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Media Release

On a mission to make wishes known

An RUH staff member is on a personal mission to raise awareness of organ donation in a gruelling coast-to-coast cycling challenge.

Simon Edwards (Information Governance Manager) and his RUH colleague, Mark Hield, will take part in the charity challenge, which will see them ride the 400 miles from Bordeaux to St Malo in France.

The Bordeaux to St Malo Atlantic Coast Challenge is timed to coincide with National Transplant Week (July 7-14), and one of the key aims of their week-long challenge is to encourage people to sign the Donor Register to make sure their organ donation wishes are known. According to figures on the NHS Blood and Transfusions website, just 45% of families agree to organ donation going ahead if they are unaware of their loved one's decision to be a donor but this figure rises to 95% when their loved one's wish to be a donor is known.

Simon has a very personal reason for taking on this challenge. In 2010, his teenage son was diagnosed with a disease that would ultimately lead to kidney failure. Simon's decision to be a 'living donor' and donate one of his own kidneys was instant. The transplant was a success, but Simon is acutely aware of the high demand for organs and has urged people to sign the donor register: "Demand for organs currently far outweighs supply – three people die every day waiting for a transplant. I want to do all I can to raise money and awareness for organ donation."

The second goal of the Bordeaux to St Malo Atlantic Coast Challenge is to raise vital funds to help create a teenagers room on the children's ward at the RUH. Simon said: "The right environment can make a real difference to a young person's time in hospital. At the RUH there are well developed plans to create a teenage friendly space if funds can be raised towards the estimated £60K cost."

People can still support Simon and Mark's Bordeaux to St Malo challenge by visiting his Just Giving page: [www.justgiving.com /Simon-Edwards22](http://www.justgiving.com/Simon-Edwards22)

Notes for editors:

- National Transplant Week runs from 7-14 July
- The easiest way people can make sure their wishes are known and can be acted on is by signing the organ donor register today: www.organdonation.nhs.uk
- The Donor Family Network is an organisation that supports people whose lives have been touched by organ donation: www.donorfamilynetwork.co.uk

Ends



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