

Leaving your organ donation decisions to your Will could be too late – Health Secretary Vaughan Gething.

It is a fairly common request for a Will to include a statement in regards to organs being donated for transplant after a person's death. Law firm Watkins and Gunn, who has offices in Cardiff, Newport and Pontypool, say around 1 in 10 people include their organ donation decision in their Will.

However, it's likely to be far too late for you to become a donor by the time your Will is read.

Only 1% of the population die in a way that means they can donate because organs have to be transplanted very soon after death and can only be donated by someone who has died in a hospital, under particular conditions.

Specialist Nurses for Organ Donation will check to see whether an individual is on the NHS Organ Donor Register, and in addition, the family of a potential donor will always be consulted.

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

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething Said:

"This Dying Matters week, dying, death and bereavement are being brought to the fore and gives us an opportunity to remind people about organ donation.

"Our latest campaign highlighted the importance of having a chat with families and loved ones about organ donation. I'd like to reiterate that message by asking solicitors and those providing a Will writing service to remind their clients to discuss their decisions, whatever they may be, with their loved ones.

"More often than not, when a Will is read, people's organ donation decisions are known too late to help someone in need of a life changing transplant.

"Ensure your decision to give the gift of life through organ donation is honoured – have the chat with your family and loved ones."

Watkins and Gunn is encouraging people to discuss these concerns early to avoid issues arising after death. Linda Dack, Head of Private Client at Watkins and Gunn said:

“Many of us find it difficult to talk about end of life planning, but it is essential that we have these important conversations with our loved ones and do not leave important decisions, such as organ donation to chance. Relatives can still override deemed consent system in Wales, so it is very important to be clear about your choice regarding organ donation so that relatives can honour your decision.

“Making a Will is the first step, and at Watkins and Gunn we have noticed an increase of 5% in clients expressing what they would like to happen to their organs. Completing a Lasting Power of Attorney for Health and Welfare is essential, as well as appointing an attorney that you trust to carry out your wishes on life sustaining treatment preferences. We would encourage people to speak openly about their decision on organ donation as part of that process.”

You can register a decision at any time by calling 0300 123 23 23 (Calls to this phone line will be answered by NHS Blood and Transplant) or visiting www.organdonationwales.org or by telling your family (and friends).