

4<sup>th</sup> February 2026

HTC Chairs  
Chief Medical Officers  
Paediatric Society of NZ – [admin@paediatrics.org.nz](mailto:admin@paediatrics.org.nz)  
Perinatal Society of NZ – [admin@perinatalsociety.org.nz](mailto:admin@perinatalsociety.org.nz)

**PLEASE READ AND CIRCULATE AS REQUIRED**

Dear Colleagues

**RE: Irradiated Blood Components – Neonates & Infants**

To prevent transfusion-associated graft-versus-host disease, the current **ANZSBT Guidelines for Transfusion and Immunohaematology Laboratory Practice (2nd Edition, June 2025)** specify that **irradiated blood components are required for neonates and infants** under the following circumstances:

The infant/neonate:

- is receiving one or more exchange transfusions
- has received an intrauterine transfusion (irradiated red blood cells and platelets are required until 6 months of age)
- is receiving blood components donated by a direct relative
- has a confirmed or suspected severe congenital T-lymphocyte immunodeficiency

It is important to note that **“very low birth weight (<1500 g)” is no longer listed as an indication** in the updated guidelines. Current evidence does not support the use of irradiated blood products solely on the basis of low birth weight.

**Accordingly, New Zealand Blood Service will no longer consider “very low birth weight (<1500 g)” as a standalone indication for prescribing irradiated blood components.** Please update your practice accordingly.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

Dr Kantharupan (Rupan) Bala – [Kantharupan.bala@nzblood.co.nz](mailto:Kantharupan.bala@nzblood.co.nz)

Yours faithfully



**DR SARAH MORLEY**  
Chief Medical Officer



**DR KANTHARUPAN BALA**  
Transfusion Medicine Specialist

Cc: *All Blood Bank Team Leaders*  
*Transfusion Nurse Specialists (incl DHBs)*  
*Transfusion Medicine Specialists*