

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
SCoJeC

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Department of Health and Social Care

New system of consent for organ and tissue donation announced

The government has outlined plans to implement a new system of consent for organ and tissue donation in order to tackle a shortage of donors. This will mean everyone is considered an organ donor unless they have explicitly recorded a wish not to be or they are from one of these excluded groups:

- children under 18
- individuals who lack the mental capacity to understand the changes
- people who have not lived in England for at least 12 months before their death

The donor register will include an option for individuals to state important religious and cultural beliefs to ensure these are respected. There will also be strict safeguards in place and specialist nurses will always discuss donation with families so an individual's wishes are respected.

The proposed new system is expected to come into effect in England in spring 2020 ... There will be a 12-month transition period to allow time for discussion with friends and family about organ donation preferences. ...

While the new system shifts the balance of presumption in favour of organ donation, those who do not wish to donate their organs will still be able to record their decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register, either via NHS Blood and Transplant's website or by calling their helpline. The NHS app, launching at the end of this year, will make it even easier for people to record their decision....

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-system-of-consent-for-organ-and-tissue-donation-announced>

The New Approach to Organ and Tissue Donation in England: Government Response to public consultation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/731913/govt-response-organ-donation-consent.pdf

Focus group consultation Opt-out system for Organ Donation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/731916/ipsos_mori_focus_group_report_for_nhs_blood_and_transplant.pdf

Impact Assessment: An opt-out system of organ and tissue donation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/731915/Organ_donation_impact_assessment.pdf

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Post mortem examinations

S5W-17063 Anas Sarwar (Labour): To ask the Scottish Government (a) how many and (b) what percentage of deaths that were reported to a procurator fiscal were then referred to a pathologist in each of the last five years, broken down by health centre.

James Wolffe QC: The following table shows the number of deaths reported to the Procurator Fiscal in the financial years 2013 to 2018 along with the number and percentage of post mortem examinations carried out as a subset of that total. Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) does not hold information about the health centre areas however the table shows a breakdown of the figures for each of the SFIU area teams.

Financial Year	SFIU Area	Death Reports Received	Post Mortem Examinations	
			Total PM examinations	as a % of total death reports received
2013-14	EAST	3,334	1,797	54%
	NORTH	2,082	1,367	66%
	WEST	4,133	2,765	67%
	Total	9,549	5,929	62%
2014-15	EAST	3,301	1,959	59%
	NORTH	1,724	1,387	80%
	WEST	4,148	2,992	72%
	Total	9,173	6,338	69%
2015-16	EAST	3,298	2,120	64%
	NORTH	1,944	1,426	73%
	WEST	4,337	3,073	71%
	Total	9,579	6,619	69%
2016-17	EAST	3,168	1,693	53%
	NORTH	2,825	1,190	42%
	WEST	4,938	2,889	59%
	Total	10,931	5,772	53%
2017-18	EAST	3,124	1,730	55%
	NORTH	2,460	1,243	51%
	WEST	5,272	2,862	54%
	Total	10,856	5,835	54%

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-17063>

Post mortem examinations

S5W-17064 Anas Sarwar (Labour): To ask the Scottish Government (a) how many and (b) what percentage of deaths recorded in each of the last five years that were referred by a procurator fiscal to a pathologist (i) involved an examination performed as a view and grant and (ii) were carried out using non-invasive scanning, also broken down by each health centre that recorded the death.

James Wolffe QC: The following table shows the number of deaths reported to the Procurator Fiscal in the financial years 2013 to 2018, the number and percentage of post mortem examinations carried out along with the number and percentage of view and grant examinations as a subset of the total number of post mortem examinations.

No examinations were carried out utilising solely non-invasive scanning equipment.

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) does not hold information about the health centre areas however the table shows a breakdown of the figures for each of the SFIU area teams.

(1) Subset of total PM examinations

Financial Year	SFIU Area	Death Reports Received	Total PM examinations	as a % of total death reports received	View and grant examinations (1)	as a % of total PM examinations
2013-14	EAST	3,334	1,797	54%	230	13%
	NORTH	2,082	1,367	66%	319	23%
	WEST	4,133	2,765	67%	319	12%
	Total	9,549	5,929	62%	868	15%
2014-15	EAST	3,301	1,959	59%	257	13%
	NORTH	1,724	1,387	80%	309	22%
	WEST	4,148	2,992	72%	410	14%
	Total	9,173	6,338	69%	976	15%
2015-16	EAST	3,298	2,120	64%	321	15%
	NORTH	1,944	1,426	73%	312	22%
	WEST	4,337	3,073	71%	455	15%
	Total	9,579	6,619	69%	1,088	16%
2016-17	EAST	3,168	1,693	53%	153	9%
	NORTH	2,825	1,190	42%	186	16%
	WEST	4,938	2,889	59%	337	12%
	Total	10,931	5,772	53%	676	12%
2017-18	EAST	3,124	1,730	55%	104	6%
	NORTH	2,460	1,243	51%	171	14%
	WEST	5,272	2,862	54%	237	8%
	Total	10,856	5,835	54%	512	9%

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-17064>

Post mortem examinations

S5W-17066 Anas Sarwar (Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the average time taken was in the last five years for a death certificate to be produced where a death was (a) reported to a procurator fiscal and (b) referred to a pathologist.

James Wolffe QC: This information is not held by Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS).

Where the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) is being completed by the reporting doctor the MCCD should be issued without unnecessary delay and, where applicable, within the timescale specified in section 24 of the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965. Where COPFS instruct a pathologist the MCCD will be issued by the pathologist upon completion of the post mortem examination.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-17066>

Post mortem examinations

S5W-17069 Anas Sarwar (Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it considers that there is appropriate availability of equipment and staff to roll out a scanning facility for post mortems in each health centre.

James Wolffe QC: No forensic pathologists in Scotland utilise solely MRI or CT scanning for the purpose of carrying out post mortem examinations on behalf of the procurator fiscal. A research project is ongoing in Lothian, funded by Lothian Health Board for radiology research purposes, in which scanning is undertaken as an adjunct to full post mortem examination. There are no facilities elsewhere in Scotland which make provision for MRI or CT scanning in the context of post mortem examination. MRI and CT scanners are located within NHS facilities. They are operated by radiographers and the scans are interpreted by radiologists who are NHS staff, and not by pathologists. It is understood that these scanners are operating to capacity in examinations on living patients. Were it to be considered appropriate to use scanning for the purpose of post mortem examinations in death investigations in Scotland, this would require the provision of additional resources by way of equipment and staff.

I am advised that the efficacy of scanning as a means of undertaking post mortem examination is a matter of debate amongst professional pathologists in Scotland, and that many pathologists take the view that scanning would only be a suitable means of establishing the cause of death in cases where pathologists currently undertake non-invasive view and grant examinations.

A view and grant examination is a non-invasive process, consisting of a careful and detailed examination of the body and consideration of the medical records. The procurator fiscal will always consider whether a view and grant examination would be sufficient. However, it is a matter for the pathologist, who has a professional responsibility to certify the cause of the death, and to do so in a manner which can, if necessary, be professionally justified, whether a view and grant examination will suffice.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-17069>

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Israel

House of Lords Written Answer

Gaza: Humanitarian Aid

Lord Ahmed (Non-affiliated) [HL9825] To ask Her Majesty's Government what support is available to any British citizen aboard the Freedom Flotilla.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises British nationals against all travel to Gaza and is unable to provide routine consular assistance. Any British nationals in Gaza who do require emergency assistance should contact the British Consulate General in Jerusalem.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-07-24/HL9825/>

European Commission

Water for Gaza: EU switches on the biggest solar energy field in the Gaza strip to fuel projects providing drinking water to people in dire needs

This week, the EU has completed the biggest photovoltaic solar field in Gaza. It will provide 0.5 Megawatts of electricity per day to fuel the Southern Gaza Desalination Plant.

The EU-funded [Southern Gaza Desalination Plant](#) currently provides drinking water to

75,000 inhabitants in the Khan Younis and Rafah governorates. With the new energy field and new investments foreseen it will eventually reach 250,000 people in Southern Gaza by 2020.

Johannes Hahn, EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, commented: "Limited energy supplies in Gaza are one of the main challenges when improving access to safe and drinkable water to the local population. The photovoltaic solar field is essential to respond to the urgent water needs in Gaza and create dignified living conditions for its people, thus mitigating tensions in a highly conflict sensitive area." ...

In the coming months, more EU-funded projects in this area will be kicked-off. In particular the EU will be:

- Supporting Oxfam in its efforts to complete the rehabilitation of brackish desalination plants (approximately 16 public and 30 private), which will serve 58,000 people living in Gaza. ...
- Improving the efficiency of the water sector. ...
- Supporting the Palestinian Water Authority in reforming the Palestinian water sector. ...

To read the full press release see

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-4769_en.htm

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Other Relevant Information

Greater Manchester Tackling Hateful Extremism and Promoting Social Cohesion Commission

A Shared Future

http://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/780/a_shared_future.pdf

University of Manchester

Youth mobilisations of 'suspect communities' UK

<http://www.promise.manchester.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Youth-mobilisations-of-%E2%80%98suspect-communities%E2%80%99.pdf>

Equinet

Faith in Equality: Religion and Belief in Europe Report

http://www.equineteurope.org/IMG/pdf/wg_religion_report_final_web.pdf

Infographic

http://www.equineteurope.org/IMG/pdf/faith_in_equality_religion_belief_in_europe_infographic.pdf

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

Scottish Parliament

Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Financial Memorandum of the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill

(closing date 31 August 2018)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/109042.aspx>

Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill (closing date 4 September 2018)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/108999.aspx>

20 years of the Human Rights Act (closing date 14 September 2018)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news-parliament-2017/20-years-human-rights-act-launch-17-19/>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438