



NHSBT Board Meeting in Public

26 September 2023

Chief Executive's Report

Status: Official

My three priorities as Chief Executive are: People; Delivery; Innovation. Since the last Board, I have been particularly focussing on the first of these. I have visited different centres and joined in with a range of work, such as going on a blood delivery and visiting the labs in Filton and Liverpool to learn more about our tissues, blood and plasma processes and the world-leading research and work we do. I have enjoyed meeting the teams and discussing what inspires and motivates them and their ideas for how we can continue to deliver improvements. I continue to be impressed by their passion and motivation for delivering the highest quality of care for those who rely on our services.

I have also worked to strengthen the leadership team within NHS Blood and Transplant. I am delighted that Denise Thiruchelvam will take up position as NHSBT's first Director for Nursing in October. I am looking forward to working with her, to ensure that our nursing teams have the support and leadership they need.

1. People

We continue to respond to the responses to the *Our Voice* survey. Work is underway to develop the action plan to drive improvements.

For the first time we have written a single Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report which brings together the Gender Pay Gap, Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) and Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES). This highlights the progress and positive improvements we have made over the last 12 months. The People Committee has approved a single unified plan with key themes of: recruitment; career progression; reducing bullying and harassment; and ensuring access to the right support.

Work has already started on the plan, with the Blood Supply Directorate launching *Your Move*, which offers information and guidance on career options in response to feedback from staff. The Plasma for Medicines Directorate is collaborating with the Diversity and Inclusion Team to pilot a Career Kickstart Project. The initiative aids individuals in evaluating aspirations and devising career pathways.

New Fit and Proper person test requirements will be introduced this month. The critical change is the need to secure references containing additional information for all Board appointments, and when any Board member leaves, we must create and agree with the person a reference which will be held on their record. The changes will affect employment

contracts, settlement agreements and our current fit and proper person policy. The Company Secretary is updating our policy and process based on these changes and they will come to the board for approval.

The new health, safety and wellbeing policy statement of intent has been approved and is being communicated, which ensures we are meeting our legal requirements. To build on this work it has been agreed there will be a Wellbeing Guardian at NED level.

2. Finance

The financial outlook for 2023-2024 continues to be deliverable within the funding envelope. We continue to carefully monitor the evolving financial investments for Future Proofing Blood and Collection capacity. While our stock position remains stable, there is a risk that this could be affected over the autumn and winter period, with a potential pressure on our ability to contain costs.

3. Service Delivery

A major milestone was achieved in September as the planned ramp up of recovered plasma was successfully implemented to schedule. The plasma being directed to fractionation has increased from c8500L/month to c13000L/month. This required a significant transformation across all three manufacturing sites, consisting of a high volume of change control and change activities.

A series of fractionator audits are now underway. The first formal audit of our collection, manufacturing and testing processes in Manchester has been undertaken with positive feedback received. Further audits of Colindale, Filton and external freezers are imminent.

We are growing more confident that pre-2020 transplant activity can be exceeded in 2023-2024. However, organ donation consent/authorisation remains under pressure. A Stakeholder event in September heard a range of views on how to increase donation rates, including: changes to organ donation marketing; resolving families' mixed understanding of new laws; and evolving clinical practices.

The first phase of the Hospice pathway for tissue donation is underway, following research led by NHSBT, NIHR and the University of Southampton. The pilot aims to boost ocular donation and the first results show strong support from patients, families and health care professionals. Five Hospice sites are being supported by NHSBT nurses.

We are now providing Serum Eyedrops to patients faster. Previously, some were waiting many months to get their first product but new capacity means that we now aim for a maximum one-month wait.

Over the summer we imported corneas from a partner European eye bank, enabling us to provide life-enhancing products to more patients.

Autumn campaigning is underway across transfusion and transplant: a new integrated campaign for Organ Donation Week encourages the public to confirm their decision to be an

organ donor. September is both Sickle Cell Awareness month and Childhood Cancer Awareness month, each of which forms the basis of campaigns seeking new Black heritage blood donors and promoting platelet donation.

We continue with work to maintain the current good stock levels for blood and put mitigation plans in place for anticipated future pressures, such as Junior Doctor and Consultant industrial action and winter impact. Donor Experience teams have also developed a 'back to green' plan for source plasma collection.

4. Innovation

We have launched a single registration and booking experience for blood and plasma donors which brings new digital self service capability for all plasma donors. Donors no longer need to call us to book, they can do it instantly online. It also brings an improved experience for all donors with a more modern and up to date experience.

In August, we formally signed the commissioning contract with NHS England to offer a new blood-group genotyping test to all sickle-cell and thalassemia patients in England over the next 12 months for a total of approximately £1m. The NHS will become the first healthcare system in the world to provide blood group genotyping for patients with this technique – a detailed DNA analysis of each patient's blood group – to more accurately match those in need of transfusions to donated blood. We are working to seek emergency use authorisation from the MHRA and to set up the operational capacity to offer this new genetic blood-matching test in Filton H&I.

5. Donor and Patient Experience

We are progressing at pace with blood group genotyping of blood donors who have consented for a donation to go to the Biobank. There are now over 40,000 blood donors having now been genotyped in our Colindale laboratory. We are expecting to complete the genotyping of the over 80,000 blood donors who have consented by the end of the financial year. This detailed picture of the blood groups of this cohort of blood donors would support NHSBT in finding the best matched blood product for patients in the future.

This month, I was privileged to attend the recent launch of the Birmingham Plasma Centre. Both Birmingham and Reading (our other recent new Plasma Centre) have been redesigned in partnership with donors. These centres improve the donor experience – there has been a 13per cent improvement in donor satisfaction since opening – as well as creating more opportunities for improving the resilience of plasma supply in the future.

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