

> **PRESS RELEASE / EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.00AM, WEDNESDAY 20TH JULY**

Coloplast UK, charities and people with a stoma heading to Parliament to 'relay' the importance of high quality stoma care

On Wednesday 20th July, Peterborough-based intimate healthcare company Coloplast UK and Ireland will join forces with the UK's three largest stoma charities to co-host a first-of-its-kind relay to Parliament to launch a new 'Calls to Action' statement. The statement, developed by people with stomas, sets out the improvements needed to ensure everyone with a stoma has access to optimal care so that they can live their lives to the full – whether that's returning to sport, going on holiday, going to the cinema, taking their kids to the park, DIY, or going to a restaurant.

Together with Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Association, Urostomy Association and Colostomy UK, Coloplast are arranging the relay, which is starting at a London hospital 6 kilometres away from Parliament, where the participants will finish; a symbolic display of the activities that people with a stoma can do when they receive high quality care and support. The relay will be led by people with a stoma, alongside other members of the stoma community including nurses, third sector representatives and even Parliamentarians. In fact, to show his support for their valuable efforts, Peterborough MP Paul Bristow will be tying up his training shoes to take part!

Using the Calls to Action statement as a 'baton', participants will follow a scenic route along the River Thames before passing the baton to Parliamentary reception host, Giles Watling MP, directly outside of Parliament. Once they have had the chance to catch their breath, Giles will invite the runners and walkers into Parliament to kick-off a reception and celebrate their efforts to carry this important message from 'patients' to policymakers. The reception will also seek to educate Parliamentarians about the steps they can take to support everyone living with a stoma across the UK.

Speaking ahead of the event, the MP for Peterborough, Paul Bristow said:

"When I heard what Coloplast and the charities had planned, I knew I needed to help. This is such a special, important event. Parliament rarely gets to hear about stoma care, yet for each MP, there are 300 local constituents living with a stoma. That needs to change.

"I'm proud to be running in this relay race. We've got to raise awareness and provide better support for people living with a stoma, not just for my city, but across the country."

Anne Marks, a relay participant who supported the development of the 'Calls to Action' research, said:

"As a member of the stoma community, I know first-hand about the challenges that living with a stoma can bring. I was really pleased to share my personal experience of what it is really like to live with a stoma. I want to play my part in making sure that as many people as possible know about our Calls to Action. I don't want anyone with a stoma to be suffering in silence."

Tracey Virgin-Elliston, Lead Nurse Specialist in Stoma Care at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust who will be handing the baton to the first relay participants, said:

Coloplast develops products and services that make life easier for people with very personal and private medical conditions. Working closely with the people who use our products, we create solutions that are sensitive to their special needs. We call this intimate healthcare. Our business includes Ostomy Care, Continence Care, Wound and Skin Care and Interventional Urology. We operate globally and employ about 12,500 employees.

"I'm so pleased to be able to start this amazing event. Myself and our brilliant team dedicate every day to making sure that people with a stoma receive the best possible care and support when they need it most. It will be amazing to hand over the baton to the relay runners, who are driven by the very same purpose. We're certainly proud to show our support for this brilliant effort to improve the lives of the UK's stoma community."

Mary Speirs, Senior Director, Clinical Services Chronic Care UK and relay participant, said:

"Coloplast is delighted to be working with Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Association, Urostomy Association and Colostomy UK on this very special and important event. We're united by our commitment to ensuring the voice of the stoma community is heard at the highest levels, and I'm sure that the relay and reception will play a vital role in achieving this. I'm looking forward to lacing up my running shoes and doing my part to support people with a stoma across the UK on Wednesday".

The Stomas in Parliament event has been initiated and funded by Coloplast UK and Ireland.

ENDS

Notes to editors

About the 'Calls to Action':

Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Association, Urostomy Association, Colostomy UK and Coloplast UK and Ireland have been working with patients to develop research articulating the challenges people with a stoma experience in their post-surgery lives, with a particular focus on the impact of leakage. The research uses insight from people with a stoma to develop recommendations that stakeholders including healthcare professionals, healthcare providers, communities and employers, policymakers and manufacturers and suppliers should be looking to implement in order to support people with a stoma across the UK. The research was developed using a modified Delphi panel, which utilised several patient focus groups to create a set of 'Calls to Action' which will be shared with policymakers on Wednesday 20th July. Among other findings, the research suggests that leakage has a significant impact on daily life and can be the cause of physical and mental health challenges, as well as unique social anxieties, for people with a stoma. It also found that access to peer support and specialist care can be a significant aid in dealing with these complications, though there is a lack of equitable access to these resources. Further information on the event and the research can be accessed [here](#) and by searching [#StomasInParliament](#) on social media channels.

About stomas:

A stoma is an artificial opening in the body that is used to discharge waste. The surgery is performed to treat a range of conditions, including bowel and bladder cancer and Inflammatory Bowel Disease, as well as trauma and disability.

- It is estimated that between 165,000 – 205,000 people in the UK live with a stoma, and that 21,000 people have stoma surgery each year^{1 2 3}.
- While the formation of a stoma is a life-saving procedure for many, it can result in physical and psychological challenges for people in their post-surgery lives.

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- Leakage in particular is a major challenge and can be a constant source of worry, in addition to causing painful skin complications, unpleasant odour and isolation, as well as career and relationship challenges.

About the Coloplast UK and Ireland:

Coloplast UK and Ireland is the largest subsidiary of Coloplast, a medical technology company based in Denmark. Coloplast UK and Ireland is headquartered in Peterborough, and employs over 500 people in the area. Coloplast develops products and services to make life easier for people with deeply personal and private medical conditions. These conditions are often associated with trauma and taboo. The more intimate the condition, the greater the requirement to understand their world and develop solutions that are sensitive to their special needs. Coloplast calls this Intimate Healthcare. For more information, please visit <http://www.coloplast.co.uk/>.

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ⁱ NHS Digital. NHS Digital Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity 2020.

ⁱⁱ Colostomy UK. Step Up for Stomas 2021. 2021 [Available from: <https://www.colostomyuk.org/active-ostomates/step-up-for-stomas/>]

ⁱⁱⁱ British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA). Estimated number of ostomates in the UK. 2021.