PEOPLE IN AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN URGED TO SHARE THEIR ORGAN DONATION WISHES

Local transplant recipient backs ‘Wee Chat’ campaign

People are being urged to discuss their organ donation wishes with family, even if they have already joined the NHS Organ Donor Register.

Many in Ayrshire and Arran have already expressed their wish to be an organ donor, with 35.5 per cent of the community signed up to the NHS Organ Donor Register.

However, although many think joining the NHS Organ Donor Register is enough, sharing organ donation wishes remains fundamental to relatives honouring a loved one’s choices in the event of their death.

The call comes as research shows that almost half of people in Scotland (45 per cent) haven’t discussed their organ donation wishes with their family, and one in ten (12 per cent) of those who are on the NHS Organ Donor Register haven’t spoken to loved ones about their decision.

Since 2010/11, the family authorisation rate for organ donation – when a family member agrees that donation can proceed - has increased from 57.1 per cent to 61.6 per cent. If the rate was to further increase to 80 per cent, around 90 more lives could be saved each year.

With around 550 people in Scotland currently waiting on a life-saving organ, the Organ Donation Scotland campaign is highlighting how the seven words, ‘I’d like to be an organ donor’ can save up to seven lives.

William Murray, Specialist Nurse, Organ Donation for NHS Ayrshire & Arran said: “The important thing about organ donation is to talk about your decision with your loved ones. By doing that, you can help them understand and respect your wishes.

“Organ donation is not a commonplace event. But by getting more people to talk about it in the first place, we hope that more people will sign up to join the register.”

Minister for Public Health, Maureen Watt, said: “Scotland has made huge progress in organ donation and transplantation, and it’s fantastic that 41 per cent of Scots have expressed their wish to donate their organs by joining the NHS Organ Donor Register. The message we want to get across is that it’s vital people talk about their organ donation wishes with friends and family, even if they have joined the Register, so these wishes can be honoured.

“Your family are twice as likely to agree to donation if they know it’s what you would have wanted and we know that in the last five years, almost two thirds of those who donated their organs weren’t on the Register. With many Scots currently waiting on a transplant, making time for a ‘wee chat’ could ultimately save lives.”

Transplant recipient Elaine Lovie, from Irvine, has backed the campaign to get Scotland talking about organ donation.

Elaine, 50, received a life-saving liver transplant in 2011.
Elaine said: "I'd never known anyone who had experienced organ donation in any way so it was never something I thought about. It's so important to speak about organ donation with your loved ones. If you don't make your wish to be an organ donor known then that wish could be wasted - a wish that could have saved several lives."

Join the NHS Organ Donor Register by visiting organdonationscotland.org

Ends

For more information, contact Emma Bain at Consolidated PR on 0131 240 6420 or emma.bain@consolidatedpr.com.

Notes to editors

Numbers on the NHS Organ Donor Register in Scotland are as at 22 January 2015, source: NHS Blood and Transplant

Statistics taken from TNS omnibus Scottish Opinion Survey. A sample of 993 adults were interviewed in 69 constituencies throughout Scotland over the period 24 September – 05 October 2014. The sample was weighted to ensure it was representative of the adult population in terms of age, sex and class.