

Cross fingers as Katherine's big day arrives

THE next seven days will be some of the longest in the life of Katherine Sinfield.

Today, a donor in Germany will be heading to hospital to donate stem cells for the 33-year-old Burton teacher.

Only days later, Katherine will undergo a bone marrow transplant in a bid to rid her body of the cancer that has attacked it for so long.

And then the waiting begins.

She will have to stay in hospital to keep any bugs, diseases or infections at bay while her body starts working its way back to full fitness.

Astonishingly, it will be around 100 days before doctors can even tell if the procedure was a success.

The Mail has covered Katherine's story from the day she was diagnosed right up until this fateful week ,which will decide the shape of the rest of her life.

Even in her times of desperation, she has remained upbeat and positive and determined to shine a spotlight on the people who have helped her.

Katherine, our fingers are crossed. We're all praying for a successful transplant and a brighter future.

Worker surely worthy of gong

LYNDSEY Hunt helped give a Burton couple the chance to be parents in her role as a social worker.

Now, after being nominated for an award for work, we congratulate her and wish her the best of luck.

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Bone marrow donation on the way to Katherine



FINGERS CROSSED . . . Katherine Sinfield is gearing up for one of the biggest days of her life as she awaits the arrival of her bone marrow donation ahead of her transplant.

by Rob Smyth
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TODAY, somewhere in Germany, somebody will be paying a visit to their local hospital.


This 'somebody' is the mystery donor who will hopefully help clear Burton teacher Katherine Sinfield of her leukaemia.

The 33-year-old, from Balfour Street, who has been the centrepiece of the Mail's Take Five Minutes campaign, said: "It's remarkable that a complete stranger will be taking time away from their jobs today to donate their stem cells for me. As the process is kept extremely confidential, all I know is that the donor is from Germany.

"Since I have been diagnosed with leukaemia, I have heard of lots of people who have had successful bone marrow transplants from German donors. Words will always fail to thank my donor for their 'gift of life', but at the same time, it raises the question as to why so many donors come from abroad?

"It must boil down to the fact that German people are far more willing to sign up to the register, which shows greater awareness and education is needed in the UK.

"Personally, I feel that the term 'bone marrow transplant' is partly responsible for a low participation rate in the UK. Everyone assumes that because they hear the word 'transplant', that it involves an operation – it doesn't, nei-



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ther for me or the donor.

"Whether you sign up with the NHS British Bone Marrow Registry or a charity such as Anthony Nolan, signing up is just a case of giving a small blood sample or spitting in a tube."

Statistics show that every 20 minutes, someone in the UK falls ill with a form of blood cancer. The Anthony Nolan charity found 937 matches for patients in 2009-10 – but for every life the charity managed to save, there was another who wasn't so lucky because of a lack of donors.

Katherine said: "The Anthony Nolan charity are responsible for finding my match and so I am eternally grateful to both them and the haematology team at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham."

Cannabis user copped twice

A CANNABIS user who was twice caught in the act by police has been given a community order.

Phillip Ball, 27, was first collared by a police officer who had smelled drugs on him while he was sitting with a group of friends near Burton Library.

Then, after a warrant was issued for his arrest after he failed to show up at court, he was again found in possession of the Class B drug.

Ball, of Goodman Street, Burton, pleaded guilty to two charges of possession of cannabis, as well as a charge of failing to surrender to court.

Michael Taylor, defending at Burton Magistrates' Court, said it was the first time Ball had ever been in trouble with the law.

He said: "It is the first time the defendant has been charged and has appeared before the court and we are dealing with very small amounts of cannabis."

He was given a 12-month community order and must pay a total of £290.

What do YOU think?

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Mental health event leads to action plan for Staffordshire

MENTAL health issues were the main issue on the agenda at a meeting of local organisations co-ordinated by Staffordshire police and crime commissioner Matthew Ellis.

The event, held at the headquarters of Staffordshire Police in Stafford, focused on getting vulnerable people the most appropriate support from the relevant agencies, rather than leaving police to deal with people with mental health problems, and led to plans for a multi-agency training plan to improve the situation in the area.

It was organised in the wake of a report published earlier this year highlighting the scale of the issues, and how much time officers spend dealing with mental health issues, which could be dealt with by different agencies and thus free up officers for operational policing.

Mr Ellis said: "I set out a challenge for all services involved to sort this out and come up with plans for Staffordshire.

"We need to get a system that stops people with mental health problems



MOVING FORWARD . . . Staffordshire police and crime commissioner Matthew Ellis.

being locked up in cells and find an appropriate alternative.

"I'm pleased that the Staffordshire Report has stimulated such incredible public debate and I get the sense that things are starting to move forward.

"Ensuring staff from agencies have the right tools to do the job so that vulnerable people get the right support from the right organisation is crucial."