

NHSBT BOARD SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT UPDATE – JANUARY 2024

Donation and Transplantation Plan for Scotland: 2021-2026

A report was produced in December 2023, which provided an overview of the progress made on implementing the recommendations from the Scottish Plan, which continue to be taken forward by the working groups and SNBTS leading on the actions in relation to tissue donation.

Some of the key progress that has been made in the past year includes, the recruitment of 10 Renal Education and Choices at Home (REACH) Transplant Nurse Specialists, the appointment of the Scottish Transplant Research Manager and the undertaking of the Transplant Patient Survey and the Use of Telemedicine for Transplant Patient Consultations Survey.

Transplant Patient Survey

The transplant patient survey, to capture an up-to-date picture of patients' views on transplant services in Scotland, closed on 29 December and 569 responses were received. The responses are now in the process of being collated and analysed, and a report outlining the findings of the survey will be presented at the April 2024 meeting of the Scottish Donation and Transplant Group.

Telemedicine Survey

As part of the work in taking forward implementation of recommendations from the Plan, a survey was sent to all transplant teams and referring clinicians to explore the use of telemedicine for transplant patient consultations. The survey ran for 10 weeks, until 08 September 2023 and received 47 responses.

The initial findings have revealed that limited appointments presently took place via NearMe (a video consulting service used in NHS Scotland) or by telephone, with a large proportion still being done in person. Patient choice, the clinical condition of the patient and travel difficulties were regarded as the main factors as to how patients are seen using remote appointments.

Clinicians found that remote appointments were mostly beneficial for patients, particularly with regards to flexibility, no need to travel, no travel costs, convenience and needing to take less time off work.

However, there was less of a clear consensus on the benefit of telemedicine to clinicians. While flexibility, efficiency, time management, improved compliance and less busy clinics were sighted as benefits, some clinicians also highlighted the

challenges, including administrative infrastructure, digital literacy, social deprivation, patients with additional support needs. Most importantly, it was particularly felt that there was a risk with not assessing patients face-to-face.

In terms of firming up any recommendations from the telemedicine survey, it has been agreed to await for the finding from the Transplant Patient Survey which also asked patients of their experiences of remote consultations.

Living Kidney Donation January 2024 Awareness Raising Campaign

A week long living kidney donation awareness campaign will run between 22 – 28 January 2024 to promote living kidney donation and also the REACH Transplant programme. The campaign will feature case studies and key messaging to celebrate the exceptional gift of living kidney donation as well as radio and social media advertising.

The Minister for Public Health & Women's Health will visit the transplant unit at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh during the week to meet a living kidney donor and recipient and the REACH Nurse Specialists.

REACH Transplant: Home-based Living Donation Kidney Transplantation Education in Scotland

During the period January – October 2023, the REACH Transplant Nurse Specialists visited 258 potential recipients, along with 471 of their invitees in their own homes.

The Nurse Specialists have access to a wide range of patient information resources for use at home visits, including the "REACH Transplant: Information for people who may need a kidney transplant in the future" booklet. This booklet compiles information on kidneys, chronic kidney disease, end stage kidney disease and treatment options in an easy-to-read format and is provided to each patient that receives a home visit so that they and their invitees can refer to if afterwards.

Home visit attendees are also provided with contact details for the REACH Transplant Nurse Specialist, which they are encouraged to share with any potential donors, in case there is a need for further information or sign posting to e.g. Living Donor Transplant Coordinator team.

NHS Organ Donor Register figures

As of 10 January 2024, over half of the population of Scotland (56.4%) have recorded their donation decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register. Of this total, 53.1% have recorded a decision to be a donor, with 3.3% choosing to opt out.

**Scottish Government,
January 2024**