



St John

NHS

Blood and Transplant

Order of St John ceremonies

Frequently asked questions and answers



Who are the Order of St John?

The Order of St John (OSJ) is an order of chivalry of the British Crown and an international humanitarian charity, most known for their St John Ambulance Service. The OSJ created the award which represents a shared belief in the role of organ donation across all faiths and backgrounds. There are local representatives for St John throughout the United Kingdom.

Who are NHS Blood and Transplant?

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) is a Special Health Authority in the NHS. It is the organ donation organisation for the UK, with responsibility for matching and allocating donated organs. Its remit also includes the provision of a safe, sufficient supply of blood and associated services to the NHS.

www.nhsbt.nhs.uk

What is the history of the award?

The award was launched in 2013 and is offered by invitation to all families whose loved one donated an organ after death in the United Kingdom. These ceremonies are held locally throughout the year in collaboration with NHS Blood and Transplant.

The award not only honours donors for their gift, but also raises awareness of the successes of organ donation and inspires other families to follow in the donors' footsteps.

What is the difference between the Gold Heart pin and the Order of St John award pin?

The Gold Heart pin is offered to a donor's loved ones as recognition of the support they have given to organ donation by NHS Blood and Transplant. The Order of St John award pin is a posthumous award for the donor, given on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, and often presented by a Lord Lieutenant.



Who can qualify for and accept the award?

The award, displaying the words 'add life, give hope' is available to all families whose loved one was a deceased organ donor in the UK. This award is given posthumously to the donor, accepted on their behalf by a relative at a regional ceremony.

You have been written to by your regional organ donation services team as you were involved in the consent for donation of your loved one's organs. There is one award invite and pin for each donor. Please do extend this invite to other significant people who were involved in the consent process with you.

Where are the ceremonies located?

On your invitation letter, you will note the date, time and location of the ceremony. The event you have been invited to represents the nearest ceremony location to the hospital in which your loved one sadly died.

The ceremony location is normally a public building. Also attending the ceremony will be other donor families, members of the Order of St John, representatives from NHS Blood and Transplant and hospital staff.

There is a possibility you may meet some of the nurses and doctors who cared for your loved one in the hospital.

What is the Ceremony dress code?

In previous years we have been asked to provide some guidance by donor families. This ceremony is to honour your loved one, please wear what you will be comfortable wearing. Many families choose to dress as if they were at a family occasion.



Who can attend?

We often get asked who can attend the ceremony. You will see on the Media Reply Form there is space for you to bring three guests of your choice. Unfortunately, this is limited to three guests due to venue size, health and safety and catering requirements.

What will happen during the ceremony?

Each ceremony around the country differs slightly but all seek to celebrate your loved one's gift of organ donation with quiet dignity. For this reason, clapping does not usually occur during the ceremonies.

Representatives from the OSJ and NHS Blood and Transplant are present and will do their best to support you and your family at what may be an emotional time. You will not be expected to give a speech at the ceremony. The ceremony is a chance to celebrate the enormous contribution your loved one gave to save the lives of others.

Once you have received your invitation, you will be provided with more details four weeks' prior to the ceremony date. Attendance is completely voluntary but families have told us in previous years that they have felt great comfort from attending the ceremonies.

What if I am unable to attend the ceremony as the dates are inconvenient?

If the date you have been provided is inconvenient, or the venue may be difficult to travel to, please contact your local Organ Donation Team, details are included on your invitation letter. The team will endeavour to find an alternative date and venue to suit your needs. If neither is convenient, your local Organ Donation Team will be able to send you the award and certificate in the post.

What will happen if I choose the postal award?

If you choose to receive the award via the post, you will receive the award and certificate within a few weeks after the ceremony has taken place.

The Order of St John is a Christian order. I am not Christian so does this mean my relative is not eligible for the award?

The Award is open to people of all faiths or of no faith. The Order of St John is keen to stress that their membership and work is not constricted by denomination or religion.

What happens after the ceremony?

After the ceremony, you will be offered light refreshments. This will give you the opportunity to meet members of the Order of St John, NHS Blood and Transplant teams and other donor families. This part of the service is optional.

Media

If you have indicated on the reply form that you would be happy to be featured in a press release, NHS Blood and Transplant may send out a release featuring you and your relative's donation. You may also be contacted about future organ donation campaigns.



Keepsake photographs

At the event there will be a photographer who will be taking photographs of the ceremony. This includes photographs of yourself and family members accepting the award. You will be offered the opportunity to receive a photograph as a keepsake should you wish.

What if I have any other questions?

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact your local Organ Donation Team. They will be able to give you further information regarding the event, and will be able to assist you in any way.

For more information on the Order of St John and how you can support its work, please contact us at:

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