

NHSBT Board Meeting – 28 March 2023

Written update from Northern Ireland

Legislation

The passing of 'Daíthí's Law' by the Northern Ireland (NI) Assembly in February 2022 marked an important first step in the introduction of a deemed consent system for organ donation in NI.

Royal Assent was received in March 2022, allowing for a 12-month period of implementation and preparation, which has included staff recruitment, training and education, as well as a comprehensive programme of public awareness.

The update for the January Board meeting advised that due to there not being a sitting Assembly in NI to make the necessary secondary Regulations, it was unlikely that the new system would be in place by Spring 2023.

However, circumstances have evolved over recent weeks and, following the intervention of the Secretary of State, which led to an amendment to the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation) Bill, the Department was able to make and lay the Regulations on 1 March 2023.

With the Regulations laid, the Department has moved into a three-month lead-in time, which will allow for the completion of implementation planning, including increased public awareness activities, before the new system goes live on 1 June 2023.

Plans are being developed to hold an event at Parliament Buildings on 1 June to mark the occasion.

Revised Code of Practice

The revised Human Tissue Authority's Code of Practice has been deposited in the NI Assembly Library.

Organ Utilisation

Initial discussions have taken place between policy officials and commissioners on the recommendations contained in the Organ Utilisation Report and how relevant recommendations can be implemented in NI.

Promotional Activity update

Promotion of introduction of deemed consent legislation

The November and December “Lifesaver” campaign ran across radio, outdoor, digital and social channels across. The campaign delivered 87% audience reach and over 16,000 impressions. The campaign has also been running across March, which had been planned in the interim period while secondary legislation issues were resolved.

Once the legislation go-live date was confirmed as 1 June, the preparation for legislation go-live burst was re-planned and confirmed to run across April and May. TV advertising will now also form part of the media mix.

A campaign burst for legislation go-live from 1 June will then be used to let audiences know that the law has changed. This will include direct mail to NI households.

Tracking research revealed that awareness of deemed consent legislation being introduced has risen from 55% in January 2022 to 71% in January 2023. It also revealed that 92% of audiences exposed to the campaign in November and December 2022 were encouraged to do something in relation to organ donation, such as find out more, register a decision, or talk about organ donation.

Outreach and engagement activity in support of deemed consent legislation

The Organ Donation Promotion Manager continues to attend a range of events across NI to raise awareness and understanding of the forthcoming law change as well as to educate on the topic of organ donation in general. Distribution of physical and digital materials also continues across a range of partner locations and venues.

Promotion of organ donation – general

Partnerships

We Are Donors: Queen's University branch

Work has commenced to support a new branch of We Are Donors at Queen's University. This includes support for ambassador training and review of and provision of promotional materials.

Belfast Marathon

Following a successful partnership with the Belfast Half Marathon in September 2022, the partnership continues for the full marathon in April 2023. This includes –

- a presence at the two-day expo with a footfall of approximately 20k;
- information being put into the 15k participant packs; and
- branding of the first mile of the marathon with organ donation materials and marshals.

Earned media

The next planned PR opportunity is to celebrate over 1 million people in NI having registered to be an organ donor.

School's resources

Primary resources are currently in a small pilot until end March 2023, after which feedback will be evaluated and the resources prepared for wider roll-out. Post-primary resources working groups will be reconvened to agree next steps for development.