



Max Johnson

Keira Ball

Organ donation laws across the UK

Wales has had an opt-out system for organ donations since 2015. Opt-out means that adults who do not want to donate their organs when they die have to register to say so. Scotland is due to introduce the same law in March 2021. In Northern Ireland, the law is opt-in, meaning people who want to donate their organs must register to say so.



DID YOU KNOW?
The skin is the body's largest organ.

Organ donation law in England changes thanks to Max and Keira

The story of two young people called Max and Keira has inspired politicians to change the law on organ donations in England. On 20 May, the law changed so that all adults in England will be considered organ donors when they die, unless they or their family say they do not want to be. It is thought the new law could save 700 lives a year.

What is organ donation?

Organ donation is when an organ or body tissue is removed from one person and given to another. If someone's organs, such as their heart, kidneys, or liver, stop working properly, it can cause that person to become unwell. Sometimes it is possible to replace the faulty organs with healthy ones from another person. This process is known as a transplant. The

organs usually come from those who have died, although some organs, such as a kidney or part of a liver, can be donated by people who are still alive.

How has the law changed?

Max and Keira's Law means that in England organ donation is now an "opt-out" system. This means that anyone over the age of 18 will automatically be considered to be in favour of donating their organs after their death. Adults in England who don't want to donate their organs will need to register or tell their family that they do not want their organs donated after they die. The previous law was an "opt-in" law, which meant people had to register if they did want their organs donated. Otherwise, their organs could not be used to save other people's lives.

Why was the change needed?

The Government says there are 5,100 people waiting for organ transplants in England, and there is a shortage of available organs. Research found that although 80% of people said they were happy to donate their organs after their death, only 37% had registered to do so under the previous opt-in law.

Who are Max and Keira?

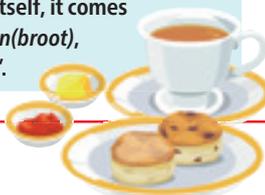
The law is named after Max Johnson and Keira Ball. Keira died in a car accident in 2017, when she was nine years old. Her organs saved four people's lives, including Max, who is now 12. He was nine years old when he received her heart. Keira's mother said, "Keira was just such a special child and what she's done is just incredible."



WORD OF THE WEEK

SCONE

When it comes to cream teas, there are usually two big debates: is it jam or cream first, and how do you pronounce scone? Many insist scone should rhyme with gone, but others say it rhymes with cone. In fact, there is no right or wrong answer – it largely depends on what your family chooses, and where they live. As for the word itself, it comes from the Dutch *schoon(broot)*, meaning "fine bread".

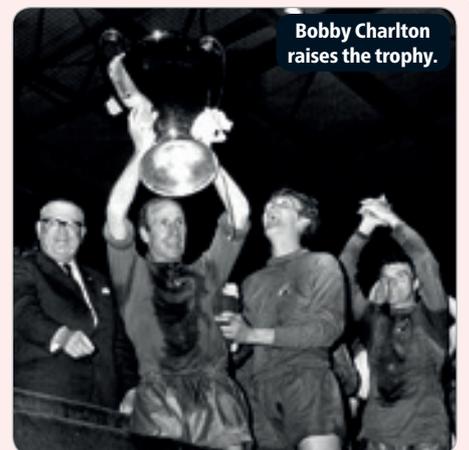


THE WEEK IN HISTORY

29 May 1968

Manchester United win the European Cup

On 29 May 1968, Manchester United became the first English club to win the European Cup. The European Cup, which is now called the Champions League, is one of the most important tournaments in football, with the best teams from across Europe playing each other. United beat the Portuguese team Benfica 4-1 in the final, which was played at Wembley Stadium in London. The score was 1-1 after 90 minutes, so the teams had to play extra time. United scored three more goals to win.



Bobby Charlton raises the trophy.

Topical Tuesdays!

Organ donation law in England changes thanks to Max and Keira

THE WEEK
Junior SCHOOLS



Once you have read the article, try any of the following activities...

Hold a debate with your family

No one likes to think about losing a loved one but, sadly, it does happen. Now that Max and Keira's Law has come into force, is that the end of the matter? What if a family does not want their loved one's organs to be used, even if the person who died had been happy to donate? Should they be allowed to block the transplant? After all, the donor might have been happy about it but that doesn't mean their family was. Or should their family's wishes be ignored for the sake of saving another life? Is it not really their business to go against a relative's wishes, even if they are no longer alive to know about it? What do you think?

Writing challenge!

Choose one of the following writing warm-ups.

1 Imagine you have had a heart transplant after a life of ill health. Write a thank you letter to the family of the donor, telling them what a difference it has made to your life and your future hopes and dreams. Follow the conventions of an informal letter but, above all, choose your words carefully so as to make sure your letter is a comfort rather than a cause of more pain.

or

2 Imagine you live in a country that does not have an equivalent of Max and Keira's Law. Write a persuasive text, stating reasons for changing the system so that people are assumed to consent to the transplant of their organs unless they have said otherwise. The skill will be in writing sensitively yet still making your point persuasively.

Investigate

Research the first ever successful heart transplant. Who performed the surgery, where and when? See if you can find out how long the patient survived and compare that with how long patients can be expected to live these days.