RCPath and SHOT Advances in Transfusion Symposium – Chair & Speaker Biographies

Day 2 Session 1 Thursday 26 November 2026

9.30 Welcome to Day 2 and opening remarks – Dr Shubha Allard

Session 1 Transfusion safety – Chairs: Professor John Forsythe and Elisabeth Buggins

9.35 30 years of SHOT – Dr Shruthi Narayan, Medical Director SHOT

9.55 Infected Blood Inquiry – learning from the past – Professor Victoria Chalker Deputy CSO NHSE

10.15 RCPath Cameron Lecture – Safety of blood tissue & organs – looking to the future – Dr Su Brailsford, Consultant in Epidemiology & Health Protection

10.35 Open questions

10.45 Break



Professor John Forsythe OBE was Consultant Transplant Surgeon in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh for over 25 years performing kidney, liver, pancreas and islet cell transplants. He then became the Medical Director for Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation in NHS Blood and Transplant from 2016, a position that he held through the pandemic, leading a team of senior clinicians and managers to support and sustain Donation, Retrieval and Transplant Services across the whole of the UK. He was seconded as the Deputy Chair of the Organ Utilisation Group, an Advisory Group to Ministers, working with Sir Steve Powis as Chair. He has continued to work in the DHSC as Co-Chair of the Implementation Steering Group for Organ Utilisation in the Westminster Government. In 2026 Minister Zubir Ahmed invited him to Chair a review of Stem Cell Transplantation for the UK.



Elisabeth Buggins CBE had three sons with haemophilia, infected as infants via NHS treatment. Already qualified as an NHS manager she used her family experience and professional insights to train patient representatives in charities and established a post-graduate module in Patient and Public Involvement, equipping health professionals to engage more effectively with patients. She believes that properly understanding the experiences of patients and families is the key to safety, efficiency and quality improvement. An NHSBT NED for nine years, Elisabeth chaired the Organ Donation Taskforce, radically increasing organ donation and transplants. She now chairs the Strategy Oversight and Sustainable Funding Group to help maximise further improvements. Over 40 years Elisabeth has chaired a number of bodies in the NHS, private and voluntary sector and is currently Patient Co-Chair of the National Blood Transfusion Committee. Awarded two honorary doctorates, she has been given lifetime membership of the British Transplantation Society. She was appointed Patient Co-Chair of the National Blood Transfusion Committee in 2025



Dr Shruthi Narayan

Dr Shruthi Narayan is the Medical Director of Serious Hazards of Transfusion (SHOT, UK). It is the independent, professionally led haemovigilance scheme covering the whole of UK. Additionally, she has a role as a Donor Consultant at NHS Blood and Transplant. Shruthi also chairs the Royal College of Pathologists Transfusion Specialty Advisory Committee, is a member of the leadership team of International Society of Blood Transfusion Haemovigilance Working Party and is the current President of the International Haemovigilance Network. Shruthi is passionate about improving transfusion safety, is actively involved in transfusion education and improvement initiatives.



Prof Victora Chalker

Professor Victoria Chalker is Deputy Chief Scientific Officer at NHS England (September 2023–Present). She is an expert in medical microbiology, bacteriology, infectious diseases, and diagnostics. Before moving to national leadership, she spent nearly two decades in the public and academic sectors and held extensive senior scientific roles within the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and Public Health England, with a heavy emphasis on molecular microbiology, pathogen transmission, and antimicrobial resistance. She was Chief Scientific Officer at NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) (2022–2023) where her work focused on transfusion technologies, genetics, and health equality. She is currently playing a pivotal role in developing the Transfusion Transformation action plan in collaboration between DHSC, NHSE, NHSBT and the National Blood Transfusion Committee.

RCPath Cameron Lecture 2026 to be given by Dr Su Brailsford

Sir Roy Cameron was the Founder President of the College of Pathologists. The College established the Cameron Lecture in his honour soon after its foundation. The lecture may be given on any pathology speciality and was first given in 1965 by Prof CL Oakley (Medical Microbiology) and was given by Dr Farrukh Shah in 2024. This is part of a series of prestigious named College lectures https://www.rcpath.org/about-the-college/college-lectures.html



Dr Su Brailsford

Dr Su Brailsford is Consultant in Epidemiology and Health Protection and Associate Medical Director in Microbiology and Public Health at NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT). Dr Brailsford's NHSBT work focuses on blood safety including donor selection and research into detecting and preventing transfusion transmitted infections. She holds an honorary appointment at the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), leading the joint NHSBT/UKHSA Epidemiology Unit, and holds an honorary professorship at the University of Nottingham. Su chaired the FAIR project which enabled blood donation to become more inclusive for gay and bisexual men. She was appointed as the chair of the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) in March 2026. This committee advises UK ministers and health departments on the most appropriate ways to ensure the safety of blood, cells, tissues and organs for transfusion or transplantation.

Day 2 Session 2 Thurs 26th Nov 2026

Session 2 Transforming transfusion – overview – Chairs: Dame Sue Hill and Dr Rommel Ravanan

11.00 A new Transformation plan for England – Dr Youssef Sorour Deputy Chair National Blood Transfusion Committee and Louise Sherliker Transfusion Transformation Program Director, Transfusion Transformation NHSBT

11.15 From Inquiry to Improvement in Scotland – Dr Julie Gillies, Consultant Haematologist, Clinical Lead for Transfusion SNBTS

11.25 National PBM approach in Wales – Dr Indu Thakar, Cons Paediatric Haematologist, Noah's Ark Children's Hospital Wales, Clinical Lead Blood Health WBS

11.35 Northern Ireland perspective – Dr Damien Carson, Consultant Anaesthetist, Northern Ireland Transfusion Committee Audit and Implementation Lead

11.45 Open questions

11.55 Close of session



Professor Dame Sue Hill DBE FMedSci FRSB FRCP(Hon) FRCPath (Hon) FHCS (Hon) is the Chief Scientific Officer for England and the NHS in England, is the Head of Profession for the scientific workforce and provides scientific leadership and advice for the wider health and care system. A respiratory scientist by background, she has an international academic and clinical research reputation
Dame Sue leads and directs Genomics in the NHS, driving the world-leading programme to introduce a nationwide Genomic Medicine Service working in partnership between the NHS and academia, industry, UK and international governments/initiatives, building on her work in heading up the NHS contribution to the world-leading 100,000 Genomes Project. Sue was made a Dame Commander in 2018 in recognition of the scale of her contribution to British genomics, having previously been awarded an OBE in 2005 in recognition of her services



Dr Rommel Ravanan is a Nephrologist and Transplant physician and prior to appointment as NHSBT CMO, was Deputy Medical Director (R&D and Innovation) within NHSBT's Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation directorate. Rommel has previously held responsible positions at North Bristol NHS Trust followed by regional and national leadership roles. These roles have included leading on policy development, strategic planning, operational delivery for clinical disciplines not related to his own specialty practise, with impact spanning from local to national level. He is passionate about investigating, understanding and where possible reducing unwarranted variation in healthcare.



Dr Youssef Sorour is a Consultant Haematologist and Associate Medical Director for Clinical Safety working at Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. He is Deputy Chair of the National Blood Transfusion Committee and Clinical Lead for Transfusion/Hospital Transfusion Committee Chair at Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals. Youssef was previously Chair of the Yorkshire Regional Transfusion Committee (2012- 2021) and subsequently the merged North-East and Yorkshire Regional Transfusion Committee (2021-2023). Youssef is also Deputy Chair of the South Yorkshire Haemato-oncology MDM for Myeloproliferative diseases and the Association of Clinical Pathologists representative on the National Quality Assurance Advisory Panel for Haematology.



Louise Sherliker is the Transfusion Transformation Program Director at NHS Blood and Transplant. She is a senior nurse leader with more than 40 years' experience in the NHS with clinical, operational, and national leadership roles. She has contributed to the development and implementation of national transfusion strategies, policies, and guidelines, including Better Blood Transfusion, Patient Blood Management initiatives, and the Transfusion 2024 strategic plan. Since 2025, Louise has co-chaired the Infected Blood Inquiry Recommendation 7f Digital Interoperability Working Group alongside NHS England's Director of Clinical and Improvement Analytics, supporting national efforts to strengthen digital capability and improve the traceability and safety of blood transfusion services.



Dr Julie Gillies has worked as Consultant in Haemato-oncology Scotland for 18 years before joining the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service in 2023. She has a patient facing role and provides clinical support for the transfusion laboratory team, the clinical apheresis unit and the transfusion practitioners. Julie is the clinical lead for the transfusion team. Julie is co-chair of the Haematology and Transfusion Scotland Committee, is the haematology representative for the National Plasma Product Expert Advisory Group and is the Scottish Clinical lead for the UK& Ireland Blood Transfusion Network. Julie sits on many of the UK and Scottish committees set up to implement the recommendations of the Infected blood Inquiry.



Dr Indu Thakur is a Consultant Paediatric Haematologist at Noah's Ark Children's Hospital for Wales since 2013. She is the Lead for the Hereditary Anaemia Service for South and West Wales. and Clinical Lead for Blood Health Team at the Welsh Blood Service. She is currently contributing to multiple projects within WBS, some of which directly relate to implementation of the IBI recommendations. Her other interests include research, undergraduate and postgraduate education and working as an examiner for Cardiff University (undergraduate exams) and RCPath (postgraduate Haematology exams). She has a keen interest in Quality Improvement. She is a committee member of the Wales Regional Council of the Royal College of Pathologists. She represents Wales on the National Haemoglobinopathy Panel and UK Forum for Haemoglobin disorders.



Dr Damien Carson is a Consultant Anaesthetist working in the Southeastern Health and Social Care Trust and is the Northern Ireland Transfusion Committee Audit and Implementation Lead. Since 2006 Damien has initiated and led many innovative transfusion related projects associated with Patient Blood Management that has led to large reductions in blood component use.

Day 2 Session 3 Thurs 26th Nov 2026

Session 3 Transforming transfusion – facing challenges together – Chairs: Prof Renata Gomes & Dr Megan Rowley
11.55 Genotyping – from rhetoric to practice – Professor Dave Roberts, Medical Director for Pathology at NHSBT
12.15 Meaningful patient engagement – Anna Mamwell Patient & Public Involvement Officer, NHSBT Transfusion Transformation Programme
12.25 Transfusion Practitioner Framework – from co-design to practice – Jennifer Rock, Transfusion Transformation Education Lead, NHSBT
12.35 Tackling Lab Workforce Challenges – Kerry Dowling, Transfusion Operations Manager, Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, Chair UKTLC
12.50 Open questions
13.00 Close



Professor Renata Gomes is the Chief Scientific Officer at NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT), where she leads strategic research and scientific innovation. A medical and forensic specialist sub-specialising in regenerative medicine, she holds an international PhD in Cardiovascular Regeneration and Biochemistry from the Universities of Oxford and Eastern Finland, alongside an executive MSc in Health Economics, Outcomes, and Management from the London School of Economics. Prior to joining NHSBT, she served as CEO of Police Care UK and Chief Scientific Officer for Blind Veterans UK and BRAVO VICTOR. Her work focuses on embedding genomics, data analytics, and equitable scientific innovation into modern healthcare to improve outcomes for both patients and donors.



Dr Megan Rowley is the current SHOT Steering Group Chair. She has been a member of the SHOT Working Expert Group as the author of the IT Errors chapter. Megan is a retired consultant haematologist, most recently working for the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service as a clinical transfusion medicine consultant. She moved to Edinburgh in 2016, previously working in and around London including a joint post between NHS Blood and Transplant and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust (St Mary's, Paddington).



Prof Dave Roberts is Medical Director for Pathology at NHSBT where he is the clinical lead for the Genomics programme including genotyping sickle cell patients for blood group antigen and provision of HLA selected units for solid organ transplant patients. He trained in Cambridge, Liverpool and Oxford in Biochemistry, General Medicine and Haematology. He completed a DPhjl on changing antigens expressed at the surface of the malaria infected red cells and held a Wellcome Trust Senior Clinical Fellowship before joining NHSBT. His research has embraced many aspects of haematology. He was clinical lead for convalescent plasma which helped define the antibody response to SARS-CoV-2, the selection of units of convalescent plasma and conducted clinical trials of convalescent plasma.



Anna Mamwell is passionate advocate for ensuring patients and the public have a meaningful voice in healthcare research, cancer policy and NHS decision-making. She has worked collaboratively with people from diverse backgrounds and with a wide range of lived experiences, helping to ensure their perspectives contribute to improvements in healthcare research, services and outcomes. As an acute leukaemia survivor, Anna combines her professional expertise with valuable lived experience as an NHS patient. She is Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Lead for Transfusion 2024 where she works closely with programme and project leads. She leads PPI activities involving patient partners with diverse experiences, blood donors and transfusion recipients, creating inclusive opportunities for people to contribute, share their perspectives and meaningfully influence the programme's development, priorities and future direction.



Jennifer Rock is the Transfusion Transformation Education Lead at NHS Blood and Transplant, supporting national educational initiatives that strengthen transfusion practice and patient safety. Her work centres on workforce development, education, and translating evidence into practice to improve outcomes for healthcare professionals and patients. Working closely with Transfusion Practitioners and key stakeholders, current priorities include the implementation of the Transfusion Practice Framework and supporting wider understanding of the Transfusion Practitioner role. The framework aims to support professional development and career progression while demonstrating the value and impact of the role in delivering safe transfusion practice across healthcare settings.



Kerry Dowling has over 16 years of experience leading Transfusion Laboratory Services within a large acute NHS teaching trust, supporting a diverse range of clinical specialties. Her commitment to improving laboratory safety and quality led her to take on the role of Chair of the UK Transfusion Laboratory Collaborative (UKTLC), alongside serving as Deputy Chair of the National Transfusion Laboratory Managers Group. Through her work with the UKTLC, she has developed a particular interest in workforce challenges facing transfusion and pathology laboratories across the UK. She is passionate about supporting laboratories to raise awareness of these issues, develop sustainable solutions, and strengthen the workforce. Her aim is to help create safer laboratory services for patients while fostering positive and supportive working environments for staff

13.00 Close of Symposium

Closing remarks by Dr Shubha Allard and Dr Megan Rowley