

Group draw up guidelines for donating medical equipment

A new group involving the NHS, The Scottish Government and [Kids Operating Room](#) (KidsOR) is trying to improve the global healthcare donation system, which results in 70% of equipment never put to its intended use.

The issue has been identified in a recent report by the World Health Organisation – and is resulting in a huge shortfall of usable equipment and a burden on the receiving country as well as wasted resources in the donor country.

The “Short Life Working Group” (SLWG) – chaired by KidsOR Chief Executive David Cunningham – reviewed current guidelines to ensure Scotland is at the forefront of best practice.

SLWG identified that common issues with donations include incompatible plugs and power supplies, equipment that has no local supplier for disposables, is too technical or basic for the setting – or simply doesn’t work by the time it arrives.

The group produced a 10 step journey to donating medical equipment safely, as well as a report reviewing standards required for donations of medical equipment to Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC).

Professor Sir Gregor Smith, Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, said: “Scotland aims to be a good global citizen

with our expertise already helping support care for patients around the world. Safely donated medical equipment can be an important part of that, but dealing with donated goods comes with risks and difficulties.

“The 10 Step Guide will make sure we are at the forefront of best practice where the donation of equipment can be done safely and effectively. It will also encourage potential donors to consider alternative forms of support where this is more appropriate.”

The group found there is a wealth of advice available on donating however it is not easily accessible, both in terms of finding and consuming – especially for smaller organisations.

That’s why a central recommendation for practice improvement has been to develop a new guide to take donors through the steps of making a donation and signposting to key guidance.

Important steps include communication with overseas partners, technical expertise, correct documentation for customs and transportation logistics and consideration of ongoing maintenance requirements.

The guide has been tested with stakeholders from across a range of partners including members of the Scottish International Development Alliance and the NHS Scotland Global Citizenship Programme.

David Cunningham, Chief Executive at KidsOR, said: “Donated medical equipment is often at the heart of patient care in many hospitals across LMIC and Scotland is leading the way on this global issue.

“Safely donated medical equipment can save lives and give health professionals the tools they need to deliver quality care however, it can be complex and dealing with donated goods comes with risks for both the donor and recipient.

“The newly published 10 Step Guide provides a clear roadmap through the important considerations for a safe and effective donation.

“The guide will support anyone wishing to donate equipment to a low-resource setting, helping ensure that, especially as the pandemic moves behind us, Scotland can continue to support our friends and partners around the world in the safest way possible.”

In 63 Operating Rooms across 24 countries, Kids Operating Room has independently created capacity for 100,000 paediatric operations so far. This highlights how vital it is to improve the way donations are made to ensure the equipment goes on to save lives by allowing safe surgery to take place.

The 10 Step Guide has been endorsed by KidsOR and the Scottish International Development Alliance.

The 10 Step Guide focuses on the donation of medical equipment however the key messages are also applicable to other types of donated equipment e.g. consumables, rehabilitation and therapeutic equipment.

Scottish Government advice on supporting humanitarian causes, including donating and managing goods as part of that, is available from the [Ready Scotland](#) website.

For more information on Kids Operating Room, please visit: www.KidsOR.org