

**NHS BLOOD AND TRANSPLANT**  
**PANCREAS ADVISORY GROUP AND ISLET STEERING GROUP**  
**PANCREAS FAST TRACK SCHEME**

**BACKGROUND**

1. The Pancreas Fast Track Offering Scheme (FTS) was first introduced on 1 December 2010 with the 2010 Pancreas Allocation Scheme and was initiated once the pancreas had been removed from the donor in order to place the donated organ as a matter of urgency. It was further agreed at the Advisory Group meeting in October 2015 that a revised fast track offering scheme would be introduced from 14 December 2015, which would be initiated either if the pancreas had been declined by 4 centres (3 centres for a donor after circulatory death) for donor or organ reasons or once the pancreas had been removed from the donor.
2. Following discussion of the large volume of fast track pancreas offers and low transplantation rate an in-depth analysis was presented at the Advisory Group meeting in November 2018. It was subsequently agreed not to fast track a pancreas if the cold ischaemic time (CIT) was greater than 8 hours at time of potential fast track. This rule took effect from 1 April 2019. No changes were made to the rules triggering fast track offers.
3. A further change was agreed at PAG in April 2020, to not fast track a pancreas to whole pancreas centres if the CIT was greater than 4 hours. This change was implemented on 1 October 2020.

**INTRODUCTION**

4. This paper audits activity in the 5 calendar years between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2025. Data were obtained from the UK Transplant Registry on both donors after brain death (DBD) and donors after circulatory death (DCD) pancreas donors aged 65 (DBD) or 55 (DCD) years or less prior to 1 October 2020, and 60 (DBD) or 55 (DCD) years or less otherwise. Between April and September 2020, there was a change to the offering process so that pancreases were fast tracked after offering to Tier A patients due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Between October 2020 and March 2021, there were fewer donors than normal due to the second wave of the pandemic.

**RESULTS**

5. Of the 1,549 pancreas donors, 39% were offered through the scheme in the 5 year period, overall a reduction compared with 43% in 2018/19. **Table 1** shows the number of pancreas donors whose organs were offered through the fast track scheme by calendar year.
6. The proportion of donors fast tracked in the latest calendar year was 39% of DBD, a reduction from 44% in 2018/19, and 47% of DCD, an increase from 39% in 2018/19.
7. Overall, of the 609 pancreas donors offered through the scheme, 249 (41%) were subsequently accepted for transplantation and 112 (18%) were transplanted. Of the 112 transplanted, 90 were transplanted as whole organs and 22 as islets.
8. **Table 2** shows, for the 5 year period April 2020 to March 2025, the trigger recorded by Hub Operations for fast tracking 609 donors. The main reason was "Declined after knife to skin (KTS)" in 236 (39%) cases. In 26 (4%) cases the reason was due to the COVID-19

pandemic offering process deviation. The main reasons for fast tracking were consistent across the different years.

9. **Table 3** shows a breakdown of the reasons for decline for those organs that were fast tracked due to being declined by 4 (DBD) / 3 (DCD) centres for organ or donor reasons. The most common reasons for decline were donor past history (44%), size (12%), poor function (9%) and donor age (8%); these proportions were similar for DBD and DCD organs. The reasons for decline for offers from these donors was also similar in organs which were transplanted and organs which were not transplanted.
10. **Table 4** shows reasons for fast tracking for the 112 pancreases which were eventually transplanted. Of these 112, 79 (71%) were DBD donations and 33 (29%) were DCD donations. Of the 75 DBD donations, 38 (48%) were fast tracked after being “Declined by 4 centres for organ or donor reasons”. Of the 33 DCD donations, 18 (55%) were fast tracked after being “Declined by 3 centres for organ or donor reasons”. Overall, the main reason for fast tracking a pancreas that was eventually transplanted was “Declined by 4 (DBD) / 3 (DCD) centres for organ or donor reasons” in 56 (50%) cases.
11. Of the 90 pancreases fast tracked in the 5 year period and transplanted, follow-up was available for 83 and the one year Kaplan-Meier graft survival was 86% (95% confidence interval 75 - 93%). Of the 22 islet transplants, 15 were routine and seven were priority top-up grafts. Of the 15 routine transplants, five of these grafts have failed, four before one year and one at one year post-transplant.

#### **ACTION**

12. The most recent change has been in place for over five years. In 2024/25 there has been an increase in the proportion of pancreas donors fast tracked however the number of donors fast tracked was similar to previous years. The scheme will continue to be monitored.

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**Table 1 Outcome of pancreases offered through the fast track scheme, by financial year, 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2025**

Year	Donor type	Number of pancreas donors	Number offered through FTS (% of donors)	Number accepted for transplantation through FTS			Number transplanted through FTS		
				Whole	Islet	Total	Whole	Islet	Total (% of offered)
2020/21	DBD	159	58 (36%)	23	8	31	11	1	12 (21%)
	DCD	51	26 (51%)	13	1	14	8	0	8 (31%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>84 (40%)</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20 (24%)</b>
2021/22	DBD	240	84 (35%)	21	10	31	13	6	19 (23%)
	DCD	91	36 (40%)	14	1	15	5	1	6 (17%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>120 (36%)</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25 (21%)</b>
2022/23	DBD	243	92 (38%)	18	15	33	9	4	13 (14%)
	DCD	110	60 (55%)	24	1	25	8	0	8 (13%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>152 (43%)</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21 (14%)</b>
2023/24	DBD	232	86 (37%)	26	8	34	12	4	16 (19%)
	DCD	114	38 (33%)	12	0	12	3	0	3 (8%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>124 (36%)</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19 (15%)</b>
2024/25	DBD	206	81 (39%)	22	10	32	15	4	19 (23%)
	DCD	103	48 (47%)	19	3	22	6	2	8 (17%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>129 (42%)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>27 (21%)</b>

<b>Reason</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Declined after KTS/x-clamp/retrieval includes damaged/fatty	236	(39%)
Declined by 4 (DBD) /3 (DCD) centres for organ or donor reasons	127	(21%)
Not accepted by KTS	106	(17%)
Declined post isolation	43	(7%)
Deemed unusable	36	(6%)
Offering process deviation due to COVID-19	26	(4%)
No (or no more) named recipients on matching run (BMI=>31 or low age, low BMI donor)	20	(3%)
Positive virology donor	9	(1%)
RM authorisation/unstable donor	6	(1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>609</b>	

<b>Reason</b>	<b>DBD</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>DCD</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>(%)</b>
<b>Donor</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>60</b>
Past history	124	44	75	44	199	44
Age	21	8	28	16	49	11
Cause of death	4	1	0	0	0	0
Other	4	1	6	4	10	2
<b>Organ</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>27</b>
Size	34	12	21	12	55	12
Poor function	26	9	11	6	37	8
Other	10	4	8	5	18	4
Better match required	6	2	0	0	0	0
Ischaemia time	4	1	0	0	0	0
Damage	4	1	3	2	7	2
<b>Other/Unknown/Not reported</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>280</b>		<b>171</b>		<b>437</b>	

<b>Table 4 Reasons for fast tracking organs that were transplanted, by donor type, 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2025</b>				
<b>Donor Type</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>(% of Type)</b>
DBD	Declined by 4 centres for organ or donor reasons	38	(34%)	(48%)
	Declined after KTS/x-clamp/retrieval includes damaged/fatty	9	(8%)	(11%)
	Offering process deviation due to COVID-19	9	(8%)	(11%)
	Not accepted by KTS	8	(7%)	(10%)
	No (or no more) named recipients on matching run (BMI=>31 or low age, low BMI donor)	7	(6%)	(9%)
	Positive virology donor	4	(4%)	(5%)
	Declined post isolation	2	(2%)	(3%)
	RM authorisation/unstable donor	2	(2%)	(3%)
DCD	Declined by 4 centres for organ or donor reasons	18	(16%)	(55%)
	Offering process deviation due to COVID-19	6	(5%)	(18%)
	Not accepted by KTS	4	(4%)	(12%)
	No named recipients on matching run (BMI=>31 or low age, low BMI donor)	3	(3%)	(9%)
	Declined after KTS/x-clamp/retrieval includes damaged/fatty	1	(1%)	(3%)
	RM authorisation/unstable donor	1	(1%)	(3%)