

News story: Opt-out organ donation: Max and Keira's Bill passed into law

A new system for organ donation that will save hundreds of lives has come into law, with the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill receiving Royal Assent on 15 March. Royal Assent means the bill is now an act of parliament.

The Organ Donation Act will mean adults in England will be considered potential donors unless they chose to opt out or are excluded. The act is known as Max and Keira's law in honour of a boy who received a heart transplant and the girl who donated it.

There are more than 6,000 people currently waiting for an organ in the UK. Three people die each day while on the waiting list. The new law will help to reduce the number of people waiting for a life-saving transplant.

Changes to the way consent is granted will take effect in 2020. Before this happens, the government will launch a public awareness campaign to make sure people understand the new system and the choices they have.

Those excluded from the plans include:

- children under 18
- people who lack the mental capacity to understand the changes for a significant period before their death
- people who have not lived in England for at least 12 months before their death

There will also be strict safeguards in place and specialist nurses will always discuss donation with families so an individual's wishes are respected.

80% of people in England support organ donation but only 37% have recorded their wishes. This means families are often left with a difficult decision when a loved one dies.

Currently, less than half of families give consent for their loved one's organs to be donated if they are unaware of their wishes. When families know what their loved one would have wanted, they are much more likely to honour these wishes.

The government's public awareness campaign will help raise awareness of the new system before it comes into force in spring 2020, and give people the time to have the conversations they need.

Those who do not wish to donate their organs will still be able to record their decision on the NHS Organ Donation Register. They will be able to do this through NHS Blood and Transplant's website or helpline, or on the new NHS App.

The government will also consult on whether certain organs should be excluded from the opt-out system.

The Prime Minister thanked campaigners for their support in getting the law passed.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

I'm delighted Max and Keira's law has passed today. It marks a momentous step for thousands of people in need of a life-saving transplant, and could save as many as 700 lives a year.

With significantly more people willing to consider organ donation than are actually registered as donors, this vital step will presume consent unless people choose to opt out of being a donor.

It's important that everyone takes the time to discuss their choices on donation with their families and register their wishes, whatever their preference may be.

I also want to thank those who have campaigned tirelessly to raise awareness of this issue, and pay particular tribute to Max, Keira and their families for making this historic change happen.

Jackie Doyle-Price, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Mental Health and Inequalities, said:

This is a remarkable change that will make a real difference to so many lives and it has been a privilege to have supported the efforts of so many brilliant campaigners to pass Max and Keira's law. The new system will mean hundreds more lives are saved every year.

Organ donation is a deeply personal decision for everyone, which is why we will be launching a public awareness campaign to ensure people understand the new system and the choices available to them.

Under the new law, being an organ donor will still be your choice – organ donation will remain a priceless gift.

[News story: Environment Agency Chair](#)

reappointed

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove, has reappointed Emma Howard Boyd as Chair of the Environment Agency.

In confirming the reappointment, Secretary of State Michael Gove said:

I am grateful for Emma's strong leadership and achievements over her first term. She has played a crucial part in the Environment Agency's vital work safeguarding our environment.

I look forward to her continuing to enable delivery of our 25 Year Environment Plan which will leave the environment in a better state for future generations.

Emma Howard Boyd said:

It's an honour to be reappointed as Chair of the Environment Agency. This is a dynamic and challenging period for the environment as we seek to maximise the opportunities presented by the 25 Year Environment Plan and EU Exit and develop even stronger environmental protections for the future.

Last year the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change called for urgent global action to limit temperature rises. The next three years will be critical for all of us to ensure that the country is more resilient to extreme weather, minimising carbon emissions and protecting and enhancing the environment.

I'm looking forward to working with all our partners to achieve the best we can. And I am proud to head an organisation which has such fantastic, professional and committed staff.

Emma Howard Boyd was first appointed Chair of the Environment Agency on 19 September 2016. She also sits on the Defra Board. Emma Howard Boyd's second term will run from 19 September 2019 until 18 September 2022.

The appointment has been made in accordance with the Ministerial Governance Code on Public Appointments.

The Environment Agency is a Non-Departmental Public Body set up under the Environment Act 1995 to take an integrated approach to environmental protection and enhancement in England. It has major responsibilities in flood management, water resources and quality, climate change, land quality, chemicals, pollution prevention and control, waste, conservation and biodiversity, fisheries conservation, air quality and navigation.

The Environment Agency Board currently comprises a Chair and nine members.

All appointments to the Environment Agency Board are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process.

There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be declared. Emma has confirmed that she has not undertaken any significant political activity during the past five years.

Biographical details for Emma Howard Boyd can be found on gov.uk.

[News story: Crew rescued from French fishing vessel off Lands End](#)

HM Coastguard was alerted at around 10pm on Tuesday night to the 24 metre French registered fishing vessel, La Fanette which had suffered engine failure. Another fishing vessel went to assist and HM Coastguard requested the launch of Sennen Cove RNLi lifeboat. Despite atrocious weather, Sennen Cove lifeboat launched but due to 5-6 metre waves on scene and storm force winds, it was impossible for either the fishing vessel or the lifeboat to establish a tow with La Fanette. Penlee RNLi all weather lifeboat also attended.

The six crew on board were airlifted from the fishing vessel by Newquay coastguard rescue helicopter.

Speaking after this morning's incredible rescue, Captain Sharky Finn from Newquay coastguard helicopter said: 'This is definitely one of the most challenging jobs we've seen at Newquay. We were flying into a force 8 gale with 20ft high waves swirling beneath us and we could clearly see the fishing vessel disappearing beneath the swell as we approached.

'We had the support of RNLi Sennen Cove on scene who had tried to establish a tow line but were unable to do so because of the severe weather conditions.

'We tried a variety of different winching positions as the fishing vessel pitched and rolled violently underneath us before lowering a hi-line and then our winchman to the bow. The only way we could do this was turn the helicopter 90 degrees out of winds which meant we were effectively flying sideways. Needless to say, it was very challenging deck; it stretched the capabilities of both the crew and the aircraft. However, despite this pressure we were able to take our time and safely recovered all six crewmates and our winchman to the aircraft before returning to the Newquay base. We're grateful for the support of the Newquay coastguard rescue team and the Newlyn seaman's mission who met us when we returned.'

Although weather conditions are still quite rough due to Storm Gareth the sister vessel 'Faradet' has successfully established a tow with the 'La Fanette' and it is now safely under tow proceeding to rendezvous with a French tug on route from Brest.

There has been no pollution reported however HM Coastguard will continue to monitor the vessel whilst it's in UK waters.

[Rescue footage](#)

[News story: Lord Reed: Scotland's Devolved Settlement and the Role of the Courts](#)

Lord Reed, Deputy President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, delivered the inaugural Dover House lecture on the evening of Wednesday 27 February 2019. The text of his lecture, titled "Scotland's Devolved Settlement and the Role of the Courts" is available for [download as a PDF](#).

[Press release: Minister for Asia highlights southeast Asia opportunities at OECD](#)

Mark Field, Minister for Asia and the Pacific, visited the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris on 11 March to address participants at a high-level forum on Southeast Asia.

During the visit, the Minister affirmed the UK's strong commitment to the OECD's role in promoting economic development and the rules based international system, as well as the UK's wish to strengthen the future UK-ASEAN relationship.

In his speech to forum attendees the Minister said:

We all know that trade, investment, and economic growth have the power to transform lives. We also know that removing barriers to trade and improving connectivity between countries and markets can

turbo-charge that power. That is why, in my role as the UK's Minister for Asia and the Pacific and for Economic Diplomacy, I focus so much on enhancing economic development and deepening investment. It is also why the work of the OECD is so important, and why the UK supports it so strongly.

We also want to remain a steadfast and active partner to ASEAN. We are investing £2 million to support the OECD's new work on boosting competition – such a key driver of economic growth... we are confident that all this cooperation and sharing of expertise will bring great benefits to the region. I look forward to continuing to strengthen the UK's relationships with ASEAN – bilaterally; through our new Jakarta mission; and through our support for the OECD.

During his visit the Minister also met with the OECD Secretary General and counterparts from Japan, Korea and other ASEAN partners to discuss how OECD work in the region could be strengthened further.

Mr Field also raised a range of Asia-Pacific issues in meetings with the French Foreign Ministry and think tankers, underlining UK commitment to the region.

Further information