



Free Churches Group
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13th December 2018

Dear FCG General Secretaries and Member Church Contacts,

I hope that you are well.

I recently met the NHS Blood and Transplant, Head of Organ Donation Marketing. They are keen to engage with churches about changes in respect of organ donation.

You may be aware that the Government is planning to change the organ donation system in England to an opt out system. A bill is currently going through the parliamentary process, and subject to it passing into law, it is anticipated that the new system will come into place from Spring 2020. If the changes come into effect, everybody over 18 will be considered a potential organ donor unless they have recorded a decision not to donate or if they are in one of the groups excluded by the law.

I believe there are important issues that churches may need to consider from the point of their respective theology on these matters and how Ministers work with the dying and their families. Churches may also need to communicate information and respond to questions about the changes from people who attend their services and the wider community. NHS Blood and Transplant want to ensure churches across the country have a good understanding of organ donation and the choices available to people.

NHS Blood and Transplant has today introduced a faith/beliefs declaration that will be added into the online registration form when someone registers or amends their registration as an organ donor on the NHS Organ Donor Register (ODR) or via the NHS Application.

Moderator: Revd Dr Hugh Osgood
General Secretary: Revd Paul Rochester

Convenor: Mr Geoff Lomas

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This will, for the first time, allow someone to formally record on the ODR that they would like the NHS to speak to their family, and anyone else appropriate, about how organ donation can go ahead in line with their faith or beliefs.

In addition, there are now digital downloadable faith donor cards that people can use to show their support for organ donation within the context of their faith. An organ donor card is not needed for organ donation to go ahead, but NHS Blood and Transplant believe that many supporters of organ donation want to show and share their support for this cause. People can use these downloadable donor cards, in a simple way, to share their decision with their family. However, it is important to note that in every case family members are approached by a specialist nurse in organ donation if their loved one dies and can become a donor.

I have attached information, including a Questions and Answers Sheet, about the Organ Donation Faith and Belief Declaration and the Digital Donor Cards.

FCG will work NHS Blood and Transport to run a workshop in the New Year to ensure that churches understand what the potential changes to the system in 2020 will mean and the choices available to people. Further information on that workshop will be sent in January 2019.

I do pray for you God's blessings as we look forward to the Christmas Season and New Year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Rochester".

Paul Rochester

General Secretary

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