

Sign up and you could save a life

By Claire Lomax 23rd February 2008

A charity which holds a register of volunteers who are willing to donate their bone marrow to a stranger has teamed up with a Bradford youth organisation to boost the number of donors.

The Anthony Nolan Trust is backing a life-saving appeal by the Bradford Youth Development Partnership, an organisation which works in the district to promote young people.

The partnership is working to raise awareness surrounding the need for more bone marrow donors and has set up a donor session on Thursday.

The session takes place at the Bradford Youth Development Offices at 63 Nesfield Street, Bradford, between 3pm and 6.30pm.

The trust is asking all local people who can to come long and help by joining the register.

Every 21 minutes someone in the UK is diagnosed with a potentially life threatening disorder, like leukaemia or aplastic anaemia, where often the only chance of a full cure is to have a bone marrow transplant.

Fewer than 30 per cent of these patients will find a family member with compatible blood stem cells to donate. For the rest, an unrelated donor is the only chance.

The trust helps these patients by holding a register of volunteers who are willing to donate their bone marrow should they share the same tissue type as the patient.

In order to recruit volunteers, the charity holds donor recruitment clinics where local people can attend to give a blood sample.

Trust spokesman Rebecca Sedgwick said: "It is so important that if you are eligible to join the register, to think seriously about joining up as the more people we have registering, the more chance we have of finding matches for patients who desperately need them."

Yasmin Hanif, of the Youth Development Partnership, said: "It is really important that we have as many people come forward and do what they can.

"You may hold the key to someone's future without even knowing it. Don't wait till it affects someone you know, act now and come and register.

"Black and minority ethnic groups in particular are needed as there is a shortage of donors from these backgrounds."

To be able to register as a bone marrow donor, you have to be aged between 18-40 years, be in good general health, weigh more than eight stone and be willing to help save the life of any patient you may match.

For details about becoming a bone marrow donor, visit anthonymolan.org.uk.