

This response was submitted to the consultation held by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics on Give and take? Human bodies in medicine and research between April 2010 and July 2010. The views expressed are solely those of the respondent(s) and not those of the Council.

Mrs Lucy Cheek

Dear Dame Marilyn,

I understand that you are currently in charge of a project to raise the profile of organ donation. Do you think the following suggestion would be of any use to you?

I would like to propose the introduction of a national scheme for everyone who would be willing to donate their organs to have a tiny tattoo hidden behind an ear lobe. It would include all age groups but I could see it becoming particularly popular with young people - worn as a proud badge and seen as a desired and accepted rite of passage. I suggest the symbol used might be a small red heart (♥). For those who for religious or other reasons would prefer not to have their organs used there could be the option of the same symbol but with a bar across (♠). This would also serve for anyone who had had the tattoo but changed their mind at a later stage. The one huge advantage of this scheme over others is that the persons own wishes

travel with them at all times - clear to all concerned, both family and doctors, and avoids the need for painful questions or chasing up of records or donor cards at a critical time.

Perhaps you think my 'Have a heart' campaign would be too radical and unacceptable but I am glad to have had the chance to raise the suggestion and I hope your work continues to produce an awareness of the importance of organ donation.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Lucy Cheek (Mrs)