



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

ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 25

Blood Health National Oversight Group (BHN OG)

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

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Executive Summary from BHNOC Chair

Welcome to the 2024 - 25 Blood Health National Oversight Group (BHNOC) Annual Report. As Chair of the BHNOC, I am extremely proud to take this opportunity to update our stakeholders and the wider healthcare community to raise the profile of our work to deliver the NHS Wales Blood Health Plan (BHP) leading with transfusion safety and improved patient blood health.

2024 - 25 began with release of our updated key strategic document, the NHS Wales Blood Health Plan¹. The plan was revised to reflect the challenges, developments and initiatives for transfusion from 2024 – 2027. In May 2024, the Infected Blood Inquiry (IBI)² released its report. This recognised the efforts of the Blood Health National Oversight Group and the BHP, commending its proactive approach.

The IBI Recommendations present significant improvement challenges, and BHNOC are active participants. These build on an already sound foundation, and BHNOC have assumed leadership in delivering those related to blood health safety and consistent with the core strategic aims of the BHP, as BHNOC is tasked to provide oversight and scrutiny in delivery:

- Support individuals to manage their blood health and wellbeing avoiding unnecessary intervention.
- Use evidence and data to inform planning, improve practice and reduce variability.
- Place safety and quality at the core of care reducing inappropriate use and promoting innovation.

To achieve this, we have 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.

Additionally, I wish to draw attention to our expanding portfolio of promotional and networking outputs (P.13-15) and celebrate our success to raise the profile of our innovative work within Wales.

We thank you as representatives and leads within your Health Boards (HBs) for the work you continue to undertake with the BHNOC 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 BHNOC

Introduction

The Infected Blood Inquiry² (IBI) report, issued May 2024, has provided one of the biggest challenges that the transfusion community will face over the coming years. The IBI recommendations for improvements and learning require system level change and robust governance related to transfusion practice.

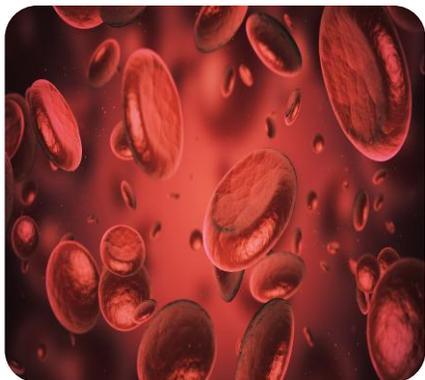
2024 - 25 saw the publication of the NHS Wales Blood Health Plan 2024 -2027¹. This builds on previous plans to further establish the work and ethos of the BHNOG to provide staff, both in the transfusion community itself and those in clinical teams, across NHS Wales who use blood components with an overarching strategy for blood health for Wales. Although issued prior to the IBI report, the reviewed BHP acknowledged the expectations that the BHNOG would be an integral enabler for implementation of recommendations related to patient transfusion safety. The BHNOG has already focussed on practice improvement and will continue through the BHP to provide the leadership, direction and strategy required to positively respond to these recommendations.

Implementation of patient blood management is key to change the mindset of transfusion use within healthcare and move to considering a holistic system approach to improved blood health for the Welsh population. Blood transfusions are essential, lifesaving treatments used every day across NHS Wales. The IBI report reminds us and the public that transfusion 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.

Additionally, this version of the plan enhances scrutiny of the robustness and sustainability of the whole blood supply chain thereby ensuring its sufficiency and suitability to meet the requirements of the patient population in Wales.

Through the strategic leadership provided by the BHNOG, the profile of Wales continues to rise as a system leader in delivering effective change related to patient blood management and safe transfusion practice, not only within NHS Wales, but across the UK and internationally.



Priorities Identified in 2023 - 24 Annual Report

The following priorities were identified in the 2023 - 24 Annual Report.



Ongoing work in 2024 - 25 seen active progress across all 5/6 priorities, and 1/6 yet to start. These can be identified as follows:

1. **Infected Blood Inquiry Recommendations:** BHNOC identified as a key stakeholder for delivery of IBI recommendations related to patient transfusion safety in Wales with work prioritised across the UK. *Activity will continue in 2025-2026.*
2. **Genetic Hemochromatosis Strategy:** *Value Based Health Care (VBHC) funding secured to support focused pilot delivery and pathway mapping. This will be continued in 2025 – 26.*
3. **Expanded scope of Anaemia Programme:** Expansion earlier into planned care pathway and scoping post operative optimisation and women's health. *Ongoing for 2025 – 26.*
4. **Development and implementation of Patient Consent Strategy:** *this programme had a delayed start in anticipation of IBI report. Subsequent update of the SaBTO consent guidance in response to the IBI report has paused further work until 2025 – 26.*
5. **Impact of Digital Transformation in Transfusion** – increased collaboration with Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) to address the digital requirements of the IBI recommendations, however implementation delays of enabling systems hinder progress: *carried over to 2025-26*
6. **Review and update of the BHNOC Educational Strategy :** *carried over until 2025-26*

Challenges to the Blood Supply in 2024 - 25

Although there continued to be blood supply challenges into 2024/2025, the frequency and duration of shortage alerts was significantly improved on the preceding year. These highlight the significant efforts made along all points of the blood supply chain through the proactive management of the supply chain with ongoing review of supply and demand.

This is a positive step for a sustainable Welsh blood supply chain, which has not been mirrored in the other UK Blood Services.



Blood Donation Model and resourcing has been a key focus to ensure a resilient supply chain to meet the needs of the patients in Wales along side collaborative working along the supply chain.



Review of hospital stock levels using the Issuable Stock Index (ISI) tool developed by the Blood Stocks Management Scheme (BSMS). This tool uses hospital transfusion activity to optimise blood stock holding.



Red Cell issuing remained stable for 2024/2025, despite increased hospital surgical activity to support addressing the backlog from COVID pandemic. Evidencing messaging and push to implement patient blood management is effective.

These pieces of work helped to maintain the integrity of the supply chain and resulted in Wales supply being the most robust of the UK where shortages continue to be seen. Work will continue in 2025 - 26 to provide assurance that a strategic approach is developed that finds a sustainable balance between supply and demand.

Work Streams: programmes of work

The BHNNOG continued the work of their four key workstreams in 2024 - 25.



Anaemia



Appropriate use of
O D Negative



Appropriate use of
Platelets



Intraoperative
Cell Salvage

Anaemia Management

The anaemia programme successfully secured ongoing Value Based Health Care funding to continue to build on the success of the focus on preoperative anaemia. The 2024-25 outcomes completed through ongoing collaboration and engagement of stakeholders were:



1. Recruitment of **permanent resource** within Welsh Blood Service to focus on delivery of an anaemia management strategy across NHS Wales as part of the BHNNOG.
2. Revised the **NHS Wales Preoperative anaemia pathway**³ to further drive improvement and equity in preoperative anaemia management across Wales.
3. Adopting a once for Wales ethos, to drive ongoing improvement in preoperative anaemia management. Activities related to this includes:
 - Launch of the **Preoperative Anaemia Major Surgery Dashboard** in collaboration with Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) to support ongoing benchmarking and evidence service improvement.
 - Simplify requesting of the POAS (preoperative anaemia screen) test set, use of which ensures patients are actively screened for anaemia and underlying cause in a single bleeding event.
 - **Supporting clinical teams** with operational or educational issues in a bespoke approach, including tailored education sessions and exploring opportunities across health boards for improved shared care.
4. Preliminary activity to expand scope to add more value through:
 - Collaboration with the **3Ps (Promote, Prevent and Prepare)** policy for planned care to allow earlier opportunity to identify and treat patients with anaemia.
 - Initiating the development of a **Post-operative Anaemia Pathway** to support patients that have not been captured on the Preoperative Anaemia Pathway.
 - Scoping alignment with **NHS Wales Women's Health Policy** to identify collaboration opportunities.

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

In 2024 - 25 the workstream continued to emphasise the importance of active stock management and appropriate use of O D negs. The '**Where does O D Neg go**' audit was repeated in Autumn 2024 with hospitals across Wales.

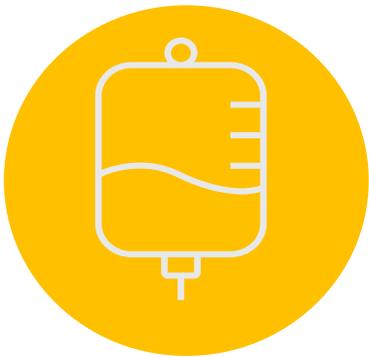


To support this work meetings are scheduled with each HB in early 2025/2026 to agree future actions and to review current O D Neg stock levels using the **Issuable Stock Index (ISI) tool** developed by the Blood Stocks Management Scheme (BSMS). As agreed in 2023/24, reports are produced utilising this tool to provide hospital with an evidence-based assessment of optimum stock holding based on activity.

Building upon the success of the workstream to drive a reduction of hospital-based O D Neg wastage, a **KPI reduction from 10 to 8%** was trialled in late 2024. Next steps are to agree this as a long term adjustment with the hospitals in 2025/2026.

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 has been working more collaboratively with the WBS in 2024/2025 to support the platelet supply.

Within WBS Futures, the **Platelet Strategy group** is a key deliverable of the Transfusion Laboratory Modernisation workstream. Development of the **WBS Platelet Operational Development Plan** as a key document outlining necessary steps to ensure sufficient and sustainable platelet component production by the WBS to meet the requirements of patients of Wales.

At the time of this report the plan was approved and awaiting oversight by BHNOC as key stakeholders.

The BHNOC Platelet workstream continued to work with Health Boards to meet platelet wastage KPIs in a bespoke manner as approved by BHNOC. This acknowledges the complexity of the platelet supply chain due to their relatively short shelf life, variation in usage, location and activity. **Bespoke support** will continue into 2025/2026.

Intraoperative Cell Salvage (ICS)

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. ICS supports the appropriate use of Cell Salvage as part of our Patient Blood Management (PBM) strategy. 2024 - 25 saw implementation of the **adjusted funding model** to improve equity across Wales.



In 2024 - 25 the All-Wales ICS Network (AWICSN) have:

- Secured a Cardiff University MSc Data Science Student to develop a **data dashboard** for ICS form returns – due to be available for use Autumn 2025.
- Performed an audit on use of surgical red cell use. **'Where does surgical blood go?'** involved participation from NHS Wales sites with significant major surgical activity, at the time of writing the annual report, the audit was complete and report in draft.
- **Drafted ICS guidance document** to provide clear expectations related to ICS use within NHS Wales.

The 2024 - 25 ICS annual report identified a total 2378 ICS data collection forms submitted for analysis. This was an **8.6% increase** (n=189) increase on 2024 - 25. The two largest specialty users across Wales were Obstetrics (n=999) and Orthopaedic surgery (n=841).

The review of the ICS funding arrangement will occur in 2025/2026 to allow a full year of submissions to be collated and considered.

BHNOG Working Groups

Serious Hazards of Transfusion (SHOT) Working Group

Following issue of the IBI recommendations, it has been identified by BHNOG that risk related to transfusion is broader than incident reports to SHOT. In response to this, the SHOT working group (SWG) has rebranded to the **BHNOG Transfusion Risk Group** as of early 2025. The group continued to build on previous work, whilst scoping to define current position related to transfusion risk within Wales.

Developments and innovations introduced in 2024 - 25 include:

- I. Supported issue through BHNOG of **WHC/2024/039 Pre-transfusion sample taking** – to highlight the poor practices leading to wrong blood in tube (WBIT) incidents.
- II. Scoping of incident reporting platforms utilised in Health Boards for transfusion related incidents.
- III. Facilitated the first joint **UK hemovigilance workshop** in 24th Jan 2025 in Cardiff with SHOT and Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).
- IV. **SWG review of ToR and membership** in progress to meet the expanded requirement from BHNOG to address the IBI recommendations. Membership will be expanded to include Welsh Risk Pool and SHOT representation - this will continue into 2025/2026.
- V. Further building relationships with the core SHOT team through:
 1. Representing BHNOG on the **UK IBI recommendation 7e subgroup** – related to implementation of SHOT recommendations.
 2. A reference point for consultation on SHOT produced resources including the **drafting of SHOT Standards** to be issued in Summer 2025.

One of the challenges that faced the SWG was ongoing management of the annual UK SHOT report. Feedback to the SHOT team mirrored that across the UK and SHOT have now moved from annual recommendations to SHOT Standards, review of which will be 3 yearly, thereby providing extended opportunity to ensure implementation.

To support this change and the IBI recommendations, the BHNOG are working with the Welsh Government Infected Blood Inquiry Oversight Group to reinforce the requirement for clear transfusion governance at a Health Board level.

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Education Strategy Group

The ESG have gone from strength to strength, the work of which has ensured Wales is in an advanced position with regards to ensuring delivery of the IBI recommendations related to transfusion education. Governance has been further enhanced with firmer links established with Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) to continue to build upon the established education programmes.

Several key milestones were achieved in 2024 – 25, these include:



F1/F2 : Transfusion Safety Training Programme

- A Welsh Clinical Leadership Fellow project: **package is based upon the Senior Student Assistantship (SSA) programme** delivered to all all final year medical students in Wales.
- Endorsed by **Health Education and Innovation Wales** with the aim to have national delivery to all foundation doctors in Wales.
- Pilots are scheduled in 2025/2026 prior to implementation.



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

- Supporting **transition of supplier** to Bangor University, to ensure the quality of the new course.
- Delivery will be virtual to improve accessibility while maintaining education quality. **First Cohort November 2025.**



Review of ESG Terms of Reference and focus on Scientific Transfusion Education

- ToR reviewed to include the requirements of the IBI recommendations - specifically 3 and 7d.
- **Mapping of scientific transfusion education** to clarify networks and oversight of activity in Wales.
- **BHNOG Education Strategy will be updated in 2025/2026** to align with the expectations of the IBI.



Hospital Transfusion Team Induction

- Facilitated by the WBS Blood Health Team - opportunity for **hospital transfusion staff** to visit the WBS site and **understand transfusion governance in Wales.**
- Objectives support staff with **networking** and signposting to **key resources.**
- Blood Heath Team Sharepoint page developed to support hospital staff.

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

Additional BHNOG Projects/Events

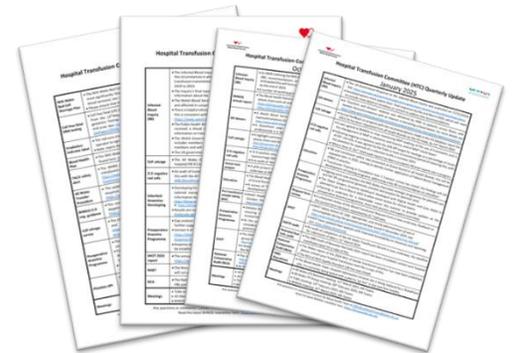
Effective and timely communication between BHNOG and the community it serves is an integral component of the success of the oversight group. In 2024 – 25, there was a strategic emphasis to BHNOG communications to HBs and stakeholders to **maximise the profile** of its work:

The **BHNOG 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, available in both Welsh and English, provide a **repository for transfusion related guidance** education and information for healthcare professionals highlighting both the work of the BHNOG and providing opportunities for our stakeholders to participate in the collaborative projects promoted by the BHNOG.

Newsletters:

One of the key strands of the BHNOG communication strategy is the issue of a Quarterly Newsletter to Hospital Transfusion Committees



Grand Round Presentations:

Aligned with Patient Safety week the Blood Health Team delivered a session at all Grand Rounds across Wales to raise awareness of the Infected Blood Inquiry, the BHNOG using case studies to reinforce the importance of transfusion safety.

Conference posters and presentations:

The Blood Health Team represented the BHNOG and Welsh Blood Service at a number of UK and international conferences to raise the profile of the innovative work behind delivery of the Blood Health Plan.



Network for the advancement of patient blood management, Haemostasis and Thrombosis April 2024 (4 posters)



*International Society of Blood Transfusion
July 2024 (2 posters)*



*Association for Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia and Critical Care
July 2024 – Oral presentation (poster winner)*



*British Blood Transfusion Society
Sept 2024 (2 posters)*

Publications



The ongoing activities of the BHNOG have also been successfully published in 2024/2025, allowing opportunity to further raise the profile of best practice within Wales.

National implementation of the All-Wales Perioperative Anaemia Pathway: focus on cardiac services

Evans, Caroline et al. British Journal of Anaesthesia, Volume 133, Issue 3, 714 – 715

Patient Blood Management in Wales: A national approach *Towell. K Bloodlines, Volume 151, 38-39*

Future Priorities for 2025 - 26

This Annual Report identifies the key achievements and work programmes undertaken by and on behalf of the BHNOG from April 2024 - March 2025.

The report builds on the **delivery of PBM**, and 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.

2025 - 26 will continue to provide challenges to the transfusion community in Wales. Following the release of the **Infected Blood Inquiry (IBI)** Report in May 2024, the responsibility of the BHNOG to support delivery of recommendation 7 Patient Safety: Blood Transfusion has been clearly defined by the Welsh Government IBI oversight group, established to ensure full implementation of the recommendations. This is reflected in the priorities for 2025-2026 with key focus on **digitisation and data, transfusion education** and **transfusion governance**.



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. Infected Blood Inquiry Report (2024) <https://www.infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk/reports/inquiry-report>
 3. NHS Wales Preoperative Anaemia Pathway : <https://bhnog.wales.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/English-NHS-Wales-Preoperative-Anaemia-Pathway-V4-3.pdf>
 4. 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
 5. 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://bsh.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 01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025. Specific Health board can be obtained from your transfusion team</i>		
Measure	KPI	Actual
1a. O D Neg as a percentage of issues	12%	11.7%
1b. O D Neg wastage	10%	6.9%
1c. Hospital Platelet wastage	15%	11.9%
2. MAJOR HAEMORRHAGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: <i>the following data provides KPIs for All Wales Major Haemorrhage data from 01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025. Specific Health board can be obtained from your transfusion team</i>		
2a. O D Pos emergency units used for unknown males	80%	70%
2b. Sample taken before first red cell unit transfused	95%	76%
3. EDUCATION COMPLETION RATES: <i>the following information is taken from key BHNOC educational programmes delivered in 2024 - 25. 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)	416 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 01/04/2024 – 31/03/ 2025</i>		
4a. Number of new users accessing the website* n.b. this will include AI bots	3610	
4b. Number of returning users accessing the website	621	
5. AUDITS & SURVEYS: <i>the following identifies the audits undertaken on behalf of the BHNOC for 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025. 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)	52.4%	
ii. O D Neg units transfused to non-O D Neg patients to avoid Time expiry	13.3%	
iii. O D Neg units issued for emergency use	10.8%	
iv. O D Neg units wasted as Time Expiry	5.7%	
v. O D Neg units transferred within a Health board	8.8%	

5b. Anaemia Standards (2&3 taken from the Major surgery dashboard – 4 unable to measure)	
1a: A standardised pathway across the health board, covering all specialties	100%
1b: Health Board pathway aligns to All-Wales pathway	100%
2. All patients matched to CQUIN standards should be screened for anaemia prior to surgery	89.4%
3. Any patient with a Hb<130g/L is assessed for iron deficiency	77%
4. Any patient identified as iron deficient can be treated before scheduled surgery	NA%
6. SHOT: <i>the data identifies the total number of SHOT reportable incidents (including Serious Adverse Reactions and Events) across all HBs. From 01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025. Specific HB data can be obtained from your transfusion team</i>	
6a. SHOT reportable incidents (SAEs & [SARs])	157 [17]
7. INTRAOPERATIVE CELL SALVAGE (ICS): <i>the following data identifies the number of ICS reports analysed from 01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025. Specific HB data can be obtained from your transfusion team</i>	
7a. Total number of ICS reports analysed	2378
7b. Two Largest ICS speciality users:	
Orthopaedic Surgery	841
Obstetrics	999