

# MARKETING SOCIETY STAR AWARDS 2016

**Category:** PR category (3.7)  
**Entry:** The True Gift Of Giving  
**Entrant:** The Scottish Government and Four Scotland (formerly Consolidated PR)



## Overview

**The UK has one of the lowest organ donation rates in Europe.  
Every day, three people die waiting for a transplant.**

This entry shows how an intensive four week campaign galvanised Scots who support the idea of organ donation to act, using the feel-good factor of Christmas to encourage people to spread goodwill and help others by joining the NHS Organ Donor Register (ODR).

For the first time in five years, there was no supporting TV or radio advertising driving registration, so PR had a crucial role to play. And with 540 people in Scotland currently waiting on a life-saving transplant, time was of the essence.

## Objectives

**There were two clear objectives:**

- Deliver a clear call-to-action via media coverage
- Drive registrations and increase the number of Scots on the NHS Organ Donation Register

## Research and planning

**The challenges were significant.**

We knew that whilst most people in principle agree to donating some, or all, of their organs, only 42 per cent of people in Scotland are currently on the ODR.

Furthermore, because organ donation isn't front of mind for most – with only about 400 transplants taking place in Scotland each year – many people are unlikely to be personally affected or know anyone who is.

And this all set against a context of declining donor numbers: the number of people that donated organs in 2014/15 fell for the first time in 11 years. (NHSBT July '15).

With less than one per cent of deaths in Scotland happening in circumstances where the person is able to donate their organs, we needed people to understand that the more people that register, the more lives that can ultimately be saved.

At every turn, we had to spell out the message:

- **There are people in Scotland currently waiting on a life-saving transplant.**
- **During the season of goodwill, take two minutes to join the NHS Organ Donor Register.**
- **You have it in you to save a life. Make this Christmas count.**

## Our approach

**Our approach was to push the immediacy of the festive feel-good factor and use powerful, real-life stories in order to jolt people into action and take two minutes out of the day to register.**

To highlight this urgency, we appealed to those waiting on a transplant to come forward via the campaign's Facebook page, to help illustrate the potential difference someone taking two minutes could make to the future of those waiting.

Working with transplant coordinators, we identified five people who would front the December push.

Our team set about interviewing the volunteers, eliciting their deeply personal perspectives on how waiting for the call impacts on their daily lives. Some were relatively new to the transplant waiting list, others had been waiting over a decade. Sensitive handling was vital and hours of preparation went into speaking to each person, agreeing consent and preparing them for speaking with the media.

We told their stories, packaging each case study with the campaign's 'act now' messaging, whilst weaving in their personal views on the importance of the ODR - many highlighting that if just one person joined after reading their story, they'd feel it had been worthwhile.

There were two (overlapping) types of people whose behaviour we wanted to change: potential donors and the families of potential donors. This meant we needed to target everyone in Scotland, irrespective of age or health.



## Campaign execution

**With a four week window and five stories to tell, media relations had to be meticulously planned, with launch, features and news landing back-to-back to provide four weeks of sustained activity amplifying the call-to-action.**

Alongside paid for, we planned and implemented a rolling programme of social media posts to engage and drive traffic.

The figurehead for our festive frenzy was Tricia Sibbald, 36, from East Kilbride, who has been on the waiting list for a donor kidney since 2011 and is on dialysis three times a week.

Her children Kara, 8, and Erin, 10, came on board, telling the story of how their mum getting a kidney would be the best Christmas present they could ever receive.

As part of their wish, the duo were recruited to design Christmas wrapping paper which was used as part of a free present wrapping service in locations across Scotland, in a bid to drive ODR sign ups.

**The neatly packaged idea allowed us to create imagery which reinforced the feel-good factor of giving something more than just a gift at Christmas.**

We assembled the family at a press photocall on 3rd December at Santa's Grotto at intu Braehead, where the trio was surrounded by gifts wrapped in the special design, outlining how a transplant would be life-changing for them all.

**Brave 16-year old Morgan MacIntyre from Fort William was next to back our campaign.**

In her fifth year at Lochaber High School, Morgan was born with renal hypoplasia, a condition which led to her undergoing a kidney transplant aged just five. Morgan now needs another transplant, making her one of the youngest people in Scotland waiting on a transplant.

The family had to cope with the devastating loss of her father Jason in 2008, a championship cyclist who tragically died in a road accident and who himself went on to be an organ donor.



Tricia



Morgan



Wrapping stations

**A succession of quick-fire releases heralded the remaining case-studies:**

- Scott MacDonald, 27, from Livingston, who has been on the transplant waiting list for over a decade.
- Teresa Robertson, 43 year old mum from Alloa, waiting for a heart transplant.
- Danny Dowie, 45, an Edinburgh hairdresser, who's been longing for a life free from dialysis, after losing his only kidney as a result of cancer treatment two years ago.

With wrapping stations popping up across Renfrewshire, Dundee, Aberdeen, Glenrothes, Stirling and the Lothians, we were busy orchestrating photo calls in each region.

The campaign's social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) reinforced the media relations messaging as we shared content of our case studies, their stories, and the resulting press coverage.

Kara and Erin  
at the STV  
studios



## Results

### Measuring results against objectives:

- **Deliver a clear call-to-action via media coverage**

Over the four weeks, we generated 51 pieces of coverage.

Of these, all but one, a colossal **98%**, included a clear call-to-action to join the ODR.

Within the cluttered festive landscape, the emotive story behind the Sibbald's smiles made sure we secured column inches. The heart-warming imagery of the family rang through loud and clear with images emblazoned across 100% of the coverage, including The Herald, Scotsman, Daily Record, and Evening Times.

Broadcast coups included STV News at 6 and an 11 minute piece on STV Glasgow News at 10 with Tricia and John Forsythe (Lead Clinician for Organ Donation and Transplantation in Scotland).

Morgan McIntyre's story also caught the media's imagination with extensive national press reporting including a Daily Record double page spread that was shared 2,246 from the paper's own site. Our Facebook post reached a further 48,400 people, attracting 583 likes and 281 shares.

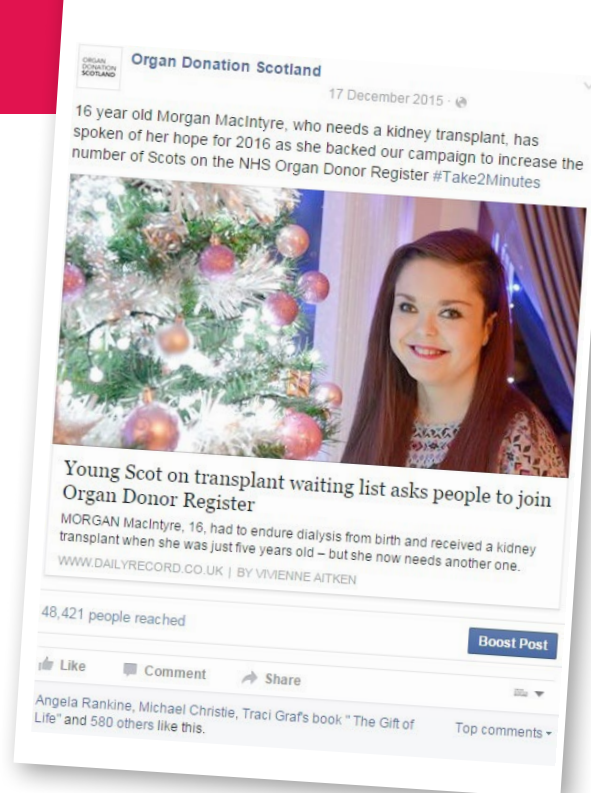
**All told, the total PR value of editorial generated was £200,075 delivering a whopping ROI of 13:1**

- **Drive registrations and increase the number of Scots on the NHS Organ Donation Register**

A total of **4,172** online registrations were recorded over the four weeks, compared to 516 during the same period last year (NHSBT 14 Dec '15 – 10 Jan '16).

With only digital, field and PR being used, this **708%** increase shows that you don't need a heavyweight advertising campaign to make a difference if you're recounting stories that resonate with the target audience.

Furthermore, the 4,172 online registrations over four weeks dwarfs the 1,234 registrations generated during the first six weeks of a TV-led campaign earlier in the year.



Final word to Tricia Sibbald:

"The girls were really proud to be asked to design the wrapping paper to help raise awareness. They are more than aware of what is going on with my health and loved being part of something that they felt was helping. With so many people in Scotland waiting like me, I hope it helps make a difference."

**Given its impact on lives saved, this sub £10k campaign, where every penny counted, has unequivocally made a difference.**

