

**UK Forum
Mutual Resilience**

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

**NHS Blood and Transplant
Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion
Service
Scottish National Blood Transfusion
Service
and
Welsh Blood Service**

Effective Date: Last date of signature

Definitions

Common Recognised Information Picture (CRIP)

A form of situation report, this will be a document to which all UKBS will contribute and will be circulated at times set by the NCIM to ensure that all UKBS and other relevant stakeholders have the most up to date information.

Devolved Administrations

The Northern Ireland Assembly, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government.

Mutual Aid

For the purposes of this agreement, mutual aid is defined as follows:

'In the event of a catastrophic incident or a sustained and severe blood shortage which compromises or threatens to compromise a national blood supply chain, the UKBS will use reasonable endeavours to support each other for the purposes of supporting front line healthcare organisations in providing care based on clinical need.

Whilst it is not the purpose of this document to define a catastrophic incident, the scenarios considered most likely would include:

- Total loss of or significant damage to a UKBS operating facility
- Mass casualty event requiring resources beyond the capacity of the affected service
- A sudden and unpredictable reduction in the number of available donors
- A widespread human disease such as pandemic influenza
- A supply chain failure that severely impairs the ability of one or more UKBS to operate

Relevant Officer

The Lead Officer or nominated deputy of one of the UK Blood Services.

Requesting Service

The UKBS requesting assistance under the terms of this agreement.

UK Forum (UKF)

The association of Lead Officers and Medical Directors for the UK Blood Services which exists to co-ordinate and promote consistency and collaboration between the UK blood services, to develop co-ordinated professional advice and to provide a means for representing the UK to European Bodies.

National Emergency Team (NET)

The team which will be formed and chaired by NHSBT with appropriate representation from all other UKBS to manage any response required under the terms of this MoU.

National Critical Incident Manager (NCIM)

A senior manager on call 24/7 who will convene and chair the NET. It should be noted that if the situation is sufficiently serious, the NET may be chaired by the NHSBT Director on call and any reference to the NCIM should be interpreted as either the NCIM or duty Director as appropriate.

UK Blood Service (UKBS)

Any one of; NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT), Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service (NIBTS), Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) or the Welsh Blood Service (WBS).

Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) exists to set out the circumstances under which any one of the UKBS can formally request assistance from one or more of the other UKBS and the responsibilities of the Relevant Officers when such requests are made.

Scope

This MoU covers the provision of assistance to UKBS in the event of a catastrophic incident as outlined above. It does not cover the provision of blood or blood components, or any other products or services under 'business as usual' conditions.

All components will be supplied under the terms of the 'Technical Agreement for Non Contracted Component Supply between UK Blood Establishments'.

Trigger

The decision to make a request under the terms of this agreement will be at the discretion of the Relevant Officer from the requesting service, and that decision will be based on the operational requirements of their service within the framework of the Emergency Blood Management Arrangements of that country.

Transfers of product to meet defined stock shortages that do not result in the UKBS providing product meeting stock problems of their own are managed under the Technical Agreement and do not trigger this agreement.

Responsibilities

The NHSBT National Critical Incident Manager (NCIM), on receipt of a request as outlined above, shall immediately convene and chair a National Emergency Team teleconference including the Relevant Officers from all UKBS, with a view to giving urgent and careful consideration to the circumstances surrounding the request.

All Relevant Officers are required to have in their possession for the teleconference, an accurate picture of their current stock holdings of components together with an estimate where possible of stock currently held by customers, and an assessment of current service capability.

In addition, the Relevant Officer from the requesting service will be required to demonstrate that their organisation has taken all reasonable steps to manage both the supply of and demand for the components and/or services being requested. This will include but will not be limited to the implementation of emergency blood management arrangements with customers, and the invocation of any relevant stock shortage plans.

Throughout the period during which arrangements are in place under the terms of this agreement, the Relevant Officers will be required to ensure that the supply of and demand for components being supplied under those arrangements continue to be managed in the most effective manner with a view to all services returning to business as usual at the earliest opportunity.

Governance

All UKBS are autonomous organisations with their own governance arrangements, and nothing in this agreement is intended to usurp the authority of the Relevant Officers to manage the affairs of their own organisations.

The NCIM however, upon receipt of a request made under the terms of this agreement shall have responsibility for coordinating the response to such request, and any arrangements subsequently put in place. The NCIM will determine the membership of the NET, and ensure that all teleconferences or meetings are conducted appropriately and are minuted.

In the event that a request under the terms of this agreement is part of a wider scale emergency representation may be required from blood services at regional or national Governmental committees. It is anticipated that such requests will be directed via the relevant Department of Health (DH) to a specific organisation and will be dealt with by that organisation. It will be a matter for the Relevant Officer to keep the Chair of the NET informed of any such requests.

Communication

All communication must fit with existing procedures, as detailed in each organisation's emergency planning system.

The information requirements and flow during the period that arrangements are in place under the terms of this agreement will be determined by the NET, who will also determine the schedule of meetings and the reporting requirements.

The Chair of the NET will also be responsible for the production of a Common Recognised Information Picture (CRIP). The contents of the CRIP will be determined at the time and will be based on the information requirements of the UKBS together with any other relevant stakeholders (Devolved Administrations etc).

If required, the media strategy to cover any arrangements made under the terms of this agreement will be coordinated by the NHSBT Director of Communications. All media statements must be issued in consultation with the requesting service and due consideration will be given to the specific issues around the Devolved Administrations.

Return to Business as Usual

The NET will determine the point at which any arrangements made under the terms of this agreement can be stood down. The parameters for standing down will be broadly the same as for requesting aid in the first place i.e. operational requirements of the requesting organisation.

Duration and Review

This MoU will come into force on the date it is signed and will remain in force until superseded or withdrawn by mutual agreement of all UKBS.

It will be subject to review every two years from the date of signing, or following invocation and the Chair of the UKF will appoint an appropriate person to conduct such reviews.

In the event that this agreement is invoked, a review will be conducted following stand-down of the arrangements to ensure that any lessons learned can be captured and incorporated into any future agreements.

Freedom of Information

This document could be subject to disclosure under a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

NHSBT, NIBTS and WBS are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. SNBTS are subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

The response to any requests for information under either of these Acts will be dealt with by the receiving organisation under its own information governance arrangements.

Contractual issues

All components supplied to a requesting service under arrangements made under the terms of this agreement will be supplied in line with the normal contractual arrangements of the supplying organisation including cost, payment, liability and any other contractual obligations.

Signatories

For and behalf of NHS Blood and Transplant

Signature: 

Name: Betsy Bassis

Title: Chief Executive

Date: 24 March 2021

For and behalf of Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service

Signature: 

Name: Karin Jackson

Title: Chief Executive

Date: 30 March 2021

For and behalf of Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service

Signature: 

Name: Craig Spalding

Title: Director - SNBTS

Date: 17 March 2021

For and behalf of Welsh Blood Service

Signature: 

Name: Alan Prosser

Title: Interim dDirector

Date: 31 March 2021