

# CONNECTIONS THAT COUNT

DEVELOPING  
THE IBTS  
2021 TO 2025

STATEMENT  
OF STRATEGY





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# Foreword



I am delighted to introduce the IBTS strategy for 2021 to 2025, which builds on the previous strategy published in 2017 and sets some new targets that we believe the organisation can achieve in the next five years. Hopefully the title that we have chosen for this strategy – *Connections that Count* – provides a thematic umbrella that is easily understood and endorsed by everyone working within the Irish Health

Service, as it is only in working together that we can achieve the quality and delivery of services to which we all aspire.

This document draws on externally commissioned surveys of all our stakeholders and is the result of months of collaboration amongst our management team and engagement with our staff.

Exciting developments in the field of regenerative medicine identify transfusion services as a key niche discipline to develop new and improved patient care. This strategy for the next five years looks to ensure that the Irish Blood Transfusion Service will play its part in developing new products and services designed to meet emerging healthcare needs; will provide advice and guidance to promote best practices in transfusion medicine;

and will facilitate the achievement of these objectives through more applied research to guide innovation in our products and services.

Over the last number of years, the Board has endorsed the expansion of its statutory research remit into a more co-ordinated activity. This timely shift in emphasis means that we now have the people and governance structures in place internally to oversee an expansion of this function and to increase our external collaborations with other scientific and medical establishments.

We are in no doubt that our core activity always remains a constant, which is the provision of a safe and sustainable blood supply. To continue to do this effectively we rely on the generosity of our donors, and the trust of our recipients. This is a unique aspect of the work we do within the Blood Transfusion Service, and a responsibility that the Board and all of the staff take very seriously. Maintaining our position of trust within Irish society is and will always be a central underpin to our strategy.

A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark red background, positioned above a horizontal line.

Linda Hickey  
Chairperson

# Introduction from the Chief Executive



The Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) is a national organisation responsible for collecting, processing, testing and distributing blood, and blood products in Ireland. It relies completely on the generosity of voluntary non-remunerated donors to provide sufficient donations to ensure a consistent supply of blood and blood components for patients. Blood transfusion

is a critical part of modern healthcare. The IBTS is funded through the charging of hospitals for its products and services at a price agreed with the Department of Health.

The IBTS has devised this Strategic Plan *Connections that Count* after a lengthy process of consultation throughout 2020 covering internal and external stakeholders. The onset of COVID-19 forced us to rapidly introduce new ways of working and do many things differently. In our response to these unprecedented times a dynamic and agile organisation has been revealed.

The outputs of the consultation process have been distilled into a plan that will stretch and challenge us in its ambition.

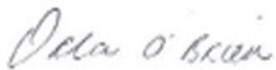
The three pillars of our strategy, supporting better health care; achieving operational excellence; and improving customer experience will be enabled by technology, quality, partnerships, our people and our culture.

A detailed implementation plan will be devised for each year of the strategy so that targets that are tangible can be achieved. The implementation plan will be communicated to all staff so that everyone knows the part they have to play in the delivery of this ambitious plan.

The ambition in this plan rests heavily on the implementation of new technology which will underpin a lot of the projects identified over the lifetime of the strategy. There will be opportunities during the timeframe to assess where we are with progress and in response to changing circumstances reprioritise if necessary.

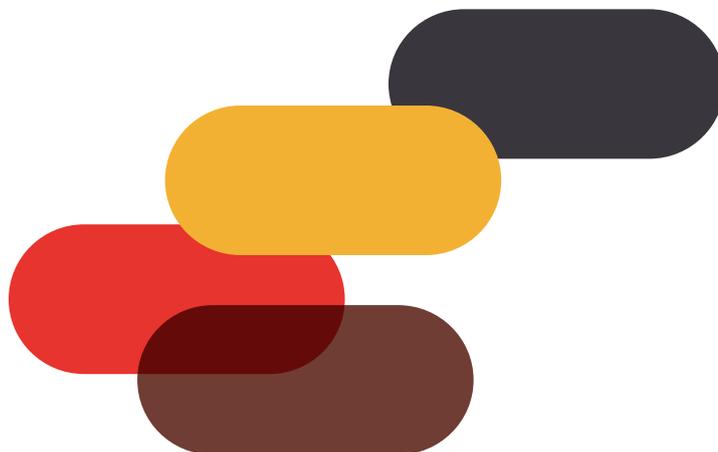
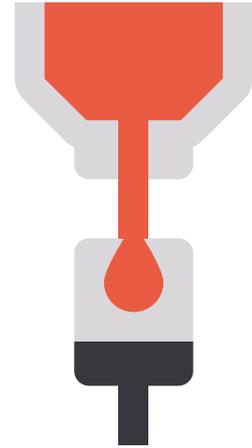
The plan provides the IBTS with a clear road map for future developments in our blood, blood components and tissue services. By 2025 the IBTS will be a very different organisation, but at its core will be our vision, mission and values which will guide us towards that goal.

As we bring our strategic priorities to life through carefully considered decision-making and focused action, we will be guided, as always, by the principle of providing safe blood and tissue services to the people of Ireland. We remain committed to being an agile and responsive organisation, and upholding the highest standards of safety and quality. Over the next five years we will build deeper relationships with our colleagues, partners and collaborators, strengthen the trust of all our stakeholders, and make connections that count.



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**Orla O'Brien**  
Chief Executive



# Irish Blood Transfusion Service

The Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) is a non-commercial state agency with responsibility for collecting, testing, processing of blood and blood related products to hospitals within the Republic of Ireland. In addition, we are also responsible for the Irish Unrelated Bone Marrow Registry and a number of critical functions in relation to tissue banking.

We rely completely on the generosity of our donors to provide sufficient donations to ensure a consistent supply of blood and blood components to patients. It is a critical part of modern healthcare and without it, much of that healthcare could not take place. Our service is funded through the invoicing of hospitals for our products and services at a price agreed with the Department of Health.

## Developing a strategy during a pandemic

We developed *Connections that Count* in 2020, the year of a pandemic that altered everyone's behaviours and disrupted our lives. COVID-19 forced us to respond and adapt in new ways. Irrespective of what was happening externally, we ensured there was a sufficient supply of blood and all our services remained operational.

It served as a reminder to us, that we are indeed a critically important emergency service in Ireland. We had to change our collection model overnight, introducing an appointment based system. We had to consider how we could conduct our clinics during periods of varying restrictions with social distancing in place to ensure the safety of our donors and our staff. We know that as we move beyond the COVID-19 pandemic there are certain things we must retain and do better, an online appointment system for our donors is key.

It has always been the case that one of the greatest threats to the provision of a sustainable and safe blood supply is the emergence of a new virus or infectious disease and we continue to focus our efforts on minimising this risk.

In 2020 we learned that a virus, even one which is not transmitted through blood transfusion can pose significant threat and disruption to our blood supply. We learned that we are flexible and agile, and we were able to quickly adapt in very uncertain and complex times. We now know we can bring about significant change when we work together towards the same goal. It is with this in mind that we set out this statement of strategy, while we never know exactly what is ahead of us, it is our collective ambition that we implement as much of this strategy as possible over the next five years.

## IBTS Facts

**600**  
staff across  
8 locations



**128,000**

We collect about **128,000** donations of blood each year

We have about  
**80,000**  
donors per year



**2,000**  
donors on  
our platelet  
donor panel

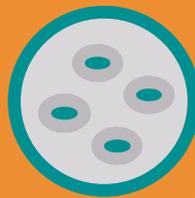
We run  
approximately  
**1,200**  
mobile clinics  
a year

We test over  
**140,000**  
samples a year



We have  
a fleet of  
**20**  
vehicles

**22,000**  
We issue about 22,000  
doses of platelets every year



**164,000**  
In any given year we have  
in excess **164,000** people  
attending our clinics

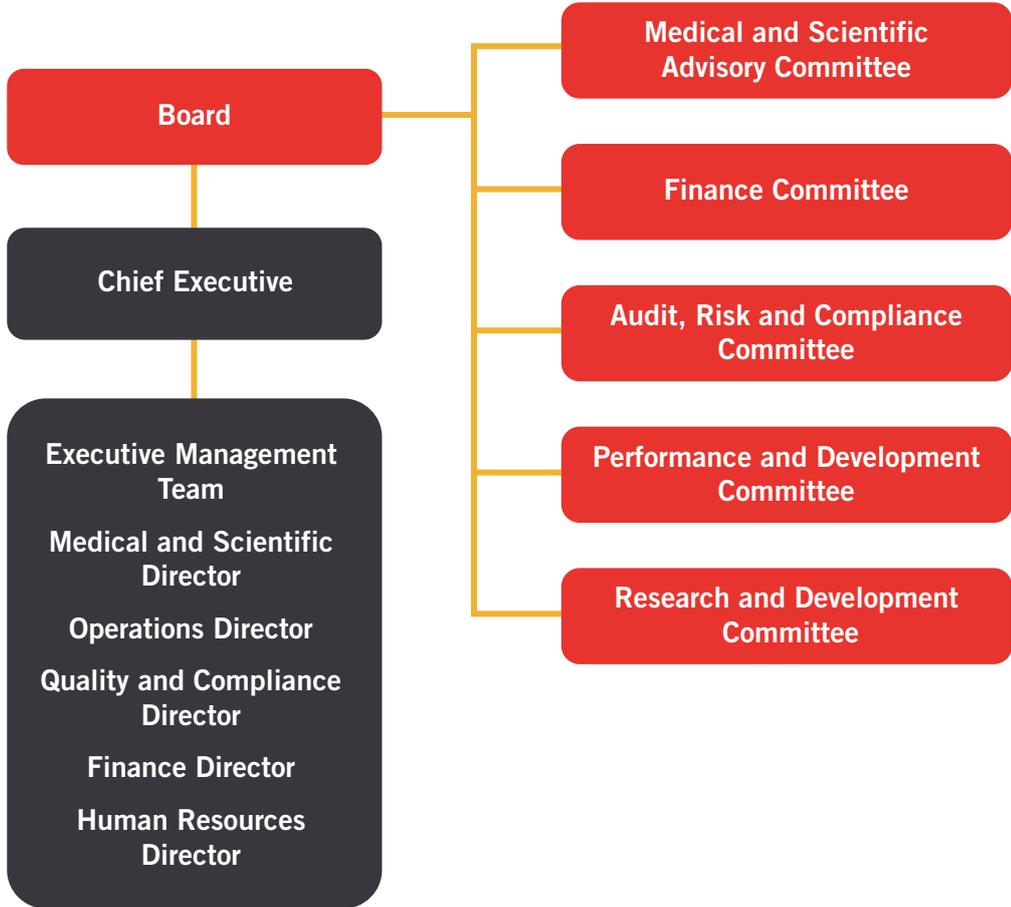
With our appointment only  
system we make **3000**  
appointments per week!  
In **8** months that's  
**108,000** appointments.

# Governance Structure

As a Non-Commercial State Agency our governance arrangements are set out in the revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The responsibility for governance of the IBTS is with the Board which is appointed by the Minister for Health and comprises twelve members. To assist the Board in carrying out its functions there are a number of Sub-Committees which deal with specific aspects of the business of the organisation:

- Medical and Scientific Advisory Committee
- Finance Committee
- Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee
- Performance and Development Committee
- Research and Development Committee

There is a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities between the Board and the Executive.



## Renewing our Vision, Mission and Values

The core work of the IBTS has always been centred on the most precious of commodities, blood and blood components. We collect, test, package and distribute in an end to end process we refer to as 'vein-to-vein'. Our services also extend to other areas in blood transfusion and tissue. Our vision, mission and values have always reflected this, however, it was agreed that we should review and revise each of these areas. Our strategic direction has not altered greatly although there is a renewed emphasis on working closely with our donors, our peers and our colleagues across healthcare and education.

We consulted with staff on the values they want to instil in the IBTS and these have been revised to reflect the feedback received.

### Our Vision

Working together to deliver world class blood and tissue services for the people of Ireland.

### Our Mission

We are committed to providing excellent blood and tissue services that improve patients' lives through the generosity of our donors, the expertise of our people and in collaboration with the healthcare community.

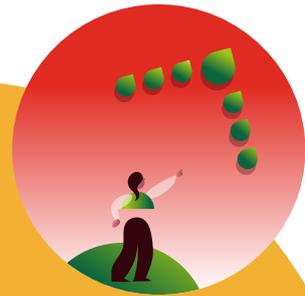
## Our Values



WE LOVE OUR DONORS



WE IMPROVE PATIENTS LIVES, TOGETHER



WE LEAD BY EXAMPLE



WE STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE



WE ARE THE IBTS

# Key Achievements from 2017-2020

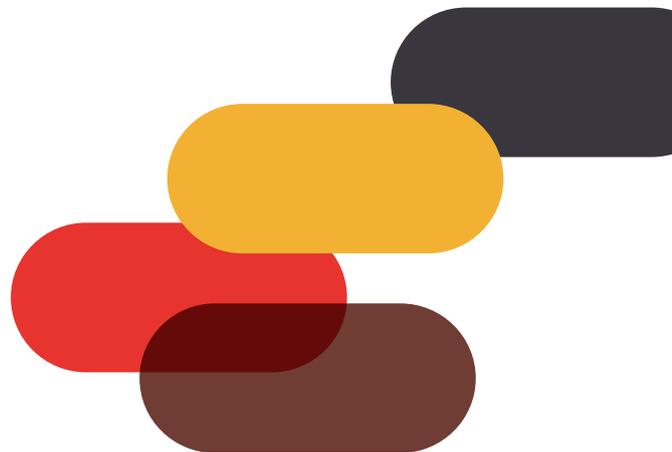
The IBTS has worked hard to implement the strategic actions from 2017 to 2020. The strategic direction of the previous strategy focused on ensuring a safe and sustainable supply and delivering excellence to our donors as well as within our operational endeavours.

We identified the importance of building relationships with national groups and societies; we had a clinical lead advisor in transfusion services appointed to the National Transfusion Advisory Group.

We also had a number of successes in the development of molecular testing services and we introduced day 2 bacterial testing of platelets which results in safer platelets with an automatic seven-day shelf life. The following outlines some of our key achievements over the past four years.

1. We appointed a Research and Development Lead Facilitator to manage research and development projects and devise and implement a R&D strategy.
2. A Review of vCJD deferrals resulted in a change in policy ensuring many donors were once again eligible to donate and this has cleared the way to explore the reintroduction of the Irish eye bank and the use of Irish plasma in the Irish health system.
3. We now provide molecular testing for blood groups including fetal genotyping. This enables us to ascertain the antigen profile of patients with auto-antibodies and who have been multi-transfused. This can be very beneficial when providing blood safely in complicated cases. Fetal genotyping enables the prediction of the RhD status of the foetus, thus informing the need for anti-D prophylaxis, or not.
4. We successfully introduced Next Generation Sequencing technology in our National Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics Reference Laboratory (NHIRL).
5. We amalgamated Blood Group Genetics laboratory (BGGL) and NHIRL into the Molecular Blood Group and Genetics Department (MBG) to create a more cohesive and collaborative way of providing molecular testing services.
6. We introduced day 2 BACT testing ensuring safer platelets with automatic 7-day shelf life.
7. We re-established the Hospital Customer Surveys (RCI and Hospital Services/ Platelet Issue Lab National Blood Centre).

8. We introduced a Histotrac system in MBG which facilitates the management and control of samples tested in the NHIRL.
9. We implemented electronic reporting for results transmission in select hospitals in MBG, which reduces sample turnaround time and is more environmentally friendly.
10. We consolidated our virology blood donor screening for blood borne pathogens onto one testing platform, with integrated Laboratory IT system (Analyser Management System), improving efficiency and cost effectiveness within the Virology laboratory.
11. We added additional testing platforms, which provide the laboratory with the ability to screen for multiple pathogens, such as Malaria.
12. We provided a steady blood and blood components supply with no national appeals in the last two and a half years.
13. We implemented a national programme in our fixed and mobile clinics to facilitate people with Hereditary Haemochromatosis that meet our donor selection criteria.
14. We launched a number of successful marketing campaigns including 'Everyone Counts' and 'Bloody Foreigners'.
15. We introduced an appointment system for all clinics nationally.
16. We introduced a new clinic layout and process with new beds and an advanced weigher mixer solution, speeding up the donation process.
17. We launched a new website and enhanced our social media capability which provides a much more user friendly and relevant experience.
18. We re-designed and re-launched a Performance Development system for our people.
19. We developed and launched an evidenced based Leadership Framework (LEAD) with University of Limerick.
20. We actively engaged with Great Place to Work.
21. We launched the Making Safety Visible' campaign as part of our aim to embed environmental health and safety in the IBTS.



# Developing Connections that Count: How we developed our strategic plan

We know that in order to provide a service that adds value, we need to understand what our stakeholders want in the pursuit of our goals and objectives. They are critical to our success and we value their insights and experience. In preparing this strategy statement, we engaged and consulted extensively with our stakeholders. We commissioned independent research to canvass views and opinions from a broad stakeholder base.

This was conducted through a series of online focus groups, telephone interviews and surveys to inform thinking about our future direction. We also surveyed the hospitals we work with and our people to gather their feedback. From listening to our internal and external stakeholders we understand that:

- **Our people** want to share their knowledge and expertise to ensure best practice in transfusion medicine and they want the most appropriate tools and technology available to support them in their roles.
- **Government, regulatory and other blood establishments** want us to maintain a high standard of operations and adapt our work practices so that we can respond with agility as the need arises without compromising our service and standards.
- **Our donors** donate blood because they want to contribute positively to society; they want us to ensure we use their time as best as possible with more online services available and a speedier donation experience.
- **Our healthcare clients** expect our service to deliver what they want, when they need it and also value collaboration and insight.

## Key Trends

### Context for our Strategic Plan

In preparing this strategy, we analysed and reviewed our operating environment and in particular on-going developments in transfusion medicine, emerging needs of our healthcare clients as well as the ever changing demographics within our donor pool. This helped us to identify our key areas of focus over the life time of this strategy.

We conducted a broader PESTLE analysis, held workshops, conducted independent research with our donors and surveyed our people to get an insight into their needs to see how we can improve and better prepare for future technological developments.

Our scientists and medical professionals continuously scan the global environment of blood transfusion medicine and keep up to date and briefed on future trends in their areas through their national and international networks. We explored the challenges we face particularly in adopting an agile approach to enable us to embrace emerging technologies.

We are cognisant of the need to get a deeper understanding of our demographic to ensure we have a robust and diverse donor pool which reflects the many changes in Irish society. Some of our practices had to change to facilitate living in a “COVID world”. Individual behaviours and patterns are changing, our research tells us we need to ensure we use our donor’s time as efficiently as possible and use technology to enable them to schedule appointments with us.

We also considered the opportunities available to us e.g. enabling our people to implement changes quickly, establishing better relationships with our partners, and developing new services that will add value and bring benefits to the health service nationally.

## Our environmental efforts

We are committed to meeting our energy reduction targets in line with the *Public Sector Energy Efficiency Strategy*<sup>1</sup>. We have scheduled a number of initiatives in this strategy to help us achieve this e.g. moving towards more sustainable laboratory practices and encouraging “Green Ambassadors” in the organisation.

We will also be encouraging ‘green transport’ through a combination of promoting cycling and public transport (where appropriate) amongst our staff. We will encourage the use of electric vehicles both for staff and our own fleet of buses and trucks (whenever possible) by piloting electric charging spaces on some of our sites.

## Our Strategic Focus

- Green laboratories
- Re-cycling – more renewable product on our clinics
- Remote working
- Renewable energy sources
- More sustainable work practices

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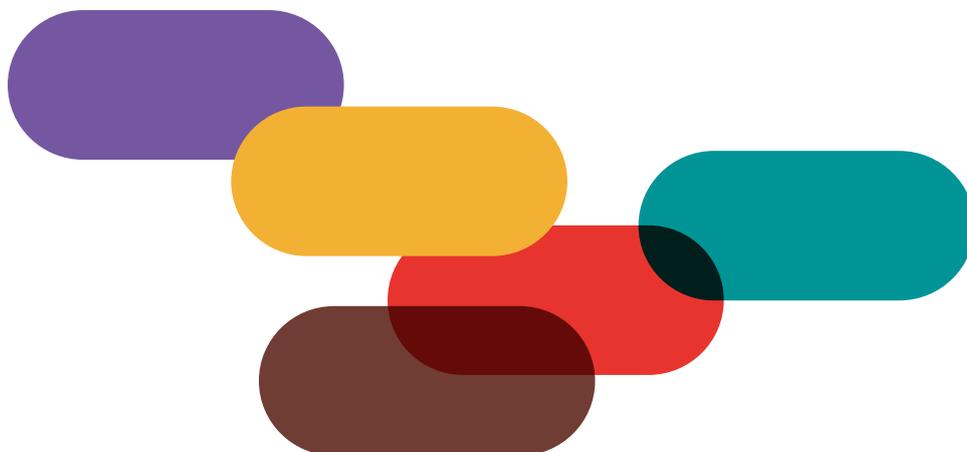
1 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7c726-public-sector-energy-efficiency-strategy/>

## Assumptions in developing this strategy

Our strategy has been prepared in consultation with a broad range of our stakeholders. We have developed this strategy based on what we believe is the best direction for the IBTS to follow particularly given the specific nature of the work we do and the highly skilled expertise of our people. In order to deliver on the strategy, we have made a number of assumptions based on the current economic environment, the national budget, our own internal resources and capacity. We believe that with a high level of engagement and steady progress with a focus on low risk initiatives we can ensure excellent delivery of this strategy.

## Risks

In developing *Connections that Count*, we also worked with our Risk and Resilience Manager to assess the level of risk contained with each pillar and enabler. The resulting risk appetite statement provides guidance on the IBTS' willingness to assume, or be exposed to, a level of risk in order to achieve its objectives. It is intended to inform business planning processes. When appraising any potential project, the level of risk is considered in detail to ensure that the IBTS and its stakeholders are not exposed to any undue risk. We are committed to ensuring that no unnecessary or unacceptable risks are taken which might expose the organisation or any of its stakeholders to potential harm or jeopardise the overall achievement of its Strategic Plan.



# Our key areas of focus for the next five years

Following extensive analysis and consultation the IBTS will be focusing its efforts across three key pillars;

- I. Supporting Better Healthcare
- II. Achieving Operational Excellence

### III. Improving Customer Experience

Each of these areas is of major strategic importance to us, with a series of programmes and projects associated with them.



## PILLAR 1

### Supporting Better Healthcare

We will place a particular emphasis on leveraging our expertise, our international networks and our investment in research and development to enhance the quality and efficiency of healthcare in transfusion medicine. We will seek to achieve this by:

- Developing new products and services designed to meet emerging healthcare needs
- Providing advice and guidance to promote best practice in transfusion medicine
- Conducting applied research to guide innovation in our products and services.

## PILLAR 2

### Achieving Operational Excellence

We will strive to improve our operational performance by constantly measuring ourselves to best practice in blood establishments globally and adopting principles of best practice throughout our operations where possible. In doing so, we will systematically enhance our efficiency and overall effectiveness.

**We will strive to;**

- Improve our supply chain efficiency from donor to patient
- Adopt best practice business processes throughout our operation
- Optimise our donor pool to ensure it is sufficiently robust and diverse to meet the emerging needs of our patients and clients in an ever changing demographic.

## PILLAR 3

### Improving Customer Experience

We are passionate about the IBTS service experience and we will focus on improving all aspects of our service and care to:

- Our donors
- Our healthcare clients, and
- Our people, ensuring they remain safe, respected and valued.



**PILLAR 1**

**Supporting  
Better  
Healthcare**



## Our Ambition

We will be at the forefront of transfusion medicine and science. We will conduct research, informed by emerging risks and opportunities, to optimise patient care. We will work with our healthcare partners to provide a guiding voice in blood transfusion medicine and science.

# SUPPORTING BETTER HEALTHCARE

## Our Strategic Objectives

### 1. Developing new products and services:

To be at the forefront of transfusion medicine and science, providing products and services that increase the safety of the people of Ireland and create a service that is self-sufficient and cost effective.

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to develop and sustain a culture of innovation and provide a national service that is adding value and is self-sufficient.

### 2. Providing advice and guidance:

Position the IBTS to our healthcare partners, as an influential and guiding voice in blood transfusion medicine and science

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to be a trusted leader at the forefront of blood transfusion medicine, sharing our knowledge and expertise that will ultimately benefit our donors and patients and optimise blood usage. The IBTS with its wealth of experience on transfusion medicine and science can contribute to the development and application of guidelines to enable appropriate and safe transfusion of blood components in Ireland.

### 3. Applied Research and Insights:

Conduct research to inform and guide us as we horizon scan trends in transfusion medicine.

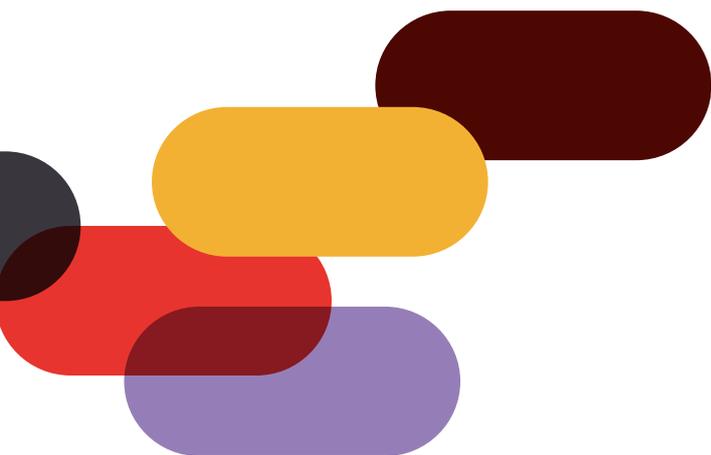
**Why do we want to do this?** We want to provide and communicate the research evidence for improving and developing our blood and tissue services thereby maximising the impact of research findings and driving further innovation.

## Key Initiatives

- Molecular-based blood antigen typing of donors and recipients.
- Re-establishment of the Irish Eye Bank and other tissue/cellular therapies.
- Introduction of Fresh Frozen Plasma use, pending feasibility study.
- Make the best use of plasma by sending surplus to fractionation plants for products such as immunoglobulins.
- Feasibility assessment of introduction of Pathogen Reduction – a post-collection blood product manipulation process.
- Development and implementation of a research and development strategy.

## Key differences you will see by 2025

- Expansion of tissue banking:
  - A fully operational Irish Eye Bank
  - A strategy to facilitate IBTS in the introduction of GMP compliant regenerative / cellular medicines.
- We will provide donor genomic blood typing for red cells, platelets and white cells.
- We will provide genomic typing for variant blood when variants or rare or variant genotypes are present.
- We will have led on and contributed to a number of academic peer-reviewed publications.
- We will have developed excellent relationships with the medical / clinical community through an active programme of reaching out led by a designated medical consultant.



A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a white lab coat and clear safety glasses, is focused on her work in a laboratory. She is wearing blue gloves and is looking down at something in her hands. In the background, another person in a white lab coat is visible, and there are various laboratory equipment and papers on a table.

## PILLAR 2

**Achieving  
Operational  
Excellence**



## Our Ambition

To be an effective whole of business supply chain organisation for blood and tissue components, integrating the very best of international practices. Building on our donor base to ensure it is diverse and robust, reflecting Ireland's evolving society and demographic.

# ACHIEVING OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

## Our Strategic Objectives

### 4. Improving our supply chain efficiency:

Deliver the right product, to the right place, on time every time as cost effectively as possible.

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to be a national service that is known for delivering high quality products to its healthcare clients, using technology and expertise to meet customer expectations.

### 5. Adopting best practice business processes:

Deliver operational excellence using a sustainable, lean and agile framework.

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to ensure we have a future proofed operating system in place that is responsive and positioned to adapt quickly to business demands.

### 6. Optimising our donor pool

We want to increase the range of blood phenotypes in our donor pool and grow donor numbers.

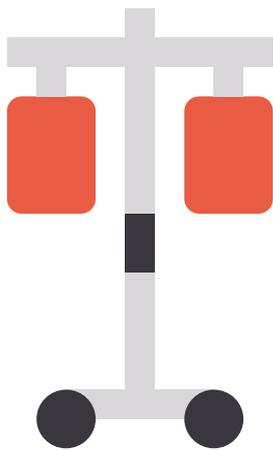
**Why do we want to do this?** We want to maintain a robust panel ensuring the safe and sustainable supply of all our products to meet customer / patient demand.

## Key Initiatives

- Further develop our systems to provide the appropriate information/metrics to our customers that will assist them in their day to day business.
- The development/introduction of more accurate forecasting tools e.g. blood component management ensuring stock availability for all eventualities.
- Standardise and share our KPIs with relevant stakeholders with a view to continuous customer service improvement.
- Develop electronic reporting of Red Cell Immunohaematology Laboratory (RCI) and Molecular Biology & Genetics Department patient results to the hospital laboratories and electronic reporting of confirmatory donor test results from the National Virus Reference Laboratory to the IBTS in place of the current manual processes.
- Reduce our environmental footprint by benchmarking current operations, including the working towards certification in laboratory sustainability best practices.
- Encourage our people to sign up as 'Green Ambassadors' to promote and oversee sustainable initiatives.

## Key differences you will see by 2025

- Increased our efficiency and capability to meet all of our customer requirements.
- Demonstrated efficiencies through the use of KPI dash boards and reporting.
- A donor base for platelets and whole blood that meets all the needs of our customers.



A bearded male doctor with brown hair, wearing a white lab coat over a light blue button-down shirt, is focused on writing on a clipboard. He is holding a blue pen. The background is a blurred hospital room with other medical staff and patients. An orange circle in the upper right corner contains the text 'PILLAR 3'. A dark orange rounded rectangle in the lower left corner contains the text 'Improving Customer Experience'.

**PILLAR 3**

**Improving  
Customer  
Experience**



## Our Ambition

We want to create an agile and innovative culture that prioritises and enhances the experiences of our donors, our hospital colleagues and our people.

We want everybody to be proud of the IBTS as a national healthcare provider.

# IMPROVING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

## Our Strategic Objectives

### 7. Provide an exceptional donor experience that is responsive to our donor's needs.

Improving the overall experience for donors from the moment they first come into contact with the IBTS to the aftercare following the donation process.

**Why do we want to do this?** We love our donors and appreciate their time. We want to provide an enhanced service that makes it easier for donors to arrange a donation, comfortable in the knowledge the donation process will be quick, safe and a positive experience.

### 8. Improve customer service for our hospital clients

Ensure our hospital clients experience exceptional service across all the touch points of the IBTS.

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to have full visibility of hospital needs so that we can provide a service that delivers on time and adds value for our healthcare clients.

### 9. Enhance the experiences of our people by ensuring they have what they need to do their job

Our people are our internal customer, we want to make sure they have what they need to innovate and improve our ways of working.

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to build on a culture that puts people first, listening to their needs when it comes to business improvements and has clear pathways that encourage innovation, change and engagement.

## Key Initiatives:

- Develop and implement a donor relationship management system through mapping and redesign of our people practices/internal processes.
- Deliver an interactive online appointment service that is accessible via mobile, tablet and desktop.
- Review our online ordering system (taking on board feedback from hospital colleagues).
- Develop a knowledge exchange programme of learning to share ideas and build relationships.
- Develop and implement a safety, health and wellbeing strategy with an overarching people and culture strategy.



## Key differences you will see by 2025

- An automated system through which donors can schedule their own appointments and complete as much of the process as possible online in advance of attendance.
- An improved online ordering system for our hospital clients that benefits the end-user.
- A healthy and inclusive workplace where our people are proud of what they do and are recognised for their innovation and contribution to our vision and mission.

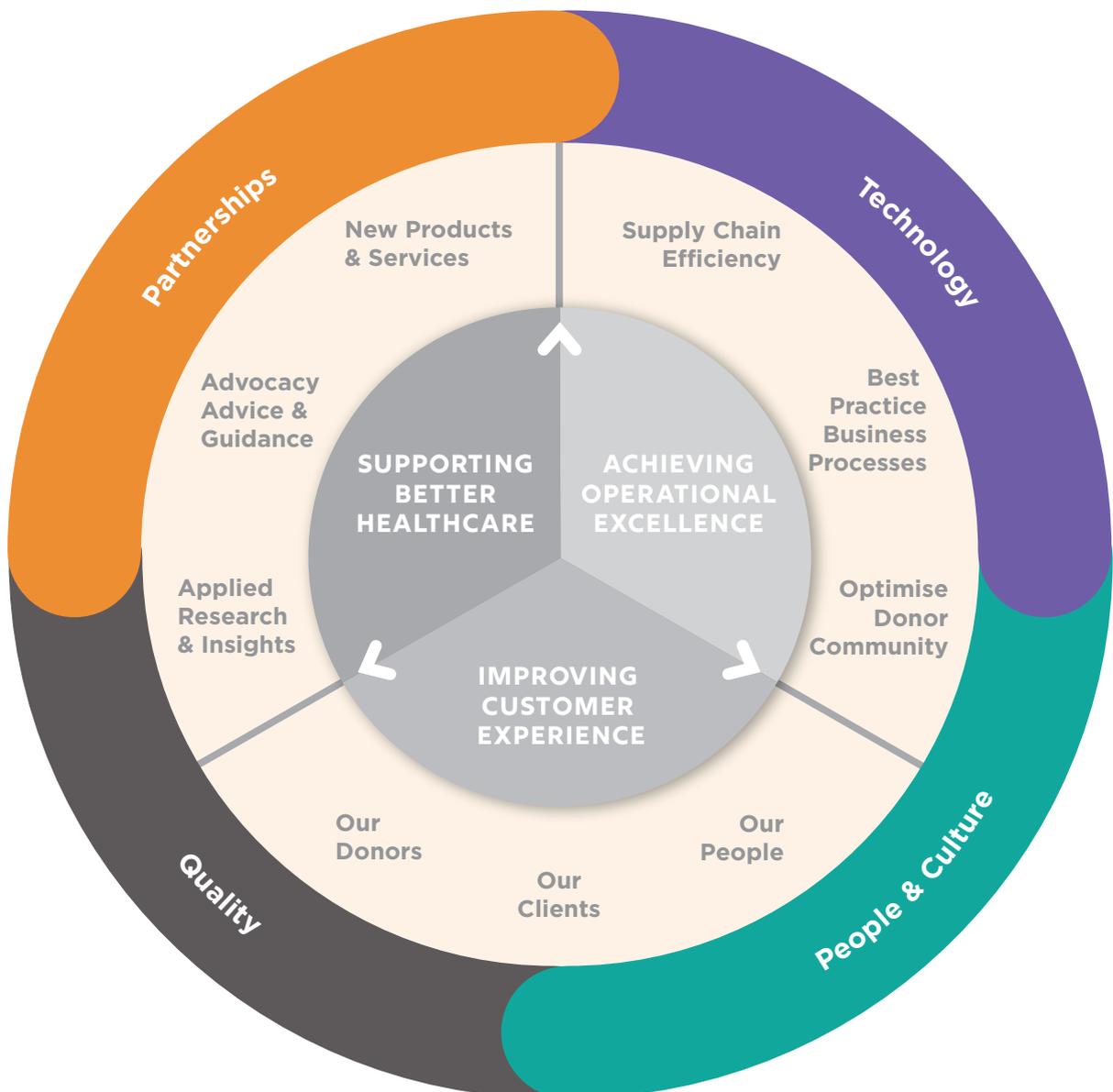




**Our  
Strategic  
Enablers**

## Our Strategic Enablers

There are four core areas that support the delivery of the services provided by the IBTS. Each of these areas will support the delivery of the pillars outlined in Connections that Count and each of them is essential in ensuring the successful delivery of the strategy.



# 1. Technology

## Our Ambition

We want to be a digitally integrated and enabled organisation, with the ability to access and view our key applications from any location, using advances in information technology to improve our efficiency and overall business performance. We will use data to inform and strengthen our supply systems, develop our business capabilities and drive evidence-based decision making.

## Our Strategic Objectives

### 10. Enable online access to information and ease of access to online applications

**Why do we want to do this?** We want our people, our donors and our healthcare clients to have access to information and applications when they need it, from any location.

### 11. Future-proof ICT infrastructure to enable new technological solutions

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to ensure we can move quickly in response to any technological developments and meet the needs of our people.

### 12. Provide access to data to enable better decision making

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to use our data sets to inform our business decisions and support our research development by providing information as efficiently as possible to all who need it.

## Key Initiatives

- Develop and implement an ICT roadmap that supports the delivery of the organisational strategy.
- Develop a portfolio of enterprise applications in response to business needs, while providing the essential information technology solutions and services across the IBTS community to achieve best practices for interacting with users.
- Identify and implement processes that reduce reliance on paper-based systems.
- Develop and adopt a robust project management approach to managing our projects and critical system upgrades.
- Develop and deliver data and business analytics tools to support the enabling of data driven decision-making.
- Promote and develop excellence in our IT Relationship Management across the Organisation, enabling the IT function to further empower and inspire our users.

## Key differences you will see by 2025

- Our people will be able to access applications and information wherever they are.
- The ICT infrastructure will be future-proofed and robust enough to enable

new technological solutions as our service departments require them.

- Clearer data based decision making in place throughout the organisation.
- Improved end-user satisfaction levels with the service delivered to the user community and the IBTS.

## 2. Partnerships

### Our Ambition

We want to be a trusted and highly-valued partner within Irish healthcare with mutually beneficial relationships with policymakers, healthcare providers and centres of education and research to promote best practice transfusion medicine and contribute to the advancement of healthcare generally within Ireland.

### Our Strategic Objectives

#### 13. Promote and create better understanding of our products and services

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to ensure all of the products and services we provide are known and understood by those who may require them and wish to avail of them.

#### 14. Promote research, new technologies and specialist learning with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and others

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to work with our colleagues across education and healthcare sectors to develop and promote research and learning opportunities which will enrich blood transfusion medicine and science and encourage people to consider blood transfusion as a career.

#### 15. Add value and develop strong relationships with the acute health sector and maternity care providers.

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to provide solutions to blood and tissue related issues experienced in the acute health and maternity sector. We believe the best way to do this is to build relationships in this sector, working together to identify areas to support and help one another.

### Key Initiatives

- Collaborate with our national maternity hospitals to roll out our fetal genotyping service.
- Cultivate a tripartite partnership with adult hospitals and advocacy groups on disease specific issues.
- Develop a range of platforms with a focus on sharing clinical and scientific research and development, working with our peers in other blood establishments to present a broad range of relevant topics to both national and international colleagues in the healthcare sector.
- Develop a programme of education and training which will further enhance our links with HEIs. Pursue direct affiliation with a Third Level Institution(s).

- Strengthen our relationships with our medical haematology colleagues in the hospital setting, and through our active participation with the Irish Haematology Society, the Royal College of Physicians Ireland (RCPI) and the Faculty of Pathology in the RCPI.
- Contribute to the development of strategies and policies within the wider healthcare system.
- Add value to the acute health sector, maternity care and care of children and adults in Ireland living with Sickle Cell Disease, with the IBTS having strong trusted relationships with each of our acute hospitals and maternity hospitals.

## Key differences you will see by 2025

Our partners in healthcare know and understand the various products and services the IBTS offers and make best use of them to suit the needs of patients.

The IBTS is known and well regarded as an organisation that promotes research, new technologies and specialist learning through a shared partnership with HEIs, other blood establishments and peers in the healthcare sector both nationally and internationally.

## 3. Quality

### Our Ambition

We want to be an industry leader in implementing and supporting a culture of quality that supports the organisation and continually meet its objective of delivering value to our donors and patients.

### Our Strategic Objectives

#### 16. Support our medical laboratories and other departments in meeting international standards

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to develop a more effective and efficient quality system. Aligning our processes against international standards will help us achieve this.

#### 17. Improve efficiencies across a range of quality activities

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to modernise the IBTS quality system so that it works for our people, this includes stakeholder engagement and process improvement.

#### 18. Introduce a flexible risk based approach

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to drive a culture of continuous improvement and total quality within the IBTS. This involves moving towards a governance and advisory approach and embracing a system that is risk based, providing staff with a more versatile quality system.

## Key Initiatives

- Engage with, and support, the laboratories at achieving their objective of ISO 15189 accreditation.
- Develop a quality education programme to increase engagement and ownership.
- Implement a whole-of-business electronic quality management system.
- Improve existing frameworks of risk through review and revision with a view to promoting and supporting agility and continuous business improvement.
- Support continuous improvement and change initiatives to drive enhanced organisation performance.

## Key differences you will see by 2025

- Our medical laboratories are fully recognised meeting the international standards for quality and competence.
- Our people consider the benefits and consequences of a quality approach in all that they do.
- Our systems and processes are streamlined, improving efficiencies across a range of activities, with significantly reduced paper outputs.
- Our people can carry out their work efficiently using a flexible risk based approach.

## 4. People and Culture

### Our Ambition

We want to be an open, agile, creative and innovative environment where our people have what they need to think, create and succeed.

### Our Strategic Objectives

#### 19. Encourage innovation and agility across the organisation

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to create space for innovation and create agile ways of working in the IBTS, where our people have an opportunity to think creatively about their work and working environment so that innovation can thrive.

#### 20. Build relationship with the public service innovation support

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to build relationships with our colleagues in the public service so we can share information and make best use of the innovation supports and tools that are available.

## 21. Encourage and facilitate cross-departmental collaboration for delivery of projects, programmes and support services

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to ensure projects and programmes are developed and delivered in a way that makes the best use of our people's knowledge and experience.

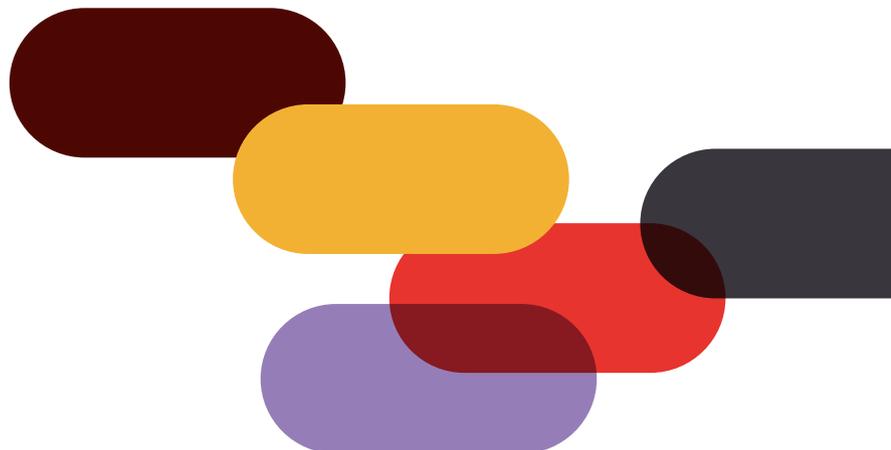
### Key Initiatives:

- Develop our Leadership Charter.
- Create and invest in the formation of current and future leaders - full implementation of LEAD the IBTS Leadership framework.
- Review organisational structure.
- "Attract, retain, recognise & reward" through implementation of evidence based talent management framework.
- Develop an Information and Communication Strategy.

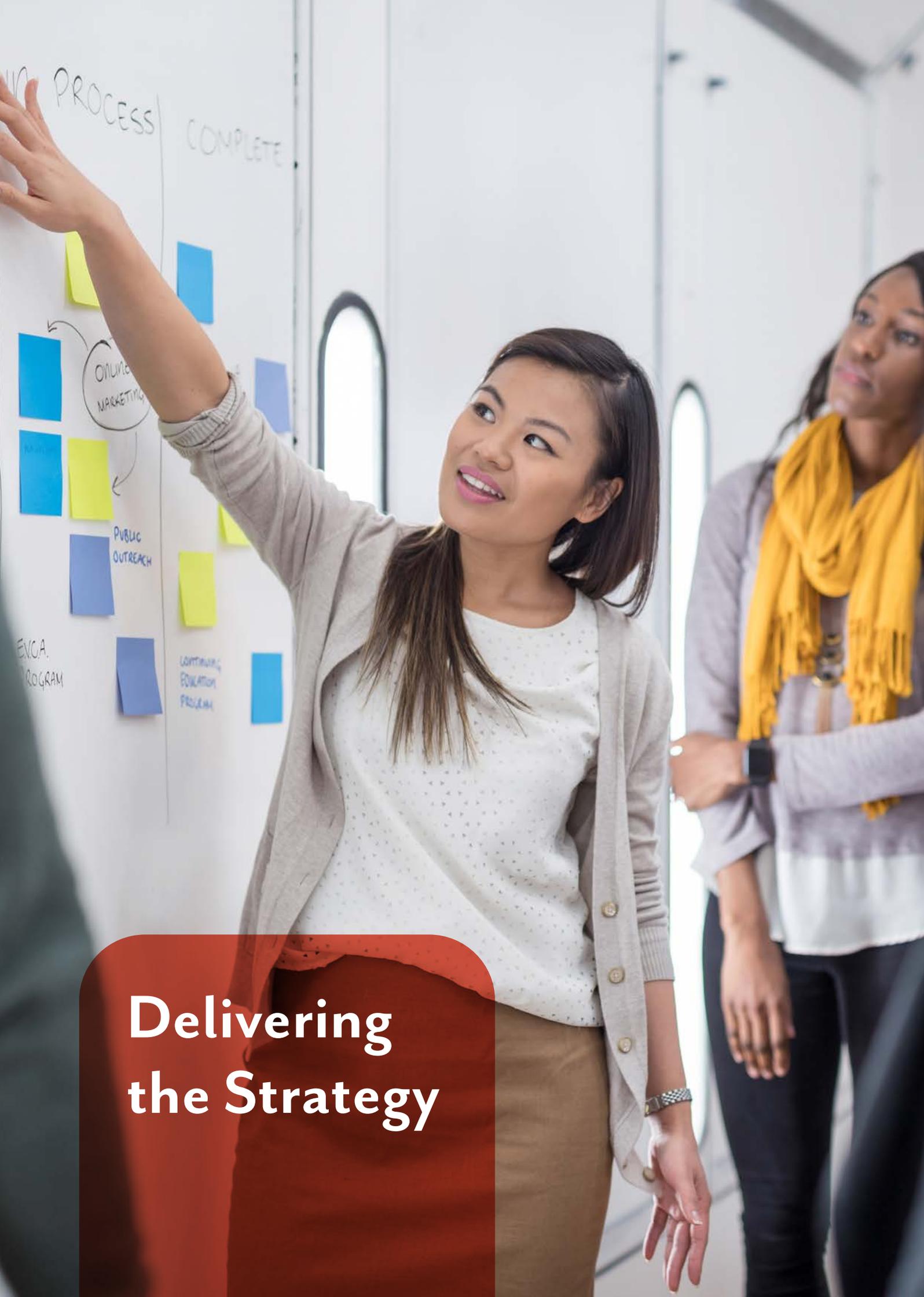
- Establish an innovation working group.
- Creating a space for information sharing, collaboration and communication.
- Develop and implement a People and Culture Strategy.

### Key differences you will see by 2025

- Our people are empowered to be innovative and actively seek out improved ways of doing things.
- We will engage regularly with public service innovation supports.
- A more collaborative, accessible, diverse and inclusive organisation that communicates easily across functions, departments and regions.
- Current and emerging leaders feel supported, confident and enabled to lead.







# Delivering the Strategy

*Connections that Count* provides a framework for the IBTS to deliver programmes of change in a number of areas. To deliver the core elements of the strategy the IBTS will develop annual business plans. The implementation of the strategy will be monitored using quarterly reviews to track progress.

## Project Management Office

Strategic programmes and projects will be developed, initiated and tracked using our project methodology. All strategic programmes and projects will be approved and governed by the Programme Board. All project/initiatives will follow the same principles to ensure we apply a robust methodology in our implementation.

## Strategic Deployment Plans

The strategy outlines key areas of focus, the IBTS acknowledges that in order to deliver on these there are supporting strategies for each of our business departments. The following three strategies will launch in 2021 and will align to our organisational strategy. Each of these will outline an implementation plan which will help us deliver our organisational goals and initiatives.

## Information Communications and Technology (ICT) Strategy

*Connections that Count* presents technology as an enabler. Our strategy consultations have informed the ambitions set out in this document and it is clear that ICT is an integral part of our organisational development. The IBTS is committed to investing in ICT; we will need to determine the capability of ICT to meet the demands of the business. The development of the ICT strategy will provide us with a road map to help us deliver the key components as outlined in this strategy.

## Research and Development Strategy

The implementation of the Research and Development strategy supports the strategic pillars of *Supporting Better Healthcare and Improving Customer Experience*. A comprehensive Research and Development programme will underpin the core areas of applied research and insights; advocacy, advice and guidance; and new products and services.

Through Research and Development, we also hope to gain a better understanding of human behaviours and motivation. This focused strategy demonstrates the IBTS on-going commitment to supporting research, and outlines the necessary steps for the development and implementation of a structured and progressive research programme within the organisation.

## People and Culture Strategy

Throughout our stakeholder sessions we have identified that our people and our culture have a significant role to play in the successful delivery of our strategic ambitions. To ensure that we deliver on our commitments in this domain we will: prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of our people; continue to invest in our leaders and people and focus our efforts in developing the necessary skills, capabilities and behaviours that support our transformation towards an agile and innovative culture. The co-creation of our aligned people and culture strategy will be the first of its kind for the IBTS, enabling our service to deliver on *Connections that Count*.









**Irish Blood  
Transfusion Service**

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