

NHSBT Board Meeting
September 2020

Organ Donation & Transplantation Strategy – Update

1. Status – Official

2. Executive Summary

2.1 There has been significant work undertaken to develop ‘*Organ Donation and Transplantation: Meeting the need*’, a ten-year strategy for organ donation and transplantation across the UK and wider NHS. A wide consultation to developing the strategy was undertaken in 2019. A draft document was presented to the NHSBT Board in November 2019 with further updates resulting in changes which are now incorporated in the document. Since then two major, unforeseen events have occurred:

- The global COVID-19 pandemic
- Concerns about structural racism within the organ donation and transplantation pathway and the wider health system

2.2 The impact of these events was discussed at the June Board meeting and an accompanying impact assessment agreed. Since then, further discussions with key stakeholders have taken place and it is proposed that this impact assessment is woven into the main document and further engagement across all stakeholders undertaken.

3. Action Requested

3.1 The Board is asked to:

- **Note the change in approach and timeframe for publication.**

4. COVID-19 Pandemic

4.1 The global pandemic had an immediate impact on both living and deceased donation and transplantation. Due to the uncertainty associated with COVID-19, all centres limited transplantation to selected patients only where the risk benefit ratio of transplantation could be justified.

4.2 In the immediate aftermath, deceased donation and transplantation activity recovered quickly, to pre-COVID-19 rates. Consent / authorisation rates have exceeded pre-COVID-19 levels however the reasons for this are unclear but the impact of opt-out in England,

introduced in May 2020 and increased goodwill towards the NHS may be contributory factors. The numbers of patients waiting for a transplant has increased but the long-term impact on the waiting-list requires further evaluation.

4.3 Living donor kidney transplantation was slower to restart and it will take several months to restore normal activity. The UK living kidney sharing scheme will resume in October.

4.5 The impact of COVID-19 on the 10 year projections for both living and deceased donor transplantation will be included within the revised strategy document.

4.6 Whilst the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was profound, the system leadership role undertaken by NHSBT, working closely with clinical and commissioning communities across the UK, brought the whole community together. This underpinned an effective and flexible response, which mitigated the risks involved and facilitated a rapid and successful recovery, including:

- Rapid, flexible response to changes in the environment and to needs of the community
- Effective and regular communication
- Willingness to engage from all parties
- Shared ownership of critical decisions
- Focused, time-limited meetings with clear outcomes
- Timely submission and review of data
- Appropriate reflection on decisions made and lessons learned

4.7 These are lessons that can be learned and replicated in the implementation of the strategy, demonstrating that NHSBT can be system leaders without necessarily being wholly accountable.

4.8 In addition, an International Peer Review event held on 8 September, chaired by Professor John Forsythe, provided valuable feedback and support for the strategy, with further ideas for collaboration with NHSBT as world leaders in service development and research.

5. Structural Racism

5.1 The commitment to address specific issues for Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) citizens with respect to organ donation and transplantation has been considered carefully during the development of the strategy.

5.2 However, given the recent focus on structural racism and impact on equality, in collaboration with key stakeholders and BAME representatives, the document, will be revisited to ensure that relevant actions are reflected in all aspects of the organ donation and

transplantation pathway and articulated clearly throughout the strategic objectives and plan.

- 5.3 In addition, the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on BAME citizens, coupled with worldwide events, have further undermined trust and confidence in the system and statutory bodies.
- 5.4 Orin Lewis and Kirit Modi, of the National BAME Transplant Alliance, have agreed to undertake a review of Objective Four of the strategy, along with a read across the whole document to ensure Equality and Diversity is evidenced as integral to all we do.

6. Revised timescales

- 6.1 The aim is to present the final draft of the strategy to the November Board meeting with publication following this.
- 6.2 Before then:
 - Revised draft from NBTA - 21 September
 - Circulate revised draft to Departments of Health, professional societies and all other key stakeholders - 25 September, with deadline for comments - 12 October
 - Agree sign off and publication plans with the Health Departments – late October.
- 6.3 Discussions have been held with the Health Departments, who have confirmed that these revised timescales will not impede progress within their internal processes.

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