

News story: Government announces consultation on organ donation opt-out system

The Prime Minister has announced the intention to launch a public consultation on increasing rates of organ donation. The proposals will include a new opt-out system for organ donation for England. The consultation will be launched by the end of the year.

In 2016 to 2018 there were 1,169 deceased organ donors and 3,293 transplants in England. While this was the highest ever rate of organ donation, there are still more people waiting for transplants than there are organs available. It means some people die before a suitable organ becomes available.

There are particularly long waiting times for those in black and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. Consent rates for organ donation are also low in these communities, at around 35% compared to 66% in the white population.

Under the current system, anyone wishing to donate their organs has to opt in via the registration and organ donor card scheme run by NHS Blood and Transplant. A family member can also agree to the donation of organs if the person had not made their wishes known.

The consultation will outline ways to increase rates of organ donation and propose a new approach where every person would be deemed to have given consent to unless they choose to opt out. It will run for 12 weeks.

The Department of Health will seek views on:

- how government can increase rates of organ donation, particularly from BAME communities
- how the issue of consent should be managed within the NHS
- what role technology could play in helping people to discuss their preferences with family
- how opt-out could work in practice, what safeguards would be necessary, and how families could be supported

There is currently a severe shortage of suitable organs, with around 6,500 people currently on transplant waiting lists. Every day up to 3 people die while waiting for an organ to become available.

Last year just over 6% of deceased donors were from black and Asian communities, with people waiting on average 6 months longer for a kidney transplant than a white patient. Work is already underway to address the fact that consent rates for organ donation in these communities are lower than in the white population. This will continue alongside the consultation.

The government will carefully consult, listen and take account of the views of people from a diverse range of ethnic, religious and cultural communities

when considering any changes to the law.

A model of 'presumed consent' was introduced in Wales in 2015 and the Scottish government announced its intention to introduce similar legislation earlier this year.

Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt said:

Too many people still wait too long for an urgent transplant and we must urgently address this. Just as most people would be willing to accept an organ if their life was at risk, most people would be willing to donate one to help save somebody else.

All these issues will be looked at in the consultation and we welcome all those with views to come forward with their contributions.

Full details of the consultation will be released later in the year. The government is seeking a wide range of opinions and asks anyone with a view to take part.

If you would like to receive updates on this issue please sign up to our [organ donation mailing list](#).

[News story: WW2 fusilier's grave rededicated 74 years after his death](#)

The World War 2 resting place of Edward Graham, a Soldier of 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers, has finally been identified. A new headstone has been installed and a rededication service has taken place today (4 October 2017) in a moving ceremony at Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, attended by the twin sons Fusilier Graham never had the chance to meet.

The service was arranged by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) and led by the Regimental Chaplain of the Royal Irish Regiment.

In 1935, Edward joined the Territorial Army as a Private in the Durham Light Infantry and attended the annual camp for the following 3 years. He signed on for a further 2 years, but at the outbreak of the war, he joined full time on 1 September 1939. He was then promptly transferred to the Royal Irish Fusiliers and posted to Ballykinler in Northern Ireland. It was while he was stationed here that he met and married Eveline McBride.

On 22 November 1942, the regiment embarked for service overseas, going initially to North Africa and then on to land in Sicily 1943. During the

advance through Sicily, near the small town of Maletto, Edward was posted missing on 13 August 1943, presumed killed in action. The final resting place of Fusilier Graham was unknown until recently.

Tragically, unknown to Edward, 22 days before his death, his wife gave birth to twin sons, Edward and Sydney. It was these sons who have been instrumental in finding the final resting place of their father.

How was Fusilier Graham identified?

Sons Edward Graham and Sydney Graham, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The identity of the graves was discovered when one of Edward's sons, Edward Graham, began researching into the final resting place of his father. Further research was completed by the MOD's JCCC to corroborate the evidence and the identification of the "Unknown Soldier" grave was found to belong to Fusilier Edward Graham.

Sons Edward Graham and Sydney Graham, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Edward's son, Edward Graham, was able to attend the service and travelled from his home town of Prudhoe in Northumberland with his twin brother, Sydney. Edward said:

It was a very emotional service and the culmination of years of hard work and research. We are very grateful to everyone involved who made today so special.

Nicola Nash, from the Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre (JCCC), said:

We feel privileged to bring some closure to Edward and Sydney after 74 years.

[Press release: From Scotland with love: British Ambassador hands over funds to Muday Charity Association](#)

On 3 October, British Ambassador to Ethiopia Susanna Moorehead presented the Muday Charity Association with almost 200,000 Birr (£6500) – the result of a fundraising drive centred on one of Scotland's best-loved writers.

Burns Night, on January 25th, remembers the life and works of famous poet

Robert Burns and is celebrated by British communities all around the world. This year's Addis Ababa event, organised by staff from the UK Embassy and others from the British community, was attended by 320 people. The evening included poetry readings and traditional Scottish Ceilidh dancing as well as a glass or two of Scotland's world-class whisky.

The evening raised 199,426 Birr for charity, and after a careful selection process the organising committee decided to give the funds to the Muday Association, which supports street children, children with disabilities and their mothers. The charity provides 600 children with meals, clothes and education. The Association has also set up a Mothers' Cooperation, enabling 400 women to make and sell handicrafts. Ambassador Moorehead presented the funds to the association's founder Muday Mitiku.

Speaking after the presentation, the Ambassador said:

The Muday Charity is doing vital and extraordinary work in Addis Ababa – giving destitute children a chance to have a happier childhood and a better future. British people have a long tradition of charitable giving, and our community here in Addis Ababa is no exception. It gives me great pleasure to hand over these funds, which I know will make a real difference to the lives of the women and children supported by Muday.

Notes to Editors

- Burns Night marks the anniversary of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns', birth on 25 January.
- Held throughout the world on Burns Night (or on an evening close to it) a traditional Burns supper is held on Burns night and celebrates Robert Burns' life and work.
- Ceilidh dance is a traditional Scottish/Irish social gathering where people can gather to dance and hear the Ceilidh band play. 'Ceilidh' is a Gaelic word. Its meaning is literally 'a visit' but is more commonly used to mean a dance, a concert or just a party.

Media Enquiries
Saba Ermyas
saba.ermyas@fco.gov.uk
+251924440432

Press release: £50 million flood defence scheme opens in Leeds

A £50 million flood alleviation scheme in Leeds which uses moveable weir technology – a first for flood risk reduction in the UK – has opened today (4 October 2017).

The first phase of the award-winning Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme not only uses state-of-the-art flood defence engineering techniques but is one of the largest river flood alleviation schemes in the country.

Led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency, the scheme will provide more than 3,000 homes, 500 businesses and 300 acres of development land with increased protection against flooding from the River Aire and Hol Beck.

More than 22,000 jobs will be safeguarded over the next 10 years due to the increased level of protection and through the scheme's development and construction, 150 jobs and apprenticeships have been created.

It comprises three main elements: state-of-the-art mechanical weirs, the merging of the river and canal and flood walls and embankments stretching 4.5km through the city centre.

The scheme, which sees work on the River Aire now substantially complete and work at Holbeck continuing into autumn, is being officially opened by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Judith Blake CBE and Chair of the Environment Agency, Emma Howard Boyd.

Multiple funding streams have contributed towards the cost of this £50 million scheme, including £35 million of government Grant in Aid funding alongside £10 million of local funding from Leeds City Council and partnership funding from Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership and others. Government is spending £2.5 billion to protect a further 300,000 homes by 2021.

Leader of Leeds City Council Judith Blake CBE said:

We are delighted to see this much-needed first phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme opened. As could be seen by the devastation at Christmas 2015, providing increased flood protection in Leeds is essential in terms of reassuring our residents and businesses, and this fantastic state-of-the-art scheme provides it for the city centre and downstream at Woodlesford. The clever use of the mechanical weirs is a brilliant idea, and they have also brought about environmental benefits with the improved river quality bringing salmon and otters, while the new bridge looks stunning offering great views of the river and beyond as part of the Trans Pennine Trail.

We'd like to thank everyone involved in this phase of the scheme and look forward to developing the plans for phase two and beyond, as only through an entire catchment and citywide approach can we protect all communities in Leeds from the threat of flooding.

Chair of the Environment Agency, Emma Howard Boyd said:

This ground-breaking scheme will not only benefit hundreds of homes and businesses in the city but it will also safeguard 22,000 jobs over the next 10 years due to the increased level of protection it provides. It's been great to see Leeds City Council and the Environment Agency working together in partnership to better protect the city – and it is one of many schemes in the Defra programme investing £430 million to reduce flood risk across Yorkshire before 2021.

We're always looking for new ways that we can use technology to reduce flood risk so it's exciting that this scheme is also a first for flood risk management in the UK thanks to the use of the moveable weirs which can be lowered when river levels are high. On a day-to-day basis, people won't even know they are being protected, and they can enjoy the river which is a key aspect of the city's South Bank regeneration plans.

Floods minister, Thérèse Coffey said:

No one can forget the devastating flooding residents and businesses in Leeds faced nearly two years ago. We know how distressing flooding is for all those affected and I'm delighted that through this new state-of-the art £50 million scheme thousands more people living and working in Leeds will be better protected.

Our commitment to strengthening flood defences across Yorkshire doesn't stop here – we are investing £430 million over six years up until 2021 to better protect the region using the best technology and engineering available.

It is the first time that moveable weirs have been used in the UK for flood alleviation purposes. The new weir gates are supported by giant inflatable neoprene bladders that can be lowered when high river flows are expected. It takes around two hours for the gates to lower, and thanks to the installation of these weir gates, it has been possible to keep flood defence wall heights to a minimum so as not to spoil views of the city centre waterfront.

The weirs have been installed at Crown Point in the city centre and further downstream at Knostrop, where a new locally manufactured bridge has been installed across the weir connecting the diverted Trans Pennine Trail with the north bank of the river.

Weighing approximately 150 tonnes and spanning approximately 70 metres, the bridge has been designed by Knight Architects, ARUP and BMMjv (a joint venture between BAM Nuttall and Mott MacDonald). It has been positioned to provide dramatic views of the weir gates. The very narrow piers and curving underside of the bridge deck are designed to give the bridge a slender appearance when viewed from up or downstream.

The new footbridge reconnects the much-used Trans Pennine Trail to the north bank of the river, providing users with a gateway into Leeds.

In addition to these measures, the removal of a manmade island, known locally at Knostrop Cut, which separated the canal and river has been removed to improve a bottleneck for flows. 180,000 tonnes of material excavated from the site has been reused on a local development site and also on diverting the Trans Pennine Trail which previously went across the manmade island. Reusing this material has saved the project in the region of £6 million.

The earlier stages of the scheme included work at Woodlesford further downstream, which were completed in 2015 and proved effective during the December 2015 floods.

Environmental enhancements have been integral within the scheme design with fish and eel passes installed at both weirs.

Weirs have previously been barriers, preventing species such as salmon migrating from the sea to the spawning grounds further up the river. Salmon have recently been spotted in the River Aire for the first time in 200 years, and now that fish passes have been installed on Knostrop and Crown Point weirs, as well as others on the River Aire, it is hoped that chances of a spawning population of salmon in the river in future will be increased.

Otter ramps and holts have also been installed and will support the local population and 700 trees will be planted along the Trans Pennine Trail later this autumn.

Roger Marsh OBE, Chair of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP), said:

The LEP, alongside Leeds City Council, the Environment Agency and other funding partners, moved quickly to improve flood protection in Leeds following the Boxing Day floods of 2015.

Local Growth Deal funding into the flood alleviation scheme helped to improve the standard of protection for the city while our £5m Business Flood Recovery Fund, launched just weeks after floods hit, supported businesses to reopen and local SMEs to get back on their feet.

Safeguarding businesses and residents from issues such as flooding is integral to growing an economy and the opening of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme Phase One today is a huge step forward in helping businesses flourish in what is fast becoming one the

busiest economic areas of the City Region.

December 2015 saw Leeds experience significant and widespread flooding with some of the highest river levels ever recorded. The flooding affected nearly 3,000 residential properties (including indirect impacts to high-rise accommodation) and 700 commercial properties.

A consultation on the second phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme is now open until 16 November, to provide increased flood protection to communities upstream of the city centre. proposals include measures further upstream including the Kirkstall corridor which was badly hit by the floods as well as Stourton, an industrial area that was badly affected on Boxing Day 2015.

Press release: Jealous ex has sentence increased after causing GBH

Graham Gawley has had his prison sentence increased after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred it to the Court of Appeal

A 53 year old man, Graham Gawley, has had his sentence increased to 4 years 8 months after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred the sentence to the Court of Appeal for reconsideration.

Graham Gawley went to the home of his ex's new partner late one evening and repeatedly stabbed him with a kitchen knife, shouting "I'm going to kill you". The victim suffered multiple cuts and slashes to his arms and body, but despite his injuries managed to push Gawley outside and with the help of a neighbour they restrained him.

Gawley pleaded guilty at Chelmsford Crown Court and was originally sentenced to 3 years in prison.

The Solicitor General said:

This was a sustained attack on the victim and he was very fortunate not have been caused more severe injury. I hope that the increased sentence brings him some comfort.