

Hibs back organ donation campaign



Hibs are backing a national campaign which urges Scots to discuss their organ donation wishes with loved ones.

Seven players donned number 7 shirts in a bid to raise awareness of how the seven words, 'I'd like to be an organ donor' can save up to seven lives, and Organ Donation Scotland street teams will be at Sunday's Edinburgh derby chatting to fans as they head to Easter Road.

Research has shown almost half of people in Scotland (45 per cent) haven't discussed their organ donation wishes with their family and other football clubs including St Johnstone, Hamilton Accies and Rangers have got behind the number 7 drive in a bid to get more people talking.

Although many think that joining the NHS Organ Donor Register is enough, sharing organ donation wishes remains fundamental to relatives honouring a loved one's choice in the event of their death.

It's a subject close to the heart of Hibs fan Claudia Bell, 51, from Edinburgh, whose life has recently been transformed by organ donation. Claudia received a kidney transplant this January after living with polycystic kidney disease (PKD) for almost thirty years.

Due to her deteriorating kidney function, Claudia began dialysis in 2010 and underwent surgery to have a kidney removed in 2011 – meaning she was able to go on the transplant list later that year.

Claudia's kidney transplant was made possible thanks to an

altruistic donor coming forward, and the Hibs fanatic is now making a steady recovery.

Claudia said: "I can't believe that a total stranger would show such generosity and offer the most amazing gift to me. The difference in how I feel after my transplant to how I felt before is remarkable. I have so much more energy and I don't have to dialyse anymore which gives me so much more freedom.

"It's the best gift I've ever received. People need to be aware of the huge difference organ donation can make to someone's life. If your family know what your organ donation wishes are, then should they ever have to make that decision, they can maybe make a positive impact on someone else's life. This is why it's so important to discuss your wishes."

Speaking about her love of Hibernian FC, Claudia said: "I'm a massive Hibs fan. When I was on dialysis, I actually changed the days I was in hospital so I'd still be able to watch their matches.

"I think getting football clubs on board with this campaign is a brilliant idea. It's going to reach a whole new audience of people and a real cross-section of society who might not really have thought about organ donation before or have discussed it with their family.

"Going to the football is something people often do with their families, so it's the perfect opportunity for them to have the discussion."

An Hibernian FC spokesperson, said: "Claudia's story is inspirational and underlines how important joining the NHS Organ Donor Register really is. That's why Hibernian are happy to fully back the campaign, and we hope the involvement of our seven players will urge fans to say those important seven words."

To find out more about organ donation and to join the NHS

Organ Donor Register, visit www.organdonationscotland.org

Picture by Gareth Easton. L-R: Martin Boyle, Keith Watson, Paul Hanlon, Mark Oxley, Farid El Alagui, Scott Robertson, Lewis Stevenson