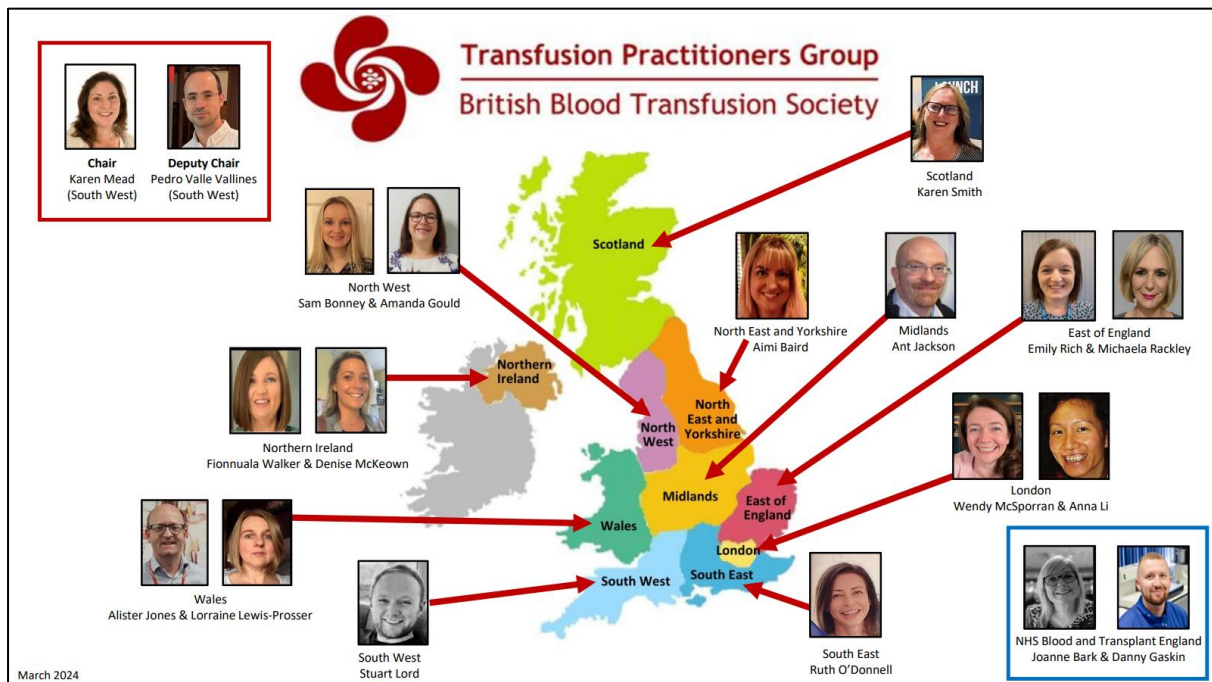




Highlight Report – March 2024

- The map of UK Transfusion Practitioners (TP) Special Interest Group (SIG) members has been updated and is on the BBTS TP SIG website [BBTS | Transfusion Practitioners](https://www.bbts.org.uk/Transfusion-Practitioners) |



- Please contact your regional representative(s) if you have anything you would like escalated to the TP SIG for discussion and feedback.
- An article reviewing TP presence at the BBTS Conference last year was published in the recent Bloodlines edition and is attached for interest.
- BBTS Conference 2024 will be held on 17-19th September in Glasgow. The programme includes a session dedicated to TPs. Conference registration and poster abstract submission is now open: [BBTS | BBTS Conference](https://www.bbts.org.uk/BBTS-Conference) |
- The National Transfusion Practitioner Network (NTPN) are hosting their free online educational event on 14 - 15th May 2024. Further information and registration is available via this link: [TP2024 Conference \(office.com\)](https://www.ntpn.org.uk/TP2024-Conference-office.com)
- As part of Transfusion 2024, work has started to develop a national framework for Transfusion Practitioners in England. A steering group and working groups consisting of volunteer TPs from across all RTC regions, have been set up to support this. For further information, please contact Jennifer Rock jennifer.rock@nhsbt.nhs.uk



A CALL TO CONFERENCE FOR ALL TRANSFUSION PRACTITIONERS

Karen Mead

Specialist Transfusion Practitioner
North Bristol NHS Trust

Pedro Valle Vallines

Lead Transfusion Practitioner
Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust

Are you a Transfusion Practitioner (TP) or working in an equivalent role? If so, did you attend the 2023 British Blood Transfusion Society (BBTS) Annual Conference? These were some of the questions recently sent out in a short online survey via the regional and national TP or equivalent networks.

As memories of the 2023 BBTS Annual Conference fade and planning begins for the 2024 Conference, the BBTS TP Special Interest Group (SIG) is encouraging all TPs and equivalents to consider attending future events. Several members of the BBTS TP SIG attended the 2023 Conference, some for just one day and others for the entire three-day programme but most for the first time. All found the Conference to be welcoming, inclusive, educational, and most importantly great fun. It provided a fantastic opportunity not only to attend the programme sessions but also to network and socialise with colleagues from different Trusts and organisations, in addition to meeting the exhibitors and learning about their products and services.

The programme sessions were meticulously planned to cover all aspects of the transfusion pathway from epidemiology studies, component production and red cell serology within the Blood Services to Blood Bank technology and serological case studies from within the hospital transfusion laboratories. There were also plenty of sessions directly related to the role of the TP including education, patient blood management, blood shortages, Transfusion 2024, and Serious Hazards of Transfusion (SHOT). This extensive programme allowed attendees to not only

expand knowledge and understanding within their own specialist areas of expertise but also to build on their general understanding of the transfusion pathway in the wider sense.

The BBTS TP SIG is fortunate enough to host their own session within the annual programme of events. For 2023, the TP session was co-chaired by outgoing Secretary of the group - Allister Jones, Blood Health Advisor from the Welsh Blood Service, and Incoming Chair of the TP SIG - Karen Mead, Specialist TP from North Bristol NHS Trust.

The first of the four TP presentations was delivered by Samantha Bonney, Lead TP at Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. With the help of real case studies, Sam explored the impact of providing inaccurate and inadequate clinical details, when requesting blood components. She discussed how TPs can educate blood requesters to ensure they know what is clinically relevant when it comes to blood transfusion. Lastly, Sam examined how electronic requesting may improve patient safety by mandating relevant information.

Pedro Valle Vallines, Lead TP at Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, delivered the next session threading into a trending topic in the current transfusion climate. His presentation, titled 'Pitfalls of Electronic Tracking' covered the difficulties and challenges to consider during the process of implementing an electronic blood tracking system. Pedro shed some light on a daunting topic for many, giving reassurance to those already dealing with similar projects and hope for those in readiness. His session finished with an appeal for national consensus

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and further guidance on blood tracking, hoping that it was somehow heard as we started the new year with the eagerly awaited updated British Society for Haematology (BSH) guidelines on this topic.

The third session was delivered by Aimi Baird, Advanced TP from Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Entitled 'The good, the bad and downright horrific aspects of overhauling transfusion practice', Aimi described the rollercoaster journey endured by the transfusion team to implement a full electronic transfusion system. Aimi explained the challenges faced and the hurdles climbed concluding that irrespective of the system chosen, timelines given and any other variables involved in overhauling practice on this scale the key ingredient is a strong team



A CALL TO CONFERENCE FOR ALL TRANSFUSION PRACTITIONERS

who are able to work together, support each other, yell, cry and laugh together without which success would not be possible.

Finally, Jipsa Jacob, Lead TP from Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust shared a presentation highlighting the effectiveness of using simulation sessions as a learning tool to improve staff knowledge of and engagement with major haemorrhage. Participation in simulation sessions appeared to improve knowledge and generate a more positive mindset than annual completion of e-learning alone.

The 2023 BBTS Conference was attended by a total of 430 people, of which only an estimated 8% were TPs or equivalent – 5% with laboratory background and 3% with nursing background. Given that attendance was approximately 11% for Lab Managers (with an overall lower number of individuals in this role), it appears the TPs are under-represented – particularly those from a nursing background.

Following the 2023 Conference, a short online survey was circulated to TPs and equivalent staff within the four nations or the UK, with the goal of identifying the main reasons behind their low attendance.

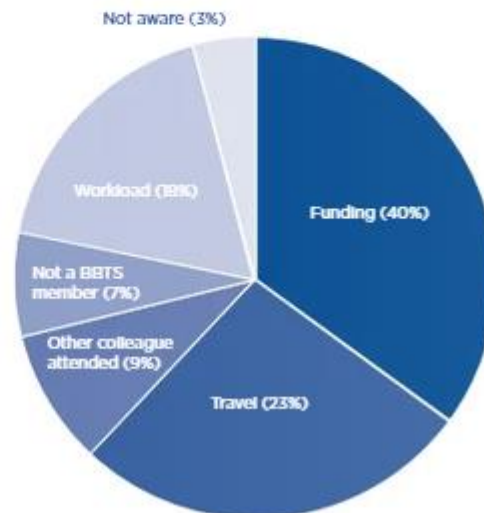
From the responses received, the biggest challenge appeared to be the lack of funding available for TPs to participate in continued professional development (CPD) activities, with some comments that staff would be required to self-fund if they wished to attend. Travel also presented issues, with many individuals requesting online virtual attendance to be a future consideration. Due to being lone

workers or part of a small team, the TP workload was a further significant reason for non-attendance.

Several comments suggested that where funding was available, this would only cover one annual event and/or only one representative from the organisation. On occasion, this funding would only be available if the attendee was speaking or presenting a poster at the Conference. Further comments alluded to the understanding that the BBTS Conference is aimed at Biomedical Scientists only and therefore other events such as the annual SHOT Conference would be attended in preference by TPs with a clinical background.

Interestingly, some responders thought that only existing BBTS members were welcome to attend, not realising that the Conference is open to all; whilst others realised that reduced fees are available for BBTS members.

Looking forward to 2024, the TP SIG would encourage all TPs and equivalent to consider attending the BBTS Conference.



▲ Reasons for TP non-attendance to the BBTS 2023 conference

This collective group of staff play such a critical role in so many aspects of transfusion practice, it is essential that they are sufficiently represented. All are welcome regardless of background (laboratory or clinical), level of experience, geographical location, or area of special interest. BBTS offer a number of financially assisted places to attend the annual conference – further details are available on their website.

Acknowledgements:

Samantha Bonney, Lead TP at Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
Aimi Baird, Advanced TP from Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Danny Gaskin, Patient Blood Management Practitioner, NHS Blood and Transplant

Many thanks to all who completed the online TP SIG Survey, your feedback is much appreciated.