SUMMER
2026

DONOR FAMILY NETWORK

CONNEXIONS

Registered charity
1098781

The Precious Gift Event

Our annual event will be held on Sunday 20th September at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire, DE13 7AR, (soon to be known as the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens). All donor families and friends, recipients and families, and anyone who is interested in our work, is welcome to attend. There is no charge apart from car parking which can be pre-booked via their website (www.thenma.org.uk)

The Arboretum opens at 10am, allowing for plenty of time to wander around the 400 memorials, including our Gift of Life memorial.

Our event will start at 1pm in the Aspects Centre and end around 4pm. We will play music, listen to poems and hear the experiences of a donor family and a recipient. There is an opportunity for everyone to light a candle in memory of their loved one or donor. Following the event there will be tea and cake and time to meet other donor families and recipients. During the afternoon we show a rolling scroll of photographs to honour the donors. If you would like your loved one to be included, please send us a photograph with their full name. We also offer Certificates of Appreciation which include the donors name. If you would like to receive one, please let us know when you book.

For catering purposes we need to have an idea of numbers, so please let us know if you are joining us and the number in your party, by the end of August, by e-mail or telephone. This is an emotional event where we remember and honour those who have given the gift of life to others.

The
Gift of Life
Memorial

Kind donations have recently been received from:

Masons Lodge of Perseverance in Cleveleys

Masons Anchorsholme Lodge in Darwen

Jim Fallow

Young Families Mothers Union

Donation in memory of Luca Giovannini

Liz Foster in memory of Mike Meaney

Brigette Lilley-Fortin in memory of her daughter Claire

Donations in memory of Martin David Parry

Donations in memory of John Davies

Donations in memory of Jane Ann McLaughlin

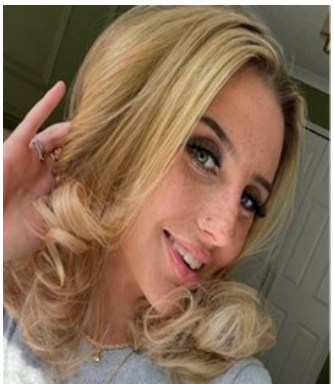
Donations in memory of Phillip Gamble

Donations in memory of Maurizio Biondo

Rebecca Watts in gratitude to her donor on the 11th anniversary of her liver transplant

MEGAN MOORE ran her first ever half marathon in Edinburgh on 24th May to raise money for the DFN. She says, 'the charity is very close to my heart. My aunty Lynne passed away in 2015 and donated her organs. The DFN has been an amazing help to her daughters Erin and Mia who lost their mum at far too young an age.'

IAN CARMICHAEL's daughter Gemma set up a page in memory of Ian and says, 'in March we sadly lost my daddy who was always passionate about being an organ donor and thankfully his last wishes were fulfilled and he was able to donate his organs to those in need. Through the whole process myself and my mum were very grateful for the kindness and professionalism shown by all the nurses and the team linked to the Donor Family Network. The support, mementos and thoughtfulness given to us, helped us through this hard time, holding onto daddy's legacy and is something we will cherish forever.'



CHLOE GALLIERS' family have kindly set up a Just Giving page and say, 'our beautiful young daughter, Chloe, passed away suddenly but peacefully in February. Chloe was registered as an organ donor and went on to save the lives of 7 people. We have witnessed first hand the importance of the Donor Family Network and the support they provide to the families who are dealing with unimaginable grief as well as those on the other side of the coin, those receiving the gift of life.'

Thankyou to our regular donors:

Patrick Gallagher	A Heron
Pauline McDonnell	Tracey Lyon
Darren Cox	J Fletcher
Keith Astbury	S Hall
Esther Watt Jones	Dale Gardiner
Roger Quick	Paul White

We are very sad to tell you that **John Davies,** husband to our **Patron Loraine Morgan-Davies** passed away at home on 16th March.

John and Loraine were together for 31 years, married in 2021 and have so many special memories of the time they spent together.

Loraine first met the Donor Family Network at the 2006 British Transplant Games in Bath. She was Chair of Bath & North East Somerset Council and came to the games in that capacity but also hosted a Civic Reception. Loraine was so interested in the work of the Donor Family Network that in 2007 she became a Patron of the charity. Since then she has offered incredible support to Trustees and members. If you have been to the Transplant Games with us you will no doubt have met Loraine, regularly to be found behind our sales stall, talking to recipients. Loraine presents the Certificates of Appreciation at our annual event at the National Memorial Arboretum, offering everyone the biggest hugs. When Loraine became involved with the DFN, she had no one close to her who had been a donor or recipient, but she loved the work that the DFN did and wanted to help. In 2011 John was diagnosed with a rare eye condition and in March 2014 he had a corneal transplant on his left eye which gave him his sight back within five days. In Sept 2014 he had the operation on his right eye which was also successful. Loraine and John were so terribly grateful to his donors and their families for giving him the chance to preserve his sight and for the support he received.

Loraine has sent her thanks to everyone at the DFN who has sent supportive messages and says, 'John would be so overwhelmed with the love that has been shown towards him.'

Our deepest sympathies and thoughts are with Loraine at this time.

(This is one of Loraine's favourite photos taken when she and John attended the opening of the Gift of Life memorial).

Sue and Stuart Finnes share their story

'Our son, Christopher, died in February 2023 after being hospitalised for four days . These were the longest and hardest four days of our lives. He sustained a catastrophic and inoperable brain injury when he fell down the stairs at our home whilst having a seizure and was put into an induced coma from which he did not regain consciousness.

We did not really have to make a decision about organ donation as it was just something that everyone in our family believed in. Stuart's uncle had received a heart transplant over 30 years ago – he was the 13th person in the UK – and this had enabled him to see his children and grandchildren grow up.

When we were approached at the hospital, and it was apparent that no more could be done for Chris, organ donation wasn't really a 'decision' for us. We knew that Chris would want to help others in any way he could.

His organs and eye/bone tissues were donated – four people received an organ transplant – his kidney and pancreas, his other kidney, his liver and his heart. His lungs were placed into a research programme. We received a lovely letter from the lady who received his kidney and pancreas telling us how life-changing this was for her. It would be lovely to hear from the other recipients, but we also understand how emotionally difficult this must be – maybe we will write again to see if anyone wishes to contact us.

Last September we were on holiday in Australia. We were feeling upset that we were unable to attend the 2025 annual donor family memorial service but then a wonderful thing happened! We were staying in Port Douglas and had booked a trip to see the rainforest. On the trip we met a group of four friends who had travelled together from Melbourne. In conversation we found out that Peter had a life-saving heart transplant 18 months ago. In Australia they do not have a charity which connects donor families with recipients and Peter told me how he would like to thank his donor family. He also told us about how he had to 'attend' his daughter's wedding in April 2024 via a live stream from his hospital bed following his transplant, but was then able to walk his other daughter up the aisle for her wedding in December 2024.

We told Peter about our experience, and he was delighted to be able to thank us, Chris and all the other donor families for the wonderful gift of organ donation. I asked Peter if he would be willing to share his story. He was delighted to do so.'

We have since received an update from Sue who adds, 'we enjoyed spending time with Peter and his wife Rhonda and saw them again in March 2026 when they visited the UK. Peter told me that after I had spoken to him he had researched and found out that there was a means of writing to his donor family in Australia. He was very pleased to be able to do this and hopes to get a reply. We will definitely be keeping in touch with Peter and Rhonda and see them again as our daughter, Catherine, now lives in Melbourne.'

Losing Chris sits very heavily in our hearts but as a couple we are learning to move forward – each day supporting each other and learning to find joy in each moment and each day. It is a great comfort to us to know that Chris made such a positive impact on so many people worldwide and that at the end of his life he was also able to help save/improve lives through organ donation. We were proud to accept the Order of St John Award in 2025.'

A little more about Chris…

'He was just 24 years old when he died and had achieved more in his short life than many thought possible as he was disabled. It does not feel right to write about him without including this information. He had autism, was non-speaking and had epilepsy which began during puberty and was not able to be controlled with medications. He lived each day facing many challenges – his autism severely affected his ability to do most things independently and he needed 1:1 support at all times. We worked tirelessly to help Chris lead a happy and meaningful life. At the age of 12, using a teaching method called RPM (Rapid Prompting Method), he was taught to point on an alphabet board to spell out his thoughts and opinions. His voice was unlocked and the quality of his life and our lives improved dramatically.

Chris repeatedly spelt that he wanted to help others – particularly other non-speakers in the autism community. He wanted to change societies beliefs about autism and intelligence. As an adult he still loved nursery rhymes and Teletubby videos but using the letterboard he demonstrated that he was highly intelligent and wrote many beautiful poems. He spelt on his letterboard 'Silent I may be, but stupid I am not. Please see autistic people for who they are – not for what they seem.'

In order to fulfil Chris's wish to help others, with his permission Sue began to share videos online and in 2013 she set up an international Facebook learning group to help other families and continued to share video-messages from Chris. This group now has over 8000 members and a UK not–for–profit company (Unlocking Voices) has also been set up to help.

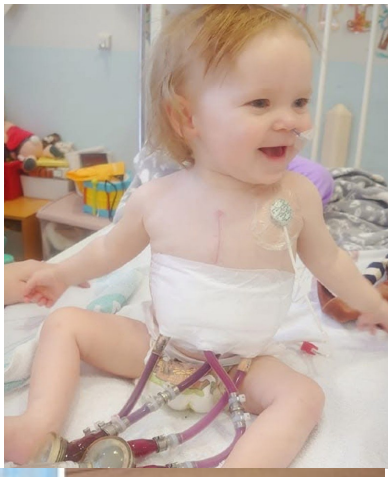
Peter's story

'My heart journey began in 2001 when I was diagnosed with ventricular tachycardia. I had a defibrillator fitted that shocks the heart back into normal rhythm. I had to have a new one fitted every 6 years. Over time a lot of normal things became impossible for me to do. I had to finish working in October 2022 but for the few years leading up to that a lot of normal everyday things had become difficult. I went on holiday to Port Douglas in October 2022, my defibrillator shocked me in the morning of departure but I thought nothing of it. It continued to shock me 35 times in 3 days. I returned to Melbourne and I had a new defibrillator fitted. I was sent to the Alfred Hospital where I was told my heart was dying and I would need a heart transplant. I could not go onto the list until I lost weight. In the interim they fitted a left ventricular assist devise (VAD) , which is a pump on the heart. I was going along quite well, losing weight and exercising but got covid just before Christmas 2023. I got an infection on the VAD and had to go back to hospital again to clear up the infection. While I was in hospital (in February 2024) I was told the infection had made my heart worse and I needed a transplant ASAP. On the 12th February I was told I would be having my transplant the next day. I received the greatest gift I could be given. I had a 47 day stay in ICU then another 24 days on the ward. I went home from hospital with my new heart. Now it is up to me to do the right thing by my donor and take care of it.

We revisited Port Douglas in September 2025 and got to do the things we missed out on in 2022. While we were up there we had the pleasure of meeting Stuart and Sue Finnes. They are a very generous donor family. I now have a very healthy and enjoyable life and will be forever grateful.

To my donor and other donor families no words can express the gratitude recipients feel for the gift we are given.'

Beatrix



'Beatrix's Heart Journey' follows the inspiring story of Beatrix Adamson-Archbold, a young girl from County Durham, who survived heart failure, spent months in hospital on a mechanical heart and successfully received a heart transplant in 2023.

With her parents, Cheryl and Terry, Beatrix is campaigning to save lives via education. The campaign raises awareness for children's organ donation and highlights the joy and anxiety of her recovery journey, emphasising that her life was saved by a donor family and blood transfusions.

Beatrix was born a healthy baby in 2021 but at 15 months old, following a terrifying cardiac arrest, she was diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy and was admitted to Freeman Hospital. She spent 14 months with a Berlin Heart whilst waiting for a suitable donor. Beatrix's parents knew only too well the terrible emotions faced by any prospective donor family, having consented to organ donation when they lost their baby daughter Isobel.

After 11 months on the urgent transplant list, Beatrix received a transplant in July 2023 at the age of two. Post transplant Beatrix is thriving, started school in September 2025 and acts as a champion for organ donation awareness. Beatrix and her family are aware that in the UK consent rates are falling and the number of people needing a transplant increases month by month, the wait proving too long for many. The solution, proven by the countries that have the highest rates of consent, is education. Beatrix and Charlie (a kidney recipient aged 16) are working with Members of Parliament to seek compulsory organ donation education lessons across all primary and secondary schools in the UK, through an initiative called Learning That Lives On.

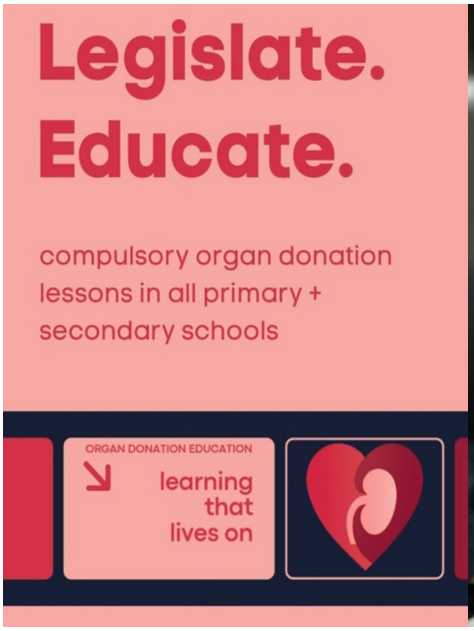
Beatrix's mum says, 'words cannot convey our gratitude. We wrote to Beatrix's donor family. It was the most difficult letter we have ever written. We wanted to convey our everlasting appreciation and wanted the family to take comfort knowing they had saved her. I hope the life she is leading is what they hoped for'.

Cheryl shared her hopes, yet fear, about receiving 'The Call' prior to Beatrix's transplant. She also worked with a photographer to produce a set of photographs named 'The Call', to highlight the need for open conversations around childhood organ donation.

She has also undertaken an Arctic Multi Activity Challenge raising funds to ensure that other families can be supported through child illness and the difficulties this brings.

(Beatrix's journey can be followed on face book)

Charlie's family say, 'our donor family gave us a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow and allowed us to heal; every crack in our timeline which now shines in gold is thanks to them. Charlie's transplant has allowed us the gift of watching him with great pride, as he grows into the remarkable young man he was destined to be. His kindness, true heart, sense of humour and his wonderful smile continue to light up our life. Without Charlie's donor and their family agreeing to organ donation, there wouldn't be a story to share; they truly are our heroes. We are forever grateful and they are always in our thoughts.'



Eashan Madan

After losing their beloved son Eashan Madan, 27, his family found comfort, when, in a final act of kindness, he saved three lives - and now they hope his story will inspire more families to say yes to organ donation. Eashan, who had Down's syndrome, died last summer following complications during surgery for a rare heart condition. His family say that the fact that he went on to save lives through organ donation felt heartbreakingly fitting. Eashan had made the decision to join the NHS Organ Donor Register in 2018. Following his death, he donated both kidneys and his liver, giving three people on the waiting list a second chance at life. His pancreas was also donated for research, a further gift that could help many more people in years to come.

To those who knew him best it captured everything about the young man they adored. 'Knowing Eashan and his personality, he would do anything to help others,' said his mother, Suvira. 'Even in death he found a way to give.' Eashan's family now hope his story will help challenge the misconceptions around disability and organ donation as some people still wrongly believe that having Down's syndrome may limit their ability to become organ donors.

His family add, 'Eashan lived fully. He achieved his Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award and a National Citizen Award and gained qualifications in Maths, English and Catering. He worked at Sheffield Railway Station, a cafe in Chatsworth House and during the Covid pandemic he volunteered at a local food bank. He was also a talented musician, artist and DJ.'

Eashan's younger brother Rashin says, 'even though that day was the hardest, everyday is easier knowing he helped others. Eashan's life was guided by honesty, kindness and compassion. Those close to him remember his cheeky smile, his warmth and the way he made people feel instantly seen.'

Renate Zeigermann received a liver transplant in 2023 and tells us about three special people involved in her journey:

'Firstly, Dr Bill Griffith (Consultant Hepatologist at Cambridge Hospital) who held my hand when we realised that there was nothing to do anymore other than a liver transplant and he was there again holding my hand when he told me that I had made it, after the operation. He was the only person I believed when he said it and finally, I started the long way to recovery.

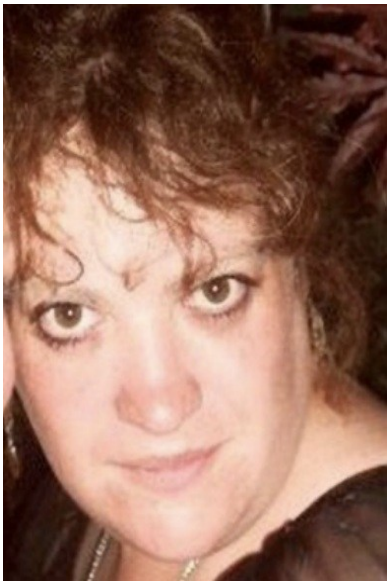
Secondly, Dr Gelson, (Consultant Hepatologist at Cambridge Hospital), who is friendly but strict, warm and always brings me back to reality.

Thirdly, Professor Paul Gibbs, (Liver Transplant Surgeon at Cambridge Hospital). He guided me through a dark time with strength, knowledge and humour.

And there are all the others—the doctors, nurses, transplant co-ordinators, the patients, the donor families and every-one else in the transplant world who made all this possible.'

Meeting Renate: At the British Transplant Games in 2024, DFN Trustee Sue met Renate, who now volunteers for a liver support group and was preparing some short video interviews to share on her blog. Renate approached the DFN stand and spoke to Sue and asked about her experience as a donor mum, especially with regard to liver donation. Sue and Nigel had previously met Andrew, the recipient of their son Martin's liver, and Sue was able to explain to Renate that Andrew had suffered for all of his life with a genetic condition which made him highly sensitive to light and that in 2003 he needed an urgent liver transplant. Due to his condition Andrew had his transplant with all natural light blocked out, UV filters on the theatre lights and screens on all the windows. Renate gasped. 'He carried out my transplant!', she said. 'Professor Gibbs! Whenever he gives a talk he recalls that story.' Professor Gibbs added , 'I don't remember many of the transplants I've done, but I do remember this one. It was done in semi-darkness.'

Claire Wilkin Teresa and Alan Wilkin from Aberystwyth lost their daughter Claire, aged 34, in 2010. They have agreed to share their story. Teresa says, 'thanks to Claire having signed up as an organ donor she went on to save five lives by donating her heart, kidneys, pancreas and lungs. One of the recipients was Simon (47) who, after suffering kidney failure for a number of years, received one of Claire's kidneys.' Simon had been on 24hr dialysis for six years before he had the call that a match had been found.



Teresa and Alan met Simon for the first time in August 2025. Teresa says, 'it was a full circle moment, 15 years since Claire's death. It was wonderful!' Teresa and Alan have become staunch campaigners for organ donation, sharing their story, and setting up an Organ Donation Memorial Garden in Penparcau in 2014. Claire's parents were unaware that she had joined the Organ Donor Register just months before her death but it was a relief when they found out as they were assured of her wishes. Teresa confirms, 'she made the decision for us.'

The DFN are proud to become the away shirt sponsor for the **England Transplant Sport Football Team**. The shirt was debuted at the Four Nations Tournament held in Scotland from May 28th to 31st.

Manager of the England team Daley said, 'it is a real privilege to be able to have the DFN logo on our shirts. None of the team would be here without donors and it just felt right to honour them like this, so partnering with the DFN seemed perfect. The DFN provide pivotal support for every donor family and we both share the same goal of raising awareness of organ donation. A huge thank you to them for making this possible.'

New Life Garden, Derry

A DFN member recently sent us this photo of a memorial they found whilst visiting Northern Ireland. The inscription on the stone says: 'This Garden of Life celebrates the gift of new life through organ donation and gives thanks to all organ donors, both living and deceased, for their tremendous generosity and empathy in providing new life through their selfless sacrifice'.

The National Organ Donation Commemorative Garden is located adjacent to the promenade in Salthill overlooking Galway Bay, Ireland. The title of the garden, 'Circle of Life', takes its name from the centrepiece which consists of five 2 metre tall standing stones positioned in a circle and each with an inscription symbolising the different stages of the journey through life.

Artist **Kate Munro's 'Thank You'** installation at Addenbrooke's Hospital is a tribute to organ donors and their families and captures the essence of gratitude, hope, and human kindness. Kate's artwork serves as a permanent 'Thank You' to donors and their families, acknowledging the profound impact of their decision. Each element of the artwork was carefully chosen to resonate with the experiences of those touched by organ donation. Kate engaged in deep, meaningful conversations with organ donation specialists, donor family members, and organ recipients during the project. These discussions revealed key themes that became central to the artwork: hope, giving, life, remembrance, and journey. Kate shares, 'It felt so important to represent and do justice to the feelings of the people I spoke to. We wanted to use flowers as they are given in times of joy, grief, love and life.'

The installation's floral elements, arranged in the colours of the rainbow, convey a symbolic message, Kate explains, 'The rainbow is a strong image, a symbol of hope after darkness, and it takes a unique set of circumstances for a rainbow to happen. This is also the case with organ donation. Staff members report using the installation as a focal point when discussing organ donation with families during difficult times. The piece provides a gentle visual way to approach a sensitive topic, offering comfort and perspective to those facing challenging decisions.'

'*Thank You*' honours those who have given the ultimate gift, offers hope to those awaiting transplants, and serves as a gentle reminder of the life-changing impact of organ donation.

(If you spot a memorial to organ donors around the country, please send us a photograph so that we can share it.)

The Pride of Yorkshire Sculpture Trail will feature 150 life-sized lion and lioness sculptures, to be displayed across South Yorkshire, and aims to raise money for the Sheffield Children's Hospital Emergency Department. This is a free trail and will run from 8th June to 30th September 2026.

Liver transplant recipient Pete Mckee has created a sculpture called 'The Transplant Game', inspired by his own life-saving transplant in 2017, based on the retro board game 'Operation'. This serves as a playful but thought-provoking way to spar conversations about organ donation.

Renowned artist Pete feels that this is his most personal piece yet. He says, 'its about the reality of organ donation, but told in a way people can connect with. If it gets people talking about it, even just with their families, then its done what it is meant to do.'

Steve Purdman, Chairman of Westfield Health (major sponsors of the British Transplant Games) said, 'we are proud to be working with Pete McKee. His design does exactly what we hoped. It starts a conversation. By encouraging people to talk about organ donation with their families, we can turn that into real action. The sculpture has been created to mark the British Transplant Games coming to Sheffield this August.'

Report

'A bolder, braver approach to organ donation' is a recent report published in 2026 which states that, due to the decline in transplant numbers and consent rates falling under 60%, a bolder approach is needed to increase consent rates, expand the donor pool and ensure more organs are successfully used for transplants.

Some of the aims / actions coming out of this report:

- The importance of clear, open conversations with families
- Consent discussion tailored to the needs of individual families
- A clear conversation with sensitive communication
- Support for families for the use of turned down organs for research

Research

Research with regard to organ donation and transplantation is a meaningful way to honour loved ones when transplantation is not possible.

The UK aims to build a pioneering culture of research and innovation in donation and transplantation. Research and technical innovations as to the assessment of donor organ quality, donor management and the regeneration of marginal organs all have the potential to maximise the utilisation of donor organs.

Other innovative steps now allow for donor organs not suitable for immediate transplant to be used to help potential recipients whilst waiting for a suitable organ to become available.

Perfusion:
Royal Papworth and Addenbrooke's Hospitals in Cambridge have carried out extensive research on the effects of perfusion technology. The passing of a special fluid through donor organs can improve the function of the organs pre transplant. This can allow for more time before the transplant takes place, thereby allowing for a suitable recipient to be found and to travel to the necessary transplant centre. It can also allow for more marginal organs, which would have been refused in the past, to be used for transplant.

A further study is testing a new way of providing temporary liver support where the patient is connected through a line in the neck to a machine that is supporting a donor liver that cannot be used for transplantation. The patient's blood passes through the donor liver and then back to them. The donor liver helps to carry out the important liver functions, giving the patients own liver a chance to rest and recover.

Workshops have shown clear support for the use of turned-down organs for research. The findings indicate a need to improve the consent process and follow up information process.

Researcher **Jeremy Forbes** from Plymouth is currently involved with research and aims to:

- consider the donor family and keep them informed using family-led research
- collect better data on the donation pathway
- focus on consistent clinical care offered across all hospitals
- build a secure database of information
- consider research priorities

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Kay Sybenga is the service lead for the NHS Donor Family Care Service.
They provide care, compassion and support to donor families.
Kay says, ' this includes being the point of contact for any enquiries you have, providing information about your loved one's donation and helping you to contact recipients if you wish to do so. We can provide you with resources specific to your needs. Our donor family website provides information that will help and support you.' See the DFCS website for more information or e mail: donorfamilycare@nhsbt.nhs.uk.

Inspiring the next generation to save lives:

We Are Donors is a UK registered charity aiming to increase the number of organ and blood donors across the UK through student-led education at schools and universities. They do this by recruiting and training university students to give talks and run workshops at schools in their local region. So far they have spoken to over 9000 students! Their emphasis is on education, to allow everyone to make an informed decision, and to minimise barriers to registration, particularly among disadvantaged groups. They are young and diverse and use this to communicate authentically to young people, aiming for the impact of their presentations to empower them to speak to their families and register as blood and organ donors.