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Our ref: AH/274781

Dear Robin

Re: Information request

Thank you for your request dated 20 November 2014, for information from NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) regarding the number of needle pricks you made to the skin which bled and our operations in North Wales.

I am writing to advise you that we are able to provide you with the following information in response to your request.

Can you tell me the number of needle pricks you made to the skin which bled? I expect that this will equal the number of finger prick tests carried out plus the number of actual donations from the arm.

Our systems do not record the number of needle pricks made to the skin which bled. The data we are able to provide is based on assumptions. For everyone who has successfully donated, we assume that they had two needle pricks; one to test their haemoglobin levels and one for the donations. This is for whole blood as well as platelet donors. The total number of pricks recorded between 1 December 2013 and 1 December 2014 for successful donations is 3,674,696.

For all the donors recorded as low HB, we counted that there was one needle prick to the skin which bled. The total number of pricks recorded for donors with low Hb between 1 December 2013 and 1 December 2014 is 57,307.

The grand total of the number of needle pricks to the skin which bled recorded between 1 December 2013 and 1 December 2014 therefore is 3,732,003.

Please note that there is a degree of uncertainty concerning donors who have been recorded as having given a sample as they can progress to donate or not donate. For this reason, this has been left out of the final calculation.

Please tell me the name of the person responsible for the decision that blood donations in North Wales should be carried out by the English blood service rather than the Welsh one.

NHS Blood & Transplant is a Special Health Authority for England and North Wales and we have been given a remit to collect, process and supply blood in England and North Wales. This is detailed in the NHS Blood & Transplant (Wales) Directions 2005 and amendments since.

The provision of a blood service in North Wales has always been carried out by an English blood service. More than 20 years ago, this was provided by a blood collection team from Liverpool who would travel round North Wales, staying overnight for a week or so at a time. Later, teams managed from Liverpool were recruited and based in Wrexham and Caernarvon. The poor transport links between North Wales and Cardiff, where the Welsh Blood Service is based, made it difficult to take collected blood to Cardiff for processing and deliver blood from Cardiff to North Wales in a timely manner, this is why the service was provided by an English service.

In June 2012, Lesley Griffiths, the then Welsh Minister for Health & Social Care, stated that an all-Wales blood service should be created by 2016, with substantial progress to be made by 2014. We have since this time worked closely with Welsh Government (including the new Minister, Mark Drakeford) and the Welsh Blood Service to help them with their planning for this change.

In section 10.7.2 of your Welsh Language plan it says "If a non-Welsh speaker is appointed to a post where the ability to speak Welsh is considered essential, NHSBT will ensure that he/she learns the language as a condition of service to a satisfactory level of fluency within 3 years." Please list any other skills which you consider essential for certain posts but despite that you are willing to appoint people to post while they still lack that essential skill, particularly where you acknowledge that it will take the employee up to as long as three years to acquire that skill to a satisfactory level. Or is the ability to speak Welsh unique in this regard?

As a public service operating in Wales, we are required to have a Welsh Language Scheme. Under this scheme we are required to treat English and Welsh languages equally. When our Welsh Language Scheme was drafted in 2009, we did not identify any jobs where the Welsh language was essential. We are obliged to offer the choice of English or Welsh in both our spoken and written correspondence in our dealings with the public in Wales. In our blood collection teams, we have Welsh speakers, we provide bilingual forms and leaflets and we will correspond with people in Wales in the language they choose.

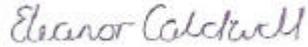
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I hope this is helpful in addressing your questions. Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely



Eleanor Caldwell
External Affairs Manager

E-mail: xxxxxxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxxxx.xxx.xx

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request an review of our decision, you should write to: Customer Services Operations Manager, NHS Blood and Transplant, Oak House, Reeds Crescent, Watford, WD24 4QN (Email: xxxxxxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxxxx.xxx.xx).

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT). The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.