
UK: Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, new guidelines on organ donation

(London) The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has issued new guidelines on organ donation following a change in the law. Indeed, as from today, all mentally and physically able adults in England will be considered donors in the event of death, unless they have recorded a decision not to donate. The Bishops welcome the fact that the new law respects the dying person's faith and beliefs while also taking into account that the deceased's family may be against such donation. "A system of presumed consent risks taking away the right of the individual to exercise this decision, and therefore potentially undermines the concept of donation as a gift", the Bishops wrote in their statement. For those wishing to donate their organs, the form to record one's religious beliefs so that they are respected after death is available on the website of the Bishops' Conference. "Preparing for death should not be feared", wrote Bishop Paul Mason, responsible for healthcare and mental health within the Bishops' Conference: "It is important to discuss this with your family and loved ones so that they are aware of your decision and can honour it. In turn, it is hoped that this may help to start a conversation so that" they too "are able to make an informed choice".

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