

# Call for visitors to Mela Festival to register as organ donors

✖ Edinburgh Mela visitors will be encouraged to save a life and join the NHS Organ Donor Register at this weekend's event.

More than 20,000 people will visit the two-day multi-cultural celebration at Leith Links.

The Scottish Government wants to boost the number of people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds on the NHS Organ Donor Register to make more organs available for transplant.

Just 1.3% of Scots registered are from ethnic minority backgrounds. They are three times more likely to need a kidney transplant and can wait nearly twice as long as a white person for an organ to become available due to the low numbers on the Register.

All major religions in the UK support organ donation but there are many misconceptions surrounding the issue.

Dr Rajan Madhok has been working with Asian and black communities to bust the myths and increase awareness of organ donation.

He said: "Organ donation is a difficult and often taboo subject within BME communities. There's a host of misconceptions surrounding the issue which is why we are working to change this and educate more people about the process.

"There's a shortage of compatible donors for patients from ethnic minority backgrounds but this can be turned around.

“The principle of organ donation is supported by all the major religions in the UK but many people are unsure of where their religion stands. We’re explaining to people there’s no reason not to join the Register. You can help save a life after your death.”

Mela visitors will be encouraged to make their wishes known and join the NHS Organ Donor Register, talk to staff and ask any questions they may have about organ donation.

Work has been taking place across Scotland for the last 18 months to help raise awareness of the need for more people from black and minority backgrounds to register, with events held at mosques, mandirs and gurdwaras.

More than 1.8 million Scots are on the NHS Organ Donor Register – at 37% of the population this is the highest proportion in the UK. To show your support register now; text LIFE to 61611 or visit [www.organdonationscotland.org](http://www.organdonationscotland.org)