

Britain to outlaw most private organ transplants

31 July 2009, By JILL LAWLESS , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- The British government said Friday that it plans to ban private organ transplants from dead donors to allay fears that prospective recipients can buy their way to the front of the line.

A government-commissioned report recommended that organs donated within the state-run National Health Service should stay within the public health system.

Very few Britons have private transplants, so in practice the new rules will stop overseas patients from coming to Britain and paying privately for a transplant.

The report by Elisabeth Buggins, former head of the [Organ Donation](#) Taskforce, was commissioned after a media storm over cases in which foreign patients were given transplants from dead Britons.

Buggins said that for most people, "financial gain from the transplant of donated organs feels morally wrong."

She said most people who wanted to donate their organs assumed they would be given to people on an NHS waiting list, and the idea of "queue-jumpers" could deter donors.

"While I found no evidence of wrongdoing in the way organs are allocated to patients, there is a perception that private payments may unfairly influence access to [transplant](#), so they must be banned," Buggins said.

Citizens of other European Union countries will still be entitled to publicly funded transplants in some circumstances, but the report said these should be tightened and clarified.

The ban does not affect transplants from living donors - such as kidney transplants - which can still be carried out privately as long as no money changes hands.

The report also said there should be greater transparency in the way organs are allocated.

The government said it accepted the recommendations and hoped to enact the ban by October.

There are currently about 8,000 people waiting for organ transplants in Britain. In the past year, about 3,500 patients received transplants but another 1,000 on the waiting list died.

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