



NHSBT Public Board Meeting

24 September 2024

Chief Executive's Report

Status: Official

There was a fantastic start to this month, with the first NHS Blood and Transplant Annual Conference. The event brought together over 230 people from across our organisation, to discuss plans for how we can support people to thrive. There was a theme in the feedback about the need to provide opportunities to break down silos between different directorates and support people to have more insight and understanding about the different services we provide. There were lots of suggestions raised about how we can do this through allowing more secondment and shadowing opportunities. I will be working with colleagues to explore how we can put some of the plans in to action.

I am also pleased that blood stock levels are building and we have continued to be able to keep up with hospital demand. We continue to support those hospitals impacted by the cyber-attack and are working closely with colleagues in NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care to identify when it will be safe to lift the current Amber Alert status for O-type blood.

1. People

Join

Our brand new [NHSBT careers site](#) has launched, as promised in the People Plan. The new site enhances our market engagement and helps candidates better understand NHSBT and the career opportunities we offer. It provides a platform to promote our proposition, "It Takes All Types" and will be crucial in helping NHSBT stand out in a crowded and competitive labour market.

The Time to Offer 11-week key performance indicator has been achieved for three months in a row. The Talent Acquisition and Recruitment team have focused on working with Hiring Managers, candidates and others to drive process times down.

Stay

There is a range of activity underway to provide training and support for staff in response to the 'Our Voice' staff survey, including developing a career action plan. Work has also started with St Johns Ambulance on essential manager training to support staff with their mental health.

Thrive

Apprenticeships numbers are increasing, with 30 colleagues waiting to begin their apprenticeship journey.

Forward Together Programme

Work is underway to undertake an end-to-end review of our recruitment process from an inclusion perspective. The review will identify and remove any potential biases across our recruitment process. The project team is currently working with key stakeholders including unions, staff networks, hiring managers and candidates to gather feedback as well as undertaking desk reviews of relevant recruitment materials, policies, processes, and data.

Civil Unrest Response

In response to the civil unrest events, Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HS&W) worked with Internal Communications and the GRacE and Muslim network Co-Chairs on a message sent out to colleagues from senior leaders around the immediate wellbeing support available. Three listening events were held, facilitated by HS&W and Diversity and Inclusion teams. The first event was attended by over 200 colleagues.

2. Finance

We are delighted to confirm that our 2023-2024 Annual Report and Accounts were laid before Parliament on the 10 September, which officially finalises the work for the last financial year.

Following the latest forecast, we are confident that Plasma, Tissue and Eye Services and Clinical Services, will deliver this year within their funding envelope. We are however, starting to see emerging pressures materialise as i) Blood Supply creates additional capacity within the supply chain to drive further resilience and ii) Organ Donation and Transplantation continue to support organ retrieval. This is being closely monitored, with options for mitigation being considered.

3. Service Delivery

Quality and Governance

During Q2, NHSBT has been inspected by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) at our Birmingham, Oxford and Plymouth centres. These inspections form part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining high standards of quality and regulatory compliance.

All three inspections received positive feedback from the MHRA, reflecting our commitment to quality and regulatory compliance. The minor observations identified during the inspections are being addressed with appropriate and proportional improvement actions to ensure continuous improvement in our processes.

Clinical Services

The Red Cell Immunohaematology (RCI) team continues to provide support to south London hospitals affected by the cyberattack. They are providing red cells to support up to eight red cell exchanges per week but over the next two weeks will reduce to four red cell exchanges per week due to staff capacity and conflicting workloads in the London RCI laboratories. This work will continue until at least September and possibly beyond. For the same reason, the Therapeutic Apheresis Service (TAS) is continuing to support Guys and St Thomas hospitals with up to two red cell exchanges per day.

Plasma

Shipments of plasma are being made on a weekly basis for the manufacture of immunoglobulin and albumin. We remain on track for the first medicines to patients in early 2025.

4. Innovation

Organ Transplantation - Assessment & Recovery Centres

We continue to develop and deliver plans to increase the number of organs available for transplant. Our vision for Assessment & Recovery Centres (ARCs) maximises the potential of machine perfusion in the UK by creating a national infrastructure for improved organ quality. If fully implemented, ARCs would enable up to 750 additional transplants per annum from today's donor base.

A business case has been developed with colleagues from across the UK and NHS, and this forms the basis of a Spending Review bid that has been submitted to DHSC for consideration. A high-level summary is attached at Annex A.

Clinical Services

A world first genetic study of stem cell donors, the GeSTy Study led by NHSBT is examining the DNA of around 5,000 past donors, to identify which genes influence how many stem cells people can donate. Genetic signatures for the best donors will help improve stem cell transplant outcomes.

Increasing Cornea Supply

We are in advanced discussions with nine NHS Trusts to deliver pre-assessed referrals, with the first site recruiting new staff and aiming to go-live very shortly. Delivery planning in a further four Trusts is well-advanced, with planned go-live dates in Q3. In the short term, we are also importing 10 donated eyes per week from Venice Eye Bank. NHS England are working closely with us and we are now able to view waiting lists in England for the first time and, during August, this meant that all "Priority 1" patients were offered corneas for their transplant.

Marketing

We are in the final stages of delivering our new Marketing automation technology, on time and to budget. Donors have already started to receive brand new emails with better design and personalisation that will help mobilisation as well as make us more effective and efficient.

5. Donor and Patient Experience

Preparations are being made for the incoming Director for Communications and Engagement and subsequent changes for Donor Experience, with some teams moving over to the new directorate. Communications are being sent to staff to ensure all aware of the changes. There are no impacts on staff in terms of duties or roles.

Organs

Organ Donation Week begins on 23 September. Priming and education has begun on social media. New activity for 2024 includes partnerships with Booths supermarkets and with award-winning illustrator Eleanor Tomlinson. Over 70 buildings have

confirmed that they will be lit up in pink for the week (with supporting information/press to inform the public to encourage registrations). Information cards are also being delivered to blood donation sites to encourage donors to register whilst giving blood. The Home Office partnership passport application link has delivered 13,776 registrations since launch on 1 March.

Whole blood

We are re-focusing Autumn and Winter marketing activity to help boost bookings in persistently 'hard to fill' slots in several key donor centres. Activity will be targeted at the audience who currently book appointments (45 years plus and affluent; and 24-44 years old young professionals). The campaign will be explicit about what slots we want to fill and will highlight the need for blood year-round. Key activations include hyper-local wayfinding (e.g. high impact on street advertising and door drops), direct activity to local organisations to mobilise employees and an exciting opportunity to feature blood donation in a storyline of popular TV show Casualty.

Platelets

In July we integrated booking and managing appointments for platelet donors into our digital experience and Give Blood app. This now means we have a single digital experience for all blood products benefiting from recent investment to improve the digital experience. During Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, we doubled the number of registrations to give platelets by people who are A negative. We will be delivering a training package for customer-facing staff which will cover all blood products. Training will focus on encouraging blood donors with priority blood groups to donate platelets and improve conversion to first platelet appointment.

Plasma

In August, our plasma donor base reached 10,000 active donors, a key milestone in our development for our current centres.

In July we shared that a Test-and-Learn in Twickenham for a mixed (plasma and whole blood) product centre went live in June and showed positive results in the first few weeks. This works continues, with 34% of collections coming from new donors, contributing to growth of the Twickenham whole blood donor base.

To support the Autumn and Winter blood campaign, we have reviewed and deprioritised the recruitment campaign planned for November. Activity will now focus on encouraging non-priority blood donors in the radius of plasma donor centres to switch to plasma, using owned and earned channels only. Paid activity will only be used for Reading.

Following the launch of 'Plasma perks', which rewards donors at key milestone donations, to further drive retention and loyalty for Plasma donors we're trialing a range of "magic moments". Our front-line teams are now equipped with sweet treats to offer to donors when celebrating birthdays or special moments to really drive a connection with our people and donors that keeps donors coming back.

Stem cells

The British Bone Marrow Registry was rebranded as the NHS Stem Cell Donor Registry, in August. This was supported by new marketing materials, an improved web experience, plus social media and news coverage highlighting that women aged 17-

40 are now able to join. Campaign plans are underway for Stem Cells Awareness Day in October. The campaign will focus on how easy it is to join the register.

The report outlines the significant progress and innovation that is being made across multiple services, to deliver improvements for our patients, donors and staff. Over the coming months, we will be focussing on embedding changes and ensuring that we are ready to meet the winter pressures. The discussion at the NHSBT Annual Congress clearly demonstrated that our teams have the enthusiasm and commitment to driving improvements.


Author: Dr Jo Farrar, Chief Executive
Date: September 2024


Annex A – Assessment and Recovery Centres


Innovation in organ transplantation is urgently needed


Survival on the transplant wait list is a daily struggle for patients with advanced organ failure. Hundreds will die this year before they can receive a life-saving transplant, and despite progress in organ donation the waiting list for transplant is growing. Yet hundreds of potentially viable organs could be successfully transplanted if proven perfusion technologies are made available equitably across the UK.

Urgent Challenges


 **Demand for organ transplants is increasing across the UK** at a greater pace than transplant activity – contributing to **growing transplant wait lists**.


 The overall donor pool is reducing and **unlocking better organ utilisation is key** to meeting demand for transplants. Without investment in machine perfusion techniques, organ availability could decline.


 Investment remains unequally dispersed across the UK and centralised **intervention is essential to prevent nationwide health inequities**.


 There are **very substantial costs to the NHS** for those on the wait list, and a significant economic impact of ill-health for patients, families and carers.


Opportunities


 Machine perfusion techniques have matured, and there is now a strong **evidence base for their safety and benefits**.

 Emerging opportunities for **research and development** enabled by **digital and data** (including AI, automation and robotics).

 Organ innovation can address **urgent and serious** challenges in **workforce sustainability and logistics** in the transplant system.

 The potential increase enabled by ARCs is the **equivalent of an 18% increase in consent rates**.

 Transplant innovation will drive progress by creating a platform for **expanded research programmes**.

 Capability to address OUG Recommendations by **investing in operational infrastructure that maximises transplant potential**.

Professor Sir Stephen Powis *Medical Director – NHS England*

“The establishment of national multi-organ ARCs has the potential to transform the provision of organs and deliver significant benefits for patients, including generating additional transplants where demand currently exceeds supply”

Adult DCD donors provide nearly **one less organ per donor** using conventional preservation techniques relative to adult DBD donors.

One year after being listed for transplant, **49% of white and 33% of people from ethnic minority backgrounds have received transplants**. ARCs will increase the availability of organs for Black, Asian and Global Majority Ethnic Groups


Current transplant numbers are **underpinned by NRP and DCD Hearts**. In 2023/24 471 organ transplants (13%) have been on organ preservation technologies. ARCs will build on these foundations to go further with organ utilisation.


ARCs are the transformative solution for today and tomorrow

ARCs will transform transplant services across the UK, drive growth in Research and Development, mitigate growing risks, attract workforce and industry, and **most importantly, save and improve lives – up to 5,000 over 10 years**.

Quantifiable & Economic Benefits

 **Up to an additional 750 transplants per year** will reduce the transplant wait list, which is nearing 8,000 people ready for a transplant. The **active transplant wait list has grown 31%** since 2019-20.


 Every extra donor leads to NHS **savings of £0.24m and £910,000 in QALYs**.


 An estimated £334 million investment over ten years can deliver **over £2.6 billion of economic savings** over ten years of activity by reducing medical management costs and the economic burdens of ill-health.

Investment Horizon (£m)	Year 1-5	Years 6-10	Total
CDEL	£14.3	£-	£14.3
RDEL	£103.6	£216.1	£319.7
TOTAL	£117.8	£216.1	£334.0
NHS savings	-£0.54	-£1.86	-£2.40




(£35.8m total set up costs; £11.8m Y1 investment).

Management & Commercial

 NHSBT's **expertise and existing operations** makes us **uniquely qualified to lead** the ARCs Transformation Programme.

 We are collaborating with NHS and industry partners **to shape ARCs**, through career development opportunities, research & development, technological advancement and co-location – **together, with the right team, we will save more lives**.



Organ:	Lungs	Livers	Kidneys
10-year additional transplants created:	1,316	1,416	2,243
versus 2023/24 published activity report:	 94%	 19%	 10%

