Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill 2017-19

House of Commons, Remaining Stages
Friday 26 October

About the BMA
The BMA (British Medical Association) is a professional association and trade union representing and negotiating on behalf of all doctors and medical students in the UK. It is a leading voice advocating for outstanding health care and a healthy population. It is an association providing members with excellent individual services and support throughout their lives.

The BMA has been lobbying for an organ donation opt-out system for more than 18 years.¹ We are delighted to see recent developments, across the UK, that show important progress is being made on this front.

We urge members of parliament to support this Bill to create the opportunity for the UK Government to deliver on its commitment to enact a life-saving shift and introduce an opt-out model for organ donation in England by 2020².

Key points:

▪ We welcome the Government’s pivotal commitment to implement an opt-out model, with safeguards, in England. Furthermore, we welcome the Prime Minister’s continued commitment³ to supporting this Bill, the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill, as the vehicle to establish this life saving change in legislation.

▪ The BMA has long advocated an opt-out system for organ donation and would like to see it introduced across the UK, without delay. We believe this model, which has already been implemented in Wales and is being introduced in Scotland, is the best option for the UK to reduce the shortage of organs and save lives.

▪ The Bill includes an important safeguard. The ‘soft’ opt-out would ensure that the loved ones of a person who has died would have the opportunity to make known any unregistered objection to organ donation that the individual may have had.

▪ The BMA gives its wholehearted support to the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill. We urge MPs to support its passage in Parliament so that it reaches the House of Lords, and thereafter Royal Assent, without delay.

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¹ The BMA has a longstanding interest in public policy on organ donation. You can view the timeline of our lobbying on the BMA’s website, here: https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/policy-and-research/ethics/organ-donation


³ Theresa May speaking at Prime Minister’s Question Time (Wednesday 5 September). Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-09-05/debates/3f814697-57e7-4c9c-9897-44425c4b7c77/oralanswers-to-questions