

NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF THE BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

Minutes of the Meeting of the National Provision
of Donors Committee
held on 1st February, 1989

Present:

Dr. R.J. Moore	-	NBTS Directorate in the Chair
Dr. D. Collins	-	Oxford RTC
Dr. J.F. Harrison	-	N.E. Thames RTC
Dr. V. James	-	Trent RTC
Mr.F.Morris	-	Lancaster TC
Mrs. B. Neaves	-	Cardiff RTC
Ms. J. Parsons	-	South London RTC

Observers:-

Mr. R. Forsythe	-	Northern Ireland BTS
Ms. S. Eddie	-	Aberdeen TC

In attendance:-

Mr. P.J. Cosgrove	-	NBTS Directorate
-------------------	---	------------------

1. Apologies for absence

None, all Members attended

2. Introductions

Dr. R.J. Moore welcomed Members to the inaugural meeting of the Provision of Donors Committee.

3. Remit

It was agreed that the remit of the Committee would be:

1. To consider and advise the National Director on measures to ensure that sufficient donors are recruited and retained to reach and maintain the targets for blood and plasma collection in the most economical manner.
2. To devise and advise on National strategies to meet the objectives and to advise on the effective disposition of the central publicity budget.
3. To maintain an awareness of Regional initiatives and advise on their co-ordination as appropriate.

It was agreed that small teams would be set up to deal with specific matters such as posters, films and leaflets as required.

It was emphasised that this committee would be the driving force in all policy matters concerning the provision

of donors. The Committee would have the responsibility for

the central publicity budget although it would formally be held by the HS division of the D.O.H.

4. Communications

Dr. Moore explained that the RDO representatives on the Committee would be able to transmit the policy view of the POD Committee to other RDO's in their divisions. Likewise the views of divisional RDO Committees would be brought to POD. Similarly the divisional medical representatives would be able to act as a conduit to the divisional meetings of consultants.

Communications between the Department and the NBTS on publicity would, in future, be through the Directorate and it was intended to improve the responses to RDO requests for posters etc.

5. The NBTS Requirements for Donors

The requirement for donors depends on the need for blood and plasma. It was agreed that a priority was to find out the Regional 1989/90 targets for whole blood, recovered plasma, and asphered plasma. The National Directorate would contact RTD's for this information which would be made available as soon as possible.

6. Reservoir of Potential Donors

The supply of blood and plasma can be increased by attention to the three R's: Recruitment of new donors, Retention of regular donors and Responsiveness to call-up.

Figures giving the number of new donors, the responsiveness of donors and the length of the retention of active donors have not been routinely collected on a common basis.

It was noted that surveys on donors had been carried out by a number of RTC's in the past and it was agreed that these should be collected and made available to the committee and other RTC's on request.

It was also agreed that a questionnaire should be sent to Regional Donor Organisers requesting this information.

7. Central Publicity Budget

The central publicity budget for 1989/90 is expected to be £570,000.

It was agreed that in order to make the best use of the funds available it would be necessary to ascertain the level of stocks of current leaflets, posters etc. With regard to the contents of leaflets it was agreed that a review was required. It was agreed that RDO's should be asked about local Regional publicity budgets for the BTS, how much money was available and if the money was earmarked for specific items or campaigns.

8. Marketing, Customer Service: Employment of Marketing Consultants

The Committee considered a paper on Customer Service by R. Franzmeier, Vice President - Blood Services, Blood Centre of S.E. Wisconsin. The paper discussed the results of a reorientation in the thinking of personnel from identifying the service with the provision of blood to hospitals, to providing a service to the donor, making the donor the focal point of attention.

A wide ranging discussion followed on the ramifications of the paper. It was agreed to adopt a mission statement for our own use on the lines of "The mission of the NBTS with regard to the provision of donors is to provide people with an opportunity to make a satisfying personal gift to the sick and injured in the community".

It was hoped this would reorientate and emphasise the responsibility of the service towards our donors.

In discussion many aspects of our service to donors were considered including staff attitudes and training needs.

It was noted that several individual RTC's had completed local surveys of donor attitudes and it was felt that these should be looked at.

In order to help us market our service to donors it was agreed that professional marketing consultants should be employed using some of the central publicity budget. Such a survey would map the way ahead for many years. A similar approach adopted in Scotland last year was already bearing fruit.

It was agreed that a draft programme specification for marketing consultants should be drawn up and enquiries made regarding costs and timescale.

9. Promotional Video

Members viewed a rough cut promotional video to be entitled 'Supplying Britain's Blood' which is being produced primarily in connection with canvassing for the setting up of Industrial Sessions but which may also be used as an educational aid to be shown at schools and colleges.

It was noted that the script and film were being checked and would be edited further, to delete a number of mistakes and ambiguities including those spotted by the Committee. The video will be finished in the financial year 89/90.

10. Minutes of the Meeting of the NBTS Publicity Sub-Committee held on 24th November 1988.

The Committee received, for information, the minutes of the above meeting and discussed the following matters arising:-

(i) Christmas/New Year Advertising

Some doubt was expressed that the Christmas/New Year advertising campaign was very effective. The principal gain was felt to be a marginal increase in the number of new donors and more certainly in raising the public's awareness of the BTS. It was argued that advertising on local radio was a cost effective means of reaching potential donors but unless data was collected verification could not be made.

(ii) Collaboration with the Automobile Association

Regarding the proposed scheme to target some of the AA's 7 million membership it was suggested that the promotional information should be linked to road traffic accidents and that a reply post card should be included. These postcards should be handled by a central mailing agency and would provide a basis for measuring the effectiveness of the campaign.

(iii) Folder for Industry

Members noted that preparation for the issue of the folder were nearly complete. It was suggested that a central organisation such as the CBI might be involved in the campaign.

(iv) Leaflets

The use of leaflets distributed with free papers was discussed. It was noted that 'leaflet drops' were to be made in Manchester and Edgware.

11. Single Telephone Number for the Blood Transfusion Services in the U.K.

After discussion, it was agreed that a single number for the Blood Transfusion Services in Scotland, England and Wales had considerable advantage. It was agreed that the Teledata proposal should be accepted. The number will be 0800 300 333. The setting-up and management costs will be paid from the central publicity budget whilst the call charges will be paid by each RTC according to the number of enquiries. All RTC's will be sent details of the service as soon as possible.

It was agreed that the timing of the implementation of the national 'phone number should be co-ordinated with the issue of new leaflets. Calls on the existing London number 0200 0200 will be re-routed to the national number 0800 300 333 for the next year.

12. National Blood Donor Day

The Committee discussed the feasibility of holding a National Blood Donor Day. It was agreed that it would not be advisable to hold such a day in the current year. A number of difficulties were identified particularly the likelihood that such an event might cause an avalanche of donors which the service could not manage and this would be counter productive as potential donors might well be turned away. Also, in the event of a massive response producing a short term glut it was felt that this might precipitate a famine.

The general feeling of members was that national effort could be utilised more effectively in the coming year. The idea could perhaps be explored in the future.

13. AIDS Leaflet

It was noted that the Expert Advisory Group on AIDS with advice from the NBTS would determine the at risk groups who should not donate blood.

It was agreed that the AIDS leaflet should be revised regularly. Six monthly changes of format/colour were suggested. This would be facilitated if it was a single sheet. It was agreed to ask EAGA to advise on the risk groups in the first instance.

14. Common Livery

It was felt that in the current situation in which RTC's had many different liveries on existing vehicles it would not be realistic in the present financial circumstances to press for a uniform livery.

It was agreed that this issue should be deferred until a later date.

15. Media Skill Courses for RDO's

It was agreed that RDO's could usefully have instruction in media skills. Dr. Moore asked RDO's to send him details of courses they had been on/heard of so that the best courses available could be identified.

16. Any other business

i) The response of donors to recent disasters had been excellent. It was suggested this might be used in future advertising.

ii) It was agreed that the removal of disincentive to giving blood such as free parking could not be considered an inducement or reward. The number of donors who might benefit from free parking in Trent in the first instance would be established so that an approach could be made to NCP for special treatment.

6.

iv) The Committee briefly discussed the franchising of companies for the production of goods bearing the Blood Transfusion Service's heart symbol. Members asked to be kept in touch with developments in this area.

Date of next Meeting

The next meeting of the Provision of Donors Committee will take place on Thursday, 16th March, 1989.