

# **Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO): biographies of members**

Updated 9 January 2026

## **Professor James Neuberger – Chair**

Professor James Neuberger qualified from Oxford University and did general medical training in London and Leeds. After 10 years at the Liver Unit, Kings College Hospital London, he moved to Birmingham as a consultant physician in the Liver Unit, where he continues to work in clinical liver disease and transplantation. He was then Associate Medical Director in Organ Donation and Transplantation at NHS Blood and Transplant from 2008 until 2016. Professor Neuberger has published extensively on aspects of liver disease and transplantation. He has been an editor of Transplantation and Associate Editor for the Journal of Hepatology. He is a Trustee of the PBC Foundation, the Children's Liver Disease Foundation and Transplant Sport.

## **Dr Su Brailsford – Consultant in Epidemiology and Health Protection**

Dr Su Brailsford was appointed to the post of Consultant in Epidemiology and Health Protection at NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) following public health training in London. She is a fellow of the Faculty of Public Health. She has an honorary appointment at the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) where she leads the joint NHSBT and UKHSA Epidemiology Unit which runs several surveillance programs providing data on infections in donors and recipients. She is a member of the Serious Hazards of Transfusion (SHOT) steering group and the UK blood services JPAC Standing Advisory Committee on Care and Selection of Donors and chaired the For the Assessment of Individualised Risk (FAIR) steering group.

## **Mr Amanpreet Dhesi – biomedical scientist**

Aman Dhesi is the Associate Director for Technical and Scientific Development at NHS Blood and Transplant. He is responsible for leading the development of the manufacturing service, which includes the processing, testing and issue of blood components. Aman has over 20 years' experience working across blood and transfusion.

He started his career as a technician fractionating plasma before joining NHSBT to complete his state registration as a Biomedical Scientist. He has substantial experience working with hospitals, to improve the safe and appropriate use of blood, and within business strategy and transformations.

## **Professor Neil Hawkins – health economist**

Neil Hawkins is Professor of Health Technology Assessment at the University of Bristol. Trained as a health economist and statistician, he works primarily in evidence synthesis and the development of cost-effectiveness models. More recently, he has developed a growing interest in qualitative methods. He is Vice Chair of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Diagnostics Advisory Committee (DAC) and a member of the NICE Medical Technologies Advisory Committee (MTAC). He previously served on the Board of Directors and Finance Committee of the International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research (ISPOR). Neil also contributed to a NICE project to develop a new model for the evaluation and purchasing of antimicrobials in the UK.

## **Mr Roger Graham – lay representative for organ transplantation**

Roger Graham is a non-clinical lay member of SaBTO with personal experience of dialysis and kidney transplant. His professional background is in engineering and portfolio project management, with 30 years of experience in the development and delivery of safety enhancements within the nuclear generation industry.

## **Dr George Greenhall – transplant nephrologist**

Dr George Greenhall qualified from Sheffield University in 2006 and completed his specialist training in Renal and General Medicine in London. He was appointed as a Consultant Nephrologist at The Royal London Hospital in 2023. He specialises in kidney transplantation. His research interests include clinical epidemiology, deceased donor risk

assessment and donor transmitted diseases. He has several high impact publications, and has presented his work at national and international conferences.

## **Ella Poppitt – nurse**

Ella Poppitt is the Chief Nurse for Blood Supply at NHS Blood And transplant. She has extensive experience in Blood Donation operational delivery, and corporate clinical governance. Ella has also worked as a nurse and senior manager in organ donation within NHSBT and at the John Radcliffe in Oxford as a Transplant Coordinator, service manager and Neuro ICU. Ella has participated in microbiology sub groups for SaBTO while working clinically in organ donation. Ella co designed the ACRE RCT for collaborative requesting in relation to improving consent rates nationally for organ donation, as well as leading transformational workforce redesign project. Ella has completed a Masters degree in Health Care Ethics and Law, and also led the implementation of the FAIR changes for blood supply in England.

Ella is accountable for donor safety across blood donation as Chair of the Blood Donation clinical governance committee. She has a career long interest in donation, spanning 30 years as a registered nurse, and is a strong donor advocate to ensure delivery safe care and products for patients.

## **Professor Will Irving – virologist**

Will Irving is Professor and Honorary Consultant in Virology at the University of Nottingham and Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust. His major research interests are in the field of viral hepatitis, particularly hepatitis C virus, wherein he has published extensively. He has served as member (1998 to 2009), then chair (2009 to 2014) of the Department of Health Expert Advisory Group on Hepatitis, and as a member of the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (2003 to 2012). Currently he chairs the National Strategy Group for Viral Hepatitis, and co-chairs HCV Research UK, a national resource comprising a cohort of 12,000 patients with database and biorepository

## **Professor Yacoub Khalaf – IVF, fertility and stem cell specialist**

Professor Yacoub Khalaf is a consultant and professor of Reproductive Medicine and Surgery at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and King's College, London. He is also Director of the Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis Programme in the Assisted Conception Unit at Guy's Hospital. Yacoub qualified at Assiut University in Egypt and

completed his MD in Birmingham. He is currently deputy director of a subspecialty training programme in reproductive medicine and a member of the Genomics Taskforce of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG). He is a former chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) Scientific and Clinical Advances Advisory Committee, a former member of the HFEA Board, and a former executive board member of the British Fertility Society. He is also former chair of the RCOG National Clinical Studies Group in Reproductive Medicine and Surgery and former Associate Editor of RBM online Journal. Yacoub is the principal investigator of several NIHR-funded research grants and has published more than 185 peer-reviewed articles on different aspects of reproductive medicine (NEJM, Lancet, BMJ, Cell Biology and Nature). He has also been an invited and plenary speaker on fertility and IVF at numerous international conferences. Currently he is General Secretary of the International Society for IVF, President Elect of the Middle East Fertility Society, visiting Professor at the University of Zagreb School of Medicine, Croatia, Expert Advisor to the Singapore Ministry of Health on the regulation of pre-implantation genetic testing and Associate Editor of Frontiers in Endocrinology.

## **Ines Ushiro-Lumb – virologist**

Ines Ushiro-Lumb is a Consultant Medical Virologist at NHS Blood and Transplant, where she is the Lead Clinical Microbiologist for Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation, and Clinical Director of the Microbiology Services Laboratory (Virology), with broad clinical and diagnostic experience in infection related matters. She is also an honorary consultant with the UK Health Security Agency and associate professor in Infection and Immunity at the University College London. Member of various UK and European professional groups and committees on the quality and safety of blood, cells, tissues and organs for transfusion and transplantation, councillor of the International Society for Organ Donation and the Transplant Infectious Diseases section of the Transplantation Society, and member of the European Society for Organ Transplantation Infectious Diseases Task force.

## **Professor Jean Manson – prion specialist**

Professor Jean Manson currently holds a personal chair in Neurodegenerative Diseases at the University of Edinburgh and is the PI of the Scottish Brain Health Bioresource. She has worked and published as a basic scientist for over 30 years in prion diseases. She has engaged in understanding and preventing the spread of prion diseases in both animals and humans through the development and use of small and large animal models and the study of natural disease. She has worked with people of all disciplines associated with prion disease to address and understand the problems of these diseases.

Her research expertise in the prion diseases also allows her to address fundamental questions in the wider family of protein misfolding diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease. She led a programme of research aiming to identify the key mechanisms that preserve healthy brain function and those that contribute to neurodegeneration. She has also served as a member of government and scientific advisory bodies in UK, Europe and Canada over the last 30 years.

## **Dr Gail Miflin – Chief Medical Officer, NHSBT**

Dr Gail Miflin has been the Chief Medical Officer for NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) since 2016. She is also the Director of Clinical Services. In the former she is responsible for clinical governance and R&D and is also the responsible officer and Caldicott Guardian. She also is responsible for NHSBT safety policy. In addition, as Director of Clinical Services, she is responsible for the delivery of Cell Apheresis and Gene Therapies and Pathology Services. As well as being a member of the DHSC advisory body, SaBTO, she also sits on the Joint Professional Advisory Committee to the UK Blood Services and the Scientific Research and Advisory Committee of the Canadian Blood Services. Gail is also a member of the Alliance of Blood Operators Chief Medical Officer group and sponsor for the UK Stem Cell Strategic Forum on behalf of the DHSC. Prior to joining NHSBT in 2010, she was a Consultant Haematologist at UCLH Foundation Trust where she specialised in treating patients with sickle cell disease and thalassaemia.

## **Professor Michael Murphy – haematologist**

Mike Murphy is Professor of Transfusion Medicine at the University of Oxford and Consultant Haematologist for NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) and the Oxford University Hospitals. His main focus is on hospital transfusion practice, patient blood management and the use of information technology. His team developed an 'end-to-end' electronic transfusion process in Oxford which has improved transfusion safety and efficiency and won many national awards. He founded the NHSBT's Clinical Studies Unit, Systematic Reviews Initiative, and National Comparative Audit programme.

He was Secretary of the National Blood Transfusion Committee (England) from its establishment in 2001 to 2015, and provided leadership for the Chief Medical Officers' Better Blood Transfusion and Patient Blood Management Seminars and Health Service Circulars from 1997 to 2012. He chaired the group which developed the NICE guidelines on transfusion (2015), was Chair of the international BEST Research Collaborative (2014 to 2018) and was President of the Association for the Advancement of Blood and Biotherapies (formerly the American Association of Blood Banks) (2019).

## **Dr Adnan Sharif – transplant physician**

Dr Adnan Sharif graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 2002 and underwent his medical and nephrology training in Cardiff and Birmingham respectively, while achieving his research degree in the field of post-transplantation diabetes. He took up his Consultant Transplant Nephrologist post at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham in 2011 and is Honorary Associate Professor in the Institute of Immunology and Immunotherapy at the University of Birmingham. He has an active research focus with >180 peer-reviewed publications and is an invited speaker at national/international meetings. He is currently Chief Investigator on several prospective cohort and randomized clinical trials in nephrology and transplantation. He is on the Board of Trustees for Kidney Research UK, Give A Kidney, and the Global Kidney Foundation, and is a long-term member of the National BAME Transplantation Alliance which serves under-served ethnic minority communities. Dr. Sharif has represented Transplant Nephrology on the British Transplantation Society Council for 2020-2023. Finally, he is an executive team member of the UK Organ Donation and Transplant Research Network. In addition to his clinical and research interests, he is the Secretary of the non-Government Organization Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH) which campaigns against illegal and unethical organ procurement around the globe. The group was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016, 2017 & 2024 and received the Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice in 2019.

## **Professor Peter Simmonds – microbiologist**

Peter Simmonds qualified in Medicine at the University of Southampton and subsequently completed his college Clinical Virology training in 1995 while employed as a clinical lecturer at the University of Edinburgh. He was appointed Professor of Virology in 2001 and has pursued a combined academic and clinical career in the area of virus pathogenesis, epidemiology and evolution and in virus diagnostic developments, emerging viruses and most recently developing the use of next generation sequencing methods in virus diagnostics. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. He is Unit Director of the NIHR Blood Transfusion Research Unit (BTRU) on Transfusion and Transplant Transmitted Infections, a large research and development partnership programme with NHSBT in the area of transfusion microbiology.

## **Professor Marc Turner – regenerative medicine specialist**

Marc Turner is Director at the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service and Professor of Cellular Therapy at the University of Edinburgh. He qualified in Medicine from the University of Manchester in 1982 and trained in General Medicine and Haematology. He obtained his PhD in human haematopoietic stem cell biology from the University of Edinburgh in 1995 and an MBA in Life Sciences from the Open University in 2007. He is a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London, of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, of the Royal College of Pathologists and of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

His research interests include the risk of transmission of prion diseases by blood, tissues and cells and the translation of advanced therapy medicinal products to clinical practice. He has held 40 research grants and has over 170 publications. He was formerly a nonexecutive director of Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult and a co-director of the Northern Alliance Advanced Therapy Treatment Centre and is currently Chair of the Global Alliance on iPSC Therapies. He was also formerly a member of the European Medicines Agency Committee on Advanced Therapies (CAT) and is currently a commissioner on the Commission on Human Medicines and a member of its COVID-19 Vaccines Benefit-Risk Expert Working Group and chair of its Clinical Trials, Biologicals and Vaccines Expert Advisory Group, a member of the Scottish Medicines Consortium and a member of the UK Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs.

## **Professor Mark Vickers – haematologist**

Mark Vickers qualified in medicine from Cambridge and Oxford in 1983. After general medical jobs in London, he researched the genetic control of alpha-globin genes. He trained in clinical haematology at the Hammersmith, Reading and John Radcliffe Hospitals, moving to Aberdeen in 1996, where he has remained. In 2010, he took a post in clinical transfusion medicine, although continues to practise some clinical haematology. In the laboratory he is currently interested in glycans in red cell pathology, glycan conjugated therapeutic antibodies, splenic function and anti-Epstein Barr virus cytotoxic lymphocytes

## **Dr Sharon Zahra – tissue donation and transplantation**

Dr Sharon Zahra is the Clinical Lead for Tissues, Cells and Advanced Therapies, Medical Director for the Cell Therapy Processing Facility and the HFEA Person Responsible at the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service. She qualified in Medicine from the University of Malta in 1997, and initially trained in General Paediatrics and later Adult Haematology.

She obtained her second MD in 2010 through the University of Edinburgh having carried out research in haemostasis. She is a member of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and the Royal College of Pathologists. She took on her current role in tissue banking in 2014, and her main responsibilities are the quality and safety of various tissue and cell products donated by both living and deceased donors for clinical use. She was an active member of the JPAC Specialist Advisory Committee on Tissues and Cellular Therapy Products from 2014 to 2023. She is an examiner with the Royal College of Pathologists; is a member of the HFEA Licensed Centres' Panel and contributes to various research projects that cross the interface from bench research to clinical trial.