

Third anniversary of life changing organ donation policy

Three years on, Health Secretary Vaughan Gething has today marked the anniversary by thanking all of those who have given the precious, potentially life-saving gift of an organ.

A soft opt-out system of consent to organ donation 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.

Data released last month showed for the first time, a significant increase in the donation after brain stem death (DBD) consent rates in Wales (88.2%) when compared to England (73.3%). The donation after circulatory death (DCD) consent rate in Wales has also improved and is now 68% compared to England 59.8%.

Organ donation consent rates in Wales are now the highest in the UK.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said: “We were the first UK nation to take the bold step to adopt a soft opt-out system of consent to organ donation in Wales.

“We made the right decision and three years on we are not only seeing other countries looking to follow our lead, but our organ donation consent rates in Wales are now the highest in the UK.

“None of what we have achieved would have been possible without the support of the Welsh population and the healthcare professionals involved in making this a success. I thank them all for their support over the last three years.

“Despite our success there’s still more to be done. It is not acceptable that people are still dying while waiting for a transplant.

“Communicating your organ donation wishes to family and loved ones is crucial. We see from the NHSBT figures that there were a number of cases where families have overridden their relatives’ decision on the organ donor register, or not supported deemed consent.

“I urge everyone to take a moment and have a conversation about their organ donation decision; every organ donation is an invaluable, potentially life-giving gift.”