



THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGAN DONATION ARTWORKS

Organ donation and transplantation is one of the greatest success stories of modern medicine, saving and transforming thousands of lives. Since 2021 all adults in England, Wales & Scotland are now considered to have agreed to be an organ donor when they die unless they have decided to 'opt out'.

But still, every year, hundreds of opportunities for transplants are missed.

It doesn't matter if organ and tissue donation in your hospital is a common occurrence or only two or three donors a year it's essential that everyone understand the importance of donation so that there are no missed opportunities.

This is why a recognisable donation memorial is so useful to get across the message to every department in your hospital as well as your local community.

HOURGLASS OF BUTTERFLIES – BASINGTOKE & WINCHESTER HOSPITALS



“JUST AS THERE IS A WAR MEMORIAL IN EVERY PARK, EVERY HOSPITAL SHOULD HAVE A DONATION MEMORIAL. IT’S A SMALL WAY TO SAY TO DONORS - YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN, AND THANK YOU.”

Dale Gardiner | National Clinical Lead for Organ Donation



WHAT TYPE OF DONATION MEMORIAL?

When a memorial is referred to, what may immediately come to mind is something sombre as found in a graveyard or a war memorial. But a donation artwork can be attractive yet prominent, featuring elements from nature in order to symbolise regeneration and thereby creating an uplifting and inspiring artwork that also acts as a memorial for donor families.

These artworks will always be a permanent feature for your hospital, created as an outdoor sculpture, a suspended ceiling sculpture or a wall artwork, and can be as big as the four-storey high wall artwork in Birds of Medway or as small as your budget and space allow such as Apple Blossom in Milton Keynes.

APPLE BLOSSOM – MILTON KEYNES UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL



BIRDS OF MEDWAY – MEDWAY HOSPITAL

“FROM INITIAL CONCEPT DESIGN TO FINAL INSTALLATION WE WERE EXTREMELY IMPRESSED WITH THE PROFESSIONALISM OF HOSPITAL ART STUDIO AND THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING HAS BEEN THE FANTASTIC MURAL THAT WE NOW HAVE IN OUR HOSPITAL ATRIUM. THE ARTWORK STIMULATES DISCUSSION ABOUT ORGAN DONATION AND HOPEFULLY THIS WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF VISITORS WHO JOIN THE ORGAN DONOR REGISTER.”



HOW CAN ART PROMOTE ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION?

Hospitals can often be scary or intimidating for patients; art is a perfect way to create a calmer and more welcoming environment. A striking donor artwork has even more significance and actually encourages people to engage. A descriptive plaque or some poetic wording such as in the Sails and Seabirds wall artwork in Southampton or in

Atrium of Butterfly's suspended glass artwork in Wrexham, can help contextualise and impart meaning. Once visitors are engaged, artworks can keep organ and tissue donation at the forefront of people's minds and later discuss donation with their families.

ATRIUM OF BUTTERFLIES – WREXHAM MAELOR HOSPITAL



SHOALING FISH – YSBYTY GWYNEDD HOSPITAL, BANGOR



HOW TO ENGAGE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?

Taking onboard local landmarks and the general landscape is important in the beginning of the design process, thereby building strong relationships with local communities, service users and staff. As a donor artwork develops it's important to ensure that the finished piece displays a strong sense of identity that is helpful in encouraging positive engagement.

The hospital's geographical location could instigate ideas and imagery that instil pride and fond memories for the local community. An Hourglass of Butterflies utilises butterflies that are indigenous to a nearby nature reserve, birds native to Yorkshire gather amongst tree branches in Bradford's A Tree of Yorkshire Birds, sycamore seeds that are also known as 'little helicopters' represent a town associated with the manufacture of helicopters in Yeovil's Verdigris Sycamore Seed sculpture.

A TREE OF YORKSHIRE BIRDS – BRADFORD ROYAL INFIRMARY



VERDIGRIS SYCAMORE SEED – YEOVIL DISTRICT HOSPITAL

“THIS IS BOTH BRILLIANT AND POIGNANT AT THE SAME TIME. THANK YOU FOR CREATING THIS FANTASTIC MEMORIAL. IT REALLY IS A LOVELY WAY OF THANKING OUR ORGAN AND TISSUE DONORS OVER THE YEARS.”

Razdy Igasan – Specialist Nurse for Organ Donation Bradford Royal Infirmary



OTHER WAYS TO PROMOTE DONATION IN MY HOSPITAL

Take a leading part in the promotion of organ and tissue donation both in your hospital and within your local community. Your Organ Donation Committee is expected to carry out some form of promotion activity during the annual Organ Donation Week held in September. At these times there is a fantastic opportunity to utilise your donation artwork, if you have one, as a branding and focal point.

If you have a donor recognition artwork use it as a beacon, a place to meet and greet in your hospital, raising awareness of the importance of donation. Hospitals who already have a donation artwork have made the most of it by including the artwork in all promotion such as on banners and leaflets, social media platforms, promotional videos on YouTube, press releases and newspaper articles. Your hospital's communication team can help you with this.

SAILS AND SEABIRDS – UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL SOUTHAMPTON



“WE ARE SO PLEASED TO HAVE THIS BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK IN PLACE TO RECOGNISE THE GIFT OF LIFE GIVEN BY ORGAN AND TISSUE DONORS AND THEIR FAMILIES ... I PARTICULARLY LIKE HOW THE ‘SAILS AND SEABIRDS’ REPRESENTS NOT ONLY THE END OF LIFE JOURNEY OF THOSE WHO DONATE BUT ALSO THE NEW VOYAGES THAT THEY OFFER THE TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS.”

Rachel Clare – Specialist Nurse for Organ Donation University Hospital Southampton



FUNDING

Consider and agree with your Organ Donation Committee how best to use the funding available to you.

This funding might consist of the donor recognition funding available to NHSBT but some committees may also have access to charitable or other funding.

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE – SALISBURY DISTRICT HOSPITAL



“THIS ARTWORK PROVOKES THOUGHT ABOUT ORGAN DONATION BUT IS ALSO A SIGN OF BEING REBORN. THE ENORMITY OF THE PIECE REALLY HELPS TO GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS. ORGAN DONATION HAS TRANSFORMED MY LIFE BEYOND RECOGNITION. IT’S THE GREATEST GIFT THAT YOU CAN GIVE. AND IF YOU’VE NEVER TALKED ABOUT IT, PLEASE DO, AS YOU COULD BE SOMEONE’S HERO AS MY DONOR IS TO ME. IT’S AN INCREDIBLE GIFT.”

Richard Burbedge – Double lung transplant patient Royal Berkshire Hospital

