This presentation is about the latest WI campaign: “Time to Talk about Organ Donation”
There are still so many people waiting for an organ to transform, or even save, their life. On average 3 people a day die while waiting for an organ in the UK.

One donor can help 9 people. It really is a precious gift of life. And it’s economical too – transplants save £316 million every year. It’s one of the most effective medical treatments around. Last year there were more deceased organ donors than ever before.

It’s an altruistic system – no money changes hands – and donors usually remain anonymous, though some donor families and recipients do exchange letters.

Donation has to happen fast, and for that reason it usually happens after trauma, and in situations when people die in hospital. Not only that, organs and tissues from donors have to be a very close match to a recipient for them to be viable. That’s why very few people die in circumstances where they could potentially be a donor, and fewer still become donors.

Over 500,000 people died last year, but only 1,320 of those people became organ donors.
The WI campaign on organ donation stems from a resolution submitted from Standon and Cotes Heath WI.

[read resolution text]

“The NFWI notes that three people die every day whilst waiting for an organ transplant. We call on every member of the WI to make their wishes regarding organ donation known, and to encourage their families and friends, and members of their local communities to do likewise.”

It was passed with a 98% majority at the Annual Meeting in Leeds on 7 June 2014. There were some amazing stories shared at the Annual Meeting during the debate on the resolution.

The mandate is based on the premise of one key thing that impacts the organ donation system in the UK: FAMILIES
The NHS has been looking into what is happening at each stage of the organ donation process, to find out how to translate willing deceased donors into actual transplants for people who need them.

This graph is more simple that it looks. It shows the two kinds of deaths of people – circulatory red and brain-stem blue – and the stages that deceased person’s organs go through from death to donation, from left to right.

You can see the lines get lower as they go along. That’s people leaving the system as their organs are deemed inappropriate to donate at each stage of the process.

You can see a big drop in blue line and the red line circled in black.

That’s the number of organs that leave the system because families have said no. Last year (2013-14), 41% of families did not let organ donation go ahead, sometimes even when the deceased was a Registered organ donor.
60% of people don’t realise that families will be asked for consent as part of the organ donation process, but they have a crucial role. In England and in Wales with the new consent system [here/there] from December 2015, families must be consulted and donation never goes ahead without them being involved.

Families have every right to say no, or yes. Especially if someone hasn’t Registered or expressed their wishes another way, it’s left completely up to families to make a choice. Clinicians are bound to not cause distress to families. Families also involved for a very practical reason: they can give valuable medical information about the deceased to make sure the right decision is made.

When families are confronted with the reality of deciding to donate their loved one’s organs, it’s very distressing. Research about donors has found that:

- They may not realise it was a decision they had to make
- It is especially distressing for families when they do not know what their loved one wanted
- They might want to protect their loved one from ‘more trauma’ or have concerns about keeping the body whole
So while the UK is overall very supportive of donation, this support is hard to translate into families giving their consent. Families need clear direction and CONFIDENCE to know what to do.

Research from last year found that the families who are the most likely to say yes to donation were those families whose loved one had expressed a wish to donate. 89% of those families who KNEW that their loved one wanted to be a donor GAVE their consent last year.

That's a very stark difference from when a deceased person's feelings about donation aren't known – they never talked about it, they're not Registered – last year only 45% of their families said yes. This consent rate is much lower than the overall public support for organ donation. It's these statistics which are the basis of the Time to Talk campaign mandate.

So have a think about whether you want to be an organ donor, make a decision, and then TELL YOUR LOVED ONES! Ease their burden, let them know what you want so they can fulfil your wishes.

Thanks for listening.