

Making news & campaigning for our community since 1886

All aboard for Vintage by the Sea

Pages 16 & 33



Eight pages of Lilywhites news & views

In The Gentry, from Page 21



PNE name change to boost county organ donor campaign

MAKE AN END A BEGINNING

By AASMA DAY
aasma.day@lep.co.uk
@AASMADAY

LANCASHIRE'S newest football club has been revealed today – Preston North Beginning.

The club is temporarily being re-named to highlight an important cause.

Today marks the start of Organ Donation Week and the campaign is calling on people to "Turn an End into a Beginning" by talking about organ donation by encouraging people to tell their family they want to be a donor.

Andy Haythornthwaite, head of community at Preston North End, said: "We hope to inspire more people from

Preston to Turn An End Into A Beginning by talking about organ donation."

At the start of this year, the Lancashire Evening Post launched its Lancashire: Giving the Gift of Life campaign with the aim of getting at least another 2,016 people to sign up as organ donors in 2016.

Figures today show that 7,527 people have registered on the Organ Donor Register since the campaign began.

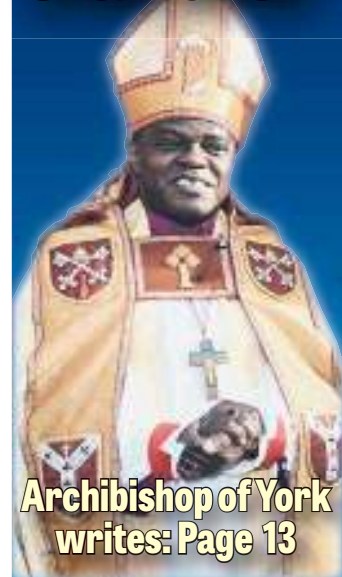
Natalie Kerr, 34, from Adlington, near Chorley, had a double lung transplant just as she thought she was reaching the end. She said: "My transplant gave me a future with my children."

FULL STORY: PAGES 8&9



CAMPAIGN:
Natalie Kerr
with the
PNB crest

'We need faith more than ever'



**Archbishop of York
writes: Page 13**

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Lung transplant gave

This week is Organ Donation Week. Aasma Day talks to Lancashire mum Natalie Kerr who had almost reached the end of her life when she was given a new beginning with a double lung transplant.

WHEN Natalie Kerr began noticing she was getting out of breath after having her first child, she put it down to juggling a busy life as a mother and working as a nurse.

Natalie, now 34, who lives in Adlington, near Chorley, explains: "I had always been fine and healthy as a child, but after having my son Brandon, I began experiencing breathlessness.

"I thought I was just unfit and maybe doing too much as after Brandon was born, I went back to university to study to become a nurse and I was always rushing around.

"I went to the doctors quite a few times telling them that I kept getting out of breath but they told me I was fine."

After repeatedly going to the doctors, Natalie had a heart scan and had heart traces but was told everything was fine.

It was only when she gave birth to her second child Isabelle in 2008 that she was diagnosed with a condition that had caused damage to her heart and lungs.

Natalie recalls: "I was really poorly during labour with Isabelle as I could not breathe.

"So doctors did tests including a heart scan and chest X-rays and diagnosed me with pulmonary hypertension.

"After I had Isabelle, I was told that there was no cure for this condition and that the outlook wasn't good as most people only lived three years with it.

"It was heartbreaking. I had just had this little baby and I was being told I might not be here to watch her or my son grow up.

"It was devastating as all I have ever wanted is to be a mum and watch my children grow up."

Natalie was put on medication to improve her quality of life and managed to stay stable for around a year.

But then she began deteriorating and struggled to be the mum she wanted to be. She was on oxygen and had to have a stairlift fitted at home.

As her condition worsened, Natalie was listed for a transplant in 2011 and continued to deteriorate.

Natalie says: "You have to be at the end and have exhausted all other options before you are considered for transplant."

When Natalie went into Wythenshawe Hospital for assessment, she got hold of her medical notes and saw the words "Prognosis: Less than a year" which really shook her up.

Natalie says: "Seeing these words in black and white made the enor-



HOPE: Natalie Kerr from Adlington, had a double lung transplant, pictured with children Brandon, 13, and Isabelle, eight.

mity of my situation hit home.

"I realised time was rapidly running out for me.

"I knew then that I desperately wanted a transplant as it was my only hope.

"However, doctors had warned me there was a real chance I might not get a transplant as there was a shortage of organs available and a lot of people died while on the waiting list."

Natalie had to go through the heartache of making a will and planning a funeral to prepare for the worst case scenario.

She turned 30 in November 2011 and as she cut her birthday cake with photos of her children on it, she realised everyone around her was crying.

Natalie remembers: "I realised then that people were crying because they thought this would be the last birthday I had."

That Christmas, Natalie became even more poorly and blacked out a few times.

As a result, she was put on the priority list for a transplant.

In February 2012, she received a call telling her a new pair of lungs had been found for her transplant.

Natalie says: "I was so excited and was texting everyone from the ambulance telling them.

"I wasn't frightened as I had reached a stage where I was so poorly, I wanted a chance of life."

Natalie underwent the eight hour operation and in hospital, she had a photo of her two children at the end of her bed as inspiration to recover as quickly as possible and get back home to them.

Natalie says: "As soon as I was given my new lungs, I felt different and I could breathe again. It felt amazing."

It has now been four-and-a-half years since the former nurse had her transplant and she is loving being a mum to Brandon, now 14 and Isabelle, eight.

Natalie says: "It is brilliant, I am alive and I can breathe.

"Just to be able

to breathe is incredible. I'd been ill for so long and couldn't be a mum.

"Now we spend quality time together and make memories.

"It's all the little things in life I treasure such as being able to walk Isabelle to school and see her face when she goes in and seeing her face when she comes out and I'm there.

"My transplant was a new beginning, a fresh start and I'm so grateful to my donor and her family.

"All I know about my donor is that she was a woman in her fifties who didn't smoke and really looked after her lungs.

"My transplant gave me a future with my children.

"What a legacy to leave - my children have their mum because of my amazing donor and her family.

"I would encourage other people to think about organ donation and talk to their family about it.

"It is such a wonderful thing.

"I hope my organ donor is proud that I am making the most of my life with her lungs."



TOMORROW: We talk to a Lancashire teacher who had a liver

me a new lease of life



CHANGE: Natalie Kerr pictured at Preston North End's Deepdale stadium - the club has been temporarily renamed "Preston North Beginning" as part of Organ Donation Week.

Over 150 Lancashire people are on organ swap waiting list

EVERY day across the UK, around three people who could have benefited from a transplant die because there aren't enough donors.

In Lancashire, there are around 153 people waiting for a transplant now and they need people to agree to donate for them to get the organ transplant they so desperately need

● In 2015/16 13 people in Lancashire died before they received the organ they

desperately needed

● In 2015/16 74 people in Lancashire received a potentially lifesaving or transforming transplant. There are currently 498,839 people residing in the Lancashire postcode area on the UK Organ Donor Register. Many people believe it is just a case of signing the NHS Organ Donor Register. However, if you die in circumstances where you could become an organ donor, your

family would be approached by specialist nurses and asked to support your decision to become an organ donor.

Anthony Clarkson, assistant director for organ donation and nursing at NHS Blood and Transplant says: "Too many families faced with the possibility of donating a relative's organs do not know what they wanted and find themselves having to make the decision on their behalf.

"This makes what is already an emotional

and difficult time even harder.

"It is therefore vital you tell your family about your organ donor decision to make it easier for them to support what you want. "Many donor families say that donation helps with their grief and they feel enormous pride at knowing their relative went on to save lives after they died giving others the chance of a new beginning." During Organ Donation Week, hospitals, health teams, charities and supporters and

their families will be highlighting the need for people to talk about organ donation and share their decision with their family. Start a conversation today and help turn an end into a beginning.

● Visit www.organdonation.nhs.uk or call 0300 123 23 23. Share your decision with your family using hashtag #YesIDonate. To register as an organ donor through the Lancashire Evening Post's campaign, visit: <http://bit.ly/givethegifttolife>

transplant after one of her pupils told her she was "yellow"

My liver transplant gave

This week is Organ Donation Week and people are being urged to “Turn an End into a Beginning” by talking about organ donation. Today AASMA DAY talks to teacher Emma Gregson who was days away from death after suddenly turning yellow.

“MISS - your eyes are a funny colour!”

As a primary school teacher, Emma Gregson was used to hearing pupils come out with bizarre comments so at first she didn't take the nine-year-old boy's comments too seriously.

But later on, she looked in the mirror and realised he was right.

Emma, now 36, who lives in Chorley and is a primary school teacher in Adlington, explains: “I noticed the whites of my eyes had gone yellow and my face had gone yellow too.

“I had always been fine and healthy before then so I was not unduly worried.

“This was in the middle of September 2012 and I had also been feeling quite tired.

“However, I had just started my new job so I put the tiredness down to this.”

Emma went to see her GP who thought there may be a problem with Emma's gall bladder as this can lead to signs of jaundice.

She told Emma she would refer her to hospital for investigations.

But Emma's condition deteriorated rapidly and she turned a lot more yellow, felt extremely

NEW BEGINNING: eating an ice lolly because one of her symptoms was getting very hot

lethargic and had a pain in her stomach and itchy legs.

Emma recalls: “Being healthy otherwise, I still wasn't too concerned.

“I thought it was just a little blip and that even if there was a problem with my gall bladder, they'd just whip it out and get it sorted.”

Emma returned to her GP who sent her straight to hospital. At this stage, doctors still suspected a problem with Emma's gall bladder and carried out a scan.

This revealed Emma's liver was very shrunken and hard and wasn't working properly.

Medics tried to kickstart Emma's liver into working, but their attempts proved futile.

Emma was transferred to St James Hospital in Leeds which a specialist liver transplant centre and she was in

there for three weeks.

Specialists tried her on different medications and monitored her.

Despite their efforts, Emma carried on deteriorating and it reached the point where she was so poorly and her liver function was so low that doctors gave her just seven days to live without a liver transplant.

Before her surgery, Emma was in a wheelchair as one of the functions of the liver is helping to control the clotting of blood.

As Emma's liver function was virtually non-existent, if she had fallen, she would have suffered massive internal bleeding.

Emma remembers: “It was very frightening to be told you only have seven days to live.

“It is a strange situation to be in as everything is out of your control and you can't do anything.

“All I could do is put my trust into the medical staff and try and be cheerful and positive about it all.

“I did cry when they told me I only had seven days to live without a transplant - but that was the only time I cried.”

Emma was prepared for two liver transplants but the surgery did not go ahead when it transpired the quality of the donor livers was not good enough.

When doctors told Emma they had another liver for her, she tried not to get her hopes up, but medics sounded very hopeful about the quality of this liver.

It was third time lucky for Emma as this time the liver transplant went ahead and the operation took about six hours.

Emma was in intensive care at first and was then moved to a ward.

Determined to recover as quickly



TRANSPLANT: Emma Gregson was days away from death before her transplant

as possible and get home, Emma managed to get out of the bed and walk within a day of the surgery.

She then set herself goals of having all the tubes removed as quickly as possible and she managed to return home just nine days after the transplant.

Doctors think Emma's liver was damaged by auto immune hepatitis. It is not known what causes this to suddenly happen.

After her transplant, Emma recovered well and managed to return to her work as a teacher on a part-time basis six months later.

She then went back to full-time work the following September.

Emma says: “The school, staff and pupils were very good and supportive.

“I talked about what happened to me and the transplant quite openly at school and explained it to people.

“It was a bit of a shock for the pupils but they have been really good and are always very careful with germs and use hand gel as they know my immune system is lowered because of the anti-rejection medication I am on.

“The school has also raised money for St James Hospital as recognition for my transplant and treatment.”

Apart from being on a low dose of anti-rejection medication,

Emma says she is enjoying life to the full and says she hasn't let her transplant stop her in any way.

Emma says: “There are certain things I have to be careful of such as not eating things such as prawns, shellfish and

soft cheese because of the risk of listeria and my low immune system and avoiding germs.

“But apart from that, I just get on with and enjoy life and sometimes I almost forget it happened to me.”

All Emma knows about her donated liver is that it came from a young man who had an accident. Emma has written to his family to express how thankful she is for the gift of life.

Emma says: “It is hard to put yourself in the shoes of the family.

“But if this awful thing has happened, it is nice to see something positive come out of it.

“Organ donation has given me life. It is an amazing gift.

“I think the theme of this year's Organ Donation Week to ‘Turn an End into a Beginning’ is a great idea as it will get people talking about organ donation.

“I was so very near the end and was given a new beginning with the liver transplant.”



TOMORROW: We speak to a man who thought that he had flu

ve me a new beginning



LAUNCH: Transplant patient Emma Gregson pictured at the launch of "Preston North Beginning"

New beginning as football club helps highlight awareness

AS part of Organ Donor Awareness Week, Preston North End has temporarily changed its name to "Preston North Beginning" to highlight awareness of organ donation.

The Evening Post revealed the temporary name change and Emma Gregson and Natalie Kerr, a mum who was given her life back with a double lung transplant, launched the campaign.

Andy Haythornthwaite, head of community at Preston North End, says: "We're delighted to be supporting Organ Donation Week and we are proud to temporarily

become 'Preston North Beginning' for such an important cause. "Using the power of the club and football in general, we already support a number of local initiatives to help promote the health of our local community.

"We hope to inspire people to share their organ donation decision with their family and help turn an end into a beginning." Every day across the UK, around three who could have benefited from a transplant die because there aren't enough organ donors.

There are currently around 6,500

people in the UK on the waiting list for a transplant.

Yet of the approximately half a million people who die each year across the UK, only about one per cent die in circumstances where their organs can be donated. With such small numbers of people dying in the right circumstances to become an organ donor and so many adults and children in need of transplant, it is vital no opportunity for someone to become a donor is missed. Many people believe it is just a case of signing the NHS Organ Donor Register.

However, if you die in circumstances where you could become an organ donor, your family would be approached by specialist nurses and they would be asked to support your decision to be an organ donor.

NHS Blood and Transplant figures show that only 47 per cent of families agree to organ donation if they are unaware of their loved one's decision to be a donor. Yet almost 90 per cent of families give their consent when the decision to be an organ donor is known.

During Organ Donation Week,

hospitals, health teams, charities and supporters and their families will be highlighting the need for people to talk about organ donation and share their decision with their family.

Start a conversation today and help to turn an end into a beginning.

● Visit www.organdonation.nhs.uk or call 0300 123 23 23. Share your decision with your family using hashtag #YesIDonate To register as an organ donor through the Lancashire Evening Post's campaign, visit: <http://bit.ly/givethegiftoflife>



DOUBLE TRANSPLANT: Natalie Kerr

but ended up needing to have a life-saving heart transplant

I thought I had flu, but

This week is Organ Donation Week and people are being urged to turn an end into a beginning. Today, **Aasma Day** talks to Lancashire dad Peter Wakefield who thought he had flu but ended up needing a life-saving heart transplant.

WHEN Peter Wakefield began suffering from a cough and symptoms of a cold, he thought he just had a touch of flu and carried on as normal.

A couple of weeks later, Peter's symptoms hadn't cleared up and he felt out of breath and then one morning, he woke up to find his face all swollen.

Peter, who was 29 at the time and lives in Heysham, near Morecambe, explains: "It all began at the end of March last year but I did not think anything of it at first as I just thought I had flu.

"I had a cough, was out of breath and had general flu type symptoms.

"Then one morning I woke up with such a swollen face, I looked like the Elephant Man.

"I couldn't even see out of my eyes properly as my eyelids were so swollen."

Peter, who was working maintaining caravan parks in Morecambe, Blackpool and Cumbria at the time, rang 111 and was booked in to a same day surgery to see a doctor.

After listening to Peter's heart and breathing, the doctor told him he was fine and thought he had just had an allergic reaction to something and told him to get some antihistamines.

However, the next morning, Peter began coughing up blood. He thought it was probably down to grazing his throat through coughing so much, but rang 111 again who told him to go to A&E.

After hearing Peter's symptoms, the hospital doctor at Royal Lancaster Infirmary asked Peter if there was any hereditary heart disease in his family and Peter explained his dad, also called Peter Wakefield, died of a heart attack at the age of 47 when Peter was nine.

Peter recalls: "The kept me in hospital for tests and told me that something was definitely not right but they were not sure what it was.

"Scans and tests showed I had patches on my lung, partial pneumonia and a blood clot on my lung.

"I then had an echocardiogram and a total scan of my heart and this revealed my heart was basically knackered."

Tests revealed Peter had become ill with a virus which had attacked his heart which led to destroying it leaving him with dilated cardiomyopathy – where the heart muscle becomes stretched and thin.

Peter was referred to Lancashire Cardiac Centre in Blackpool where they carried out further tests and managed to control Peter's heart with medication.

Doctors were planning to fit Pe-



INSPIRATION: Peter almost a year on from his life-saving operation with a photo of his son George, six.

"A lot of people would be willing to accept an organ if they needed one, but are not willing to give."

ter's heart with a mini defibrillator but the procedure had to be cancelled twice as he was too ill.

After three weeks at Blackpool, Peter was referred to Wythenshawe Hospital in Manchester and was shocked to be told his heart was only functioning at 25 per cent and he needed to be put on the urgent waiting list for a heart transplant.

Peter, now 30, who has a six-year-old son George, remembers: "I had already been warned this would be the worst

case scenario but it was a huge shock.

"You don't expect to be told you need a heart transplant at 29.

"I had always been fit and active and I played football and went on days out with my son.

"I had never been in hospital before and never really been ill before so to suddenly have something major like this happen was a massive shock.

"Doctors told me I had to stay in hospital until they found a new heart and told me that without a transplant, I wouldn't see the year out.

"That's when it hit home and really sank in."

Medics kept Peter's heart going with medication and in August last

year, he was told they had a new heart.

All Peter knows about is donor is that she was a woman in her 50s.

He admits he did feel guilty at the realisation that someone else died before he was given his chance to live.

Peter explains: "When I was on the waiting list for a transplant, I did feel uncomfortable as I felt I was waiting for someone else to pass away for my chance to live.

"It does make you feel guilty, but if the person had opted into organ donation, it is what they wanted and their choice."

The heart transplant went ahead and was a success and Peter recalls

noticing a difference straight away. He says: "It felt like a whole weight had been lifted.

"Before the transplant, I was struggling to breathe. Even when I went to the toilet, my heartbeat would rise.

"But after the transplant, I felt normal. I was in critical care for a week but I was walking within two days."

While in hospital, Peter became friends with another man waiting for a heart transplant called Christopher Randall who was in his 50s.

Sadly, Christopher died while waiting for a transplant but he donated his own organs.

Peter says: "Christopher was an amazing person who made every day better in the hospital.

"But unfortunately a transplant never came in time for him.

"He was in a worse way than me and deteriorated and passed away.

"However, he ended up saving two people's lives with giving his organs for donation."

Peter says it was a difficult time for his family when he was in hospital and his brothers and sisters had to be tested for heart conditions too.

One of his sisters was supposed to get married last August but postponed the wedding as she did not want to go ahead with it while Peter was in hospital.

Peter is on anti-rejection medication but apart from that, he feels as good as he did before and is getting on with his life.

Peter says: "I feel fine physically and mentally and I am now doing everything I did before – football, days out and spending time with my son and I am out on my bike every day.

"The only thing I am struggling with is getting back into work since my transplant.

"I am a bricklayer by trade but when I try and get work, I am asked why I was out of work for a year and tell them I have had a transplant.

"I even tried to get a job in a chip-ppy but did not get it.

"I feel as good as I did before and just want to get back to work."

Peter has now reached the one year milestone since his transplant and says it feels amazing to be here after all he has gone through.

He says: "It is brilliant and I feel so back to normal now, it does sometimes feel like it never happened.

"To be honest, I had never really thought about organ donation until this happened to me.

"Now I think so highly of organ donation as I would not be here without it and so many people would not have a second chance of life.

"A lot of people would be willing to accept an organ if they needed one, but are not willing to give.

"But if everyone thought like that, there would be no transplants."

TOMORROW: Double lung-swap musician writes tribute song

I needed a new heart



TREATMENT: Peter in hospital a year ago, above, with Christopher Randall, who he became friends with in hospital while waiting for a heart transplant, below left; and son George, right.



Organ donation: time to talk about it

During Organ Donation Week, hospitals, health teams, charities and supporters and their families will be highlighting the need for people to talk about organ donation and share their decision with their family.

Start a conversation today and help to turn an end into a beginning.

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LEGACY OF LIFE

DONOR: Mark
Houghton

30,000 people sign up to our organ donor campaign

BY AASMA DAY

aasma.day@jpress.co.uk
@AASMADAY

ALMOST 30,000 Lancashire people have signed up to leave the legacy of life since the Lancashire Evening Post launched its campaign to recruit more organ donors.

In January last year, we launched our

Lancashire: Giving The Gift Of Life campaign with the aim of spurring on an extra 2,016 people to sign up as donors during 2016.

But figures show more than 10 times that number have joined the NHS Organ Donor Register with 28,861 people joining from Lancashire alone. Organ donor



chiefs have praised the Lancashire Evening Post for the campaign while a dad who has donated one of his kidneys to a complete stranger has told his story to raise awareness of donation. Ben Armstrong, specialist nurse in organ Donor

nation at NHS Blood and Transplant said: "The Lancashire Evening Post's

campaign to promote organ donation will have inspired many people to join the NHS Organ Donor Register which is fantastic news.

"I'd like to say thank you to the Lancashire Evening Post for spearheading a drive for more donors from the area."

TURN TO PAGES 8&9



Packed People pullout

Starts on Page 17

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SPECIAL REPORT

‘Why I gave the gift of life’

As the Lancashire Evening Post reveals almost 29,000 people have joined the NHS Organ Donor Register since we launched our “Lancashire: Giving the gift of life” campaign, AASMA DAY talks to a man who is recovering after donating his kidney to a stranger

IT was a combination of feeling powerless at the death of his father and being grateful for his own good health despite abusing his body with heavy alcohol consumption that Mark Houghton believes were the factors in driving him to donate one of his kidneys to a total stranger.

Mark, 53, was first given the idea of donating a kidney after listening to a radio show where the subject of altruistic kidney donation was being discussed.

Mark, who has a partner Julie and two grown-up daughters and a granddaughter, explains: “It all began around last summer when I heard a radio show where they were talking about altruistic kidney donation.

“I knew you could donate organs after you died and I knew at the back of my mind that family members could give a kidney to another family member while still alive.

“But I did not realise you could give a kidney to a complete stranger who needs one.

“After hearing about it, I de-



cided it was something I wanted to do.”

Mark believes his decision to donate was two-pronged with the first being his gratitude of his own good health after he decided to give up alcohol when realising he was drinking far too much.

Mark, a self-employed handyman from Ellel, near Lancaster, admits: “Like a lot of people, I was alcohol dependent.

“I used to drink way too much and was probably a borderline alcoholic.

“Then almost four years ago, I made a decision to give up

drink. In the last week before I gave up drink, I was drinking a bottle of whisky every day.

“I just knew I had to stop this and give up alcohol and luckily I managed to give up.

“I have not had an alcoholic drink since.”

Mark was heartened to find that despite his heavy drinking, he hadn’t done any permanent harm to his body.

He says: “I am really fortunate as my health has been unaffected.

“I felt very lucky to have given up the booze and come away unscathed and I wanted to take something positive from that.

“I wanted to do something of genuine good.”

Mark cites the other reason for his kidney donation as stemming from the death of his beloved dad Barrie of Alzheimer’s Disease at the age of 66 in 2003.

Mark says: “My dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s Disease when he was only in his mid-50s which is not too far from where I am now and he

died at the age of 66. My dad’s death was one of the most traumatic things I went through and the most difficult thing was feeling powerless as I knew I could not do anything to save him.

“I wonder if this kidney do-

nation is deep down my way of saving someone else because I could not save my dad.”

Donating a kidney is the latest in a series of unusual challenges Mark set himself in recent times.

Mark lived in France for 15

years and came back to the UK in September 2015.

Mark says: “After I gave up the booze, I did a half marathon with my daughter to raise money for the Alzheimer’s Society. And in 2015, I walked from my house in France to my

OUR CAMPAIGN

Ben Armstrong, specialist nurse in organ donation at NHS Blood and Transplant says: “The Lancashire Evening Post’s campaign to promote organ donation will have inspired many people to join the NHS Organ Donor Register which is fantastic news.

“I’d like to say thank you to the Lancashire Evening Post for spearheading a drive for more donors from the area.” “We really appreciate all the support we have had from the paper and we hope this campaign will continue to prompt conversations about

organ donation.

“If you have already joined the Organ Donor Register, we urge you to tell your family about your decision.

“Every day across the UK around, three people who could have benefited from a transplant die because there aren’t enough organ donors. “We need more organ donors to save and transform lives.”

Sally Johnson, NHS Blood and Transplant director of organ donation and transplantation, says: “It is a terrible shame that so many people who want to save

lives through organ donation have not taken the next simple step to register that decision.

“We all have busy lives yet most of us would admit that we still find ourselves while time away and delaying doing important things. “Signing up to the NHS Organ Donor Register is one thing we know people often just haven’t got around to doing.”

• To join the Organ Donor Register, visit: <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/register-to-donate/register-your-details>

DONOR: Mark Houghton, 52, has donated his kidney altruistically



INSPIRATION: Mark Houghton as a child with his dad Barrie who died of Alzheimer's Disease at 66



In the last **FIVE YEARS**, 384 people in Lancashire have had a life changing transplant.

When the Lancashire Evening Post launched its **"GIVING THE GIFT OF LIFE"** campaign in January last year, there were **480,606** people in the county on the UK Organ Donor Register. Latest figures as of October 31 2016 reveal there are now **509,467** Lancashire people on the register

There are currently **154 people in Lancashire on the transplant waiting list**

A SHORTAGE OF DONORS means too many people die before they get the transplant they need. In the last five years, 71 people in Lancashire have died waiting for a transplant

Thanks to people donating after their deaths, over the last year 78 people in Lancashire have had a **potentially life changing transplant**

ON THE RUN: Mark has been raising money



more about the procedure and what it entailed. After undergoing all the relevant tests, Mark underwent surgery to remove his kidney on November 30 at Manchester Royal Infirmary and the procedure took around three-and-a-half hours.

Mark says he has absolutely no regrets and didn't have any doubts along the way.

He says: "I only did this after hearing about kidney donation on the radio by chance and as soon as I made the decision, I didn't look back."

"Just before you go under, you do hope you are going to wake up again. I have had no regrets – in fact, quite the opposite, I have felt almost euphoric."

"I am very happy with how the recovery is going."

"I am in very little pain. The only thing I am taking is one paracetamol. The wound will take about 12 weeks to heal."

"For me, it was a very easy thing to do."

"My kids are grown up and I am in good health and my life gave me flexibility to do this."

"Donating a kidney to a stranger may not be for everyone but I would like people to consider the fact it can be done."

"I am so happy I had the opportunity to do this. How often do you have the chance to change someone else's life?"

"Someone said to me, 'You will have made a massive difference to someone's Christmas', and I hadn't really thought of it like that."

"The person who received my kidney may have been on dialysis and to have this transplant may have changed their life."

"I have no idea who my kidney was given to but the medics will have put it into the person who I matched best."

"Hopefully, it has changed their life and that is all I need to know. That is all that matters to me and that is all I need to know. I did not do this to get any thanks but because it was the right thing to do."

dad's grave in Lancaster. It was 450 miles and I did it for the Alzheimer's Society. It took me three weeks and I arrived at my dad's grave on Father's Day.

"It made me feel I had done something positive from it."

"This year, I ran the Morecambe Bay cycleway. It was 81 miles and I ran it in three days. I did this to raise money for St John's Hospice in Lancaster."

After deciding he would like to donate his kidney, Mark researched altruistic kidney donation and discovered there was a kidney donor co-ordinator Fiona Biggins at Preston. He went to see her to find out



SPECIAL REPORT

‘Before Johnne had to leave us for organ donation, I knew we needed a picture of all of our hands together’

LOVINGLY holding Johnne Johnson's hand for the last time, wife Debbie and her family see this emotional photograph as a symbol of hope despite their overwhelming sadness at losing him.

It was the last photograph taken before Johnne was taken away to have his organs removed for donation after suffering a fatal brain haemorrhage.

Debbie, 45, of Heeley Road, St Annes, explains: "I always loved Johnne's hands and they were very special to me.

"I am a proper romantic and big softie and I always thought my hands fitted perfectly with his.

"Before Johnne had to leave us for organ donation, I knew we needed a picture of all of our hands together.

"The photo shows Johnne's hand

The Lancashire Evening Post launched its "Lancashire: Giving the gift of life" campaign to boost the number of organ donors across the county. The campaign has achieved success in raising awareness of the need for donation and latest figures reveal 28,861 people from Lancashire registered as organ donors in the last year. Today, AASMA DAY talks to Debbie Johnson whose husband Johnne predicted his own death at the age of 54 and why she made the decision to donate his organs.



for seven years, would have been celebrating her third wedding anniversary on May 5 2015.

Instead, almost three years to the day, she walked down the same aisle as on her wedding day with her husband's coffin.

"Johnne's dad died when he was 54 and Johnne thought he would die at the same age and often talked to me about it.

"When Johnne and I got together, he brought up my children Lucy, now 14 and Jordan, now 13 as his own and we had Jack together, who is now six.

"When Johnne was 53, he said: 'I've not got long now' but I told him not to be silly as he wasn't going to die and that Jack needed him as did we all."

Johnne had shown no signs of ill health until April 2015 when he had been suffering headaches for about three weeks. However, he thought they were just caused by stress.

Debbie recalls: "Johnne didn't really think anything of the headaches, but on the Friday, he had a bit of a blackout so I took him to the doctors.

"The doctor checked him over and told us to come back on the Monday for more tests including blood tests and an ECG.

"However, Johnne died on the Saturday. It was a huge shock to everyone."

with my hand, the hands of my three children and the hand of Johnne's daughter Frankie, from his previous marriage, who is 22."

Johnne, 54, who was a builder, had always been healthy and well but Debbie reveals Johnne predicted he would die at the age of 54 after his own dad died at 54.

Debbie, who had been together with Johnne



POIGNANT PICTURE: All of the family hold hands

Debbie, a manager of a cafe in St Annes, was with Johnne at the time of his death. On the Saturday morning, he told her he was feeling exhausted so she gave him a painkiller and told him to try and get some rest.

Debbie remembers: "Johnne told me he couldn't sleep as all sorts of things were going on inside his head.

"I wish I'd asked him what sorts of things were going through his mind.

"I then told Johnne I was go-

ing shopping and would only be a couple of hours and would be back about 3pm.

"At 3.05pm, Johnne rang me and said he felt sick. I told him I was only five minutes away.

"When I got home, I went upstairs and found Johnne keeled over on the bed and his T-shirt was wet through.

"He said: 'Debs, I am gone' but I told him to keep breathing and I put him into the recovery position and waited for the ambulance to arrive.

"Johnne's breathing was go-

ing and as I was looking at him, the colour was draining out of his body and I knew things weren't looking good."

Johnne was taken to hospital where doctors told the family they suspected he had suffered a massive brain haemorrhage and sadly nothing more could be done for him.

Medics asked Debbie if the family had considered organ donation and told her Johnne was registered on the NHS Organ Donor Register.

Debbie says: "It was such a horrendous time and I was trying to absorb the information that my husband was dead.

"I felt like my heart had been ripped out and was in total shock and could not believe what had suddenly happened.

"It felt so surreal and sad.

"Until the subject of organ donation was broached, I had not really thought about it.

"Even though Johnne had talked about his fear of dying at the age of 54, we had not discussed organ donation.

"Being told that he was on the organ donor register made the decision easier. I felt we were fulfilling Johnne's wishes and we agreed to his organs being donated."

Debbie says even at the moment of intense grief, she recalls getting some solace from knowing her husband's organs would be making a massive difference to someone else's life.

Debbie says: "I remember thinking: 'While I am here now, somebody at this moment in time is receiving a telephone call telling them that doctors have an organ which will either save or dramatically improve their life.

"I realised that as hard as it was for us going through such pain and loss, that it was a good thing that something so positive and amazing could come out of a tragedy.

"You don't realise how many people are waiting for organ transplants and what a huge impact organ donation



HUGE SHOCK: Debbie with a picture of husband Johnne



LIFE-SAVING DECISION: Debbie with her children Jack and Lucy



WEDDING DAY: The happy couple



STEPPING OUT: The couple enjoy a night dancing



FAMILY MAN: With the children



CARING: Johnne with son Jack.



SADNESS: Johnne Johnson



HAPPY TIMES: The couple together

can make on their lives."

Before Johnne was taken to have his organs removed for donation, the photograph featuring his hand with the hands of his wife and children was taken and it is an emotional image which they treasure.

Debbie says: "We know that somebody received Johnne's pancreas and another person received a kidney and someone else received a heart valve.

"Losing Johnne was terrible and since his death, I wasn't sleeping properly and I kept having dreams about him.

"I wish Johnne was still here, but he is not and nothing can change that.

"But it does make me feel better knowing that other people have gained from our loss and that Johnne's organs went to helping other people.

"It is heartening to know that there are families out there who are not going through the pain that we went through because Johnne's organs are helping them keep their loved ones for longer.

"I feel like part of me died with Johnne and I haven't been the same since losing him.

"Johnne was just such a lovely guy and was a very funny man who was always cracking jokes and he was a real people's person.

"If someone asked him, he would have given them the shirt off his back as that was the type of kind person he was.

"I know organ donation is what he would have wanted and even though I would sooner have Johnne, I do feel some comfort from knowing he is helping other people even after death."

● To join the Organ Donor Register, visit: https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/register-to-donate/register-your-details/?utm_source=lanceveningpost&utm_medium=banner&utm_campaign=lancashire_evening_post

SPECIAL REPORT

Bereaved families are having the courage to

Our “Lancashire: Giving the gift of life” appeal launched last January has achieved success as latest figures reveal almost 29,000 people in the county have joined the organ donor register in the last year. Today, AASMA DAY and MICHELLE BLADE talk to the families of two people posthumously honoured for saving lives through organ donation.



Donors'

HUNDREDS of families attended regional ceremonies across the UK to see their loved ones posthumously honoured for saving lives through organ donation.

The deceased people received the Order of St John Award for Organ Donation run in conjunction with NHS Blood and Transplant which was given to their

Wife: ‘He has given hope and life to someone else. It kind of softens the blow’



Beryl Swales with her Order of St John



Tony and Beryl in happier times

THE grieving widow of a grandad-of-20 has proudly accepted an award on his behalf after he donated his organs to save lives.

Beryl Swales, 73, collected her late husband Tony's special award from St John Ambulance.

Tony, 68, donated his liver, eyes and skin tissue after he died from a brain haemorrhage.

Beryl, of Pinfold Lane, Lancaster, says: “There are so many people needing organs and it's turning a death into something positive.

“It's just knowing that all these people around the country have benefited from his death.

“He has given hope and life to someone else. It kind of softens the blow.”

Beryl said she and Tony had discussed organ donation and he told her it was something he

felt strongly about wanting to do.

Beryl explains: “He said ‘Your body is no good to you when you die - if you can help someone, why not?’

“So when he was in the hospital with no hope of recovering, his family knew that is what he wanted.”

Tragically, only months after Tony's death tragedy struck again for Beryl.

She says: “Tony died on December 30 and on May 20 my daughter Brenda died.

“She had an underactive thyroid and she had the signs but she wouldn't go to the doctors.

“She had a heart attack and passed away. She was 50, which is no age whatsoever.

“It has been a weird year for me, its hard to comprehend that they are not still here.

“For a long time I still expected Tony to walk through the door.”

An animal lover, Tony had two horses, Rosie and Maggie, and it was while he was out in a van with his friends to get hay for his animals, that he collapsed.

“It was a big shock,” Beryl says. “I got a call saying Tony was in hospital after collapsing.

“I ran to the hospital but he was unconscious. I never really spoke to him again.”

Last autumn Beryl recieved a letter from St John's Ambulance about Tony's Order of St John award.

“The ceremony was in November,” she remembered. “I went with Tony's sister, it was lovely.

“There were a lot of people

there who had loved ones that had given their organs.

“When people donate their organs they know they are helping somebody live - they are giving someone a big present but willingly. It is a nice thing to do.”

Beryl and Tony met in The Millstone pub in the 1980s and were married for 29 years.

The couple have 20 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

“It's lonely now,” Beryl said. “Tony did a lot for me. But although you know you have lost your loved one, its a wonderful feeling to know that they are going to help people with donations.

“It lifts your spirits. Someone is surviving and Tony lives on in other people, or at least a part of him does,” added Beryl.

Mum and dad: ‘We but we think organ

A COUPLE who lost their son in a road smash have revealed how they made the decision to donate his organs after death as they knew he had signed up to be an organ donor.

Nigel Hardman, 48, who grew up in Penwortham but was living in the New Hall Lane area, was killed in a horrific road collision in which a 51-year-old woman driving the other car also died.

His parents, Edwin and Dorothy Hardman, of Padway, Penwortham say that although they were devastated at losing their son, they wanted to donate his organs to save others and meet his wishes.

Mum Dorothy, 85, says: “We still don't really know exactly what happened but Nigel was on the Penwortham flyover on his way to see us when the crash happened on December 9, 2015.

“He was on a bend and for some reason, he went straight on and crashed into a lady's car and sadly she died as well.

“Nigel had not been well for a few days before his death and said he had an upset stomach.

“I had called him on the



Nigel Hardman

telephone that morning at about 8:30am and he told me he just needed to feed his cat and then he would come to our home.

“The accident happened just after 10am and we did not find out what had happened until after lunch.

“A policewoman appeared at our door and told

awarded honours for save lives of strangers

loved ones attend ceremonies to receive Order of St John

families and loved ones on their behalf.

The awards recognise the 1,364 people who donated their organs after death last year leading to thousands of lives being saved or transformed.

During 2015/16, thanks to the generosity of these donors and the support of their families, the number of deceased donors went up from 1,282 to 1,364 - a rise

of six per cent. However, there are still around 6,500 people on the UK transplant waiting list and around three people die every day in need of an organ.

NHS Blood and Transplant is calling for people to be inspired by the actions of these donors.

Barrie Davies, chairman of the local County Priory group of the Order of St John, says: "We're delighted to

be able to work with NHS Blood and Transplant to run the Organ Donor Awards for a fourth year and to meet the inspirational families attending the ceremony.

"Organ donation can clearly save lives and it is a genuine privilege to be able to say thank you to these families whose loved ones have already donated their organs to assist others," he added.

"In 2016, around three people died every day due to the shortage of organ donors.

"We hope the example set by the organ donors whose lives we honoured encourages many others to join the NHS Organ Donor Register."

Sally Johnson, director of organ donation and transplantation at NHS Blood and Transplant, says: "The

sense of pride families feel at these ceremonies is truly inspirational.

"Everyone I have spoken to is glad that their relative was able to be an organ donor.

"Families take great comfort from knowing that their loved one went on to save and improve the lives of desperately ill people.

"Transplant patients tell us that organ donors and their families are heroes.

"This award is a chance for us all to recognise their bravery and generosity.

"We hope these awards will inspire other people to tell their families they want to be an organ donor and then register their decision at www.organdonation.nhs.uk."

● To join the NHS Organ Donor Register, visit: www.organdonation.nhs.uk or call: 0300 123 2323.

are still devastated by his death donation is a wonderful thing'



Dorothy and Edwin Hardman receive the Order of St John after donating Nigel's organs

us there had been a terrible accident."

Dorothy said Nigel had suffered health problems and had been treated for a heart aneurysm a few years previously and had also suffered a mini stroke.

He was taken to hospital with a bleed on the brain and a fractured pelvis and was put

into an induced coma. He died a couple of days later.

Dorothy says: "Organ donation was discussed with us at the hospital.

"Nigel had signed up to be an organ donor and we knew he had a donor card."

Dorothy and Edwin have since been told Nigel's kidneys and liver were donated to

save the lives of three people.

Dorothy says: "It was upsetting we also felt proud that this is Nigel's legacy after death and are glad other people are alive due to his organs.

"We would rather have Nigel and are still devastated by his death but we think organ donation is a wonderful thing."

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Egg-tastic time in the park

See pages 16 and 33



Crash couple died days after engagement

See page 5



'HELP US HAVE A BABY'

BACK OUR CAMPAIGN: PAGES 8-9

By AASMA DAY

aasma.day@press.co.uk
@LEPONLINE

AN ANGUISHED couple today made an emotional plea: "Help us have a baby."

Claire and Neil Martin, who live in Leyland, near Preston, dreamed of having a child as the next stage of their life together.



CHILD
of our
DREAMS

However, when things didn't happen for them naturally, they sought medical advice and were devastated to be told that their only chance of having a baby together was through IVF using donor eggs.

Heartbreakingly, due to a dire shortage of egg donors at the clinic they are referred to, the couple have been told they

face a massive four year wait for an egg donor on the NHS waiting list. As people finish exchanging Easter eggs to symbolise new life, the Evening Post launches its series "Child of our dreams" to raise awareness of egg donation and encourage more people to think about helping childless couples.

Claire, 36, today said: "We are desperate to have a child together and know we need a miracle. There are hundreds of couples in the same boat as us and it is a heartbreaking feeling and you feel like you're in limbo. We would love it if someone came forward willing to donate eggs to us so we can have a baby."

Essential business guide ...



Starts page 21

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The hardest part is waiting stuck in limbo and we know

A shortage in egg donors means some couples struggling with fertility issues face agonising waits. Today, on the first day of our series 'Child of our dreams', AASMA DAY talks to Claire and Neil Martin who are desperate for an egg donor so they can have the hope of a child together.

“FIRST comes love, then comes marriage, then comes little baby in a baby carriage.”

It may just be a childhood playground song, but for many couples, this is the natural order they assume their lives will take when they find their perfect partner.

Claire and Neil Martin, of Crawford Avenue, Leyland, both knew they wanted children and thought that it would just happen when they felt the time was right.

The thought that it might be a struggle did not really occur to them as like many, they assumed it would be the most natural thing in the world.

The couple, who have been together for 10 years and married for six, both work for a travel company in Euxton, near Chorley where Claire, 36, works in customer services and Neil works on the transport side.

Claire explains: “Not being able to have children is not something you think about - until it affects you.

“Having children is something we both knew we wanted but first we wanted to get a house together and get settled.

“Once we got married, we thought having a baby was the natural next stage.”

After a year of trying for a baby, Claire and Neil began to suspect something wasn't right and went to the doctors.

After undergoing tests and investigations, specialists told the devastated couple there was a problem with Claire's eggs and their only chance of having a baby together was through IVF using donor eggs.

Claire explains: “Normally, a woman's body produces the better quality eggs and releases them every month.

“But my body was not doing that. It was just putting any eggs out and sometimes, they didn't think there were any

eggs coming out at all.

“Doctors told us that there was next to no chance of us conceiving naturally.

“When all you've ever wanted is to have children, to be given that news is heart-breaking.”

Claire says from as far back as she can remember, she always knew she wanted to be a mum some day.

And Neil, who is an only child, grew up surrounded by cousins so family was always important to him.

Neil, 37, says: “I am an only child but my mum had seven brothers and sisters and my father was one of four, so I have got lots of cousins.

“Family is very important to myself and Claire and we

both desperately want children if we can.

“When you hear tales of women who have become pregnant by accident or without really trying, it can be very difficult.

“It is hard when you want something so much

when for other people it is a natural thing that they have not really planned or thought about.”

Claire says: “My mum has a twin brother and an older set of twins and an older sister so is one of five children.

“From being young, I have been with all my cousins and we are a close family with lots of aunts, uncles and cousins.

“I always took the motherly role and did babysitting and always knew that's what I wanted for the future.

“I wanted to do what my mum has done for us and have that for my own children.”

Claire and Neil were referred to the Hewitt Fertility Centre at Liverpool Women's Hospital where they had tests and counselling.

DEMAND FOR EGG DONORS HAS BECOME A LOT HIGHER

Some of the reasons why women need an egg donor to have a baby include older women, younger women who have reached an early menopause, women who have had unsuccessful IVF treatment due to poor egg or ovarian response, women born without ovaries and those who have had their ovaries damaged through chemotherapy. Andrew Drakeley, consultant in fertility at The Hewitt Fertility Centre based at Liverpool Women's Hospital, says: “As a specialist centre, we attract all these patients and more so there is a real need for more egg donors. “Some couples manage to find their own donor and it is often someone they know like a sister, relative or work acquaintance.

“If this is the case, the waiting time is about three to four weeks to do all the testing, screening and counselling.

“The couple or individual looking for an egg donor can also advertise for an anonymous donor.

“We give them a laminated card with an advert on with a reference that links to them.

“They can place this in a local newspaper or use some other form of advertising.

“One woman famously put an advert



SPECIALISTS: Fertility sister Gill Hathaway and consultant Andrew Drakeley

appealing for an egg donor on the side of a London bus. That story made the national news and she found an egg donor.

“If a couple are able to make their own attempts to find a donor, the waiting time can be shorter.

“However, if they just wait on our NHS waiting list, the current waiting time is about three to four years.”

Gill Hathaway, fertility sister,

adds: “Our waiting list for women waiting for altruistic donors is currently treating women who have been on the waiting list since 2012.”

Andrew and Gill say the demand for donors has become a lot higher as more people have become aware the technique is available.

Gill says: “I think people probably accepted childlessness in days

gone by as there was no other option or went for the adoption route.

“But now, because of artificial reproductive techniques improving so much and donation becoming mainstream, the demand is greater.

“For couples needing egg donation, it is an emotional roller-coaster and a lot of them are desperate and it is their last call.”

Claire's sister, who has a daughter and a son, offered to be an egg donor for her sister and the IVF cycle took place in September last year. Unfortunately, it was unsuccessful.

Claire explains: “We went all the way through the IVF cycle and they collected eggs, fertilised them and then implanted them - but it just didn't work.

“It was a very difficult time as you go through all that convinced it will work and then you are left devastated.

“Doctors can't pinpoint exactly why the IVF didn't work but say the eggs just weren't as good quality as they needed.

“The hospital are now keen for us to have IVF using a donor from outside as they think it will stand a better chance of working.

“However, at the moment at the centre, there is a four

year wait for donor eggs on the NHS.”

The clinic recommend couples cut down their waiting time by advertising for an anonymous donor of their own if they feel this is the best route for them.

Neil says: “We have looked at private clinics and having the treatment privately and providing there is no physical barrier, if you can pay, you can have treatment using donor eggs.

“But the cost is thousands. You can't put a price on having a family and if there was a guarantee of success, we would find a way.

“However, there is no guarantee.”

Claire admits she sometimes feels responsible and although it is her “fault” although Neil constantly reassures her that they are both in it together.

Claire explains: “When

there is something wrong with your eggs, there is nothing doctors can do to fix that, so you feel like it is your fault the IVF is not working.

“I know there is nothing I could have changed, but it is still heartbreaking.

“When I see other people with babies and children, as much as I am over the moon for them and happy for them, there is also a part of me that wishes it was my baby.

“I have a niece and nephew and love being an aunty. But I still long to have my own children.

“Our family network have been very supportive through all this and their help has been invaluable.

“The hardest part is the waiting. We are just stuck in limbo waiting for donor eggs.

“We are desperate to have a child together and know we need a miracle.”

The couple get two rounds

of IVF on the NHS and as they have already had one, they know this is their last chance.

They are now appealing for women to consider becoming an egg donor to help them - or other couples facing the same plight.

Claire says: “From a selfish point of view, we want donor eggs so we can have a baby.

“But we know what other people are going through so if it does not work out for us and a donor can help others in the same position, that would be great too.”

Neil says: “We want to raise awareness of the need for couples like us who long to be parents but can't have children without an egg donor.

“We moved to the house we are living in last year and we bought it with starting a family in mind as it is in a nice area with great schools nearby.



for a donor we're we need a miracle



BABY BATTLE: Claire and Neil Martin

SUPPORT FROM NATIONAL GAMETE DONATION TRUST

The National Gamete Donation Trust is a registered charity covering the UK which supports people who are looking for egg and sperm donors and raise awareness of the need for gamete (egg and sperm) donation. Pip Morris, donor recruitment manager, says: "Four years does sound an unusually long time to wait for an egg donor. "There are some clinics in the UK

who have more egg donors than recipients. "If this couple are under the NHS, it is possible to get their NHS contract transferred to another clinic. "There will always be a need for donors because at the moment, the demand outstrips the supply. "But there are clinics who have running very successful recruitment programmes which are

bringing donors forward. "We are also hearing of a lot of repeat egg donors coming forward to help others. "This is a very positive thing and shows they had a good experience at the clinic. "There is more of a demand for egg and sperm donors as more people now know this treatment is available. "We need to increase awareness

about donation as a lot of people are not aware they can help people in this way. "Things are changing and there are egg and sperm donors available. "If people are having trouble with their local clinic, they can contact us for advice." ● Call the National Gamete Donation Trust on: 0845 226 9193 or visit: www.ngdt.co.uk

"Everything we have worked towards is having a family of our own.

"We are now down to our final shot and just hope we can find someone willing to help us achieve our dream of a baby."

● If you a woman aged between 21 and 35 and preferably have already had

children and would like to receive more information regarding egg donation, call the Ovum Donation Co-ordinator at Liverpool Women's Hospital on 0151 702 4212.

If you want to help Claire and Neil by being a potential egg donor, quote reference: 590R

● **TOMORROW:** WE TALK TO A LANCASHIRE MUM ABOUT WHY SHE WANTED TO DONATE HER EGGS TO HELP OTHERS AND FIND OUT WHAT THE PROCESS INVOLVES

New school nurse text service for youngsters

CHILDREN and young people can now conveniently and confidentially contact their school nurse electronically via Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust's School Nurse Messaging Service.

The new service caters for children and young people who increasingly use handheld mobile devices.

The new messaging service also gives them the opportunity to contact a nurse by SMS text message and can be used outside school hours.

Lorraine Chadwick, service integration manager at Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust, said: "There are some health issues that young people find embarrassing to talk to nurses face-to-face about.

"The School Nurse Messaging Service deals with this problem in a convenient, confidential and non-invasive way.

"It's a contemporary solution that is resulting in more and more young people contacting school nurses with their concerns."

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'To be able to give the gift

Donating eggs to someone who longs to become a parent could give them the fairytale issue of donation to help those battling infertility, AASMA DAY talks to a Preston mum

SARAH Fraser loves her five children and knows she is lucky as becoming a mum came so easily to her.

When she and husband Gareth decided their family was definitely complete after five children, Sarah admits her thoughts turned to those who weren't quite so fortunate.

Sarah, 33, who lives in Fulwood, Preston and has children Jordain, 16, Joshua, 11, Jaimie, 10, Nikita, eight and Nieve, six, explains: "I've been very lucky as I had five pregnancies and have five healthy children.

"Although I also love having my own space and going to

work and having my own life, I would not be without my kids and they mean the world to me.

"I started feeling guilty when I heard of a lot of people struggling to have children.

"I saw friends struggle and read things in the paper about people desperate to have children but couldn't have them.

"It made me feel guilty as children came so easily to me.

"When Gareth and I decided we didn't want any more children of our own, I felt selfish my eggs were going to waste every month."

Sarah, a funeral arranger at H W Whalley and Sons in Preston, was 16 when she had her first son Jordain.

Although he wasn't planned, Sarah says she couldn't be happier fate worked the way it did.

She explains: "I was 16 and nearly four months pregnant when I found



out I was expecting Jordain.

"I was very naive. I was a good girl and things like that didn't happen to me.

"My family were very supportive and have continued to be so.

"Jordain was certainly not a mistake but an early gift.

"He has turned into a well rounded lovely young man."

Sarah met Gareth when she was 18 and although Jordain is still involved with his natural dad, Gareth became a stepdad to him too.

The couple got engaged a few years later and set a date for the wedding.

However, Sarah then became unexpectedly pregnant and gave birth to son Joshua three months before their wedding at the age of 21.

Sarah and Gareth married at Our Lady and St Patrick's Church in Walton-le-Dale near Preston and when Sarah was 23, they had their son Jaime.

Sarah says: "When it came to having Jaime, there was an element of 'if it happens, it happens.'

"Jaime was my first premature child as he was born at 29 weeks

weighing 2lbs 10oz.

"He was born healthy and well and was just smaller."

Sarah admits after three boys, she fancied having a daughter, so when she became pregnant again, she kept her fingers crossed for a girl.

At the age of 25, she gave birth to Nikita born at 33 weeks weighing 4lbs 3oz.

After a while, Sarah experienced a wave of thinking it would be nice to have a little sister for Nikita and at the age of 26, she had Nieve born at 28 weeks weighing 2lb 15oz.

After being sure she didn't want any more

children of her own, Sarah began contemplating how she could help others less fortunate and started looking into egg donation.

Sarah recalls: "I can't pinpoint the exact moment I decided I wanted to donate eggs but it seemed a logical thing to investigate to help other people.

"We talked about it as a couple and Gareth was very supportive.

"I discovered I could either be an anonymous egg donor or be a known egg donor to a family.

"I felt for me personally, although I didn't want any involvement afterwards, I wanted to know who my eggs

were going to."

Sarah went on an online forum where women were appealing for egg donors.

She found a couple whose nearest fertility clinic was in Leicester and spoke to the clinic and the couple.

Sarah says: "I told them about myself and they wanted to know what I looked like and my genetic background.

"I had to carry out around 10 to 12 visits to Leicester and didn't meet the couple until the very end.

"The treatment for egg donation was basically IVF treatment until the egg collection stage and I had to inject myself with hormone



FAMILY: Sarah Fraser's five children. After having five healthy children of her own, Sarah decided to help others in need

HELPING HAND: Sarah Fraser, mum-of-five, has donated her eggs to help people who can't have children
Photo Neil Cross

of a child is so worthwhile'

ending they dream of. Today, as part of our series "Child of our dreams" looking at the about why she chose to donate her eggs.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EGG DONATION

EVERY day, women up and down the country learn the devastating news they have very little chance of having a baby without the help of donor eggs.

There are many reasons why someone might need an egg donor. The female may:

- Have suffered a premature menopause
- Have reduced ovarian reserve
- Never have been able to produce eggs
- Have lost the use of her ovaries due to disease, surgery or cancer treatment
- Carry inherited genetic diseases and want to use donated eggs so as not to pass the disease on to their children. Those who have received the heartbreaking news they won't be able to conceive with their own eggs and then bravely decide to take the next steps are often faced with yet another dilemma: there isn't an egg donor available for them due to a shortage of egg donors.

To meet current demands, more than 1,200 egg donors are needed every year from all nationalities, religions and cultures

CRITERIA:

To become an egg donor you must:

- Be aged between 18 and 35
- Be within a healthy weight range for your height with a BMI under 30
- Be willing to be screened for a range of medical conditions, including sexually transmitted infections.
- Be free from serious medical disability
- Be willing to have a healthy diet and lifestyle
- Know or be able to find out about your immediate family medical history
- Not have any hereditary disorders within your family

THE PROCEDURE

- Egg donation involves commitment. There are injections for 10 to 12 days, ultrasound scans and blood tests
- A simple procedure is used to collect the eggs - after a few hours rest you can leave
- Counselling is advised to discuss the implications of donating eggs or sperm
- Egg donors are matched to a recipient by height, weight, hair and eye colour and blood group

- Any child born from donated eggs or sperm may at age 18 may request and be given identifying information about their donor
- The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has agreed a set level of compensation for egg donors to cover all travel costs, loss of earnings and out of pocket expenses incurred - this is £750

EGG SHARING

If you need IVF treatment yourself for factors unrelated to female egg quality, there is a way to receive significantly discounted private fertility treatment: egg sharing. By agreeing to share your eggs with women who need them, not only do you receive cheaper fertility treatment yourself but you will also become an egg donor. By taking part in the egg sharing scheme, you must meet the key egg donor criteria and your legal parenthood status will be the same as other egg donors. Your IVF treatment cycle will go ahead as a typical IVF cycle except around half of your eggs will be kept for treatment for you and

the other half will be given to your matched recipient.

COMPENSATION

Egg donors can receive compensation of up to £750 for each egg donation treatment cycle. This payment is to reasonably cover any financial losses you might encounter in connection with your donation. You might also be able to claim an excess to cover higher expenses such as travel, accommodation and childcare. The amounts clinics give and at which stage during the donation process does vary so always check with your clinic before you start your egg donation cycle.

SUPPORT

The National Gamete Donation Trust is a registered charity covering the UK which supports people who are looking for egg and sperm donors and raise awareness of the need for gamete (egg and sperm) donation. Call them on: 0845 226 9193 or visit: www.ngdt.co.uk



led to donate her eggs to help

drugs.

"Although they managed to collect 12 eggs and the couple had two or three attempts at IVF, unfortunately none of them worked.

"However, a year later, they did get to the top of the NHS waiting list for donor eggs and had twins and named one of them after me even though it wasn't with my eggs that they were successful.

"I thought this was a lovely thing to do."

Sarah waited about a year and then felt the need to try to help someone else by donating her eggs.

This time the couple were closer to home as they lived in Manchester and the clinic had a

different policy and Sarah met them first.

She says: "The lady was a bit older at about 40 so her chances of success were lowered.

"She was a lovely woman and we collected around eight to 10 eggs but again, it didn't work.

"You feel really gutted for the couple when the treatment doesn't work as you know how much they are pinning their hopes on it.

"However, if this woman had waited on the NHS waiting list, she would have gone past the age to meet the criteria so at least she felt like she had tried."

Although Sarah's donated eggs didn't achieve a successful pregnancy, she is glad she did it.

However, she has decided her last attempt was her final one.

She explains: "It is quite an invasive treatment and takes a lot of time.

"I feel disappointed I wasn't able to donate eggs which resulted in a baby for someone.

"I really wanted to give that gift to someone, but at least I tried and gave them a chance they might not have had.

"People often take having children for granted and I felt lucky to have mine and egg donation seemed the right thing to do.

"A lot of people take it for granted they will meet someone,

fall in love, get married and have a baby.

"But unfortunately, it doesn't work out like that for everyone.

"I am probably in the minority, but to me personally, an egg is just a cell that I didn't need myself.

"If we can do things like organ donation, I felt why shouldn't I donate my eggs to help someone?

"Having children is what we were designed as human beings to do.

"For me, it just happened without planning or thinking about it. In that sense, I was very lucky.

"I cannot even imagine not having the things we take for granted.

"It must be the most crushing feeling in the world when you want a child so badly but can't have one.

"I certainly empathise with anyone who is in the position of needing an egg donor.

"With me, the couples paid my expenses which covered my petrol money to get to the clinic.

"It certainly wasn't for profit, but it covered my expenses.

"If anybody is considering donating their eggs, I would encourage them to look into it.

"To be able to give the gift of the chance of a child to someone is very worthwhile and certainly worth any travel or temporary discomfort."

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LEGAL PARENTHOOD

• All UK-based clinics licensed by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) must conform to strict medical, legal and ethical standards. By donating your sperm through one of these clinics, your legal parenthood is as follows:

- You will not be the legal parent of any child born as a result of your donation
- You will have no legal obligation to any child born from

your donation

- You will not be named on the child's birth certificate
- You will not have any rights over how the child will be brought up
- You will not be asked to support the child financially.
- There isn't a limit as such on the number of children that can be born from your donations. However, a maximum of 10 families can be created from your donations.

SUPPORT

THE National Gamete Donation Trust is a registered charity covering the UK which supports people who are looking for egg and sperm donors and raise awareness of the need for gamete (egg and sperm) donation.
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Giving couples of experiencing

Some couples discover they cannot have a child together as part of our series "Child of our dreams" AASMA DAY create 10 families by donating sperm.

DAVID feels a warm and contented glow whenever he considers he has helped create 10 families by donating sperm with a total of 13 children.

These are families who might never have experienced the joy of parenthood if it wasn't for people like David willing to donate sperm.

David, 31, from Lancashire, first decided to donate sperm about six years ago after hearing the plight of a couple he knew who were struggling to conceive.

David recalls: "In my head, I knew this couple were going to make great parents but they weren't going to be able to achieve that without assistance.

"I realised there were many other people in similar situations who would make terrific parents, but needed intervention to make it happen."

David read news reports about how there was a shortage of men willing to be sperm donors following a change in the law.



Since 2005, all egg, sperm and embryo donors in the UK must agree to be identifiable to any person conceived from their donation.

David wanted to help people become parents and after hearing about CARE Fertility in Manchester through a friend, made enquiries about becoming a donor and decided to go ahead.

Donations are made at least once a week until sufficient sperm has been collected and frozen.

David, who works in an office and is post graduate

educated, says: "The actual donations take a couple of months to give as they require a certain volume of the samples.

"You have to abstain from sexual activity for three days before each donation and it takes 10 to 12 separate donations before the clinic has the amount it needs.

"Because of the rulings around quarantine, they then quarantine the samples for six months as there are certain blood borne viruses which may take this long to show.

"I had to give personal information about myself such as hair colour, eye colour, height and ethnicity so they could match my sperm to people so the child would look like them.

"I also wrote a pen portrait, a letter to any children who may be conceived, so they could potentially request information about me once they reach 18."

After completing his sperm donation, David theoretically didn't need to donate again.

However, he was called



back a couple of years later as one of the families who successfully had a child using his donation wanted another

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the chance parenthood

without the use of donated sperm. Today, talks to a Lancashire man who has helped



donation can apply to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) for details of their donor once they reach 18.

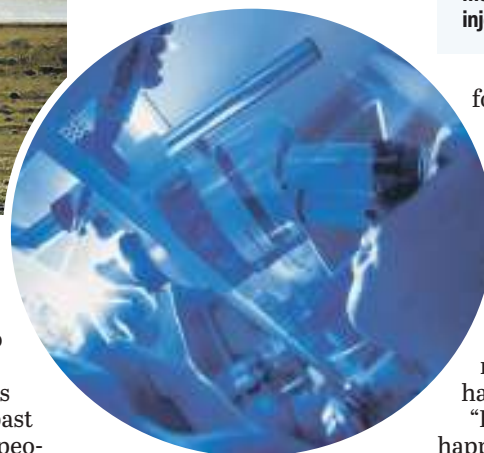
David says: "I think some people get concerned these children might turn up on their doorstep in 18 years time.

"But I think the likelihood of that is very slim.

"Their parents may never tell them they were conceived using donor sperm or donor eggs."

David confesses he does think about the children he helped create and feels happy knowing they are out there.

He is also hopeful that



baby and preferred using the same donor so the children would be biological siblings.

David was happy to do this and donated sperm again.

David says: "There are now 10 families that have been created through my donations with a total of 13 children including a set of twins.

"Ten is the maximum number of families that can be created by one person's donations as they want to limit the chance of half-brothers and half-sisters meeting each other and forming relationships or getting married."

However, David admits even if he was able to, his partner wouldn't want him to donate sperm again.

David explains: "At the time I made the donations, I was with a different partner who was absolutely fine with it all.

"But my new partner says she feels a bit strange about it and wouldn't want me to do it again.

"She is accepting it is something I did in my past and that I did it to help people.

"I think it is the potential that if we had children ourselves, she feels it would be something very personal between us and maybe she doesn't like the idea that I have helped create children elsewhere.

"But they are not my children.

"They were created with my sperm and have their own parents and families."

David says some people are put off donating sperm due to the changes in law surrounding anonymity.

Potentially, any children conceived from egg or sperm

one day he might get to meet some of them - although it is another 13 years before that can potentially happen.

David says: "It makes me happy to know these children are out there.

"Hopefully they are happy and making their parents happy.

"I am hoping at least some of the parents do tell their children about me.

"Some may choose not to tell their children they were conceived with donor sperm and that is fine and their choice.

"Personally, I am looking

GLENN ATKINSON - MEDICAL DIRECTOR AT CARE FERTILITY MANCHESTER

THE majority of sperm donors used to be younger men doing it for spare cash safe in the knowledge they would never know the consequences.

However, the change in anonymity laws since 2005, means all egg, sperm and embryo donors in the UK must agree to be identifiable to any person conceived from their donation.

This does depend if their parents chose to tell them they were conceived using a donor and if they decide they want to know about their biological donor.

Glenn Atkinson, medical director at CARE Fertility Services in Manchester, says there has been a change in the demographic of sperm donors.

He says: "A lot of sperm donors used to be students doing it for beer money who were happy they would never know the consequences.

"But the change in law impacted this and made some of them unwilling to be donors.

"We have seen a change in the demographic of sperm donors. "It is now mainly older men in relationships rather than young students."

Situations where sperm donors are needed include men who are infertile, single women and same sex female couples.

Mr Atkinson says: "Men with low sperm counts who may previously have needed donor sperm can now benefit from ICSI - a treatment where single sperm are injected into a single egg.



MEDICAL DIRECTOR:
Glenn Atkinson

"This means we can effectively treat them using their own sperm."

However, there is still a need for more sperm donors and although CARE has its own sperm bank, patients can also buy their own sperm from Denmark for use in their clinics.

Some people go it alone and buy sperm from over the Internet, but this is risky.

Mr Atkinson says: "Sperm donation is easier than egg donation as to donate eggs, women basically go through IVF treatment.

"With egg donation, you are also usually donating to one person.

"With sperm donation, there is opportunity for multiple donations.

"With one sperm sample, we usually get 10 straws of sperm so there is the potential to donate to 10 couples."

To meet current demands, around 1,000 sperm donors are needed in the UK every year from all nationalities, religions and cultures, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Mr Atkinson says the cost of fertility treatment using sperm donation at CARE as a private patient depends on how the sperm is used.

He explains: "If it is donor insemination, the cost is around £1,400. "IVF using donor sperm costs between £4,000 and £5,000.

"The cost of IVF treatment with egg donation is between £5,500 and £8,500 for a cycle of IVF."

Andrew Drakeley, consultant in fertility at The Hewitt Fertility Centre based at Liverpool Women's Hospital, says the law change has not been around long enough to know the numbers of children who will seek their biological donor.

He says: "The law changed in line with adoption laws to give people the right to know their biological parents.

"But that assumes the child knows they were conceived using a donor egg or donor sperm.

"That right is entirely up to the parents. It is not compulsory.

"It can be a difficult decision whether to tell the child or not and this is why there is counselling.

"In this country, the parent who gives birth is the legal mother and it is their name on the birth certificate.

"It is important the couple think of this child as their own and not somebody else's child.

"Similarly, the donor has to see it as helping someone less fortunate rather than giving something away.

"This minimises regret."

forward to meeting at least some of them.

"However, I went into the whole process knowing I might never meet any of these children.

"Even if I do meet them, it would not be as a parent. I didn't raise them and will have no claims on them. "I knew this and was happy with this from the start."

David says his experience of being a sperm donor with CARE Manchester has been very positive and he would encourage anyone else considering sperm donation to look into it.

He says: "If you can do something to help other people and it is not something difficult to do, then why not do it?"

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● TOMORROW: WE SPEAK TO THREE WOMEN AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE EGG DONATION JOURNEY

Three stages of egg donation,

On the final day of our series “Child of Our Dreams” looking at the issue of fertility and donation,

WAITING FOR A DONOR

“I can take over your life if you don’t take a step back.”

When Louise was just 14, she discovered she had Turner Syndrome, a genetic condition where women have underdeveloped ovaries resulting in a lack of monthly periods and infertility.

Louise, now 34, explains: “I was having a lot of kidney trouble as a younger and when doctors carried out blood tests, after realising I had not started periods, they began investigations.

“They told me I had Turner Syndrome caused by a missing chromosome and that this may mean fertility issues.

“However, when I was younger, I was a typical teenager not really thinking about having children.

“It was only as I got older and met my husband that it became an issue.”

Louise, a teaching assistant, does not produce eggs or



have periods. When she met her husband, she told him quite early on that it was a real possibility that she might not be able to have children naturally.

Louise recalls: “It was quite a difficult conversation to have, but I felt it was important to be honest and upfront.

“Luckily, he was very supportive and continues to be so.”



Louise had further tests and investigations which confirmed she would not be able to have children naturally and needed IVF with an egg donor.

Louise admits: “I had a rough 18 months where it affected me quite badly emotionally. I was bottling up my emotions and it resulted in my skin becoming really dry and even the skin on my eyes started peeling.

“It was because I was getting myself so stressed out about everything.

“Things became even harder as my sister had two children in the meantime and close friends had children.

“This brought it home that that was not going to be me.”

Louise and her husband were referred to the Hewitt Centre at Liverpool Women’s Hospital and began advertising for an egg donor

by putting up posters and adverts in newspapers.

However, despite having six initial responses to newspaper ads, no egg donor was forthcoming.

A friend initially offered to donate eggs but then had personal issues of her own to deal with and Louise says they became disheartened.

She says: “I spoke to a private clinic who had egg donors who said they were willing to take me on if we could get our NHS funding transferred to them.

“But we had to go through the Clinical Commissioning Group and it took until February this year to get an answer and it came back as a no. I realised we were going round in circles.”

Louise and her husband advertised for an egg donor again and now feel more positive as the Hewitt Centre have told them they will be in the next group of people to be matched with an egg donor.

Louise says: “Hopefully it will be imminent although we have not been given any timescales. The hardest part is the waiting and not knowing. It has been a long process and you feel like you are working so hard to get a donor.

“It can take over your life if you don’t take a step back and put a strain on you as a couple.”

THE EGG DONOR

“THERE are so many people who desperately want children but can’t physically have them.”

Stephanie is about to donate her eggs for the sixth time and she knows that her donations have resulted in at least two longed-for babies for people she doesn’t know, but is glad to have helped.

Stephanie, 28, who is in a same sex relationship, says her partner has also donated her eggs three times.

Stephanie explains: “Two of my friends donated their eggs

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giving, receiving and waiting

AASMA DAY talks to three Lancashire women at different stages of the egg donation journey.

so they could afford IVF as an egg share IVF treatment.

"I looked into it as I thought it would be great to help people in that way.

"There are women who don't have eggs of their own for all sorts of reasons including if they have had cancer treatment which has damaged their ovaries.

"Last year, I decided I wanted children of my own so donated eggs through an egg share and had IVF treatment myself using a sperm donor, but it did not work.

"However, I had some eggs frozen from the egg share so am hoping to try again soon.

"I think it is such a shame that so many people can't have children when they want them so much and I am happy to help them."

With the law stating that any children born as a result of donor eggs or donor sperm being able to ask for details of their biological parent once they turn 18, Stephanie knows

there is a possibility that any children born from her eggs may seek her out in the future and she is fine with this.

She says: "I am happy with the whole concept as I know my eggs are going to people who desperately want children when so many people take it for granted.

"I do not think of any children born from my eggs as my children as I have not cared for them or brought them up.

"I am happy to donate eggs again in the future but there is a limit of 10 families that can be created through donations.

"I have carried out my egg donations with CARE Fertility in Manchester and they have been great with me and I have not found the procedure invasive at all.

"The only pain is after the eggs have been collected and it is a bit like period pain for a few hours, but it's worth it."



THE MUM OF AN EGG DONOR BABY

"THE woman who donated eggs to give us our baby is such an amazing person."

As Kerry gazes down at her eight-month-old daughter Alice, she is filled with intense love and emotion.

It is the baby she feared she would never have after she discovered the only way she

could have a baby was with an egg donor.

Kerry, 43, says: "It wasn't that I put off having children but I only met my husband later in life.

"I went to see my GP when I was 37 or 38 after we had been trying for a baby for a year and they discovered I was perimenopausal.

"It was a huge shock and after more tests and investigations, they told me the only way I could have a baby was with IVF using a donor egg.

"I was devastated and then me and my husband found out the authority we were under was not funding IVF cycles."

When Kerry turned 40, she found out she was entitled to one cycle of IVF on the NHS and went to see her GP who referred her to Liverpool's Hewitt Centre.

The couple were told there was a three year waiting list for egg donors and that they needed to advertise.

Kerry recalls: "When we were referred, I was almost 41 and the cut off for IVF on the NHS was 42 so we knew we only had a year to find a donor.

"We advertised by putting up posters on noticeboards in supermarkets and universities and doctor's surgeries.

"I had siblings and relatives who were willing to donate but were too old.

"We did not hear anything until the August of the following year to say a donor had come forward.

"It was just in time as it was only a couple of months before my 42nd birthday.

"I had given up hope of a donor by this point and although I was thrilled, I was also very nervous as I knew this was my only shot."

The couple went ahead with IVF using donor eggs and it was successful.

Kerry says she knows how lucky they are and she can never express how grateful she

is to her donor.

She says: "Alice is wonderful and such a joy to us and we want to do everything to give her the best we can.

"I appreciate every moment with her and we have lots of cuddles.

"Being a parent is the best thing ever and I can never be thankful enough to the lady who donated her eggs and made it possible.

"She is just such a selfless and amazing person."

SUPPORT

THE National Gamete Donation Trust is a registered charity covering the UK which supports people who are looking for egg and sperm donors and raise awareness of the need for gamete (egg and sperm) donation. Call them on: 0845 226 9193 or visit: www.ngdt.co.uk

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