

NHSBT Board Meeting – 19 July 2022

Written update from Northern Ireland

Introduction of an Opt-out System for Organ Donation

The Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, also referred to as Dáithí's Law, will come into operation in the spring of 2023.

A Project Board, which comprises of key stakeholders from relevant organisations, including NHSBT, has been established to oversee planning for and implementation of the law change.

The Human Tissue Authority is currently revising its Code of Practice (CoP) to include Northern Ireland. A public consultation on the revised CoP closed on 24 June and it is expected that the revised CoP will be laid in the Houses of Parliament in the coming months.

Promotion

Public information campaigns have been planned to run in various bursts across 2022 to prepare people for the fact the law is changing in spring 2023.

The first burst of the new 'Lifesaver' campaign was launched on 9 May 2022 and ran until the end of June 2022. Further media bursts will run in September and December 2022, with activity ramping up from January 2023 in advance of the law coming into effect, when messaging will reinforce the go-live date. From early 2023, additional media spend will include TV and direct mail to all households.

From April 2023, the campaign will continue but with a shift in messaging to confirm that the law has changed.

In support of the public information campaigns across mass media channels and more targeted digital channels, there is a full programme of outreach and engagement activity. This includes attendance at general public events, events targeted at specific audiences, presentations to specific organisations or groups and widespread distribution of materials in the community setting.

Distribution of materials is primarily being facilitated by key partners such as the Healthcare Trusts and all local councils, which is enabling exposure at a wide range of public venues. Distribution across the GP and Community Pharmacy Network is also underway.

As well as targeting the general population of NI widely through a range of channels, work is also underway to reach several key audiences. Engagement is particularly focused on reaching the following key audiences:

- young people;
- older people;
- BAME audiences; and
- faith audiences.

Activity to target these audiences includes specific information and presentations to individuals groups or umbrella organisations, attendance at events organised by or for these audiences and development of specific initiatives to engage with these audiences.

In addition to the above, plans are being developed for Organ Donation Week in September.

Belfast Renal Transplant Centre

In keeping with other specialties, the renal team in Belfast currently has reduced theatre access as services rebuild following surge periods of the pandemic. The Trust hopes to increase theatre access by the end of August and return to pre-pandemic levels by November, but this will be dependent on the prevailing pandemic pressures.

Visit by NHSBT

On 5 July, Minister Robin Swann met with NHSBT's Chief Executive, Chair and the Director of Organ Donation and Transplantation. During the meeting, the Minister reaffirmed his support for organ donation and also conveyed his thanks to NHSBT for the support provided during the pandemic and during the passage of the deemed consent legislation.