

I'd do it again, says lifesaver

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A BONE marrow donor who saved the life of a Swedish man said he would do it again to help others.

Owain Stanford, of South Street, Bridgend, donated his bone marrow to a 33-year-old man in Sweden after being told he was a perfect match.

Mr Stanford, aged 35, signed up to the Anthony Nolan Trust bone marrow register in 1998 when his lifelong friend Simon Hegarty needed a donor.

Sadly, no match was found to save Mr Hegarty, who died the following year.

But, nine years on, Mr Stanford was told he could help a Swedish leukaemia sufferer who needed a transplant.

"When Simon died we were gutted," he said.

"Then I got a phone call last year saying there was a potential match.

"They sent a box to Oaktree Surgery and I gave six test tubes of blood. They later said it looked as though it was a positive match.

"Simon died in 1999 but if it wasn't for him this man in Sweden wouldn't have had a chance."

Mr Stanford donated his bone marrow at Cardiff's BUPA hospital.

Within half an hour, a motorbike courier transported the marrow to Bristol Airport.

It was then flown to Sweden before being driven to the hospital to be given to the patient.

This Monday, Mr Stanford received a call informing him that the recipient was recovering well after the transplant.

Following the donation, Mr Stanford was presented with a love spoon at the Welsh Blood Service's donor awards evening.

"It's quite emotional and the chances of being a match are very small," said Mr Stanford, a medical representative for a pharmaceutical company.

"But I think everyone should be on the register. It just means giving someone a chance and I was lucky enough to do that.

"It's something I will remember for the rest of my life and if I had to do it again, I would."