



Foreword

Organ donation is a relatively rare event in the UK, because although around half a million people die each year, very few do so in circumstances which allow organs to be donated. It is therefore very positive to note that in 2015/16 there were more deceased donors than ever before, leading to the highest ever number of deceased donor transplants.

1,364 people in the UK donated organs after their death, enabling 3,519 deceased donor transplants utilising 3,932 organs. A further 3,779 patients had their sight restored through a cornea transplant.

Living donors continued to make a significant contribution across the UK, with 1075 living donors, most donating a kidney. The overall number of living donors decreased slightly for the second year running and NHS Blood and Transplant is working with transplant units to try to reverse this trend.

Despite steady progress in 2015/16 there is still much to do if the UK is to achieve the stated ambition of the *Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020: a UK strategy* and be among the best in the world.

Increasing the numbers of people who consent to organ donation remains a significant challenge. While the number of deceased donors increased last year, the family consent / authorisation rate only increased slightly to 62%, meaning that up to four in ten families do not agree to donate a relative's organs. Targeted activity focussing on changing attitudes and behaviour has been taking place in all four UK countries and last year also saw the implementation of the deemed consent system in Wales. We will work closely with the Welsh Government to track the long-term impact of this legislative change.

We know that the consent / authorisation rate is higher when the potential donor's decision to donate is known to their family. In 2015/16, almost nine out of ten families agreed to donation when the patient's decision to donate was known at the time of the potential donation, but fewer than five out of ten agreed when the patient's wishes were not known. 120 families were asked to support their relative's decision to be an organ donor as recorded on the NHS Organ Donor Register, or known by other method, but felt unable to do so.

Another challenge is increasing the numbers who consent to organ donation from the black, Asian and ethnic minority (BAME) population. Patients from these communities receiving kidney transplants continues to rise, representing 28% of all kidney transplant patients, yet relatively few people from these communities give consent for organ donation. In 2015/16, the consent rate for BAME patients was almost half that of white patients. This presents real challenges for the BAME patients who make up 33% of the active kidney transplant waiting list. Although able to receive a transplant from a white donor, for many the best match will come from a donor from the same ethnic background. More BAME donors are needed to improve the chances of these patients getting the kidney transplant they need.

We are working with stakeholders to increase the number of donors from BAME communities but this is a slow process. To support this work, this year we are publishing a supplementary report specifically examining organ donation and transplantation in BAME communities.

Unfortunately some families, in the midst of their grief, find donation impossible to agree to. Sadly 466 patients died in need of an organ and a further 881 were removed from the transplant list before an organ could be found for them.



Today's donors are older, more overweight and often with a more complex medical history. *Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020: a UK strategy* sets out an aim to transplant more of the organs offered from consented donors. Progress against this aim is patchy and NHSBT is working with clinicians to develop a more detailed strategy to help surgeons make best use of the organs that are available.

All the figures in this report represent real people: those who generously gave their organs to save the lives of others; those who were fortunate to receive an organ and those for whom no organ was found last year. We would like to thank every donor and their family and all the teams in donor and transplant hospitals who work hard every day to increase the number of people who benefit from lifesaving transplants.



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