

Joy as marrow match is found for Matt

Last Updated: 04 April 2008 10:30 AM

A teenager with a bone marrow disease has been handed a lifeline by a mystery donor who is a match for the transplant he needs.

Matthew Hunt, 15, of Brookfield, Preston, has a rare condition called aplastic anaemia, also known as bone marrow failure, which means his body cannot replenish vital blood cells.



Matthew Hunt with mum
Wendy Lafi

The condition was identified a couple of years ago after the teen began feeling tired and sick, and would bruise easily.

He was put on treatment but has deteriorated so much he now needs a blood transfusion every few weeks.

The Evening Post revealed how the lad's only hope was a bone marrow transplant but, as his tissue type is rare, doctors could not find a match despite scouring the country and beyond.

Now Matthew has been given fresh hope as specialists have found a potential donor. But all they know about the stranger who could save Matthew's life is that he lives in Britain.

The teenager has been told to prepare himself for the life-saving transplant next month.

Matthew's mum Wendy Lafi and dad Andrew Hunt have spoken of their mixed emotions at the news – joy that a match has been found, but anxiety about the days ahead.

Wendy, who has four other children, said: "It's fantastic they have found a match and we are delighted.

"If everything goes well, it will give Matthew his life back. At the moment, he is weak and tired.

"His blood count is so low he doesn't have any energy.

"I am so very grateful to the mystery donor. It is wonderful to give a stranger the gift of life and whoever it is is a wonderful person."

She added: "It is early days at the moment and we know there is a long way to go.

"We will take each day one at a time and hope for the best."

Andrew Hunt, Matthew's dad, who lives in Burnslack Road, said: "Matthew is due to go into the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital in May. He will first have chemotherapy to get rid of his own bone marrow cells that don't work. He will then undergo the transplant.

"After the transplant, there is a chance of rejection, and immediately after the procedure he will have to be in isolation for up to eight weeks until his body can produce its own white blood cells to fight infection.

"We have mixed feelings at the moment – happiness, but also fear of the unknown."