

Irish Kidney Association welcomes publication of year end donation and transplant figures.

The Irish Kidney Association is heartened with the notable increase in organ transplants in 2023 as reported by the HSE Organ Donation Transplant Ireland (ODTI) on its release today of preliminary end of year figures. Our sincere thanks to all the deceased organ donor families and Health Care Professionals involved. The positive impact of their actions extends beyond organ recipients to families, communities, and society at large.

Table 1, Organ Transplants in Ireland

	2022	2023	5 year Average 2015-19
Deceased Donors	86	95	85
Kidney	130	161	128
Liver	51	54	61
Lungs	18	24	33
Heart	10	7	16
Pancreas	8	6	2
Total Deceased Donor Transplants	217	252	241
Living Donors	33	30	43
TOTAL TRANSPLANTS	250	282	284

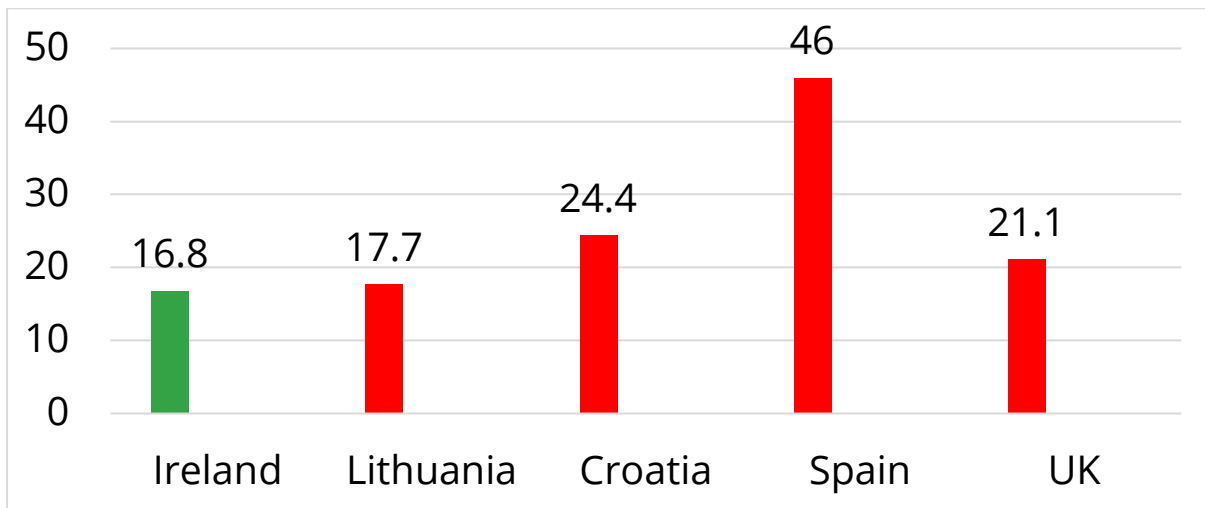
Despite reaching 282 transplants (an increase of 32 transplants compared to 2022), it's essential not to limit ambitions based solely on a year-to-year comparison. Over 500 individuals and families still await life-transforming transplants. So, it is important to look behind the headlines to understand the successes and identify the challenges.

Looking at the longer-term trend, Table 1 shows that Ireland is starting to move beyond the levels of deceased donor organ transplantation that were being achieved pre-pandemic. In 2022, Ireland's organ donation rate was 16.78 per million population (PMP) compared to 46.3 PMP in Spain (IRODAT, 2022)

In 2017, there were 50 living donor kidney transplants and Ireland has not come close to that since with just 30 such transplants taking place in Ireland in 2023. Whereas Northern Ireland, with a much smaller population, had 68 living donors in April 1 2022 to March 31 2023.

Table 2, Ireland's position compared to other countries.

Worldwide actual deceased organ donors rate 2022 (Per Million Population pmp)



Source

https://www.irodat.org/img/database/pdf/IRODaT_Newsletter_2022_preliminary_july.pdf

Carol Moore, the CEO of the Irish Kidney Association stated, "We welcome the recent recommendations of an [HSE report](#) which highlights the gaps in transplant and donation services infrastructure and look forward to seeing the new 10-year strategy in early 2024 which the HSE is developing.

The ongoing need for quality data, highlighted by the **National Office for Clinical Audit (NOCA)**, which published its findings of a [Potential Donor Audit Development Study Report of donors in September 2023](#), is vital. The pilot study carried out in six hospitals by NOCA showed good practise in many areas but also demonstrated missed opportunities to offer donation to families. To become a deceased organ donor, a person must die under very specific circumstances. These circumstances are not common and account for approximately 3% of deaths in Ireland. This is why it is important to ensure all opportunities for donation are offered to families. Families of deceased organ donor families often describe organ donation as the "one bright light in the darkness".

We also welcome the commitment to new funding so that an annual Potential Donor Audit can be expanded nationwide."

Given kidney transplantation saves €1.6 million per patient over 15 years, (compared to dialysis treatments), it makes economic sense to invest in transplant programmes as it leads to better outcomes for patients and also saves money in the long run. (Note 1)

2023 saw the progression of the **Human Tissue Bill** through the Dail as it moved to the Seanad for final review in January 2024. It will be the first national legislation in the history of the state to address organ donation and transplantation. A robust public awareness campaign is vital for its effective implementation.

In conclusion, the Carol Moore stated.

“Organ Donation is not only about healthcare. The act of organ donation is an act of kindness, civic responsibility and community solidarity. This wonderful act has a ripple effect, inspiring others to think and act on behalf of their community. We see this in our passionate and committed volunteers and our health care professionals who respect and value others and give their time so selflessly and generously. In these troubled times, the organ donation and transplant community are role models for a kinder, more inclusive society. Developing organ donation and transplant services benefits not just patients but Irish society as a whole, so it is important to have the conversation with your loved ones over the Christmas break and let them know your wishes.”

For Organ Donor cards visit the Irish Kidney Association web site at <https://ika.ie/get-a-donor-card/>

ENDS

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Note One

Over a 15-year period, it costs €1.87 million to treat an End Stage Kidney Disease patient by dialysis whereas treating them by transplant would cost €255,299. **That averages out as a saving of €107,879 per patient per year or €1.62 million over the 15-year period.** On January 1, 2023, the number of patients receiving in centre dialysis was 2,159 with 302 patients on home dialysis

Source : [PQ Question in Dail, February 2023](#)

Note Two

Please note the Free Text facility to request organ donor cards will be discontinued from the 31st December 2023.