

Support for the opt-out system of organ donation in Wales is high, says new report

Published on Thursday 30 November, the report assesses the initial impact the change in law has had on organ donation rates in Wales, two years on. It shows an increase in levels of support for the system among the public and NHS staff.

Before implementation, seven in ten staff (71%) said that they were in favour of the change in legislation, increasing to more than four-in-five (85%) after implementation. It also shows an increase in the percentage of families giving consent for donation from 44.4% in 2014 to 64.5% in 2017.

More than half of respondents in the September 2017 Wales Omnibus Survey said they had discussed their organ donation wishes with a family member. This figure remained at around four out of ten between 2012 and 2015 but has increased since.

On 1 December 2015, Wales became the first country in the UK to move to a soft opt-out system of consent to organ donation. This means that if a person has not registered a decision to become an organ donor (opted in) or a decision not to become an organ donor (opted out), they will be considered as having no objection to being an organ donor – this is known as deemed consent.

However, if individuals don't tell their families of their decision to donate, the family may not honour that decision, and over-ride the organ donor registration or not support deemed consent.

Organ donation and transplantation activity data for 2016-17 published by NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) shows that in Wales:

- patients who died whilst on the waiting list for their transplant decreased 18.5% from (27 in 2015-16 to 22 in 2016-17)
- The number of donors after brain stem death (DBD) increased by four, from 36 (2015-16) to 40 (2016-17)
- the number of patients residing in Wales receiving cardiac transplants increased by one
- the number of patients residing in Wales receiving a live Kidney transplant increased by five.

A major new advertising campaign was launched in November to help increase public awareness of the law, focusing on the role of families in the organ donation process. The aim of the campaign encourages people to talk to their loved ones about their wishes, so their families can honour their organ donation decisions.

In 2016-17, there were 21 cases in Wales where families either overrode their relatives' decisions to donate organs, or didn't support the deemed consent. With an average of 3.1 organs retrieved per donor in Wales, this could have resulted in as many as 65 additional transplants.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

"I welcome the findings in the Impact Evaluation and I'm pleased that there are improvements we can celebrate after such a short period. I congratulate the healthcare professionals involved making this a success however, none of what we have achieved would have been possible without the support of the Welsh population.

"I'm delighted that in the first two quarters of this year, our consent rate reached 72% putting us second in the UK, with 39% of the Welsh population registering as organ donors. While this is not reflected in a rise in donors overall, the report suggests this may be because there have been fewer eligible donors over the short period since the change in law.

"We must work harder to further increase organ donation levels while there are people dying waiting for their transplant and to have a significant impact on reducing those waiting lists.

"It's important to remember that it's too early to know what the true impact of the change will be, but I'm confident we have started to create a culture where organ donation is openly discussed.

"While awareness and understanding is increasing, it's really important that we keep the momentum going and continue to monitor, over the long term, the impact of the Act."

[Health Secretary opens new £4 million health and social care centre in Blaenau Ffestiniog](#)

The centre has been built thanks to nearly £4 million of capital funding from the Welsh Government.

The changes to the services in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area were made following engagement and public consultation. The Health Board has worked with partners and stakeholders to develop its plans and services for the new

facility.

The Blaenau Ffestiniog GP practice, managed by the Health Board, has moved into the new centre. The innovative General Medical Services model utilises the support of the wider primary care community in line with Welsh Government's primary care strategy. The team includes one salaried GP supported by locums, a permanent Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Pharmacist and Musculo Skeletal Physiotherapy.

The new centre will also improve primary and community care in the area bringing services closer to patients' homes. It will:

- Bring together consultant led palliative care; outpatients and specialist nurse clinics, consultant led respiratory outpatients clinics sessions under one roof
- Improve children's services in the area by providing more child and adolescent mental health services
- Provide a permanent midwifery base and antenatal clinics
- Increase paediatric speech and language sessions
- Provide consultant paediatrician and community paediatrician outpatient sessions
- Provide a school nursing and health visiting service
- Offer community dental accommodation with potential to attract an NHS salaried dentist.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

"Canolfan Goffa Ffestiniog will be crucial to the future health and well-being of the local population of Blaenau Ffestiniog and I was delighted to be at the official opening today.

"This is an important model for primary and community services that we could potentially look to replicate at other facilities in NHS Wales."

[£26m EU-backed investment to help young people into work and training](#)

The funding package, which includes £17.5m of EU money, will be used to fund 3 schemes aimed at helping 7,000 young people aged 16-24 years from across Wales access training and job opportunities.

This latest announcement brings the total investment in young people through EU programmes for 2014-2020 to £193m. Speaking at an event in Swansea to mark

the progress and achievements of EU funds in Wales, and the 60th anniversary of the European Social Fund (ESF), Finance Secretary, Mark Drakeford, said:

“I am delighted we have so far invested £193m of EU funds to help our young people unlock their potential and improve their career prospects. These projects are further examples of the importance of Wales receiving replacement funding from the UK government post-Brexit, so that we can continue supporting young people, helping them secure a prosperous future.”

The schemes set to go ahead are:

- Inspire2Work
- Ad Trac
- Cam Nesa

The schemes will provide tailored support for young people facing significant challenges. They will offer one to one mentoring, help with basic and personal skills as well as digital literacy and self esteem, so that young people are able to gain qualifications, enter further education and secure employment.

The £10m Inspire2Work project, backed with £6.7m from the ESF, will be led by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Newport City Council. It will offer advice, support and training to young people in Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Torfaen, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Newport and Monmouthshire.

The £5.7m Cam Nesa project, backed with £4m ESF and led by Pembrokeshire County Council, will deliver advice, support and training across south west Wales, while the £10.4m Ad Trac project, led by Grwp Llandrillo-Menai and backed with £6.8m EU funds, will deliver these services across North Wales.

Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, Eluned Morgan, said:

“Many young people face significant barriers in securing work because they do not have the appropriate skills or support they require to help them succeed. These schemes will help them gain self confidence and develop the skills they need to overcome these barriers and secure employment.”

[First Minister meets with First](#)

Secretary

The First Minister began the meeting by expressing his support for the Prime Minister's criticism of President Trump. There was agreement around the table that no truck could be given to any propagation of hate propaganda.

On Brexit, both sides recognised that progress had been made since the last meeting. A detailed discussion about future frameworks was positive and demonstrated a developing and serious attempt to resolve differences.

There are clearly still obstacles to overcome before the Welsh Government can recommend supporting the Withdrawal Bill, and it was acknowledged that there are opportunities for the UK government to make changes to the proposed legislation as it passes through Parliament.

The First Minister reiterated his central message that he is not looking to frustrate Brexit, and recognises the importance of respecting the referendum result. However, both the final deal and resulting legislation must reflect the economic and constitutional priorities of Wales.

Pioneer schools report shows journey of improvement

A [report](#) published today shows that the schools feel more supported and confident in their work developing six different Areas of Learning and Experience – the subject areas that will make up the new curriculum to be rolled out from 2022.

Interviews carried out as part of research with the pioneer schools revealed that they felt confident that they understood the aims and objectives of their AoLE groups and were happy with how they were being run. They also felt sufficiently supported to progress independently and work with other schools.

Responding to today's report, Education Secretary Kirsty Williams said:

“Our Pioneer Schools are at the heart of the process of designing the new curriculum. That's why it's so important for us to listen to their views and act on them accordingly.

“There will always be challenges when introducing a new curriculum but it's encouraging to know that schools are feeling confident and supported in taking this vital work forwards. There is a clear sense of momentum here and it demonstrates that our approach is the

right one.

“We will continue to monitor progress, listen on where and how we can improve and ensure that the curriculum is fully fit for purpose when we start rolling it out in 2022.”