

Jack Docherty submission of 29 September 2022

PE1911/Q – Review of Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 as it relates to post-mortems

I would like to pledge my support to this petition, and express my beliefs that the current laws surrounding post-mortems and the care of the deceased are not adequate or dignified.

Currently, the next of kin do not have enough involvement, communication or input regarding how post-mortems are carried out, and subsequently, what becomes of all the remains of their loved ones following post-mortem. Furthermore, permission should be requested from next of kin, to use their loved ones' remains for research purposes. Where permission cannot or is not provided, this should be considered as an opt-out and respected as such.

Likewise, I believe it would be advantageous to allow the general public to, whilst alive, have full say of what happens to their body in the event of their death. This is an extremely easy resolution to implement, by allowing the public the choice to opt out of certain aspects or all aspects of post-mortem research.

It is important to give grieving families the chance to lay their family to rest, and with the current system I believe this is especially difficult, and the dead should be treated with dignity and respect. It goes without saying that when a post-mortem is deemed necessary, people have already lost their loved ones under unexpected and tragic circumstances. We should not, as a nation, extend their pain by withholding tissue samples or removing pieces of the body which do not need to be removed for the purposes of the post-mortem (i.e. removing the tongue and/or brain).

Relating to the above discussion of removing tissue samples and parts of the body, with the development of advanced post-mortem equipment and procedures (scanning technology and keyhole post-mortems) which allows post-mortems to be carried out whilst preserving the body, I believe this should become the legal standard of practice for post-mortems, unless in the specific case it becomes completely necessary to

investigate the human remains further.

I hope this Act will be reconsidered, and a resolution can be found which is humane and respectful of the dead and their families.