

NHSBT Report for SDTG - 25th August 2020

As the UK undertakes the gradual loosening of lockdown for COVID-19 NHSBT has been able to focus its efforts on delivering the services required to support this effort. Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation have now seen all Specialist Nurses and other team members return from volunteering on the NHS COVID-19 front line and back in their usual roles. During the pandemic Specialist Nurses – Organ Donation volunteered over 25,000 hours on the NHS front line, contributing their expertise in intensive care units, Bereavement Services and more areas.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact upon Organ Donation and Transplantation across the UK. While donor numbers are continuing to rise month on month post-pandemic peak, they are still understandably behind figures recorded for the same period in 19/20. Q1 in 20/21 saw 47% fewer donors than Q1 in 19/20 and 42% fewer deceased donor organ transplants than in 19/20. Slower recovery is evident in living donation with the last two UK Living Kidney Sharing Scheme matching runs being cancelled. Early analysis suggests it is possible that the transplant list will return to a level of demand last seen in 2014/15.

Max and Keira's law came into force in England on 20 May. Despite the planned public awareness activity being disrupted due to COVID-19, research in May showed that 68% of adults in England were aware of the law change. The application of deemed consent is now in place across England.

Development of the Organ Donation and Transplantation strategy was suspended in March 2020 to enable full operational focus on COVID-19. The strategy was well developed before being paused, and work on this has resumed with an assessment of the impact of COVID-19. The aim is for the strategy to be presented to the NHSBT Board in September.

A corporate focus remains upon the delivery of Convalescent Plasma to treat the sickest COVID-19 patients. As of 03/08/20 there are 33 centres and pop-up centres collecting Convalescent Plasma and 15,537 units have been collected. The Department of Health and Social Care has approved funding to increase capacity for the next 6 months to ensure supply of Convalescent Plasma through any second wave of COVID-19.

After 7 years of service Keith Rigg has retired as a Non-Executive Director of NHSBT. Professor Deirdre Kelly CBE has been appointed as his successor and commenced her role as Non-Executive Director on 1st July. Prof. Kelly is currently the Professor of Paediatric Hepatology/Consultant Paediatric Hepatologist at Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Lorraine Fahey
Business and Project Coordinator
Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation. NHSBT