



The Public Health Agency (PHA) is encouraging people to sign up to the NHS Organ Donation Register as well as raising awareness of the new opt-out law surrounding organ donation in Northern Ireland which came into place on 1 June 2023, [read more about the law change below](#).

## **What is organ donation and how does it work?**

Organ donation is when one person chooses to give an organ or tissue to save or improve the life of someone else. This is often called giving the 'gift of life'. 90% of people in Northern Ireland support organ donation, and 61% of people have now registered their decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register. To donate organs after death, a person needs to die in hospital in specific circumstances. This applies to only 1 in every 100 people, making every registration and family conversation vital. You can also become a living donor, most commonly by donating a kidney or part of your liver.

Over 8,000 people in the UK currently need a transplant, over 140 of these patients in Northern Ireland, and sadly around 10-15 people here die awaiting a transplant.

Last year (2025/26) in Northern Ireland, 54 families supported the gift of organ donation after death, and there were 68 living donors. Organ donation is a most precious gift and the selfless act of donors and their families is at the heart of organ donation. A total of 140 lives Northern Ireland were saved and transformed through an organ transplant last year, both living and deceased.

## **Public information campaigns: why it matters**

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Public information campaigns help to raise awareness of the law change, as well as reinforcing the importance of sharing organ donation decisions. Should the worst happen, families find the organ donation conversation much easier if they already know what their relative would have wanted. Registering a decision on the NHS

Organ Donor Register and having a conversation with loved ones can make all the difference. When families are aware of their loved one's wishes, 90% support organ donation going ahead. When they are unsure, this falls to around 50%.

## **How to register and donate?**

You can join the NHS Organ Donor Register by filling in a form online at [www.organdonationni.info](http://www.organdonationni.info) or by calling the NHS Donor Line on 0300 123 2323.

You can also join when you are registering for a driving licence.

## **Read more about organ donation in Northern Ireland below:**

### **Organ donation law change in Northern Ireland**

The Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, to be known as 'Dáithí's Law', came into effect on 1 June 2023.

Named after young organ donation campaigner Dáithí Mac Gabhann, who has been awaiting the gift of a new heart since he was a baby, the new law changed the system of organ donation in Northern Ireland to an opt-out system. This means, in the event that organ donation is a possibility after you die, it will be presumed that all adults agree to being considered as an organ donor unless they choose to opt out or are in an excluded group\*.

The best way to opt out is by registering a decision [not to donate on the NHS Organ Donor Register](#).

Excluded groups include:

- Those under the age of 18
- People who lack the mental capacity to understand the change in law
- Visitors to Northern Ireland
- Temporary residents

Organ donation is a personal decision and you still have the choice about whether or not you want to become a donor. Your family will continue to be consulted, and decisions based on faith and belief will continue to be respected.

## **Commonly asked questions**

Commonly asked questions about organ donation and more information about the law change can be found on [About donation \(organdonationni.info\)](http://organdonationni.info).

## **Key campaigns and resources**

You can find various resources, publications and news about organ donation under:

- [News | HSC Public Health Agency](#)
- [Publications | HSC Public Health Agency](#)
- [Resources | Organ Donation NI](#)

[Print](#)