HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE
HUMAN TISSUE (AUTHORISATION) (SCOTLAND) BILL
SUBMISSION FROM HUMANIST SOCIETY SCOTLAND

Humanist Society Scotland welcome the bill and proposed changes to the organ donation register and how organ donation wishes are respected. We believe the proposed changes will be a significant improvement for Humanists as the current system currently does not respect Humanists views regarding personal autonomy. Humanists in Scotland believe the current system where another individual can overturn an organ donation decision to donate organs after their death is unethical.

As Humanists we value the autonomy of an individual over their own body and beliefs. No person should be subject to decisions based on another individual’s religious or spiritual life stance. Humanists continue to be alarmed at the current system which is often argued as being ethical and respecting the individual’s choice, when in fact this is not the case. NHS Blood and Transplant estimate over 500 cases a year (across the UK) where the donor had registered with the organ donation register but the preference was overturned after their death.

It is a cause of concern to many of our members that their express wishes in relation to Organ Donation or whole body donation, can be overturned after their death.

It should however be possible for individuals to note, whether in wills or in the organ donation system that they have a preference for donation their organs but that they are happy that this could be overturned after their death if the family wish. This would allow for individuals to make a choice about family instruction rather than the current system of assumed consent that families/next of kin can overturn an individual’s decision.

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On behalf of
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