

# Organ Donation Campaign

✘ The latest organ donation campaign got underway today with the message: Everyone has the potential to save a life.

Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon launched the campaign during a visit to The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. She met people whose lives have been transformed by transplants, as well as someone who is waiting for a lifesaving organ. And she also heard about the difference an organ transplant can make to people's lives.

The £500,000 marketing campaign, which aims to encourage people to sign up to the organ donor register, launches today and includes TV, radio and online advertising.

Ms Sturgeon said:-“Nobody likes to think about dying or losing a loved one but organ donation can make something positive come out of a tragedy.

“In Scotland there are more than 600 people waiting for the organ that will give them the second chance at life. Every one of them is somebody's son, daughter, friend, workmate or neighbour. But, sadly, for some of those waiting an organ will not be found in time and the loss of that person will have an impact on many people.

“That's why we need to drive up the number of people on the organ donor register. Joining the NHS Organ Donor Register can be the easiest thing you do to help save someone's life.”

Among those supporting the campaign are the Boon family from Edinburgh. Eighteen-year-old Rachael was born with Alagille Syndrome, which affects the bile ducts in her liver, and has just had her second liver transplant.

Her mother Bev said:-“Rachael asked if a transplant would be suitable for her to help give her a better quality of life.

After the transplant she got her life back. She was able to live life like a normal, healthy teenager.”

Earlier this year, Rachael became ill again and needed a second transplant which she received at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh on September 5.

Mrs Boon said:-“It was devastating to see your child deteriorate day-by-day. She became more and more ill, more and more exhausted and there is nothing you can do about it.

“When we knew there was a match we were filled with such relief and fear. We were also overwhelmed with gratitude for the person who agreed to organ donation and offered our child the gift of life. You can’t put into words what it feels like and what our feelings are for them. It is such a wonderful thing to do for others.

“It touches everyone around you. Many of our friends and family have joined the NHS Organ Donor Register as they know what good it can bring.

“I would urge people to consider and think about what they would want if it was their loved one in the same situation. When you see how much it can change someone’s life – and actually save them – you realise how much good comes from it and it is hard to justify why you wouldn’t join the register.”

GP Susan Filsell, from Fife, who has the auto immune disease Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis, has been on the transplant waiting list since July 9 and is also backing the campaign. She said:-“I am unable to work just now so spend a lot of time hoping ‘the call’ will come soon. I have had to postpone my wedding as well which I was very upset about but we will celebrate our love another day. When I get my transplant, we will have something extra to celebrate as well.

“I am on the NHS Organ Donor Register and passionately believe all Scots should be. We all have it in us to save a life after

our death so please become an organ donor today.”

John Forsythe, Scotland’s Lead Clinician for Organ Donation and Transplantation, said:-“Due to the generosity of the Scottish people, organ donor numbers are increasing and allowing more life-saving transplants. But there is much still to do as people wait on lists for their chance to get a transplant. I think this advert is excellent and I hope it makes people think about whether they want to put their names on the Organ Donor Register.”

Every day three people in the UK die waiting on an organ transplant. More than 600 people in Scotland are currently waiting for an organ transplant.

Recent research by NHS Blood and Transplant found 96 per cent of people say they would accept an organ but only 36 per cent of Scots have actually joined the register.

To join the NHS Organ Donor Register visit [www.organdonationscotland.org](http://www.organdonationscotland.org) or text “Life” to 61611.