

8<sup>th</sup> November 2010

### **Bone marrow testing plea to save lives**

Staff at The Dudley Group of Hospitals are appealing to local residents to be tested to go on the a register to help people who desperately need life-saving bone marrow transplants.

A testing/registration session has been organised at Russells Hall Hospital by the Trust's transfusion practitioner Caroline Stone and Nicci Plant, lead nurse on ward B1, together with Anthony Nolan, the charity that finds matches for patients who need life saving stem cell (bone marrow) transplants.

The session was organised to find a match for nine-year-old Owen Evans, a patient at Birmingham Children's Hospital, after his father Mark contacted the Trust for its support.

Nicci said little Owen had very poor chances of survival without a bone marrow transplant.

"The family were desperately trying to find a match, but without success, so they appealed for our help to ask as many people as possible to come forward to be tested and put on the donation register," she said.

"It looks likely a match has now been found for Owen but we still need people to go on the bone marrow register to help the 1,500 people still waiting for a transplant."

Only a saliva sample will be required and anyone wishing to be tested can just turn up for the session.

If a successful match is found, the bone marrow transplant involves a daily injection for three days to make the body produce more of the stem cells needed and they are collected via a procedure similar to kidney dialysis. The body then replaces the cells taken within 21 days.

Potential donors must be aged between 18 and 40, be in good health, weigh more than 8 stone (51kg), have a Body Mass Index of 35 or less and be willing to donate bone marrow to ANY patient should they ever match.

Mark Evans said he was grateful to the Trust for its help and support.

"It added a little more hope and optimism to the search for a suitable donor for Owen," said Mark. "Until August this year he was a perfectly healthy boy and now we have a chance to get him back there again."

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For more information, please call Jackie Dietrich, Communications and Engagement Officer for The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, on (01384) 456111 ext. 1423.