

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/06240/12

William Powell AM
Chair Petition's Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

20th
March 2012

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 12 March regarding Petition: P-04-375 Stop Opt-Out Organ Donation.

The Welsh Government is committed to introducing a soft opt-out system of organ donation which, evidence suggests, could increase the number of organ donations by up to 25 per cent. Last year one person a week on average died in Wales, whilst waiting for a transplant. I realise this is a very emotive issue and this is why it was so important to consult widely on how the arrangements for an opt-out system will work. The One Wales Government held debates across Wales on the issue of organ donation in 2008. The outcomes of these public debates and a formal public consultation in 2009, clearly demonstrated the majority supported a change to the status quo and the introduction of legislation in respect of organ donation. You may also be aware a recent BBC poll showed two thirds of the Welsh public are in favour of a change in the law.

Members will be aware we made it clear in our 2011 Manifesto, we would introduce an Assembly Bill in order to move to a 'soft opt-out' system of donation, backed up by a comprehensive communication programme. A White Paper, published in November, last year focused on how a Bill might be implemented. Nevertheless the consultation on the White Paper offered respondents the opportunity to make any points they wished on the issue. The consultation attracted a large response with 1,234 replies received, of those who offered an opinion, 52% of all respondents (646) supported the proposals and 39% (478) opposed. There are, of course, a number of sensitive issues involved and we are, therefore, considering the responses carefully as the draft Bill is developed, which we intend to publish for consultation before the summer.

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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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I should like to reassure those people who signed the petition a soft opt-out does not mean people's organs will be taken automatically or forcibly. The White Paper explained if someone dies in circumstances which makes them a potential donor, there will be a clear emphasis on the need for families to be involved in the decision making process around donation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this petition.

Regards
Lesley

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