



Grŵp Goruchwyllo Iechyd
Gwaed Cenedlaethol
**Blood Health National
Oversight Group**

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 24

Blood Health National Oversight Group (BHN OG)

<https://bhnog.wales.nhs.uk>

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Executive Summary from BHNNOG Chair

Welcome to the 2023 - 24 Blood Health National Oversight Group (BHNNOG) Annual Report. As Chair of the BHNNOG, I am extremely proud to take this opportunity to update you on the work undertaken on behalf of the BHNNOG in 2023 - 24 and to inform you of our future projects and innovative work plans.

2023 - 24 has seen a sustained consolidation of projects started since COVID, with BHNNOG continuing to work with transfusion teams and clinical colleagues across Wales to ensure a safe and sufficient supply of blood for our patients. However, blood supply challenges remain with extended blue (pre-amber) alerts in Autumn 2023 & Winter 2024, during which time, BHNNOG worked with key stakeholders to support the blood supply chain and finalise the revised NHS Wales Red Cell Shortage Plan.

2023 - 24 also saw a review of our key strategic document, the NHS Wales Blood Health Plan¹. The plan was updated to reflect the challenges, developments and initiatives for transfusion from 2024 - 2027. BHNNOG continues to play a system leadership role in the transfusion community in Wales.

Our key message for the safe and appropriate use of blood, supporting the provision of blood for those who need it most remains the same.

To achieve this, we have again focussed on delivering service critical areas of work and included in this report is a data section to provide overview and scrutiny of our key measurable outcomes. These Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (Appendix 1) have been developed to monitor ongoing practice with the intention where appropriate of improvement and/or establishment of best practice.

We thank you as representatives and leads within your Health Boards (HBs) for the work you continue to undertake with the BHNNOG as we believe that only by adopting this collaborative approach to transfusion practice can we ensure that we both deliver and where possible exceed the requirements of a first-class transfusion service providing exemplary care for both patients and the population of Wales.



Dr Brian Tehan, Consultant Anaesthetist, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board,
Chair of BHNNOG

Introduction

Blood transfusions are essential, lifesaving treatments used every day across NHS Wales. Transfusion however is not a risk-free procedure, and the possibility of transfusion reactions or transmission of infection must always be considered as part of the overall treatment plan.

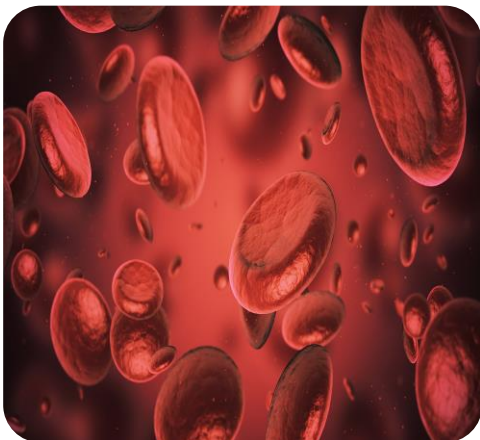
It is therefore critical that blood components are only given when needed and where no other suitable alternative exists.

Blood supply challenges continue to affect the supply chain in Wales resulting in shortage alerts in Autumn 2023 & Winter 2024. These highlight the criticality of a safe and effective blood supply for the people of Wales and drive us to ensure that we have proactive management of the supply chain with ongoing review of supply and demand (as shown on page 6).

To help meet these challenges, we have sustained the focus on our key strategic aims and associated BHNOG work streams and working groups established to lead on these initiatives.

2023 - 24 saw the revision of the NHS Wales Blood Health Plan 2024. This builds on previous plans to further establish the work and ethos of the BHNOG to provide staff both in the transfusion community itself and those in clinical teams across NHS Wales who use blood components with an overarching strategy for blood health for Wales.

Implementation of core strategic aims and best practice principles will enable us to develop a resilient system of patient care within transfusion with safety and quality at its core.



Priorties Identified in 2022 - 23 Annual Report

The following priorities were identified in the 2022 - 23 Annual Report.



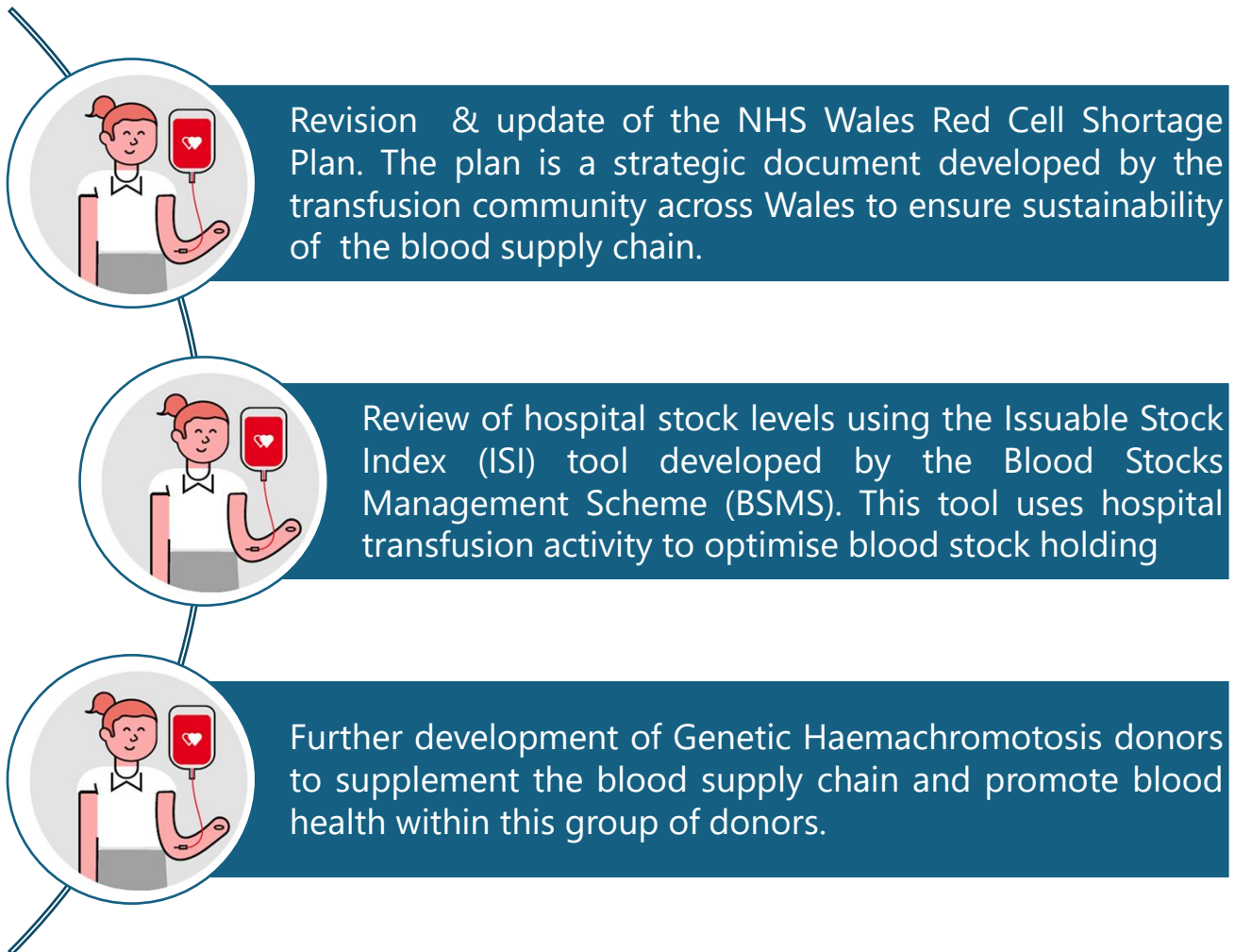
Ongoing work in 2023 - 24 meant that 2/6 these priorities were fully met 3/6 are in progress & 1/6 not yet started. These can be identified as follows:

1. **Review and update of the Blood Health Plan (BHP):** *revised BHP ready for issue in April 2024*
2. **NHS Wales Red Cell Shortage Plan:** *consultation completed, and plan approved. Issued March 2024*
3. **Genetic Hemochromatosis Strategy:** *strategy developed and work ongoing to implement. This will be continued in 2024 - 25*
4. **Implementation of Pre-op Anaemia Programme:** *ongoing as part of the VBHC anaemia programme for 2024 - 25*
5. **Development and implementation of Patient Consent Strategy:** *this programme has been started however delays to IBI report has paused further work until 2024 - 25*
6. **Impact of Infected Blood Inquiry (IBI):** *following delays to the issuing of the IBI report this is now scheduled for issue in May 2024 and will be identified as one of the priorities for 2024 - 25*

Challenges to the Blood Supply in 2023 - 24

Challenges to the blood supply chain in Wales continued in 2023 - 24. This was mirrored by other UK Blood Services. Shortages occurred in both Autumn 2023 and Winter 2024 before achieving a stabilised position in Spring 2024.

Revision and update of the NHS Wales Red Cell Shortage Plan provided focus and structure to the discipline of managing red cell shortages and together with a collaborative approach from key stakeholders the supply chain was able to maintain delivery.



These pieces of work helped to maintain the integrity of the supply chain and work will continue in 2024 - 25 to ensure provision of a robust and resilient blood supply chain.

Work Streams: programmes of work

The BHNOG continued the work of their four key workstreams in 2023 - 24.



Anaemia



Appropriate use of
O D Negative



Appropriate use of
Platelets



Intraoperative
Cell Salvage



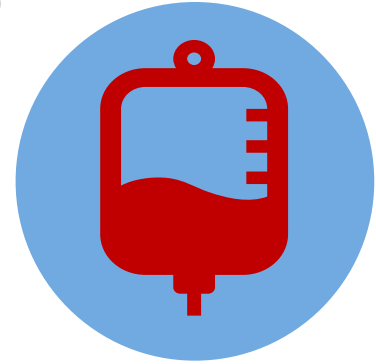
Anaemia Management

The Value Based Health Care funded anaemia team have fast-tracked implementation of a national preoperative anaemia pathway² ahead of projected timeline. Through ongoing collaboration and engagement of stakeholders the completed outcomes in 2023 - 24 were:

1. Agreed national preoperative anaemia standards and a dataset for ongoing benchmarking based on Commission of Quality and Innovation (CQUIN) standards used in England but modified from a Welsh perspective.
2. Completed numerous activities, adopting a once for Wales ethos, to mitigate barriers to pathway implementation. This includes:
 - Implementation of an All-Wales POAS (preoperative anaemia screen) test set built upon reflex testing. Now in use across Wales, this ensures all patients are actively screened for anaemia and underlying cause in a single bleeding event.
 - Development of patient outcome dashboard in collaboration with Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) to support ongoing benchmarking and evidence service improvement.
 - Supporting services through Patient Blood Management (PBM) education sessions for F1/F2 medics across Wales and a toolkit of standardised resources.
3. All-Wales Pre-operative Anaemia Pathway was revised and consultation complete March 2024.

Appropriate Use of O D Negative Red Cells (O D neg)

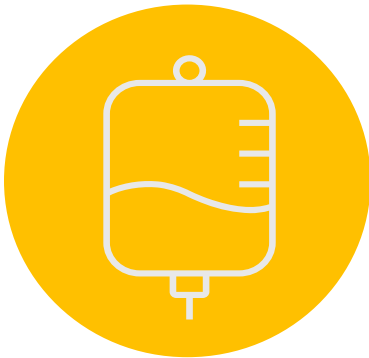
In 2023 - 24 the workstream continued to emphasise the importance of active stock management and appropriate use of O D negs. In June 2023 a 'Where does O D Neg go' audit was conducted with hospitals across Wales. Results were generally aligned although each hospital/ HB was provided with an individual report and action plan based on their results.



To follow up this work meetings were held with each HB to agree future actions and to review current O D Neg stock levels using the Issuable Stock Index (ISI) tool developed by the Blood Stocks Management Scheme (BSMS). This tool provides hospital with a prediction of optimum stock holding based on activity. It was agreed to run the O Neg audit annually and review the ISI six-monthly.

In March 2024 the BHNOG O D Neg Guidance was updated and approved³. These key pieces of work facilitate a more holistic view of O D neg usage, empowering transfusion teams to discuss with their clinical colleagues the management, use and conservation of O D negs as part of the overall Wales strategy.

Appropriate Use of Platelets



The platelet work stream saw a consolidation in 2023 - 24 of the platelet key performance indicators used to support the platelet supply.

To complement the work of the BHNOG platelet workstream a Platelet Strategy group was established by WBS in December 2023 to review the whole platelet supply chain. Key stakeholders representing the BHNOG are involved in this group ensuring a holistic appreciation of all aspects involved in this supply.

February 2024 the BHNOG workstream proposed to introduce a more bespoke method of applying platelet wastage KPIs to individual health boards. It is appreciated that due to their relatively short shelf life the management of the platelet supply chain is more difficult than that of red cells added to this the complexity of stock holding and logistics cause considerable strain. The proposal to move to a nuanced KPI based on usage, location and activity has been agreed by the HBs and is awaiting formal approval by BHNOG.

Intraoperative Cell Salvage (ICS)

2023 - 24 saw further consolidation of ICS in Wales following its promotion to a key BHNOG workstream in 2022. ICS supports the appropriate use of Cell Salvage as part of our Patient Blood Management (PBM) strategy. It is a long-established practice in Wales and has been supported both financially and in an administrative capacity by Welsh Blood Service (WBS) since 2007.



In 2023 - 24 the All-Wales ICS Network (AWICSN) have:

- Rolled out the revised ICS data collection form designed to capture more valid data
- Approved Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and standards in June 2023
- Undertaken an initial scoping exercise with Digital Health Care Wales to look development of patient dashboard - work ongoing
- Scoped relevant OPCS codes for Cell Salvage procedures to assist with development of dashboard
- Agreed with HBs the reallocation of ICS funding to include all HBs. This funding is based on ICS activity over the last seven years.

The 2023 - 24 ICS annual report identified a total 2189 ICS data collection forms submitted for analysis. This was a 7.5% (n=151) increase on 2022 - 23. The two largest specialty users across Wales were Obstetrics (n=724) and Orthopaedic surgery (n=716).

2023 - 24 will look to monitor the new funding arrangements and review in 2024 - 25.

BHNOG Working Groups

Serious Hazards of Transfusion (SHOT) Working Group

The SHOT working group (SWG) continued to build on previous work with a range of associated safety and educational initiatives.

Developments and innovations introduced in 2023 - 24 include:

- I. Inaugural national meeting held with SWG & UK SHOT. These will be expanded to include all UK nations going forward
- II. Focus on trending of incidents and local support to implement SHOT. New quarterly report generated for HBs to monitor incidents
- III. SWG requested to support distribution and promotion of SHOT guidance etc. through clinical, safety and governance networks across Wales

One of the challenges that faced the SWG was how to manage ongoing actions in light of the publishing of the annual UK SHOT report. In June 2023, BHNOG agreed that to avoid duplication of the work of the two groups the SWG would move focus to action Wales specific issues.

To support this change, UK SHOT established a UK wide forum with colleagues from across the four nations meeting on a 6-monthly basis to align their safety programmes. These meetings will ensure that BHNOG SWG is still playing an active role in transfusion safety but should eliminate duplication of processes and allow the SWG to make better use of its resources in supporting UK SHOT more clearly.



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Education Strategy Group

In September 2023, the Education Strategy⁴ which was approved at the end of 2021 was developed into a work group for BHNOG. Approval of the Education Strategy Group terms of reference (ToR) and appointment of the Education Strategy Chair has provided a starting point to fully develop an All Wales integrated transfusion education programme for health care professionals in Wales.

Several key milestones were achieved in 2023 – 24, these include:



F1/F2 : Patient Blood Management (PBM) education

- Delivered by the BHNOG anaemia team. From September 2023, this education was made available to all F1/F2 doctors
- Further iterations of the training will again be delivered in 2024



Independent Authorisation of Blood Transfusion (IABT) (formerly NABT)

- Review of current course specification and rebrand from NABT to IABT
- IABT policy to align with new specification and futureproof qualification was issued November 2023



Transfusion Practitioners & Transfusion Lab Managers Education Day

- Combined workshop looked at current transfusion education priorities across Wales
- Discussions will feed into the revised BHNOG Education Strategy scheduled for review in 2024

For more information about educational courses please go to <https://bhnog.wales.nhs.uk/>.

Additional BHN OG Projects/Events

BHN OG Communications

Effective and timely communication between BHN OG and the community it serves is an integral component of the success of the oversight group. In 2023 - 24 communications to HBs included engagement with Hospital Transfusion Committees/Teams, Pre-operative anaemia leads, Medical Directors and Welsh Government amongst others.

The BHN OG website: <https://bhnog.wales.nhs.uk/> continued to provide informative and up-to date transfusion information including Toolkits for Anaemia and educational posters for Health Care Professionals, transfusion guidance and information for the transfusion community.

The website provides a repository for transfusion related guidance education and information for healthcare professionals highlighting both the work of the BHN OG and providing opportunities for our stakeholders to participate in the collaborative projects promoted by the BHN OG.

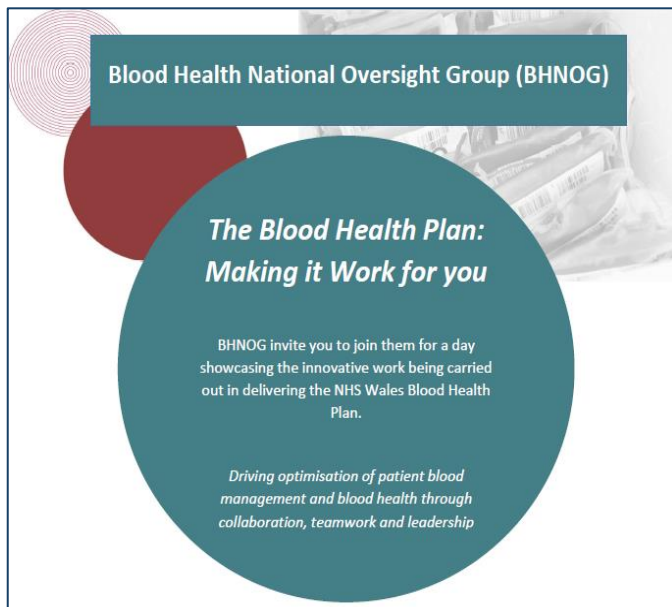
N.B. The website is available in both English & Welsh

One of the key strands of the BHN OG communication strategy is the issue of a Quarterly Newsletter:



Each Newsletter provides a unique and inspiring insight into the work of the BHN OG and the part it plays in the transfusion community across Wales. BHN OG Newsletters are available at <https://bhnog.wales.nhs.uk/>.

BHNOG Conference



In March 2024 BHNOG held a virtual Conference. The Conference entitled:

‘THE BLOOD HEALTH PLAN: MAKING IT WORK FOR YOU’

comprised of presentations from key themes of work associated with the launch of the new Blood Health Plan 2024.

Over 100 delegates virtually attended the conference, which was opened by Sir Frank Atherton, Chief Medical Officer for Wales.

Highlights of the programme included presentations from our external speakers including:

- **How is it for you? – Genetic Haemochromatosis (GH) Donor Story**
Hywel Lloyd, GH Donor
- **Diversity in the Donor Panel – Are we doing enough?**
Mr John James, OBE, Chief Executive of the Sickle Cell Society
- **Partnering with Patients to Enhance Transfusion safety**
Dr Shruthi Narayan, Medical Director, SHOT

A new addition to the Conference programme was the introduction of a poster session which saw presentations from four poster categories presented on the day. Overall, the posters proved very successful, highlighting work completed by colleagues from across Wales.

Conference feedback was very positive with comments such as:

‘Very interesting and inspiring presentations’

‘the GH presentation was fantastic, really powerful to have a patient involved’

The full programme from the day can be accessed at: <https://bhnog.wales.nhs.uk/>.

Future Priorities for 2024 - 25

This Annual Report identifies the key achievements and work programmes undertaken by and on behalf of the BHNOG from April 2023 - March 2024.

The report builds on the delivery of PBM, prudent health principles by supporting continuous improvements in transfusion in Wales. It highlights and applauds current momentum whilst acknowledging there is still much to do.

2024 - 25 will continue to provide challenges to the transfusion community in Wales. The release of the Infected Blood Inquiry (IBI) Report in May 2024 is anticipated to have a huge impact on transfusion practice across the UK, with multiple recommendations to be met.



References & Useful Document Links

1. NHS Wales Blood Health Plan 2024-27: <https://bhnog.wales.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/BHP-2024.pdf>
 2. NHS Wales Preoperative Anaemia Pathway (v4): <https://bhnog.wales.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/English-NHS-Wales-Preoperative-Anaemia-Pathway-V4-3.pdf>
 3. All Wales Guidance for the Management and Use of Group O D Negative Red Cells (2024): https://bhnog.wales.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/All-Wales-Guidance-for-the-Management-Use-of-O-D-Neg-Red-Cells_2024-v3.pdf
 4. BHNOG Transfusion Education Strategy 2021: <https://bhnog.wales.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/BHNOG-Transfusion-Education-Strategy-2021.pdf>
- BHNOG website: www.bhnog.wales.nhs.uk
 - BSH Guidelines for the use of platelet transfusion (2016): <https://b-s-h.org.uk/guidelines/guidelines/use-of-platelet-transfusions>

If you would like to know more about the work of the BHNOG or are interested in participating/collaborating with any of the projects in this report, please contact us at: WBS.bloodhealthteam@wales.nhs.uk



APPENDIX 1

Current key data KPIs to provide overview and scrutiny of our measurable outcomes. These will be expanded as our workstreams continue to develop their KPIs.

Further narrative around KPI data is available from your HB transfusion team.

1. ISSUES AND WASTAGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: <i>the following data provides the KPIs for All Wales issues and wastage data from 01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024. Specific Health board can be obtained from your transfusion team</i>		
Measure	KPI	Actual
1a. O D Neg as a percentage of issues	12%	12.2%
1b. O D Neg wastage	10%	7.6%
1c. Hospital Platelet wastage	15%	11.4%
2. MAJOR HAEMORRHAGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: <i>the following data provides KPIs for All Wales Major Haemorrhage data from 01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024. Specific Health board can be obtained from your transfusion team</i>		
2a. O D Pos emergency units used for unknown males	80%	60%
2b. Sample taken before first red cell unit transfused	95%	84%
3. EDUCATION COMPLETION RATES: <i>the following information is taken from key BHNOC educational programmes delivered in 2023 - 24. The data shows the total number of students who have completed each course. Further information on each qualification can be found at www.bhnog.wales.nhs.uk</i>		
3a. Senior Student Assistantship (SSA)	424 students	
3b. Independent Authorisation of Blood Transfusion	13 delegates	
3c. Foundation programme Drs PBM/anaemia education	272 F1/F2 Drs	
4. BHNOC WEBSITE ANALYTICS: <i>analytics are provided by Google based on the number of users of the website from 01/04/2023 – 31/03/ 2024</i>		
4a. Number of new users accessing the website	3136	
4b. Number of returning users accessing the website	752	
5. AUDITS & SURVEYS: <i>the following identifies the audits undertaken on behalf of the BHNOC for 01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024. Unless otherwise stated these audits are pan Wales. Specific Health Board data can be obtained from your transfusion team. All data is recorded as compliance with the standard defined</i>		
5a. Where does O D Neg Go	Compliance	
i. O D Neg units transfused to O D Neg patients (non-Emergency)	50%	
ii. O D Neg units transfused to non-O D Neg patients to avoid Time expiry	11%	
iii. O D Neg units issued for emergency use	10%	
iv. O D Neg units wasted as Time Expiry	7%	
v. O D Neg units transferred within a Health board	13%	

5b. Anaemia Standards	
1a: A standardised pathway across the health board, covering all specialties	79%
1b: Health Board pathway aligns to All-Wales pathway	79%
2. All patients matched to CQUIN standards should be screened for anaemia prior to surgery	96%
3. Any patient with a Hb < 130g/L is assessed for iron deficiency	96%
4. Any patient identified as iron deficient can be treated before scheduled surgery	33%
6. SHOT: <i>the data identifies the total number of SHOT reportable incidents (including Serious Adverse Reactions and Events) across all HBs. From 01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024. Specific HB data can be obtained from your transfusion team</i>	
6a. SHOT reportable incidents [SAEs & SARs]	176 [12]
7. INTRAOPERATIVE CELL SALVAGE (ICS): <i>the following data identifies the number of ICS reports analysed from 01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024. Specific HB data can be obtained from your transfusion team</i>	
7a. Total number of ICS reports analysed	2189
7b. Two Largest ICS speciality users:	
Orthopaedic Surgery	716
Obstetrics	724