

## VIP and Celebrity Visitor's Guidelines – NHS Blood and Transplant

### Who should read this document?

This document is applicable to all NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) employees at all locations. It should be referenced alongside our current procedures on visits to centres/sessions and current risk assessment policies.

### Key points

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that there is no risk to the safety and security of NHSBT employees, donors and patients arising from visits to NHSBT locations, either operational or offices, by approved or invited VIP and celebrity visitors.

The document sets out NHSBT guidelines in terms of how visits to our sites by VIPs, celebrities and other official visitors are agreed and managed. These visitors could include Government Ministers, MP's, senior Department of Health representatives and representatives from local Government such as local Councillors.

In part it responds to recommendations published in the themes and lessons learnt from NHS investigations into matters relating to Jimmy Saville. The independent report published in 2015 for the Secretary of State summarises for all NHS Trusts:

**'All NHS hospital trusts should develop a policy for agreeing to and managing visits by celebrities, VIP's and other official visitors. The policy should apply to all such visits without exception'.**

The guidelines require that approved official guests are always accompanied throughout their visit to NHSBT locations, especially where there is a possibility of contact with lone employees or other visitors. As VIPs/celebrities are often accompanied, this entails the supervising and chaperoning of any guests/accompanying party that they may well bring with them. The policy does not relate to non VIP visitors and to non VIP volunteers although it is acknowledged that anyone bringing a visitor to an NHSBT location must ensure that they and any guests they may bring are accompanied at all times by a senior NHSBT employee.

**Any requests for such visits must be referred to the Director of Communications having been approved by either the Assistant Director of Corporate Communications or the Assistant Director of Digital and Marketing.**

If approved official visitors are on NHSBT property for extended periods of time, for example a celebrity linked to a particular campaign or a celebrity volunteer, and they are likely to be unaccompanied, further advice will be sought from the Director of Communications about further management and the authorisations required.

The Communications Directorate may not be responsible for organising every visit that takes place but they can advise on the arrangements that the responsible team must make on behalf of NHSBT. If visits occur outside normal working hours or at weekends then the person leading the visit must ensure that the Director of Communications, Assistant Director of Corporate Communications or Assistant Director of Digital and Marketing is informed, advised of the arrangements and confirm that they will personally be supervising the visit.

If a VIP or celebrity arrives at a NHSBT location without any prior notice and not in a private capacity, ie as a donor, potential donor or member of a donor family then the Director of Communications or a nominated Deputy/Assistant Director must be notified immediately either directly or via the Press Office on 01923 367600 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) or on 0117 969 2444 (out of hours) or at [pressoffice@nhsbt.nhs.uk](mailto:pressoffice@nhsbt.nhs.uk). The visitor should be held in the Reception area until a member of the Communications Directorate determines the nature of their visit and whether it is appropriate for it to go ahead. If this is out of hours or on a weekend then a call should be placed to the 'on call' press officer for NHSBT and they can then contact the Director or Assistant Director as appropriate.

**The Communications Directorate will maintain a central register of VIP and celebrity visitors for recording purposes.**

These guidelines have been reviewed as appropriate by the safe guarding policy lead for NHSBT.

### **Background and scope**

NHSBT arranges visits by VIPs and celebrities from time to time and these visits typically involve access to a wide range of locations, offices and events. These visits naturally play a significant role in promoting our services and campaigns, enhancing our messages and motivating our employees.

NHSBT aims to support and accommodate such visits wherever operationally possible, whilst recognising our responsibility to protect the safety and security of our employees, donors and patients. We also recognise the need to ensure such visits do not have a detrimental effect on our operational service. Therefore, NHSBT will take practical measures to ensure robust arrangements are in place to organise and manage external visits safely and to minimise disruption.

The vast majority of VIP and celebrity visits to NHSBT locations are 'one-off' events which means that more formal standard safeguarding arrangements (Disclosure and Barring Service) may not be appropriate. These guidelines do not apply to any VIP/celebrity visiting in a private capacity, ie as a donor, potential donor or member of a donor family. Regulators are not included in these guidelines and NHSBT has sought assurances from them that they have similar safeguards in place to ensure that our employees, donors and patients are not put at risk by their visits or inspections.

### **Policy guidance**

The guidance requires that one-off or very short term approved official VIP and celebrity visitors are always accompanied throughout their visit on NHSBT premises, especially where there is a possibility of contact with individual employees, donors or patients.

Any requests for VIP or celebrity visits must be referred to the Communications Directorate and must be approved, or organised, by the Communications Directorate. Visit supervision may be delegated to local teams if appropriate, providing that our protocols are strictly adhered to. It is highly likely that one or more of NHSBT's Executive or Senior Team will be present during the visit too.

The Communications Directorate will advise on the appropriateness of the proposed or requested visit.

All planned visits should be added to the Communications Directorate Forward Planner so that all in the Communications Directorate are aware of the visit and those responsible for its management and execution. Where appropriate the Head of Centre or most senior manager at a NHSBT location should be notified as soon as possible of the proposed visit and checks made to ensure that operational difficulties will not occur because of the visit.

The purpose and objective of any visit should be agreed in advance. This includes scope and shape, ensuring that individuals only have access to areas of our locations/sites that are appropriate to do so. Visitors should always be accompanied throughout their visit by a named individual contact representing NHSBT. Visitors should naturally follow all appropriate personal guidance in respect of the visit provided to them by NHSBT, for example health and safety, protective clothing, etc.

After each visit has taken place the Communications Directorate should ensure that feedback as to the effectiveness and value of the activity is carried out in order to inform future plans and policy.

### **Arranging a visit**

Before arranging or approving a visit to a NHSBT site by a VIP or celebrity the Communications Directorate will check with the operational lead to be visited that the visit is appropriate and will not affect the smooth running of the unit or department.

The Communications Directorate should alert the relevant member of the Executive Team to all planned visits as soon as the details are established as it is likely that NHSBT would wish to ensure that one or more of the Executive Team are present at the visit.

Whilst preparing for the visit, the operational team on site are likely to have to make a number of arrangements including such items as security, ensuring the area to be visited is clean and tidy, car parking, guidance to the visitor in respect of visiting clinical areas, etc.

### **Arrival at NHSBT premises**

Upon arrival at NHSBT premises, approved official visitors will be met by the appropriately nominated employee.

Approved visitors should be greeted at a main reception area and then escorted to the pre-arranged area where the visit or meeting will take place.

### **During visits**

An appropriately nominated representative of NHSBT should remain with the approved visitor throughout the visit and meeting until they are escorted from the building. If it is necessary for another NHSBT representative to take over management of the visit then this should be logged as part of the formal record of the visit.

Approved visitors who do not have further levels of appropriate checks and authorisation **must not be left unaccompanied.**

The NHSBT representative must ensure that all appropriate NHSBT protocols are observed at all times during the visit or meeting.

#### **Raising concerns about a visitor**

If during a visit or meeting the behaviour of the visitor or a member of their accompanying party gives cause for concern, then this should be raised at the time (or as soon as possible) with the NHSBT employee who is supervising. If the behaviour is of a highly inappropriate nature then the NHSBT representative may, in conjunction with others present, take the decision to bring the visit to an end. Following this it will be appropriate for a follow up investigation and any relevant action to be taken alongside senior NHSBT management.

#### **Confidentiality and Consent**

Any employee (or donors/patients) who may be involved in a VIP/celebrity visit should be asked in advance whether they mind being approached by the visitor and particularly so if the visit includes the taking of photographs. The appropriate consent form will be required to be signed by donors/patients as normal.

#### **Employee behaviour**

Management and employee representatives of NHSBT are expected to behave professionally at all times. During VIP and celebrity visits, employees should continue in their roles as usual while supporting the management of the visit where appropriate. Approved official visitors should always be greeted appropriately by employees and treated respectfully throughout their visit. Employees must not directly approach visitors on NHSBT locations unless they are taking part in the planned management of the visit or advised to do so by a member of the Communications Directorate or senior management.

#### **Terms and Definitions**

**Approved visitors** – individuals or groups who are invited or who have approval to be on NHSBT premises for an official purpose or visit.

**VIPs** – key stakeholders including Government Ministers, elected representatives at all levels, overseas dignitaries, members of the Royal Family, senior Department of Health representatives.

**Celebrities** – famous/high profile figures who may be well known to the general public and therefore to NHSBT management and employees, donors and patients. This also potentially includes costumed characters well known to children and young people.

**Volunteers** – people who work within NHSBT on a paid or voluntary basis to support the business of NHSBT, to generate financial support or to present funds raised.

**Public areas** – any location on NHSBT premises that is accessible by the general public and does not have secure entry. These would include reception areas and potentially catering and retail areas.

**Clinical or restricted areas** – any area of NHSBT facilities or premises associated with clinical or healthcare business or which is a secure area/requires a pass or employee to gain entry.

**Visits** – for the purpose of this document and our policy this refers to organised, planned appointments to NHSBT locations, sites and offices by VIP's and celebrities.

**Locations/Sites** – this covers all NHSBT locations, sites and offices and includes permanent sites, mobile operations and NHSBT facilities in NHS hospitals.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

**Head of External Affairs** – to monitor the implementation of these guidelines; to ensure that all VIP and celebrity visits are handled effectively and responsibly; to decide upon the appropriateness of visits by VIP's and celebrities to NHSBT locations/sites; to react appropriately to visits made without prior arrangement; **to set up and maintain a central register of VIP and celebrity visitors for recording purposes; to also consider that a pre and post visit control form is established to complete upon a request from a VIP or celebrity to visit a NHSBT location.**

**Security** – where NHSBT security representatives or facility management are required to do so, and as advised by the Communications Directorate, they should provide security support for advised visits. If and where required the Communications Directorate should liaise and work with external agencies such as the local police or Royal Protection Officers. A risk assessment will determine the appropriate level of additional resources or control measures if required.

**All NHSBT employees** – must act in accordance with this policy and support visits as appropriate by representing NHSBT properly and acting with the utmost professionalism at all times.

**Wayne Lawley**  
**Head of External Affairs**

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