Chapter 2: Quality in blood and tissue establishments and hospital blood banks

2.1: Introduction

2.1.1: The quality environment

Until fairly recently, there was no formal regulation to cover blood tissues or cells. Indeed, they were all formally excluded when the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Directive\(^1\) was updated in 2003.

This omission was deliberate, in the knowledge that separate legislation was planned for blood (the ‘Blood Directives’) and tissues and cells (the ‘Tissues and Cells Directives’). All of this legislation is described in more detail below. This legislation has changed the regulatory landscape for the Blood Services (now known as Blood Establishments), hospital blood banks (which are now subject to regulatory scrutiny for the first time) and for tissue and cell banks (which are now under formal regulation for the first time and known as Tissue Establishments).

In this chapter, the impact of these new regulatory requirements is discussed and the management of a quality management system which meets these new regulations is described based on the requirements for the Blood Safety and Quality Directives. The requirements for Tissues and Cells Directives are similar.

The key requirements for Blood Establishments and for hospital blood banks are defined in the Blood Safety and Quality Regulations (Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 50),\(^2\) and are enforced by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Those for tissues and cells are defined in the Human Tissue (Quality and Safety for Human Application) Regulations, 2007 (Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 1523), \(^3\) and are enforced by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA).

These regulations require that Blood and Tissue Establishments are licensed and subject to regular inspection for compliance. Hospital blood banks are not formally licensed, but must submit annual compliance reports to the MHRA. Based on these compliance reports, the MHRA select a number of hospital blood banks for inspection every year and can also decide to do ‘for cause’ inspections when there is evidence of non-compliance.

The MHRA and HTA have powers to remove licences from Blood and Tissue Establishments, respectively, and the MHRA can issue cease and desist orders to prevent blood banks from continuing in operation. These powers derive from the relevant UK legislation, which is designed to ensure that appropriate standards of performance are achieved and maintained. This inspection process is designed to generate a climate of continual quality improvement, and this chapter will look at the key issues which have to be addressed in achieving an effective quality management system.
2.2: Key European initiatives

2.2.1: European Union Blood Safety and Quality Directives


The first two Directives came into force in UK law on 8 February 2005 as the Blood Safety and Quality Regulations 2005 (BSQR),\(^2\) with their requirements becoming effective in November 2005. They set standards of quality and safety for the collection and testing of human blood and blood components, whatever their intended purpose, and their processing, storage and distribution when intended for transfusion. The regulations also cover the collection and testing of blood and blood components for autologous use. In effect, therefore, they cover the whole process from donor to patient – from ‘vein to vein’.

The latter two Directives came into force in August 2006 and relate specifically to traceability requirements and notification of adverse reactions and events, and introduce EC standards and specifications relating to a quality system for Blood Establishments. They also added provisions relating to record keeping and traceability of blood and blood components to a new category of facility, defined as a hospital, another facility or service owned or managed by a health service body, a care home, an independent clinic, a manufacturer or a biomedical research institute.

The Directives define certain activities which can only be undertaken by Blood Establishments, namely:

- the collection and testing of blood or blood components, whatever their intended purpose

- the processing, storage and distribution of blood and blood components when they are intended to be used for transfusion.

Hospital blood banks are not permitted to undertake these activities unless licensed as Blood Establishments, but are able to store, distribute and perform compatibility tests on blood and blood components for use within hospital facilities.

2.2.2: In Vitro Diagnostic Medical Devices Directive – 98/79/EC\(^8\)

Following implementation of this Directive into UK law, users of \textit{in vitro} devices must ensure that any stock produced and introduced into the supply chain is CE marked, and that only CE-marked stock can be purchased and used. There are a number of other obligations placed upon users; for example, they can be
held criminally liable if they knowingly encourage the supply of non-CE-marked *in vitro* devices. The main implication for the Blood Services surrounds the provision of reagents to third parties for their use, where CE marking is required, even if there is no payment for the reagent supplied. This is a complicated piece of legislation. Blood and Tissue Establishments and hospital blood banks are significant users and producers of *in vitro* devices, and they should ensure they are compliant with the legislation and should take appropriate advice to ensure they work within the legislation.

2.2.3: Medical Devices Directive (MDD) – 93/42/EEC

This Directive has been brought into UK law. It was, however, amended by Directive 98/79/EC to recognise the definition of an *in vitro* diagnostic device, which was not originally defined, and to ensure there were common definitions between the two Directives, such as the precise meaning of ‘putting into service’. It is anticipated that, while Blood and Tissue Establishments and hospital blood banks may not manufacture medical devices, they are key users of such devices, from blood bags to donation beds, so knowledge of the legislation may be beneficial.

At the time of writing (late 2012) a European Consultation is in progress to review the effectiveness of the European Devices legislation.

2.2.4: Human Tissue Act 2004


The Human Tissue Act 2004 covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It established the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) to regulate activities concerning the removal, storage, use and disposal of human tissue. Consent is the fundamental principle of the legislation and underpins the lawful removal, storage and use of body parts, organs and tissue. Different consent requirements apply when dealing with tissue from the deceased and the living. The Human Tissue Act 2004 lists the purposes for which consent is required (these are called Scheduled Purposes).

There is separate legislation in Scotland – the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006.

While provisions of the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 are based on authorisation rather than consent, these are essentially both expressions of the same principle.

2.2.5: The European Union Tissues and Cells Directives


These Directives establish a harmonised approach to the regulation of tissues and cells across Europe. They set a benchmark for the standards that must be met when carrying out any activity involving tissues and cells for human application (patient treatment). The Directives also require that systems are put in place to ensure that all tissues and cells used in human application are traceable from donor to recipient.

The HTA, as one of the Competent Authorities in the UK under the EU Tissues and Cells Directives, has responsibility for regulating tissues and cells (other than gametes and embryos) for human application.

2.2.6: Human Tissue (Quality and Safety for Human Application) Regulations 2007

The Directives were fully implemented into UK law on 5 July 2007, via the Human Tissue (Quality and Safety for Human Application) Regulations 2007. The HTA’s remit includes the regulation of:

- procurement
- testing
- processing
- storage
- distribution
- import/export

of tissues and cells for human application.

Establishments where these activities are carried out will normally need a licence. To obtain this, establishments carrying out the above activities are required to meet the standards which are detailed in the Guide to Quality and Safety Assurance for Human Tissues and Cells for Patient Treatment as implemented by HTA Directions 003/2010.

The HTA also publishes Codes of Practice, which provide guidance and lay down expected standards for each of the sectors it regulates (see www.hta.gov.uk).

2.3: Other standards

There are a number of other standards that help define how a quality management system should be designed to meet the needs of a particular aspect of a Service’s work. Table 2.1 provides information on some key inspection/licensing/accreditation/certification standards.

They are all applicable within England. Some apply directly to the whole of the UK (e.g. the International Standards), others to England and Wales (e.g. the NHS Litigation Authority Risk management assessment programme). Where there is not a direct cross-reference the reader should investigate further to determine how the standards might apply.

All the primary sources cited here are places where sound advice on management systems to address the various requirements of a modern Blood Service can be found. These will support the design and establishment of a system that can be confidently subjected to an external inspection process. The list is not intended to be exhaustive and by the nature of change is only current at the time of publication. It is for this reason version numbering has not been applied to the available standards; they will be constantly updated.
Table 2.1 List of some key inspection/licensing/accreditation/certification standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key standards</th>
<th>Applicable to</th>
<th>Responsible body</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
<td>BS 15000 IT Service Management Standard</td>
<td>Service management</td>
<td>BSI British Standards HQ, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL, UK +44 208 996 9000 BSI Online, Technical Indexes Limited, Willoughby Road, Bracknell RG12 8DW, UK +44 1344 404429</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bsigroup.com">www.bsigroup.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care Quality Commission</td>
<td>To regulate and inspect health and social care services in England</td>
<td>Care Quality Commission National Correspondence, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4PA, UK +44 3000 616161</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cqc.org.uk">www.cqc.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Healthcare Inspectorate Wales</td>
<td>Healthcare Inspectorate Wales is the independent inspectorate and regulator of all healthcare in Wales</td>
<td>Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, Bevan House, Caerphilly Business Park, Van Road, Caerphilly CF83 3ED, UK +44 29 2092 8850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or NHS Quality Improvement Scotland</td>
<td>Improving the quality of care and treatment delivered by NHS Scotland</td>
<td>NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, Edinburgh Office, Elliott House, 8–10 Hillside Crescent, Edinburgh EH7 5EA, UK +44 131 623 4300</td>
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<tr>
<td>or The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety</td>
<td>Responsible for monitoring and inspecting the availability and quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland, and encouraging improvements in the quality of those services</td>
<td>The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, 9th Floor, Riverside Tower, 5 Lanyon Place, Belfast BT1 3BT, UK +44 28 9051 7500 Central ALB Governance Unit, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Self-Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Measurement of the effectiveness and, over time, the improvement in a Blood Service’s management system. Helping understand where they are on the path to excellence</td>
<td>British Quality Foundation, 32–34 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2OX, UK +44 207 654 5000</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bqf.org.uk">www.bqf.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.efqm.org">www.efqm.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Blood Inspection System (EuBIS)</td>
<td>European project addressing the safety of blood transfusion</td>
<td>Institut für Transfusionsmedizin und Immunhämatologie, DRK-Blutspendedienst, Klinikum der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Sandhofstrasse 1, D-60528 Frankfurt am Main, Germany</td>
<td><a href="http://www.eubis-europe.eu">www.eubis-europe.eu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Federation for Immunogenetics (EFI)</td>
<td>Histocompatibility and Immunology (H&amp;I) – reference and tissue typing</td>
<td>European Federation for Immunogenetics (EFI), EFI Central Office, c/o Department of Immunohematology and Blood Transfusion, Leiden University Medical Centre, Building 1 E3-Q, PO Box 9600, 2300 RC Leiden, The Netherlands</td>
<td><a href="http://www.efiweb.eu">www.efiweb.eu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) guidelines</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical environments</td>
<td>The European Commission publishes this online as EudraLex Volume 4</td>
<td><a href="http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/eudralex/vol-4/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/eudralex/vol-4/index_en.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTA Directions 003/2010 – the standards required under the Human Tissue (Quality and Safety of Tissues and Cells for Tissue banking activity</td>
<td>Human Tissue Authority, 151 Buckingham Palace Road, Victoria, London SW1W 9SZ, UK</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hta.gov.uk">www.hta.gov.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ISO 17799 Information Security Management</td>
<td>Information security</td>
<td>BSI British Standards HQ, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL, UK +44 208 996 9000 BSI Online, Technical Indexes Limited, Willoughby Road, Bracknell RG12 8DW, UK +44 1344 404429</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bsigroup.com">www.bsigroup.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO 9000 2000 and ISO 9001 2008</td>
<td>Quality management system</td>
<td>BSI British Standards HQ, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL, UK +44 208 996 9000 BSI Online, Technical Indexes Limited, Willoughby Road, Bracknell RG12 8DW, UK +44 1344 404429</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bsigroup.com">www.bsigroup.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Accreditation ICT Europe and EBMT (JACIE) assessment standard</td>
<td>Stem Cell Immunology – Human Progenitor Cells (SCI – HPC) collection, processing and storage</td>
<td>The Joint Accreditation Committee EBMT-EuroSHAGE (JACIE) Alvaro Urbano-Ispizua, JACIE Office, Hospital Clinic, Villarroel 170, 08036 Barcelona, Spain Tel: +34 93 454 9543 Fax: +34 93 453 1263</td>
<td><a href="http://www.jacie.org/standards/interim-standards">www.jacie.org/standards/interim-standards</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHSLA risk management assessment programme for NHS Trusts</td>
<td>Management of claims and litigation</td>
<td>National Health Service Litigation Authority, Napier House, 24 High Holborn, London WC1V 6AZ, UK +44 207 430 8700</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nhsla.com">www.nhsla.com</a></td>
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<td>Project control</td>
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2.4: Systems

2.4.1: Quality management system

Within a Blood/Tissue Establishment an effective quality management system (QMS) is a well-designed, structured and organised method of quality assuring the provision of consistent, safe and efficacious products. It also covers all diagnostic activities, reagent production, clinical trials and R&D. It provides both a means to confirm to regulatory bodies, management and customers that the establishment’s service is in compliance with relevant standards, and also a basis whereby improvement in quality may be demonstrated.

The European Blood and Safety Quality Directives require that a quality system is to be applied for any blood and blood components circulating in the EC and that member states therefore should ensure that for all blood and blood components including those coming from third countries there is a quality system in place for Blood Establishments equivalent to the quality system provided under these Directives.

The EU Tissues and Cells Directives have equivalent requirements for the provision of a quality management system. These are defined as follows: ‘an efficient QMS comprises a series of inter-related elements and a quality system for Blood/Tissue Establishments should embrace the principles of quality management, quality assurance, and continuous quality improvement, and should include personnel, premises and equipment, documentation, collection, testing and processing, storage and distribution, contract management, non-conformance and self-inspection, quality control, blood component recall, and external and internal auditing’.

2.4.2: Good manufacturing practice

The application of GMP is the cornerstone of an effective QMS and provides the structure upon which the elements of the quality system can be built. The objective of GMP is formally stated as being ‘to assure the quality of the medicinal product for the safety, well-being and protection of the patient’. The BSQR requires that Blood Establishments and hospital blood banks meet the requirements of good practice. This is taken by the MHRA to mean that Blood Establishments and hospital blood banks should comply with all relevant sections of the EC Guidelines to GMP. This applies to hospital blood banks, even though they are not manufacturing anything, but are part of the distribution chain which is defined as part of the overall manufacturing process.

The EC Guidelines to GMP are described more fully in section 2.6 using the quality system format provided by Directive 2005/62/EC. Elements are presented under separate headings, and in practical terms all of
these must be considered for each and every procedure or process to conform to the principles of good manufacturing practice.

2.5: Application of a quality management system

2.5.1: Blood Establishments

Blood Establishments are required under Directive 2005/62/EC to implement EC standards and specifications relating to a quality system for Blood Establishments, taking fully into account the principles of GMP. Article 2 of the Directive identifies the need for Good Practice Guidelines. These are in the process of preparation and the first iteration appears in the Council of Europe’s *Guide to the Preparation, Use and Quality Assurance of Blood Components*, Annex 1. Over the next few editions of the guide the contents of the annex will be expanded and elaborated to fully incorporate all relevant aspects of GMP. When complete, it will become the Good Practice Guidelines referred to in Article 2 of Directive 2005/62/EC.

In the absence of a complete guide, the approach we have taken in this chapter is to outline in this section the requirements of a quality management system in the context of the collection, processing, testing, storage and distribution of blood and blood components and tissues.

In addition, Blood Establishments should ensure they are compliant with the specific standards identified within the Blood Safety and Quality Regulations 2005 and other relevant standards and guidelines. These elements of the quality management system can be adapted to support other activities that a Blood Establishment may undertake, such as diagnostic testing and reagent production.

Blood Establishments are required to obtain a Blood Establishment Authorisation from MHRA before operating and to ensure that it is maintained through inspections scheduled every 2 years.

2.5.2: Hospital blood banks

Hospital blood banks are required to comply with the elements of the quality system outlined below relevant to their activities (see section 2.6). In addition, they must:

- Maintain donor to recipient traceability. Specifically BSQR (SI 2005 No.50) Regulation 9 (1)(e) requires hospital transfusion laboratories to ‘maintain, for not less than 30 years, the data needed to ensure full traceability of blood and blood components, from the point of receipt of the blood or blood component by the hospital blood bank’.

- Undertake mandatory reporting of serious adverse events and serious adverse reactions related to transfusion to the Competent Authority. Specifically BSQR (SI 2005 No. 50) Regulation 12B, Directive 2005/62 Annex, section 9.2 requires that ‘there are procedures in place for quality assurance within the transfusion laboratory – Reporting Serious Adverse Events (SAE) and Serious Adverse Reactions (SAR)’.

- Complete an annual form, the Blood Compliance Report, developed by the MHRA, in which the laboratory indicates its compliance with the regulations. The form is reviewed by the Inspectorate division of the MHRA and those laboratories where there is deemed non-compliance are inspected as ‘for cause’ inspections. There may also be some control inspections undertaken to verify the use of the Blood Compliance Report and its completion.

- Establish their bona fides with the supplying Blood Establishment and sign a service level agreement between both parties to outline how compliance will be achieved. This must be done before a hospital blood bank can operate.
2.5.3: Tissue and cell establishments

These establishments should also operate a quality system that reflects the requirements below (section 2.6). The Tissues and Cells Directives are not as explicit on the requirements of a quality management system as the Blood Safety and Quality Directives and a quality system in the context of the Tissues and Cells Directives consists of the following elements: the organisational structure, defined responsibilities, procedures, processes, and resources for implementing quality management, and includes all activities which contribute to quality, directly or indirectly. Experience has shown that the elements below are effective in maintaining quality and safety in the procurement and supply of tissues and cells.

2.6: Quality management system

Note that where key advice is given elsewhere in the guidelines, the relevant sections have been cross-referenced. Where there is not a direct cross-reference, the reader should investigate further the relevant chapters of these guidelines and the standards in Table 2.1.

2.6.1: Personnel and organisation

The Blood Service must ensure that adequate resources are provided to implement and operate the quality management system, to continually improve its effectiveness and to satisfy customer requirements. The physical resources to undertake the work must be suitable to attain the required standards; this will include equipment, consumables, work areas, utilities etc. (see section 4.2 on staffing and training principles for donation sessions).

All personnel shall have up-to-date job descriptions that clearly set out their tasks and responsibilities. Organisations shall assign the responsibility for processing management and quality assurance to different individuals who function independently.

All personnel shall receive initial and continued training appropriate to their specific tasks. Training records shall be maintained. Training programmes shall be in place and shall include good practice.

The contents of training programmes shall be periodically assessed and the competence of personnel evaluated regularly.

There shall be written safety and hygiene instructions in place adapted to the activities to be carried out and in compliance with requirements.

2.6.2: Premises

2.6.2.1: General

Premises including mobile sites shall be adapted and maintained to suit the activities to be carried out. They shall enable the work to proceed in a logical sequence so as to minimise the risk of errors, and shall allow for effective cleaning and maintenance in order to minimise the risk of contamination (see section 6.4 on component processing).

2.6.2.2: Donation area

There shall be an area for confidential personal interviews and assessment of individuals to determine their eligibility to donate. This area shall be separated from all processing areas (see section 4.1 on premises at blood donor sessions).
2.6.2.3: Collection area

Collection shall be carried out in an area intended for safe donation, appropriately equipped for the initial treatment of donors experiencing adverse reactions or injuries from events associated with donation, and organised in such a way as to ensure the safety of both donors and personnel as well as to avoid errors in the collection procedure (see section 4.1 on premises at blood donor sessions).

2.6.2.4: Testing and processing areas

There shall be a dedicated laboratory area for testing that is separate from the processing area with access restricted to authorised personnel.

2.6.2.5: Storage areas

Storage areas shall provide for properly secure and segregated storage of different categories of blood, blood components, tissues and materials including quarantine and released materials and donations collected under special criteria (e.g. autologous donation).

Provisions shall be in place in the event of equipment or power failure in the main storage facility (see section 6.7.1 on the specifications for component storage areas).

2.6.2.6: Waste disposal area

An area shall be designated for the safe disposal of waste, disposable items used during the collection, testing and processing, and for rejected blood or blood components.

2.6.3: Equipment and materials

2.6.3.1: Equipment checks and record keeping

All equipment shall be validated, calibrated and maintained to suit its intended purpose. Operating instructions shall be available and appropriate records kept.

2.6.3.2: Selection of equipment

Equipment shall be selected to minimise any hazard to donors, personnel or blood components.

2.6.3.3: Selection of materials

Only reagents and materials from approved suppliers that meet the documented requirements and specifications shall be used. Critical materials shall be released by a person qualified to perform this task. Where relevant, materials, reagents and equipment shall meet the requirements of Directive 93/42/EEC for medical devices and Directive 98/79/EC for in vitro diagnostic medical devices or comply with equivalent standards in the case of collection in third countries (see section 4.7 on the control of purchased material and services).

2.6.3.4: Inventory records

Inventory records shall be retained for a period acceptable to and agreed with the Competent Authority.

2.6.3.5: Computerised systems

When computerised systems are used, software, hardware and back-up procedures must be checked regularly to ensure reliability, be validated before use, and be maintained in a validated state. Hardware and software shall be protected against unauthorised use or unauthorised changes. The back-up procedure shall prevent loss of or damage to data at expected and unexpected downtimes or function failures.
2.6.4: Change control

There shall be a system of change control in process. The system’s aims shall be to ensure that changes are evaluated and made only if they provide tangible benefits to the organisation as judged by, for example, benefit to patients through risk reduction. It may also be driven by efficiency savings to ensure that maximum resources are devoted to patient care.

The system shall then ensure that the change is planned and implemented in a controlled way, incorporating training for staff in new procedures, and demonstration that the expected outcome has been delivered. Supporting documentation, including for example standard operating procedures (SOPs), shall ensure there is a record of the processes operated before and after the change, that the date of the change is known, and that material processes through the changed system can be identified.

There shall also be a system to ensure that the effectiveness of the newly implemented process is monitored and opportunities for further improvement are investigated and, where relevant, implemented. It shall support the organisation in trying to learn from incidents, complaints and other event information, as analysis of this will help identify potential beneficial changes.

2.6.5: Validation

Validation is a pre-defined exercise to ensure that equipment or a procedure (either current or proposed) is fit for its intended purpose and meets its pre-defined specification. The benefits of validation include assurance that critical aspects of a process are in control, increased probability of uniform product quality, reduced product waste and reduced customer complaints. New equipment, blood packs and manufacturing processes are examples where validation is essential before they are introduced into routine application.

2.6.6: Documentation

Effective documentation, whether in written or electronic format, must be accurate, authorised, controlled at issue and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains relevant. It provides clear instructions on what to do and prevents errors that may result from spoken communication. Records must be legible and made at the time actions are completed using indelible ink; corrections shall be signed and dated and made so that the original entry can be seen. This ensures consistency of manufacture and service provision, provides objective evidence that tasks have been correctly performed, permits investigation if problems arise and facilitates traceability from donor to patient and vice versa.

Records can be transferred to other media following procedures which meet applicable British or international standards.

Comprehensive documentation includes a hierarchy of documentation starting with:

- a quality manual
- policies
- specifications
- SOPs
- forms and worksheets, batch processing records, labels, equipment logbooks and investigation /validation records.
Effective document control must be practised to ensure that documents being used are current and an archive of superseded documents shall be established to provide an historical record.

2.6.7: Collection

2.6.7.1: Donor eligibility

- Procedures for safe donor identification, suitability interview and eligibility assessment shall be implemented and maintained. They shall take place before each donation and comply with legislative requirements (see section 3.2 on blood donation, and section 20.1 on tissue donation).

- The interview shall be conducted in such a way as to ensure confidentiality (see section 3.4 on informed consent for blood donation, and section 20.2 for tissue donation).

- The donor suitability records and final assessment shall be signed by a qualified health professional (see section 3.4 on informed consent for blood donation, and section 20.2 for tissue donation).

2.6.7.2: Collection of donated blood, blood components and tissues

- The collection procedure shall be designed to ensure that the identity of the donor is verified and securely recorded and that the link between the donor and the blood, blood components and blood samples is clearly established (see Chapter 5 on the collection of a blood component).

- The sterile systems used for the collection of donations and their processing shall be CE marked or comply with equivalent standards if the donations are collected in developing countries. The batch number of the key consumables shall be traceable for each blood component (see section 4.7 on the control of purchased material and services).

- Collection procedures shall minimise the risk of microbial contamination.

- Laboratory samples shall be taken at the time of donation and appropriately stored prior to testing.

- The procedure used for the labelling of records, donations and laboratory samples with donation numbers shall be designed to avoid any risk of identification error and mix-up.

- After collection, the donations shall be handled in a way that maintains their quality at a storage and transport temperature appropriate to further processing requirements.

- There shall be a system in place to ensure that each donation can be linked to the collection and processing system into which it was collected and/or processed.

2.6.8: Manufacture

2.6.8.1: Procedures and controls

Manufacturing processes must follow clearly defined procedures in order to obtain products or services of the requisite quality. The inputs to any process must be controlled: for example the use of approved suppliers to agreed specifications. Goods requiring incoming inspection must be held in quarantine until the inspection has been performed. During manufacture any in-process controls shall be carried out and recorded (see Chapter 7 on specifications for blood components). Statistical techniques may be used to provide confidence that processes remain in control.

2.6.8.2: Calibration
Calibration is a procedure that confirms, under defined conditions, the relationship between values obtained from an instrument or system and those obtained using an appropriate certified standard. Examples include any equipment from which physical measurements are obtained, for example weights, scales, temperature loggers, thermometers, light sources etc.

2.6.8.3: Quality control and quality monitoring

These provide confirmation either during or at completion of a process that manufacturing materials, processes and products meet their pre-defined specification. They may be release requirements (quality control tests), such as a non-reactive microbiological test results or demonstration of the effectiveness of a new batch of reagents (see Chapter 9 on microbiology tests for donors and donations, and section 20.5 on tissue donor testing). They may provide evidence that systems are operating as expected (quality monitoring), such as meeting a stated leucodepletion requirement by random sampling of finished product, or testing white cell content and then subjecting the result to statistical analysis perhaps by the use of control charts (see section 6.3 on component and process monitoring tests). These latter tests would not normally prevent the issue of material.

2.6.8.4: Proficiency testing

Proficiency testing monitors the capability to perform procedures within defined limits of accuracy by analysis of unknown samples. Successful outcomes are dependent on the combined outputs of operators, equipment and process. Proficiency testing exercises are applied to a wide spectrum of laboratory procedures and may be managed on a local or national basis. National External Quality Assurance Schemes (NEQAS) are widely used in the UK.

2.6.8.5: Contract manufacture

When contract manufacture/testing are undertaken the company supplying the goods or service shall have been employed following a formal contracting process. This shall include supplier audit, if the goods or service had been deemed critical, on the basis of a GMP risk assessment, by the organisation letting the contract. The goods and services provided shall be subject to regular monitoring to ensure they comply with the service specified in the original contract and may be subject to ongoing audit depending on the quality of the service/goods provided and their criticality to the organisation letting the contract.

2.6.9: Labelling

At all stages, all containers shall be labelled with relevant information of their identity. In the absence of a validated computerised system for status control, the labelling shall clearly distinguish released from non-released units of blood and blood components (see section 6.6 for labelling of blood components).

The labelling system for the collected donations, intermediate and finished blood components, tissues and samples must unmistakably identify the type of content, and comply with the labelling and traceability requirements.

For autologous blood and blood components, the label also shall comply with requirements.

2.6.10: Release of blood and tissue components

There shall be a safe and secure system to prevent release until all mandatory requirements have been fulfilled (see Chapter 9 on microbiology tests for donors and donations for blood, and section 20.11 on release criteria for tissues). Each establishment shall be able to demonstrate that each blood, blood
component, tissue, reagent or diagnostic test result has been formally released by an authorised person. Records shall demonstrate that before a blood component or tissue is released, all current declaration forms, relevant medical records and test results meet all acceptance criteria.

Before release, blood and blood components, tissues and reagents shall be kept administratively and physically segregated from released items. In the absence of a validated computerised system for status control a labelling system shall identify the release status.

In the event that an item fails release due to a confirmed positive infection test result, a check shall be made to ensure that other components from the same donation and components prepared from previous donations given by the donor are identified. There shall be an immediate update of the donor record.

2.6.11: Storage and distribution

Procedures for storage and distribution shall be validated to ensure blood and blood component quality during the entire storage period and to exclude mix-ups of blood components (see section 6.7 on component storage).

Autologous blood, blood components and tissues as well as blood components and tissues collected and prepared for specific purposes shall be stored separately.

Appropriate records of inventory and distribution shall be kept.

Packaging shall maintain the integrity and storage temperature of blood or blood components during distribution and transportation (see section 6.11 on transportation of blood components).

Return of blood, blood components and tissues into inventory for subsequent reissue shall only be accepted when all quality requirements and procedures laid down by the Blood Establishment to ensure tissue and blood component integrity are fulfilled.

2.6.12: Traceability

There must be a system to ensure that material can be traced through the procurement, testing, and production and issue systems to a patient (for blood, see sections 5.2.1 on donor identification, and 5.5.3 on labels). If the material is donated then traceability must be maintained from the donor to the patient. Any products must be uniquely identified to help support traceability. For example, for reagents this can be to batch level. Where appropriate this should be to individual units, for example apheresis donations split into multiple doses. Any material obtained from outside the EU must maintain a standard of traceability to its origin equivalent to that expected within a Blood Establishment. Under the terms of the BSQR, traceability records of blood components must be maintained for a minimum of 30 years. A similar requirement is in place for tissues and cells under the terms of the Tissues and Cells Directive.11

2.6.13: Continuous improvement

It is important to take a holistic view using all available information, including information derived from analysis of incidents, errors, near misses and complaints as well as from audit processes, litigation and peer organisations. This approach will help prioritise those improvements that will be most beneficial to patients, donors and staff. As root cause analysis places a significant drain on expert resources it should be targeted on activities that on the balance of risk are most critical to the organisation. This process should be linked to the Blood Establishment’s planning process so that improvements that require significant resources can be given sufficient consideration and support in their implementation.

2.6.14: Non-conformance
2.6.14.1: Deviations

Blood components or tissues deviating from required standards shall be released for transfusion only in exceptional circumstances and with the recorded agreement of the prescribing physician and the Blood Establishment physician.

2.6.14.2: Complaints

All complaints and other information, including serious adverse reactions and serious adverse events, which may suggest that defective blood components or tissues have been issued, shall be documented, carefully investigated for causative factors of the defect and, where necessary, followed by recall and the implementation of corrective actions to prevent recurrence. Procedures shall be in place to ensure that the Competent Authorities are notified as appropriate of serious adverse reactions or serious adverse events in accordance with regulatory requirements.

2.6.14.3: Recall

A system (usually, but not necessarily, computer software) shall be in place to allow full traceability of products. This will ensure that efficient recall of products can be effected and that look-back studies can be undertaken. The recall operation shall be capable of being initiated promptly and at any time. It is essential that all recalled products are stored separately and securely until a decision is made on the fate of the product. Records of recall must be maintained. A review of the recall procedures for effectiveness needs to be carried out periodically (for blood, see section 6.12 on component recall and traceability).

2.6.14.4: Serious adverse events and reactions

Serious adverse events (SAEs) and serious adverse reactions (SARs) (as defined in the EU Directives) must be reported to the relevant Competent Authority through the relevant website reporting tool:

- For blood and blood components, these are reported to the MHRA as serious adverse blood reactions and events
- For tissues, these are reported to the HTA as serious adverse events and reactions.

2.6.15: Audit (self-inspection)

Quality audit is a planned process of inspection conducted in an independent and detailed way by competent, trained individuals to ensure that procedures and associated quality assurance comply with the principles of GMP. The results of such inspections shall be recorded and non-compliances reported in writing to a designated individual whose responsibility it is to ensure corrective and preventive actions are applied in an effective and timely manner.

There will also be an opportunity to learn from the problems identified through audit, to identify underlying root cause and possibly to support conclusions on areas to improve, identified through incidents and error reporting. As noted above this process should also be linked to the Blood Service’s planning process so that improvements that require significant resources can be given sufficient consideration and support in their implementation.

For Blood and Tissue Establishments, audits shall extend to suppliers of goods and services. The frequency or appropriateness of audit shall be decided on the basis of risk. This can be incorporated into the procurement system.

2.7: Reporting of incidents to external bodies
2.7.1: Serious Hazards of Transfusion ([www.shotuk.org](http://www.shotuk.org))

For blood components, serious adverse reactions and events must be reported to the MHRA (see section 2.6.14.4). However, in addition, blood banks and Blood Establishments are encouraged to report to the Serious Hazards of Transfusion (SHOT) scheme. SHOT collects data on serious sequelae of transfusion of blood components. Through the participating bodies, the information obtained contributes to improving the safety of the transfusion process, informing policy within the transfusion services, improving standards of hospital transfusion practice and aiding production of clinical guidelines for the use of blood components.

Participation in the scheme is voluntary, and covers both NHS and private hospitals in the UK and Ireland. Reports are made via SABRE (see [www.mhra.gov.uk/Safetyinformation/Reportingsafetyproblems/Blood/index.htm](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Safetyinformation/Reportingsafetyproblems/Blood/index.htm)).

Near misses should also be reported to SHOT. These are incidents where an action has placed a patient at risk. This could include, for example, the placing in stock of incorrectly labelled blood components where the discrepancy in blood group, genotype or test status would have placed a patient at risk of an adverse outcome if the component had been transfused.

It is assumed that if transfusion of products in this ‘near miss’ category occurs resulting in adverse outcome the incident would be reported back to the supplying service, so that they can investigate, identify root cause and prevent further occurrence. In this case it is important that it is understood that in these situations capturing data about events is not about assigning blame or liability but is about improving systems and reducing risk. Such incidents should also be reported to SHOT.

2.7.2: Devices ([www.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.mhra.gov.uk))

The remit of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is to enhance and safeguard the health of the public by ensuring that medicines work and are acceptably safe.

Blood Services, blood and tissue banks shall have a mechanism to report problems with medicines, medical devices or *in vitro* diagnostic devices to the MHRA. This will provide an opportunity for problems with medicines and devices to be viewed on a UK or European-wide level.

There may be additional local requirements which also must be met. For example, in Northern Ireland there has been a recent Directive that all critical adverse incidents be reported directly to the Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

2.7.3: Serious untoward incidents

Serious untoward incidents can be defined as ‘something out of the ordinary, or unexpected, with the potential to cause serious harm, and/or likely to attract public and media interest that occurs on NHS premises or in the provision of an NHS or a commissioned service’ (NHS London, 2007). Blood Services may choose to refine this definition further.

Many of these incidents will be captured and investigated using a Blood Service’s quality management system processes. Investigations shall be undertaken promptly, be coordinated by a board director and shall be considered for reporting externally.

Reports may be referred to:

- Department of Health or equivalent
• National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA), although the lead report should be from the Trust or facility where the patient involvement occurred. If this is not a Blood Service then the final report should contain the blood service’s contribution

• National Health Service Litigation Authority (NHSLA) if litigation may result

• NHS Information Authority (NHSIA) for IT-related events

• Police in the case of criminal activity

• Health and Safety Executive (HSE) – RIDDOR

• Department of Health Estates and Facilities for fires

• Local Counter-Fraud Specialist (LCFS) for fraud

• Department of Health Estates and Facilities for defect and failure reporting in plant or facility or associated services

• Other stakeholders identified as relevant during the investigation of the serious untoward incident.

2.8: References


