



Summary of Organ Utilisation Group Meeting, 10th December 2021

The Chair welcomed members to the fourth meeting of the Organ Utilisation Group (OUG).

The focus of the meeting would be on:

- i. hearing feedback from stakeholder engagements.
- ii. considering the ethical implications of organ utilisation
- iii. hearing feedback from the Stakeholder Forum and subgroup chairs.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

1. Gap Analysis

The approach to how to address the previous gaps in the Group's engagement was shared, including further workshops, surveys and focus groups.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Confirmed that engagement with physicians extends to the referral teams, as well as transplant teams.
- Engagement on site visits included discussions with teams and patients on wards, where this was possible in line with COVID restrictions
- Representation on the Group's subgroups is UK wide, not just in England

2. Recommendations Approach

In the New Year, the Group will start focusing on using the evidence provided through the online call for evidence, site visits, workshops, meetings, subgroups etc to develop high-level, high-impact recommendations for Ministers on improvements to the transplant service.

3. Organ Utilisation: Ethical Considerations

A representative from the Nuffield Council of Bioethics presented on the ethical considerations of organ utilisation.

The following points were raised:

- The relationships influencing the donation process are important and include family members, health representatives, and the NHS
- Context of pressures due to historical austerity and COVID means high pressures on staff and systems - sometimes there are no 'good' options
- Practices and procedures aimed at maximising the availability of organs, such as Opt Out legislation, have implications for utilisation as well

- The importance of demonstrating trustworthiness through transparency, accountability, and equitable access

4. Feedback from Stakeholder Engagement

The Group was provided with feedback from the stakeholder engagement activity, including the site visits, meetings with international organ donation organisations, transplant team representatives and the OUG's Stakeholder Forum. Key points/ themes were presented and discussed as follows:

- Site Visits
 - Visit to a referring centre held
 - All organ types were represented, with different challenges faced by different organ groups
 - Common issues across all centres regarding:
 - Workforce capacity and resilience
 - Access to theatres/ intensive care units
 - The need to improve access to data to inform patient and clinical decisions
 - The need for improved minimum standards and monitoring against best practice
 - The need for improved collaboration and streamlining of processes
- International Meetings
 - Similarities shared across countries such as: shared issue of maximising utilisation potential; addressing risk appetite and centre variation; workforce burnout and recruitment issues
 - Cautionary tales shared such as: focus on chastising poor outcomes leads to risk averse behaviour; Having a large number of transplant centres in a country improves local access for patients, but reduces the number of times a transplant will be performed in any one centre and therefore potentially de-skills the teams due to low transplant activity
 - Lessons learned include: focus on monitoring adherence to best practice, setting measures to incentivise; disseminate benchmarked activity data to inform and drive local improvements; support those that take risks, provide training programmes and share experiences
 - Innovation included: the use of machine perfusion to improve the number and quality of organs available for transplant; predictive analytics regarding the outcome of an organ into a named recipient, to address risk aversion; GPS tracking for organs in transit to support management of logistics; Shared decision making with patients
- Clinical Team Meeting
 - Key themes of the meeting included: Trust Board involvement/ownership; addressing risk aversion; workforce and access to resources
- Stakeholder Forum
 - Key themes for the OUG to consider included: lack of capacity and resources; inequity and inequality of access and care; the need to improve shared learning to drive improvements; incentivising transplant services

5. Subgroup Meeting Updates

The Chairs of the Systems Architecture & Data Handling, Standards, Commissioning and Workforce subgroups have all held meetings. The following points were discussed by the subgroups:

- Systems Architecture & Data Handling
 - Had three out of the four meetings planned
 - Key themes:
 - Access to data at point of need
 - Unconnected nature of all data sourced
 - Reporting of inaccurate and incomplete data which is not sufficiently accessible
 - Paper based processes
- Commissioning
 - Have had two meetings with three planned in total
 - Key themes:
 - Standardisation of pathways
 - Define a commissioning framework
 - Improving collaboration between agencies
 - Finance and resource management
 - Patient centricity
- Standards
 - Held first two meetings
 - Key themes:
 - Equity of access
 - Organ Decline meetings
 - Novel Technology
 - Formalised agreement between NHSBT and Commissioners
 - How and when information is presented to patients
- Workforce
 - Held first meeting
 - Discussion points are in their initial phases, but have been collated:
 - Commissioning an external review to map the minimum and optimum number of healthcare professionals required in the organ acceptance and transplant pathway may be a good idea
 - Difficulties in recruitment and retention specific to transplantation
 - Timing of organ retrieval

Next steps

Next steps were agreed as:

- Secretariat to facilitate more engagement with patient groups and those with psycho-social expertise
- Secretariat to continue support with the ongoing work of subgroups
- Secretariat to start drafting agenda, invites etc for the Stakeholder Workshop

Date of next meeting: 10th February