



# United Kingdom Transfusion Laboratory Collaborative (UKTLC) Survey 2022



The UKTLC, working closely with key stakeholders, aims to influence positive changes within the transfusion community and enhance safety through promotion of best practice and addressing gaps identified in practices. UKTLC provides informed recommendations including staffing, qualifications, knowledge and skills, information technology and just culture within UK transfusion laboratories to promote staff and patient safety.

A biennial survey is sent out to all transfusion laboratories in the UK who report to the Serious Hazards of Transfusion (SHOT) haemovigilance scheme and is intended to represent a 'snapshot' of working conditions within the laboratory on a single day across UK.

The UKTLC standards have been revised for 2023, replacing the previous version (Chaffe *et al.*, 2014) and a full report will be published in Transfusion Medicine, an abbreviated version is viewable on the SHOT website: [www.shotuk.org/resources/current-resources/uktlc/](http://www.shotuk.org/resources/current-resources/uktlc/)



## UKTLC SURVEY 2022

- Open 26 September to 9 December 2022
- Included 45 questions relating to a variety of laboratory activities
- One response per laboratory requested to assess the situation per lab rather than network or Trust

## RESPONSES

- There was a 49% response rate (74/151)
- 94.6% was completed by the Transfusion laboratory manager (TLM)
- 5.4% completed by TP, blood sciences manager, transfusion lead and deputy director of acute services

### 1. Staffing

↑ Workload ↑ Vacancies  
Difficulties in recruitment and retention

### 2. Qualifications, knowledge and skills

↑ Difficulties training and maintaining competency  
↓ Satisfaction with newly qualified HCPC registered BMS

## KEY THEMES

### 3. Information Technology

Limited number of organisations with full vein-2-vein IT

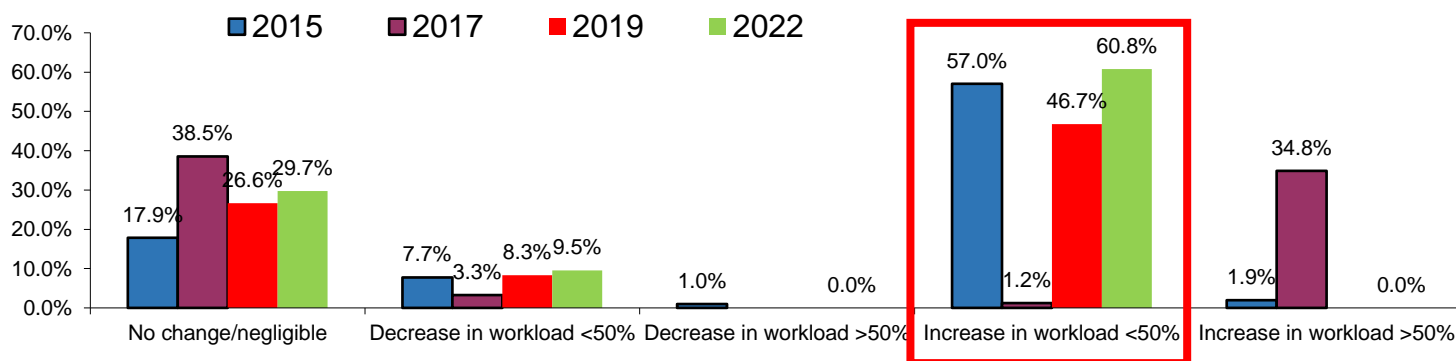
### 4. A just culture

↑ Ability to raise concerns ↑ Learning from excellence  
↑ Incorporating human factors in day to day practice

## 1. STAFFING

### Workload

What is the percentage variation in current workload compared to previous year?



Most laboratories have seen an increase in workload of <50%, few have seen a decrease. In general, the variation in workload has been similar over the years surveyed between 2015 and 2022, except for 2017 where 34.8% of respondents noted an increase greater than 50%.

## Capacity planning



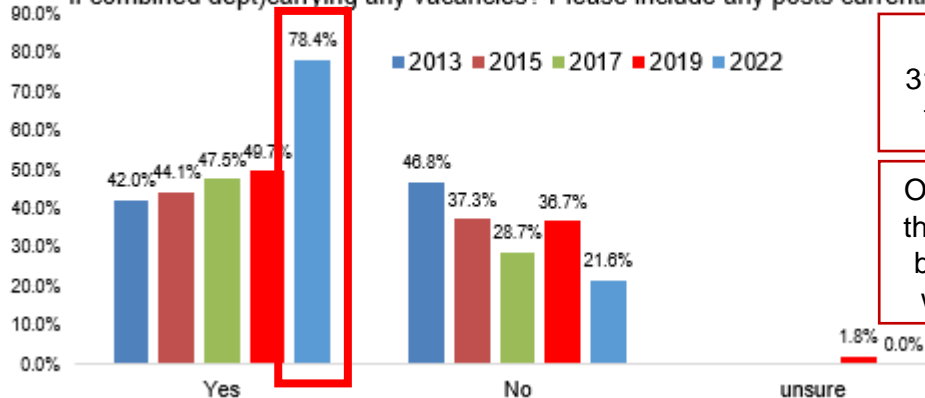
The number of laboratories with capacity plans had increased from 62% in the 2019 survey to **86.5%** in 2022 survey



However, respondents noted **lack of compliance** with the capacity plan and deficiencies in both **staffing numbers** and **skill mix**

## Staffing levels

Is the blood transfusion department (or haematology / blood transfusion department if combined dept) carrying any vacancies? Please include any posts currently filled by locums



Less than half of laboratories (23/74, 31.1%) had a full complement of staff in the 7 days prior to survey completion

Only 37/74 (50%) of respondents stated that on the day of completing the survey both the staffing numbers and skill mix were compliant with the capacity plan

Difficulties included covering long term leave (including sickness and maternity) and recruitment and retention

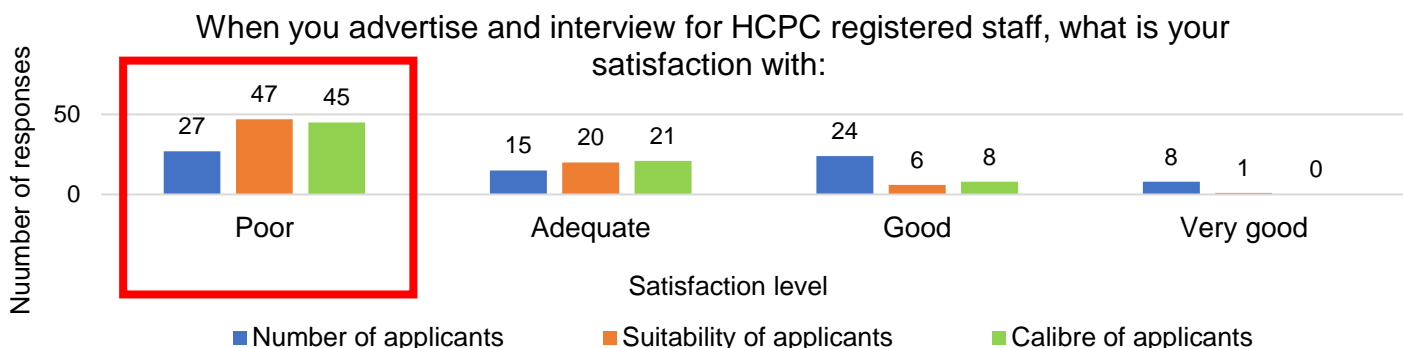
1/3 noted an incident or near miss delay in provision of blood components due to inadequate staffing levels and/or staff education and knowledge.

"We have problems with recruitment and retention of staff and therefore there is a focus on training so that we can maintain a service."

"Senior BMS staff are currently providing training most days due to short staffing and skill mix issues. We are currently carrying a high training burden"

## Recruitment

Concerns have been raised relating to the **number, suitability, calibre of applicants** for HCPC registered roles. Most respondents felt that the level of education relating to transfusion in newly qualified HCPC registered BMS was poor.







**Recommendation:** All laboratories should have a formal approved capacity plan covering staff numbers and skill mix. There should be a process for escalation where the capacity plan is not met, and staffing levels are considered unsafe.

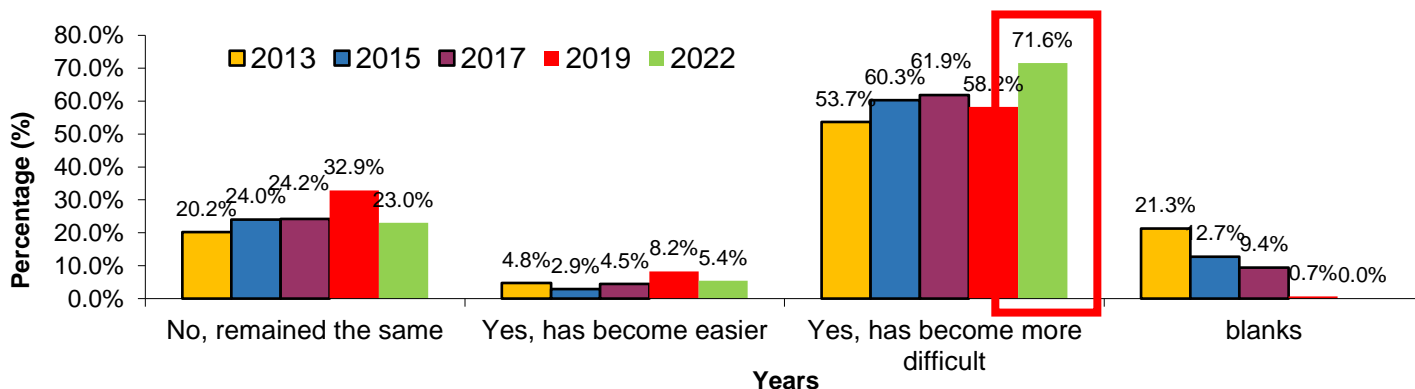
**Recommendation:** UKTLC to work with Biomedical degree providers and relevant stakeholders to improve education in relating to blood transfusion.

## 2. QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS

### Training and Competency assessment

-  Most stated staff working on the night shift prior to completion of the survey were compliant with the laboratory training and competency assessment program
-  Most noted no specified training and development budget for transfusion and challenges with releasing staff for external educational events, both face-to-face and virtual
-  Respondents were keen to have more access to technology to aid self-directed learning for staff in training
-  Increased staff turnover has put additional strain on laboratories to provide training and supervision

**In your opinion has the ability to train/mentor inexperienced staff altered during the last 2 years (3 years for 2022)?**



### Qualifications and education

What is your grade of satisfaction with the level of education (knowledge and understanding) of newly HCPC registered BMS of blood transfusion?

Majority of respondents not satisfied with the level of education

Respondents felt that the level of education relating to transfusion in newly qualified HCPC registered BMS was poor

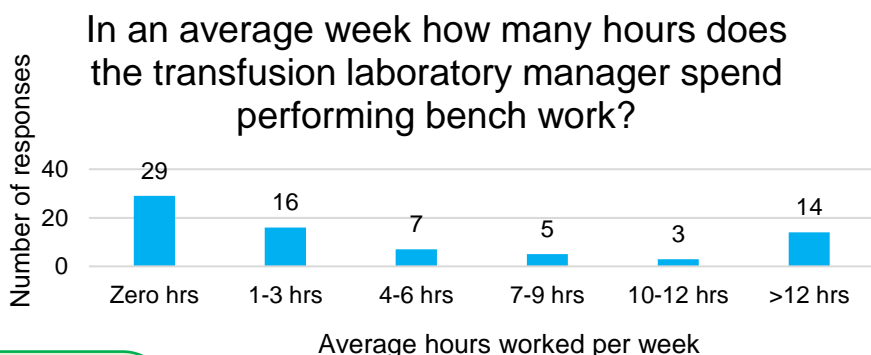


**Recommendation:** Training and competency assessment requirements should be included in the laboratory capacity plan to ensure that adequate time is available for compliance.

**Recommendation:** UKTLC in conjunction with other professional organisations should consider providing interactive tools and resources that could be used to support self-directed learning in the workplace.

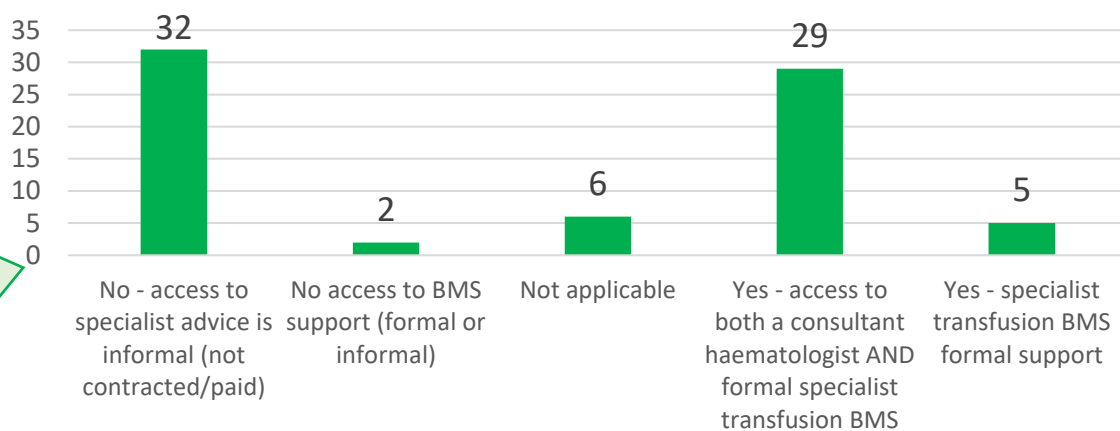
**Recommendation:** Pathology management should ensure allocation of budget for training and development opportunities for transfusion staff.

## Management and supervisory



Majority of TLMs are having to work on the bench for part of the time, which is likely to reflect inadequate numbers of staff as identified by the capacity plan

Is there a formal arrangement for lone workers to access specialist transfusion LABORATORY ADVICE outside of core hours?



**Recommendation:** Organisations should review access to formal and remunerated specialist laboratory advice out of hours.

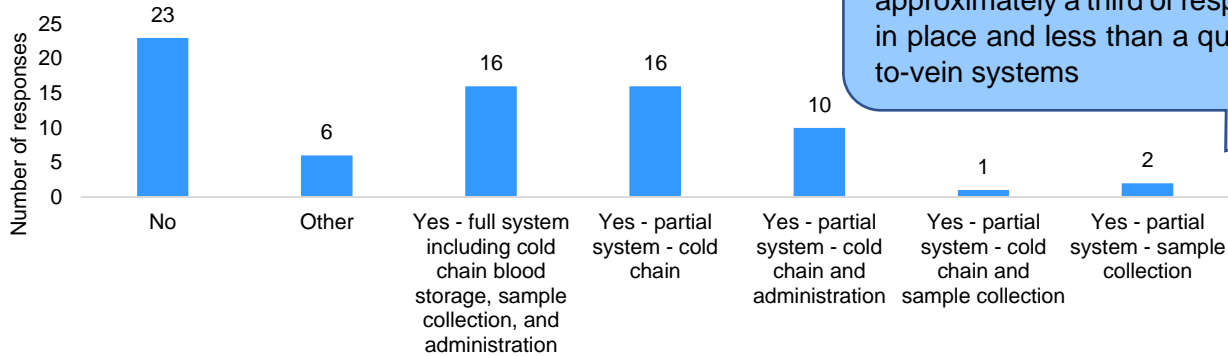
**Recommendation:** Where multiple laboratories are managed by a single manager, there must be staff in each laboratory with the knowledge and skills to support and supervise the workforce on a daily basis.

**Recommendation:** There should be a formal and documented provision for cover of the transfusion manager role. Staff identified to cover this role should have the knowledge and skills as required by the UKTLC standards.

**Recommendation:** Time to complete quality and compliance work should be included in the staffing capacity plan.

## 3. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Implementation of electronic blood management systems



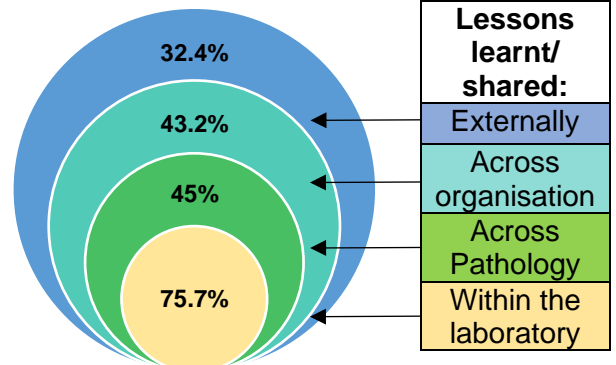
Despite SHOT and UKTLC recommendations for implementation of EBMS for patient safety, approximately a third of respondents had none in place and less than a quarter had full vein-to-vein systems

**Recommendation:** Organisations should implement full vein-to-vein electronic blood management systems (EBMS) for patient safety.

## 4.A JUST CULTURE

### Learning from incidents and excellence

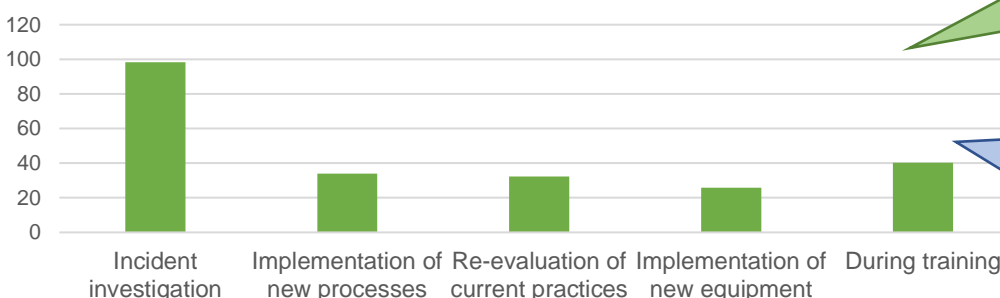
- 100% had a documented system to raise concerns
- 56.8% said there was learning from excellence
- Excellence reporting included Greatix, formal compliments, lessons learnt bulletin as star awards



- 98.6% have **business continuity** and **disaster recovery plans**
- 95.9% included recovery for IT, 98.6% for equipment failure, and 89% for staffing provision
- Will allow labs to **respond** to unplanned IT downtime and other service disruptions

### Human factors

Areas incorporating human factors (%)



Human factors were being applied in 83.8% of laboratories surveyed

With increasing use of human factors principles in day-to-day laboratory practices

## Pathology networks

**60.8% were either part of an established pathology network or working towards a network**

- +** Positives included having LIMS and cross site access
- Negatives included reduced staff morale and laboratory culture

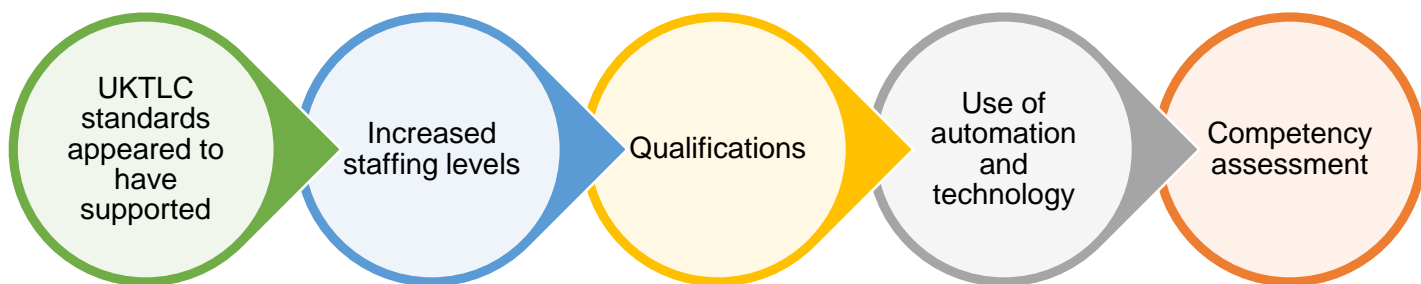


**Where organisations were not part of a network but had multiple sites:**

- +** Positives related to workload, LIMS and cross site access, and laboratory culture
- Negative impacts included staffing levels, recruitment and retention, and resources

**Recommendation:** Where pathology networks and multiple site laboratories are planned consideration must be given to the impact of this on the staff working in the laboratories.

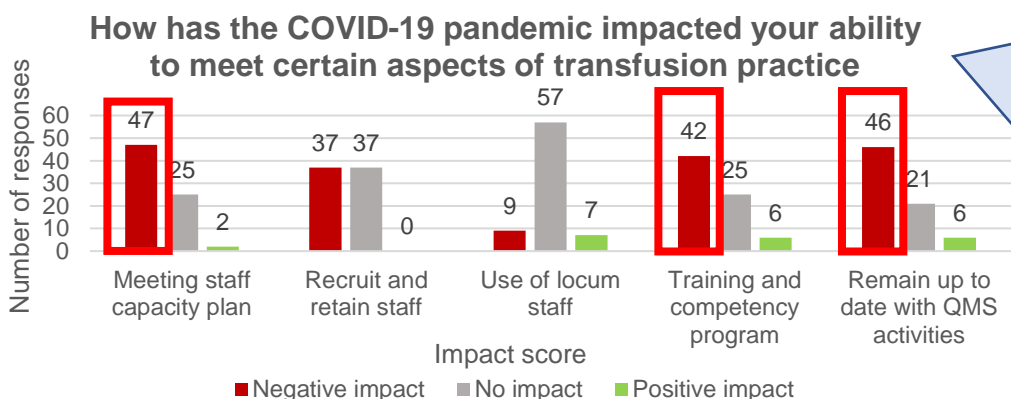
## UKTLC standards



Respondents would like the UKTLC standards to cover the requirement for transfusion managers, particularly related to knowledge, qualifications, and skills, dedicated for transfusion service and not participating in the out of hours rota

The updated standards now clearly detail the requirements for qualifications, knowledge and skills for staff working at band 7 and above, which includes those in the Transfusion Laboratory Manager role

## Impact of COVID-19 pandemic



**Negative impact** on meeting capacity plan, training and competency and ability to maintain QMS due to increase in staff sickness. Recruitment and retention, and training also impacted

The UKTLC aim to use the results of this survey to identify key areas where laboratories are finding challenges to service provision and also identify areas of good practice and improvements from previous surveys. Where concerns and challenges are identified the UKTLC will strive to provide recommendations for service managers, escalation to professional bodies and practical support.

The UKTLC standards are utilised as part of the MHRA inspection and UKAS assessment processes. Where deficiencies, or poor practice are noted laboratories will be asked to provide justification for non-compliance with the standards.

## Additional resources

The UKTLC standards have been revised for 2023, replacing the previous version (Chaffe *et al.*, 2014) and a full report will be published in Transfusion Medicine. An abridged version of the standards is provided here for laboratories to begin the compliance and gap analysis process. To support this process a gap analysis template is also provided, along with other resources that can be used to aid compliance:

QR Code	UKTLC related document (including link)	Website
	<a href="https://www.shotuk.org/wp-content/uploads/myimages/UK-TLC-Standards-2023-SHOT-version-for-website.pdf">UKTLC Standards 2023 – abbreviated version</a>	<a href="https://www.shotuk.org/wp-content/uploads/myimages/UK-TLC-Standards-2023-SHOT-version-for-website.pdf">https://www.shotuk.org/wp-content/uploads/myimages/UK-TLC-Standards-2023-SHOT-version-for-website.pdf</a>
	<a href="https://www.shotuk.org/resources/current-resources/uktlc/">UKTLC Standards 2023 Gap Analysis Tool</a> <a href="https://www.shotuk.org/resources/current-resources/uktlc/">Capacity Planning Guidance May 2021</a> <a href="https://www.shotuk.org/resources/current-resources/uktlc/">Example Capacity Plan</a> <a href="https://www.shotuk.org/resources/current-resources/uktlc/">Mapping a band 5 or 6 against IBMS specialist learning outcome</a> <a href="https://www.shotuk.org/resources/current-resources/uktlc/">Mapping a band 7 against IBMS HSD learning outcomes</a>	<a href="https://www.shotuk.org/resources/current-resources/uktlc/">https://www.shotuk.org/resources/current-resources/uktlc/</a>
	<a href="https://www.shotuk.org/wp-content/uploads/myimages/UKTLC-2019-summary-final.pdf">https://www.shotuk.org/wp-content/uploads/myimages/UKTLC-2019-summary-final.pdf</a>	<a href="https://www.shotuk.org/wp-content/uploads/myimages/UKTLC-2019-summary-final.pdf">https://www.shotuk.org/wp-content/uploads/myimages/UKTLC-2019-summary-final.pdf</a>
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