedicated pharmacy, research team and nuclear medicine and physics teams.

A key feature of the new centre is the Macmillan Wellbeing Hub. The three-storey hub provides a welcoming, non-clinical space designed around the needs of patients and their families. It also includes comfortable accommodation where relatives and loved ones can stay overnight.

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