

Brave Katherine enjoys home comforts again ...

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"THERE is light at the end of the tunnel and we are slowly edging towards that light."

Those were the words of the husband of a leukaemia sufferer from Burton who has finally been given the all-clear to return home.

Katherine Sinfield is now back in Balfour Street with husband Stephen following a gruelling treatment process, which has seen her undergo intensive chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant since being diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia (CML).

It marks a significant milestone on her road to recovery, but Katherine openly admits there remains a long and diffi-

cult path ahead of her.

The 33-year-old reception class teacher's schedule will be dominated by regular trips to back to hospital in Birmingham, as well as visits from district nurses while at home.

She said: "I am obviously delighted to be home, although everything is proving to be quite an effort. I'm also finding that I am now very susceptible to the weather, so although the heating is cranked up and the fire is blazing, I'm still struggling to get warm.

"It's important to stress that just because I am home, it doesn't mean I am better.

"Recovering from a transplant and beating leukaemia is a very long process – years not months – but you clearly cannot stay in hospital all of that time

'We've been waiting for this day for a long time'

Stephen Sinfield

and therefore your main recovery period is spent at home.

"That is why I am taking 34 tablets a day while visiting Birmingham twice a week."

As for husband Stephen, he said he was just glad to be able to bring his wife home.

He said: "We've been waiting for this day for a long time. Now instead of making a 70-mile return trip to the hospital each day, I am a doctor, nurse and full time carer. It's a 24/7 challenge but there is light at the end of the tunnel and we are slowly edging closer to this light."

Katherine was at the centre of the Mail's Take Five Minutes campaign, set up to get more people to donate blood and sign up to the bone marrow donor register.



Katherine's Diary

THE reception class teacher from Burton describes in her own words what daily life is like living with Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia (CML).

Earlier this year, the 33-year-old from Balfour Street spent nearly eight weeks at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham undergoing intensive chemotherapy.

Meanwhile, the Burton Mail launched its Take Five Minutes campaign in a bid to locate a suitable bone marrow donor, not just for Katherine, but for anyone who is in her position, while also raising greater awareness of the condition.

Thankfully, in September, Katherine was able to announce that a suitable donor had been found in Europe and a transplant was planned for late October.

While undergoing gruelling treatment herself, Katherine wants to help others in a similar position and has taken to raising awareness of the condition and generating support for the charities. For more information on how to become a bone marrow donor, call the National Blood Service Donor helpline on 0300 123 2323.

Thursday, November 21:

I'm home. I was discharged from hospital today marking a total stay of 33-days – and 23 days since my transplant.

Of course, a leukaemia patient is a patient for life and so I will be going back to Birmingham twice next week for routine check-ups.

For the next month or so our visits to Birmingham will be a twice-weekly affair.

I left hospital today with a huge bag of tablets. On my busiest days I will be taking 34 tablets – and although this reduces to around 30 tablets on a quiet day, I will be popping pills pretty much constantly.

Some of the tablets – penicillin (Phenoxymethylpenicillin) – for instance, I will be taking twice daily for the rest of my life.

What I noticed most when I walked out of the hospital was that the temperature had dropped since I was admitted. If you remember, I was admitted on the evening after the BUPA Great Birmingham Run on October 20.

The next hurdle to overcome is the 'day 100' marker. My day 100 is Thursday, February 6, 2014.

WOMEN WHO RACED FOR LIFE HELPED RAISE £78,290



THE total amount raised by thousands of women who took part in Cancer Research UK's Race For Life at Darley Park in Derby has been totted up.

Two races took place over one weekend in July, raising £78,290.

Burton woman Sharon Holloway, 42, who has beaten cancer twice, was among the women who took part.

When the Mail spoke to Sharon in May, she was still undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Now she has now been given the all clear.

She said: "I have been given the all-clear and everything is back to normal as it should be."

Speaking about taking part in the race while still going through treatment, she said: "Seeing everyone there makes you even more determined, knowing what other people have gone through."

Sharon raised £540 when she raced with her two daughters, granddaughter and friend, and is continuing to raise money through a raffle at her shop Steptoes in Horninglow.

She also wants to do a skydive next year.

Sharon said she had experienced the advances in breast cancer treatment since she was first diagnosed 13 years ago.

"The care is completely different, things have improved", she said. "I know a lot of people who have been through it and the treatment is better. There is more care out there for people now and it is still improving."

Mrs Holloway first overcame breast cancer 13 years ago but was told she had BRCA2 – the breast and ovarian cancer susceptibility gene – making it more likely she would contract both types.

SURVIVOR ... Sharon Holloway has been given the all clear following her second battle with cancer. She and thousands of other women helped raise a massive amount for Cancer Research UK.

Eye spy a boost for guide dogs after Specsavers event

STAFF at a Burton opticians managed to raise more than £500 for charity with an open day marking a special occasion for the store.

Specsavers, in High Street, organised the event to celebrate the shop's 21st anniversary in Burton, and to boost funds for the charity Guide Dogs for the Blind UK.

They had cake and celebrations, and

were joined for the day by guide dog Ice, who was a big hit with customers and passers-by.

Staff also carried out 'MOTs' for glasses in exchange for a donation to the charity.

The store also took part in Guide Dogs Week by donating £1 from every sight test to the charity.

Store director Linda Joyce said: "We're

elated to have raised so much for this fantastic charity. It's a cause we all feel very passionate about, as we see it change lives for the better, allowing those with visual impairment the freedom and independence they couldn't otherwise achieve on their own."

The charity is supported by Specsavers nationally, and events such as this take place all over the UK.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Case adjourned against man accused of assault

A POLISH man accused of assault by beating has had his case adjourned.

Pawel Burda, of Hill Street, Stapenhill, was due to appear before Burton Magistrates' Court yesterday to face a charge of assaulting Sylvia Burda in Burton on November 5. However, his case was adjourned until December 13 for an interpreter to attend.

Defendant, 48, denies offences against child

A 48-YEAR-OLD man has denied assaulting a child on two separate occasions.

Stuart Murphy, of Hill Street, Stapenhill, will now face trial at Burton Magistrates' Court February 25. He has been granted conditional bail.