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# **Organ Donation Week 2020**

**7 – 13 September**

## **Resource Toolkit**

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## 1. Introduction

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, all awareness raising activity for organ and tissue donation and transplantation ceased in March this year.

At that time, the Scottish Government also took the decision to postpone the implementation of the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Act 2019. The new opt out law around organ and tissue donation will now come into force in March 2021.

This year's Organ Donation Week, which will run from Monday 7 – Sunday 13 September will mark the start of our gradual reactivation of awareness raising activity in relation to the opt out law change in Scotland.

Unfortunately we are not supporting any awareness events that encourage face to face interaction or large number of people to gather. This year's campaign will have a stronger digital focus and we are asking our stakeholders and ambassadors to support the campaign on their online and social channels.

If you do have plans for any local awareness raising activity during the week, please consider using the resources in this toolkit to help you develop consistent messaging across your digital channels.

Thank you for your continued support of Organ Donation Week.

Please email [Organ\\_Donation\\_Scotland@gov.scot](mailto:Organ_Donation_Scotland@gov.scot) if you have any questions or queries about this Toolkit.

## 2. Organ Donation Week 2020 - Activity in Scotland

Organ Donation Week traditionally provides a positive focus for the Scottish Government, NHS Scotland, wider stakeholders and those whose lives have been touched by organ and tissue donation to shine a light on its importance, celebrating how the selfless actions of donors and their families have transformed and improved lives.

Following a pause on opt out PR activity due to the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, we plan to use this year's Organ Donation Week to get people starting talking again about donation and its importance, in the context of the law is changing to an opt out system and highlighting the choices that people have.

This year, our campaign activity during Organ Donation Week in Scotland will be lower key and less than in previous years. This is because we are at the start of reactivating our awareness around the opt out law change and we will be increasing the momentum over the following months with our national media campaign ahead of the law changing in March 2021.

### Our confirmed plans for the week

<b>Life Matters radio</b>	Clinical voices will be aired across many local radio stations in Scotland talking about choice and conversations and myth busting the most common misconceptions around donation.
<b>Stakeholder engagement</b>	Key stakeholders will be encouraged to show support for the law change and Organ Donation Week and to start developing their plans and to share how they can get involved.
<b>Media relations</b>	Development of a news release using case studies and stats for local newspapers.

### 3. Law Change - Overview

#### How is the law changing?

The law is changing to introduce a new system of deemed authorisation. This is often referred to as an opt out system.

This means that if you have not opted out when you die, the law allows for the donation of certain organs for transplantation purposes.

This does not apply if you are in an excluded group (as detailed below) or it has been established that this would be against your views.

You can still choose to register your support for donating your organs or tissue if you choose. By doing this it can make it easier for your loved ones to honour your decision when you die.

#### When will the new law come into force?

The new law will come into force in March 2021.

#### Who will the law change affect?

Deemed authorisation will apply to most adults who are resident in Scotland; however it will not apply to these excluded groups:

- Children (under the age of 16)
- Adults who lack the capacity to understand the new law and to take the necessary actions
- Adults who have lived in Scotland for less than 12 months before their death

#### Why is the law around organ and tissue donation changing in Scotland?

The law is changing to help save and improve more lives.

- Every year up to **50** people die in Scotland in need of an organ transplant.
- In Scotland, **more than 500** people are waiting for a transplant at any time. But there aren't enough donors to help all of these people.
- Although **over 70% of people in Scotland support donation** and would be willing to donate after death, many don't record this decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register. An opt out system will be a better reflection of the support there is for donation in Scotland.
- Only around **1%** of people die in the rare circumstances that makes deceased organ donation possible, which usually means dying in a hospital critical care unit. So, every opportunity for donation is very precious.

[View the law change factsheet](#)

## 4. Law Change - Key messages

From March 2021, the law around organ and tissue donation in Scotland is changing to an opt out system.

The law is changing to help save and improve more lives.

The change in law means that if people have not recorded a decision about donation, they will be considered as a possible donor when they die unless they have chosen to opt out or are in an excluded group (see page 4).

Organ and tissue donation remains a personal decision and everyone has a choice as to whether or not they want to become an organ and tissue donor. People can either choose to register their support for donation or register not to be a donor by opting out on the NHS Organ Donor Register at any time.

It's important that people share that decision with their family and those closest to them, so they can honour their decision.

People can find out more about the opt out system of organ and tissue donation, and their choices at [www.organdonationscotland.org](http://www.organdonationscotland.org).

## 5. Law Change - What choices do people have?

All adults in Scotland can take any of these steps before or after the law change and they can change their mind at any time.

### **Register their decision to opt out of donation**

This means opting out of donation of all organs and tissue.

### **Register their decision to be a donor**

By confirming their support for donation, it will make it much easier for their family or those closest to them to honour their decision.

If people are willing to donate some types of organs and tissue, but not others, they can make their choices clear when they record their decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register.

### **Amend their registration**

Update an existing record with changes to personal details such as a new address, name change or to change to preferences for organ and tissue donation.

### **Withdraw their registration from the register**

Withdrawing your details from the register is not the same as opting out. You must have previously chosen to register a donation decision in order to withdraw one.

### **If people do nothing and do not record a donation decision**

If people do not register a decision or withdraw a decision, it will be considered that they agree to donate certain organs and tissue for transplantation in the event of their death.

Family or those closest to them will still be consulted to ensure that donation does not proceed if they would not have wanted it to.

If a person in one of the excluded groups set out by the law, dies in a way that means they could donate, then their next of kin will always be asked whether they wish to authorise donation.

## 6. Law Change – How do people register their decision?

People can register their decision:

### **Online**

Via the NHS Organ Donor Register at [www.organdonationscotland.org](http://www.organdonationscotland.org).

### **Phone**

Call 0300 123 23 23. Lines are open 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Calls will be charged at local call rates depending on the phone provider.

## 7. Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Statistics 2019/20<sup>1</sup>

People in Scotland	
<b>570</b>	are currently waiting for a transplant
<b>2.7 million</b>	have joined the NHS Organ Donor Register (49.6% of the Scottish population).
<b>37</b>	died waiting for a transplant
<b>407</b>	received a transplant
<b>282</b>	received a kidney transplant
<b>68</b>	received a liver transplant
<b>24</b>	received a kidney and pancreas transplant (or kidney and islet cell transplant)
<b>13</b>	received a heart transplant
<b>9</b>	received a lung transplant
<b>10</b>	received islet cell transplants
<b>1</b>	received a multi-organ transplant
<b>43</b>	tissue donors - 27 of these were also organ donors
<b>46</b>	donated their eyes, some of whom also donated organs or other tissue

<sup>1</sup> [NHSBT Organ Donation and Transplantation Activity Data:Scotland](#)

## 8. Organ Donation Registrations by NHS Board

<b>NHS Board</b>	<b>Opt in Registrations as at 6 Aug 2020</b>	<b>Opt out Registrations Jul 2015 – 6 Aug 2020*</b>
Ayrshire & Arran	16,4958	1155
Borders	62,511	385
Dumfries & Galloway	67,645	554
Fife	182,866	1347
Forth Valley	145,464	1088
Greater Glasgow & Clyde	551,434	7344
Grampian	298,565	2423
Highland	169,672	974
Lanarkshire	290,241	2577
Lothian	531,032	4230
Orkney	10,416	50
Shetland	10,571	59
Tayside	212,315	1826
Western Isles	10,872	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,708,562</b> <b>49.6% of the Scottish population</b>	<b>23,883</b>

\*The ability to register an opt out decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register has been available since July 2015.

## 9. Opt out decisions in Scotland

<b>Month/Year</b>	<b>No. of opt out decisions Jul 2019 – Jul 2020</b>
<b>Jul-19</b>	213
<b>Aug-19</b>	159
<b>Sep-19</b>	833
<b>Oct-19</b>	404
<b>Nov-19</b>	1910
<b>Dec-19</b>	1460
<b>Jan-20</b>	3481*
<b>Feb-20</b>	1203
<b>Mar-20</b>	985
<b>Apr-20</b>	544
<b>May-20</b>	2256*
<b>Jun-20</b>	726
<b>Jul-20</b>	507

\*We presume that these spikes in the number of opt out decisions were linked to NHSBT publicity of the law change in England which came into force in May. We expect to see similar spikes in Scotland over the coming months as our awareness raising of the law change gains momentum.

## 10. Social Media

Promote the law change with this messaging on your social media channels.

**#lifesavingconversations**

**Social Copy and Assets**

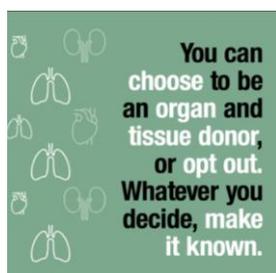
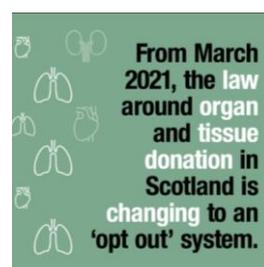
Organ Donation Week starts today! Have YOU shared your donation decision? The law around organ and tissue donation is changing to an opt out system from March 2021, but you can register and share your decision at any time. Why not do it today? Find out more at [organdonationscotland.org](http://organdonationscotland.org)

It's Organ Donation Week! Help make it count by discussing your organ and tissue donation decision with your family. Sharing it, means they will be able to honour it. You can record your decision on the NHS Organ Donation Register too. [organdonationscotland.org](http://organdonationscotland.org)

You can choose to register to be an organ and tissue donor or opt out so make your decision known this Organ Donation Week. Find out more and register your decision at [organdonationscotland.org](http://organdonationscotland.org)

The law around organ and tissue donation is changing to an opt out system from March 2021, but you don't need to wait until then to register your decision and share it with your family. Make it known this Organ Donation Week. Find out more here [organdonationscotland.org](http://organdonationscotland.org)

Families of organ and tissue donors have shared their stories during Organ Donation Week to encourage people to share their donation decision. You can choose to register to be a donor or to opt out, but it's important to share it. Find out more at [organdonationscotland.org](http://organdonationscotland.org)



**These social media assets can be downloaded at:**  
[www.organdonationscotland.org/resources](http://www.organdonationscotland.org/resources)

## 11. Editorial

### Make your decision known this Organ Donation Week

We all have it in us to save a life, but how many of us have thought about whether we actually want to be an organ and tissue donor?

Making that decision known is important, as the law around organ and tissue donation is set to change to an opt out system from March 2021.

Scotland has made huge strides in increasing transplant rates over the past decade, thanks to the generosity of those who choose to become donors and their families.

There is high support for organ donation in Scotland, which has the highest number of people in the UK currently on the NHS Organ Donor Register. But the reality is that there are people in Scotland still waiting for a transplant to save and improve their lives.

The move to an opt out system is part of a package of measures to continue to improve transplantation rates – and the lives of those for whom the wait continues.

The change in law means that if people aged 16 and over have not recorded a decision about donation, they will be considered as a possible donor when they die.

Organ and tissue donation remains a personal decision and everyone has a choice. You can choose to register to be an organ and tissue donor, or opt out.

Whatever you decide, it's important to record that decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register at any time, from now and in the lead up to the law changing, and share it with family so they are able to honour your decision.

People can find out more about the opt out system of organ and tissue donation, and their choices at [organdonationscotland.org](http://organdonationscotland.org).

### Having that important conversation

A woman who honoured her husband's decision to donate his organs has shared her story to mark Organ Donation Week (07 – 13 September 2020).

Jane Hall's husband George became an organ donor in 2015 after losing his life to a brain hemorrhage, aged 56.

The decision to allow donation to proceed was eased by the fact that the family had talked about what they would want to happen – and Jane has encouraged more people to have that important conversation.

From March 2021, Scottish organ and tissue donation law is changing to an opt out system. Everyone has a choice – you can choose to register to be an organ and tissue donor, or opt out – and people can register their decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register at any time.

Jane said: "I'm incredibly proud of my husband and his legacy. Even though as a family we've suffered a tremendous loss, his decision has given life to others which has brought comfort.

"Talking about death is never easy, but it's so important. Knowing George's wishes made that decision so much easier at the worst of times, and people's lives were saved as a result.

"If you want to be an organ donor, make this the Week you share your decision." People can find out more about the opt out system of organ and tissue donation, and their choices at [organdonationscotland.org](http://organdonationscotland.org).

