

New fund aims to break down barriers to organ donation in black, Asian and other ethnic minority communities

Almost a third of black and Asian people in Wales are unsure about donating their organs for lifesaving transplants after their death according to new research by NHS Blood and Transplant.

A similar proportion – 31% – said they definitely did not want to donate. Just 16% of those surveyed said they would definitely donate all or some of their organs, while the remainder would consider it.

The main barrier is the belief that organ donation is against their culture or religion. However, all the major religions in the UK support organ donation and transplantation.

Less than one in five (17%) of those surveyed were aware that organs matched by ethnicity had the best chance of success. Only one in 10 (11%) knew that people from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to need an organ transplant than white people.

Community and faith based groups from across England and Wales are now being invited to apply for funding through a new community investment scheme, to help break down myths and barriers and increase support for organ donation among black, Asian and ethnic minority communities.

The scheme is funded by the Welsh Government and the Department of Health and Social Care, and is led by NHS Blood and Transplant.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“We have seen huge improvements in consent rates for organ donation in Wales, but there are still people dying waiting for a transplant so we need as many people as possible, from all ethnic backgrounds to agree to donate.

“This latest research highlights the many misconceptions people still have about organ donation. We want to make sure people are fully informed when making their decision, which is why we are offering funding to help community groups talk to people from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds about organ donation and the positive impact a decision to donate can have.”

Anthony Clarkson, NHS Blood and Transplant Interim Director for Organ Donation and Transplantation, said:

“Our research findings underline how important it is to address myths and barriers and encourage more people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to talk about organ donation.

“Community and faith-based organisations occupy a trusted place in their communities and can play a vital role in increasing support for and understanding of organ donation.

“This community investment scheme will enable these groups to promote a positive organ donation message and encourage more people from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds to decide that they want to be a lifesaving organ donor and to share that decision with their families.”

£20,000 will be available for projects in Wales in the first year of the scheme. Organisations operating at a local level in both England and Wales will be able to put in separate applications or combined applications to cover both areas.

There will be two levels of funding available. Applicants can apply for funding for projects up to £2,499 or for projects over the value of £2,500. All applications will be reviewed by an independent judging panel which will also oversee the projects as a steering group.

Applications should be received no later than 5pm on Monday, September 24th. Projects will need to be completed by end June 2019.

The community investment scheme is part of a Government campaign led by NHS Blood and Transplant with support from the National BAME Transplant Alliance (NBTA) to address the urgent need for black, Asian and minority ethnic donors.