



Foreword

Every transplant is a reflection of the exceptional altruism of the donor and their family and a testament to the care and hard work of many people in the NHS who co-ordinate an incredibly complicated process. Intensive Care, laboratories, the National Organ Retrieval Service, transport, the transplant centres and NHS Blood and Transplant are all involved. Donated organs are sent across the UK to reach the recipient who will benefit the most.

At any time, this is a considerable achievement but during a time of huge pressure on the NHS, it is even more remarkable to see organ donation and transplantation numbers reach an all-time high. 1,574 people donated their organs after they died and a further 1,051 people were living donors. As a result of this generosity, 5,090 people benefitted from a transplant: the first time ever that more than 5,000 people have received a transplant in a single year. As always, we thank the donors and their families but this year, we particularly want to pay tribute to all the people in the NHS who made donation and transplantation possible.

In the ten years since publication of the Organ Donation Taskforce report 'Organs for Transplants', organ donation and transplantation have been transformed. When the report was published, there were few donors and more people were waiting for a transplant each year. While training, clinical and organisational improvements have led to a 95% increase in the number of deceased donors and the transplant waiting list has fallen for eight consecutive years, changes here can only take us so far. We still have not reached the level of many of our peer countries and though the consent rate for donation has improved, it is still far below the aim of 80% of families supporting donation. To continue our progress, we need a transformation in public attitudes.

This is a time of considerable change for the service, with new 'opt out' legislation planned for England, Scotland, Jersey and being considered in the Isle of Man and Guernsey. Although a change in legislation is not a magic wand neither is it business as usual. Everyone involved in organ donation will need to understand the implications and potential of the legislation as we move to a situation where UK citizens are expected to donate unless they have recorded a refusal. We also need to ensure that the system has the capacity, throughout the clinical pathway, to support extra donors and transplants.

A remaining challenge we face is the huge imbalance between the need for transplants in our black and Asian communities and the availability of suitable organs with the right blood and tissue type. We need more people from these communities to be prepared to donate in life or after death and provide suitable organs for the 1,574 black and Asian people on the waiting list. Providing culturally sensitive services, community education, information and engagement, and targeted awareness raising campaigns are all part of the UK's plans to address this important issue.

We commit to working with you to face these challenges in the year ahead.



E Sally Johnson
Director - Organ Donation



Prof John Forsythe
Associate Medical Director



Dr Dale Gardiner
National Clinical Lead
For Organ Donation

