

Purpose of this procedure:

This procedure outlines the principles of safe and accurate patient identification in relation to the blood transfusion process.

The Procedure:

Staff involved in transfusion need to be vigilant at each step in the transfusion process, particularly where patient identification is involved.

The patient must be wearing a **patient identification (ID) band** when they are being transfused regardless of location.

The **five core patient identifiers** that must be included on their ID band are:

1. First name
2. Last name
3. Date of birth
4. Community Health Index (CHI) number* or emergency number
5. Sex**

*There are a small number of patients who do not have a CHI number. These include individuals who are not registered with a GP in Scotland; patients who have been admitted to the hospital in an emergency who are yet to be identified; newborn babies who have yet to be issued with a CHI. In these instances, the laboratory will accept the 700-prefix unique hospital patient identification (UHPI) number (or, if applicable, emergency number) as the patient's unique identifier. Please alert the transfusion laboratory if this is the case. Patients for whom a CHI subsequently becomes available (e.g. neonates, unidentified patients) should have this applied to their ID band and then used throughout the transfusion process. Please ensure the transfusion laboratory is informed of this so that they can link transfusion records if necessary.

The transfusion identification minimum data set must be used at every stage of the transfusion process. The patient's ID band must match the information on all transfusion documentation exactly.

Unconscious, sedated or confused patients, babies and small children and any other patients unable to communicate verbally must be identified by the information given on their identification band. This should be verified by another member of staff, relative or carer.

Patients with capacity must be asked to identify themselves. Positive Patient Identification requires the patient to give their full name and date of birth.

In circumstances where patients do not have capacity, use the ID band, and, if present, a relative may be asked.

The Unidentified (Unknown) Patient

The unidentified patient is a patient who cannot verify their name and date of birth. If an unidentified patient (e.g. unconscious) is admitted and their identity is unknown, the following procedure must be followed if blood transfusion is necessary:

- The patient must be allocated a unique identification number (i.e. 700 prefix UHPI number or emergency number (used in emergency department))
- The minimum identifying dataset must include this number plus **Unknown Male/Female** (e.g. “Unknown Male A123456”).
- A patient identification band including this minimum data must be attached to the patient
- This dataset must be used on sample tubes and request forms for transfusion until additional identification details become available
- When additional identification details become available, the hospital transfusion laboratory must be informed to ensure records are linked

In the event of a major incident: all patients will be identified by a unique identification number which must feature on the patient’s identification band. This number must be written onto the transfusion sample tube at the point of sampling: it will appear on the component pack tag and must be used to identify such patients for the duration of the transfusion episode, even if additional identification information subsequently becomes available.

**Transgender and non-binary patients

To enable the laboratory to provide blood components that are safe and appropriate for the recipient, it is important that laboratory staff know whether the recipient has child-bearing potential or not. If a patient has childbearing potential and their blood group is either unknown or Rh D negative and Kell negative they should receive Rh D negative, Kell negative red cells. At certain sites in NHS Lothian the transfusion laboratory IT system permits/restricts issue of certain blood components and registrations of pregnancies according to the CHI and sex registered in the system. These are built-in safety measures. A trans patient’s current CHI number may not reflect their previous gender and therefore their childbearing potential.

At the time of writing there are no published general laboratory or transfusion guidelines on how to manage these issues. However, there is ongoing consultation within Scotland with a view to published recommendations.

In the interim, when sending transfusion blood samples taken from patients who identify as trans or non-binary please state clearly in the clinical details section on the request form whether the patient has child-bearing potential and follow this up with a phone call to the appropriate transfusion laboratory. This should be done as far in advance of any potential transfusion as possible to ensure there is time to resolve any potential IT issues and to allow release of appropriate blood components.

Associated materials/references

[NHS Lothian Patient Identification Policy](#)

[NHS Lothian Blood Transfusion Policy](#)

[NHS Lothian Blood Transfusion Procedures](#)