

**Non-Medical Authorisation of Blood Components in England
NHS Blood and Transplant Patient Blood Management Team Position Statement
August 2017**

In 2008, a collaborative project was undertaken by NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) and the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) to investigate if it would be feasible for nurses and midwives to 'prescribe' blood components.

The project found that Section 130 of the 1968 Medicines Act had been amended by Section 25 of the Blood Safety and Quality Regulations 2005 (Statutory Instrument 2005). In effect this meant that blood and blood components (Red Cells, Platelets, Fresh Frozen Plasma and Cryoprecipitate) are excluded from the legal definition of medicinal products and therefore cannot be "prescribed" by any practitioner. For this reason, the term 'authorisation' was agreed. There is no legal barrier to nurses authorising a blood transfusion.

Following wide consultation, 'A Framework to Support Nurses and Midwives Making the Clinical Decision and Providing the Written Instruction for Blood Component Transfusion' was produced to support development of this role. It provides clear guidance for suitably experienced qualified nurses and midwives who wish to extend their role to include making the clinical decision for blood component transfusion and providing the written instruction in a safe and appropriate manner (Green and Pirie, 2009). The British Committee for Standards in Haematology (BCSH) Guideline on the Administration of Blood Components (2009) recognises and supports this change in practice.

It is the responsibility of individual Trusts or hospitals to implement non-medical authorisation of blood components as part of their service improvement plans. A variety of tools and templates are available to assist Trusts in developing local policies, education packages and assessment tools to enable nurses and midwives to authorise blood components competently.

NHSBT offer a course 'Non-Medical Authorisation of Blood Components' as part of their educational programme. The course is designed to support the implementation of nurse authorisation of blood components. The course delivers the core theoretical knowledge required for this role and the practice element will be achieved by experiential learning in the clinical area, supported by a medical mentor.

The Independent and Supplementary Prescribing for Nurses and Midwives and Supplementary Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (V300) course does not include the authorisation of blood components.

References

British Committee for Standards in Haematology (2009), Guideline on the Administration of Blood Components.
<http://www.b-s-h.org.uk/guidelines/>

Green J, Pirie L (2009) A Framework to Support Nurses and Midwives Making the Clinical Decision and Providing the Written Instruction for Blood Component Transfusion.
<http://hospital.blood.co.uk/patient-services/patient-blood-management/education/>

Statutory Instrument - Blood Safety and Quality Regulations (2005) No 50. Section 25.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2005/50/regulation/25/made>

Further reading

Pirie E, Green J (2007) Should nurses prescribe blood components? *Nursing Standard*, 21, 39, 35-41.

Pirie E, Green J (2010) A Framework to support safe blood transfusion practice. *Nursing Standard*, 24, 48, 35-40.

Further Information

Please contact your regional NHSBT Patient Blood Management Practitioner or the Customer Service Support Team on 01865 381010 or via email: nhsbt.customerservices@nhsbt.nhs.uk