

NHSBT Board Meeting – 28 May 2021

Written update from Northern Ireland

Introduction of an Opt-out System for Organ Donation

Following the public consultation, work is progressing on a draft Bill for consideration by the Executive and NI Assembly to enshrine the policy proposals into law.

As part of this process, an Organ Donation Clinical Advisory Group (ODCAG) has been established. The aim of the ODCAG is to provide a mechanism for clinicians and other stakeholders with relevant expertise to advise the Department on the development and implementation of the new legislation.

Members of the group include representatives from –

- NHSBT – Clinical Leads for Organ Donation, Clinical Lead for Organ Utilisation, Specialist Nurses for Organ Donation and National Clinical Lead for Organ Donation;
- Public Health Agency;
- Human Tissue Authority;
- British Medical Association; and
- Belfast Health and Social Trust.

The first meeting of the group was held on 27 April 2021 and provided a useful forum for discussion with members regarding the draft Bill.

Kidney Transplant Service

Following a pause in the kidney transplant service due to the pandemic for all but the most highly sensitised patients for whom it was extremely difficult to find a suitable match, living donor kidney transplants resumed at the end of March 2021 on a phased approach. Deceased donor transplants for all suitable patients resumed on 6 April 2021.

Officials continued to work closely with Commissioners, Trusts and NHSBT to consider options for the full restoration of the service, including the consideration of alternative locations.

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust recently submitted a Renal Surgery Recovery Plan, which includes details of how the service will increase incrementally between April and June 2021. This includes a commitment to carrying out transplants over the next four months for those identified in the recent UK Living Kidney Sharing Scheme matching run.

The Department of Health would like to formally thank NHSBT staff for the invaluable support they have provided to both the opt-out process to date and in re-establishing the renal transplant service.

Organ Donation Promotion

The NI Organ Donation Promotion Manager continues to develop and roll out a series of promotional events. Recent progress has included the creation of dedicated Organ Donation Twitter and Facebook pages ([organdonationNI](#)).

The next meeting on the NI Organ Donation Steering Group is scheduled to take place on 10 June 2021 and discussions will include the forthcoming Organ Donor Week in September.