

Major campaign urges people to talk about organ donation

Three hard-hitting advertisements show an individual's choice to donate their organs being over-ridden by family members, because they didn't talk to them about their decision or registration on the organ donor register to become a donor.

The Welsh Government is urging people to talk during Organ Donation Week (September 3 to 9) to prevent lifesaving transplants being missed because families did not know their loved one's organ donation decision.

Surveys show around 80% of people in the UK support organ donation, however only 33% of people have told their family that they want to donate. In circumstances where a family does not know their loved one's decision, they are far more likely to refuse to allow organ donation to take place.

Data published by NHS Blood and Transplant showed that in 2017-18 there were 22 cases in Wales where families either overrode their relatives' decisions to donate organs, or didn't support deemed consent. With an average of 3.2 organs retrieved per donor in Wales in 2017-18, this could have resulted in as many as 70 additional transplants.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

"We want to encourage everyone across Wales to talk with their loved ones about their organ donation decision. We know awareness and understanding is increasing, but it is really important we reach the Welsh public on this issue.

"We have seen huge improvements in our consent rates, increasing from 59% in 2015-16 to 70% in 2017-18, however when there are still people dying waiting for a transplant we must work harder to further increase the consent rate to have a significant impact on reducing transplant waiting lists.

"If you know you want to be an organ donor, then simply tell your loved ones. Your family will be involved in any discussions about organ donation if you are in a position to donate your organs when you die. This could make an already difficult time more stressful if families have never discussed organ donation.

"If you support organ donation, remember to speak to your family and friends about it."

Just having a chat can help benefit the people of Wales and the UK by reducing the number of people dying whilst waiting for a suitable organ to become available, and transforming the lives of others.

It is your decision whether or not you would like to donate your organs after you die.

Once your decision is made, you can choose to:

- Opt in – this is your decision to become a donor.
- Do nothing – You will be treated as having no objection to being a donor and your consent will be deemed.
- Opt out – this is your decision not to become a donor.
- 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 organdonationwales.org or by telling your family (and friends).