

ANNUAL CORONER/PROCURATOR FISCAL REPORT

POTENTIAL DONOR AUDIT SUMMARY FOR THE 12 MONTH PERIOD

1 APRIL 2023 – 31 MARCH 2024

PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2024



Background

1. This report presents trends in Coroner and Procurator Fiscal lack of objection rates, with regards to organ donation, along with the common objection reasons.

Data

2. Data on all referrals where Coroner or Procurator Fiscal review was required and requested, have been obtained from the national Potential Donor Audit (PDA) as at 6 June 2024. The Coroner/Fiscal lack of full objection rate has been defined as the proportion of reviews where there was a lack of full objection to organ donation and the Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rate has been defined as the proportion of reviews where there was a lack of full objection or a restricted (partial) objection to organ donation.

Trends in Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rates

3. **Figure 1** presents Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rates in the UK, for the last five financial years. The Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rate has returned to 92% in the last year, a rate similar to previous years, following a dip to 90% last year. The total number of referrals requiring Coroner/Fiscal review has decreased over the last five years, from 1624 in 2019/20 to 1330 in 2023/24, as illustrated in **Figure 2**. During that time, the proportion of Coroner/Fiscal full objections has remained similar at around 8% and Coroner/Fiscal restricted (partial) objections have increased from 15% to 19%.

Figure 1: UK Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rates between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2024

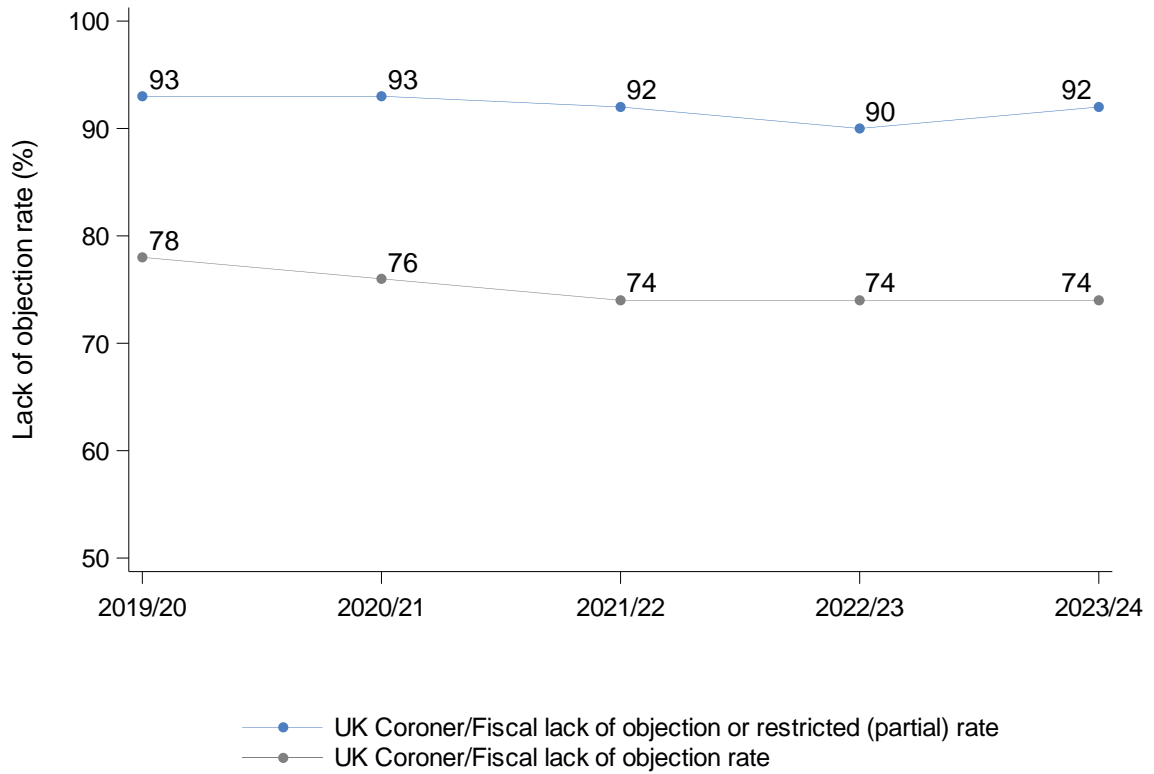
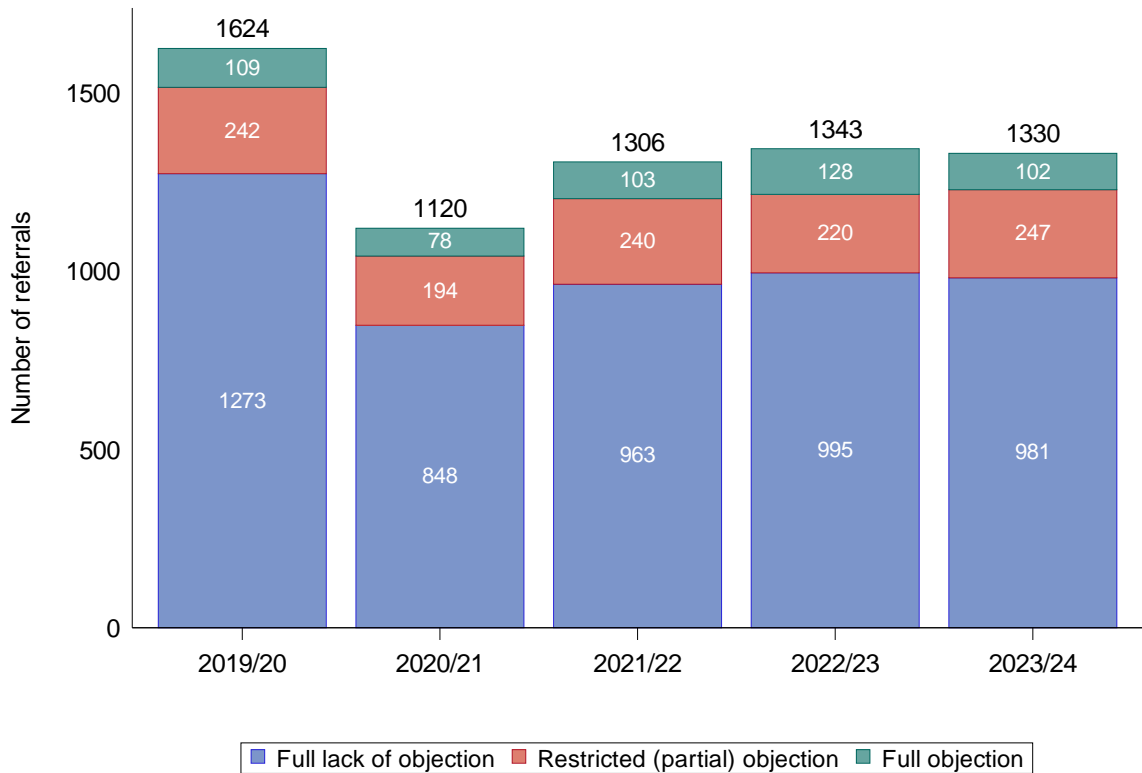


Figure 2: Number of referrals requiring Coroner/Fiscal review and level of objection, 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024

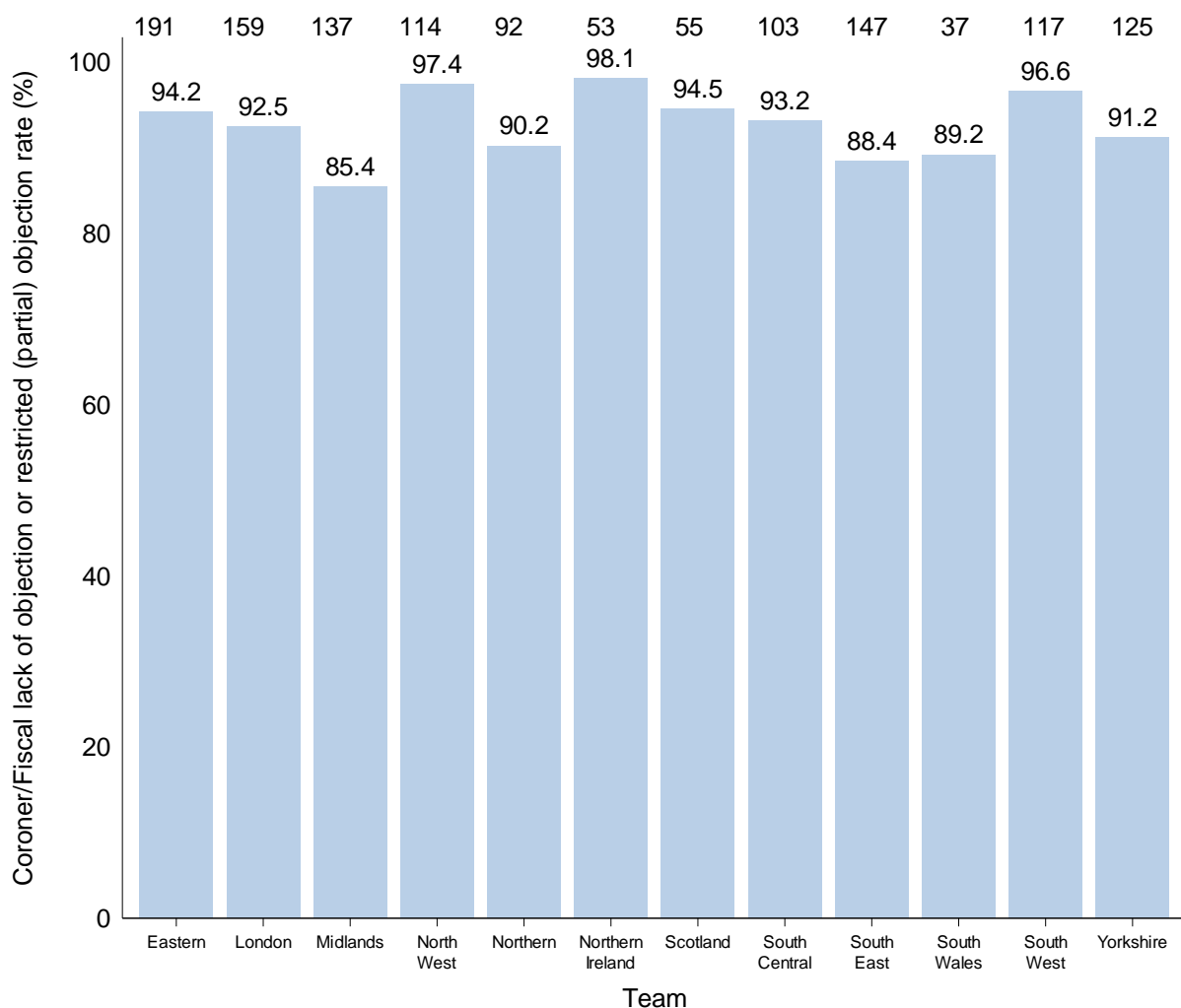


Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection 2023/24

4. Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection and restricted (partial) objection rates in 2023/24 are presented in **Figure 3** by team. There is some variation in lack of objection and restricted (partial) objection rates between the 12 teams ranging from 85.4% (20/137 objections) in the Midlands to 98.1% (1/53 objections) in Northern Ireland.
5. Five-year team trends in lack of objection rates are presented in **Appendix A1**. Lack of objection rates have increased on last year in eight of the twelve teams and decreased in the remaining four. London's Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rate increased on the previous year from 78.6% to 92.4%.

Figure 3: Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection and restricted (partial) objection rate by team, 2023/24

Numbers at the top are total number of referrals requiring coroner/Fiscal review

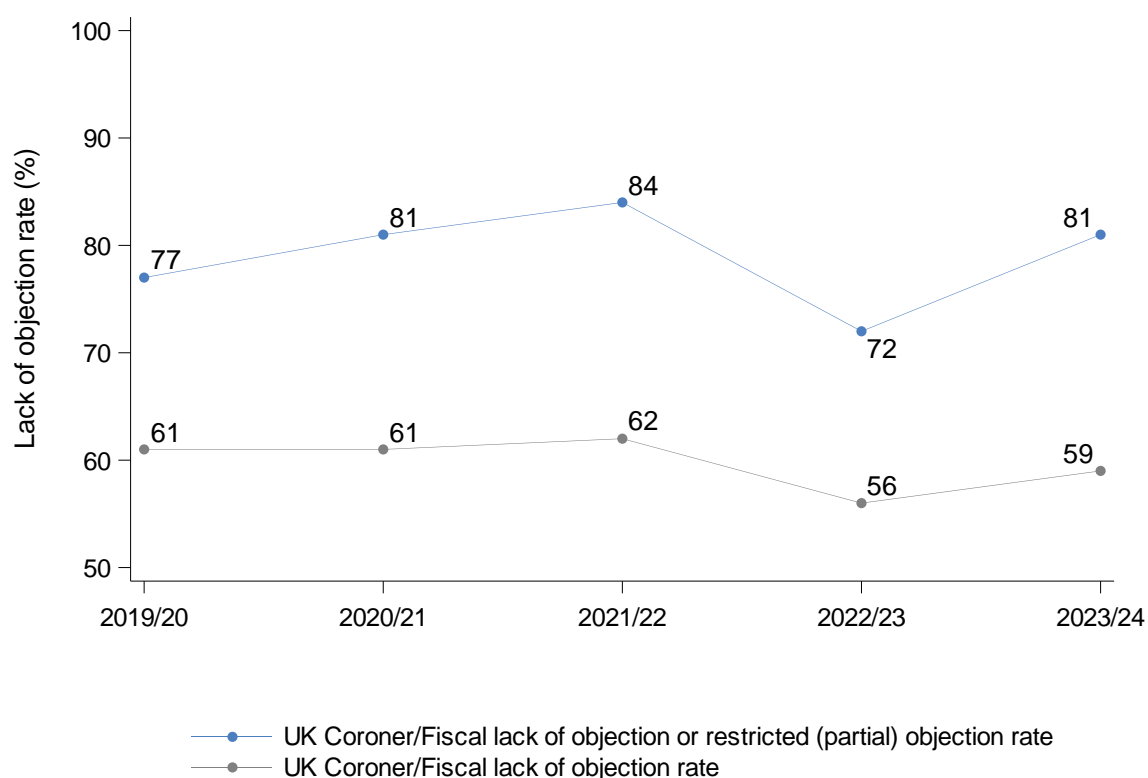


6. **Table 1** lists the reasons for Coroner/Fiscal full objections for donation in 2023/24 for adult and paediatric patients. The main reason for Coroner/Fiscal full objection was 'uncertain or suspicious cause of death' (54%, 55/102), followed by 'murder/manslaughter investigation' (26%, 27/102).

Reason	Adult	Paediatric	Total
Uncertain or suspicious cause of death	44	11	55
Murder/Manslaughter investigation	24	3	27
Other	15	1	16
Police refusal	4	0	4
Total	87	15	102

Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rates for paediatric patients

Figure 4: UK Coroner/Fiscal paediatric lack of objection rates between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2024



7. **Figure 4** shows Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rates for paediatric patients (under 18 years) in the UK for the last five financial years. The lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rate had been trending upwards before falling in 2022/23 but has increased in the past financial year from 72% to 81%. Over the

same period the lack of objection rate remained around 61-62% before falling in 2022/23 but has also increased in the past financial year from 56% to 59%.

Conclusion

8. During 2023/24, Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rates in the UK have returned to levels similar to previous years following a dip in 2022/23. The number of referrals where Coroner/Fiscal review was required and requested have decreased over the last five years.
9. During 2023/24, lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rates varied amongst the teams from 85% in the Midlands to 98% in Northern Ireland. The main reason cited for Coroner/Fiscal objection was 'uncertain or suspicious cause of death' (54%).
10. During 2023/24, paediatric Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rates have returned to levels similar to previous years, following a fall in 2022/23. The lack of objection rate has increased from 56% to 59% and the full or partial permission rate has increased from 72% to 81% over the past year.

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Appendix

Figure A1: Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rate by team and financial year

