Preface

An in-depth service review of the Joint UKBTS/HPA Professional Advisory Committee (JPAC) conducted in 2009/10 concluded that the work of JPAC was perceived as being of high value, and that the outputs were valid and based on sound professional advice and expertise. One of the most important of these outputs is this publication. Due to undertaking the review, it has been several years since the publication of the seventh edition of the Guidelines for the Blood Transfusion Services in the United Kingdom (known as the Red Book). During this time numerous updates have been made to the website version and issued as change notifications. All chapters have been reviewed in preparation for this edition, revised where appropriate, and in addition some chapters have been removed and one added. It is not therefore feasible to indicate where changes have been introduced in the text, although any major changes will have been approved by JPAC prior to their inclusion.

At the time of publication of the seventh edition, the European Directives on blood and tissues and their translation into UK law had just come into force. The legal requirements of these are now well embedded into the practice of blood transfusion and tissue transplantation in the UK and continue to be reflected in these Red Book guidelines.

The most up-to-date version of the Red Book can always be found on the JPAC website, www.transfusionguidelines.org.uk. In this increasingly electronic age, we conducted a website survey among users of the Red Book in 2010 to determine whether a hard copy version was still required. Out of 223 respondents, 173 (78%) confirmed that they would prefer to have the Red Book available in both electronic and hard copy format. Working practices continue to change rapidly, however, and we will continue to monitor users’ requirements in this area, particularly when deciding how future editions should be presented.

The JPAC website, in addition to hosting these guidelines, is the home of the Donor Selection Guidelines for blood, tissues, stem cells and cord blood, the Handbook of Transfusion Medicine and other transfusion-related areas. In addition, position statements and background documents written by the JPAC Standing Advisory Committees providing evidence for changes in the guidelines are posted, together with the minutes of JPAC meetings. The website is now 10 years old, and a redevelopment is being planned.

We wish to thank the Chairs and Members of the JPAC Standing Advisory Committees for their efforts and enthusiasm in reviewing the chapters for this edition, and for their continuing work in ensuring that these guidelines remain up to date and representative of best practice in transfusion and transplantation medicine. In particular I would like to thank Caroline Smith, JPAC Manager, for her unstinting work in preparing the material and organising the publication of this edition.

We are very happy to receive comments on this edition from users of the Red Book. These should be addressed to me.

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