The Introduction of an opt-out system for organ donation in England

Summary

There will be a debate in Westminster Hall on Thursday 13 July at 3.00pm. The Member in charge of this debate is Dan Jarvis MP.

This briefing provides a summary of the current position in England (where donors must opt in) and the calls for change to an opt-out system, a description of the existing opt-out system in Wales, together with statistics and international comparisons, press and parliamentary coverage and further information.

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1. Organ donation in England: an overview

Organ donation, as with other aspects of health care, is a devolved matter.

England, Scotland and Northern Ireland all have an opt-in system for organ donation.

In Wales, the situation is different. In December 2015, the Human Transplantation (Wales) Act 2013 came into force in Wales. Under this Act, adults who live and die in Wales will be held to have given their consent to donate organs unless they register a wish to not be a donor (an opt-out system).

In October 2016, the then public health minister, Nicola Blackwood, confirmed that the Government had no plans for an opt-out system. She described the ongoing work to increase donor rates and transplantation:

Since 2008 donation in the United Kingdom has increased by 68% and transplants by 47%, by increasing the number of specialist nurses and strengthening the donation infrastructure. 2015/16 saw the highest ever deceased donor rate in the UK with 1,364 deceased donors resulting in 3,529 transplants.

We continue to support work to further increase donation and transplantation rates, particularly promoting collaborative working amongst organisations and raising awareness of donation in the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to become donors.

NHS Blood and Transplant launched a new UK-wide organ donation and transplantation strategy in July 2013. Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020 identifies the action being taken to increase organ donation and transplantation.¹

Responding to another PQ in February 2017, Nicola Blackwood again set out the actions being taken to improve organ donor rates (such as making it easier to sign up to the register).²

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### Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020


The strategy noted the success of the organ taskforce’s report in 2008, and the 50% increase in deceased organ donors. The new strategy included the following aims:

- Increasing the number of potential donors
- Improving donor conversion rates
• Making the most of organ donors  
• Increasing retrieval and transplantation of organs  
• Improving resuscitation of retrieved organs  
• Improving survival of transplant patients  
• Systems to support organ donation and transplantation

The NHSBT strategy noted too that international evidence shows that the use of transplant coordinators achieves higher consent rates. A UK audit also demonstrated that, when Specialist Nurses for Organ Donation (SN-ODs) are involved with a family at early stages, consent rates improve. One of the actions in the strategy was that families of potential donors will only be approached by someone who is specifically trained and competent in the role. This approach was also supported by NICE guidance.

1.1 Calls for change in England

There has been some support for a change to the organ donation system in England in recent years.

Governments have in the past said that they had no plans to move to an opt-out system in England but, recently, there have been signs that the Government is possibly now more inclined towards such a system. In July 2017, the Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, indicated that the Government was sympathetic to calls for the system in England to become one of opting-out rather than opting-in:

There is a lot of merit in the opt-out system that has been developed in Wales for some time and is now happening in Scotland. We are looking closely at the evidence, but we have a lot of sympathy with this. If the system does lead to an increase in organ donations, it is certainly something we would want to pursue here.⁴

1.2 Support for a change to the system

In 2012, the British Medical Association (BMA) produced its report Building on progress: Where next for Organ donation policy in the UK? This looked to the standard set by Spain, where they have the highest donation rate in the world, and stated that the BMA believed an opt-out system with safeguards was the best option for the UK and the one that is likely to be the most effective.

Delegates at a June 2016 BMA annual representatives meeting voted in favour of a motion calling on the Governments in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland to move to an opt-out system similar to that in Wales. Some charities, such as the British Heart Foundation, have also expressed support for a change in system across the UK.

⁴ HC Deb 4 July 2017 c1020
BAME communities and organ donation

NHSBT report that 66% of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities living in the UK refuse to give permission for their loved one’s organs to be donated compared with 43% of the rest of the population. They also highlight that patients from BAME communities are more likely to need a transplant due to an increase risk of illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension. On average, BAME patients will wait a year longer than a white patient for a kidney transplant.\(^4\)

A [PQ reply in December 2016](https://www.parliament.uk/business/questions/statements-papers/56780) highlighted the steps being taken to improve BAME organ donation rates:

As of 9 December 2016, there were 1,851 people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities waiting for an organ transplant. This represents around 29% of the active transplant list. Around 5% of all deceased organ donors came from BAME communities.

There are a number of specific initiatives to increase the number of organ donors from BAME communities. These include the National BAME Transplant Alliance to coordinate the work of BAME organisations working within these communities, a Peer Educator Project working with the Pakistani Muslim Community in Birmingham and the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets and NHS Blood and Transplant has developed a behaviour change campaign strategy in support of the [Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020: A UK Strategy](https://www.hsa.org.uk/assets/files/00598/Taking_Organ_Transplantation_to_2020_A_UK_Strategy.pdf). This includes increasing its education and engagement activities with BAME communities and a Faith Action Plan outlining action to work in partnership with faith leaders.\(^5\)

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\(^4\) NHSBT, *Organ donation and ethnicity* (undated)

\(^5\) PQ 56780, 15 December 2016
2. The new organ donation system in Wales

*The Human Transplantation (Wales) Act 2013* came into force in Wales in December 2015. Under this new law, adults who live and die in Wales will be held to have given their consent to donate organs unless they register a wish to not be a donor (an opt-out system). The deceased has to be over 18 years of age and have lived in Wales for longer than six months. There is an option for the family of the deceased to provide information to show they would not have wished to consent, and those without the capacity to make the decision are excluded from the new system.

A [December 2016 news story](https://www.organdonation.wales/2016/12/13/welsh-organ-donation-system-now-in-force-in-wales/) reported that there had been 39 organs transplanted from people whose consent had been deemed:

- People who want to be organ donors can register a decision to opt in or do nothing, which will mean they have no objection to being an organ donor. Those people who do not want to be organ donor can opt out at any time.

A year on, the latest figures show that 39 organs from patients whose consent was deemed have been transplanted into people who are in need of replacement organs.

In the two years prior to the introduction of the new system of deemed consent, the Welsh Government made significant efforts to inform the public of the exact nature of the upcoming changes in respect of transplantation activities. During this period the number of organs transplanted increased each year, from 120 between the 1 December 2013 and 31 October 2014, to 160 between 1 December 2015 and 2016.6

In June 2017, junior health minister, Jackie Doyle-Price, said that it may be some time before the evidence base is big enough to show what effect the change in the law in Wales has had, but available figures suggested there had been no notable change:

Organ donation policy is a devolved matter. NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) collects data on organ donation and transplantation across the United Kingdom. The latest activity data for Wales can be found in full on NHSBT’s website.

The following table shows there has been no notable change in Welsh deceased donation figures since the change in legislation on 1 December 2015:

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6 [UK first, Welsh organ donation system celebrates first anniversary](https://organdonation.wales/2017/06/09/welsh-organ-donation-system-celebrates-first-anniversary/), Organ Donation Wales (undated)
NHSBT’s statistical analysis indicates that, due to small numbers of donors in Wales, it may be three or four years before there are sufficient numbers to provide enough evidence to determine the true impact of the change in legislation.7

2.1 How is it working in Wales?

The table below illustrates the impact of the opt-out system in Wales. Given that in 2015/16 only 5% of people opted out, followed by 6% in 2016/17 the pool of potential organ donors in Wales has almost trebled since 2014/15.

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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of potential organ donors in Wales</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>Change 2014/15 to 2016/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people opted-in to the ODR</td>
<td>1,047,039</td>
<td>1,113,090</td>
<td>1,171,300</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated number with potential for deemed consent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,831,055</td>
<td>1,755,108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential donor pool including deemed consent</td>
<td>1,047,039</td>
<td>2,944,145</td>
<td>2,926,408</td>
<td>179%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NHS Organ Donation Statistics

The opt-out system does not appear to have deterred individuals in Wales from pro-actively opting-in. The table below shows the percentage of the population who have opted in to organ donation registers in the four countries of the UK. The percentage in Wales has increased since the opt-out scheme was introduced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of population opted-in to the organ donation register</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>Change 2014/15 to 2016/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NHS Organ Donation Statistics

However – and reflecting what the Minister said in June 2017 - there does not as yet appear to be any conclusive evidence regarding the impact of the opt-out system in Wales on the number of deceased organ donors or transplants involving deceased donors. Since the system was introduced, both the number of deceased organ donors and

7 PQ 1214, 26 June 2017
transplants involving deceased donors increased more in England and Scotland than in Wales.

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1,076</td>
<td>1,154</td>
<td>1,177</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>-12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NHS Organ Donation Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>2,833</td>
<td>2,931</td>
<td>3,154</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>-5.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NHS Organ Donation Statistics

2.2 Organ donation: international comparisons

Data from the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines shows the relative rate of transplants between different European countries. The table below shows comparisons between the UK and Spain, Germany and France. The UK has higher transplant and deceased donor rates than Germany, but lower rates than Spain and France.

The rates for ‘actual deceased organ donors’, relate to persons from whom at least one organ has been recovered for the purpose of transplantation.

Please note that while the UK’s rates of kidney transplants overall are below Spain and France, the UK’s rate of kidney transplants from living donors is around double that of Spain and France.

Organ donation in Spain

The Spanish system for organ donation is a soft opt-out system which was introduced in 1979 but it is generally accepted that the improved
organisation and resources are likely to be more responsible for the increase in numbers of donors and transplants than the donation system.

The system for organ donation in Spain is technically a soft opt-out system, organs are taken with family consent or in the absence of any known objection by the deceased. However, in practice the system works more in line with an opt-in system as the consent of the family is always sought. Spain saw a small increase in the numbers of donations following the introduction of this system in 1979 but the most significant increase came following the introduction of ‘the Spanish model’ in 1989.

The Organizacion Nacional de Transplantes (ONT) was established in 1989 as part of the Spanish Department of Health. They started a reorganisation of organ donation in Spain through the use of medical trained transplant co-ordinators. Initially the number of coordinators was very small but by 1999 there was a transplant co-ordinator in every hospital that had the potential for organ donation.

The transplant coordinators are usually intensive care doctors who work in the role part time. They are responsible for all aspects of the transplant process- identifying potential organ donors and spending significant time with the bereaved families are central parts to the role. There is ongoing in depth training provided to all these transplant coordinators. In a 2009 press article, the president of the ONT suggested that the role and success of the transplant coordinators is often down to the time spent, and understanding approach they have with a donor’s relatives.

The British Medical Association in their 2012 report on the future of organ donation policy in the UK advised that some of Spain’s performance is likely to be due to difference in resources and clinical practice between the two countries:

These include:

- the higher number of intensive care beds in Spain – 87.5 per million population compared with 27 per million population in the UK (excluding coronary care, neonatal and burns units);
- different admission criteria for ICU – with far fewer beds in the UK, those with a poor prognosis, who are therefore more likely to be potential donors, are less likely to be admitted to ICU;
- end-of-life practices – in the UK it is considered good practice to withdraw life-sustaining treatment before brain stem tests are carried out if treatment is no longer benefitting the patient, whereas this is less common in Spain. This results in a far lower number of potential DBD donors in the UK. (Spain has a donor rate of 34-35 per million population, 95% of whom are DBD donors whereas the maximum number of potential DBD donors identified in the UK potential donor audit was 18.4 per million population). This situation could change with recent Spanish

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8 BMA, Building on progress: Where next for organ donation policy in the UK, 2012
9 AFP, Daniel Silva, Spain leads world in organ donations,
legislation on withdrawal of life support which could make patient and family requests to withdraw ventilation more common.211

- the use of ‘higher risk donors’. In 2009, 45% of Spanish donors were over 60 years of age, compared with 30% in the UK. In 2009 no organs could be transplanted from 206 of the 1,606 donors (12.8%) in Spain.212

One of these transplant coordinators reported in a 2013 news article that increased awareness is not enough- improved coordination, best practice and ongoing training plays a significant role in increasing organ donor numbers10.

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10 BMJ Blog, Aser Garcia Rada, Exporting the Spanish and European organ donation system, July 2013
3. Media

3.1 Articles and blogs

British Medical Journal (BMJ)
Scotland plans to move to opt-out system for organ donation
6 July 2017

Guardian
Organ donation presumed consent could be adopted in England
30 June 2017

Financial Times [login needed]
NHS considers requiring opt-out from organ donation in England
30 June 2017

Independent
England could move to 'opt out' organ donation system, Downing Street says
30 June 2017

Telegraph
Scotland to introduce 'soft' opt-out organ donation system
28 June 2016

Telegraph
BMA to push for 'opt-out' organ donation system
22 June 2016

Guardian
Doctors to lobby for opt-out organ donor system
22 June 2016

BMJ (Letter)
Too soon to assess effects of deemed consent to organ donation in Wales
23 May 2017
BMJ
Margaret McCartney: When organ donation isn’t a donation
28 February 2017

Guardian
Welsh ‘deemed consent' organ donation system shows promising results
4 September 2016

Guardian
Organ donation rates for transplants still too low in UK, says NHS
1 September 2016

3.2 Press releases

BMA
Organ donation: move towards 'soft' opt out
30 June 2017

BMA
Two thirds of people support a ‘soft’ opt-out organ donation system, reveals new BMA survey
28 February 2017

British Transplantation Society
BTS Response to the Scottish Government’s Consultation on Legislation on Organ Donation
14 March 2017

NHS Blood and Transplant
Waiting time to kidney transplant down 18% but shortage of donors still costing lives
9 March 2017

Welsh Government
Taking organ transplantation to 2020
22 November 2016
4. Parliamentary business

4.1 PQs

**Organs: Donors**

**Asked by:** Flynn, Paul

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the report, Taking organ transplantation to 2020: a detailed strategy, published in 2013, what progress his Department has made towards increasing consent rates for deceased organ donation to 80 per cent by 2020.

**Answering member:** Jackie Doyle-Price

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSTB) is the organ donor organisation for the United Kingdom and is responsible for promoting organ donation and the matching and offering of donated organs.

The UK Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020 Strategy (2013) sets an ambitious target to achieve world class consent rates to donation after death of over 80% by 2020. One action to achieve this was the development of national strategies to promote a shift in behaviour to increase consent.

The consent/authorisation rate has increased, from 59% in 2013/14 to 63% in 2016/17 but is behind the Strategy’s target of 70% for 2016/17. The rates since 2013/14, and the Strategy target dates, are set out in the table below.

Consent/Authorisation (1) rates by financial year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial year</th>
<th>2020 Strategy (2) target rate (%)</th>
<th>Actual rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – NHS Blood and Transplant

Notes:

1 Authorisation is the term used in Scotland for consent.

2 UK Taking Organ Donation to 2020 Strategy, July 2013

The 2020 Oversight Group (with membership from the Department and the Devolved Administrations, NHSTB, professional bodies and voluntary sector stakeholders) reviewed the strategy in November 2016. In addition to the specific actions recorded in the Strategy, the Oversight
Group identified new actions that might contribute to increasing consent rates. These are outlined in the supplementary action plan available at:

https://nhsbtde.blob.core.windows.net/umbraco-assets-corp/2296/tot20-review.pdf

NHSBT has also introduced several operational initiatives to increase the consent rate, including: a new role within the Specialist Nurse – Organ Donation team that focuses on obtaining consent to build greater expertise and experience; and a number of communications and marketing initiatives to encourage people to sign up to the NHS Organ Donor Register and to tell their family of their wishes.

06 Jul 2017 | Written questions | 1450

House of Commons Tabled Parliamentary Question 2017-19 3535

Tabled by: Flynn, Paul

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2017 to Question 1450, on organ donors, if he will review that strategy to ensure it meets the target to achieve a consent rate of over 80 per cent by 2020. [3535]

Date tabled: 06 Jul 2017 | Date for answer: 13 Jul 2017

Organs: Donors

Tabled by: Ashworth, Jonathan

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what comparative assessment he has made of the number of BAME organ donors and longer transplant waiting times for patients from those backgrounds. [3546]

Date tabled: 06 Jul 2017 | Date for answer: 10 Jul 2017

Topical Questions

Asked by: Ronnie Cowan

With the Scottish Government now committed to a soft opt-out system for organ donation similar to that implemented in Wales in 2015, is it not time that the UK Government followed the lead of the Welsh and Scottish Governments by introducing a similar system south of the border? [900200]

Answered by: The Secretary of State for Health (Mr Jeremy Hunt)

There is a lot of merit in the opt-out system that has been developed in Wales for some time and is now happening in Scotland. We are looking closely at the evidence, but we have a lot of sympathy with this. If the system does lead to an increase in organ donations, it is certainly something we would want to pursue here.

04 Jul 2017 | Members' contributions | 626 c1020

Organs: Donors

Asked by: Jarvis, Dan
To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to the Answer of 27 April 2017 to Question 71709, on organs: donors, if he will introduce a system of deemed consent for organ and tissue donation in England.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price

On 1 December 2015, Wales introduced deemed consent (opt-out) for organ and tissue donation. We will monitor closely how the changes in the law on consent in Wales affect donation rates.

Since the launch of the United Kingdom-wide Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020 Strategy in 2013, organ donation rates have increased by 7% and transplant rates by 6% mainly through a strengthening of the donation infrastructure (e.g. increased specialist nurses, improved retrieval arrangements). In 2016-17, the UK had the highest ever deceased donor and transplant rates with 1,413 deceased donors resulting in 3,712 transplants.

29 Jun 2017 | Written questions | 1215

Organs: Donors

Asked by: Jarvis, Dan

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information his Department holds on the change in the level of organ donations in Wales since the introduction of an opt-out system in that country.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price

Organ donation policy is a devolved matter. NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) collects data on organ donation and transplantation across the United Kingdom. The latest activity data for Wales can be found in full on NHSBT’s website.

The following table shows there has been no notable change in Welsh deceased donation figures since the change in legislation on 1 December 2015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NHSBT’s statistical analysis indicates that, due to small numbers of donors in Wales, it may be three or four years before there are sufficient numbers to provide enough evidence to determine the true impact of the change in legislation.

29 Jun 2017 | Written questions | 1214

Business of the House

Member: Paul Flynn

When can we debate early-day motion 85?

[That this House congratulates the Scottish Government for announcing new legislation to introduce presumed consent for organ donation in Scotland; notes the model successes of presumed consent in Wales]
where 39 lives have been saved in the last year, which has inspired the change in Scotland; further notes that the UK still has the lowest rates of organ donation consent in Europe; and calls on the Government to save more lives by introducing presumed consent for organ donation in England.]

The early-day motion congratulates the Scottish Government on introducing legislation so that Scotland can share the benefits that Wales has enjoyed in having presumed consent for organ donations. The United Kingdom has the worst record in Europe for the number of consents. It has been a brilliant, life-saving success in Wales. Is it not time that England and Scotland enjoyed those life-saving benefits?

Andrea Leadsom:
This is a sensitive subject, and there are strong views on all sides of the argument. I share the hon. Gentleman’s view that presumed consent would be life-changing for many people waiting for organ donations. I will certainly raise the issue, but of course he could secure a Westminster Hall debate to highlight it. I am sure that will be in his mind.

29 Jun 2017 | Business questions | 626 cc744-8

Organs: Donors

Asked by: Chishti, Rahman
To ask the Secretary of State for Health, with reference to Taking organ transplantation to 2020: a detailed strategy, published in 2013, what plans he has to increase consent rates for deceased organ donation to 80 per cent by 2020.

Answering member: Nicola Blackwood
NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) is the organ donor organisation for the United Kingdom and is responsible for promoting organ donation and the matching and allocating of donated organs.

The UK Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020 Strategy (2013) aims to achieve world class consent rates of over 80% by 2020. One of the actions to achieve this was the development of national strategies to promote a shift in behaviour to increase consent. The consent rate was 57% in 2013 and is currently 62% year to date. More data can be found at:


NHSBT has adopted a model to share and scale up successful local activity and to allow broad national messages to be adapted to meet specific local audiences and needs. Examples include NHSBT’s ‘hot house’ pilots which aims to target specific areas which cover a large population, high potential donor numbers and lower than average opt in rates on the Organ Donation Register with a fully-integrated programme of local activity.
In addition, NHSBT has invested significantly in more specialist nurses, in better retrieval arrangements and in strengthening referral procedures between intensive care and the transplant programme to help ensure that all potential donors are identified and that families are supported through this very difficult time.

01 Mar 2017 | Written questions | 65019

**Organs: Donors**

**Asked by:** Chishti, Rahman

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what plans his Department has to increase the number of people registered as organ donors in the UK.

**Answering member:** Nicola Blackwood

A seven year United Kingdom-wide organ donation and transplantation strategy was jointly published by the four UK health ministers and NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) in July 2013. The strategy aims to increase consent rates, encourage people to be proud to donate and to make the UK system comparable with the best of the world. 2015/16 saw the highest ever deceased donor rate in the UK with 1,364 deceased donors resulting in 3,529 transplants. A further 3,779 patients had their sight restored through a cornea transplant and there were 1,075 living donors, most donating a kidney.

NHSBT run regular awareness raising campaigns and introduced a new Organ Donation Register (ODR) system making it easier for people to record their wishes about donation. NHSBT works collaboratively with a number of partners in the private, public and third sectors to promote organ donation. People can add their name to the ODR via Government owned channels such as applying for a driving licence and paying car tax online.

On 1 December 2015, Wales introduced deemed consent (opt-out) for organ and tissue donation. We will monitor closely how these changes in legislation in Wales affect donation rates.

21 Feb 2017 | Written questions | House of Commons | 63912

**Organs: Donors**

**Asked by:** Simpson, David

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make an assessment on whether current levels of organ donations meet the levels of demand for such donations.

**Answering member:** Nicola Blackwood

Currently there are over 6,500 people on the United Kingdom national transplant waiting list. Most people are waiting for a kidney. The figure changes constantly as people join and leave the list. Each year around 5,000 people die in circumstances where their organs can be donated. Our aim is to maximise the number of people who can benefit from a transplant.
A seven year UK-wide organ donation and transplantation strategy was jointly published by the four UK health ministers and NHS Blood and Transplant (NHBS) in July 2013. The strategy aims to increase consent rates, encourage people to be proud to donate and to make the UK system comparable with the best of the world. 2015/16 saw the highest ever deceased donor rate in the UK with 1,364 deceased donors resulting in 3,529 transplants. A further 3,779 patients had their sight restored through a cornea transplant and there were 1,075 living donors, most donating a kidney.

NHBS run regular awareness raising campaigns and introduced a new Organ Donation Register (ODR) system making it easier for people to record their wishes about donation. NHBS works collaboratively with a number of partners in the private, public and third sectors to promote organ donation. People can add their name to the ODR via Government owned channels such as applying for a driving licence and paying car tax online.

On 1 December 2015, Wales introduced deemed consent (opt-out) for organ and tissue donation. We will monitor closely how these changes in legislation in Wales affect donation rates.

07 Feb 2017 | Written questions | 62309

**Organs: Donors**

**Asked by:** Bradshaw, Mr Ben

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the merits of the Welsh Government’s policy of opt-out for organ donation; and if he will review the policy for organ donation in England.

**Answering member:** Nicola Blackwood

We are monitoring the impact that the change in legislation in Wales has on donation rates. A seven year United Kingdom-wide organ donation and transplantation strategy was jointly published by the four UK health ministers and NHS Blood and Transplant in July 2013. In 2015/16 the highest ever deceased donor rate in the UK was recorded with 1,364 deceased donors resulting in 3,529 transplants.

01 Feb 2017 | Written questions | 61357

**Organs: Donors**

**Asked by:** Mahmood, Mr Khalid

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department has taken to establish ways of encouraging BME organ donations.

**Answering member:** Nicola Blackwood

As of 9 December 2016, there were 1,851 people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities waiting for an organ transplant. This represents around 29% of the active transplant list. Around 5% of all deceased organ donors came from BAME communities.

There are a number of specific initiatives to increase the number of organ donors from BAME communities. These include the National
BAME Transplant Alliance to coordinate the work of BAME organisations working within these communities, a Peer Educator Project working with the Pakistani Muslim Community in Birmingham and the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets and NHS Blood and Transplant has developed a behaviour change campaign strategy in support of the Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020: A UK Strategy. This includes increasing its education and engagement activities with BAME communities and a Faith Action Plan outlining action to work in partnership with faith leaders.

15 Dec 2016 | Written questions | 56780

Kidneys: Donors

Asked by: Moon, Mrs Madeleine

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment his Department has made of the need to provide additional kidney organ donation surgery as a result of the change to an opt-out system in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Jane Ellison

Government funding to NHS Blood and Transplant enables the provision of the UK National Organ Retrieval Service and ensures that there are fully staffed retrieval teams constantly available to retrieve donated organs from anywhere across the United Kingdom.

Donated kidneys, from wherever they are donated, are offered to transplant centres across the UK. The funding of transplant services lies with UK commissioners.

Over the last eight years organ donation rates have increased by 68% and transplant rates by some 47% giving many more people the opportunity of a transplant. We are monitoring how legislative change in Wales is affecting donation rates but our efforts remain focussed on encouraging donor registration and discussions within families about donation to increase consent rates.

27 Jun 2016 | Written questions | 40514

Engagements

Asked by: Jo Stevens (Cardiff Central) (Lab)

There are currently more than 7,000 people in the UK who need an organ transplant, including 139 children, and many will die because of the shortage of available organs. The Welsh Labour Government have already introduced groundbreaking legislation for opt-out organ donation in Wales. Will the Prime Minister join me in supporting the “change the law for life” campaign for opt-out organ donation throughout the UK?

Answered by: The Prime Minister

I am always happy to look at this again. I have looked at it before and have not come out in favour of opting out. We debated the matter in the last Parliament and made quite a lot of moves towards making opt in much easier. We found that different hospitals and different areas of
the country had very different records for how well they do. My personal position is that we should support and continue to drive opt in, but the House of Commons can vote on this issue from time to time, and on whether it wants to go down the Welsh track rather than the track we are on. Personally, I think let us make opt in work better.

13 Apr 2016 | Prime Minister's questions | 608 c352

**Organs: Donors**

**Asked by:** Evans, Mr Nigel

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether his Department has plans for an opt-out system for organ donation across the UK.

**Answering member:** Nicola Blackwood

There are currently no plans for an opt-out system for organ donation in England. Since 2008 donation in the United Kingdom has increased by 68% and transplants by 47%, by increasing the number of specialist nurses and strengthening the donation infrastructure. 2015/16 saw the highest ever deceased donor rate in the UK with 1,364 deceased donors resulting in 3,529 transplants.

We continue to support work to further increase donation and transplantation rates, particularly promoting collaborative working amongst organisations and raising awareness of donation in the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to become donors.

NHS Blood and Transplant launched a new UK-wide organ donation and transplantation strategy in July 2013. **Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020** identifies the action being taken to increase organ donation and transplantation.

26 Oct 2016 | Written questions | 49808

### 4.2 Private Members’ Bill in 2016-17

**Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill 2016-17**

Presentation and first reading. To be read a Second time on Friday 24 March, and to be printed (Bill 123).

16 Jan 2017 | Legislative formal proceedings | 619 c686

**Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill 2016-17**

Order for second reading on 24 February read and discharged. Bill withdrawn.

### 4.3 Debates

**Organ Transplants**

08 Jul 2014 | Adjournment debates | Westminster Hall | 584 cc1-24WH

**Organ Donation Register**

Jun 2014 | Adjournment debates | 582 cc1-23WH

**Organ Transplants**
17 Jul 2013 | Adjournment debates | 566

**Blood, Organ and Bone Marrow Donation (Education)**

Motion for leave to bring in a Bill. Agreed on question. Presentation and first reading. Bill to be read a second time on 26 April.

06 Mar 2013 | Debates on bills | 559 cc984-6

**Organ Donation**

Westminster Hall adjournment debate on organ donation and the issue of presumed consent.

30 Nov 2011 | Adjournment debates | 536 c263-86WH

**Organ Donation**

Westminster Hall adjournment debate on organ donation and transplantation.

09 Nov 2011 | Adjournment debates | 535 c97-105WH
5. Petitions and further reading

5.1 Petitions

UK Government and Parliament Petitions

All UK residents to be placed on the Organ Donor Register
Date closed 28 October 2016
https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/128473

Implement an Opt-out Organ Donation System (as in Wales)
Date closed 26 April 2017
https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/170316

Change.org

Make the UK organ donor register opt-out

5.2 Further reading

NHS Blood and Transplant, Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020, July 2013
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