

## DANIEL'S LEGACY

Daniel Harrison was 17 when he was killed instantly in a car crash last December. But it wasn't until a few hours later that his devastated family discovered he was on the organ donor register.

Daniel had mentioned it a few months earlier after talking about it at school, says his father Steve, but he had no idea his son had signed up to be a donor.

We just got a call saying his name was on the donor register and would we be willing to donate, he recalls. 'We said, yes of course.'

As a result of that decision as many as 40 different people have benefited from Daniel's organs and tissue, something that has given his mother Amanda enormous comfort. 'My wife says constantly that she feels Daniel is living on in other people.'

The only small hiccup in the whole process, recalls Steve, was that to be effective Daniel's eyes had to be removed within 24 hours of his death and at that point his wife and daughter still hadn't seen the body. But thanks to police and hospital pulling out all the stops the family were able to view Daniel shortly afterwards.

The next day, says Steve, they learnt that the tissues had already been retrieved. 'They told us that as a result somebody was going to be able to see this Christmas who otherwise wouldn't have.'

Critical to the whole experience has been the empathy and professionalism of the hospital staff.

Although time was of the essence for the eye transplants we were never hurried when they were saying their goodbyes to Daniel and never even referred to organ donation.

He feels every hospital should have staff who can discuss organ donation with bereaved families. In fact he is astonished it isn't standard procedure. I know it isn't the easiest job in the world but at the end of the day you would think somebody would be able to broach the subject if lives depend on it.

There are 8,000 people waiting for a transplant of one sort or another. I think it's almost criminal this isn't done as a routine procedure, a natural step after somebody has died.

The fact that one young man can help up to 40 people might help some to look beyond the tragedy and see the positives that can come out of it. I'd urge anyone to think about it very seriously because ultimately it can change somebody's life.