

NHSBT Board

January 2019

Chief Executive's Board Report**1. Status – Official****2. Personal Perspective**

The organisation's main focus since our last Board meeting has been on maintaining good blood stocks over the Christmas and New Year period and I am delighted that we were able to keep stocks of all blood types at over five days through the period. This is a much more secure position than last year and enables us to face the prospect of bad weather with some confidence. This position has required a tremendous amount of hard work from the teams with many working over the Christmas period for which I am tremendously grateful.

Before Christmas I was delighted to visit our new centre at Barnsley which is looking most impressive. The team working on this have done a fine job and Chris Sims in particular is to be commended for the huge amount of work he has done. I was also pleased to meet members of the Scottish organ donation community at their Christmas collaborative. Welsh colleagues were present at this meeting too and shared their experience of implementing the 'Opt Out' legislation.

Finally in December I interviewed, together with our incoming Chief Executive, for an Interim Director of Technology. We were pleased to be able to appoint Brian Henry who joined us at the start of the new year.

Much of January's focus has been on supporting Ian Bateman and the team working on preparing for EU Exit. Stephen Hammond, Minister of State for Health responsible for this area met with ALB Chief Executives to ensure that plans are consistent and co-ordinated. DHSC have put in place measures to oversee and control all relevant communication, including communication with suppliers, NHS customers and donors. We have put in place our own procedures to ensure that, in so far as possible, the clearance process does not constrain our planning and operations. I am very grateful to all members of the team working on our business continuity plans. The current SRO, Ian Bateman, will be taking leave for approximately 6 weeks from early March following surgery and Huw Williams has kindly agreed to take over this role.

Last week I met Minister of State, Jackie Doyle Price and MP for South Shields, Emma Lewell Buck, to discuss the case of Carter Cookson who needed a heart transplant. Very sadly this baby boy died aged 3 weeks, highlighting the importance of implementing our Neonatal and Paediatric donation strategy. I have sent our condolences to Mrs and Mrs Cookson.

3. Communications Activity Since Last Board Meeting

The Organ Donation Deemed Consent Bill has been closely tracked through Parliament, prompting numerous briefing requests and media enquiries. We await confirmation of a date for the Committee stage of the Bill in the House of Lords. Preparations for a public information campaign continue to ensure we are ready for a launch in April. We have worked with our agencies to refine messaging and are currently testing possible creative concepts in focus groups. A campaign advisory group drawn from across government, the NHS, the third sector and academia is helping to refine our approach.

We continue to prepare for the next stage of the Infected Blood Inquiry and arranged a tour of Filton to ensure that our own legal advisors are familiar with modern blood safety practices. A further visit is being arranged for representatives of the Inquiry team and we are consulting on the best approach to providing information on modern blood safety practices to those infected and affected. We have responded to a significant volume of MPs correspondence inspired by the 'Secrecy Must End' campaign asking NHSBT to confirm it will release all relevant documents to the Inquiry including those protected by legal professional privilege. DHSC have made a positive statement about releasing such documents.

4. Promoting Donation

- **Organ donation:**

Although average monthly opt-in registrations on the ODR are down slightly this quarter, with December traditionally being a quiet month, the overall numbers of people opted in on the ODR has now exceeded 26 million for the first time.

We have now evaluated our campaign activity through Interfaith Week in November. Activity was aimed at generating conversations about the implications of faith in donation. Over 50,000 posts were generated across social media channels achieving 2.6m opportunities to see. We also achieved widespread coverage in BAME and faith media, and we saw a significant uplift in visits to all the faith pages on our website. There were an additional 181 BAME registrations during the campaign compared to same period last year.

A faith declaration was added to the online organ donation registration process in December, allowing donors to record the fact that faith is an important consideration in their decision to donate. This information will be visible to SNODs who will ensure that faith considerations are discussed with families at the time of donation. Considerable consultation has taken place with faith groups to update the faith-based information on our website and other channels.

Our media team have generated significant regional media coverage across the country over recent months through supporting the Order of St John events which celebrate the contribution of donors and donor families.

- **Blood donation:**

Our ongoing Bleed for... campaign continues successfully with new blood donor registrations standing at 384,503 year to date - around 100,000 more than the same period last year. The last three months have seen 39-40% of new donors donating being male, compared to 34% earlier in the year.

In total 46,752 new donors attending this year to date have been at donor centres (28% of total) reflecting our focus on recruiting locally to fill capacity. Black donor registrations currently stand at 9,973 year to date, slightly below target, but we expect more of these to donate with the increase in London capacity and slots for new donors in January.

The re-opening of the West End Donor Centre on Christmas Eve attracted significant media interest in the London area – including regional ITV and BBC programming. The event was used to promote the need for more blood donors in the capital – particularly those from BAME backgrounds

We launched the winter stock build activity at the end of last year with targeted activity to encourage existing donors to donate through the holiday period at donor centres with the capacity to accommodate them. Targeted communication at donors was supported by localised PR activity. New donors were also constrained in November and December as a short-term measure and the stock position has remained strong through the festive season.

We have now evaluated our Halloween partnership with ITV2. The partnership, featuring the cast of 'Love Island' in myth-busting promotional activity was targeted at recruiting younger donors. There was no cost to NHSBT for ITV2's support. During the period of the campaign the proportion of younger donors registering to give blood increased - an 11% increase for those under 40 and a 66% increase in 16-20 year olds. There were 31,000 additional registrations 24,000 of them under 40 and 5,500 of them 16-20. The no-cost campaign outperformed the same period last year during which we invested £130,000 in paid media.

We have also fully evaluated our activity during Black History Month. The campaign which featured media and PR activity, local events and social media posts achieved an additional 300 black donor registrations and over 100 black donor donations.

5. Activity in the next period

In February we have arranged a blood donation event at City Hall as part of our blood donor recruitment activity in London. Promoting organ donation will also be part of the event. Senior members of the London Assembly and the Mayor Sadiq Khan will be making blood donations and the Mayor's office are collaborating on a joint media release. There will be promotional stalls within City Hall bringing together charity partners as well as NHSBT.

In February SaBTO will launch a consultation with relevant bodies about the latest evidence relating to possible changes to the protection measures designed to protect people born after 1996 from being exposed to vCJD. We are liaising with DHSC on the handling of this issue. SaBTO will consider its recommendations in April and it will then be for ministers to decide on whether to make changes to protection measures.

We are developing handling arrangements for key Board decisions – in particular consideration of the CSM review and also the next steps in the Logistics Review Programme.

We will continue to monitor the considerable political uncertainty surrounding EU Exit and the implications for NHSBT – including the possible impact on organ donation deemed consent legislation.

We are preparing to welcome our new Chief Executive in early March and taking steps to ensure she can share her views with colleagues across the organisation.

6. Quality

There have been no regulatory inspections since my last report, but preparations are well underway for a busy first quarter of 2019/20 where we expect a number of MHRA and HTA inspections. We have continued to work hard in reducing overdue items and excellent progress has been made, particularly in the operational directorates. We will be working hard to now sustain this improved performance.

7. Action Requested

The Board is asked to note the report.

Sally Johnson
January 2019