NHS
Blood and Transplant

NHSBT Public Board Meeting

01 December 2026

Chief Executive's Report

Status: Official

Since the last Board meeting I have continued to focus on progressing our strategic priorities, including expansion of the plasma programme, delivery of our digital transformation agenda, implementation of the Organ Donation Recovery Plan and development of innovative services that support better outcomes for patients. These achievements reflect the collective efforts of colleagues across NHSBT and the strength of our partnerships across the NHS, government, academia and life sciences sectors. I would like to thank everyone involved for their continued commitment in delivering for patients, donors and families.

I attended the National Organ Utilisation Conference in Sheffield, where service providers and patients discussed the challenges in organ transplantation and where future efforts should be focussed on ensuring every organ that can be safely transplanted is used. The NHSBT Board has agreed that improving the availability of organs is a priority and that we must also take an active role in leadership of transplanting the organs donated, to improve equity of access and outcomes for patients. The Board is committed to working with NHS Trusts, NHS England and UK commissioners, Integrated Care Boards, patients and donor families, to see UK transplantation rates become world leading.

From 5pm on 12th November 2026, NHSBT experienced disruption following a global Microsoft 365 outage, predominantly affecting email and associated services. While core clinical systems remained operational, the disruption affected a range of business and operational activities across the organisation. NHSBT declared a Priority 1 Major Incident and instigated a coordinated response to enact business continuity arrangements. This ensured essential services were maintained, with no widespread clinical system failures or significant interruption to critical service delivery reported. Services across NHSBT were largely restored by late afternoon on 13th November, with Microsoft formally confirming resolution of the global outage in the early hours of 14th November. NHSBT is reviewing the incident and identifying lessons learned and opportunities to further strengthen operational resilience.

1. Service Delivery

Blood Supply

At 2 November 2026, total red cell stocks were at 5.8 days of stock, compared with a target level of 5.5 days. Three blood groups remain below target levels, with O-negative at 3.5 days, B-negative at 3.9 days and O-positive at 4.6 days. Platelet stocks are at target levels, and the current focus is on maximising appointment bookings in the lead up to Christmas and the New Year.

Increased demand for Ro units continues to place pressure on O-negative and B-negative stocks. Year to date, Ro demand has been 8% higher than during the same period in 2025/26, partly driven by growth in Red Cell Exchange capacity across the wider NHS. This represents a positive development for sickle cell patients but requires a significant increase in the collection of Ro units, supported by joint working and shared donor recruitment goals with NHS partners, particularly hospitals serving Black heritage communities.

NHSBT has established a dedicated Ro programme to build on these early findings, increase recruitment and retention of Ro donors, and work more closely with hospitals to influence best practice in Ro ordering and treatment. The programme is also exploring options to increase capacity and extend similar approaches to other parts of the country. To support this objective, NHSBT has introduced a Bloodmobile in London to reach communities not currently served by the existing collection network. The vehicle was launched at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium and has generated positive early results, with around one in four units collected identified as Ro, a substantially higher proportion than at other collection locations. However, the vehicle's size limits capacity and the number of appointments available.

Plasma

NHSBT is on track to ship more than 1 million litres of plasma to its fractionation partner, Octapharma, by the end of 2026/27, having begun shipments in August 2024. During 2026/27, more than 328,000 litres will be delivered and, year to date, over 184,000 litres have been shipped across 17 consignments. Integrated shipments with Scotland continue, with the first shipment from Wales now planned for Q4 2026/27.

Progress continues across the wider plasma programme. A major milestone has been achieved with Department of Health and Social Care approval of the outline business case for new apheresis technology, while design and planning work for new freezer solutions is underway to improve efficiency and support future growth in collections. In addition, NHSBT's Manchester site has successfully completed an Octapharma audit.

These developments support NHSBT's longer-term objective of increasing UK self-sufficiency in plasma-derived medicines through continued expansion of the source plasma collection network across both new and existing donor centres.

Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation

NHSBT is grateful to colleagues, NHS partners and stakeholders for their support in implementing the Organ Donation Recovery Plan. This work has been necessary following a pronounced decline in deceased donation during the first half of this year. The work is split into two streams running in parallel: delivery of quick-win recovery plan actions, and analysis to inform additional work with broader, more transformational recommendations. NHBST will continue working closely with colleagues to ensure that these actions remain effective and support improvements in organ donation rates. Whilst we saw a significant number of donations in October (further details below) this has not been sustained through November and the pressure on the waiting list remains, meaning that longer term sustainable solutions are needed.

Donor Experience

Net Promoter Score performance continues above target. September also recorded the lowest monthly complaint volume of the financial year, continuing a positive long-term trend. The complaints we do receive continue to express frustration at short notice and sometimes repeated cancellations which we need to take seriously

A significant milestone was achieved with the opening of Reading Donor Centre at Reading Bridge House. As NHSBT's first donor centre where blood, plasma and platelets can all be donated within a single donation space, it strengthens supply resilience, improves donor access across the region and supports future growth in collections. The centre includes 16 plasma chairs, three blood chairs, three platelet chairs and three additional chairs to support blood collection during periods of high demand. Plasma collection commenced on 12 October, whole blood collection on 19 October, and platelet collection is expected to commence before the end of the year. By bringing all three donation types together in a single location, the centre makes it easier for people in and around Reading to start or continue donating. Media activity supporting the opening of Reading as NHSBT's first multi-product donor centre contributed to Reading and national plasma bookings reaching their highest weekly levels since June 2025.

Targeted interventions focused on O-negative, B-negative and Ro donors have improved retention of donors and helped maintain resilience within these critical blood groups. The number of O-negative donor numbers has remained broadly stable and both B-negative and Ro donor bases continue to grow. Current forecasts indicate that B-negative and Ro will exceed year-end donor base targets, driven by sustained improvements in donor retention and lower-than-expected attrition. The 24-month active donor measure remains above one million donors, providing a broader view of donor engagement across the service.

Priority Appointment Requests have been expanded to include Black heritage donors alongside O-negative, B-negative and Ro donors. More than 5,400 bookings, equivalent to roughly 66% of the number needed to meet a week’s collection target, were made through the service during September, with early evidence of strong uptake among Black heritage donors. The service continues to improve appointment access for priority donors and support resilience within critical blood groups.

Digital

A new, modernised Organ Donor Register web registration form went live on *organdonation.nhs.uk* ahead of Organ Donation Week. This was a collaboration between the Donor Experience Product Centre, the Organ Donor Register team and the Donor Experience Directorate. The form makes it easier for registrants to record their decision and was thoroughly tested during Organ Donation Week, with over 20,000 registrations made through that route alone – a 59% increase compared with the 2025 Organ Donation Week. The redesigned organ donation registration service follows NHS user-centred design principles and forms part of wider work to improve user experience, increase registrations and support delivery of the Organ Donation and Transplantation 2030 strategy.

The organ transplant patient "risk communication tools" have been updated to improve accessibility, usability and compatibility across devices. These tools support discussions between patients and healthcare professionals by providing patient-tailored information on the likely risks and outcomes of waiting for an organ transplant and survival post-transplant. The update included improved underlying risk models, a more patient-friendly design, and migration to a new software platform, allowing access across desktop, tablet and mobile devices

The digitised service for Therapeutic Apheresis Services NHSBT has reached a major milestone, with all TAS units meaning that all red cell exchanges and treatment plans are fully digitised. The release introduces several key clinical and operational enhancements, including: Red Cell Exchange referrals and treatment plans, supporting services such as the management of patients with sickle cell disease; Pre-Apheresis Clinical Assessment workflows; multi-procedure pathways for patients undergoing more than one treatment, such as Plasma Exchange and Red Cell Exchange; and offline working capability for colleagues operating in environments with limited or intermittent network connectivity.

Quality & Governance

Continued improvements are being delivered across Quality Management System processes, including audit and incident management. Activities have focused on strengthening governance, assurance, auditor capability, reporting and oversight arrangements, while maintaining delivery of the 2026/27 internal audit programme.

The MHRA inspection of the Manchester Centre and associated Donor Centres resulted in no "critical" findings, one "major" finding and five "other" non-conformances. This represents a positive regulatory outcome, with improvement actions already underway. Inspectors recognised the openness, professionalism and strong commitment to safety and quality demonstrated by staff, with specific positive feedback for the Quality Assurance, Testing and Manufacturing teams. The MHRA also inspected the Colindale Blood Centre and associated Donor Centres., resulting in six "other" non-conformances, where evidence exists that a departure from applicable legislative requirements and/or established GCP guidelines and/or procedural requirement and/or good clinical practice has occurred, but it is neither critical nor major. Inspectors commended the professionalism, commitment and engagement of staff and were highly complementary about the new Red Cell Immunotherapy laboratory.

The Quality & Governance Senior Management Team hosted a two-day strategic learning visit with colleagues from Canadian Blood Services. The visit provided an opportunity to share best practice on quality management, operational resilience, incident management and supporting frontline services, with both organisations identifying opportunities to strengthen collaboration and inform future improvement activity.

A review of NHSBT's quality and clinical governance structures and processes is underway to ensure compliance with external regulatory requirements, redefine how clinical governance is delivered, increasing understanding of the effectiveness and quality of our services, driving meaningful change through triangulation of data, and to strengthen floor-to-board assurance.

As part of this transformational change initiative, the Clinical Audit, Risk and Effectiveness Committee will be renamed and re-established as the Clinical Governance and Clinical Leadership Executive Committee in January 2027. The review is being led by the Chief Medical Officer, Director of Quality & Governance, and Chief Nurse for Corporate Nursing, Clinical Services and Plasma, through five workstreams with recommendations co-produced alongside patient and donor representatives.

It will introduce a multi-professional model that addresses both quality and clinical governance agendas consistently across the organisation, with a clearer, more strategic line of sight for efficient upward assurance and/or escalation and reporting into the Clinical Governance Committee.

2. Innovation

The Assessment and Recovery Centres Programme continues to progress at pace. The liver and lung pilots are now operational and at 23 October 2026 had enabled 23 additional transplants, against a programme commitment of 36 additional transplants by March 2027. The kidney pilot is due to commence in mid-November 2026. The Programme Business Case is progressing through NHSBT and DHSC assurance and approval processes, recommending three nationally commissioned multi-organ Assessment and Recovery Centres.

The Spray Dried Plasma programme has received conditional approval to progress to the clinical study phase. This is a significant milestone for the programme and reflects the commitment and collective efforts of colleagues across the organisation.

3. Partnership and Engagement Activity

During the week commencing 5 October, NHSBT hosted the Alliance of Blood Operators Board meeting in London, bringing together Chief Executives from NHSBT, American Red Cross, Vitalant (USA), Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, Canadian Blood Services and Sanquin (Netherlands). Discussions focused on strategic challenges facing the sector, particularly resilience, alongside growing threats from cyberattacks, supply chain disruption, opportunities in AI, technology and advanced therapies. A visit to our Brixton donor centre showcased NHSBT’s work to recruit more Black heritage donors.

Organ Donation Week delivered strong results following the launch of an urgent public awareness campaign in response to declining donor numbers. NHSBT secured extensive national media coverage and more than 65 broadcast and press interviews, helping raise awareness of organ donation and support registration activity. Public response was strong, with more than 17,700 new registrations and over 91,000 opt-in registrations overall. Website registrations increased by 67% compared with Organ Donation Week 2025.

NHSBT's CEO met with the Chief Executive and Medical Director at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to discuss collaboration to strengthen organ donation and improve outcomes for patients with sickle cell disease. Outcomes from the discussion include plans to create a positive culture for organ donation at King's and

work in partnership with the community to increase Ro blood collection. Further meetings are planned with other key Trusts over the coming months.

NHSBT has launched a UK-wide Winter Blood campaign in partnership with the other UK blood services, calling on the public to fill more than 150,000 blood donation appointments before the end of the year. The campaign secured extensive national and regional media coverage, including broadcast, print and online channels, despite a highly competitive news environment. Early results have been extremely positive, with 1,891 new donor registrations recorded on launch day, the highest daily total this year, alongside 12,730 donation appointments booked, an increase of 2,400 compared with the same day the previous week. The campaign will continue throughout the winter to support blood collection activity

Public engagement continued through the period through the second series of *Love is in the Blood*, Black History Month campaigns and community outreach programmes. These campaigns supported donor recruitment, engagement with Black heritage communities and awareness of blood and organ donation. Activity marking the 20th anniversary of newborn sickle cell screening generated national coverage and supported recruitment of Black heritage donors.

Stem cell awareness activity has continued. Three Stem Cell Community Engagement Assistants engaged with 2,679 eligible donors, facilitating 1,732 stem cell samples. A pilot is also testing registration to the stem cell panel alongside blood donor recruitment activity. During Stem Cell Awareness Week, NHSBT highlighted the record number of people joining the NHSBT Stem Cell Registry, securing national media coverage and strong social media engagement.

NHSBT continues to build influential relationships with Parliamentarians and health leaders. Sir Ed Davey MP visited Brixton Donor Centre to donate blood, accompanied by Baroness Floella Benjamin, patron of the Sickle Cell Society, providing an opportunity to discuss support for sickle cell patients, the Ro Taskforce and Black heritage donor recruitment.

NHSBT welcomed Professor Frankie Swords, NHS England's National Medical Director, to the West End Donor Centre, where she donated blood. Separately, Hamish Falconer MP visited to discuss donation policy and public messaging, and a delegation of Welsh Senedd members also visited to discuss future collaboration

Stakeholder engagement was further strengthened through a Parliamentary Reception attended by more than 60 parliamentarians and senior stakeholders, reinforcing plasma collection as a national strategic priority. Speakers included Public Health Minister Dame Diana Johnson MP, NHSBT's Chief Executive and patient advocate Kate George.

4. People

Health and Wellbeing

Health and safety performance remains on track, with key measures meeting their year-to-date target trajectories. The harm incident rate stands at 4.8 against a target of 6.7 (where lower is better), while near-miss reporting is 16.6 against a target of 15.8

(where higher reporting is encouraged). This reflects continued progress in reducing harm and strengthening proactive safety reporting.

The annual flu vaccination programme began on 28 October, later than planned due to national supply constraints affecting egg-based vaccines. Alternative supplies were secured, enabling vaccination of Blood Donation teams from late October, with centre-based clinics commencing in November. Additional vaccination routes through GPs and host NHS trusts have been promoted to colleagues to support uptake and mitigate the impact of the delay

Employment Legislation and Compliance

A structured programme of work has been established to assess, implement and evidence NHSBT's compliance with the Employment Rights Act 2025, ensuring legislative changes are translated into appropriate policies, employment practices and organisational controls.

Recruitment Workforce and Stability

Recruitment performance remained strong during the quarter, with all agreed key performance indicators achieved and employee turnover remaining better than target, supporting workforce stability and operational delivery. Following a successful pilot, a controlled rollout of a new skills-based candidate sifting tool has commenced for high-volume Donor Carer recruitment. The approach is improving national consistency and candidate experience while reducing administrative burden, with an estimated 600 hours of managerial time released to date, demonstrating the potential for further productivity improvements through recruitment process modernisation.

Organisational Development, Leadership and Culture

Organisation Design and Development continues to support delivery of NHSBT's strategic transformation priorities, including the One NHSBT Strategy Programme and the development of leadership capability and collective accountability. Monthly Strategic Delivery Group sessions, involving approximately 50 senior leaders, are strengthening cross-organisational alignment and delivery around strategic priorities. The 2026 NHSBT Staff Conference, held on 15 October, brought colleagues together from across the organisation to engage with NHSBT's new strategic priorities, reinforce our One NHSBT ambition and strengthen understanding of the contribution colleagues can make to their delivery.

The 2026 Our Voice survey achieved 59% participation, with an overall Engagement Score of 65%, equal to the 2025 result. Colleague experience has improved on several measures. The proportion of colleagues reporting instances of harm through Harassment, Bullying and Abuse has reduced from 9.4% to 8.4%. Reports of discrimination from managers, team leaders and colleagues have reduced from 5.9% to 4.5%. Wellbeing and workload scores have both increased by 3%, to 66% and 67% positive respectively, and confidence that senior leaders make the right decisions has increased by 4%, to 46% positive. This reflects progress in building a safer and more supportive working environment for our staff with work underway to analyse these results and develop action plans in response.

The Executive Team will be considering our Staff Side engagement strategy further in November, and proposals for amending the partnership working committee structure and a refreshed commitment to shared values and behaviours will be considered at the Staff Partnership Committee in December.

Dr Simon Stanworth, Consultant Haematologist, and one of NHSBT's principal investigators has been awarded the Tibor Greenwalt Memorial Prize by the Association for the Advancement of Blood & Biotherapies, for his exemplary contributions to transfusion medicine and advancements in patient outcomes worldwide

Rajat Samal, formerly Operations Director for Lucchini Unipart Rail, has been appointed to the role of Director of Operations in Blood Supply. This new role will provide oversight of our Supply Planning, Manufacturing, Logistics and Technical and Scientific Development functions, strengthening collaboration across these critical areas of our business

Executive Leadership Appointments

Nick Kirby, Managing Director of Cambridge, Biomedical Campus and senior leader at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, has been appointed to the position of Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer. Nick will join the Executive Team in February 2027.

5. Finance

Whilst directorates are operating within their agreed financial envelopes, there is work underway to ensure that the cost base is better understood and there is reduced dependence on non-recurrent savings. Following completion of the Quarter 2 forecast, we remain confident in delivering the 2026/27 Cost Improvement Programme while maintaining a stable underlying financial position. We continue to apply close cost control governance, careful prioritisation of expenditure and use of available cash reserves.

A prudent approach has been taken to forecasting, reflecting both emerging opportunities and the financial pressures and risks that continue to be monitored.

Planning for 2027/28 is underway, including development of service and financial plans, refinement of the Cost Improvement Programme and discussions with the National Commissioning Group on funding requirements for next year. Our focus remains on maintaining high-quality services for patients while ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

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