



**Blood and Transplant**

**INTERIM REPORT ON  
CARDIOTHORACIC ORGAN  
TRANSPLANTATION**

**REPORT FOR 2020/2021  
(1 OCTOBER 2017 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2020)**

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**PRODUCED IN COLLABORATION WITH NHS ENGLAND**



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# **Executive Summary**



## 1. Executive Summary

This interim report presents key figures about cardiothoracic organ transplantation in the UK during the three-year period 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2020. The report covers the number of transplants performed and the short-term survival outcomes of patients following heart and lung transplantation; both on a national and centre-specific basis. For longer-term survival rates by centre, with risk-adjustment, the reader is referred to the full Annual Report on Cardiothoracic Organ Transplantation.

### Key findings

- There were **460 adult heart only transplants** performed in the UK over the three-year period. Split by quarter, activity was lowest during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, April-June 2020. However, during the following quarter, July-September 2020, activity exceeded the same quarter in the previous two years. Seventy eight percent of all transplants performed were either urgent or super-urgent.
- The national 30-day survival rate following first adult heart only transplantation in this cohort was 91.6%. Centre-specific rates ranged between 82.5% and 96.9% ([unadjusted](#) for [case mix](#)).
- There were **457 adult lung transplants** (including 16 combined heart-lung transplants) performed in the UK over the three-year period. Split by quarter, activity was lowest during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, April-June 2020, and remained low during July-September 2020. Twenty five percent of all transplants performed were either urgent or super-urgent.
- The national 90-day survival rate following first adult lung only transplantation in this cohort was 89.9%. Centre-specific rates ranged between 85.3% and 95.7% ([unadjusted](#) for [case mix](#)).
- There were **91 paediatric heart only transplants** performed in the UK over the three-year period, including 8 which utilised [DCD](#) donor hearts.
- The national 30-day survival rate following paediatric heart only transplantation in this cohort was 97.7%. The centre-specific rates for the two paediatric centres were 94.7% and 100% ([unadjusted](#) for [case mix](#)).
- There were **15 paediatric lung transplants** (including 2 combined heart-lung transplants) performed in the UK over the three-year period.
- The national 90-day survival rate following paediatric lung only transplantation in this cohort was 91.7%. Centre-specific paediatric survival rates were not estimable for either centre due to small numbers of transplants performed in this category.

Use of the contents of this report should be acknowledged as follows: *Interim Report on Cardiothoracic Organ Transplantation 2020/2021, NHS Blood and Transplant*

# **INTRODUCTION**



## 2. Introduction

This interim report presents data on activity and outcomes of heart and lung transplant recipients during the three-year period 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2020, for all centres performing heart and/or lung transplantation in the UK. Data were obtained from the UK Transplant Registry, at NHS Blood and Transplant, which holds information relating to donors, recipients and outcomes for all cardiothoracic organ transplants performed in the UK.

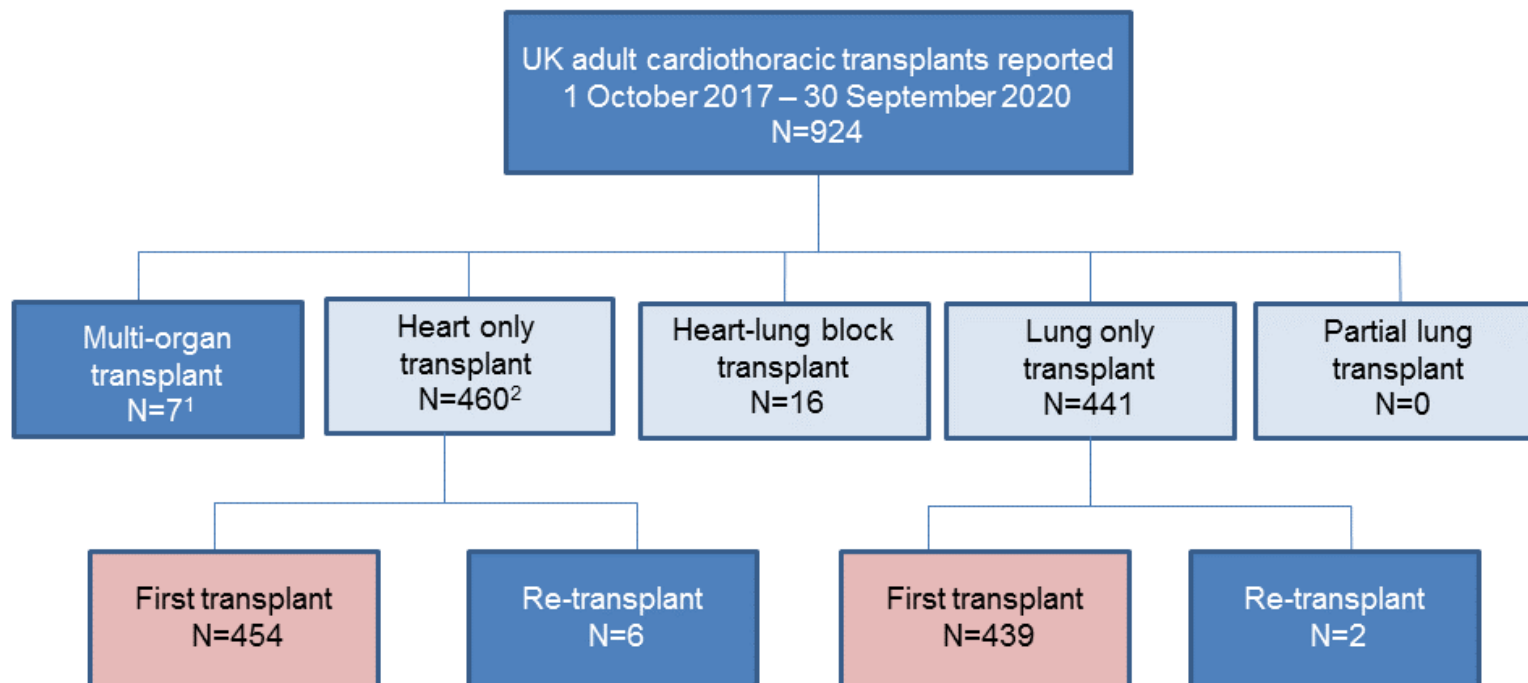
Results are described separately for heart and lung activity and also for adult (aged 16 years or over) and paediatric patients (aged less than 16 years). There are seven cardiothoracic organ transplant centres in the UK; six in England and one in Scotland. Five of the seven centres specialise in adult transplantation, one in paediatric transplantation (Great Ormond Street Hospital) and one in both adult and paediatric transplantation (Newcastle). Any transplants carried out at Great Ormond Street Hospital in patients aged 16 or over are included in the paediatric sections, and any transplants carried out at adult only centres in patients less than 16 are included in the adult sections. Combined heart-lung transplants are included in the lung analysis.

Patients receiving [multi-organ transplants](#) (other than heart-lung transplants) are excluded from all analyses other than those presented in this Introduction section. In addition, partial lung transplants, heart-lung transplants and patients receiving their second (or subsequent) graft are excluded from the survival analysis calculations. Only short-term unadjusted survival rates are presented. For longer-term survival rates by centre, with risk-adjustment, the reader is referred to the full Annual Report on Cardiothoracic Organ Transplantation. Methods used are described in the [Appendix](#).

In the last 4 years, the UK has made changes to the listing and allocation policies for heart and lung transplantation. As of 26 October 2016, patients can be registered super-urgently on the heart transplant list. This additional tier is a result of the growing number of patients registered urgently and will help to prioritise those with a greatest need for heart transplantation. National urgent and super-urgent allocation tiers were also introduced for those with the greatest clinical need on the lung transplant list on 18 May 2017.

**Figure 2.1** shows a breakdown the 924 adult cardiothoracic organ transplants performed in the UK in the three-year period whilst **Figure 2.2** shows the same information for the 106 paediatric transplants performed during the same period. In the remainder of this report, [multi-organ transplants](#) are excluded, hence 917 adult and 106 paediatric transplants are analysed further (those in the light blue boxes). In the survival sections, first transplants only are analysed (those in the pink boxes).

Figure 2.1 Adult cardiothoracic organ transplants performed in the UK, 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2020

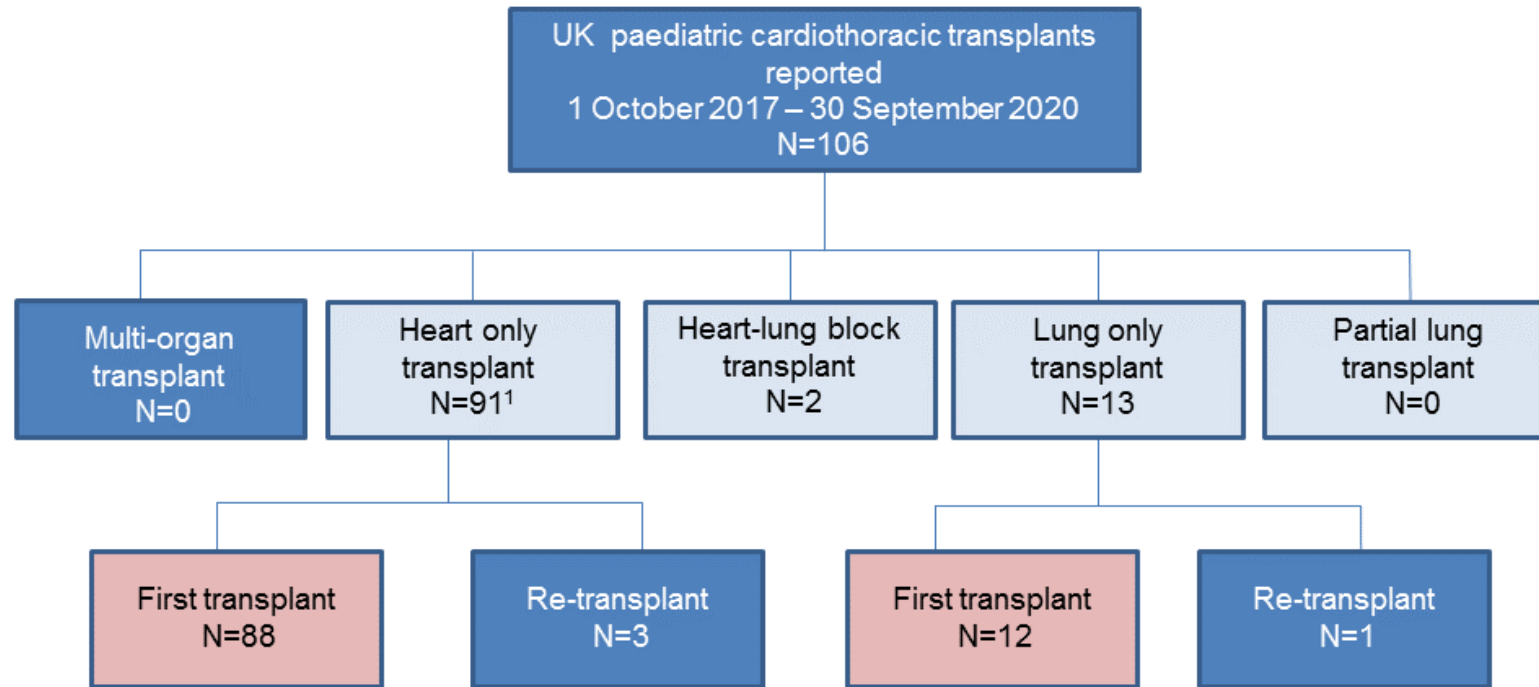


<sup>1</sup> Includes 1 heart and kidney transplant, 4 heart and liver transplants, 2 lung and liver transplants (all excluded from remainder of report)

<sup>2</sup> Includes 76 DCD heart transplants



Figure 2.2 Paediatric cardiothoracic organ transplants performed in the UK, 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2020



<sup>1</sup> Includes 8 DCD heart transplants

# **ADULT HEART TRANSPLANTATION**

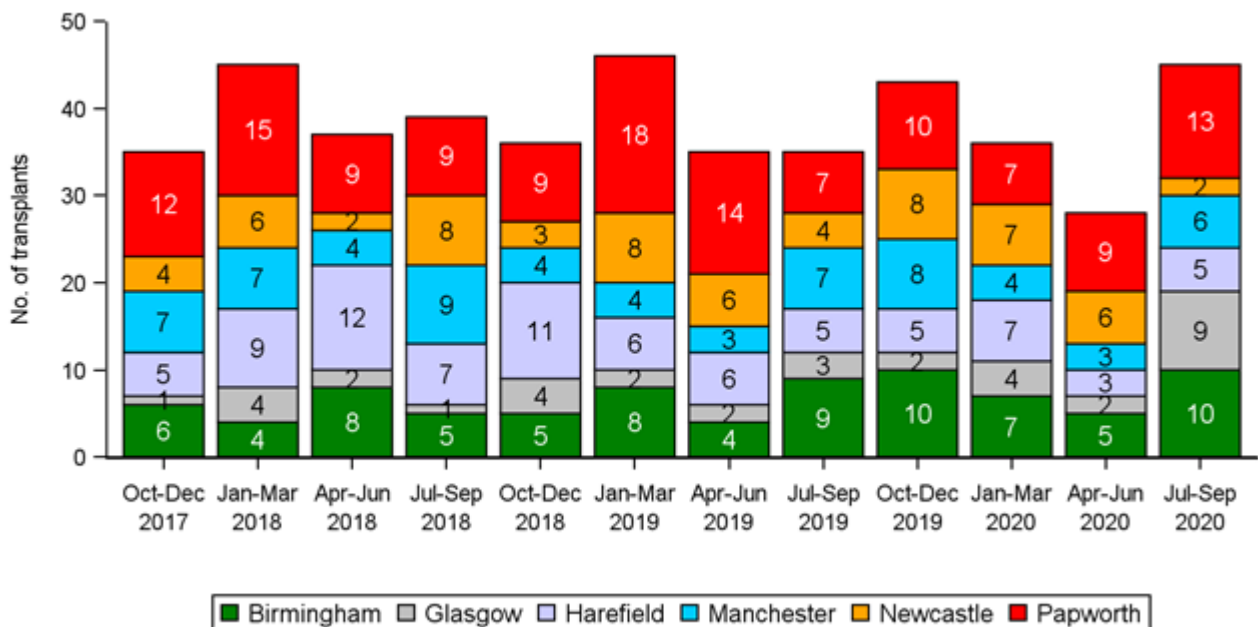


### 3.1 Transplant Activity

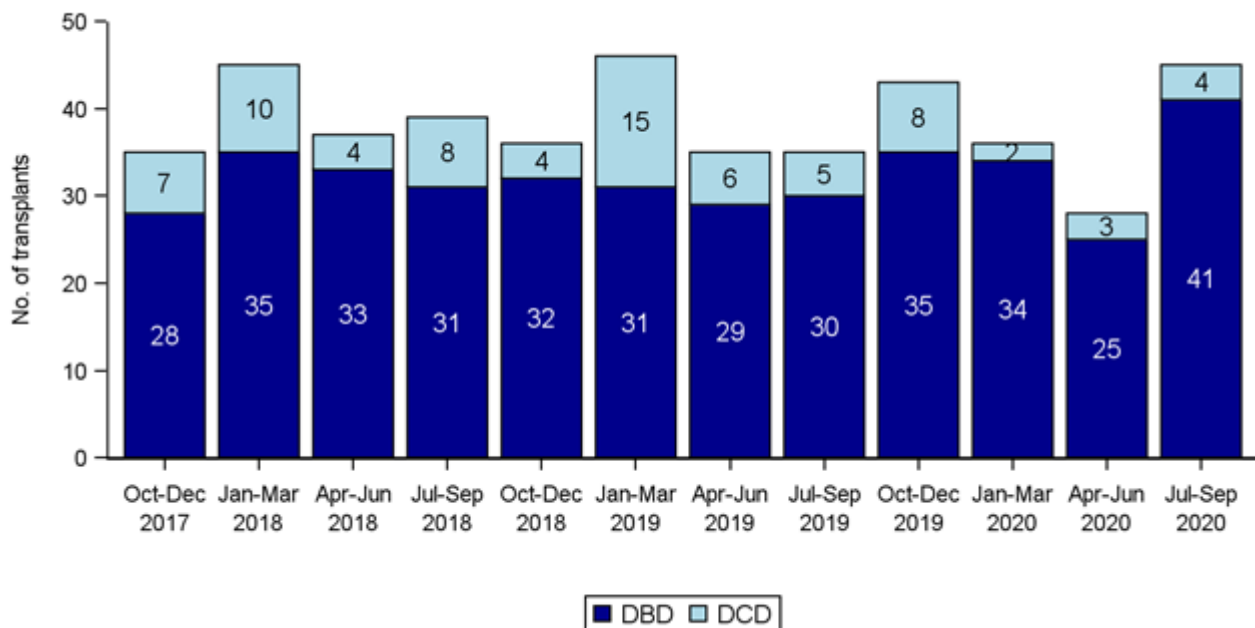
Between 1 October 2017 and 30 September 2020, 460 adult heart only transplants were performed. **Figure 3.1** shows the quarterly trend in activity over the three-year time period, stratified by transplant centre. Quarterly activity has remained reasonably stable, fluctuating between 28 and 46 transplants, with the smallest number during April-June 2020 during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Figure 3.2** shows quarterly activity stratified by donor type and **Figure 3.3** is stratified by urgency status. In the latest quarter, July-September 2020, 69% of transplants performed were either urgent or super-urgent.

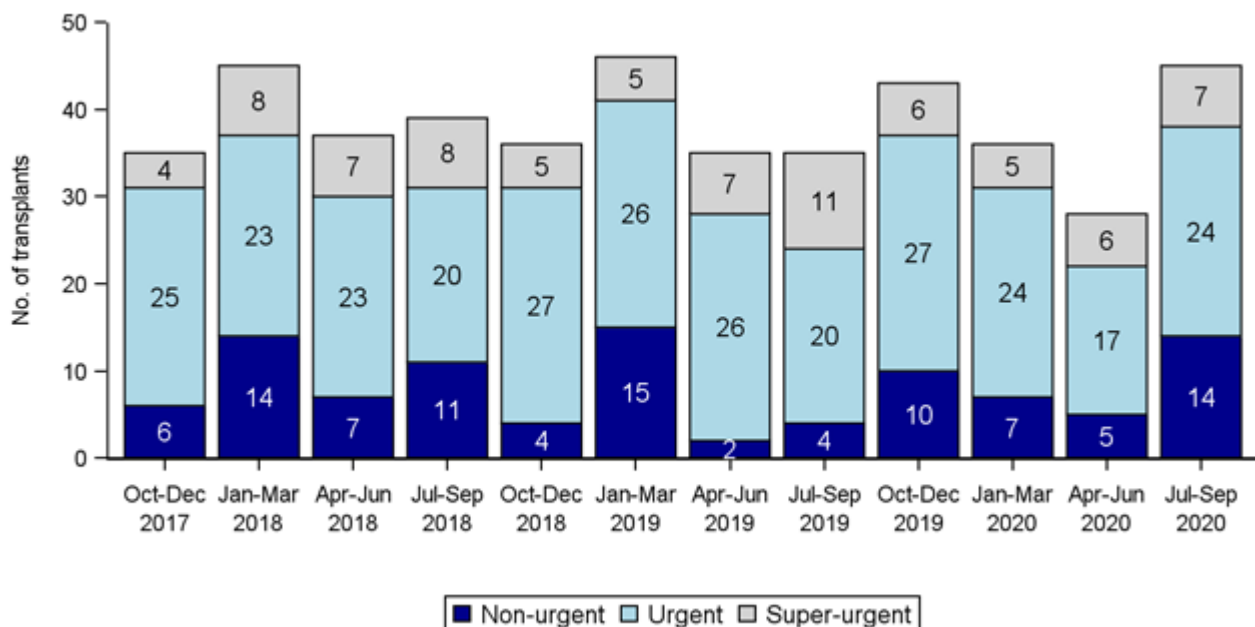
**Figure 3.1** Number of adult heart transplants, by quarter and transplant centre, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020



**Figure 3.2** Number of adult heart transplants, by quarter and donor type, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020



**Figure 3.3** Number of adult heart transplants, by quarter and urgency status, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020



### 3.2 Post-Transplant Survival

This section includes first time transplants only. [DCD](#) heart transplants are included.

Of the 454 adult patients receiving a first heart only transplant between 1 October 2017 and 30 September 2020, survival information was known for 100%. The 30-day post-transplant [unadjusted patient survival](#) rates for each centre and nationally are shown in **Table 3.1**. The national 30-day survival rate was 91.6%, ranging from 82.5% to 96.9% across centres.

<b>Table 3.1 30-day patient survival rates after first adult heart transplants, by centre, 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2020</b>				
Centre	Number of transplants	Number of deaths	30 day survival % (95% CI) Unadjusted	
Birmingham	80	4	95.0	(87.2 - 98.1)
Glasgow	36	4	88.9	(73.1 - 95.7)
Harefield	80	14	82.5	(72.2 - 89.2)
Manchester	65	2	96.9	(88.3 - 99.2)
Newcastle	62	7	88.7	(77.7 - 94.4)
Papworth	131	7	94.7	(89.1 - 97.4)
<b>UK</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>(88.7 - 93.8)</b>

# **ADULT LUNG TRANSPLANTATION**

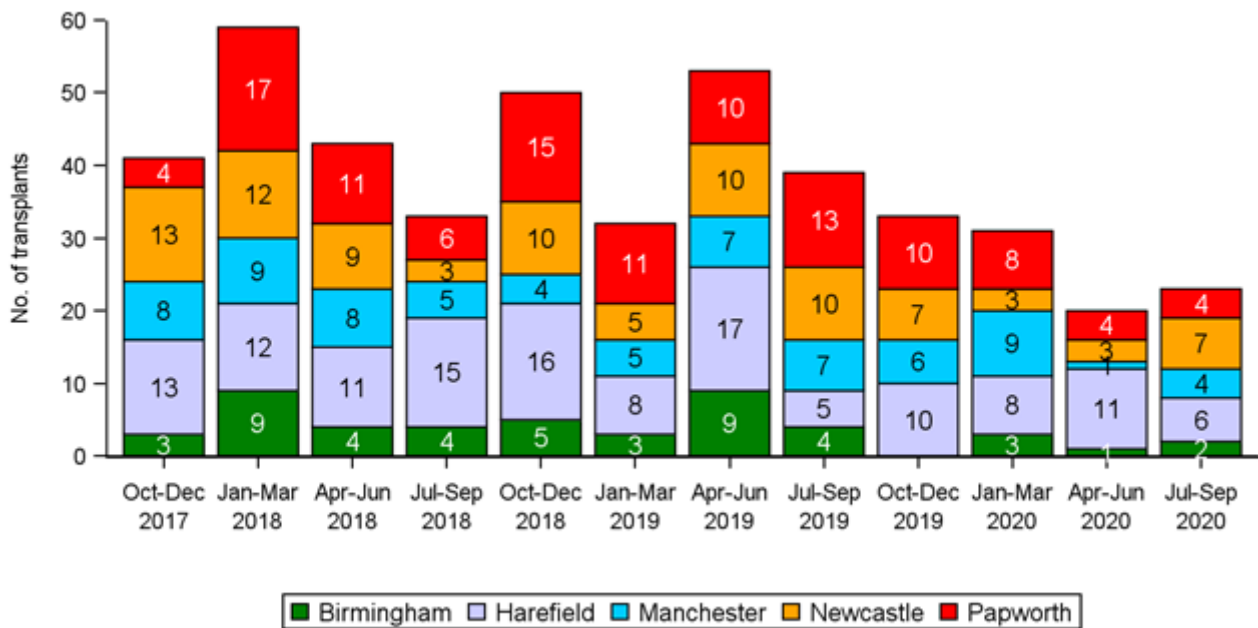


## 4.1 Transplant Activity

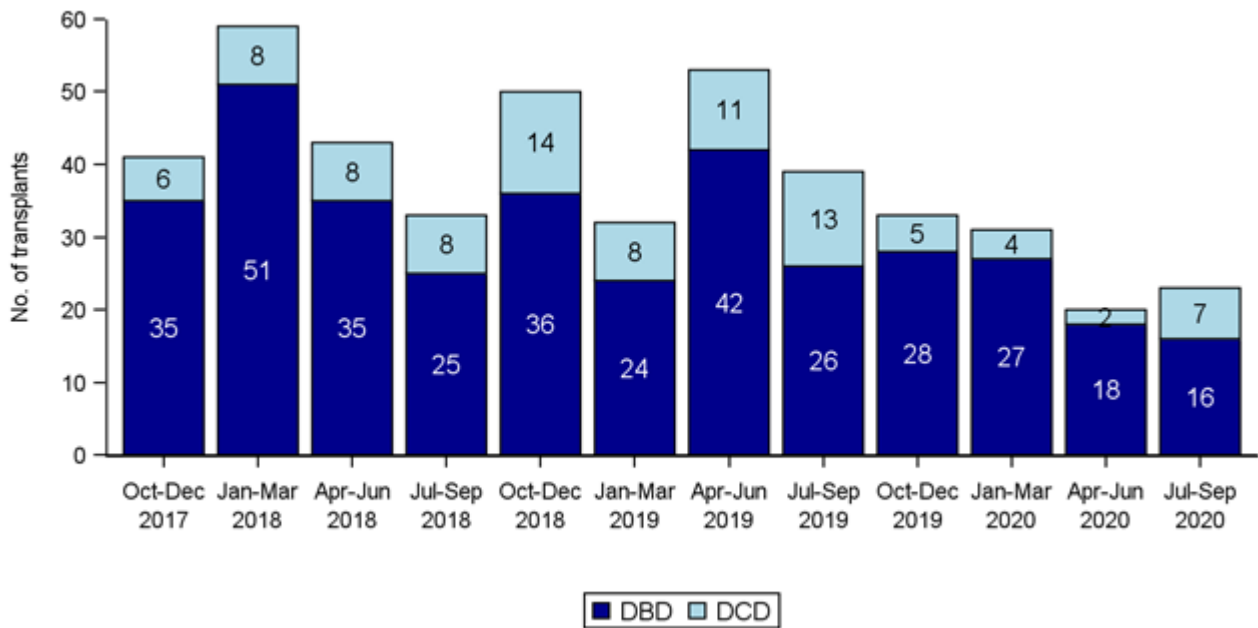
During the three-year period, 457 adult lung transplants were performed (including 16 combined heart-lung transplants). **Figure 4.1** shows the quarterly trend in activity over the period, stratified by transplant centre. Activity was highest during January-March 2018 and lowest during April-June 2020 which coincided with the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The last 12 months, October 2019 to September 2020, has seen lower than usual activity levels.

**Figure 4.2** shows the quarterly activity stratified by donor type and **Figure 4.3** shows lung only transplant activity stratified by urgency status. Over the three-year period there have been a total of 81 urgent lung transplants and 15 super-urgent lung transplants. **Figure 4.4** shows combined heart-lung transplant activity stratified by urgency status.

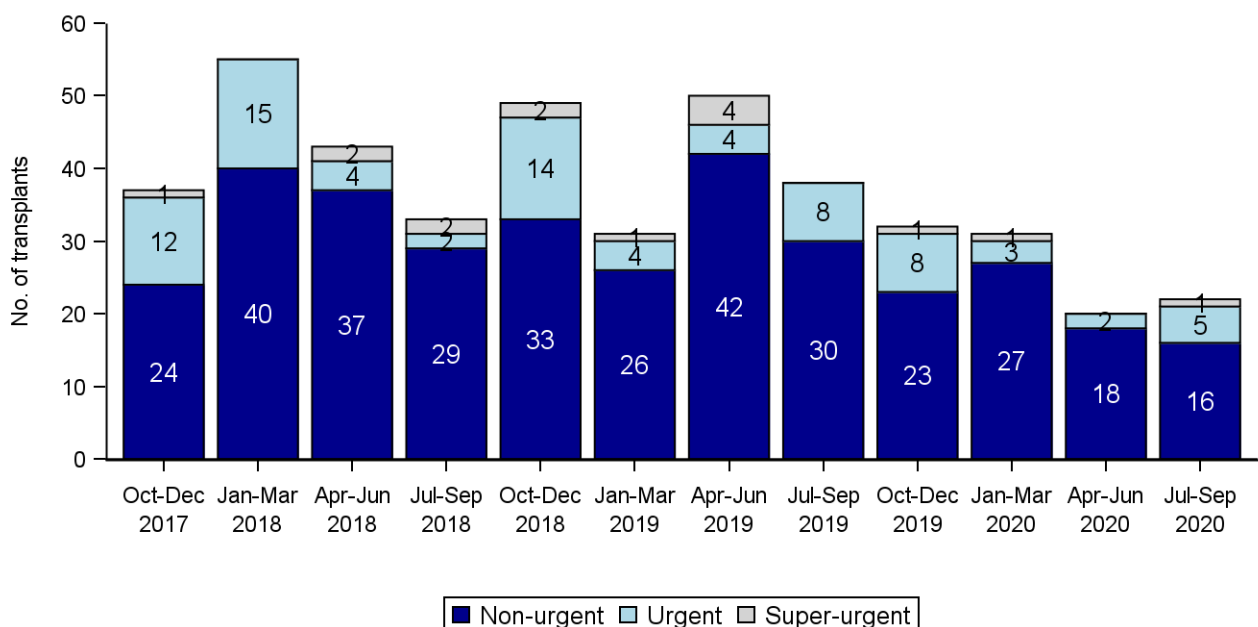
**Figure 4.1** Number of adult lung transplants, by quarter and transplant centre, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020



**Figure 4.2** Number of adult lung transplants, by quarter and donor type, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020

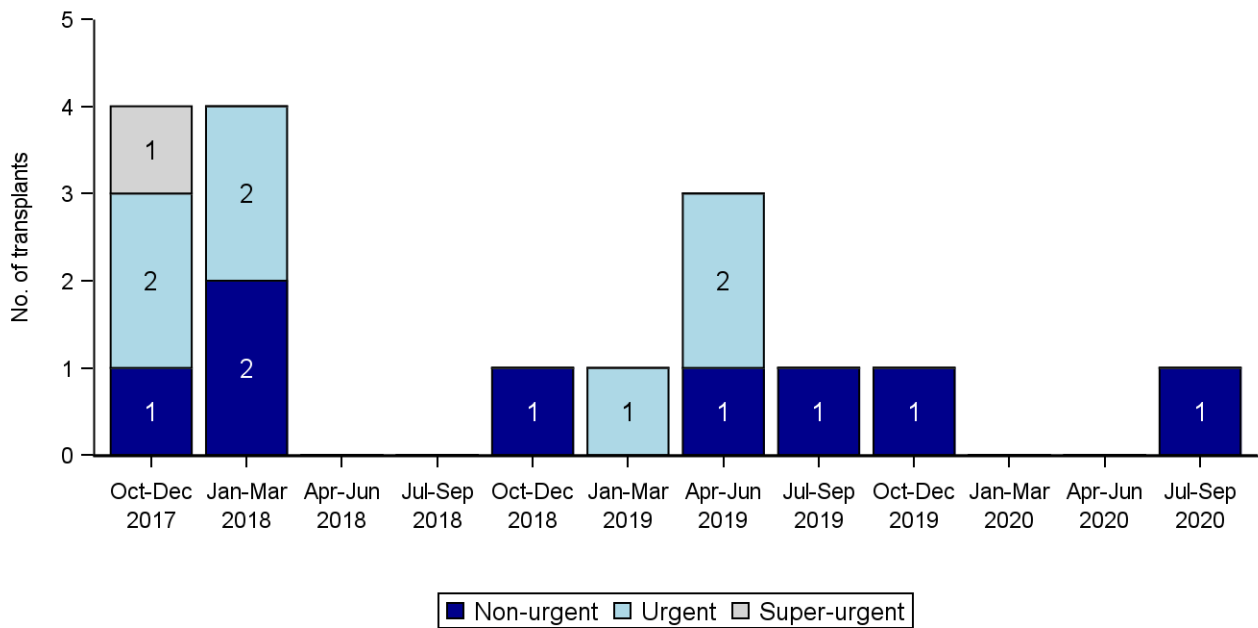


**Figure 4.3** Number of adult lung only transplants, by quarter and urgency status, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020





**Figure 4.4** Number of adult heart-lung transplants, by quarter and urgency status, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020



## 4.2 Post-Transplant Survival

This section excludes combined heart-lung transplants. It includes first time transplants only and both single and bilateral lung transplants.

Of the 439 adult patients receiving a first lung only transplant between 1 October 2017 and 30 September 2020, survival information post-transplant was known for 438 (99%). The 90-day post-transplant [unadjusted patient survival](#) rates for each centre and nationally are shown in **Table 4.1**. The national 90-day survival rate was 89.9%, ranging from 85.3% to 95.7% across centres.

<b>Table 4.1 90-day patient survival rates after first adult lung transplants, by centre, 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2020</b>				
Centre	Number of transplants	Number of deaths	90 day survival % (95% CI) Unadjusted	
Birmingham	43	5	88.2	(74.0 - 94.9)
Harefield	127 <sup>1</sup>	14	89.0	(82.1 - 93.3)
Manchester	69	3	95.7	(87.1 - 98.6)
Newcastle	89	13	85.3	(76.1 - 91.2)
Papworth	110	9	91.7	(84.9 - 95.7)
<b>UK</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>89.9</b>	<b>(86.7 - 92.4)</b>

<sup>1</sup> Survival missing for one patient transplanted in this period which isn't counted in this number

# **PAEDIATRIC HEART TRANSPLANTATION**

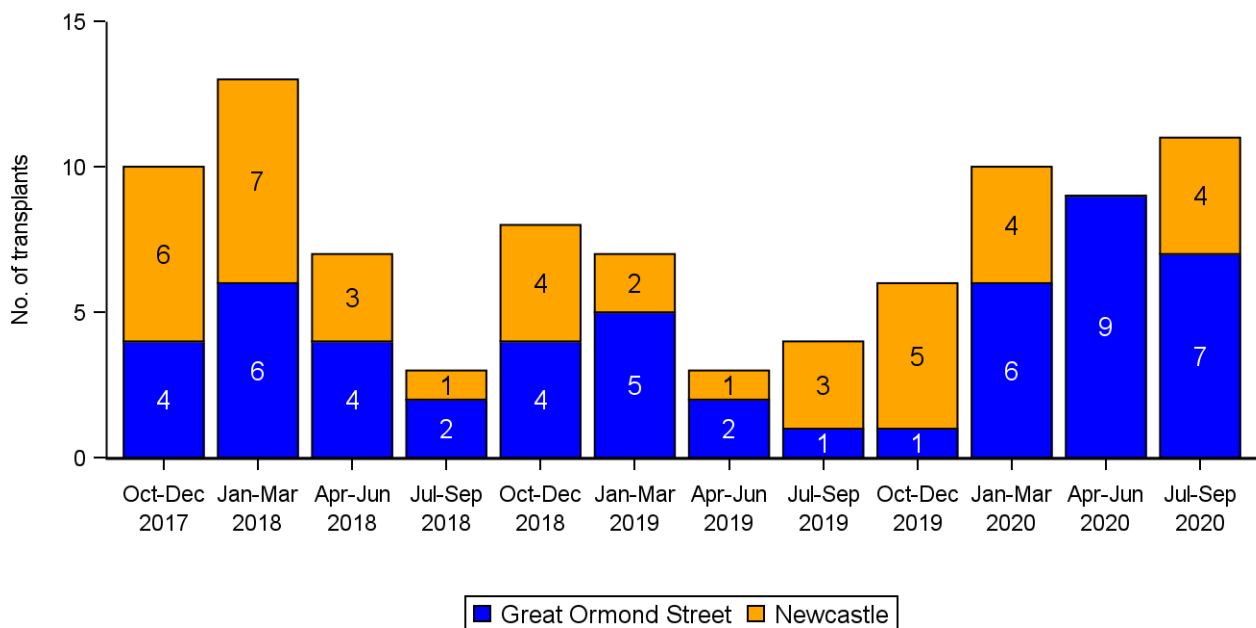


## 5.1 Transplant Activity

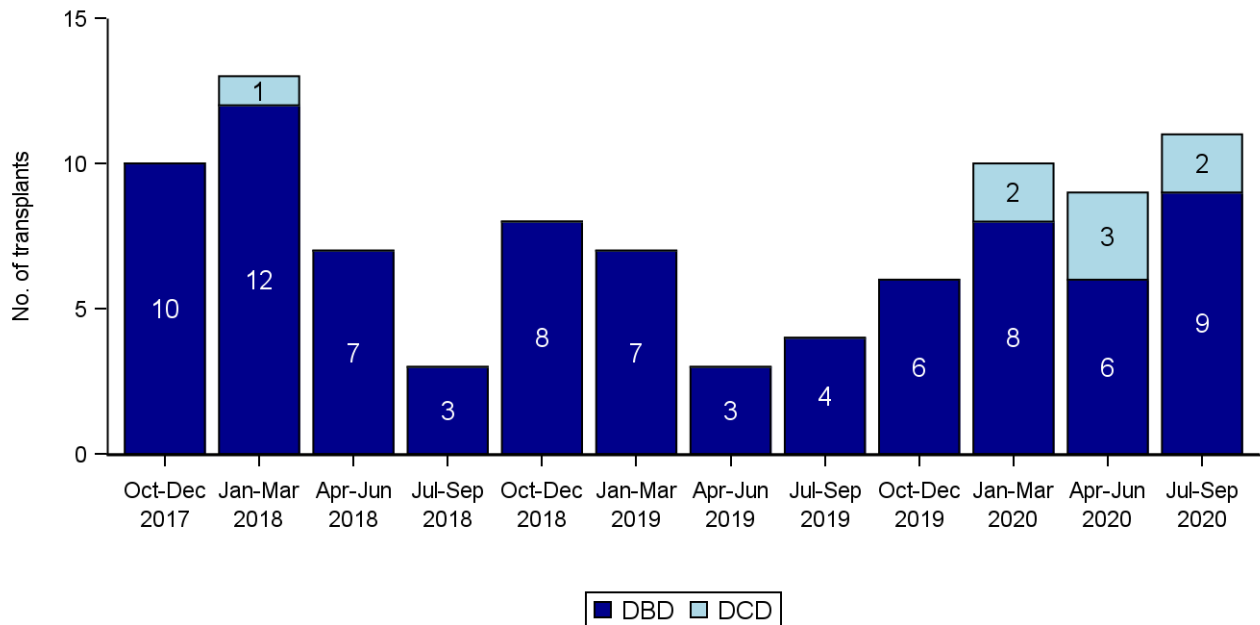
During the three-year period, 91 paediatric heart only transplants were performed. **Figure 5.1** shows the quarterly trend in activity over the period, stratified by transplant centre. Quarterly activity has fluctuated, with between 3 and 13 transplants performed, with the lowest numbers equally in July-September 2018 and April-March 2019.

**Figure 5.2** shows the quarterly activity stratified by donor type and **Figure 5.3** shows quarterly activity stratified by urgency status. Eighty one percent of the transplants over the three-year period were either urgent or super-urgent.

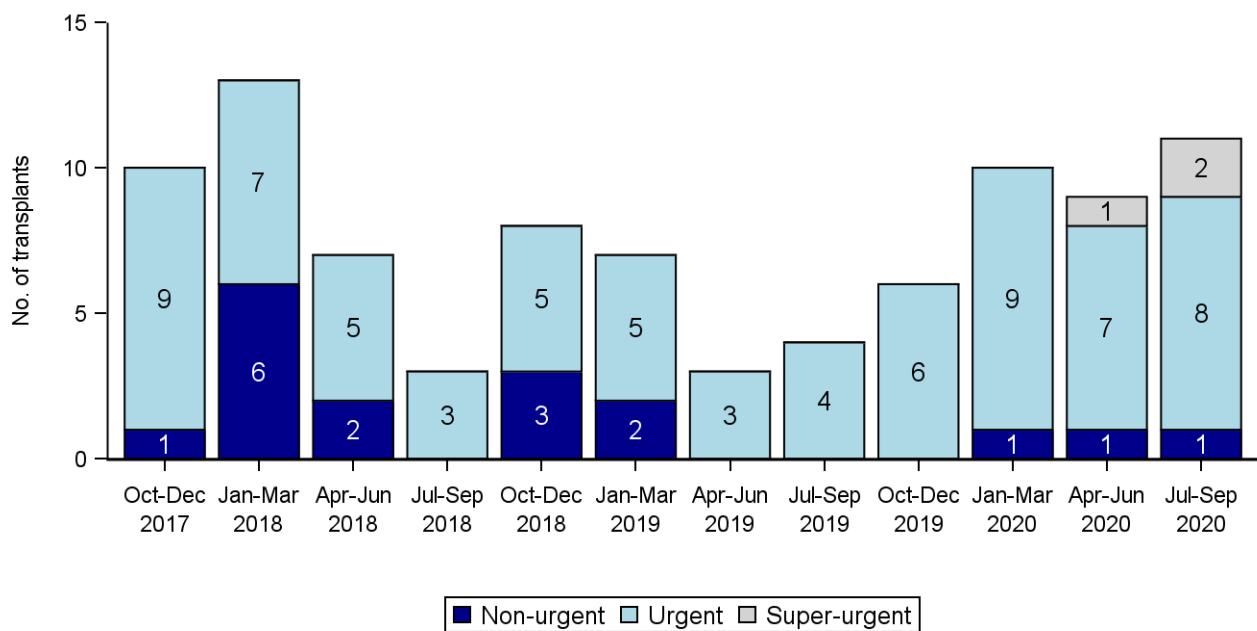
**Figure 5.1** Number of paediatric heart transplants, by quarter and transplant centre, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020



**Figure 5.2 Number of paediatric heart only transplants, by quarter and donor type, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020**



**Figure 5.3 Number of paediatric heart only transplants, by quarter and urgency status, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020**



## 5.2 Post-Transplant Survival

This section includes first time transplants only. [DCD](#) heart transplants are included.

Of the 88 paediatric patients receiving a first heart only transplant between 1 October 2017 and 30 September 2020, survival information was known for 100%. The 30-day post-transplant [unadjusted patient survival](#) rates for each centre and nationally are shown in **Table 5.1**. The national 30-day survival rate was 97.7%.

<b>Table 5.1 30-day patient survival rates after first paediatric heart transplants, by centre, 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2020</b>				
Centre	Number of transplants	Number of deaths	30 day survival % (95% CI) Unadjusted	
Great Ormond Street	50	0	100.0	-
Newcastle	38	2	94.7	(80.6 - 98.7)
<b>UK</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>97.7</b>	<b>(91.2 - 99.4)</b>

# **PAEDIATRIC LUNG TRANSPLANTATION**

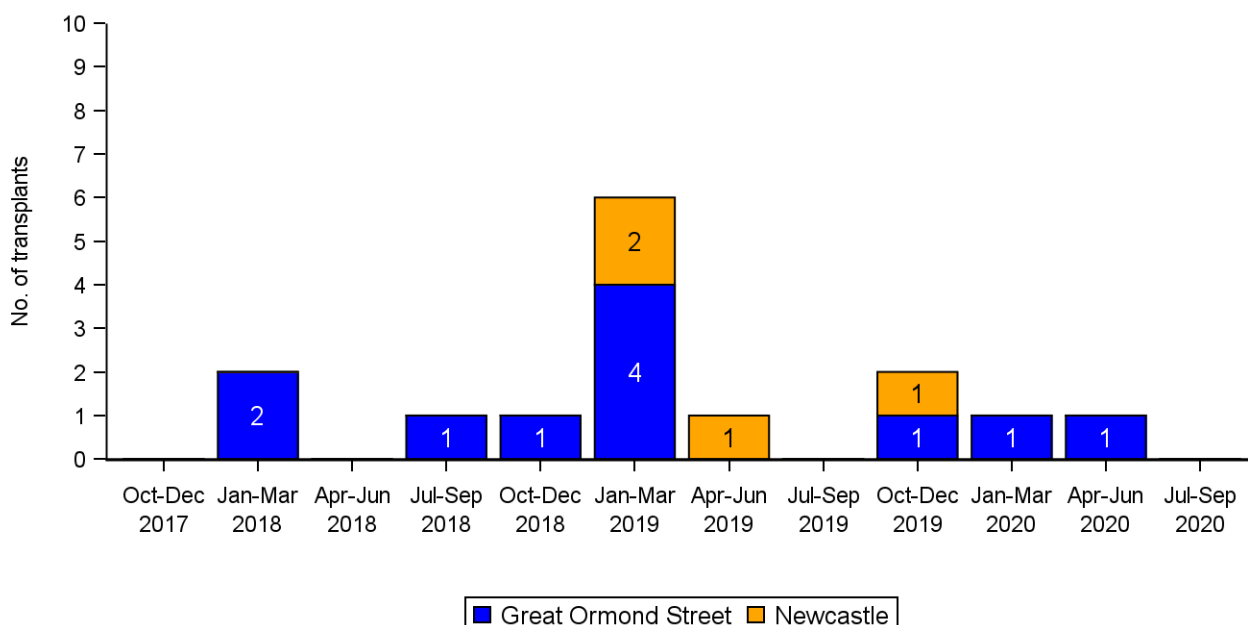


## 6.1 Transplant Activity

During the three-year period, 15 paediatric lung transplants were performed (including 2 combined heart-lung). **Figure 6.1** shows the quarterly number of transplants over the period, stratified by transplant centre. The numbers per quarter are very small, with the highest number of transplants performed in January-March 2019.

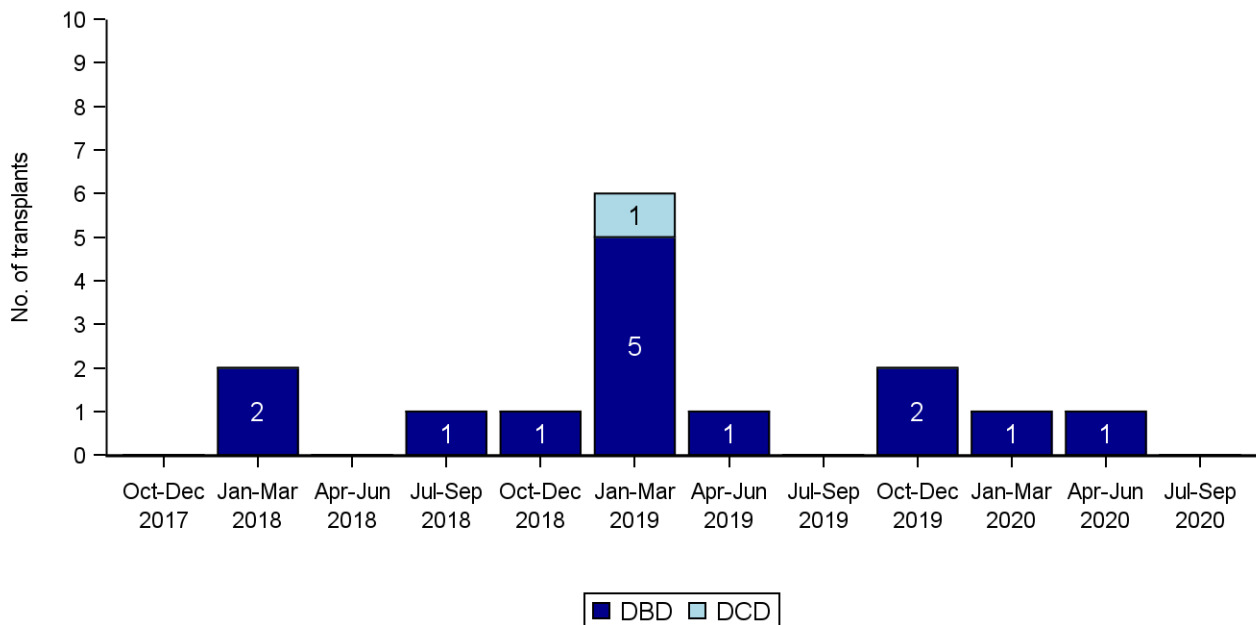
**Figure 6.2** shows quarterly activity stratified by donor type and **Figure 6.3** is stratified by urgency status (note that one of the urgent transplants during January-March 2019 was an urgent heart-lung transplant).

**Figure 6.1** Number of paediatric lung transplants, by quarter and transplant centre, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020

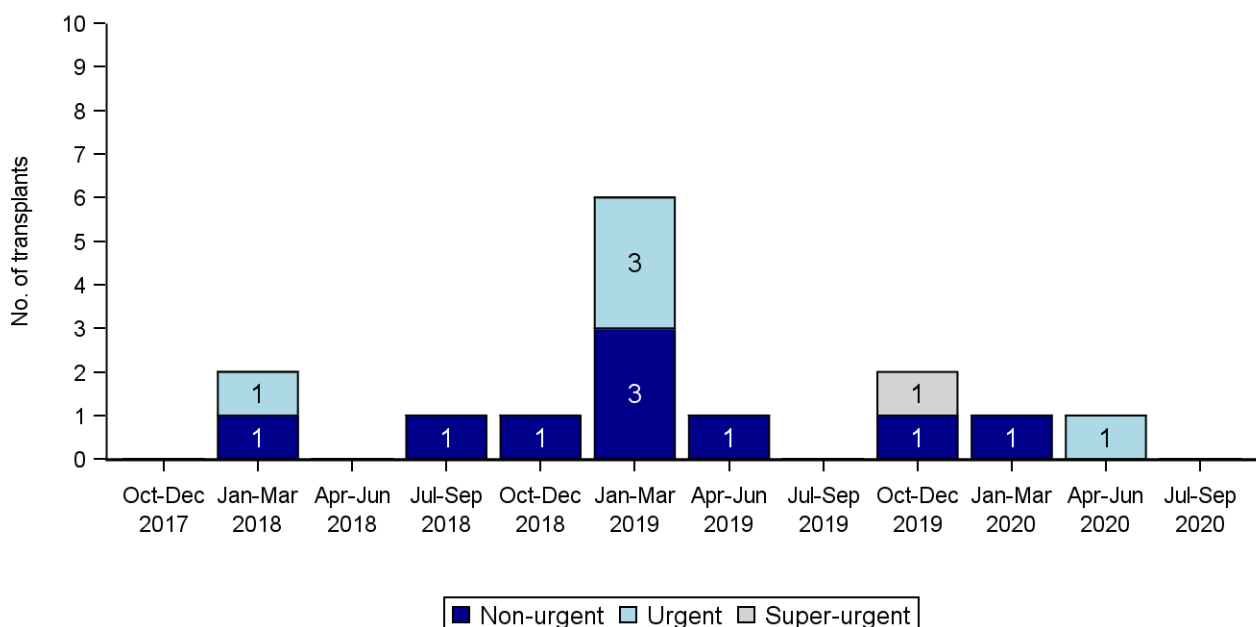




**Figure 6.2** Number of paediatric lung transplants, by quarter and donor type, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020



**Figure 6.3** Number of paediatric lung transplants, by quarter and urgency status, 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2020



Note that Figure 6.3 includes 1 non-urgent heart-lung transplant in October-December 2018 and 1 urgent heart-lung transplant in January-March 2019

## 6.2 Post-Transplant Survival

This section includes first time transplants only. Of the 12 paediatric patients receiving a first lung only transplant between 1 October 2017 and 30 September 2020, survival information was known for 100%. The 90-day post-transplant [unadjusted patient survival](#) rates are shown in **Table 6.1** where numbers allow. The national 90-day survival rate was 91.7%.

<b>Table 6.1 90-day patient survival rates after first paediatric lung transplants, by centre, 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2020</b>				
Centre	Number of transplants	Number of deaths	90 day survival % (95% CI) Unadjusted	
Great Ormond Street <sup>1</sup>	9	1	-	-
Newcastle <sup>1</sup>	3	0	-	-
<b>UK</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>(53.9 - 98.8)</b>

<sup>1</sup> Survival rates for groups with less than 10 patients are not presented due to small numbers

# APPENDIX



## **A1: Methods**

### **Unadjusted survival rates**

The [Kaplan-Meier](#) method was used to estimate the 30-day [unadjusted patient survival rates](#) for heart transplants and the 90-day [unadjusted patient survival rates](#) for lung transplants. For each patient in the study cohort, time from transplant to death or last known survival if still alive is taken and used to calculate an overall [survival rate](#). Patients can be included in this method of analysis irrespective of the length of follow-up recorded. If a patient is alive at the end of the follow-up then information about the survival of the patient is censored.

## **A2: Glossary of terms**

### **Case mix**

The types of patients treated at a centre for a common condition. This can vary across centres depending on the facilities available at the centre as well as the types of people in the catchment area of the centre. The definition of what type of patient a person is depends on the patient characteristics that influence the outcome of the treatment.

### **Confidence interval (CI)**

When an estimate of a quantity such as a [survival rate](#) is obtained from data, the value of the estimate depends on the set of patients whose data were used. If, by chance, data from a different set of patients had been used, the value of the estimate may have been different. There is therefore some uncertainty linked with any estimate. A confidence interval is a range of values whose width gives an indication of the uncertainty or precision of an estimate. The number of transplants or patients analysed influences the width of a confidence interval. Smaller data sets tend to lead to wider confidence intervals compared to larger data sets. Estimates from larger data sets are therefore more precise than those from smaller data sets. Confidence intervals are calculated with a stated probability, usually 95%. We then say that there is a 95% chance that the confidence interval includes the true value of the quantity we wish to estimate.

### **Donor after brain death (DBD)**

A donor whose heart is still beating when their entire brain has stopped working so that they cannot survive without the use of a ventilator. Organs for transplant are removed from the donor while their heart is still beating, but only after extensive tests determine that the brain cannot recover and they have been certified dead.

### **Donor after circulatory death (DCD)**

A donor whose heart stops beating before their brain stops working and who is then certified dead. The organs are then removed.

### **Kaplan-Meier method**

A method that allows patients with incomplete follow-up information to be included in estimating [survival rates](#). For example, when estimating one year [patient survival rates](#), a patient may be followed up for only nine months before they relocate. If we calculated a crude survival rate estimate using the number of patients who survived for at least a year, this patient would have to be excluded as it is not known whether or not the patient was still alive at one year after transplant. The Kaplan-Meier method allows information about such

patients to be used for the length of time that they are followed-up, when this information would otherwise be discarded. Such instances of incomplete follow-up are not uncommon and the Kaplan-Meier method allows the computation of estimates that are more meaningful in these cases.

### **Multi-organ transplant**

A transplant in which the patient receives more than one different organ. For example, a patient may undergo a transplant of a heart and kidney. Transplantation of both lungs is not classed as a multi-organ transplant.

### **Patient survival rate**

The percentage of patients who are still alive (whether the graft is still functioning or not). This is usually specified for a given time period after transplant. For example, a five-year patient survival rate is the percentage of patients who are still alive five years after their first transplant.

### **Unadjusted survival rate**

Unadjusted survival rates do not take account of risk factors and are based only on the number of transplants at a given centre and the number and timing of those that die within the post-transplant period of interest. In this case, unlike for risk-adjusted rates, all patients are assumed to be equally likely to die at any given time. However, a centre may have a lower unadjusted survival rate than others because their patients had a higher risk of death due to their clinical condition at time of transplant. Such differences in [case-mix](#) may explain any variation in the unadjusted survival rates, thus no conclusions can be made about differences in the standard of care between centres.

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