

Scottish Donation and Transplant Group (SDTG)

Donation and Transplantation Plan for Scotland: 2021-26 (“the Plan”) Closing Report and Next Steps

Closing Report

The [Donation and Transplantation Plan for Scotland: 2021-2026](#), published on 24 March 2021, was developed in collaboration with the members of the Scottish Donation and Transplant Group (SDTG), building on the improvements in donation and transplantation following the [UK Organ Donation Taskforce report](#) in 2008 and the recommendations set out in [A Donation and Transplantation Plan for Scotland: 2013-2020](#).

The main focus of the Plan was to increase organ and tissue donation and transplantation so that more people receive life-saving or life-enhancing transplants and experience better long-term health outcomes.

The Plan covered both living and deceased donation of both organs and tissue for adults and children and contained the following seven priorities:

Priority 1	Implementation of the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Act 2019
Priority 2	Increasing Organ Transplantation
Priority 3	Reducing Missed Opportunities for Deceased Donation
Priority 4	Increasing Living Donation and Reducing the Wait for a Kidney Transplant
Priority 5	Transplant Recipient Support and Aftercare
Priority 6	Research and Innovation
Priority 7	Public Health Improvement

Of the 21 recommendations set out in the Plan, 19 had been completed by 1 August 2026, with progress on several continuing to be monitored. Key achievements include the introduction of Scotland’s opt-out organ and tissue donation system, investment in technologies such as machine perfusion to increase organ utilisation (£783k), additional funding for eye retrieval services (£250k), funding for the Assessment and Recovery Centres (ARCs) pilot (£660k) and the launch of the Renal Education and Choices at Home (REACH) Transplant nurse programme (£350k), and the establishment of the Scottish Transplant Research Network (STRN).

The following two recommendations remain ongoing:

- Ensure a robust eye retrieval service for Scotland is in place and continue to monitor and review progress on increasing eye donation; and
- Undertake an evaluation of the organ and tissue donation opt out system, as required by The Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Act 2019 and seek to learn any lessons from the evaluation findings.

Next steps

Given the substantial programme of UK-wide work currently being progressed through the Implementation Steering Group for Organ Utilisation (ISOU) and the Organ Donation Joint Working Group (ODJWG), the Scottish Government does not propose to develop a separate Donation and Transplantation Plan at this time. Instead, the focus will be on supporting and implementing the recommendations emerging from these programmes, many of which closely align with Scotland's existing priorities to improve organ donation, increase transplantation activity, maximise organ utilisation and ensure equitable access to transplant services.

In the short term, priority will be given to delivering a number of practical actions aimed at increasing organ and tissue donation and transplantation rates across Scotland.

The Minister for Mental Wellbeing, Public Health, Sport, Alcohol and Drugs will be invited to endorse this approach and the proposed actions. Subject to agreement, the SDTG will finalise the report at its December meeting.

Before determining whether a new Scottish Donation and Transplantation Plan is required, we will seek the views of stakeholders, including members of SDTG before deciding whether there is a need for a new national plan to address Scotland-specific challenges and opportunities.