

Anthony Nolan

additional information



saving the lives
of people with
blood cancer

Who are we?

- We are a UK charity with international reach. We work with hospitals and donor registries around the world to find matching donors for patients, wherever they are.
- We carry out world-class research into stem cell matching and transplants to improve outcomes for all patients.
- In 2008, we set up our state-of-the-art Cell Therapy Centre for banking umbilical cord blood and conducting ground-breaking research.
- Anthony Nolan is the charity that saves the lives of people with blood cancer and blood disorders. We're saving lives right now – 3 lives a day in fact.

Who was Anthony Nolan?

- Anthony Nolan was born in 1971 with a rare blood disorder called Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome. The only cure was a bone marrow transplant. None of Anthony's family was a match and back then there was no way of finding an unrelated donor.
- In 1974, Anthony Nolan's mother, Shirley, set up the world's first bone marrow register to match donors with people who desperately need a transplant. Since then, we've made more than 21,000 transplants happen.
- Sadly, our register couldn't help Anthony, who died aged eight in 1979.

Read more about [Anthony Nolan's history](#).



Key facts

- **Every 14 minutes, someone is diagnosed with blood cancer or a related disorder.**
- Over 2,000 people in the UK are in need of a stem cell transplant every year.
- 75% of UK patients won't find a matching donor within their families. So they turn to us to help find them an unrelated donor.
- **Every day, we help give 3 people a second chance of life.**
- Every day, at least 5 people start their search for a matching unrelated stem cell donor.
- Last year we helped around 1300 people receive a stem cell transplant; getting a second chance of life.
- Last year we searched for donors for 300+ children who couldn't find a match within their family.
- **Currently, only 72% of patients from White, Caucasian, backgrounds can find the best possible match from a stranger. This drops, significantly, to 37% for patients from a minority ethnic background.** By building and diversifying our register we will be able provide the best possible match to even more people with blood cancer or a blood disorder.
- Only 2% of people in the UK are registered as stem cell donors. This compares to 13% in Cyprus, 12% in Israel and 9% in Germany.
- 90% of donations take place via peripheral blood stem cell (PBSC) collection. This is a procedure similar to giving blood. It takes around 5 hours, and is a simple outpatients procedure. The other 10% is done via bone marrow, but is completed under general anaesthetic so the patient feels nothing throughout.
- Once you're on the register, you have a 1 in 800 chance of being asked to donate. Your chance of being chosen to donate depends on your age and sex. A young man aged 16-30 has a 1 in 200 chance of being chosen.
- **It costs about £40 to recruit each potential donor to the stem cell register.**
- Anthony Nolan's recent research confirms that the use of donors under 30 is associated with a trend towards better survival rates.



Who do we need?

- **We need more men aged 16–30 to sign up as they are vastly under-represented on the register.** Young men currently make up only 18% of our register, but they provide an astonishing 55% of all donations.
- Young people are also most likely to be chosen to donate as they provide better outcomes for patients and are less likely to have long-term health problems which might delay or prevent donation.
- **We urgently need more people from minority ethnic backgrounds to sign up as stem cell donors.** Patients who are White Caucasian have a 72% chance of finding the best match from an unrelated donor. This drops to a 37% chance for patients from minority ethnic backgrounds.



Blood cancer facts

- There are three main types of blood cancer – leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma.
- Blood cancers are life-threatening. This is partly because they stop a person's immune system working properly.
- When someone's immune system is badly damaged, they can die from an infection their body could normally fight off.
- On average, 104 people a day are diagnosed with a blood cancer. That's one person every 14 minutes.

Treating blood cancer

- All blood cells originate in bone marrow from the same type of cell, called a blood stem cell.
- A blood stem cell (or bone marrow) transplant can replace a damaged immune system in a person with blood cancer – but only if the donor's tissue type matches.
- For many people with blood cancer, a transplant is their last chance of life.
- A transplant works by taking blood stem cells from a healthy, matching donor and giving them to someone with blood cancer or a blood disorder.
- The donor and the recipient must have the same tissue type. As there are millions of different combinations, finding a suitable match is very complicated.

