

NHSBT Board Meeting – 29 November 2022

Written update from Northern Ireland

Legislation

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 revised Human Tissue Authority Code of Practice was laid in Westminster on 7 November and is now ready to be laid in the NI Assembly.

Secondary Legislation, which identifies what tissues and organs that are excluded under the new legislation, has been developed and is now ready to be laid in the NI Assembly.

Both these documents require a sitting NI Assembly to be laid. Therefore, as the Assembly is currently not sitting, there is the potential for a delay in the go-live date. We continue to plan for a Spring 2023 go-live; however, we will continue to monitor the current political situation and adjust our plans as required.

Training

The education training build is complete and halfway through delivery. This should be completed by mid-January, with some mop up sessions to be carried out in February before the expected go-live date.

Overall, the training is being very well received, particularly in the bitesize format. A high percentage of the team are reporting an increase in knowledge after the sessions.

Education sessions for CLODs will be rolled out over the coming months.

Promotional Activity

Organ Donation Week 2022

A review of Organ Donation Week in September has indicated that it was a very successful week, with lots of activity and engagement –

- a total of 125,000 hits on Facebook and Instagram and 30,400 impressions on Twitter;
- Instagram influencer engagement reached a further 262,000;
- the local organ donation website had twice as many visitors during the week compared to the previous week, with the amount of time spent on the website also increasing; and
- registrations to the Organ Donor Register (ODR) also increased during the week, with 1,764 people registering their decision.

Outreach and engagement

The Organ Donation Promotion Manager continues to attend a wide range of events across NI to raise the profile of organ donation eg funeral fairs, presentations to faith and community groups, schools etc.

The distribution of materials to venues in local communities continues, as well as provision of digital materials e.g. local council leisure and community centres.

Promotion of introduction of deemed consent legislation

The third burst of activity of the “Lifesaver” campaign is currently ongoing, which is running on radio, outdoor, digital and social channels across November and December.

The first two bursts have performed well in terms of campaign effectiveness. Research from May/June activity showed the campaign had strong impact, with 91% of people reporting that it had encouraged them to do something in relation to organ donation, such as tell a family member about their donation decisions, register on the ODR, or to find out more.

Baseline research was carried out in January 2022 and a check in August 2022 has indicated that awareness of the deemed consent legislation has increased from 55% to 61%.

Planning is underway for 2023 activity, including the development of TV advertising and direct mail to increase campaign activity in advance of the new law coming into effect in spring.

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 November, but due to the drop in donors, current theatre capacity is sufficient to meet demand in transplant operations and there are no delays to transplants relating to lack of theatre capacity.

The issue of in-hours access to theatres for the transplant team has been an issue over the last year and the hope would be to improve access to this going forward.