

NHSBT Public Board Meeting**21 July 2026****Chief Executive's Report****Status: Official**

As I near 6 months in office, I would like to extend thanks to all that have taken the time to welcome me and share their breadth of the knowledge and insight. I am grateful to all of the patient and donor representatives that have taken time to meet me. These conversations are helping me understand what more we can do to support the people who selflessly donate, or who rely on the services we provide.

It has also been important to me to meet the people that keep this organisation running, and since the last Board I have visited Filton, Birmingham, Cambridge, Southampton and Liverpool. I continue to be impressed by everyone's commitments to delivering the best possible donor care. Our mobile blood teams always work hard to travel to different communities for blood donation, loading and unloading equipment quickly. I would like to recognise their efforts in ensuring the blood supply continues despite the extreme heat of the last few weeks.

I was privileged to meet with colleagues from the Ministry of Defence last month at Filton, where we signed a Master Strategic Partnering Agreement, which will help innovate battlefield transfusion in an era of drone warfare. The agreement confirms a wider strategic bond and provides a strong legal and governance framework designed to protect NHSBT and reduce risks and deliver innovation in blood supply, such as Spray-Dried Plasma Project and Drone Delivery of Blood.

1. Service DeliveryBlood supply

As of June, overall red cell stocks are above target levels. Stock resilience has been impacted by the red weather warnings and heatwaves seen throughout May and June. At the time of writing three blood groups are below target levels. O-negative is at 3.7 days of stock, B-negative is at 4.9 days of stock and O-positive is at 5.0 days of stock. Actions are in place to support increased bookings for these three blood groups in July. Stock levels for platelets, across all groups, are meeting or exceeding target levels.

The collection of Ro units has seen an increase of around 10% in volume when compared to the previous year. This is due to an increase in demand of this sub-type, although the demand gap remains at 45-50%. The Ro taskforce is currently reviewing the approach, and it is recognised that further activity and interventions will be required to close the demand gap. We will continue to work with wider NHS colleagues to improve blood stock management and ensure that every precious donation goes to the patient it will most benefit.

Plasma

Increasing the self-sufficiency of the UK in plasma derived medicines is a key goal as the demand continues to rise globally. Since August 2024, NHSBT has delivered over 864,000 litres of plasma for fractionation into plasma derived medicines (Immunoglobulin and Albumin).

In the short term, NHSBT is progressing expansion of its source plasma donation footprint (in both new centres and existing sites) for increased collection and will continue to work closely with the DHSC/NHSE to inform the long-term strategy in the delivery of plasma derived medicines in the context of increasing global demand and supply challenges. NHSBT continues to innovate in engaging donors and has recently launched a pilot to reimburse plasma donors for their travel expenses. The 12-month pilot will allow NHSBT to gain intelligence of the effect on donor behaviour, retention, donation frequency, donor base diversification, as well as the cost/benefit of such a scheme.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) approved the use of UK donor plasma for manufacturing five high-priority plasma-derived medicinal products. This decision lifts a precautionary ban dating back to 1999, which will help strengthen supply chains and reduce reliance on imported treatments.

Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation

Current consent rates remain below the level required to meet growing demand for transplantation. Increasing consent remains one of the most important opportunities to increase donation and transplantation activity. We are already working with clinical teams to ensure that more people are able to support donation and help save and transform lives. We are also continuing with plans to implement the recommendations within the Organ Donation Joint Working Group report, which set out a bold agenda for change, calling for greater societal action, a stronger clinical donation culture, and improved performance monitoring and ethical guidance. These actions will strengthen clinical practice, and better support families through compassionate, skilled conversations at the most difficult of times.

On 25 June, the *Scotland to the Commonwealth: Advancing Excellence in Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation* conference took place at the Golden Jubilee Conference Hotel in Glasgow, celebrating the strength of Scotland's donation and transplantation community and its contribution to the Commonwealth Tribute to Life project. The programme brought together clinicians, specialist nurses and donation professionals from across Scotland to reflect on progress, share learning and look ahead. Learning sessions spanned paediatric heart donation, ocular and tissue donation, and an update on the Tribute to Life project, alongside reflections from donor families and recipients. A central theme of the day was how advancing excellence in donation depends on collaboration and shared learning. This was reinforced by a joint hybrid session with Madras Medical College, showcasing how Scotland's expertise can both inform and be informed by Commonwealth partners.

Clinical Services

NHSBT and the National Blood Transfusion Committee have been awarded a National Partnership Award by the Royal College of Pathologists for their outstanding collaboration to improve transfusion practice. The National Blood Transfusion Committee brings together experts across the NHS and devolved nations to set strategy and drive best practice in blood transfusion. This partnership is key to ensuring safe, effective and consistent transfusion care for patients, making this recognition a reflection of truly exceptional and impactful joint working.

A new satellite Therapeutic Apheresis Service unit has been set up and is located within the private Genesis clinic in Bristol and has been granted licence, following an inspection by the Human Tissue Authority. The unit adds additional capacity to the Bristol Therapeutic Apheresis Service unit and will be used primarily for healthy donor stem cell collections. The first donor is anticipated to attend the unit in July.

NHSBT is continuing to support the Department of Health's Stem Cell Review, which has been established to identify opportunities for strengthening the resilience, sustainability and effectiveness of the stem cell donation infrastructure for unrelated, allogeneic transplants. NHSBT has attended two sessions, including an in-person Information Collation Exercise meeting and submitting written evidence. NHSBT has outlined their role in the stem cell supply chain and highlighted areas that could be improved, including the data ecosystem and clear commissioning and governance routes. Following stakeholder meetings with NHSBT counterparts, the review is expected to deliver recommendations to Ministers by the end of the year.

Donor Experience

The whole blood donor base reduced slightly from April to May due to planned reductions in O+, A+ and B+ collections. Growth in Ro and B groups, and stable O negative levels, has enabled patient needs to be met. Plasma and platelet donor numbers are gradually declining, although increased donation frequency is helping maintain collections.

A new Stem Cell Growth Strategy has been published, with delivery on track to add 30,000 additional potential donors to the register

Digital

A zero-cost, three-month promotional Organ Donation Register campaign launched on the NHS App homepage in April has driven significant increases in engagement with the Organ Donation Register in England. Over the first eight weeks there were 105,000 weekly lookups to check donation decisions (+53%), 1,342 new opt-in registrations per week (+100%), 1,231 new opt-out registrations per week (+37%), 7,792 weekly updates to opt-in decisions (+67%) and 1,775 weekly updates to opt-out decisions (+27%). This demonstrates the effectiveness of leveraging the NHS App as a high-reach, cost-efficient engagement channel to influence public health behaviours.

The new JPAC (Joint UK Blood Transfusion and Tissue Transplantation Services Joint Advisory Committee) website is now live, and has received excellent feedback from users.

NHSBT has taken immediate and robust action to comply with the urgent Prohibition on Destruction notice circulated by the Inquiry Secretary regarding the Statutory Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs.

Quality & Governance

The Clinical Governance review is nearing its completion. Following an assessment and review of the practices related to Patient and Donor Safety and overarching Clinical Governance, a number of areas for improvement have been highlighted. Work is underway to address these. These include opportunities to improve data utilisation, increase triangulation of information and define outcome measures which will aid activity to drive improvements.

Key outputs will be: a redefined Clinical Governance meeting structure, which will include collaboration with Nursing, Medical and Quality; Clinical Governance dashboards; improved assurance for the Executive Team and Board.

Work to improve the Quality Management System's Incident management process is progressing, with recent focus to consolidate the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework into a holistic, organisational incident response framework, with the aim to reduce duplication and unwarranted documentation. We are also working with stakeholders to refine and improve reporting categories.

The Quality Assurance team has started work on launched Phase 3 of the Data Intelligence Programme. They are leading the definition of future-state quality and clinical governance reporting requirements. This work will support continuous improvement by reducing manual reporting processes, establishing consistent quality metrics, and enabling proactive quality and safety intelligence through integrated organisational data. This will allow leaders to understand quality and safety performance within their areas of accountability and work seamlessly from organisational performance to local operational insight.

Nursing

The Nursing Leadership review is underway with external Nursing expert, Caroline Alexander meeting with key members of staff within the organisation including frontline nurses.

2. Innovation

Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation

In June, the Assessment and Recovery Centres programme's liver pathway went live, with the first sites located at Cambridge University Hospitals, Royal Free London, and King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trusts, with an additional liver transplant taking place within the first week at King's. The liver pilot joins the lung pathway that went live earlier this year. The launch of the kidney pathway is scheduled for 2028.

Assessment and Recovery Centres honour the act of donation by creating unique facilities to evaluate organs, increasing availability and clinical confidence. They also support the NHS's goals to reduce health inequalities and save more lives.

A full Assessment and Recovery Centre service could add hundreds of extra transplants every year, at a time when over 8,000 people are on the organ waiting list.

These pilots are testing the Assessment and Recovery Centre concept in real time. NHSBT anticipate the Assessment and Recovery Centres will in future, offer 'reconditioning' type surgical repairs, blood type changes, and cell therapies to expand transplantable organs. If successful, this will be the world's first nationwide Assessment and Recovery Centre network.

Donor Experience

New digital features have been introduced to the GiveBlood app, which include milestone badges and home-print certificates. These support a shift towards a more digital-first approach, while maintaining options for donors who prefer traditional recognition.

In December 2025, WhatsApp was introduced as a new communication channel for Ro donors. To date, 30,000 messages have been sent, resulting in improved engagement and appointment attendance, particularly among Black heritage donors. Expansion to first-time Black heritage donors (approx. 1,000 per month) is planned from June, aiming to reduce non-attendance (currently 58%) through two-way communication using contact centre agents and tailored content.

World Sickle Cell Day, a national digital campaign highlighted critically low blood stocks and was supported by major partners with strong national and community reach. Our "Next Best Action" tool, which dynamically aligns paid advertising spend with appointment availability was awarded winner: Best Use of Technology (Purpose Awards).

Research and Development

Research and innovation are of key importance for me. I am proud that NHSBT are amongst the world leaders in many important clinical areas, supporting research and clinical trials that are delivering improvements in patient care. At a recent visit to the University Hospitals Birmingham Stem Cell Transplant Unit, I heard about the clinical innovation we have delivered in partnership with the clinical community, such as the globally significant CAR-T trials and one of the two largest graft-versus-host disease trials in the world. This has been done as a key member of ACT (Advanced Clinical Trials Limited) which delivers novel clinical trials in blood cancer and stem cell transplantation.

I also saw great collaborative working with colleagues in the University of Cambridge and Cambridge University Hospitals Trust when I visited Cambridge recently. We also continue to work with partners and funders both on applications for funding calls, and to increase the number of calls in blood and transplantation.

I am keen to continue to build on our current activity and continue to grow our research and development and partnerships, so that more patients can benefit from innovations in clinical care.

3. Donor and Patient Experience and Engagement Activity

Patient and Donor Experience Policy

Work to develop a new, organisation-wide policy for ensuring that the patient and donor voice is placed at the heart of our service improvement and policy development activity is progressing well. A key milestone has been the creation of the Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP), bringing together 19 patient and donor representatives. The panel is already offering valuable insights and has received positive feedback, strengthening our relationships with both groups. Surveys for [patients](#), [donors](#) and [staff](#) have been launched, to gather further insight and shape our approach. Planning is also underway for a full-day, in-person engagement session in September, which will support the next phase of our strategic engagement framework.

Strengthening Community Engagement

May's Senior Leadership Team conference focused on the role of leadership in supporting NHSBT's strategic ambition to address health inequalities and strengthen relationships with the communities we serve. Community representatives joined the conference to share lived experiences and perspectives on trust, engagement and access, providing leaders with direct insight into the opportunities and barriers facing different communities. Discussions highlighted the need for stronger community partnerships, more collective leadership across NHSBT, and greater organisational focus and empowerment. A series of leadership commitments were agreed and will be taken forward.

Partnerships

The UK-wide partnership with Metallica ran throughout June and into July in the run up to Metallica's Glasgow, Cardiff and London gigs. The initial announcement in May generated extensive national and regional interest and has been heavily promoted across social media platforms. The campaign is a partnership between the NHSBT Charity and Metallica's All in Our Hands Charity. Blood, platelets or plasma donors who attend between 26 June and 3 July received special edition merchandise, which included Metallica's gift of t-shirts, guitar picks and prize draw tickets with a total 'gift in kind' value of over £390k. The value of this partnership extends much further and came at an important time after blood stocks were impacted by the unprecedented hot weather at the end of June. A combination of the campaign officially starting and NHSBT media briefing regarding the impact of hot weather on collections, led an increase in media coverage, which saw an increase in bookings. NHSBT are working closely with Metallica on additional promotional opportunities.

NHSBT's key media story for National Blood Week focussed on 13-year-old Elliott Wills, who survived a catastrophic internal bleed after losing seven litres of blood, thanks to emergency transfusions. This received national and regional media coverage and led to an increase in bookings and registrations. During National Blood Week, NHSBT appealed for the 'missing types' of O neg B neg and RhD, through targeted campaigns, What's Your Blood Type events and influencer activity. The government was also contacted for support through constituents.

NHSBT attended the NHS Confed Expo this year, with *Know Your Blood Type* kits available. This was an opportunity to liaise with senior NHS Leaders about the work NHSBT does. In his opening address at the conference, Lord Victor Adebawale (Chairman of the NHS Confederation) highlighted NHSBT as an example of strong leadership in community engagement.

NHSBT has been running an organ donation social media campaign linked to the FIFA Club World Cup, encouraging football fans to take two minutes to confirm their decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register. Working with Birmingham Transplant FC and the England Transplant Football Team, NHSBT has produced a series of social media reels featuring players taking part in football-themed challenges. At the time of writing (ahead of England's first knockout match), the content has generated nearly 300,000 views, helping to raise awareness of organ donation and encourage engagement with the Organ Donor Register. Further content and audience reach are expected as the tournament progresses.

Donor Base and Donor Experience

Donor satisfaction remains high, with overall experience at 86.4% and Net Promoter Score at 89.6% in May. Improvements are driven by better appointment availability and reduced waiting times, supported by lower session fill rates.

Complaints have decreased to an average of 270 per month (down from 400), while compliments remain strong, with an 8.6:1 ratio. Appointment cancellations remain the main source of complaints

4. People

Appointments

I am delighted to be welcoming two new members to the Executive Team. Following an open and competitive interview process, Sarah Stansfield has been appointed as Chief Financial Officer and will join the organisation at the start of October 2026. Rommel Ravanani joined as the incoming Chief Medical Officer in July, with a month's handover with Gail Mifflin.

As this will be Gail's last Board meeting as CMO, I would like to formally acknowledge her achievements during her tenure. She has steered the organisation through Covid, keeping blood supplies running to save patients' lives. She was instrumental in responding to the Infected Blood Inquiry, helping to ensure the current and future blood service is as safe as possible. She has also supported the introduction of plasma donation, helping to improve the resilience of life-saving plasma-derived medicines for UK patients. Her leadership has placed NHSBT amongst the world-leaders for research in blood, tissues and organs and grown life-saving cellular and gene therapy programmes.

Health and Wellbeing

There was a positive response to the mental health awareness campaign week, running from 11-17th May. The theme this year was '*taking action, for yourself, for someone else, for all of us*'. Top ten tips for mental health were shared widely, and mindfulness sessions held.

The Basildon centre and Essex teams were green for mental health awareness, to promote good mental health and de-stigmatise talking about it.

Diversity and Inclusion

NHSBT has adopted the Government's non-statutory definition of anti-Muslim hostility, as set out by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. This forms part of our wider commitment to tackling racism and discrimination across the organisation, supporting a culture where all staff, donors and patients feel safe, respected and included. The definition will be shared with teams and embedded through ongoing engagement and discussion at Executive Team level and beyond.

Learning and Development

Our Festival of Learning 2026 (delivered during National Learning at Work Week) promoted new ways of learning, building skills, connecting to our mission, and prioritising wellbeing. British Sign Language sessions were fully booked with demand continuing beyond the event through repeat learners, progression to accredited courses and ongoing enquiries, particularly from donor- and patient-facing teams. Colleagues attended webinars on AI, coaching and high performing teams. Feedback was consistently positive (4.8/5), with all respondents identifying clear application to their roles. Sessions were valued for being practical and interactive. Two Q&A sessions featuring colleagues who had progressed and changed careers within NHSBT were well received, providing visible examples of internal development opportunities. Self-directed content, including podcasts, webinars and Viva Engage posts, extended reach.

Donor Experience People Plan

The Donor Experience people plan is progressing well with agreed activities being delivered on time. The four areas of focus are Reward and Recognition, Transformation Change & Strategy, Growth and the Inclusion foundation.

5. Finance

National commissioning discussions for Blood and Specialist Services are progressing and are now in the final stages. 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 for Blood and Specialist Service income streams. We will share the final outcomes, including new contracts and updated price lists, with hospitals at the earliest opportunity.

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Date: July 2026