Become an eye donor

**We need your help**
The number of eye donors in and around London has decreased over recent years and there is often a shortage of tissue available for transplant. Without tissue many patients cannot have an alternative therapy or treatment for their eye condition. Agreeing to donate your eyes after your death could potentially restore or improve the vision of up to 10 patients.

Becoming an eye donor is simple:

1. Join the organ donor register ([www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk))
2. Tell your family and friends that you wish to become an eye donor

This leaflet explains more about the process.

**What we do here at Moorfields**
Our eye bank has supported services at Moorfields since 1967. It is open 24 hours a day, and is strictly licensed and regulated by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA).

Eye bank staff are specially trained to facilitate the consent, retrieval and storage of donated eyes from the deceased so that tissue can be used for sight-saving surgical procedures within Moorfields and other NHS trusts.

Each year, we perform more than 25% of all corneal transplants in the UK (around 1,000 operations) and nearly 250 operations using ocular tissues for glaucoma surgery.

**The eye donation process**
Our highly trained and experienced eye bank team remove the whole eye to obtain the parts of the eye used for transplant (cornea and sclera). Great care is taken to ensure the facial appearance is restored and the eyelids are carefully closed.

Eye tissues are very delicate and need to be stored under strict laboratory conditions at our eye bank. This must take place within 24 hours of the donor passing away.
Transplant of the cornea
The cornea (clear tissue covering the front of the eye) is the main focusing element of the eye. Vision is dramatically reduced if the cornea becomes cloudy or damaged from disease, injury or infection.

Corneal transplants can be performed to replace a disc-shaped segment or layer of an impaired cornea with a similarly-shaped piece of healthy donor cornea.

Transplant of the sclera
The sclera is the white area of the eye. A donated sclera can be used in surgery to treat glaucoma.

Who can become an eye donor?
Most individuals under the age of 90 can become an eye donor including those who are short-sighted or who have previously had a cataract operation.

People with cancer can also donate their corneas. The cornea does not have an active blood supply and therefore is not affected by most cancers. The exceptions are leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma.

Your wishes
It is important for potential donors to inform family members of their wishes so that these can be respected after death – consent for donation and medical history is taken from the next of kin. Please also sign up to the organ donation register to express your wishes.

We will ask the next of kin about research consent at the time of donation. Tissues that cannot be used for transplant (such as the retina, lens, optic nerve and poor quality corneas) can be used in research activities to gain further insight into potential cures for blindness.