

In March, the Organ Donation Deemed Consent Bill – Max and Keira’s Law – was granted Royal Assent, giving formal confirmation that the Bill will now become law. These changes offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to deliver improvements to the donation and transplantation system in England.

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The change in law means that, unless you choose to opt out or are in one of the excluded groups, you will be considered a possible organ donor when you die. Those covered by the change will still have a choice as to whether they want to be an organ donor and their families will still be involved before organ donation goes ahead.

Those excluded are:

- people under the age of 18
- people who have been ordinarily resident in England for less than 12 months
- people who lack the capacity to understand the change.

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“Through our efforts and those of the wider organ donation and transplantation community, campaigners, charities and partners, we want to make sure that as many people as possible understand the changes, make the decision that’s right for them, record it and share it with their loved ones. This way, when the time comes, their decision can be honoured.”

Andrea Ttofa, Head of Organ Donation Marketing

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A public information campaign will launch in April to ensure everyone in England is aware of the change in law as well as the options available to them. Dedicated teams in Marketing and Communications have been working hard to plan this campaign with the Department of Health and Social Care.

Colleagues should know that:

- the law in England will not come into full effect until spring 2020
- consent rates in Wales increased from 58% when the system changed in 2015 to 73% in 2018
- one donor can save or transform up to nine lives through organ donation and save and transform even more by donating tissue.

"Every effort is being made to ensure our Specialist Nurses, Clinical Leads for Organ Donation and wider NHS stakeholders have the education and resources needed to implement the legislation."
Cathy Miller, Education and Governance Lead



Max Johnson with Keira's parents, Loanna and Joe

An NHSBT programme board was established to manage the operational changes leading up to the change in law in England. Protocols, policies and controlled documents which cite organ donation will need to be revised. We will be working closely with the Human Tissue Authority to ensure best practice in organ and tissue donation is supported. Our current specialist nurses and requesters and future cohorts will receive training ahead of spring 2020.

A faith option was added to the Organ Donor Register (ODR) to give reassurance about how organ donation can go ahead in line with a person's faith or beliefs. Anyone signing up to the ODR will now be asked an optional question about whether or not they want their faith or beliefs to be discussed with their family or a faith leader.

An early version of the NHS app was launched in December 2018 and will allow patients to state their preferences relating to organ donation and end of life care. Further developments to integrate the ODR and the NHS app are underway.

The organ donation website will host a wide range of digital and downloadable materials for the public to access in April.

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