



Summary of Implementation Steering group for Organ Utilisation (ISOU) Meeting, *April 2025*

1. Welcome and introductions – William Vineall/ John Forsythe

The Chairs welcomed members to the 10th meeting of ISOU. The group welcomed Ailsa Willens who had taken the role of Deputy Director of Highly Specialised Commissioning within NHSE.

The aim of the meeting was to summarise progress since the last ISOU meeting in February.

There were no actions outstanding that were not being picked up separately on the agenda.

Conflicts of Interest - All

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. DHSC updates on actions since the previous meeting

John Forsythe set the scene for the meeting which covered the changing NHS landscape and plans to maintain the momentum of the ISOU in the current climate. A summary was given on progress of ISOU recommendations, the Spending Review, and subgroup Co-chairs were invited to provide any further updates/reflections. NHSE provided updates on the Cardiothoracic Transplant Transformation Programme, and combined with NHSBT, gave an update on The Transplant Oversight Group. Updates were also provided on the upcoming Workforce Symposium (7 May) and the Organ Donation Joint Working Group (major event early June).

Changing NHS Landscape and plans to maintain ISOU momentum

- It was noted that following the announcement of the merger, work was underway being led by Penny Dash (NHSE Chair) and Alan Milburn (Lead Non-Executive Director, DHSC). A first meeting of the central programme board had already taken place
- Samantha Jones has been appointed as DHSC's new Permanent Secretary and will begin in this role on 16 June.
- A voluntary exit scheme for DHSC colleagues had opened and was scheduled to close on the 30 April.
- It was agreed that the momentum of ISOU should not be lost during the transition period. The OUG recommendations had been reviewed and 3/6 ISOU sub-groups involve NHSE, and this increases to 4/7 if including commissioning.
- Some of the senior figures on the ISOU have also become senior representatives on the transformation board which will help to maintain momentum.
- It was acknowledged that while this is a period of uncertainty, it was important to not lose momentum.
- It was noted that the Stakeholder Forum will be seeking reassurances regarding next

steps for ISOU and how to keep the momentum of the programme.

- It was confirmed that NHSE was working closely with NHSBT and other commissioning colleagues across the UK.

The Spending Review

- It was noted that the outcome of the Spending Review was a great achievement and there had been strong collaboration across NHSBT and DHSC to support the SR bids for 2025/26. Abdominal Normothermic Regional Perfusion (ANRP), Donation after Circulatory Death (DCD) Hearts, and Clinical Leads for Organ Utilisation (CLUs) had been consolidated into NHSBT's baseline, and funding to begin work on Assessment and Recovery Centres (ARCs) had also been given for 2025/26.

Update on action from the subgroups

- ARCs and H&I recommendations
 - The ARCs and H&I Subgroups recommendations were accepted by the Minister and both have been published on the NHSBT ISOU website. The ARCs recommendations were also part of the evidence base for the successful SR bid.
 - It was requested that a slimmed down version of the H&I subgroup should be continued to support implementation. NHSBT were supportive of the recommendations but will need time to assess delivery and build into the business plan.
- Transplant Oversight Group (TOG)/Transplant Commissioning
 - A further face-to-face TOG meeting was held on 9 April bringing together strategic views to improve transplant outcomes. TOG will continue to support the commissioning structure. The TOG Away Day (April) provided opportunities to map shared areas of activities and priorities moving forwards. Next steps were to map out the calendar year of TOG meetings, do a deep dive at TOG level, and communicate findings to partners.
 - Transplant commissioning discussions will continue to develop over the next few years.
- Xenotransplantation
 - There had been a meeting with the DHSC Chief Medical Officer (CMO) to discuss the recommendations and the report had been shared with the Minister. The Minister and CMO will meet to discuss next steps and engagement activity. This would inform any formal future public engagement plans. The recommendations would not be published until the Minister returns with a decision on engagement.
- Patient Engagement (PE) and Trust Engagement (TE) recommendations
 - Both sets of recommendations had been submitted to Ministers after approval by ISOU.
 - Once approved by Ministers, Patients who were consulted on the PE recommendations should be provided with feedback.
 - Members of the TOG and ISOU were asked to consider implications from the TE subgroup report and consider next steps. It was also noted that there are some renal specifications due to be issued and disseminated to ICBs and the impact of this will need to be considered.
- NHSE update on CT Transformation Programme
 - The first formal Programme Board was held w/c 21 April chaired by Matt Day

and Simon Kendall and this was characterized as being very successful in setting out plans. The literature review was nearly complete. Patient and Public Voice (PPV) appointments had been made for adult and paediatric services and were working in partnership with others on the programme to drive and inform activity.

- Communication was planned for all transplant providers to provide an update in May.

3. Stakeholder Forum

- It was confirmed that there were no plans to disband the Stakeholder Forum ahead of the close of ISOU. The next meeting of the Forum was expected to include the approach for the Cardiothoracic Review and timing for adult and paediatric services.

ACTION: ISOU Secretariat to circulate links to the published ISOU reports and the ISOU Newsletter to members ahead of the next Stakeholder Forum. A note of which reports are due to be published should also be shared.

ACTION: Co-chairs of the Stakeholder Forum to highlight areas of the discussion from this ISOU meeting to help steer updates at the forum meeting.

4. Workforce Symposium

- A Workforce Symposium was planned for 7 May, which was well subscribed. It would be in a similar format to the Commissioning Symposium, with Zubir Ahmed MP (Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Health) opening the event. A series of talks would follow to set the context for the discussion. Workshops against different themes (using Menti feedback) would also take place. Paediatric Renal Transplantation will be highlighted as a key issue and used as a case study for some of the workshops, with patient representatives across tables. It was expected that a final summary report of the event would be published once agreed by Ministers.

5. Organ Donation Joint Working Group (ODJWG)

- There were issues with a decreasing pool of donors and consent rates. To help address this, the ODJWG is planning a significant series of events in the first week of June that will focus on identifying opportunities for increasing the pool of potential donors, increasing consent rates, and increasing societal support. The group will include representation from donor families, clinical, and operational teams.
- An update on progress included:
 - All international experts now engaged
 - Clinical survey launched
 - Donor family survey in final stages, and expected to be launched very soon
 - Data collation nearly complete
 - Discovery meetings planned with national and international experts, to inform discussion and recommendations
- The aim was to have the final report ready before the Summer. Further consideration on the best route of engagement with patient and donor family representative groups will be necessary. It was also reported that discussions had taken place with Devolved Governments regarding best approach for engagement.

6. AOB summary and close

No further AOB raised.

Next meeting – 25th June, 1 – 3pm