

NHSBT Board Meeting – 2 December 2025

Written update from Northern Ireland

Rolling programme of education and awareness

Planning and delivery is ongoing for all education and awareness activities for 2025/26, and an outline of these follows:

Activities and initiatives

Complete:

Transplant Activity Report release (July):

- A release and recipient story were distributed to media outlets, resulting in twenty-six pieces of coverage across print, online and broadcast channels. This activity achieved an estimated audience reach of 4.8 million and delivered an advertising equivalent value of £60,725.

World Transplant Games Press Release activity (August):

- Ahead of the World Transplant Games in Dresden, the Department of Communities and the Public Health Agency issued press releases and athlete bios, alongside interview opportunities for members of Team Northern Ireland (NI), generating twenty-three pieces of coverage across print and online platforms. This activity achieved a combined audience reach of 3.1 million and an advertising equivalent value of £132,480. Additionally, athlete profiles were shared on social media, delivering a total reach of 41,000 across Face Book and Instagram.
- Following Team NI's success at the games, additional press releases and interview opportunities generated ten pieces of coverage across print and broadcast channels, achieving an audience reach of 383,000 and an advertising equivalent value of £27,135. A post-Games recognition ceremony was jointly hosted by the Department of Health and Department for Communities at Parliament Buildings. The event featured speeches from both Departmental Ministers and a number of MLAs, including the Deputy First Minister, also attended the event.

Education resources (September):

- In advance of Organ Donation Week (ODW), the Ministers of Health and Education jointly attended an event to officially launch new Post-Primary education resources, supported by accompanying social media promotion and the issue of a press release, designed to encourage schools to download and deliver the resources during ODW. The resources were reviewed by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA) through the Department of Education and subsequently hosted on the CCEA website. They were communicated directly to schools and promoted via social channels at the time of the launch. The Education Authority also supported the promotion and communication to schools.
- The launch event was held at the school of one of the teachers from the Organ Donation Working Group, who is also the sister of an organ donor.
- Media coverage secured an advertising equivalent value of £19,000 and there were 274 downloads of the resources across September.

Orgtober (October):

- Throughout October, a series of organic social posts were published to promote the Primary age education resources and highlight all activities through the Orgamites resources. Resources were offered in both online and hard copy formats, ensuring accessibility for schools and educators.

World Sight Day (October):

- World sight Day provided an opportunity to encourage people to consider cornea donation, featuring key statistics, a recipient testimonial video and an 'Ask the Experts' video to inform and engage audiences.

Forthcoming:

- The annual Organ Donation Discussion Day will take place on 11 December. This year's campaign includes the distribution of 10,000 branded take-away coffee cups across all coffee outlets within all Health and Social Care Trusts, selected outlets at Ulster University and Queen's University (some coinciding with winter graduations), and Translink staff canteens. Each cup will feature a

dedicated QR code to encourage registrations to the Organ Donor Register, with the aim of generating 10,000 conversations about organ donation. Additional campaign elements include an animated Christmas card shared on the day, and the provision of assets and messaging to partners for amplification across their channels. A press release featuring a donor family story will be issued ahead of the 11 December to drive media engagement.

- New materials designed to encourage people to think differently about cornea donation and to encourage them to include corneas in their ODR registration are being developed. A promotional plan will commence in the new year.

ODW

During ODW, Northern Ireland delivered a range of activities, including 2 headline events, designed to raise awareness of organ donation and transplantation and initiate those important conversations, see list below:

- Translink Lifecycle event at Grand Central Station;
- Turn the Peaks Pink Donard challenge;
- Launch of post-primary school resources (as per section above);
- 'Lead by example' initiative: communications circulated to staff across the health and social care sector and the NI Civil Service;
- Content and stories shared across the week, including the release of a series of new 'Ask the Experts' videos;
- Partner pack shared with all partners (Organ Donation Committees, Trust comms, Council comms, charity partners etc); and
- SNODs worked with Trusts for local and on-site activities.

Results:

- Activity delivered 64 pieces of broadcast and print coverage, achieving a total audience reach of 7.1 million and an advertising equivalent value of £231,451
- This included a package on Sunday Morning Live featuring SNOD Nisa Francis, teacher and donor family Ciara Hunter, and Daithi's dad Mairtin Mac Gabhann.
- Organic Facebook and Instagram content delivered a reach of 100k

- Content shared and posted by partners across the week had an amazing total reach of 11.5 million

Outreach and engagement work

Planning for the schedule of events is ongoing and includes a diverse range of engagement opportunities targeting the general public, workplace audiences, and educational settings.

Over the summer and throughout September, activities included participation in major events such as Belfast Mela and the Belfast Marathon, providing valuable platforms for outreach and awareness.

Organ Donor Register

The spike in opt-outs in May and June has now settled. Investigations with colleagues in ROI revealed heavy-weight awareness campaign activity in May, June, and July relating to their law change to opt-out, which is likely to have had breakthrough in NI.

There were also some negative influencer posts and a couple of negative PR stories around organ donation at this time which may also have contributed.

There was a slight drop in opt-ins for September, something which has occurred before, which is surprising given the activity and reach of ODW.

NI now has 60% of people having registered a decision.