

DAILY Mirror

FIGHTING FOR YOU
Thursday, February 15, 2018 70P



BITTEN Raeya

Fox attacks baby girl in her home

A BABY was mauled by a fox in her own home. Seven-month-old Raeya Wyatt could have been killed, her mum said.

FULL STORY: PAGE 13



Booze shame young Tories are in Cam's drinking club

EXCLUSIVE: PAGES 10&11

CHANGE THE LAW FOR LIFE

Today we reveal that 4,712 people have died in England in the past decade while waiting for an organ donor. People like tragic Aoife, the smiling four-year-old girl in this picture. The death toll is shocking and the Mirror is campaigning to persuade MPs to change the law and save hundreds of lives. Now we need your help to make sure our politicians listen...



DON'T LET ANY MORE DIE

BY ANDREW GREGORY

SHOCK figures reveal 4,712 patients died waiting for donor organs in 10 years.

But you can urge your MP to back an opt-out law that would have saved many lives.

FULL STORY: PAGES 4&5



MAKE SURE YOUR MP VOTES ON CRUCIAL PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILL

MPs should heed Mirror campaign



SIR VINCE CABLE
LIB DEM LEADER

THERE are around 6,271 people in the UK waiting for an organ transplant.

This is a great campaign. I urge all MPs to pay attention to it, and to listen to the calls of countless families across the country.

We can ensure that more lives and more children like little Max Johnson are saved.

I'm proud to be a registered organ donor and carry my card everywhere. It was an obvious choice.

But it should be assumed that everyone wants to donate their organs, unless they choose to opt out.

This bill benefits all in our society



SIR OLIVER LETWIN
CONSERVATIVE MP

This private members' bill follows a pattern that has been established in recent years.

Of maintaining freedom of action for the individual while providing a "nudge" in favour of actions that benefit society as a whole.

I believe that this is a wholly appropriate attitude for the state to take when it comes to organ donations that can save lives.

I hope that all Conservative MPs will follow the Prime Minister's lead in supporting the bill.

Boy called Max is our inspiration



DAN JARVIS
LABOUR MP

I understand that some people have concerns regarding the opt-out system, and it is vital that nobody feels they are being forced into organ donation.

But in my opinion, changing to an opt-out scheme is the right thing to do. Knowing the story of Max Johnson will help you understand why.

For seven months, nine-year-old Max was kept alive by a tiny metal pump in his chest.

Last August, he received a new heart and is on his way to making a full recovery.

Without this transplant, Max would have joined hundreds who die each year waiting.

Life or death.. simple as that

» Push to change donor laws » 4,712 die waiting for organs

EXCLUSIVE
BY ANDREW GREGORY
Political Editor

THE scandal of thousands of patients dying needlessly while waiting for an organ transplant could be brought to an end by MPs in a vital vote next week.

And today we urge you to contact your Member of Parliament to ask them to push through an opt-out law that makes every citizen a potential donor unless otherwise stated.

Our plea comes as shock figures revealed 4,712 people have died in the past decade while waiting for an organ.

They include four-year-old daughter Aoife O'Sullivan, who lost her fight for life in March 2016 after suffering from a rare heart condition that could only be cured with a transplant.

Her mum Michelle said: "I would say to people, 'Put yourself in the shoes of

ASK YOUR MP
If you want to change the organ donation law, tell your MP how you want them to vote on Friday, February 23. To contact your MP go to: www.mirror.co.uk/yourMP

someone waiting for a transplant' and encourage your MP to vote next week.

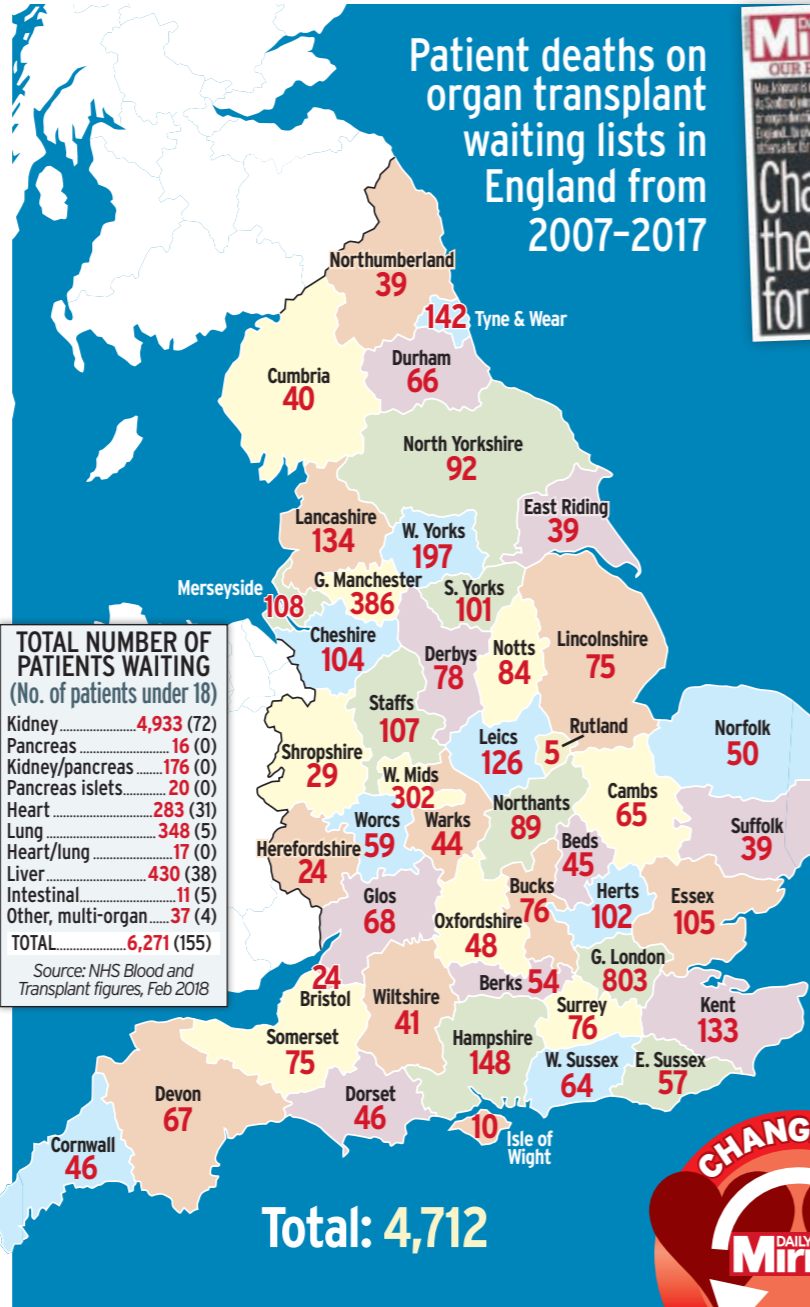
"It would be better if England had an opt-out system because it would increase the pool of organs available."

Theresa May has already pledged to change the donor laws after a personal appeal by heart transplant boy Max Johnson, nine, of Winsford, Cheshire, whose life was saved last year. The PM has said if the move is successful, it will be called Max's Law.

And it follows the Mirror's Change The Law For Life campaign that has for the past two years urged the Government to take action. The opt-out vote goes before the Commons in a private members' bill, brought by Labour MP Geoffrey Robinson, next Friday. Wales already has the law.

Separate figures show 6,271 patients in the UK – including 155 children – are on the organ waiting list.

Mr Robinson said: "Saving lives is at the heart of my bill. Getting the bill passed next week will help ensure the



CAMPAIGN How Mirror led the way with our stories about brave Max's struggle

families don't know their loved ones' wishes. I have been incredibly moved by the Mirror's campaign to change the organ donation law. It has already been changed in Wales and the next Labour government will do the same for England. But we need change now.

"So next Friday I urge all MPs to come together and back Geoffrey Robinson's bill so we can give that gift of life sooner rather than later."

Kidney Care UK policy director Fiona Loud added: "We need to find ways to reduce the numbers of people needlessly dying whilst waiting for a transplant so we are calling on MPs to attend the bill reading, and show their support for saving lives."

There had been fears the change of law would bring in a "hard" opt-out system where once a person had died they would be considered donors regardless of the wishes of relatives.

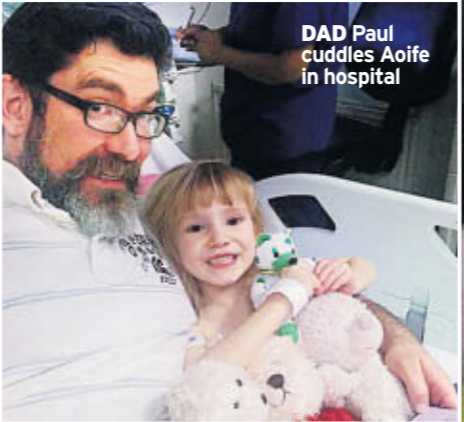
But those pushing and supporting the bill dismissed the claims and insisted they were only seeking a "soft" option, as in Wales and Spain, where families will still be given the option to block donations after death.

The figures regarding waiting lists, obtained by the Mirror from NHS Blood and Transplant, show the worst affected area was Greater London, where 803 people died due to a lack of organ availability in the decade up until last year.

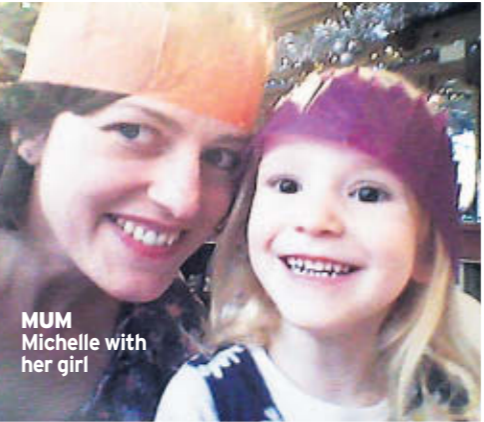
That was followed by 386 deaths in just 10 years in Greater Manchester, and 302 in the West Midlands.

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VOICE OF THE MIRROR: PAGE 8

TRAGIC DEATH
But Aoife's kidneys saved a man



DAD Paul cuddles Aoife in hospital



MUM Michelle with her girl

Our little girl died waiting for a heart ... but her kidneys saved another soul

BY WARREN MANGER

When little Aoife O'Sullivan's heart began to fail, her anxious parents clung to their only hope. They prayed a donor would be found to save her before it was too late.

Tragically, it was not to be. Aoife's heart stopped beating as she languished on the transplant waiting list, and emergency surgery to fit a temporary mechanical replacement could not save her.

As four-year-old Aoife slipped away, mum Michelle and dad Neil held her tiny hands and they knew what to do.

They told doctors they wanted to donate their daughter's organs. Her kidneys saved a young man's life – just as they had hoped some selfless stranger would save hers.

Michelle says: "We didn't have to talk about it. There was no decision to make, we knew that was the right thing to do.

"Life is so precious. Organ donation is not about saving one person, it saves a whole community of people who were suffering with them – their family, friends, and work colleagues."

Aoife was a bright and bubbly girl who had just started school in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex when a recurring cough previously dismissed as colds or asthma got worse.

When she began coughing up blood she was raced to Southend Hospital and diagnosed with tuberculosis and pneumonia.

Michelle, 44, says: "It was very scary, but I thought at least we know what it is now and she's in hospital, that's the best place for her."

But worse news followed. An X-ray showed Aoife's heart was unusually large for her age.

At the Royal Brompton Hospital in West London she was diagnosed with a rare heart disease called restrictive cardiomyopathy and moved straight to intensive care.

Her heart muscles had become too thick and rigid, stopping the chambers filling with blood. Legal secretary Michelle says:

"Suddenly her life was in danger." Broadcast engineer Neil, 44, raced to the hospital and they were warned what to expect.

"There was no cure. It was devastating," says Michelle. Aoife's only hope was a heart transplant, but the shortage of donor organs meant an agonising wait.

Michelle says: "My first thought was, I don't want her to have someone else's heart. I just wanted her to get better with her own heart. But that wasn't an option.

"To make matters worse, we needed a heart that had to be a match for Aoife's body. The odds against us felt overwhelming."

Aoife spent Christmas at Great Ormond Street Hospital. By January doctors decided Aoife could go home to wait, and her parents tried not to dwell on the transplant. Michelle says: "I couldn't keep thinking about it. I knew it would mean another family had lost their son or daughter."

The parents, who also have daughter Emilie, now two, were told Aoife would eventually need a mechanical Berlin Heart to pump her blood when her heart failed, to keep her alive until a suitable organ was found.

As her condition deteriorated medics raced to fit one. As the morphine wore off doctors realised she had suffered permanent brain damage.

Michelle says: "Our little girl was gone."

When Aoife's life support was switched off and she died in March 2016, her parents knew they wanted to donate her organs.

Because Aoife was on so much medication in hospital, only her kidneys could be used. They saved a young man, giving him and his family the second chance they never had.

Now Michelle and Neil are backing the Mirror's campaign for an opt-out donor register. Michelle said: "So many don't know what their loved ones' wishes are regarding organ donation. If we had an opt-out system, it would make people think about it."

"I think the majority of us would want to save another's life if our time had come."

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AT HOME Aoife with little sister Emilie