

Marie sings in the B Positive Choir alongside her partner Calvin Campbell who has sickle cell anaemia.

The couple heard about the choir through the Camden and Islington Sickle Cell & Thalassaemia Centre where they both help to run the support group Red Cells R Us as volunteers.

Marie said: "I jumped at the chance to be part of the choir even though I had never sung in public before.

"It seemed a great way of encouraging more people to give blood and raise awareness of sickle cell, a cause that is very close to my heart.

"My partner Calvin needs blood every four weeks, something that just wouldn't be possible without the generosity of blood donors."

When she met Calvin more than 30 years ago Marie had never heard of sickle cell anaemia, but soon became familiar with the regular medical treatments he relies on.

She said: "The hospital became our second home, especially when our children were born as his crisis episodes became more frequent and his admissions stretched over months rather than weeks.

"Our children grew up celebrating several Father's Days, birthdays and Christmas dinners by his hospital bed, which doubled as their play mat and dinner table.

"But Calvin's illness was never the focal point of our relationship because his strength of character and resilience of handling his pain helped me cope and carry on with our everyday life."

Marie feels the choir is an important way to raise awareness of sickle cell anaemia as well as blood donation.

She said: "I think it is such an inspirational idea and a great platform in reaching a wider audience to highlight the importance of these combined causes".

Marie added: "Being in the choir has given me more confidence and I've met new people from all over the country. They are a lovely bunch and the camaraderie is fantastic".

"What unites us as a choir is our personal connection with sickle cell and blood donation and using singing to raise awareness is a fantastic thing".

Marie and Calvin live in London and have a grown-up son and daughter and two young grandchildren.

