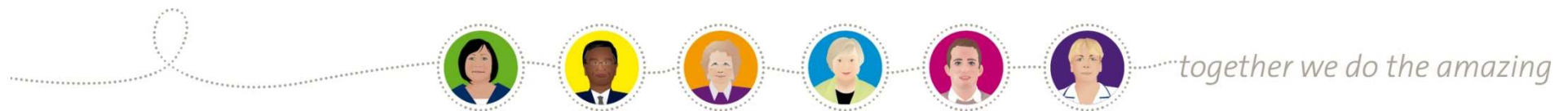


# Consent for Blood Transfusion

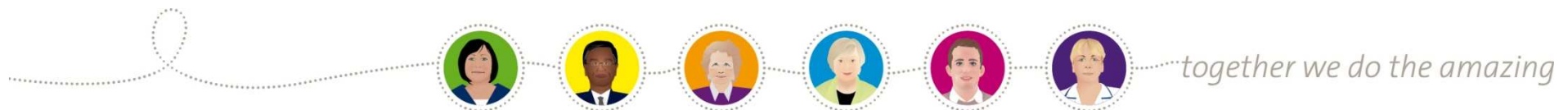
Vicki Davidson

Transfusion Practitioner



# Consent

- It is a general legal and ethical principal that **valid consent** should be obtained from a patient (or parent/guardian) before treatment is given



# What is *valid* consent?

- The patient must be **competent** (have capacity)

\*Every adult patient is presumed competent unless proven otherwise

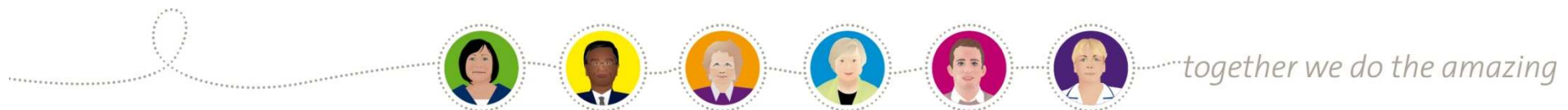
\*An unwise or eccentric decision does not mean incompetence

- The patient must have received **sufficient information** to make an informed decision

\*To include details on the risks, benefits and available alternatives

- Consent should be seen as a process, rather than a one off event

What information would **you** give?



## RISKS

Hepatitis  
Clinical errors  
Bacterial Infection  
HIV  
vCJD  
Adverse reaction

## BENEFITS

Treatment for leukaemia/cancer  
To feel better  
To save life  
Relief from symptoms of anaemia

## ALTERNATIVES

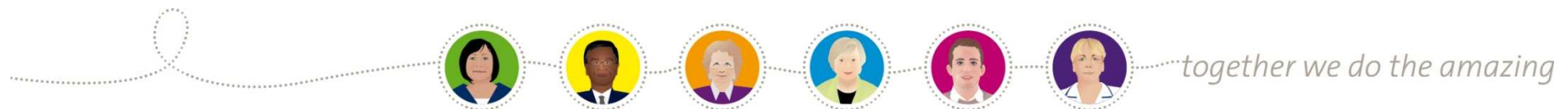
Cell salvage  
Iron therapy  
Minimise blood loss



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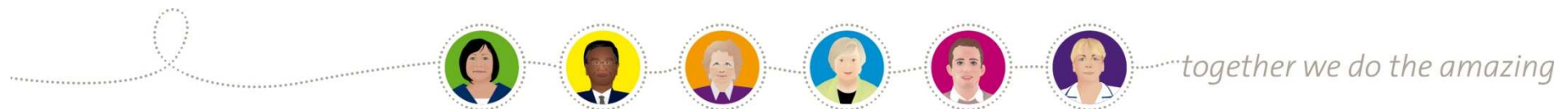
## Please remember....

- Compared to other everyday risks, the likelihood of getting an infection from a blood transfusion is very low
- The risk of viral infections is extremely low - there is a rigorous process for selection of donors and testing
- Clinical and laboratory error is a known risk of transfusion



# Children and consent

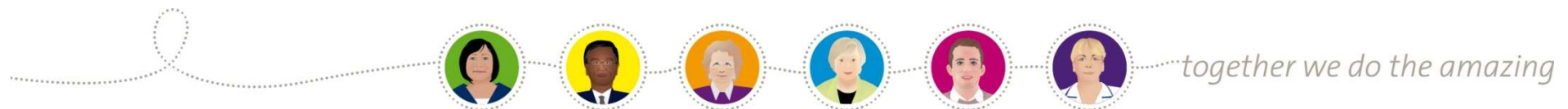
- Children and young people should be involved as much as possible in decisions about their care
- Children under the age of 16 are not deemed to be automatically legally competent to give consent



# Lack of competence

- Where a patient is deemed to lack competence then a 'best interest' decision will be made
- Where possible, treatment decisions will be made based on any available knowledge of a patient's previously expressed wishes

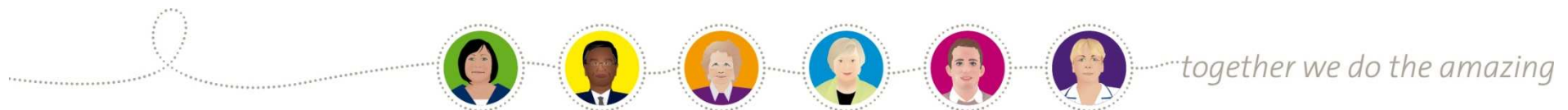
Can you think of any examples of how we may determine these wishes in a patient who lacks capacity?



# Determining a patient's wishes

- Advanced decision
- Views previously expressed by patient
- Patient's wishes known by close relatives
- Religious beliefs

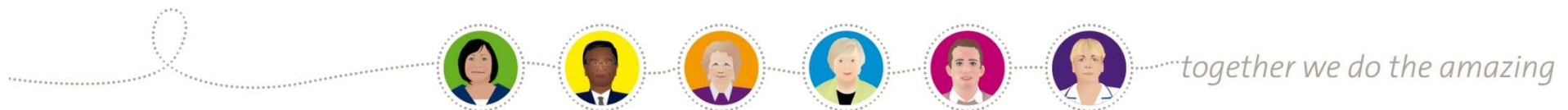
**The final decision must be based on the best interests of the patient**





## The right to refuse

- An adult patient has the right to refuse a blood transfusion or blood product
- Reasons for refusal can vary and include religious beliefs
- The patient must fully understand the risks of **NOT** having the transfusion
- Again, it is important to clearly document the patient's wishes



# Information leaflets

to aid your discussion and ensure standardised information

**NHS**  
Blood and Transplant

## Will I need a blood transfusion?


Patient information



**NHS**  
Blood and Transplant

## Information for patients needing irradiated blood


Patient information



**NHS**  
Blood and Transplant

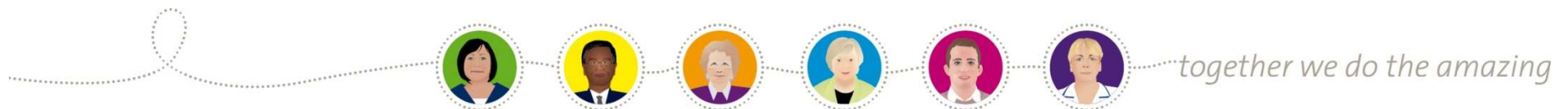
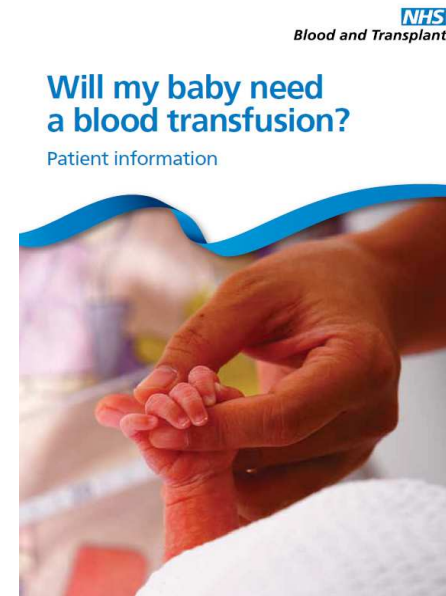
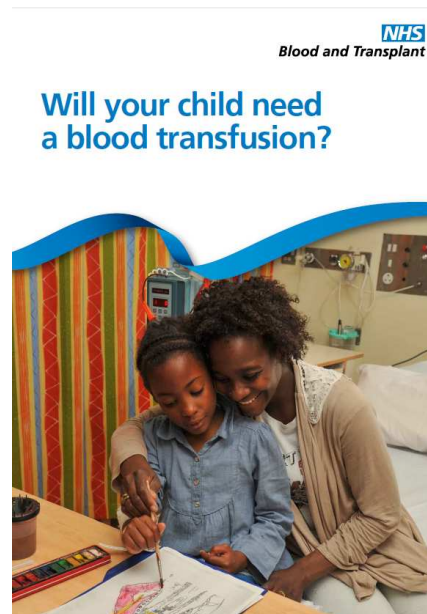
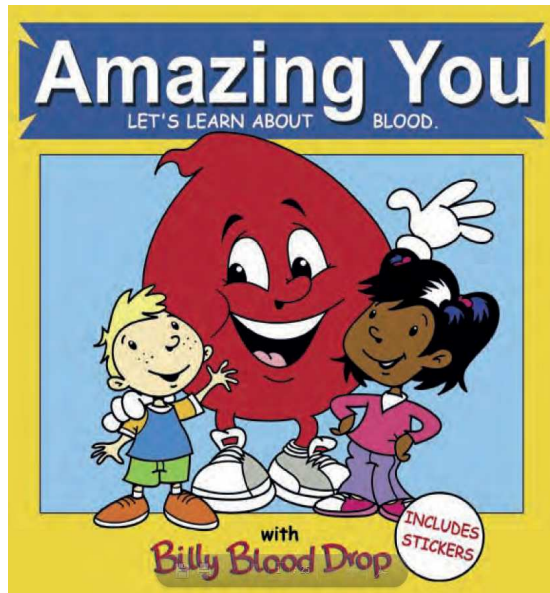
## Will my baby need a blood transfusion?

Patient information



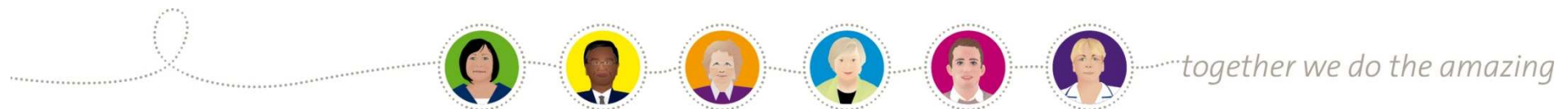
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# For parents and children too..



# Check understanding

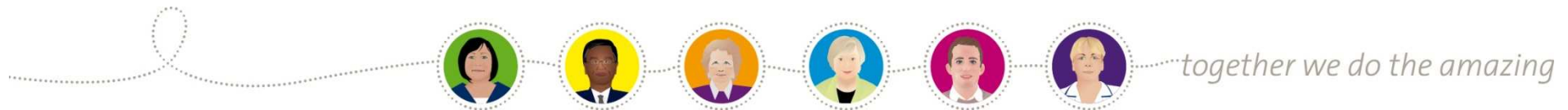
- Use language the patient is likely to understand
- Avoid 'jargon' and medical terms
- Encourage the patient to ask questions
- Information leaflets are available in a variety of languages
- An interpreter may be necessary



# Documentation - as important as ever!

Please remember to document any  
discussions regarding consent for transfusion  
in the patient's medical records

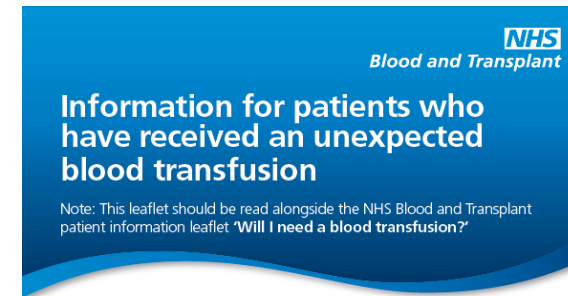
The patient is not legally required to sign a consent form





# Retrospective ‘consent’

- Patients who cannot give consent at the time of transfusion should be informed that they have received a transfusion in retrospect
- As a precaution to reduce risk of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD), people who have received a blood transfusion since 1980 are not able to donate



While you were in hospital, it was necessary for you to receive a blood transfusion. There are many reasons why patients may need a transfusion, some of which are discussed in the 'Will I need a blood transfusion?' leaflet. However do please ask a member of your healthcare team about why you needed a blood transfusion. They will be able to answer any questions you may have.

#### Are blood transfusions safe?

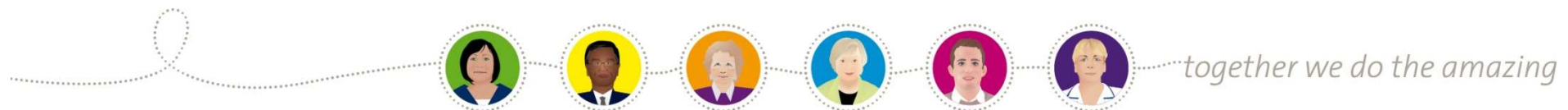
Yes, the risk that a blood transfusion may make you ill is very low. More information about any potential infection risks, and all the measures that are taken to ensure your safety, is included in the leaflet 'Will I need a blood transfusion?'.

#### I'm a blood donor. Can I still donate?

As a precautionary measure to reduce the risk of transmitting variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD), people who have received a blood transfusion since 1980 are not currently able to donate blood.

#### Do I need to tell my doctor?

The hospital should include information in the discharge letter to your GP to tell them that you have had a blood transfusion, and to explain why it was carried out. The hospital should give you a copy of this letter; if they don't, you can ask the hospital for a copy.



# Sources of essential information

- Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues, and Organs (SaBTO)

- [Recommendations on consent for blood transfusion](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/advisory-committee-on-the-safety-of-blood-tissues-and-organs>

- General Medical Council (GMC)

- [Consent guidelines](#)

[http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical\\_guidance/consent\\_guidance\\_index.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/consent_guidance_index.asp)

- NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT)

- [Patient Information leaflets](#)

[http://hospital.blood.co.uk/library/patient\\_information\\_leaflets/leaflets/index.asp](http://hospital.blood.co.uk/library/patient_information_leaflets/leaflets/index.asp)

- Learn Blood Transfusion

- [E-learning package on consent](#)

<http://www.learnbloodtransfusion.org.uk/>

- Serious Hazards of Transfusion (SHOT)

- [UK reporting on adverse events and reactions](#)

<http://www.shotuk.org/>



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# Any questions....

