



Impact Report





2025 – 2026



ANTHONY NOLAN

Saving lives through stem cells

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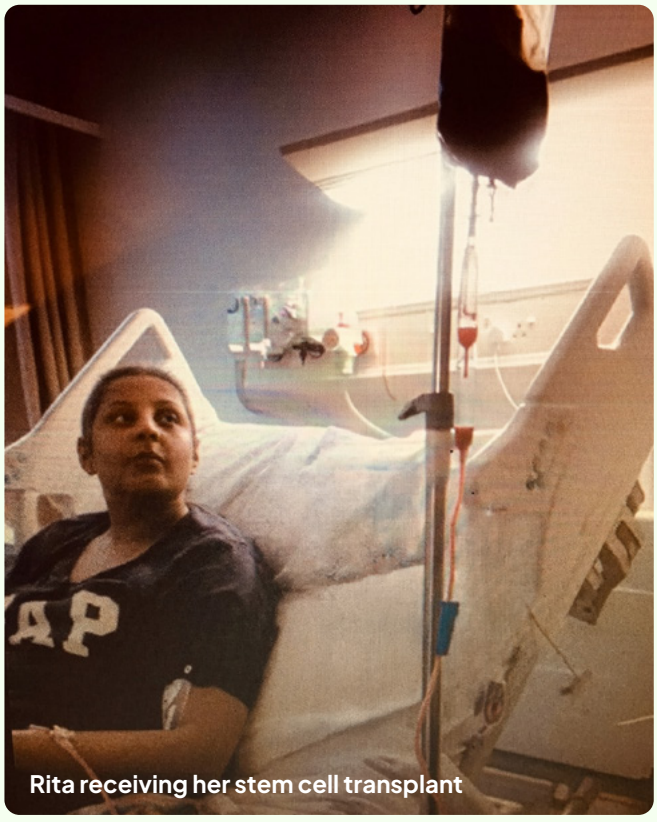
Our impact

Patient Rita's view

My name is Rita, and there was a time when I didn't know if I would live long enough to see my children grow up. But I'm here now, and that's thanks to Anthony Nolan, so I'm happy to share the latest impact from this organisation – impact that is truly transforming lives like mine.

I was six months pregnant when I was told I had blood cancer. In that moment, everything changed. I wasn't just thinking about myself – I was thinking about the baby I hadn't even met yet, and the life I might not be there to see. A stem cell transplant was my best chance of survival, but there was no match for me on the register. I had to face the reality that the treatment I needed simply wasn't there.



Rita receiving her stem cell transplant



Rita and her baby daughter on her transplant day

"It all began with one mother, Shirley Nolan.. Her determination created something bigger than any one person: she created a lifeline for people like me."

After rounds of intensive chemotherapy, I was incredibly lucky to go into remission. I gave birth to my daughter, and for a while, life felt like it had given me a second chance. Years later, I welcomed another daughter. But just 12 weeks after she was born, I relapsed. This time, there were no alternatives – a stem cell transplant wasn't just an option, it was my only hope.

And this time, there was a match.



Rita with her two teenage daughters and husband post-transplant

Because someone, somewhere, had signed up to donate. Because an organisation – Anthony Nolan – exists to make those connections happen. It all began with one mother, Shirley Nolan, who refused to accept that her son, and others like him, would die waiting for a donor. Her determination created something bigger than any one person: she created a lifeline for people like me.

"Now my daughters are teenagers. I get to watch them grow, laugh, and become who they're meant to be. Being their mum feels like a miracle I get to live every single day."

Thanks to her, and thanks to Anthony Nolan, I'm still here. Now my daughters are teenagers. I get to watch them grow, laugh, and become who they're meant to be. Being their mum feels like a miracle I get to live every single day, and it's not something I will ever take for granted. I know just how lucky I am. But what matters just as much is knowing I'm not the only one.

Since my life was saved, countless others have been given that same chance – to live, to love, to stay with the people who need them most. Every day, more families are kept together, more futures are rewritten. And that's because the work continues.

This report shares a glimpse of just some of the extraordinary, lifesaving achievements from the past year at Anthony Nolan. They are stories of hope, progress, and the growing impact of a mission that continues to transform lives across the UK and beyond.

Saving lives through stem cells, transforming futures every day

Every stem cell transplant is a second chance, not just for patients like Rita, but for everyone who loves them. Our goal is simple: to make that chance possible for more people, faster, and more equitably.

By growing the donor register, advancing science, and supporting patients through every stage of their journey, we're working to ensure that no one is left waiting for the lifesaving treatment they need, and that those who receive it can go on to live their lives to the full. This last year has been no exception and we're taking vital steps towards making the vision set out in our 2023–2028 organisational strategy, ***Unlocking new ways to treat every patient***, a reality – the vision of a future where every patient who needs us can survive and thrive. We're doing this by accelerating progress towards achieving our aims of Survival, Equity and Progress with every piece of work we do and increasing the impact we have. We're continuing to unite people and science to transform the future for the patients of today, and the patients of tomorrow.

All the stories in this Impact Report demonstrate how we have delivered against our strategy this year and strengthened the foundations which underpin its aims. Each story is clearly labelled to show the strategic links:

STRATEGY AIM: SURVIVAL

To give every transplant patient the best chance – and quality – of life.

STRATEGY AIM: EQUITY

To ensure all patients have the best access to, experience of and outcome from, treatment.

STRATEGY AIM: PROGRESS

To explore and embrace new cell therapies and make them available for patients more quickly.

Our year in numbers

From 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 Anthony Nolan has...



Given 1,630 people another chance to live

through lifesaving stem cell transplants.
(FY24/25: 1,573)



Added 7,467 people from minority ethnic backgrounds to the register

meaning they now make up **16.2%** of the stem cell register.
(FY24/25: 8,206)



Banked 342 units of cord blood,

providing an incredible lifeline to those struggling to find a donor match and bringing our total number to **10,030**.
(FY24/25: 143)



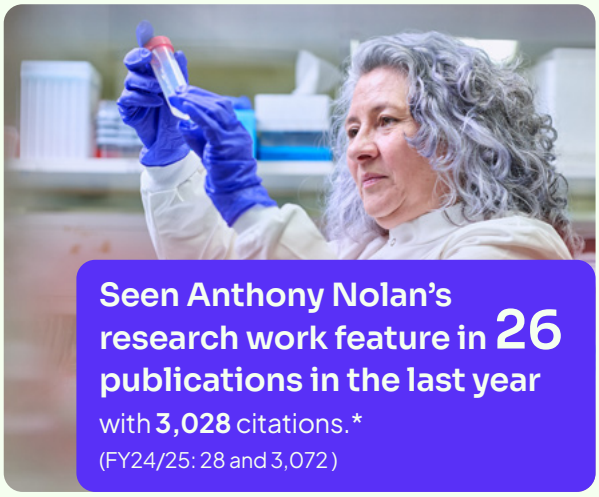
Recruited 32,480 people to our stem cell register,

where they are now part of a total of **941,452** people standing by to save lives.
(FY24/25: 33,562)



Raised £14,071,000 from our amazing supporters

through individuals, grants, legacies, corporate and partnership funding, making the work we do possible.
(FY24/25: £9,169,000)



Seen Anthony Nolan's research work feature in 26 publications in the last year

with **3,028** citations.*
(FY24/25: 28 and 3,072)

*Estimated to reflect financial year numbers based on figures accumulated across calendar years.

1 Highlights of the year

Everything we do is driven by our patients and our determination to do as much as we can, for as many people as we can. In 2025/26, we supported more patients than ever before through stem cell donation, cord blood collection and research. Behind every number is a person, a family, and a future that might otherwise have been lost.

1,630
patients have been given another chance to live in 2025/26
(FY24/25: 1,573)

796
grants worth £197,000 in total have been provided to patients and families
(FY24/25: £188,000)


Brendon's story P9

342
units of cord blood have been banked
(FY24/25:143)

6
specialist roles funded – including nurses, psychologists and play therapists
(FY24/25: 9)


Kathi's story P12

2,583
individual patients in the UK started their donor search with our team
(FY24/25: 2,619)

132
people have accessed our emotional support services
(FY24/25: 184)


Harry's story P16

STRATEGY AIM: SURVIVAL

Opening the Anthony Nolan Cell Collection Centre

In July 2025, we opened the Anthony Nolan Cell Collection Centre (CCC) – a dedicated space where donors give stem cells safely and efficiently.

By increasing capacity, the CCC helps us to make sure collections go ahead on the dates requested – which is critical to co-ordinating a patient's treatment schedule with the donor's commitments. Before this, delays or misaligned timing could mean missed opportunities for transplant.

What this means for patients: more donations happening exactly when needed, without delays that could impact survival.

Since opening, nearly 200 donors have already come through our doors and cells have been transported across five continents.

Before the CCC, only 1 in 5 donations could happen on the exact date clinicians requested. Now, 1 in 2 of all collections made at the centre happen on the first choice of date.

For patients that can mean:

- faster transplants
- less uncertainty
- better outcomes

The CCC is also giving researchers better access to cells to accelerate cutting-edge medical research and develop the next generation of innovative treatments.

Why this matters: it doesn't just save lives today – it helps create the treatments that will save more lives tomorrow.

Our partnership with Omaze raised over £3.7 million to support this work – an amount that will cover the centre's running costs for 18 months.

Find out more about Omaze on page 20

omaze
MILLION POUND HOUSE DRAW
SUPPORTING
ANTHONY NOLAN

Since opening, nearly 200 donations have taken place at the Cell Collection Centre



Read more about the opening of our own Cell Collection Centre.



Brendon's story

26-year-old Brendon was one of the first people to donate their cells at the centre, after signing up at an event held by our donor recruitment partner Race Against Blood Cancer.

"I signed up to the register on Christmas Eve, while I was doing some last-minute shopping. I bumped into a friend who was recruiting people to the register to help a young boy called Marshall in need of a transplant.

I didn't end up matching with Marshall, but a few months later I was contacted by Anthony Nolan who told me I was a match for someone else. It was a no-brainer for me to say yes. I wouldn't feel right saying no – if you've got a chance to help another person I don't see why you wouldn't do everything you could.

I feel honoured to be one of the first donors at Anthony Nolan's new centre. A stem cell transplant could be lifesaving for someone, and donating your cells is such an easy way to help."

BRENDON DONATED HIS STEM CELLS AT THE ANTHONY NOLAN CELL COLLECTION CENTRE

Are you aged 16-30? Find out more about joining the register.

STRATEGY AIMS: SURVIVAL & EQUITY

Expanding our cord blood lifeline

Umbilical cord blood is a unique and powerful source of stem cells. It can be used even when patient/donor matching is a challenge, making it especially important for patients who struggle to find a match on the register. For many it is an essential lifeline when other options are not available.

Why this matters: for some patients, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, cord blood can be the difference between having a treatment option – or having none at all.

Cord blood is also quicker to access, already collected and stored, and plays a growing role in research and the development of new therapies. Over 81,234 cord blood units collected through Anthony Nolan between 2007 and 2025.

In 2025/26, thanks to a generous and transformational donation from the Denise Coates Foundation, we were able to expand and upgrade the Anthony Nolan Cell Therapy Centre in Nottingham with:

- a liquid nitrogen tank three times larger than before
- relevant and up to date technology used for more efficient processing and storage

This will allow us to increase cord blood banking and cryopreservation and ultimately save more lives. It also strengthens our ability to support pioneering research and evolving stem cell therapies that could potentially enable tomorrow's breakthroughs.

What this means for patients: more treatment options available, faster and more equitable access to treatment, and more opportunities for lifesaving transplants and research.



Over 81,234 cord blood units collected through Anthony Nolan between 2007 and 2025

Find out more about donating your umbilical cord.

STRATEGY AIM: SURVIVAL

Launching our psychological care report

A stem cell transplant is just the beginning of a long journey for so many patients and we're there to support them throughout.

We carried out major policy research in 2025/26 into the psychological impact of stem cell therapies on patients, families, caregivers and donors. The results were stark. Our work shows that 40% of patients experience significant anxiety while waiting for treatment, and for many that anxiety remains as they recover – yet access to specialist support remains limited.

What this means for patients: too many people are facing the psychological impact of transplant without the support they need.

We launched a national policy report calling for psychological care to be embedded in transplant pathways, and worked to ensure patient voices were heard across healthcare and government, as well as sharing our findings at the European Society of Blood and Marrow Transplantation conference.



We launched a national policy report calling for psychological care to be embedded in transplant pathways

Read our report 'Improving the mental health of cell therapy patients' in full to find out more.



Kathi's story

Oscar was born with the extremely rare blood disorder Diamond Blackfan Anaemia Syndrome and was entirely dependent on regular blood transfusions. He then received a stem cell transplant from an unrelated donor shortly after his eighth birthday.

Following the transplant, Oscar experienced severe complications and spent almost a year in hospital before finally returning home. But this was only the beginning of the family's journey. Oscar's mum, Kathi, supported and helped promote our report in the hope that other families don't have to face the same challenges they experienced.

You can find out more about Oscar and Kathi's story in our report 'Improving the mental health of cell therapy patients'.

"The trauma didn't end when we left the hospital. In fact, that was when the hardest part began.

Most people assume that once you're home, life returns to normal. That everything is fine and you've made it. The reality is very different. Everything feels broken. We had to rebuild every part of our lives – emotionally, physically, financially and socially – as well as finding our way forward as a family. We did it largely alone.

There was no psychological support embedded within Oscar's care pathway. We had to find and fund therapy ourselves – for Oscar, for his little sister, and for us as parents. No family should have to face that on their own."

KATHI | OSCAR'S MUM

STRATEGY AIM: EQUITY

Shaping the future of care through the National Cancer Plan

On World Cancer Day 2026, the UK Government published its National Cancer Plan for England.

We were delighted to see that two key areas we campaigned for – alongside partners – have been included. **The first was a pledge to reduce the financial burden of treatment.**

Why this matters: patients often travel long distances for specialist care and many face significant financial strain during treatment.

- Patients can lose around £30,000* in household income
- Many rely on grants to cover travel and accommodation

Following our sustained campaigning with partners, the government's plan now includes:

- a dedicated £10 million annual travel fund for children and young people with cancer

What this means for patients: vital financial support for younger patients and families, helping them access treatment without added hardship.

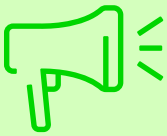
Our next steps include pushing for this support to be made available more widely. We want it to include children undergoing transplant or cellular therapies with conditions other than cancer, and also to cover adult patients facing the same financial difficulties.

The second was the pledge to improve earlier diagnosis.

Why this matters: too many patients with blood cancer are diagnosed in emergency settings – often when their condition has already become critical.

Through our work with the Blood Cancer Alliance, we have long called for this to change, and the plan now includes a commitment to reduce emergency diagnoses for blood cancers.

What this means for patients: earlier diagnosis, faster treatment, and better chances of survival.



Because of our campaigning the National Cancer Plan now includes a dedicated £10 million annual travel fund

Read more about our reflections on what the National Cancer Plan means for cell therapy patients.

* Anthony Nolan's Cost-of-Living Survey 2024

STRATEGY AIM: PROGRESS

Equipping professionals to deliver the latest CAR-T treatments

We are proud to play our part in embracing new and evolving treatments such as CAR T-cell therapy, which is transforming the way we treat blood cancers.

For some it can offer an additional treatment option when few remain. So it is also vital that we make sure healthcare professionals have the knowledge and tools to deliver them safely and effectively.

Why this matters: as CAR-T therapy expands, equipping professionals and learning from patient experience will be critical to ensuring no one is left behind.

In 2025/26, we launched a free, CPD certified CAR-T e-learning programme, supported by an educational grant via the Gilead UK and Ireland Fellowship Programme. We also launched a study at the University of Birmingham into the experiences of CAR-T patients and their carers to identify where improvements can be made. This project received support from Johnson & Johnson Innovative Medicine and the Gilead UK and Ireland Fellowship Programme.

What this means for patients: more informed care teams, more consistent treatment experiences, and services that better reflect real patient needs.



"I'm really proud of how this resource has been developed together with healthcare professionals (HCPs), combining clinical insight and patient experience to support learning across the CAR-T pathway.

By providing clear, accessible education and linking people to further helpful resources, it complements education that is given to HCPs in hospitals and supports the delivery of consistent, high-quality care for patients and families during a complex treatment journey."

EMILY JOHN | CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST



STRATEGY AIM: PROGRESS

Advocating for new therapies to be made available

We play a key role in ensuring that scientific breakthroughs translate into real treatments for patients and we campaign to secure equitable access to innovative new cell therapies for all patients.

Working with organisations like The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, we provide evidence, clinical insight and patient voice to support the approval of new therapies on the NHS.

One example is **obe-cel**, a personalised CAR-T therapy for B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukaemia that has come back or stopped responding to treatment. Together with Leukaemia UK and Leukaemia Care we advocated for it to be made widely available after clinical trials showed it can effectively treat cancer with fewer severe side effects for patients.

It is now available on the NHS in England for eligible patients.

What this means for patients: access to more effective, less toxic treatments – and renewed hope when other options have failed.

Read more about how we welcomed the decision to offer new cell therapy for leukaemia patients on the NHS.



Harry's story

Harry on his transplant day

Harry, a 20-year-old student from Harrogate, was treated with obe-cel for B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukaemia as part of a clinical trial in 2024.

"I feel so lucky to have had access to such a wondrous treatment. Not only did it work better than my doctors thought it would, it worked without many of the horrible side-effects you can get from other treatments.

I think it's brilliant obe-cel is now available on the NHS. The biggest thing it offers is hope. When you're facing a situation like mine, hope is the most valuable thing you can have."



Harry post-transplant

HARRY | OBE-CEL THERAPY GAVE HIM A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE

2 How we achieved success

Saving lives takes people – thousands of them. From donors on the register standing by to save lives, to volunteers, researchers, clinicians, fundraisers, supporters and dedicated colleagues, every individual is essential to making our work possible.

32,480
people added to the stem cell register this year
(FY24/25: 33,562)

£14,071,000
raised by our dedicated supporters and partners this year
(FY24/25: £9.2m)



1,081 people volunteered for us
(FY24/25: 1,099)

7,467
new register sign-ups by people from minority ethnic backgrounds
(FY24/25: 8,206)

1,256
lifesaving journeys made by our volunteer couriers
(FY24/25: 1,004)



STRATEGY AIM: SURVIVAL

Digital developments keeping our potential donors engaged

We have added so many new potential lifesavers to the Anthony Nolan register in the last year. But just as importantly we've made great progress in keeping donors engaged.

Why this matters: a donor on the register can only save a life if they are contactable, informed and ready when that call comes

In 2025/26, we introduced digital donor cards and expanded our donor portal, making it easier for donors to stay connected and keep their details up to date. While 40% of new donors have registered for digital cards already, we're working with the tech team to improve the system, increase visibility of the digital donor cards, and reach our target of 60%.

- 20,000 people are now actively using the portal

The portal allows donors to:

- update contact details, including alternative contacts
- confirm availability
- stay connected to their role as a potential lifesaver

Alongside this, we began working to better understand why some donors do not proceed to donation when identified as a match.

By introducing earlier engagement and simple feedback tools, we can identify and address barriers – whether practical, emotional or informational – at the earliest stage.

What this means for patients: more donors progressing from match to donation, and more chance of treatment going ahead.

Nearly 40% of new donors have downloaded their digital donor card



"I do believe a digital card is a lot better than a physical one, mostly because it's a lot harder to lose it.

I joined the stem cell register initially because my girlfriend wanted to, however due to her autoimmune disease, she was unable to. I decided to join to sort of 'take her place'.

After some research I realised I would've joined regardless due to how easy it could be to save someone's life."

MAXIMUS

21-YEAR-OLD WHO HAS ONLY RECENTLY JOINED THE REGISTER AND WAS HAPPY TO HAVE A FULLY DIGITAL OPTION



STRATEGY AIMS: SURVIVAL, EQUITY, PROGRESS

Raising the funds that make the lifesaving possible

So many of the amazing things we achieved in the last year would not have happened without our incredible fundraisers and supporters.

From charitable trusts, generous individuals and corporate partners funding transformative projects, to people and families taking on challenges and supporting us in the community. Our impact is your impact, and we hope you share our pride in seeing everything you've made happen.

In 2025/26 we've been grateful to every person who has been part of our success:

- 17 businesses have entered new corporate partnerships with us
- 1,022 people have taken part in challenge events

What this means for patients: every pound given or raised by supporters changes lives – from the £40 it costs to add a new donor to the register, to the millions needed to fund our cell collection centre.

This year 1,022 people took on a challenge event

Find out more about the many ways you can fundraise with us.



Fundraising Focus: Omaze

Last year we were delighted to partner with Omaze in the Omaze Million Pound House Draw, Cheshire.

Their community, joined by our supporters, entered for the chance to win a stunning £4 million home in Cheshire. The draw attracted huge publicity, celebrity support – including from our patron Olivia Colman, brand awareness and most of all, resulted in raising £3.7 million to support our work.

The money raised by the Omaze partnership is funding the running costs of the Anthony Nolan Cell Collection Centre for 18 months.

"We know just how precious time is with the people we love and we're thrilled that our partnership with Omaze has raised an incredible £3.7 million for Anthony Nolan, helping us get lifesaving stem cells to people with blood cancers and blood disorders.

We're so grateful to Omaze and everyone who entered for playing their part in the race against the clock to give people in need of a transplant more time with their loved ones."

HENNY BRAUND MBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF ANTHONY NOLAN

Fundraising Focus: Round Table

In 1974, when Shirley Nolan desperately needed help to run the first ever donor recruitment clinic, she reached out to Round Table.

They stepped up then and have been stepping up for us ever since – raising thousands of pounds and recruiting thousands of potential lifesavers. So we were delighted when Round Table Great Britain and Ireland chose Anthony Nolan as their charity of the year last May. They committed to raising enough funds to add 3,000 new potential donors to our register – one for every member of Round Table – but went above and beyond, raising over £140,000 across the past year – enough to add 3,500 new names to the register.

Round Table raised enough to add 3,500 new names to the register







"Round Table members and clubs across Great Britain and Ireland really got behind Anthony Nolan this year, an organisation that has stood with Round Table for 50 years. To end the year having raised £143,000 is absolutely phenomenal. It has also been great to have the support of the team at Anthony Nolan every step of the way and I look forward to Round Table and Anthony Nolan continuing their relationship in the future."

STEVE ECCLES ROUND TABLE PRESIDENT



Fundraising Focus: Laura's story

Laura took on the incredible challenge of completing 12 marathons in 12 months in memory of her husband Xander, who sadly passed away following complications after a stem cell transplant.

Her twelfth and final marathon, the London Marathon 2025, fell on what would have been their sixth wedding anniversary. To mark the occasion, she ran it in her wedding dress – an act of powerful symbolism that went viral and raised our profile nationally and internationally.

"My husband was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and the best chance of survival and for the cancer to not come back was for him to have a stem cell transplant. That's where Anthony Nolan stepped in and they found a donor for him... the transplant went really well. They gave us the gift of 18 more months together and I will strive to assist Anthony Nolan in giving more families a better future."

LAURA | ONE OF OUR INCREDIBLE INDIVIDUAL FUNDRAISERS



Angela (left) with her daughter (right)

Fundraising Focus: Angela's story

Another vital way our work is funded is through legacies – when people leave a gift to Anthony Nolan in their Will.

This crucial income not only supports our lifesaving work, but it also reminds us how strongly people feel about our organisation. Angela Dusek is one of those that has pledged to remember us in her Will.

"I had a stem cell transplant in 2024, and I have Anthony Nolan and my donor to thank for my life. My daughter did a charity skydive and raised money after my transplant and signed up for the stem cell donor register to support the valuable work you are doing. I have included a gift in my Will to Anthony Nolan as I can't thank you enough for everything you do."

ANGELA PLEDGED TO LEAVE A GIFT TO ANTHONY NOLAN IN HER WILL

STRATEGY AIMS: SURVIVAL, EQUITY, PROGRESS

The power of volunteers and partners

Our work is powered by people who give their time, energy and expertise.

Volunteer couriers transport lifesaving stem cells across the UK and internationally, often navigating delays and tight timelines to ensure deliveries reach transplant centres on time.

What this means for patients: without these journeys, many transplants simply would not happen.

RSM UK and the RSM UK Foundation have been a vital partner and key funder of our courier service – and this year they marked 15 years of supporting Anthony Nolan. This is an amazing milestone as their contribution has been fundamental in helping us deliver the services we do. Their generosity has funded over 10,000 journeys and genuinely saved countless lives.

Their support has:

- contributed over £2 million
- funded patient grants and courier services
- enabled thousands of deliveries of lifesaving cells

Why this matters: long standing corporate partnerships like this ensure critical services are there for patients when they need them most.

This year RSM UK marked 15 years of supporting Anthony Nolan – their generosity has funded over 10,000 volunteer courier journeys





Volunteer Focus: Couriers

Peter Hodes started volunteering with Anthony Nolan in 2012 transporting lifesaving stem cells across cities, countries, oceans and even continents.

Overcoming every possible challenge during the 452 trips he made, he never failed to deliver his incredible cargo before standing down last year at the age of 80.



"I was aware that each trip I was doing was a potential lifesaver. It made no difference to me whether I was picking up cells and walking them a short distance, or travelling much further afield – each trip was as important as the other.

I had one trip where I was caught by a hurricane in America. The woman on the flight desk dropped everything and arranged for me to fly on a little propeller plane. And coming back from Hanover once, the pilot radioed ahead to Heathrow to make sure we'd land on time so I wouldn't miss my connection. They upgraded me to club class too! It turned out that the partner of one of the cabin crew had leukaemia and was saved by a stem cell transplant themselves. I hear so many incredible stories."

PETER VOLUNTEERED AS A COURIER FOR ANTHONY NOLAN

Interested in being a volunteer courier for Anthony Nolan? Find out more.

Partnership Focus: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Anthony Nolan has worked closely with Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) for 17 years to reach more potential lifesavers and get them to join the register.

They have worked tirelessly to support us and in the last year alone recruited 1,268 people to the register. This brings the total from their partnership to over 20,000 – an amazing 131 of whom have gone on to donate.

17–year-old James is one of them and donated this year.

Last year SFRS recruited 1,268 people to the register



"I joined the stem cell register when the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service came to my school. I thought I'd join just in case – I knew it wasn't going to be a high chance I was a match, but it turned out I was! I was only on the register for four months when I was contacted, and then two months later, I donated!"

JAMES DONATED HIS STEM CELLS

Volunteer Focus: Marrow

Our dedicated and engaged network of student volunteers, Marrow, are not only phenomenal fundraisers – bringing in over £45,000 for the charity last year alone – but they are also key to recruiting new people to the register.

This year they celebrated an amazing milestone by recruiting their 200,000th potential lifesaver to our register. Over the last 26 years, across dozens of universities they have been responsible for signing up one in four people who go on to donate for Anthony Nolan.

Marrow volunteer Abbie was keen to give something back after a successful stem cell transplant saved her life when she was 16.

This year Marrow recruited their 200,000th potential lifesaver to the register



"When I got to uni I started volunteering with Marrow. Hull is quite a small uni, but, to me, every sign-up is one potential life saved. So, even if I do a recruitment event and only one person signs up, it's worth it. I think it's encouraging that I can say, 'I had a stem cell transplant and I wouldn't be here without it,' it definitely helps motivate people."

ABBIE (RIGHT) MARROW VOLUNTEER

STRATEGY AIM: SURVIVAL

Using AI to improve access

We introduced an AI-powered chatbot developed with partners to support donors and potential donors.

With high volumes of calls and emails each week – many requesting information already available online – the chatbot provides instant answers and directs users to relevant resources.

What this means for patients: faster, clearer communication with donors, and more staff time focused on urgent, time-critical cases.

STRATEGY AIMS: SURVIVAL & EQUITY

Strengthening community-led donor recruitment

At Anthony Nolan, we know the most effective way to reach underrepresented communities is by working with those who are already part of them.

In 2025/26, we launched a new Donor Recruitment Partners Grant Programme – supporting grassroots organisations to lead donor recruitment within their own communities, with a strong focus on equity.

This approach is already delivering impact. Partners such as One Voice Blackburn have run targeted campaigns, engaged young people through schools and community outreach, and inspired hundreds of new donors to join the register.

Why this matters: building trust and reaching communities through local partners is key to tackling long-standing inequities in donor availability.



We launched a new Donor Recruitment Partners Grant Programme – supporting grassroots organisations

STRATEGY AIMS: SURVIVAL, EQUITY, PROGRESS

Improving EDI to create a stronger organisation for every patient

Delivering for patients today – and in the future – depends on the strength, diversity and adaptability of our organisation.

At Anthony Nolan, we are investing in our people, culture and systems to keep pace with growing demand and continue to innovate. In 2025/26, we strengthened our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) by:

- launching internal networks to amplify colleagues' lived experiences
- improving our use of EDI data
- expanding our internal training
- marking key moments across different cultures such as Ramadan and South Asian Heritage Month

What this means for patients: a more inclusive organisation helps us reach underrepresented communities, improve donor diversity, and reduce inequity in access to transplant.

We've strengthened our approach to EDI by expanding our internal training and improving our use of data to help embed it in everything we do.



Colleagues coming together to share an iftar meal during Ramadan as part of our programme of awareness activities

3 Innovating for the future

We're proud of everything we have achieved in the past year, but we know so much more is possible. Saving lives today and for generations to come depends on the science we build for tomorrow. Our expertise, research and constant drive to do more, and better, is keeping us at the forefront of this fast-changing and developing environment.

1,008
adults donated cells for research, development and clinical use
(FY24/25: 509)

4
new treatments have been introduced or approved by health institutions, thanks to our involvement, bringing the total since the start of the strategy to 19
(FY24/25: 6)



Donna's story P31

24
research publications featured contributions from Anthony Nolan's experts
(FY24/25: 28)



Donna's story

Donna had been on the Anthony Nolan register for decades. But it wasn't until 2018, when her husband David was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia, that she truly understood what that meant.

What followed was months of uncertainty – and when the call finally came to say a donor had been found, Donna remembers being overwhelmed with relief. That anonymous donor gave David a second chance at life. Today, David is doing well — but the experience stayed with Donna.

So when she saw an opportunity to donate stem cells for research through Anthony Nolan, she didn't hesitate.

"I wouldn't have my husband if someone hadn't donated for him. This was my chance to give something back. I did wonder if, at 60, I would be too old to be considered. But I enquired and I was chosen for a research programme. I felt a mixture of nerves and excitement about the experience but it went very smoothly, and I was well cared for. I hope my donation will now help scientists develop new treatments – treatments that could save more families from going through what we did, and in the future, more people could get that second chance – just like we did."

DONNA
DONATED HER STEM CELLS FOR RESEARCH

STRATEGY AIM: EQUITY

Tackling inequity in access to transplant

Finding a stem cell donor depends on matching HLA – a group of genes that vary widely between individuals and populations.

People from minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to have a rare (or in some cases even completely unique) HLA type compared to the populations of white Northern European ancestry. This can make it harder to find an unrelated donor.

Through research with the World Marrow Donor Association, Anthony Nolan's Director of Bioinformatics Research Dr James Robinson participated in the Registry of Unmet Need (RUN) project which analysed data from thousands of patients worldwide who were unable to find a match.

What this means for patients: increasing representation of all ethnicities on global stem cell registers has the power to improve the chances of patients finding a lifesaving match.

Through research with the World Marrow Donor Association we've identified critical areas for donor recruitment

"The findings show that despite there being more than 40 million potential donors available on all registers worldwide – there are still patients that cannot find a match. Some of this is due to the diversity and combinations of key genes, but there are also populations that are underrepresented globally. Regions such as South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa were identified as critical areas for donor recruitment."



DR JAMES ROBINSON
ANTHONY NOLAN'S DIRECTOR OF BIOINFORMATICS RESEARCH



STRATEGY AIM: EQUITY

Our Search Inequity Project

We are investigating whether there is any correlation between patient ethnicity and inequity in search experiences by analysing our own UK data through the Search Inequity Project.

This study is examining over 2,500 patients who began a donor search between 2020 and 2025, tracking:

- donor availability at each stage of the search
- time taken to have their transplant
- differences linked to ethnicity

This level of detail will allow us to pinpoint exactly where delays or barriers occur – whether in matching, processes or system capacity.

Why this matters: it enables targeted, practical changes that can reduce delays and improve access to transplant for patients who currently face the greatest barriers to treatment.



We're examining data from over 2,500 patients to improve access to transplant for future patients

STRATEGY AIM: PROGRESS

Driving breakthroughs in research and Natural Killer therapies

At our Anthony Nolan Research Institute, our scientists are working to expand the boundaries of what cell therapies can achieve.

One major area of progress in 2025/26 has been when Dr Diana Hernandez and her Immunotherapy team made important discoveries in the development of natural killer (NK) cell therapies using umbilical cord blood.

NK cells are a powerful part of the immune system, capable of identifying and destroying cancer cells. Donated NK cells are already being used in this way but a key challenge has been inconsistency – some donor cells grow and perform well, while others do not.

Our researchers discovered that:

- NK cells collected very soon after birth grow up to twice as fast
- earlier freezing improves their performance after thawing
- cord blood from caesarean births may produce faster-growing cells

These findings are a significant step towards developing reliable, "off-the-shelf" cell therapies that could be used without the need for a close genetic match.

What this means for patients: in the future, more people could have access to more treatments as our research drives forward the discovery and development of new cell therapies.



"These findings are the result of years of hard work from my team, marking a fundamental advance in our approach to the manufacture of novel cell therapies. Cell therapies like these could introduce major shifts in how we treat blood cancers, alongside stem cell transplants."

DR DIANA HERNANDEZ
DIRECTOR OF IMMUNE AND ADVANCED THERAPIES

Find out more about how umbilical cord blood could provide us with unique cell therapies.

STRATEGY AIM: PROGRESS

New DNA sequencing technology enabling faster discovery

In 2025/26, we implemented next-generation DNA sequencing technology to support our work into the factors that make the best donor matches.

Our new "third generation" Vega sequencer – capable of analysing entire genes in much greater detail – can process up to ten times more data than previous systems.

This allows our researchers to better understand the complex genetics behind donor matching and transplant outcomes.

Why this matters: faster, more accurate genetic insight accelerates the development of better matching strategies and new treatments.

We implemented technology that can process up to ten times more data than previous systems

"The implementation of Vega enables our teams to use the most cutting-edge third generation sequencing platform available in their research, meaning we are characterising patients and donors in our research studies to the highest possible capacity. Vega has allowed us to double our sequencing throughput in a single experiment, meaning our research will move forward faster than previously."



DR NEEMA MAYOR
ANTHONY NOLAN'S DIRECTOR OF IMMUNOGENETICS AND RESEARCH SERVICES



STRATEGY AIM: EQUITY

Expanding access to new treatments through innovation

Alongside supporting the development of new treatments, we are supporting innovations that make existing treatments available to more people.

One of the most promising is post-transplant cyclophosphamide (PTCy), a therapy to reduce the risk of graft-versus-host disease following a stem cell transplant. Evidence from recent studies shows that PTCy can:

- reduce graft-versus-host disease (GvHD)
- increase the chance of successful transplants from HLA mismatched donors

In the US, this approach has already shown that the addition of PTCy means nearly all patients could have access to a donor when lower match thresholds are used safely.

In the financial year 2025–26, we helped bring together the UK transplant community, through collaboration with the British Society of Blood and Marrow Transplantation and Cellular Therapy, and made a major contribution to agreeing how PTCy can be adopted in practice.

What this means for patients: many more people – especially those from underrepresented backgrounds – could have access to lifesaving treatments.

Read more about how PTCy is helping to level the playing field for patients.

STRATEGY AIMS: SURVIVAL, EQUITY, PROGRESS

Unlocking the power of transplant data

Decades of transplant data exists, but much of it is incomplete or difficult to use. Large scale and longer-term improvements in transplant data will need collaboration from across the community.

That's why we're working with hospitals, medical teams and the British Society of Blood and Marrow Transplantation and Cellular Therapy (BSBMTCT) to improve clinical data. This year – with funding from Sanofi – we expanded our Research Data Manager Project – the first in the UK embedding dedicated research specialists within transplant centres to improve data quality and accessibility.

We've strengthened our strategic partnership with the BSBMTCT, to drive forward our shared ambition for a more accessible, sustainable and secure data ecosystem. And we've invested in MyeCare, a new Acute Myeloid Leukaemia data registry bringing together demographic, diagnostic, genomic, treatment, transplant, outcome, quality of life and follow-up data, which should pave the way for new research in the future.

Why this matters: better data leads to better research, faster discoveries, and improved survival for future patients.

Together we can accelerate progress – starting by developing a modernised database platform that will support research and improve data quality.

What this means for patients: this new clinical evidence will help us advocate for innovation in policy and practice that leads to improvements in patient outcomes and experiences.

"We are sitting on a goldmine of data that has the potential to revolutionise the landscape of stem cell transplants. Our project also has the potential to shift the way transplant centres in the UK operate, by freeing up staff to spend more time on their lifesaving work rather than responding to challenging data requests."

SHELLEY HEWERDINE
OUR FIRST RESEARCH DATA MANAGER

Read more about how we're using data to help unlock the next big discoveries in stem cell transplant research.

STRATEGY AIM: PROGRESS

Powering scientific breakthroughs with starting materials and guidance

Research into new treatments is accelerating at an unprecedented pace, bringing hope to thousands of patients worldwide.

Through partnerships with researchers, biotech and pharmaceutical companies, Anthony Nolan's Cell Therapy & Laboratory Services (CT&LS) play a critical role in enabling this progress – providing high-quality biological samples and expert guidance to support the development and discovery of new therapies.

What this means for patients: more treatments moving from bench to bedside faster, safer, and with the potential to improve survival and quality of life.

Why this matters: today's research is tomorrow's treatment – and without access to high-quality cells and expertise, these breakthroughs simply wouldn't happen.

Helping to develop potential new cancer vaccines

The CT&LS team has been working with Professor Bass Hassan from The University of Oxford to supply donors with specific HLA types for an early-stage study into Ewing sarcoma and Rhabdomyosarcoma. These are rare and aggressive cancers that mainly affect bones and soft tissue in children and young adults. The aim of the project is to help develop a new type of cancer vaccine that could train T-cells – a key part of the immune system – to recognise and attack molecules found only on sarcoma cells. HLA proteins play a central role in how the immune system works so starting with the right HLA types makes it far easier to identify how T-cells recognise these cancer-related targets.

Ultimately, this research could lead to highly targeted cancer vaccines that train the immune system to attack Ewing sarcoma and Rhabdomyosarcoma cells while leaving healthy cells untouched.



STRATEGY AIM: PROGRESS

Accelerating access to groundbreaking trials

At Anthony Nolan, we are part of a major new collaboration launched this year to accelerate clinical trials in stem cell transplantation and blood cancer – helping bring innovative treatments to patients faster, while strengthening the UK's position as a global leader in life sciences.

Accelerating Clinical Trials (ACT) builds on the success of the Trials Acceleration Programme and the IMPACT network - which we were founding funders of and played a key role in - together recruiting over 3,000 patients to pivotal studies.

Launched with funding from Anthony Nolan, Cure Leukaemia and NHS Blood & Transplant, ACT was founded by Professor Charlie Cradock CBE, former Anthony Nolan Medical Director.

He said: "Advances in science are now translating into genuinely transformational treatments. One in four of the patients we treated today would not have survived ten years ago. I see before my eyes how this revolution in clinical trials is changing patients' prospects."

Over 3,000 patients have been recruited to pivotal clinical studies

ACT will:

- deliver faster access to innovative treatments
- offer more patients the opportunity to take part in trials
- establish a scalable model for trial delivery
- generate high-quality data to support research and decision-making

What this means for patients: faster access to new treatments, more opportunities to take part in clinical trials, and quicker progress in developing the therapies of the future.

Why this matters: clinical trials are essential to improving survival – and accelerating them means breakthroughs can reach patients sooner.

STRATEGY AIM: EQUITY

Reaching more people, more equitably, by expanding global networks

Not everyone has the same chance of finding a matching stem cell donor – and ethnicity plays a major role.

Matching depends on inherited genetic markers (HLA), which are more likely to be shared by people with similar ancestry. Populations with greater HLA diversity have a lower probability of finding an unrelated donor. This challenge is exacerbated by the under-representation of many of these populations on donor registers worldwide.

What this means for patients: longer waits, fewer options, and in some cases, worse outcomes.

We are working to change that.

In the UK, we target recruitment in areas of high ethnic diversity, working with communities, schools, universities and partners to reach underrepresented groups. This year alone we have added 7,467 people from minority ethnic backgrounds to the register.

Globally, our partnership with India's biggest donor register, DATRI, funded by the National Institute for Health Research, is helping grow the worldwide donor pool and these individuals could go on to donate to patients in India or anywhere in the world, including the UK. During the last year:

- 4,826 donors were recruited and HLA typed through the DATRI project

Donors recruited through this work have already come up as potential matches for patients in the UK and internationally.

Alongside this, we are strengthening international collaboration – including co-hosting the International Donor Registry Conference in Chennai, India in March 2027 – to bring global registries together. We're also welcoming news that our CEO Henny Braund MBE has become President-Elect of the World Marrow Donor Association.

10,000 donors were recruited and HLA typed through the DATRI project since 2023

Increasing diversity on the stem cell register alone is not enough to address these disparities. That's why we're also working to strengthen the global pool of donors, investing in our cord blood bank and researching new therapies that could expand access to treatment for more people.

Why this matters: combining these approaches ensures we are doing all we can to increase the chances of finding a match for every patient, whoever and wherever they are.

Read more about our partnership with DATRI, India's largest stem cell register.

STRATEGY AIMS: SURVIVAL & EQUITY

Patients leading the way in shaping their own care

Everything we do is driven by our patients – not just in how we support them, but in how we learn from them.

At Anthony Nolan, we believe patients should help shape the research and care that affect their lives. In 2025/26, two studies led by Dr Gemma Pugh explored how transplant recipients define quality of life, and what wellbeing data should be collected after transplant.

Working with our patient advisory group, we interviewed 21 patients about the reality of life after transplant.

The findings highlight the profound and ongoing challenges that patients can face, often due to having weakened immune systems. Many struggle to return to work or everyday life and need a wider range of physical, emotional, social and financial support.

What this means for patients: treatment is only the start of a patient's recovery – and too often, the long-term impact is not fully recognised or supported.

All participants strongly supported the need for long-term quality of life research and these insights are already shaping how we design future studies and services. Alongside this, we continue to provide direct support through emotional support services, financial grants and specialist nurses.

Why this matters: by listening to patients, these insights are shaping how we design future studies to make sure patients not only survive, but truly thrive after transplant.

"I was delighted to be involved in the study to consider how quality of life was affected after a stem cell transplant. I have had two stem cell transplants and have been unable to work after the second. I was fortunate to be in my mid 50s and able to retire – had I been younger I would not have had that choice. The opportunity to contribute to the research and to be asked to input into how the study was designed was fantastic. The feedback we received from the research team was excellent and I think we helped in a small way to ensure the study was well received by patients."

PETER
MEMBER OF THE PATIENT ADVISORY GROUP

Read more about the insights that the two studies led by Dr Gemma Pugh have revealed.

All thanks to you

Everything we have achieved, and everything we plan to achieve in the future, is only made possible thanks to people like you.

We are so grateful for the continued support of the many volunteers, donors, partners, funders, supporters, individuals, patients, families and organisations that work with us to change lives. We would like to give particular thanks to the following:



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For supporting Anthony Nolan's efforts to grow the stem cell register for patients now and in the future:

Adrian Sudbury Schools Education Trust
African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust
The Ammies
House of Medics
Humberside Police
Marrow
One Voice Blackburn
Police Scotland
Race Against Blood Cancer
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Sue Harris Trust

For their ongoing commitment to raising awareness in the South Asian and Muslim communities and continuing to recruit new donors to the register:

MyNameisEesa

For the time and effort involved in sharing their experiences and insight, so we can improve support and services for those in need:

Patient and Families Network

For their dedication to inspiring and educating potential donors through our Education Programme and impactful recruitment efforts to corporate, Armed Forces, and other events across the UK:

Community Volunteers

For being an amazing team of 103 volunteer couriers who carried out 1,256 trips in 2025/26.

Couriers

For sharing their insights and experiences of transplant and cell therapy to help ensure we are advocating for the things that matter most to patients and families:

Policy Insights panel members

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NEXT PLC
Omaze UK
RSM UK Foundation
Sanofi
Takeda UK Limited
Therakos UK
Troy Asset Management Limited
Vital-Fizz

Be part of the lifesaving

This work changes lives – but it depends on people choosing to act. People like you.

- Join the stem cell register, or invite others to do so
- Partner with us to support progress in research and innovation
- Help raise the funds that make the lifesaving possible
- Volunteer with us
- Advocate for change, help us influence the future
- Share your story, our story, the story of saving lives through stem cells

Because every action helps ensure more people get the chance not just to survive, but thrive.

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