

23rd July 2021

To: Organ Donation Services Teams
RCLODs and CLODs
Cardiothoracic Transplant Centres
All NORS teams

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Dear Colleagues,

As we seek to increase organ utilisation an emerging challenge is, what to do when there are requests regarding donor characterisation that are outside routine experience. In a recent case, a coronary angiogram was facilitated as part of exploring the possibility for DCD heart donation. Whilst on this occasion it resulted in a successful heart donation it was agreed that this was outside current practice.

Whilst we are all supportive of innovation to increase the number of organs available for transplant, it is vital that we always act within the framework of current professional, ethical and legal guidance. Where developments and innovations are agreed, these need to be implemented in a controlled manner with the appropriate policies and training in place.

Currently in England, Wales and Northern Ireland there is no published guidance that supports the use of coronary angiogram in DCD donors. Legislation in Scotland covering pre-death procedures prevent the use of coronary angiogram as part of donor characterisation.

We will continue to respond and adapt to any new guidance as it become available, however at the current time a request to perform a coronary angiogram, or any ante-mortem intervention outside of the routine or expected, requires detailed and careful consideration. This must be escalated to team/regional managers and regional CLODs/NHSBT medical directors and may include the need for second opinions. It may also require an explicit discussion of the risks/benefits with the family to request their agreement.

In Scotland the types of permitted pre-death Procedures for DCD has been legally clarified following the implementation of the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Act 2019, details of which can be found [here](#). For England, Wales and Northern Ireland, NHSBT, in consultation with the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine, the Intensive Care Society and other representative intensive care/critical care societies, and the British Transplantation Society, are in the process of drafting a new document entitled, *A Professional, Ethical and Legal Framework for Deceased Organ Donation Actions*. This Framework, which covers donation actions before death and after death, is hoped to be published toward the end of 2021. Importantly this document will also outline a process whereby proposed new innovations can be evaluated and agreed. We will of course share the Framework once published.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding the above please do not hesitate to contact one of us.

Yours faithfully



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