

DCD Heart Oversight Group (DCD HOG) – Update Brief

Meeting: 18 November 2025 | **Chair:** Ian Currie

Purpose: Governance for the ongoing delivery and development of the UK DCD Heart service, including safety, capacity, operational delivery, financial impact and future development.

Key Updates & Decisions

1. Service Capacity & Workforce

- Papworth: Fully staffed rota, recruiting additional DCPs, regular EVLP activity and training; 11-hour rest period described as “game-changing”.
- Glasgow: Limited DCD heart cover (single surgeon), training pipeline developing; transport remains a key risk.
- Harefield: Strong rota with senior and junior surgeons; noted increasing DCD activity.
- Overall recognition of the learning curve and complexity for new centres – assurance given that proctoring and support will be mandatory before independent practice.

2. Activity & Trends

- ~60% of donors are now DCD,
- Noted increase in recipient ECMO usage.
- Request for data on time to death following withdrawal (<15 minutes) to support service evaluation.

3. Statistics & Data

- April - August 2025 - 60 attendances for DCD Heart retrieval, 42 proceeded to donation and 41 transplants.
- Total of 398 adult and 32 paediatric DCD hearts transplanted since DCD hearts began
- Since national retrieval and offering, the conversion from retrieval to transplanted has improved from 84% to 91%,

4. Paediatric DCD Hearts

- Three successful paediatric DCD heart cases using the XVIVO device, with no post-transplant ECMO.
- Policy revised to offer mechanical support for children <5kg as smaller hearts are available
- Training underway in Newcastle; funding remains charitable while a national business case is being developed.

- **5. Patient Safety**

- Two incidents highlighted regarding incomplete or conflicting ECHO reports.
- Agreed principles:
 - No offering without an ECHO.
 - If a heart is accepted, the DCD heart team must mobilise.
 - SNOD documentation to be aligned with updated clinical protocols.
 - Regional Heads of Nursing to support rapid resolution of conflicting opinions.

6. mOrgan & Technology Updates

- MHRA approval for mOrgan awaited.
- External update to be provided at the next meeting.

7. Governance & Future Development

- The remit of the DCD HOG has ended now baseline funding has been secured.
- The Cardiac Retrieval Service Development Group (CRSDG) has been established to focus on the development of the DCD heart service over the longer term.
- Adult and older paediatric DCD Heart retrieval will be commissioned from 1 April 2026.
- DCD hearts to be included in the NORS contract as a bolt-on to the standard NORS service, same t&c's. Whilst one team is on call this will include the 11-hour rest.
- Long-term ambition: two DCD heart teams on call (North/South), subject to funding.
- Agreement to explore routine perfusate sampling for service evaluation (HTA agreement required).

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