

Shubha Allard¹, Louise Sherliker², Catherine Howell³, Edwin Massey³, Mike Murphy², Jon Cort⁴

¹NHS Blood and Transplant London, ²NHS Blood and Transplant Oxford, ³NHS Blood and Transplant Filton,

⁴Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Introduction

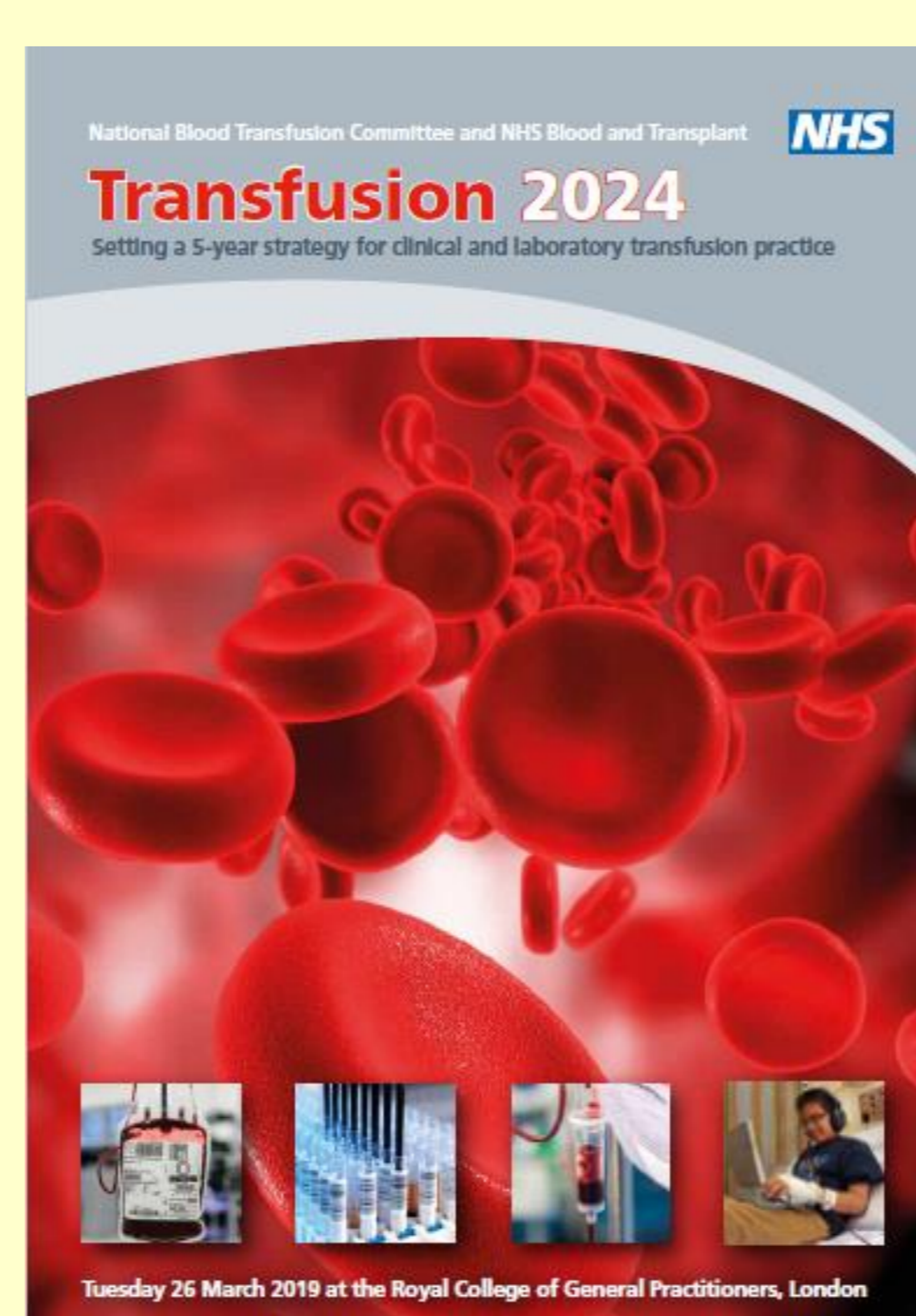
Around 2 million units of blood and components are used in England to support the care of adult and paediatric patients with a wide range of clinical conditions. It is essential to provide clear policies for the many healthcare teams involved in the care of these patients to ensure safe and appropriate transfusion practices. This needs even greater emphasis with the challenges of the ongoing and evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

Transfusion 2024 Symposium

The Transfusion 2024 symposium was organised in March 2019 by the National Blood Transfusion Committee (NBTC) and NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) with the aim of defining a strategy for clinical and laboratory blood transfusion for England for the next 5 years.

The topics covered included

- Patient blood management (PBM)
- Transfusion laboratory safety
- Information Technology to support transfusion practice and integration
- Research and development.



With >100 invited participants, the symposium provided an effective forum for NBTC and NHSBT to work collaboratively with hospital teams, Royal Colleges, professional bodies, regulators, healthcare providers, NHS England (NHSE) and above all patients to determine priorities for transfusion care in line with key NHS policies.

Multi-professional discussion informed by short presentations emphasised the importance of building on the successes of previous initiatives, including the recommendations provided by the Better Blood Transfusion Health Service Circulars (1997, 2002 and 2007) and subsequent PBM Seminar (2012).

Over the last 20 years, there has been considerable improvement in transfusion practice supported by evidence from clinical trials, guideline implementation and process improvements. These have resulted in improved patient safety, a 25-30% reduction in blood use and significant cost savings for the NHS.

However, there remains considerable variability in transfusion practice within and between hospitals that may impact on patient outcomes and this needs further action.

Summary and Conclusions

The final recommendations are in line with 1) the NHS Long Term Plan with an emphasis on a skilled and trained workforce, better use of data and technology, and integrated models of working; 2) the Department of Health and Social Care in promoting inter-operable digital solutions; and 3) the NHS Patient Safety Strategy in promoting safer patient care.

The recommendations have particular relevance in supporting safe and appropriate transfusion and addressing significant blood demand and supply challenges during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

We will proceed with publication of the Transfusion 2024 recommendations and the development of a plan to implement them as a joint collaboration between the NBTC and NHSBT.

Transfusion 2024 recommendations

The outcome of Transfusion 2024 was the development of recommendations for improving clinical and laboratory transfusion practice in England.

Key recommendations included the development of PBM self-assessment for hospitals, improved support for Hospital Transfusion Teams especially the Transfusion Practitioner role.

It was agreed that a core aspect of a future transfusion strategy must include ensuring a trained and competent laboratory workforce to support patient needs across all clinical disciplines where transfusion may be needed.

Key actions to strengthen hospital transfusion laboratory safety were the development of advanced information technology and exploration of integrated models for hospitals in collaboration with NHSBT.

There is a major focus on research and development promoting

- Data driven transfusion practice
- Development of Novel blood components
- Implementation of genotype matching of blood for multi-transfused patients at risk of red cell alloimmunisation such as patients with sickle cell disease.