What our IAs say about their role

“I enjoy meeting the donors and recipients and meeting transplant colleagues.”

“Truly humbling experience to take this role and very rewarding. Very different to my normal job though some of the skills are obviously transferable.”

“Personal and professional satisfaction of interviewing the people who put themselves forward for live donation.”

Contact Us

This leaflet is a guide only. For more information, please contact:

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[hta.gov.uk](http://hta.gov.uk)
[@HTA_UK](https://twitter.com/HTA_UK)
[/HumanTissueAuthority](https://facebook.com/HumanTissueAuthority)
The role of the HTA in living organ donation

The Human Tissue Act 2004 (HT Act) provides a legal framework for living organ donation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, the framework is provided by the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006.

The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) regulates living organ donation and transplantation across the UK. For each case, the HTA decides whether the donation can go ahead, based on criteria set out in the relevant law.

Our role is to provide an independent check to help protect the interests of living organ donors. Every living donor will speak confidentially to an Independent Assessor (IA), who is not connected with the transplant unit.

Independent Assessors (IAs)

IAs are trained and accredited by the HTA to assess cases of living organ transplantation. IAs act as a representative of the HTA to help us with ensuring the requirements of the Human Tissue Act 2004 (The HT Act), Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 (HT Scotland Act) and associated Regulations are met in all cases of living organ donation.

What the IA role involves

IAs are not known to the donor or recipient and are independent of the clinical teams caring for them. They meet with the donor and the recipient to explore whether the following requirements of the HT Act have been met:

- the donor has the capacity to make an informed decision;
- there has been no reward sought or offered for the organ donation;
- the donor’s wish to donate is free from any pressure to act against their will; and,
- the donor understands the nature of the procedure and risks of the surgery.

After the meeting, the IA submits a report to the HTA based on the discussions with the donor and the recipient. The HTA then makes a decision on whether the proposed transplant can proceed.

Who can become an IA

IAs come from varied backgrounds and do not need to be medically qualified. Our current IAs include Consultants, hospital Chaplains, retired GPs, senior nurses, surgeons, retired teachers and judges.

The personal specification can be found on our website (hta.gov.uk/who-can-become-an-ia).

How to become an IA

If you are interested in applying to become an IA, you will need to contact your local transplant unit. Once they have agreed that you can apply, please complete an application form and send it to the HTA.

To become an IA, you must attend a one day classroom training session and complete online training modules before assessing living organ donation cases. This training ensures that all IAs understand the requirements of the HT Act in relation to living organ donation and how to carry out an independent assessment. The HTA also provides continued support and advice to IAs, when requested.

Read more on applying on our website (hta.gov.uk/ia).

How we maintain trust

All IAs sign a Code of Conduct with the HTA at the time of accreditation. This outlines the role and responsibilities of the HTA and the IA.

The IAs also sign an honorary contract with their Hospital Trust/Health Board. This usually allows access to an NHS email account for transplant-related communications and access to any IT equipment needed for the independent assessment.

Before IAs begin their role, they must undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) screening.