A decorative graphic consisting of two wavy, horizontal lines. The top line is blue and the bottom line is black, both curving upwards at the ends.

Empowerment: Why transfusion laboratory staff need it – and what are the barriers to it?

Katy Cowan PBMP NHSBT

Empowerment – Definition

- From the Oxford English Dictionary:

1. Give (someone) the authority or power to do something

2. Make (someone) stronger and more confident

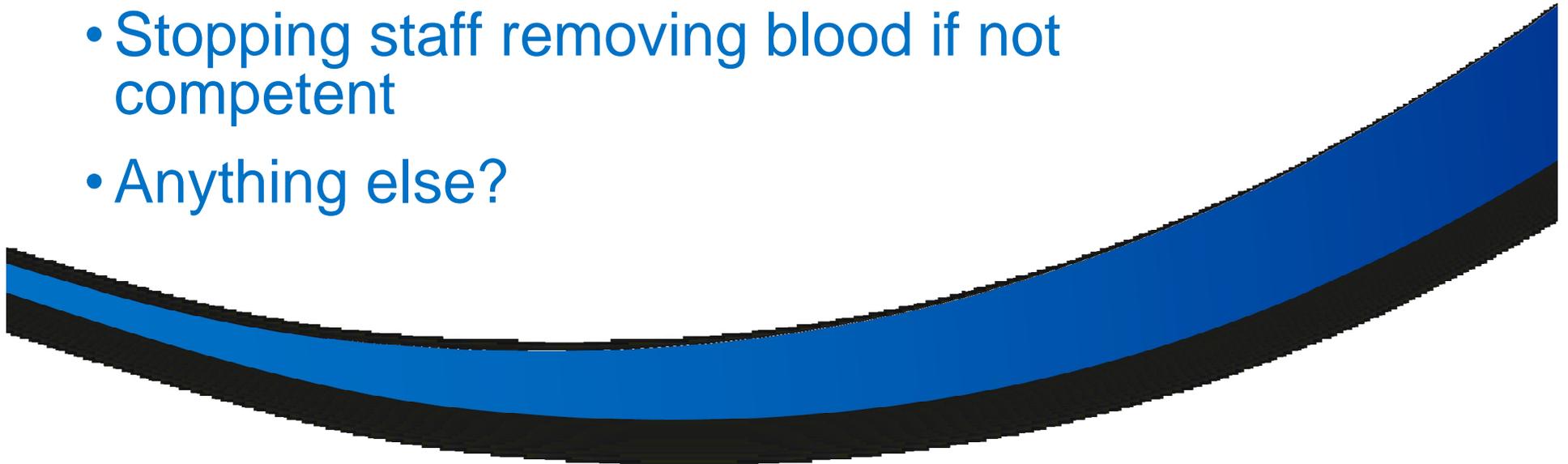


**How many of you would say
that you feel empowered?**



When and why do you need empowerment in your job?

- Rejecting samples
- Appropriate requests
- Transfusion Advice
- Stopping staff removing blood if not competent
- Anything else?



What may stand in your way?

- Education
- Use of the telephone
- Managerial support
- Confidence
- Clinical knowledge



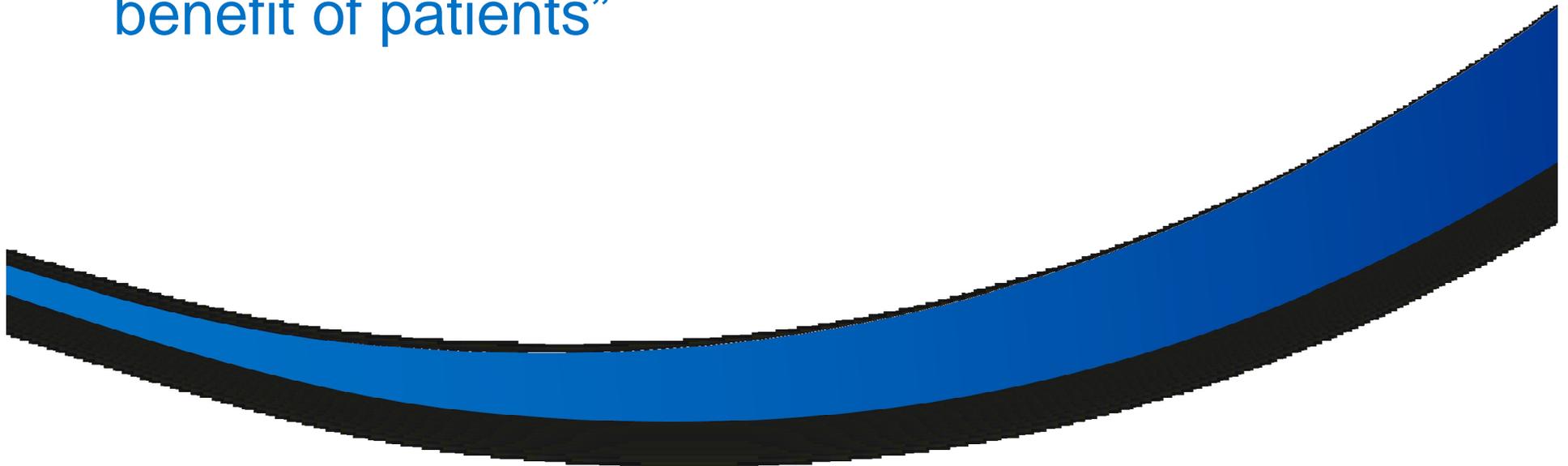
Myth Number 1

“We are just here to provide a service, no questions asked.”



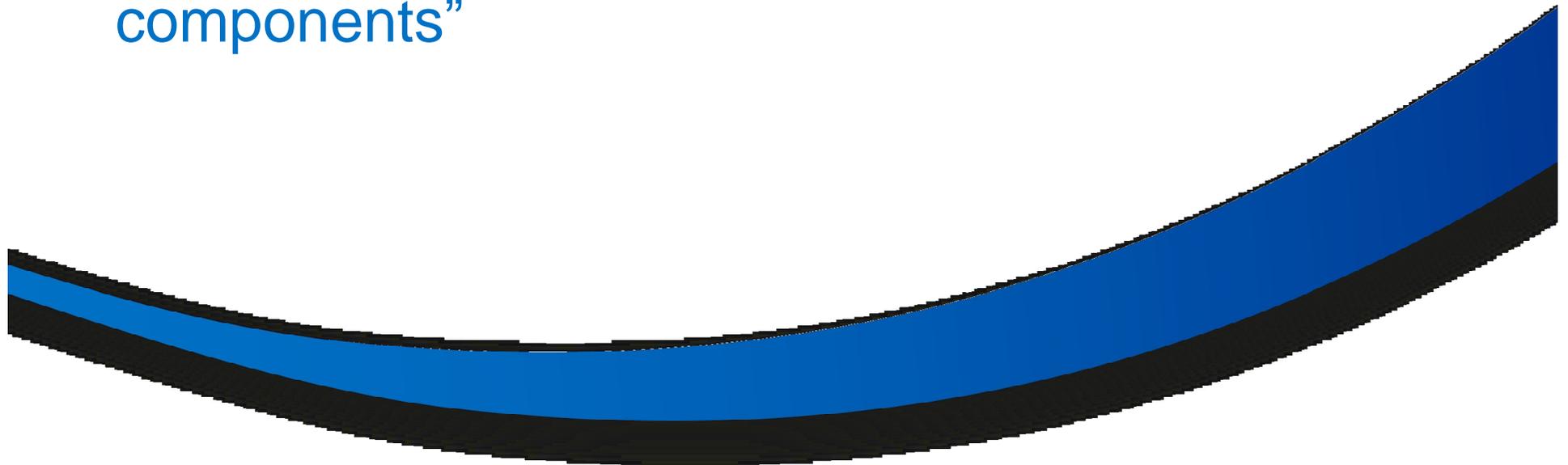
National PBM Recommendations June 2014

- “Everyone involved in blood transfusion needs to take responsibility for ensuring that blood components are used appropriately for the benefit of patients”



National PBM Recommendations June 2014

- TLMs should “Empower laboratory staff to challenge clinicians about apparently inappropriate requests for blood components”



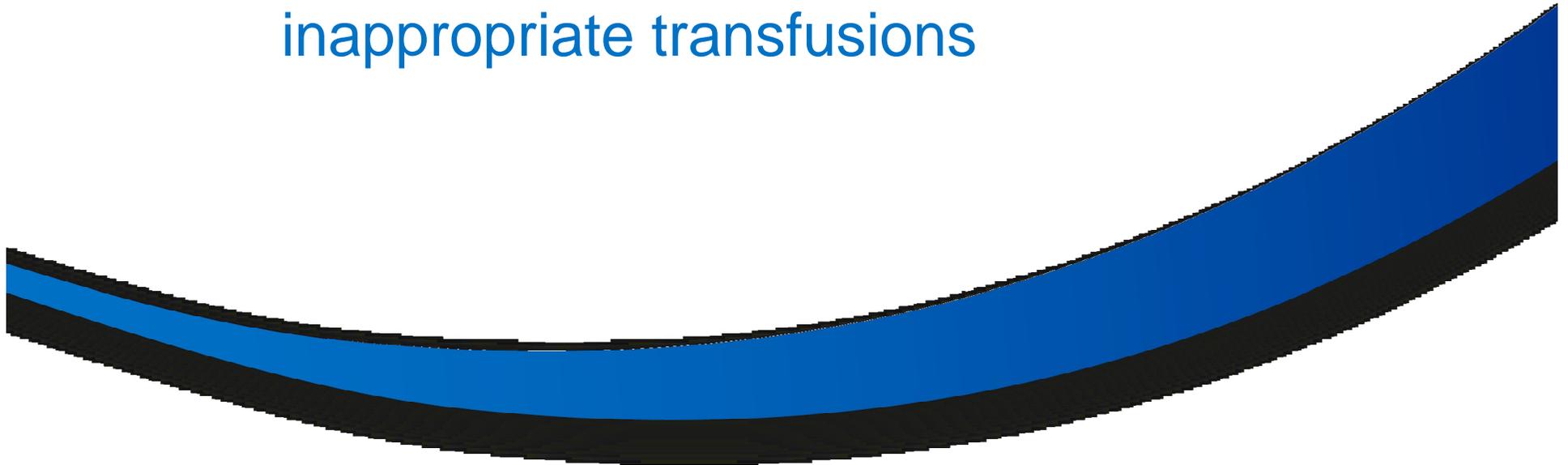
Changing role

- Collective responsibility to ensure appropriate use of blood:
 - Better patient care
 - Blood Conservation



Changing role

- Need to be able to advise *and* challenge
 - To conserve a finite supply of blood
 - To stop patients receiving inappropriate transfusions



How do you do this?

- Police all requests – know the clinical details
 - Request further appropriate tests before issue
 - Clear guidelines
 - Good support from haematology medical staff
 - Transfusion Committee backing
 - Trust Board backing
- 

Myth Number 1

“We are just here to provide a service, no questions asked.”

MYTH BUSTED!!



Myth Number 2

“Doctors know more than us
about blood transfusion”



A little bit of knowledge...

- Transfusion education in medical school?
 - F1/F2s taught on induction...
 - Pick up practice on wards...good and bad
 - Consultants out of date
 - Outside Haematology, small part of clinical knowledge
 - They need support
- 

A wealth of specialist knowledge

- Laboratory staff : lengthy training & education
- Annual competencies, CPD
- Quality assurance
- Knowledge extensive
- Can offer valuable support and advice



Myth Number 2

“Doctors know more than us
about blood transfusion”

Myth Busted!



Myth Number 3

“I don’t have the authority to challenge”



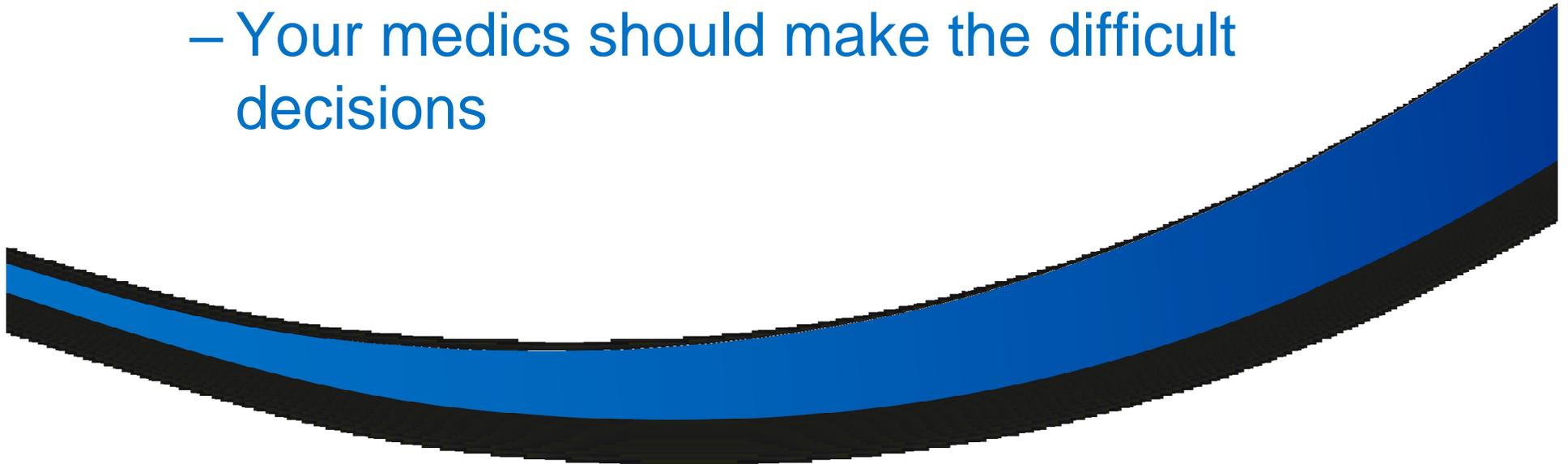
Know your facts

- Where are you in the hierarchy?
- Does the buck stop with you?
- Know your rights *and* your responsibilities
- HPC registration – you must take responsibility for your own actions.



Doctors

- GMC and Medical liability insurance
 - Doctors make difficult decisions and take ultimate responsibility for their patients
 - Your medics should make the difficult decisions



What does that mean?

- **Very important!**
- You do have the authority to **challenge** a request but **not** the authority to **refuse** it



Pass it on..

- If a request doesn't "fit" the guidelines, challenge it if you need to.
 - Pass it on – to haematology team and / or transfusion practitioner.



Making it work

- Clear guidelines accessible to both lab and medical staff
- Medical staff must be aware that lab staff will challenge them
- Good education
- Team working



Myth Number 3

“I don’t have the authority to challenge”

Myth Busted!!



Heated Exchanges

- Try not to get drawn in. It takes two to argue
- Remember – they are with the patient. Serious situation and often inexperienced medics = anxiety++
- Be polite
- Stay calm



Heated Exchanges

- Try to be constructive and helpful
- You have something that they want
- Use guidelines
- Know who you are talking to
- Pass it on!



Team work

- Nobody has the right to be rude or abusive
- There is a patient at the end of all this – it is NOT about you!
- We are all on the same side with a common goal
- You are part of a team and they will support you.

