

Press release 20 May 2020: embargoed until midnight 19 May.

For media queries please contact James Simpson (james.simpson@parliament.uk) or Kirit Modi (kiritmodi1@hotmail.com)



Hindus and Jains welcome opt out law

The implementation of the “opt out” law in England from 20 May 2020 was welcomed by the Jain and Hindu Organ Donation (JHOD) steering group today.

The change in law will mean that all adults in England will be considered to have agreed to be an organ donor when they die unless they have registered a decision not to donate or they are in an excluded group.

Lord Jitesh Gadhia said:

“Clearly, the implementation of the new law will be challenging in the context of COVID-19 and organ transplants will progress with those with the most urgent need of life-saving operations. However, it is very important that everyone discusses organ donation with their close family, makes a decision and shares this decision with their family members. In our Hindu and Jain traditions the act of selfless service, or sewa, is one of the biggest gifts we can give others – so I would urge everyone to make a positive decision to help save lives.”

Kirit Modi, Chair of JHOD Steering Group said:

“I welcome the change in law because eventually it will result in a significant increase in organ transplants and help save lives. I urge

members of the Hindu and Jain community to continue to support organ donation and register to donate organs following discussion with their close family members. I am most grateful to many Hindu and Jain organisations for the amazing work they are doing to promote organ donation in their local communities.

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on organ transplant recipients and dialysis patients, particularly patients from BAME communities. The understandable drop in the number of transplants taking place at present has affected the BAME communities more severely. It is most likely that there are more people on dialysis and the incidence of COVID among BAME dialysis patients in hospitals is higher. As we begin to develop plans to recover from the current crisis, I urge hospitals and NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) to carefully consider the disproportionate impact on BAME patients and to engage with the National BAME Transplant Alliance (NBTA) in doing so.”

Many Hindu and Jain community groups are taking the lead in explaining the change in law to members of their community. Videos and leaflets specifically aimed at the Hindu and Jain communities have been produced. The following five community groups are currently funded by NHSBT to undertake this work.

Vanik Council UK: led by Mr Manharbhai Mehta

Jalaram Mandir, Leicester: led by Mr Bharat Patel

Jain Network: led by Dr Natubhai Shah

Oshwal Association UK: led by Mr Aswinbhai Shah

Veerayatan UK: led by Mr Bakul Shah

Notes:

1. Recent data from NHSBT and the Renal association shows that:

The number of organ transplants in the UK has significantly reduced from 360 in November 2019 to 99 in April 2020, It is highly likely that the number of patients on dialysis in the UK has increased because of Coronavirus.

By 6 May 2020, there were 3693 kidney patients in England who had Coronavirus. 1058 kidney patients died of COVID-19 in renal centres in England by this date.

The rate of infection from Coronavirus among BAME patients dialysing in hospitals is higher.

2. How to register: To register your decision please visit <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/register-to-donate/> or call 0300 123 23 23.
3. A number of videos aimed at the Hindu and Jain communities about organ donation and the change in law have been produced jointly by NHSBT and JHOD. They are in two play lists.

Hindu playlist

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQyda-e2jKc&list=PLjl4wHu2TagN2GI4vlcO5qvVldklxsF73>

Jain playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6He1xBrcpk&list=PLjl4wHu2TagOmDOR-8D90Z8_gNApfGxza

About JHOD - The Jain and Hindu Organ Donation steering group is a national group that works with NHS Blood and Transplant, the

organisation responsible for organ donation across the UK, to create culturally appropriate resources from a Hindu and Jain perspective. JHOD encourages and supports Hindu and Jain community groups and individuals in promoting organ donation in our communities.

###