



A Message from the Regional Transfusion Team (RTT):

This has been one of the most challenging years for all colleagues across healthcare. We would like to thank all the members of the South East Coast Regional Transfusion Committee (RTC) and RTT for adapting, managing, and maintaining their hard work throughout 2020, and for their continued resilience.

It is also important to remember the colleagues we have lost during this pandemic.

Thank you for the support you have shown.

Transfusion Laboratory Manager (TLM) update:

The pandemic has meant that 2020 has been a very unusual year. An obvious change has been to hospital admissions, including a general reduction in surgery but increasing Covid-19 positive patients. At the beginning of the pandemic this significantly decreased transfusion activity, but lessons have been learnt so recent activity has been better managed, with less, but appropriate, surgery still taking place and with labs supporting this. The pandemic has also resulted in changes to out-patient transfusions and encouraged clinical teams to plan transfusion events rather than using day-case admissions. This has resulted in a change in demand, including less un-planned transfusions that may have been seen before. Virtual Clinics have led to a reduction in Haematology/Oncology patients attending hospital, and this in-turn, has sometimes led to labs providing transfusions to unusual locations. Emergency Major Haemorrhage Incidents are still a concern, but these have been fine-tuned to include social distancing restrictions.

The Convalescent Plasma trials introduced an unfamiliar practice to many labs, but the success of this trial must, in part, be attributed to the practical support they have provided. Within the SEC, concerns about congestion delaying NHS Blood and Transplant deliveries to hospitals in East Kent have been managed and most of the haulage traffic has been prepared for these delays. On a day to day basis, staff absences remain a concern. Senior staff have, in some cases, had to work on the bench to maintain lab services. Staff have become used to labs being managed from a distance including the loss of face to face contact. Restrictions to moving around the hospital and to re-stock blood fridges both inside and outside the lab has meant innovative solutions. These require specific training covering how these fridges will be accessed and by whom. Despite everything, lab staff have done their best to remain professional, supportive and cheerful while meeting the needs of patients.

Richard Whitmore, Customer Services Manager, NHSBT.

Transfusion Practitioner (TP) update:

During the unprecedented times of 2020, the SEC TPs have faced many challenges and changes to practice, one was the cancellation of face to face training. TPs rose to the challenge in a variety of ways, virtual training sessions via Microsoft Teams, rapid writing of on-line e-assessment packages, and extra support for staff re-deploying to unfamiliar areas where they may need to be involved in transfusion.

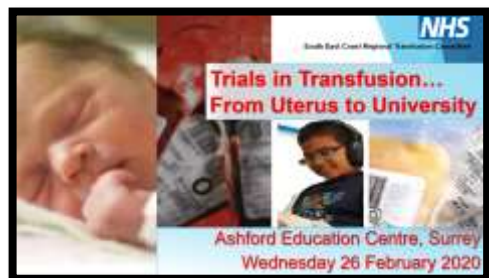
The National Transfusion Practitioner Network has produced a document, in conjunction with the National TLM group, listing many common problems that occurred due to Covid-19 restrictions, solutions that worked well, possible improvements and tips, tricks and learning points which have been shared with all TPs.

It was also a year that saw TPs renewing clinical competencies, re-training and offering help and support in ICU; working voluntarily to ensure "cold" sites were safe and ready for patients; and in one hospital approval for non-medical staff in ED to authorise blood components – this has been very successful "with policy being applied to the letter". *Jo Lawrence Chair and Liz Tatam, Deputy Chair, SEC TP group*

In this summary we look back at 2020 at some of what has been achieved. As we move into 2021, we look forward to working alongside our South Central colleagues and the opportunities this brings as we merge to a new South East RTC Region in the Spring.



Regional Education and Business



60 delegates attended the SEC RTC Education and Business meeting at Ashford Hospital, Surrey on 26th February. The theme of the day was '**Trials in Transfusion: from Uterus to University**' and focused on blood transfusion requirements in foetal, neonatal, and paediatric patients. Talks included patient case studies and guidelines for blood selection. Delegates enjoyed the variety of talks, which included laboratory and clinical aspects. Overall score 3.7/4.



We were pleased to be able to continue to maintain education during 2020, with our first foray into virtual training happening on the 7th October with a '**Transfusion Bites**' session. This was also the first joint event held with our colleagues in South Central RTC, with over 120 delegates attending. The event received very positive feedback, with appreciation shown for delivering an accessible, relevant, and

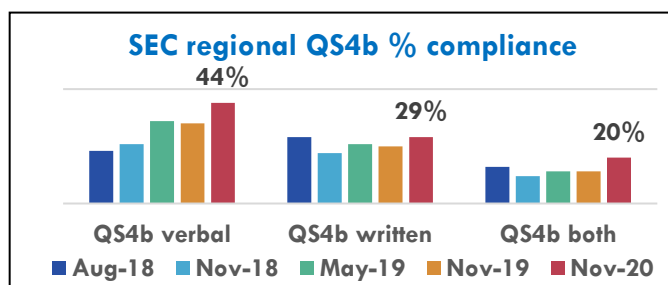


welcome learning opportunity. Talks included pre-hospital transfusion; management of blood stock levels during COVID; a catastrophic bleed at a satellite site; and the importance of clear communication in avoiding transfusion errors in paediatrics. A successful, interactive session, with 100% of survey respondents reporting they would recommend a similar event to colleagues.

Presentations, where permission given, can be found on our [JPAC site](#) and the [PBM England YouTube channel](#)

Regional Audit

NICE Quality Standard QS138 Usually performed twice per year, the regional audit scheduled for April was postponed due to Covid-19. TPs spent the Summer reflecting on results obtained since the rolling audit began in 2018. Hospitals continue to perform well against Quality Statement (QS) 2 - use of tranexamic acid in moderate blood loss surgery, and QS3 - clinical/haemoglobin re-assessment after every transfused unit. Areas of consistent shortfall in compliance are QS1a, correction of iron deficiency pre-op, and QS4b, informed consent in transfused patients. The audit was performed for the fifth time in November 2020 and focused specifically on QS4b with 182 cases audited from 9 hospitals. Results showed a slight improvement in consent compliance, with documented evidence that: 44% of patients received verbal information, 29 % written information, and 20% of patients receiving both verbal and written information about transfusion. Patient information leaflets on blood transfusion are available [here](#); consent resources available [here](#).



Hospitals in SEC were invited to take part in a **London and SEC Trauma group scoping survey** in October, looking at whether hospitals had policies in place for use of PCC in reversal of warfarin; reversal of DOAC; and use of O positive blood in unknown males. 9/32 responses were from SEC hospitals. The survey indicated that a further audit on compliance to reversal policies would be beneficial. **An NBTC survey on the use of blood in the pre-hospital setting** was also circulated, results of both surveys will be revisited in 2021.

National Audits: The national results of the **2018 NCA Audit of the Management of Maternal Anaemia** were reviewed, 10 hospitals in the region took part. The national report for the audit is available [here](#). The regional results from the **NCA 2018 Audit of the Management of Major Haemorrhage** were reviewed, 10 regional hospitals took part. National report is available [here](#).

Shared Learning

Available on our [JPAC website](#):

Western Sussex have updated: 'Collection of Blood Components' Workbook; 'Receiving and Administering a Blood Component' Workbook; 'Investigation Interview for a WBIT' template

East Kent have produced 'Investigation of a Transfusion Reaction' clinical and laboratory forms

Congratulations to **Laura Humber** at Brighton, Sussex for winning a Blood Administration Training Quality Improvement Project as part of a Florence Nightingale Leadership Programme

NEW South East Regional Transfusion Committee - Next Steps

South East Coast and South Central RTCs will merge to become the new **South East RTC** from April, aligning to NHS England South East region

Plans are currently being put in place to:
Combine meetings for existing groups: RTT; TP
Review existing workplans & agree 2021 workplan
Plan RTC meetings, Education Days

Future meeting and events details to follow in due course.

For information on RTC activity or to forward any ideas for future work or events, email frances.moll@nhsbt.nhs.uk or visit [JPAC](#)

