

# **Review of First Year of Implementation of Specialist Requester Model in Scotland January 2020-2021**

## **Summary Overview**

### **1. Background**

The Scottish Organ Donation Services Team introduced the Specialist Requester (SR) model in January 2020 following successful implementation in other parts of the UK.

The aim of the new approach was to improve the experience for donor families, increase authorisation rates, expand career opportunities for SNODs and positively impact on 24 hour working. As an SR, staff would have a real opportunity to become an expert in family approach and authorisation.

The Scottish team appointed six members of staff to the SR role from the existing specialist nurse – organ donation (SNOD) team. The model initially introduced was that of SRs working 10hr shifts over four days (full-time hours) or three days (part-time hours) per week.

### **2. Performance**

Within the first six months of the model an SR was present at 60% of approaches. However data was collected which highlighted that SRs would have been able to attend 17% more cases if their working shift pattern was increased from 10 hrs to 12.5 hrs.

So subsequently, the SR model changed in October to 12.5 hour shifts.

The results from the first year of operation are summarised below:

- 69% of approaches in Scotland were made with a Specialist Requester.
- Donation was authorised in 83.2% of cases where an SR was involved, compared to 50% to where a SNOD was involved and only 16% where no SNOD or SR was involved (although the latter figures involve small numbers).
- This compares to an overall authorisation rate in Scotland of 65% in 2019-2020.

### **3. Impact of COVID-19**

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the number of organ donors and subsequent organs available for transplantation in Scotland since March 2020, with only a total of six proceeding donors during April and May. However, July 2020 saw a record number of proceeding transplants, with the highest number of transplants ever recorded by NHSBT over the last decade.

#### **4. Monitoring Performance**

Working a 12.5 hour shift pattern allows for improved continuity and longer contact with potential donor families, with a positive impact on the length of the donation process due to collaborative working with embedded and on-call SNOD colleagues.

The introduction of the SR model seems to have contributed to the increased overall authorisation rate of 71.6% so far in 2020-21. This is higher than the UK average of 69.5%. There have also only been three cases so far in 2020-21 where families have overridden the donation decision of a potential donor who was on the Organ Donor Register, which is a significant reduction on the 14 override cases in 2019-20.

#### **5. Recommendations**

NHSBT's Scottish team has made a number of recommendations, including:

- Specialist Requesters should continue to approach families to help increase authorisation rates and reduce overrides where patient was on the ODR or whose authorisation could be deemed.
- Monitor reasons for ODR overrides with any trends noted and learning points for practice.
- Monitor the work of the Specialist Requesters and evaluate whether using Specialist Requester is effective in increasing authorisation rates in Scotland.
- The new Potential Donor Audit (PDA) should capture a more detailed picture of the circumstances surrounding the approaches and enable a more detailed analysis.

#### **6. Conclusion**

The Specialist Requester role in Scotland is still in its infancy and it is too early to draw firm conclusions. However this year has demonstrated a positive impact on authorisation rates, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Good team cohesion, flexibility and collaborative working with the intensive care units have been instrumental in ensuring the success of the SR model so far.