



Highlight Report -TP Specialist Interest Group (SIG): July 2026

Key Updates

TP SIG Leadership

Danny Gaskin continues to act as interim Chair and has agreed to remain in the role alongside Pedro Valle Vallines, until after the BBTS Annual Conference. Expressions of interest for the permanent Chair role remain open, and members are encouraged to consider this opportunity. Several promising conversations have taken place with interested members, and we hope to appoint a new Chair in the coming weeks, with a view to them taking over following the conference. All being well, we hope to announce the new Chair at the conference.

Bloodlines Contributions

Recent and upcoming articles continue to showcase the breadth of TP practice across the UK and internationally, with contributions planned from multiple regions. Members are encouraged to submit articles, including collaborative or externally authored pieces.

Claire Sidaway was featured in the 'Meet the Member' column in Bloodlines Issue 156, providing an opportunity to showcase the role of Transfusion Practitioners and highlight the valuable work being undertaken across the profession.

BBTS Conference and SIG Activity

BBTS Conference 2026 – Registration Now Open

Registration for the BBTS Conference 2026 (Glasgow, 15–17 September) is now open. Further information, including programme details and registration, can be found here: <https://www.bbts.org.uk/bbts2026/>

Awards and Recognition

Both the Mollison Award and the TP SIG Award have now been awarded, with the successful recipients contacted ahead of the awards being formally presented at the BBTS Annual Conference. We are particularly pleased to welcome this year's TP SIG



Award winner to our session at the conference, where the award will be presented by the previous recipient. This continues our aim of establishing a tradition of previous winners presenting the TP SIG Award to the next recipient.

TP SIG Conference Session

The TP SIG session at this year's BBTS Annual Conference will focus on maternity care, with particular emphasis on the safe delivery of anti-D prophylaxis. Against a backdrop of continued national focus on maternity safety, the session will explore the important contribution of transfusion services to the care of women during pregnancy and beyond.

Anti-D prophylaxis remains one of the most successful interventions in transfusion medicine; however, recent SHOT reporting continues to highlight incidents involving omitted or delayed administration and the importance of effective communication, reliable systems and multidisciplinary working.

The session will bring together perspectives from across the maternity and transfusion pathway, with contributions from transfusion practitioners, doctors, nurses, midwives and biomedical scientists. Alongside invited speakers, the session will include the presentation of the 2026 BBTS TP SIG Award and a series of flash presentations showcasing quality improvement, innovation and good practice from across the transfusion practitioner community.

TP Role Development

National TP Framework

Significant progress continues on the development of the National TP Professional Framework. Following a recommendation from the TP SIG, BBTS has formally endorsed the framework, representing an important step in supporting its wider adoption and recognition.

Next Meeting Dates

- 8th September 2026
- 7th December 2026

NAVIGATING SINGAPORE'S BLOOD DONATION RULES: THE VCJD LEGACY FOR FORMER IRISH AND UK RESIDENTS



Aine O'Kane, former Northern Ireland Haemovigilance Coordinator and Manager at Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, retired in September 2024. She chaired the BBTS Transfusion Practitioner Group for several years and remains an active member of the Society.

I moved to Singapore in April 2024, having spent my career working in Blood Transfusion in Northern Ireland. As such, and having been a blood donor myself, I was aware of the pressures of maintaining an adequate blood supply for transfusion, and was keen to explore the options for donation in my new home.

Previously, donors who had lived in Ireland for 5 years, or in the UK for three months cumulatively between 1980 and 1996 were not allowed to donate blood in Singapore due to these countries having a high incidence of vCJD (variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease), the human form of 'mad cow disease'.

Following a review in 2022 which determined that the risk of transfusion transmitted vCJD is low if donations are leucodepleted, Singapore eased

the restrictions in October 2023, allowing apheresis donations which are leucodepleted at source.

As a former UK/Irish resident, I still couldn't donate whole blood, as red cell components in Singapore are not routinely leucodepleted, but would be able to donate via apheresis.

I had to pass an initial suitability check (age <64 in good health with good veins) before I could make an appointment to donate. Not every blood bank centre carries out apheresis, so donors must attend the HSA (Health Services Authority) Blood Bank at Outram Park.

The first apheresis collection from female donors is plasma only, which is subsequently checked to ensure that they do not have HLA antibodies (which are often produced during pregnancy). If HLA antibodies are detected, then no further donations may be taken as it poses a reaction risk to patients.

First time male donors do not need to be checked for HLA antibodies, and may donate platelets, plasma or red cells



Transfusion Practitioners SIG
British Blood Transfusion Society

A change to Singapore's donor criteria in 2023 now allows former UK and Irish residents to donate blood via leucodepleted apheresis.

providing they meet the criteria.

Red cells collected by apheresis from UK/Irish donors are in the form of a double red cell unit, especially if the donor is the very popular 'universal' group O, or



even better, O D negative, providing a valuable resource for the treatment of haemorrhage in patients whose blood group is unknown, in maternity cases with anti-D antibodies and in newborns with anaemia.

Following my initial checks, I returned a week later for my first plasma donation. I completed the same form again, had a haemoglobin finger prick test, then a 1:1 chat with medical screening personnel who signed me off as suitable to proceed.

The Apheresis Area has very comfortable loungers, and I was given a local anaesthetic prior to commencing the (painless) donation. The first blood taken was used to fill sample bottles for all the necessary donation testing.

It was amazing to see blood in the line going into the small bedside machine, and the bag at the end filling up with 500mL of clear straw-coloured plasma. The rest of the blood components were returned to me via the same tubing (so only one needle is needed)

The donation took around 40 minutes, after which I was invited to get some refreshments at the Blood Bank cafe.

After a couple of weeks, I received a call to inform me that my HLA antibodies were negative, and that I would be able to donate platelets every four weeks. I have since donated both plasma and platelets - it is a different machine to the simple plasma collection, and it was fascinating to watch the rate of component collection on screen as the two bags filled. This donation takes around 70 minutes.

Reflections on donation

You need to be hydrated on arrival, and have recently eaten.

Cans of isotonic drinks are supplied, but donors are advised to factor in not needing a bathroom break during the process.

There is a small television with headset available, along with free WiFi and charging points for phones or laptops. Phone calls can be freely made, as it does not interfere with the machine operation.

Consider that one of your arms is not available during the donation process, so if you intend to email or message, it has to be done single handed. The donation arm is decided at the time, but the nurses will take into account donor preference.

All the staff, from reception to donation suite are very reassuring, professional, and friendly, and are keen to explain every part of your experience with them.

Message from Singapore Health Service Authority

"We are grateful to Aine and all blood donors, including many of you who have made Singapore your new home, for your strong support of our National Blood Programme. We hope that more of you can come forward to help patients whose lives could be saved or improved due to your selfless acts. We would especially encourage you to donate double units red cells if your blood group is O D negative, as only 1% of the Singapore population is of this group."