



South East Regional Transfusion Committee 2023 Activity Summary Report CELEBRATING SUCCESS

It has been another busy year, and I would like to thank everyone for their support at our meetings, education events and audits. The Education Events have again provided an excellent window to learning and sharing best practice. It was a pleasure to welcome back Malcolm Robinson – founder of Harvey's Gang - to present at our October Transfusion Bites. Harvey's story and Malcolm's dedication always inspire and at the same time remind us why we do what we do. The region should also celebrate the successful launch of the QS138 Quality Insights Tool, which started as a project within the South East, and has been rolled out across the country, and received NICE endorsement. Congratulations.

Howard Wakeling, SE RTC Chair

Regional Meetings

Regional Transfusion Team (RTT) met three times this year – February 7, July 12, and October 4, with a fourth meeting planned for February 7, 2024. The RTT is the working group of the Regional Transfusion Committee (RTC) and meets to ensure the momentum of the Committee's activities is maintained between full Committee meetings. The agendas this year covered the; results of the pilot and lead up to the launch of QS138 Quality Insights Tool (full report below); planning for future education events (full report below); a survey was introduced to look at Massive Haemorrhage Packs, and the different processes and protocols in place across the region.



Transfusion Laboratory Manager (TLM) User Groups (UG) There are two groups within the region. **TADG UG** for Tooting and Colindale held three meetings, unfortunately, the planned face to face in December was cancelled and took place via teams in January 2024. The **Oxford and Southampton user group** met three times: February 28, July 20 and October 17, the October meeting was a hybrid meeting, hosted by Oxford. It was the first in-person meeting since the pandemic.

On April 19, Southampton Hospital Services had to shut due to a structural issue with the roof. This became a hot topic for the user group meeting as hospitals and NHSBT had to work closely together to resolve the logistical issues this caused. The UGM was also a chance to share learning from MHRA and UKAS ISO inspections. Although the new ISO 15189 2022 standards have been published, labs are still being assessed under the old standards while performing a gap analysis ready for the changeover in 2023. Both groups continue to discuss training and competency which continues to be challenging for all hospitals, with newly qualified staff lacking adequate Transfusion knowledge. Hospitals are increasingly relying on overseas recruitment as well as growing staff 'in house' through apprenticeship schemes.



Transfusion Practitioner (TP) Group The **TP Group** is made up of 44 TPs (40 NHS/4 Private) based across 27 Hospitals. Eight new TPs were welcomed to the group, with some farewells to others. The group is now co-chaired by Jon Ricks and Samantha Carrington, Sam stepped in to share the role at the start of the year. The group met three times – March 23, June 14, December 7. Sharing experience and knowledge is a major reason for having the group. As in previous years, the group supported each other in navigating challenges such as ongoing blood shortages and industrial action, as well as helping to spread improvements and good practice. With this in mind, we have been comparing our practice through completing the QS138 Quality Insights benchmarking audit, currently twice a year.

The **Joint TP/TLM meeting** took place on September 13, with thirty-three TPs & TLMs attending. This virtual event brings together the combined experience from across the disciplines and presentations included Transfusion Principles at Major Incidents & Mass Causality Events. A recommended read was *Emergency preparedness, resilience and response guidance for UK hospital transfusion teams* available via the [Wiley online library](#) written by Heidi Doughty and Fateha Chowdhury on behalf of the [NBTC Emergency Planning Working Group](#). There was also a discussion on Staffing, Recruitment and retention an ongoing challenge both in the Laboratory and Clinics



London & South East Haematology and Trauma Group now covers a much larger geographical area, recent additions include the Major Trauma Centres (MTCs) in Coventry and Leeds. Recent meetings have focussed on emergency preparedness, resilience, and response. The importance of capacity planning, plus the importance of communication, particularly where hospitals had merged. Following two paediatric major incidents declared at one of the Hospitals, it was recommended that paediatric and neonatal haemorrhage protocols and staff training should be reviewed.

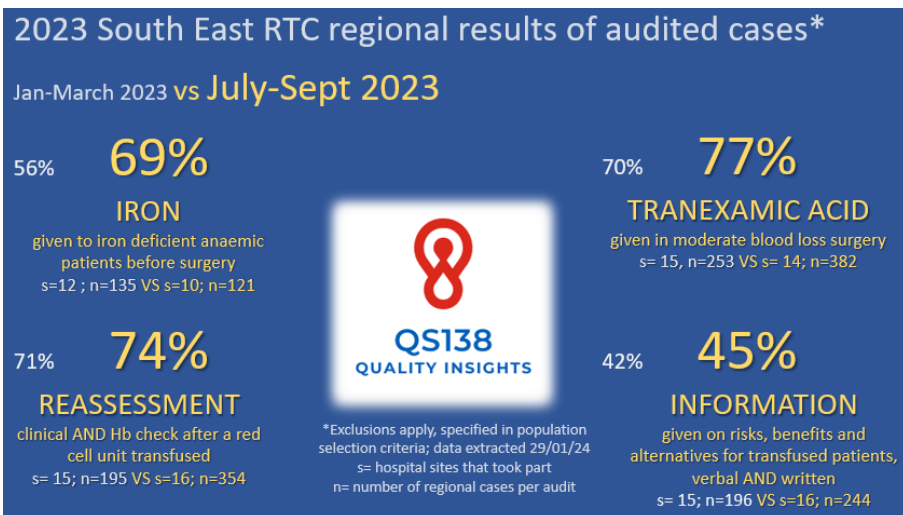
Under the chairmanship of Kerry Dowling, new **UK Transfusion Laboratory Committee (UKTLC)** standards were introduced in 2023. The UKTLC is a collaboration of UK Transfusion Laboratory professionals using evidence-based tools to reduce errors occurring within Transfusion Laboratories and improve patient safety in the field of Blood Transfusion. [To learn more](#)



National and Regional Audits

The South East collaborate on NICE QS138 The NICE-endorsed QS138 Quality Insights audit tool developed by the NHSBT Patient Blood Management team launched on 27 March 2023. This live, free, automated tool builds on earlier gap analysis work by NHSBT and the former SE Coast TP group. QS138 Quality Insights enables hospitals to enter a transfusion quality improvement cycle, auditing up to four priority improvement areas up to four times per year, providing instant automated hospital and regional benchmarking reports.

95% of South East NHS Trusts have now signed up at least one hospital site. The SE TP group conducted two audit cycles in 2023, initially auditing cases from January to March, followed by a repeat audit of July to September. Compliance to the priority areas varied by hospital site, with room for improvement identified. Areas of note included pre-op anaemia and the documented provision of verbal and written information for transfused patients to include risks, benefits, and alternatives of transfusion where appropriate. Regional results discussed at regional TP meetings shared practice, ideas, and learning. Overall, it is encouraging to see compliance improvements between the two audits in all four metrics below:



SE regional QS138 audits will continue bi-annually, in April and October. Hospital generated reports are designed to be shared with hospital transfusion committees, audit and clinical governance departments to evidence and monitor compliance. Regional reports will continue to be shared at SE transfusion meetings to identify areas of improvement and support workplan activity.

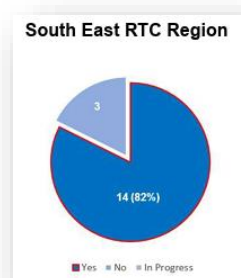
[QS138 Quality Insights](#) is now available to all NHS and private hospitals in England and Wales with over 100 hospitals registered to date. The tool is listed as a resource for Transfusion 2024 and the Health Quality Improvement Partnership Directory.

Direct Oral Anti-Coagulants (DOACs) and Warfarin Reversal in Trauma Patients audit report was [published](#) in May 2023. The report outlines the findings of the original survey, pilot study and the results of the audit undertaken between January - March 2022.

The Region also took part in the **National Comparative Audit** (NCA) of NICE QS138 Audit in April. [Upcoming audits for 2024](#)

Working Groups

O Pos in Bleeding Males working group concluded this year. Information from the working group contributed to a report [published by NHSBT](#) in December 2023. The National objective was to promote the use of OD positive red cells in adult males* in emergency situations – trauma/major haemorrhage (MH). The South East provided a 100% response rate to the report. 82% have a policy in place to give emergency OD positive RBC to unknown adult males in trauma/MH. With just three trusts saying no – one stating due to geographic isolation there were concerns in potential delay of back up OD neg red cells. (*Adult patient assigned as male at birth)



Education and Training

Now an annual event in the region's calendar, the **Biomedical Scientist Study Day** — was held virtually on April 25. The one-day event for newly qualified BMSs' was attended by 19 delegates, who provided positive feedback. Having enjoyed the interactive elements within the day; and considered the presentations clear and informative.

The **RTC Education and Business Meeting - Shared Learning from Amber Alert** - took place on May 3. The presentations drew on the first-hand experience of the TPs, and TLMs managing stock holding, and improving communications during the alert. The 68 delegates also heard an overview of the NHSBT Amber Alert Hospital Actions Survey. The feedback from the virtual event was very positive with valuable information shared.





Transfusion Bites returned on November 2, entitled **Sharing Practice and Learning from Excellence**

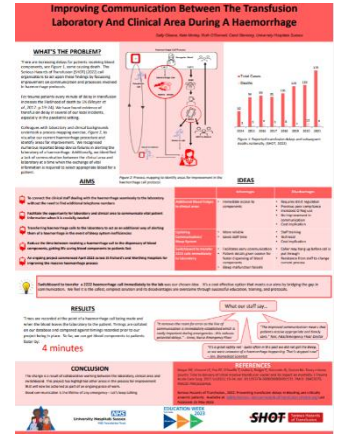
This virtual event was well attended with 107 delegates. Of the 71 who provided feedback - 100% would recommend these events to colleagues. They valued the Bites size case studies, and there was unanimous praise for the presenters and their presentations. There were three "Bites" – Reducing Platelet Wastage by Increasing Stock Levels, Recurrent anaphylaxis to blood – what could it be; Stock Sharing Across a Multi-site Trust, and Eisenmenger Syndrome & Blood Transfusion, plus two longer presentations - A Holistic Approach to Transfusion Safety, and [Harvey's Gang](#) – empowering and educating our young patients. Some of the presentations are available [here](#) and on the PBM [YouTube channel](#).

Poster Power

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells had a TACO awareness campaign in May.



At Worthing and St Richard's, the TP team submitted an entry to the UHS improvement poster competition and was the shortlisted for the final judging. "Improving Communication Between the Laboratory and Clinical Area During a Haemorrhage" detailed the rationale behind and the implementation process of a change in the haemorrhage protocol. The focus was on enhancing communication between the laboratory and the clinical area, identified as a



critical step contributing to potential transfusion delays.

JPAC website

The new South East [JPAC pages](#) were launched in April, with a fresh look, presentations, and regular updates for the year ahead.



Omitted from last year's Summary...



Congratulations to **Julie Staves**, TLM at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, who was awarded the **BBTS Gold Medal Award - Nominated by BBTS Council**. The BBTS Gold Medal was introduced in 1997 and is awarded to an individual for their exceptional and long-standing services to the Society and to the practice of blood transfusion in the UK.

Welcome: The region welcomed two new Customer Service Managers:



Carol Stening, Hospital Customer Service Manager for Southampton, and the South West. Carol joined NHSBT in July 2023, from St Richards Hospital Chichester where she had worked for nearly 17 years as a Biomedical Scientist. Carol is also an IBMS (Institute of Biomedical Science) Specialist Examiner for Haematology and Blood Transfusion and have completed 11 verifications nationally since last April.



Danny Bolton, Hospital Customer Services Manager for Tooting (London and the South East). Danny joined NHSBT in April 1992 and worked in the Hospital Services Department at Tooting for many years where he completed his Biomedical Scientist education and HCPC (Health and Care Professions Council) registration. Danny joined the Hospital Customer Service Team in April 2023.

Thank you and Farewell: to Fatts Chowdhury, for her support to the region over the past seven years. With a change in role, Fatts is no longer the NHSBT Consultant for the South East. The RTT also said farewell to Simon Rang, Consultant Anaesthetist, with East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust.

Projects for 2024: The workplan for 2024 includes – MHP skills and drills; Recruitment, Training and Retention; and How, When and Where is Blood Used – how we handle data?

Dates for your 2024 Diary:

- Extra RTT meeting – 12 March
- TP Meeting – 14 March, June 12, December 5
- Oxford /Soton TLM – 14 March

Annual Summary Contributors:

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