

NHSBT Public Board Meeting**18 May 2026****Chief Executive's Report****Status: Official**

As I reach my first one hundred days in office, I would like to thank everyone who has taken time to meet with me and help me understand more about NHS Blood and Transplant's incredible work. I continue to be impressed by the depth of commitment and passion for delivering the highest levels of care for our donors, patients and front-line teams.

Looking ahead, my focus will be on building on the feedback received from NHSBT teams, partners, and stakeholders to identify and act on opportunities for further improvement and growth. I want to build on our strong collaboration with others, to ensure that our services are resilient and support our ambition of every patient receiving the donation they need.

1. Service DeliveryBlood Stocks

As of late April, total red cell stocks are in a healthy position, with 8.5 days of stock (DoS). O-negative is the only group below target levels at 4.7 DoS. Since the start of the calendar year, Blood stocks have been in the most stable position we have experienced since COVID-19.

Platelets

As of the end of April, stock levels for platelets, across all groups, are at or above target levels. Platelets stocks were resilient over the Easter Bank Holiday period. A new approach to managing access to donation appointments launched in March, enabling availability to be aligned more closely with blood group need, donor status and other relevant characteristics. This has now been rolled out across all mobile and donor centre sessions.

Plasma

Since August 2024, NHSBT has delivered over 791,000 litres of plasma to NHS England (NHSE) for fractionation into plasma-derived medicines (immunoglobulin and albumin) for patient use. Between April 2025 and March 2026, over 458,000 litres will have been shipped, exceeding the 450,000 target. Ensuring that collection of plasma is efficient, productive and safe is a key focus and this has been delivered in 25/26 through the continued delivery of our transformation agenda. An agreed shipment schedule is in place to deliver over 328,000 litres of plasma in 26/27 and procurement activity is underway for new apheresis and other technology to increase productivity and collections.

Increasing the UK's self-sufficiency in plasma-derived medicines remains a priority, as global demand continues to rise. In the short term, NHSBT is exploring options to expand source plasma collection and is working with Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHSE to inform a long-term strategy that addresses growing demand and ongoing supply challenges.

Improving the efficiency, productivity, and safety of plasma collection is also a core focus. Progress in 2025/26 has been supported through delivery of the transformation agenda. An agreed shipping schedule is in place to supply over 328,000 litres in 2026/27, alongside ongoing procurement of new apheresis and supporting technologies to increase capacity.

Plasma Nursing is reviewing venepuncture training, including introducing training arms for a wider range of skin tones and piloting vein viewers to support vein selection. The SHAPE Plasma Study has also been underway for six months, aiming to inform future plasma donation strategies. To date, 1,334 donors have consented to participate, with 1,922 appointments attended. Findings will help shape national guidance, strengthen the UK's plasma supply, and support its position as a leader in evidence-based collection.

A further milestone has been achieved with the go-live of Automated Results Transfer (ART) Quant (antibody quantification) at the Newcastle laboratory on 24 March, as part of wider efforts to automate results transfer and reduce manual transcription.

Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation

Provisional data for 2025/26 shows improved performance across Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation (OTDT). Deceased organ donation increased by 2% (26 additional donors), resulting in a 1.6% rise in transplants and enabling 57 more patients to receive life-saving treatment.

While performance has improved year-on-year, further progress is required, particularly in deceased donor consent rates. A new, system-wide donation programme is being scoped to deliver recommendations from the NHSBT/ DHSC Joint Organ Donation Working Group. Key themes include innovation, donor and patient experience, workforce, and financial sustainability.

From April, confirmation and welcome emails are now automatically sent to people registering on the Organ Donor Register, the first-time registrants have routinely received direct email engagement. Registrations via the NHS Wales App now also include a bilingual version.

Targeted work to increase ocular donation, alongside urgent measures to stabilise cornea supply, drove further gains. We experienced the best post pandemic quarterly performance in Q3. The rates of donation increased by 11.70% (293 donors), which resulted in 15.07% more corneas being issued for transplants, enabling 584 transplants, which has allowed more people to regain their sight and live fulfilling and productive lives.

NHSBT has also created a much closer working relationship with NHSE, resulting in corneas being better targeted to those patients that need them the most. Prior to this new working relationship, NHSBT had no visibility of the patient waiting list, with the

only priority issue being for very urgent cases. Under the principles of the new system there is only one customer, NHSE, and they now hold the waiting list centrally, and work with their regional teams to ensure that Trusts are accountable for requesting corneas for the patients who have been waiting the longest.

2. Innovation

Blood Group Genotyping Programme

Genotyping of patients with sickle cell disorders under the NHSE programme has led to updated clinical advice for 58 of the first 3,000 patients tested (2%). This enables better-matched transfusions, reducing complications and supporting efforts to address health inequalities.

Analysis of 78,000 donors from the National Institute for Health Research NIHR STRIDES cohort has identified 302 with ultra-rare blood types. These donors will undergo confirmatory testing and, once validated, will be actively managed to support patients with complex needs and strengthen the National Frozen Blood Bank.

HLA-Typed Red Cells

NHSBT can now supply HLA-typed red cells to reduce antibody responses and support kidney transplant outcomes. Following a successful pilot, a national rollout began on 1 April across all UK transplant centres. Early findings suggest reduced immunisation risk, though challenges remain, particularly for patients from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Increasing HLA-typed donations from these groups remains a priority.

SWiFT Trial

The SWiFT trial, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and sponsored by NHSBT, found that prehospital whole blood transfusion was not superior to standard care. However, it may offer logistical and cost advantages, including simpler storage and faster administration. Work is ongoing with partners to determine future provision.

3. Donor and Patient Experience and Engagement Activity

Donor Base and Donor Experience

Donor satisfaction strengthened in Q4, with Overall Experience (Top Box) reaching 86.3% in March and 83.8% for the year (NPS 88.8). Waiting times improved, with average check-in to screening close to 10 minutes, while complaints fell to a three-year low. New donor centres in Brixton, Southampton and Brighton performed strongly (87.0% Top Box; Net Promoter Score [NPS] 91.3), reflecting improved access, reduced waiting times and daily donor feedback.

The whole blood donor base declined modestly (-1.2% to 775,176), but stock levels entered 2026/27 stronger than the previous year, including an increase of almost two days for O negative. Growth was concentrated in priority groups (O negative, Ro, B negative), while reductions in O and A positive reflect active stock management.

The Plasma For Medicine (PFM) donor base fell by 1.6% (February–March), largely due to disruption in Reading, while the reported platelet donor base decreased by 1.1%, although this is understated due to a coding issue to be corrected.

In 2025/26, over 750,000 people registered an opt-in decision (100% of target), alongside 2.8 million reconfirmations. Total opt-ins now exceed 28.7 million, with 2.9 million opt-outs. An integrated marketing and engagement strategy will be presented to the Board, supported by improved registration journeys launching in the Spring.

The Blood Supply Clinical Audit, Risk and Effectiveness Committee (BSCARE) is establishing a Blood Supply Donor Safety Group to strengthen oversight of donor safety, learning from adverse events, and regulatory compliance. BSCARE has also developed organisation-wide guidance on filming and photography at sessions, enabling donors to share their experiences while ensuring confidentiality is protected.

In March, we marked one year of NHS patients receiving UK-sourced plasma medicines. Media activity included filming with a patient at King's College Hospital for BBC London, supported by wider BBC coverage and an online explainer. The Metro also featured behind-the-scenes coverage of plasma and blood manufacturing at Colindale, with strong reach across print and social media.

Partnerships

We secured a partnership with HBO Max's hospital drama *The Pitt*, which includes an organ donation storyline. Lead actor Noah Wyle recorded an exclusive message encouraging sign-up to the Organ Donor Register, to be promoted in May.

Our partnership with the London Marathon and Abbott put the spotlight on the NHSBT Charity. Four runners raised money for our charity with our own Lead Nurse for TAS running it in 2 hours 35 minutes. The Chief Executive of the London Marathon launched our "Blood, Sweat and Cheers" campaign which received excellent media coverage, and we had high engagement across our own social channels. The partnership also gave our Community Engagement Team access to the Marathon Expo, where they filmed a piece with BBC Sport's Gabby Logan, and a spot to do Know Your Blood Type tests opposite the Tower of London on the day of the marathon.

People

Phase 1 of ServiceNow HR Service Delivery went live on 15 April, improving access to people information and enabling longer-term automation and transformation of people and pay services.

The Forward Together Programme concluded in April. Phase 2 delivered the upgraded HR platform and key recommendations on leadership and management development, inclusive recruitment, and colleague development, alongside diagnostic reviews covering workplace adjustments, employee relations, policy, and professional pathways. This positions the People Directorate to embed delivery as business as usual. Transformation funding has been secured for HR Service Delivery Phase 2 and development of a Job Architecture framework in 2026/27. The programme team has also been shortlisted for the Inclusion category at the Government Project Delivery Awards.

Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) has completed its Workplace Adjustments Audit, issuing an overall opinion of *Moderate*. Strong foundations were confirmed, with

improvement actions identified around oversight, training, monitoring, policy coverage, confidentiality controls, cost transparency, and recruitment visibility. Actions on Disability Confident recruitment are complete, policy changes are progressing, and remaining recommendations are being taken forward.

The 2026 pay award for England, Scotland and Wales has been implemented, with uplifts paid in April. The Scottish working week reduced to 36 hours from 14 April. Northern Ireland pay will follow once national guidance is confirmed.

In Year 2 of the People Plan, 12 actions have been completed and 27 are on track; four have been paused with recovery plans agreed. Final-year delivery will focus on the future operating model, performance and culture, strategic workforce planning, and workforce transformation.

A new intranet launched in March, improving search, accessibility, and directorate-level personalisation.

David Abdo, Brand and Studio Manager in Donor Experience, has been appointed to the National Infected Blood Memorial Committee Board, bringing valuable lived experience to this important work.

5. Finance

Finance Report

We have closed our 2025/26 accounts and are continuing work on the preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts. While the figures remain provisional and subject to audit, they show a positive financial position compared with our original plan (£25m surplus). This reflects higher levels of operational activity across Pathology, Plasma, and Tissue and Eye Services, additional funding from DHSC late in the financial year to address specific unrecovered cost pressures within Blood and Group, as well as acknowledging a number of corporate underspends. Our Cost Improvement Programme was also delivered in full during the year.

National commissioning discussions for Blood and Specialist Services are now nearing completion. In the interim, hospitals will continue to be billed for Blood Components at 2025/26 contract prices. Once the commissioning process is finalised, adjusting invoices will be issued, alongside billing for Specialist Services. We will share the final outcome, including new contracts and updated price lists, with hospitals as soon as this process is finalised.

NHSBT Accountability Meeting

The NHSBT Accountability Meeting was held in April, where NHSBT and the four UK Health Departments discussed progress against the organisation's key performance indicators and financial position, as outlined in this report and in the Board's Performance and Finance reports. Areas of future focus were also discussed and agreed, with a focus on actions to further improve service resilience.

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