

## **NHSBT Board Meeting – 2 December 2021**

### **Written update from Northern Ireland**

#### Introduction of an Opt-out System for Organ Donation

The Second Reading of the draft Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill took place on Monday 20 September 2021 and, following an Assembly vote, the draft Bill was referred to the Committee for Health for consideration.

The Committee for Health, in anticipation of the Bill being referred to it, had opened a call for written evidence from Trusts and subject matter experts following the Bill's introduction on 5 July 2021.

The call for evidence on the Bill closed on 24 September 2021. The Committee received a total of 11 responses from organisations, all of which were in favour of the Bill. It also received 19 responses from individuals, the vast majority of which were not in favour of the Bill. The Committee heard evidence from a number of key stakeholders on 11 November 2021 including NHSBT; Departmental officials will provide further evidence on 25 November 2021.

The Committee is due to report back to the Assembly by the end of January 2022. This will allow sufficient time for the Bill to go through the remaining stages of the legislative process within the current Assembly mandate, which ends in mid-March 2022.

If the legislation is passed by the Assembly it is expected that the implementation phase for the new legislation will last a year, with the new system going live in March 2023. During the implementation phase, the Department will be working to introduce Secondary Legislation, which will specify what organs and tissues will be included under deemed consent.

The Department will also be working to develop a Code of Practice for NI. Following discussions with the Human Tissue Authority (HTA), it has been agreed that HTA will

amend the existing version of Code F Part Two of the Code of Practice to include NI in deemed consent provisions, rather than create a standalone code.

Once again, the Department would like to place on the record its thanks to the invaluable support and expertise of the NHSBT team who continue to work closely with officials on all aspects of the developing legislation.

### Organ Donation Promotion

The NI Organ Donation Promotion Manager worked with partner organisations to develop a wide range of events and communications to mark Organ Donation Week in September. The analysis indicates a fourfold increase that week in web users to the local organ donation website and an uplift of 24.75% in registrations on the Organ Donor Register compared to the previous week.

Social media performance on the official Organ Donation NI channels reached the following users:

- Facebook – approx. 97k;
- Instagram – approx 72k;
- Twitter – approx 204k.

In addition, working with partners gained additional exposure of 591k on Twitter and influencer activity reached 206k on Instagram.

The Organ Donation Promotion Manager is now working with the Department and NHSBT to develop plans for promotion of the proposed change in legislation during the implementation phase before any such legislation goes live.