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**Launch of Organ Donation Week 3-9 September – Hundreds of Transplants Missed Each Year Because Families Don't Know What The Deceased Relative Wanted – Remember "Words Saves Lives" So Let's get talking about Organ Donation!**

**To: All Branches**

Dear Colleagues,

Three people die every day waiting for a transplant. We in the CWU can help change things, though the campaign needs your support in all Branches and Regions to get people talking.

It's just two weeks until Organ Donation Week 3-9 September and the CWU is again proud to be supporting the campaign week aimed at helping inspire the public to get talking about organ donation and sharing their wishes with their loved ones.

In line with CWU Conference Policy we are urging all Branches, Regions, Reps and Members to give their support to the week by raising awareness and urging members to talk about it to their families, sign-up and carry a donor card.

More than three families a week are saying no to organ donation because they didn't know what their relative wanted.

This means around 500 lifesaving organ transplants are being missed each year.

Left with the burden of making a decision for someone they love, the families decide it is safer to say no.

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) has revealed the figures today, to mark the launch of the 2018 Organ Donation Week (September 3 to 9) and is urging people to tell their families they want to become lifesaving organ donors. The reluctance to talk about the issue is contributing to a deadly shortage of organs and leaving families to make a difficult decision when someone they love dies.

Last year around **500** people died while on the active transplant waiting list and a further **900** people were removed from the list, mainly due to ill health. Many of these people will have died shortly after being removed. There are currently over 6,000 people waiting for a transplant. Every **ten** minutes, someone is added to the national transplant waiting list. On average, **20** people die each day while waiting for a transplant. One organ donor can save **eight** lives.

It's a tragedy that hundreds of people are dying unnecessarily every year waiting for transplants. NHSBT tell us that if everyone who supported donation talked about it and agreed to donate, most of those lives would be saved.

2018 Organ Donation Week is about urging people to tell their family that they want to save lives. A few words now can make an extraordinary difference. It will also make things much easier for the family to make the right decision should that time come. The message is; if you want to save lives, don't leave it too late to talk to your family. If you want to be a donor, your family's support is still needed for donation to go ahead, even if you are on the NHS Organ Donor Register. And if you are unsure about donation, please ask yourselves as a family; what would you do if one of you needed a transplant? Would you accept a lifesaving organ? If you'd take an organ, shouldn't you be prepared to donate?

Only one in every hundred people die in circumstances where they could donate, so every potential donor is precious. NHS Blood and Transplant's annual audit of potential donors in 2016/17 shows that around 200 families said no to donation because they were not sure whether the patient would have agreed to it. Based on last year's average number of 3 transplants per deceased donor, those refusals could instead have led to around 500 lifesaving or life transforming transplants.

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) surveys show more than 80% of people support organ donation but only around 50% of people have ever talked about it. Research shows that women are 30% more likely to start a conversation about organ donation than men.

### **Words Save Lives – Spread The Word**

Do your family know whether you want to be an organ donor? Have you ever talked about organ donation with them? If the answer is no, then you're not alone; sadly, many donation opportunities are lost every year because families don't know if their loved one wanted to be a donor or not. Family support is crucial to enable donations to take place.

We need more people to talk about organ donation to increase the number of transplants that happen. There's no time like the present, talk about it today. Talking about your organ donation decisions makes it easier for your family to support your decision and for you to support theirs. You could help someone waiting for that vital call, by joining the [NHS Organ Donor Register](#) and by telling your family.

### **The top 5 reasons people gave for not having the conversation were:**

- 1) It never came up – 33%
- 2) Don't want to talk about death – 16%
- 3) Not got round to it yet – 17%
- 4) Donating organs is a personal choice, don't need to talk about it – 14%
- 5) Others wouldn't feel comfortable talking about it – 11%

Families who agree to donation say it helps with their grief and that they feel enormous sense of pride at knowing their relative gave others the chance of a new beginning and life!

Donating an organ can quite simply transform someone's life. The CWU encourages every member to use this opportunity to talk to their family about their wishes – a simple conversation could make such a big difference.

To support Organ Donation Week visit:

<https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/get-involved/promoting-donation-hub/>

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) is a joint England and Wales Special Health Authority who are responsible for ensuring a safe and efficient supply of blood and associated services to the

NHS in England. They are also the organ donation organisation for the UK as a whole and are responsible for matching and allocating donated organs. NHSBT are an essential part of the NHS and take pride in saving and improving lives by making the most of every voluntary donation, from blood and organs to tissues and stem cells. Their work would not be possible without donors – ordinary people doing extraordinary things by saving and improving the lives of others.

**Important NHSBT Notes & Information:**

- Follow NHSBT on social media
- Twitter: @NHSBT
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/nhsbloodandtransplant](http://www.facebook.com/nhsbloodandtransplant)
- Instagram: @nhsorgandonor
- YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/NHSOrganDonation](http://www.youtube.com/user/NHSOrganDonation)

It is quick and easy to join the NHS Organ Donor Register. Visit [www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk) or contact NHSBT's 24 hour a day donor line – 0300 123 23 23.

The register records your decision on whether you want to donate your organs and/or tissue after your death to save and improve the lives of others. It is used by authorised medical staff to establish whether someone has registered an organ donation decision.

Letting your family know your organ donation decision will make it much easier for them to support what you want.

Every day across the UK around three people who could have benefited from a transplant die because there aren't enough organ donors. NHSBT needs more people to agree to organ donation.

Anyone can join the NHS Organ Donor Register, age and medical conditions are not necessarily a barrier to donation.

One donor can save or transform up to nine lives through organ donation and transform even more by donating tissue.

**BAME Donors**

There is a particular need for more black and Asian organ donors. People from Black and Asian communities have a higher incidence of conditions such as diabetes and certain forms of hepatitis, making them more likely to need a transplant. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic patients make up a third of the active kidney transplant waiting list. Although some are able to receive a transplant from a white donor, for many the best match will come from a donor from the same ethnic background. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic donors are needed to improve the chances of these patients getting the kidney transplant they need.

**Whilst there may be some individual concerns relating to religious or cultural practices, all the major religions support organ donation.**

**NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) is urging people to tell their families they want to donate during Organ Donation Week, September 3 to 9.**

**Sign Up To The NHS Organ Donor Register:** <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/register-to-donate/register-your-details/>.

**For further information please contact Stephen Bailey (NHSBT) on 0151 268 7017 or [stephen.bailey@nhsbt.nhs.uk](mailto:stephen.bailey@nhsbt.nhs.uk)**

**Or visit the NHSBT Website:** [www.nhsbt.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk)

**Attachments:**

- Organ Donation Week How You Can Help NHSBT Leaflet
- Organ Donor Week – Join Us & Sign Up Today NHSBT Logo download
- Words Saves Lives – NHSBT Web Header Download
- Words Save Lives Poster (Sam)
- Words Saves Lives Poster (Taniyah)
- Organ Donation & Ethnicity Fact Sheet

**Organ Donor Law Set To Change by 2020:**

Following a recent announcement, the Law is set to change in England but not until 2020. A new opt-out system for organ donation will be in place by 2020 in England, if Parliament approves it. Under the plans, adults will be presumed to be organ donors unless they have specifically recorded their decision not to be and have opted out – rather than the current system where people have to opt in. The UK government say this will save around 700 to 800 lives each year.

Yours sincerely



**Dave Joyce**  
**National Health, Safety & Environment Officer**

