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NHS SCOTLAND

[redacted]

[redacted]

Date 30 October 2026
Your Ref FOI-2026-3530
Our Ref FOI-2026-3530

Enquiries to [redacted]
Email psd.foi@nhs.scot

Dear [redacted]

Freedom of Information Reference: FOI-2026-3530

I refer to your Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) request that we received on 16 October 2026 requesting the following information:

> **I am writing under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to request information held by the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) concerning the prevention, monitoring and management of iron deficiency among blood and blood-component donors. I am particularly interested in iron deficiency without anaemia, the limitations of haemoglobin screening, and the evidence informing SNBTS policies on ferritin testing, iron supplementation and long-term donor health. Please provide the following recorded information for the period 1 January 2021 to the date of this request, together with any earlier documents that remain operative or underpin current policy.**
>
> 1. **Ferritin screening and donor iron monitoring**
>
>   - **Current policies, clinical guidelines and standard operating procedures governing ferritin testing and monitoring of iron stores in whole-blood, plateletpheresis and plasmapheresis donors.**
>   - **Any evidence reviews, risk assessments, business cases, committee papers or decision records considering the introduction of routine or targeted ferritin screening.**
>   - **Any recorded rationale for decisions not to introduce or expand ferritin screening, including clinical, operational or financial considerations.**
>
> 2. **Post-donation iron supplementation**
>
>   - **Current policies and clinical guidance concerning iron supplementation following whole-blood and blood-component donation.**
>   - **Any evaluations, evidence reviews, risk assessments or decision records concerning routine, targeted or donor-initiated iron supplementation.**

Chair Mr Keith Redpath
Chief Executive Professor Karen Reid

- **Any recorded rationale for SNBTS's current approach, including consideration of frequent donors, menstruating donors and other groups at increased risk of iron depletion.**

3. **Haemoglobin screening and donor information**

- **Current guidance and training materials explaining the limitations of haemoglobin screening in detecting iron deficiency without anaemia.**
- **Any assessments or evaluations of donors' understanding of the distinction between haemoglobin levels and iron stores.**
- **Any reviews or evaluations of the adequacy of donor information concerning cumulative iron loss, recovery times and the potential consequences of repeated donations.**

4. **Ferritin thresholds and clinical evidence**

- **Clinical guidance or evidence reviews concerning ferritin thresholds used to identify low iron stores or iron deficiency in donors.**
- **Any recorded consideration of differences between laboratory reference ranges, diagnostic thresholds for iron deficiency, and ferritin levels associated with symptoms in individuals without anaemia.**
- **Any assessments of whether donors may experience iron-deficiency-related symptoms despite meeting minimum haemoglobin requirements.**

5. **Monitoring, evaluation and donor outcomes**

- **Existing reports or statistical summaries concerning low ferritin, iron deficiency or iron-related adverse outcomes among donors.**
- **Any evaluations of the effectiveness of donation intervals, haemoglobin screening and donor information in preventing iron depletion.**
- **Any available analyses of donor iron status according to donation frequency, sex, age or donation type.**
- **Any assessments of cumulative red-cell and iron losses associated with repeated plateletpheresis or plasmapheresis, including losses from routine sampling, residual blood in collection sets or incomplete returns.**

6. **Policy review and governance**

- **The names of committees, working groups or clinical governance bodies responsible for reviewing donor iron management policies.**
- **Relevant minutes, recommendations or decision summaries concerning ferritin screening, supplementation or donor iron depletion during the specified period.**
- **Any documented ongoing or planned reviews, trials or policy developments concerning these matters.**

We have now completed the search of our records and can provide you with the following information:

In response to your request please find attached a letter from Dr Faye McCleery, SNBTS Clinical Lead for Blood Donation (see attachment "Letter from Dr Faye McCleery") and copies of the documents referred to in her letter.

All documents attached to this response are listed below:

ATTACHEMENT
Letter from Dr Faye McCleery
NATP DON 13 002 - Haemoglobin and FBC Testing of Platelet Donors
NATP DON 07 007 Management of donors failing WB Hb
NATS COL 060 - SESSION MANAGEMENT OF DONORS FAILING PRE-WHOLE BLOOD DONATION HAEMOGLOBIN SCREENING
NATL 017 SNBTS High Haemoglobin Leaflet April 2024 (WEB) FINAL
NATL 018 SNBTS Low Haemoglobin Leaflet 2024 (WEB) FINAL
NATL 020 SNBTS_DIL (WEB) May 2025_v1
NATS MED 008 Haemoglobin results- Platelet donation
NATS MED 008 Plasmaphereses Haemoglobin and FBC Results
NATS MED 008 Haemoglobin Results- Whole Blood

It is important to note that from 1 April 2026, NSS and NHS Education for Scotland (NES) joined to form Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland), enabling transformation in health, social care, and the wider public sector. The new direct PSD Scotland FOI email address is now psd.foi@nhs.scot

More information regarding PSD Scotland can be found at the following URL:

Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland)

I trust you will find the information of assistance and if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me using the email address psd.foi@nhs.scot.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of how we have dealt with your request, you can make representations to us asking us to review the handling of your request. Please write to the Associate Director Corporate Governance using the email address psd.foi@nhs.scot within 40 working days of the date of this correspondence.

If after a review you are still unhappy, you also have the right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at Kinburn Castle, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS, or via their online Appeal form.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]