

9<sup>th</sup> August 2018

For local media

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Life-changing organ donations on increase

Lives are being saved thanks to an increase in organ donation from Russells Hall Hospital – but more people need to tell their loved ones that they wish to be donors.

Organ Donation Week begins on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, and a specialist organ donation nurse has spoken about the huge difference that can be made when people let others know that they are on the donor register.

Last year a record number of lives were saved or transformed thanks to organ donation. Locally, The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust had the highest number of donations in the Black Country.

Since April, around six lives have been saved thanks to donations from Russells Hall. Just one donor can save the lives of up to nine people while dozens of other lives are transformed through tissue donation.

Kirsty Lazenby, specialist nurse for Midlands Organ Donation and Transplantation with NHS Blood and Transplant, said: “Staff are to thank for that because we couldn’t do it without the work of Trust staff in this area.”

The Trust Organ Donation Committee has worked with community groups and the Dudley Interfaith Network over the last year to raise awareness of Organ Donation and the importance of family conversations.

As a thank you for the Trust’s big increase in referrals, NHS Blood and Transplant is funding two lift wraps at Russells Hall Hospital. The two central hospital lifts will be getting a bright pink organ donation logo makeover.

This year Organ Donation Week will focus on the theme Words Save Lives. The organ donation team will be in the main reception area of Russells Hall Hospital on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> September, talking to people about how to register and the importance of letting others know.

Kirsty said: “My message to people is how important it is to talk to their loved ones about their decisions on organ donation, so that if the family is approached in the most awful circumstances, they know what their loved one’s wishes were.

“Often families say no because they just don’t know the answer and it is a stressful time for them anyway. Our aim is to get pe

ople to have that conversation in advance.

“By signing up on the register and having that conversation among families, it makes it a bit more bearable.”

In the last year, over 1,500 people across the UK donated after they died, and over 1,000 people became living donors. Together they helped to save or transform the lives of over 5,000 people – a record number.

Although the number of donors is increasing and the waiting lists are reducing, right now there are around 6,000 people waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant across the UK. On average three people die every day in need of an organ transplant because there just aren’t enough donors.

Fewer than half of families agree to donation going ahead if they are unaware of their loved one’s decision to be a donor. This rises to over 90% when the decision to be an organ donor is known.

For more information visit [www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk)

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