

NHSBT Board Meeting – 26 March 2024

Written update from Northern Ireland

NI Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly was reconvened on 3 February 2024 and Robin Swann MLA was returned to his former post of Minister of Health.

Funding

Although no budget has been confirmed for 2024/25 as yet, the Minister has approved the additional funding requested by NHSBT for 2024/25. In addition, he has confirmed continued funding for DCD hearts, ANRP, CLU and HHV-8 testing and the increases required for those in 24/25.

NI Promotional Activity Update – March 2024

Deemed consent legislation

A major focus for the organ donation education and awareness programme was to support the successful implementation of the deemed consent legislation change. This was achieved on 1 June 2023 and saw awareness of the law change rise from 55% baseline (January 2022) to 71% (January 2023).

The public information campaign to drive awareness of the law change was awarded Integrated Campaign of the Year at the UK Digital Excellence Awards in February 2024.

Quarter 3 ODR figures for NI show 56% registered on ODR (55% opt-in; 1% opt-out).

This has -

- increased from 53% in quarter 3 last year (53% opt-in; 0% opt-out); and
- increased from 55% last quarter (54% opt-in; 1% opt-out)

The evolution of campaign messaging to ODR confirmations and family conversations is currently being tested. This will be used in organic activity and in campaign activity if the current pause on campaign spend is lifted.

Rolling programme of education and awareness

Planning is underway for all education and awareness activities for 2024/25, and an outline of these follows:

Initiatives

As per previous update, the development of initiatives and partnerships will be increasingly relied upon in the absence of higher-level awareness campaign activity.

Planning continues around:

- Libraries NI – a plan is being developed to work with the network of libraries across NI (approx. 96) to include distribution of materials, creation of a curated ‘organ donation book collection’, hosting of events / competitions / information sessions.
- Orgamites – a plan is being finalised for initiatives and content targeted at primary children to include a superhero day, production of a book collection for the libraries project.
- Red Sky Foundation – a plan is underway to bring ‘The Call’ photographic exhibition to NI, including associated launch event – the search for a suitable venue is underway.
- Queen’s University – two joint projects have been identified, the first being an Organ Donation and Transplantation Education Day as part of NI Science Fest which was delivered in February; and the creation of a myth-busting series of videos.
- Commercial retail – various local retail outlets have been targeted for potential joint working opportunities, as well as local shopping centres for promotional space.
- NI Blood Transfusion Service (NIBTS) – planning is underway for a ‘registration/donation event’ to mark 1 June law change anniversary. Launching around 1 June, it will take place across NI using the NIBTS donation clinics for one week.
- Ongoing support for NHSBT campaigns and initiatives e.g. Ralph’s campaign, Specsavers partnership.

Outreach and engagement work

A schedule of events for 2024 continues to be developed, which includes a range of engagement opportunities with the general public, workplace audiences and educational settings.

Circulation of materials continues with the support of various partners, such as local councils, libraries, community pharmacies and GP practices.

Events in February and March to date include shopping centres and several general community events for wellbeing and employability delivered by the Department for Communities.

Schools resources

Irish language versions of the primary school resources were launched on 15 March.

A meeting with NHSBT and their education advisor on post-primary resources is scheduled to take place, with a view to getting these resources updated and launched.