

The Donor

News and information
for blood donors
WINTER 2016

**Paralympic
success thanks to
your donations**

#REPRESENT launches with **LADY LESHURR**

**"The time is now to give
blood and save a life"**



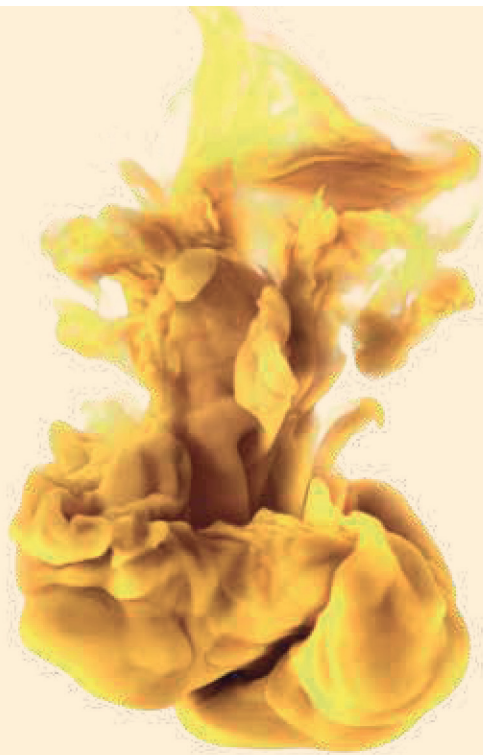
**It's our 70th
anniversary!**



Save a life
Give blood

NHS

Blood and Transplant



ARE YOU GOLD BLOODED?

**Only a precious few people donate platelets
– golden cells that help the blood to clot.
60% of their donations are used to treat people
with cancer. We need more donors with
*A negative and AB negative blood groups.***

Find out now to see if you can help, please visit
platelets.blood.uk or call **0300 123 23 23**



A message from Ian Trenholm, chief executive

Hello, and welcome to the Winter 2016 edition

As we look back over the year, we celebrate the fact that our blood stocks have remained healthy and consistent – providing patients with lifesaving transfusions when they have needed them. On their behalf, I would like to offer my sincere thanks for your continued support.

Every year presents new challenges. The demand for blood has been dropping by about 4 per cent a year – both here and across the world – and we expect the trend to continue. This sounds like good news, and in many ways it is. The fall is thanks to improvements in clinical practice and by our working more efficiently with hospitals to ensure that blood is used appropriately for patients.

While slightly fewer donations are required overall, we need more donations from certain groups. There remains a particular need for universal blood and platelet types - O negative and A negative - and we still have a long standing shortage of black and Asian donors, who are more likely to have rarer blood types.

We have also needed to change sessions, which has meant asking some donors to go to a different venue. I know this can be disappointing and may be less convenient for you. We are investing in

new technology, such as our app, to make it as easier to view all donation venues in your area, book an appointment, and review your donation history.

As we head into the cold winter months, we do tend to see blood stocks dip as



**“Thank you again for
your dedication to blood
and platelet donation.
I wish you health and
happiness for 2017”**

people stay indoors and are distracted by the festivities over Christmas and the New Year. We know that time is particularly precious at this time of year, but, if you can, please do book an appointment to donate.

Thank you again for your dedication to blood and platelet donation. I wish you health and happiness for 2017. ●

Write and tell us your news, views and interesting or unusual donor stories.

The Editor, The Donor, NHS Blood and Transplant, Oak House, Reeds Crescent, Watford, WD24 4QN
or email thedonor@nhsbt.nhs.uk

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Breakthrough in the manufacture of platelets

Many patients need platelets so a potential new way to produce them on demand is an exciting development

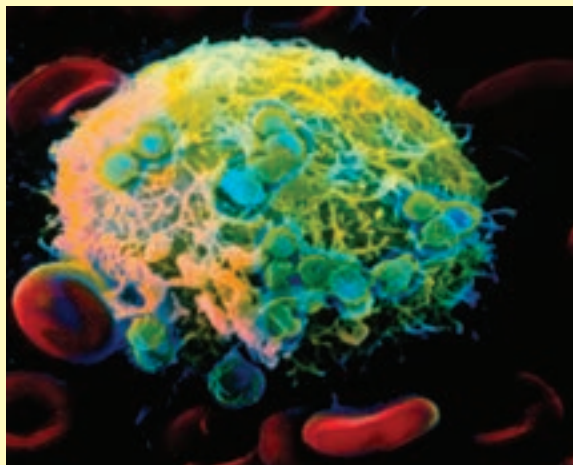
Researchers at NHS Blood and Transplant and the University of Cambridge have developed a new method to produce platelets in the laboratory in large numbers for the first time.

Billions of platelets are circulating in our blood and they are vital because they stop bleeding, for instance when you cut your finger. They may be given to patients having cancer chemotherapy, transplants, major surgery and trauma. But how are platelets made?

What are platelets?

Platelets are formed from giant 'mother cells' known as megakaryocytes that are themselves formed from stem cells in the bone marrow. The platelets 'bud' off the megakaryocytes – they are the round objects on the surface of the megakaryocyte in the picture – and eventually join the blood circulation by passing through the small vessels in the bone marrow.

Our researchers have found a novel way to switch stem cells grown in a laboratory into these megakaryocytes with a very high efficiency so making it possible to produce large numbers of platelets outside the body.



BSIP DR AMARSCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

The significance

This breakthrough is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, donated human platelets only last seven days, which is why we ask our platelet donors to donate as regularly as possible. Also, whenever a patient receives a platelet transfusion, there is always some risk, although it is very low, of transferring an infection. Finally, patients who receive

Above: Coloured scanning electron micrograph megakaryocyte, the giant bone marrow cells that produce platelets (thrombocytes)

“Joining the register is really easy, all we need to do is take an extra sample when someone gives blood”

regular platelet transfusions may become sensitised to them, making it difficult to find suitable donors in future. The production of platelets in strictly controlled conditions in the laboratory could make them more available, safer and precisely matched to the patient, stopping them

becoming sensitised.

Cedric Ghevaert, a consultant haematologist at NHS Blood and Transplant said, “Making megakaryocytes and platelets from stem cells for transfusion has been a long standing challenge because of the sheer numbers we need to produce to make a single unit for transfusion. We have found a way to ‘rewire’ the stem cells to make them become megakaryocytes a lot faster and more efficiently. It’s a major step forward towards our goal to one day make blood cells in the laboratory to transfuse to patients.”

But please don’t stop donating platelets! It will take many years to develop the

More A negative platelet donors needed

You may have heard that O negative blood can be given to any patient. Well A negative platelets can also be given to any patient requiring a platelet transfusion. We particularly need more A negative blood donors to start donating platelets at one of our donor centres.

For more information visit: www.platelets.blood.co.uk or call 0300 123 23 23

production of laboratory platelets to the scale required for transfusion and we still need more platelet donors to donate as regularly as possible. ●

Platelets helped save my life!

When Andy Jackson was 18 he was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukaemia. He was told that a bone marrow transplant was his only option.

Andy takes up the story...

“About three months after I was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukaemia I was fortunate enough to find a suitable donor. When I received my bone marrow transplant it was just like having a blood transfusion; it was over in a couple of hours. Then it was a case of having to wait and hope that the donor stem cells would accept my body.

“In the weeks and months following the transplant, I received platelet transfusions to help bolster my levels which had been depleted by my treatment.

“Platelets and blood transfusions are easy to take for granted, but they were vital for me in my recovery. I can’t thank my bone marrow donor, or the donors who donated platelets, enough for their generosity.



“I now work for Bloodwise, a charity that has been working to beat blood cancer since 1960. In April this year we became the official charity partner for NHS Blood and Transplant. We are really looking forward to working with them to raise awareness of the need for blood and platelet donors and raising awareness about blood cancers.” ●

What are you waiting for?

With a desperate shortage of donated organs, it's now more important than ever to sign up as a potential donor

Around 6500 people are waiting for a organ transplant across the UK and some will die before they get the transplant they desperately need due to a shortage of organ donors.

Most people support organ donation, but too many (37%) who want to be donors say they haven't got round to joining the NHS Organ Donor Register.

This winter NHS Blood and Transplant will be asking people to think about the incredible gift they could give by highlighting the lives saved and transformed through organ donation and transplantation.

Like 3-year-old Freddie McDonald from West Yorkshire, who received a liver transplant in 2015.

Mum Emma said: "Freddie's organ donor is our hero. Until you are a family waiting for a donor you can never understand the importance of signing the organ donation



xxxxxx xxxxxxxx
xxxxx Beth xxxxxx
xxxxx



Freddie, xxxxxxx
xxxxxx xxxxx xxxxx
xxxxxx xxxxx

Help turn an end into a beginning by starting a conversation today with your family, friends or colleagues. Join the NHS Organ Donation Register, and make sure you share your decision with your friends and family. Visit www.organdonation.nhs.uk or call 0300 123 23 23. ●

register. It might be one of those things you think you'll do another time. If you, your child or anyone close to you ever needs an organ, you'll know the desperation felt by families on the transplant list."

Beth's story

When Beth Dykes sadly died aged 21 after a brain haemorrhage, her family were in no

doubt that she would have wanted to be an organ donor as they had discussed organ donation during a family dinner.

Jim Walker, Beth's stepfather said: "Without that conversation, we would have been lost. We feel we are quite strong but without knowing that's what Beth wanted, it would have been an impossible decision at a devastating time."

Beth's organs and tissues went on to save and improve the lives of four people.

Jim has also become a blood donor. He added: "Since Beth passed away, I have started to give blood. It was something that I had always thought about doing, but never got around to making the effort. I now do it every three months, as it's my way of 'donating' whilst I'm alive and it makes me feel closer to Beth."

As an organ donor you could save or transform up to nine lives. So, what are you waiting for? ●

FACEBOOK: [nhsorgandonor](https://www.facebook.com/nhsorgandonor) • TWITTER: @NHSOrganDonor using the #YesIDonate
INSTAGRAM: @nhsorgandonor • YOUTUBE: [nhsorgandonation](https://www.youtube.com/nhsorgandonation)

When Helen Vincent went into labour in January 2012, it changed her life in more ways than she expected.

The early stages of Helen's labour progressed normally, however her son Zac became stuck. Doctors decided to complete the delivery using forceps and subsequently Helen lost one and a half litres of blood. She takes up the story.

"Having lost so much blood, my iron levels had dropped dramatically. The doctors decided to give me two units of



A chance conversation

How a blood transfusion led to a new role for nurse Helen Vincent

blood to boost them.

"Before I had Zac I was working as a trauma nurse at the hospital where he was born. I would often give my patients transfusions and I was very familiar with how to give someone the vital blood they needed. After having Zac I thought more about the selflessness of donors, as I knew what it was like to have my own life saved by a transfusion."

After her maternity leave, Helen went on to work at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital in Birmingham and it was during a chance conversation with a member of our Tissue Services team that she decided to look for a role at NHS Blood and Transplant.

New role

In December 2013 Helen joined us as a session sister with our Worcester team. She said, "I got to know my team and the

donors very well. I have since gone on to become the clinical donor centre manager

at Gloucester and I still enjoy seeing our regular blood and platelet donors. It amazes me how they donate so selflessly even though they will never meet the person who they have given the chance of survival to."

Helen often tells her story to donors to thank them and give them an insight into the difference they are making. She continued, "I feel proud to work for NHSBT and to be able to give something back to the donors who helped me. I will never get to thank them in person."

Helen relishes every moment she spends with her family. She knows that wouldn't have been possible without the generosity of blood donors. ●



After the birth of baby Zac (above) mum Helen (pictured top with Zac and partner Steve) lost a lot of blood and needed a transfusion to recover



A 1960s session, left, looks quite different to a modern donor centre, above. Right: Tea and biscuits after a session in the 1950s.



Left: Blood collected in bottles was shipped unrefrigerated. Above: Early recruitment advertising.

Do you have a memory of blood donation that you'd like to share?
If so, please email us at thedonor@nhsbt.nhs.uk.

It's our 70th anniversary!

Today we take it for granted that donated blood is there when it's needed. But it wasn't always so.

Our modern blood service has its roots in the Second World War and even earlier – and 26th September 2016 marked the day 70 years ago that the National Blood Transfusion Service (the forerunner of NHS Blood and Transplant) came into being.

The push to develop a blood transfusion service came with the outbreak of the Second World War. Until then, the British Red Cross had organised voluntary donations and by 1926 a national network of donors had been developed. It was a fairly basic system - there was a distinct lack of knowledge around screening, testing and grouping.

Also, the service was unable to store blood, so direct donor to patient

Looking back at seven decades of saving lives

transfusions were fairly commonplace!

Casualties

It wasn't until 1940 that donated blood was needed on a large scale, when injured troops returned from Dunkirk. This, plus the many casualties of the Blitz, led to blood banks being set up in London, using

Right: Donated blood is transported in insulated bags and containers.



"The value of having stored blood ready to treat patients prompted the establishment of a national blood service"

methods for storing blood developed during the Spanish Civil War.

The value of having stored blood ready to

treat patients prompted the establishment of a national blood service... and the rest is history!

So much has changed in those 70 years – we now have plastic blood packs not glass bottles, specially engineered donor chairs rather than beds, and all kinds of sophisticated testing and processing methods that ensure blood donation is now safer than ever. ●



Above: At Filton we have the largest blood processing centre in the world. Right: Sessions and equipment have come a long way.



Help to fill up the stocking this Christmas

It is always a challenge to collect the right amount of blood to meet patient needs over the festive period, so with Christmas falling on a weekend this year, creating an extended bank holiday, we need to plan carefully.

There are very specific blood group requirements for the period between Christmas Eve and New Year. So we are having to book specific time slots now for the donors with these blood groups to ensure that their donations reach hospitals in time.

We're asking these donors, if they can, to

It is always a challenge to collect the right amount of blood to meet patient needs over the festive period, and this year is no different



book an appointment. If we do call you, we would really appreciate it if you could find the time to donate.

Also, from now until 23rd December we



Ask a friend to donate in 2017

We are asking all of our loyal blood donors to encourage a family member or friend to pledge to give blood in 2017.

New Year's Resolutions are typically about giving up, but we'd like more people to give. Our committed donors are already aware of the value of giving blood and platelets, but just 3 per cent of the eligible population actively give blood.

This means that we don't have enough new donors coming forward to provide the right mix of blood to match patients' needs, and to replace people who can't donate anymore.

Please spread the word, and encourage someone you know to take up this life saving habit! ●



need to make sure that we have a steady supply of blood, so if you haven't done so already, please make an appointment to give blood in the next few weeks. After all, the gift of life is the most precious gift you can give!

All blood groups are important, but we're appealing particularly to O-neg, B-neg and A-neg donors to make an appointment, and those with rare blood types.

Visit blood.co.uk or call 0300 123 23 23 to find your nearest session. You can also download the app by searching 'NHSGiveBlood' in the app store. ●

A day to remember

John Fuller's 100th donation will be a day that he and his wife Jacqueline will never forget

John, a regular blood donor, donated every three or four months. In April he was about to give his 100th donation. His wife, Jacqueline, had a heart condition that had been worsening and she had recently been placed on the transplant waiting list. John takes up the story.

"My wife Jacqueline had been suffering with a heart condition for many years and her condition had slowly worsened. When I booked my appointment for my 100th donation I had no idea the date I had booked would be anything other than an ordinary day.

"On that day, at 4am in the morning, the telephone rang. My first reaction was one of displeasure until I answered the phone and the voice on the other end said to me 'This is the hospital, there is a possible heart for Jacqueline.' She had been on the transplant list for just two months.

Life changing

"Those words started a day which changed our lives for ever. By the end of the morning Jacqueline was in the operating theatre, and for the first time I had time to think. One of my thoughts was of my blood donation. It was booked for that evening, the time when she would be coming out of theatre. At first I thought 'I'll just have to miss it this time.' Then I thought, 'No! Someone has lost their life



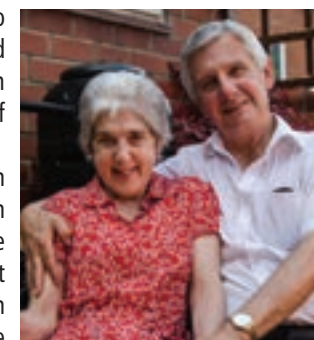
and by donating their heart they have given my wife the chance of a future. The least I can do is donate some blood.' So

I drove home and went to the donor session. 'Could I donate now rather than later?' I asked. 'Yes of course' came the reply.

"I hope you can understand that my 100th donation does have importance to me, not because of the donation itself, but because of the day it was made on, and the importance of blood without which the heart transplant could not have been carried out."

Jacqueline is now recovering well thanks to the generosity of an organ donor and blood donors. ●

John's wife Jacqueline proudly holds his certificate



It's a massive hit!

Since we launched our online blood donor account service on blood.co.uk in November 2013 over one million of you have registered



Left: You can register online via our website. Below: A still from our new animated film about the journey of blood

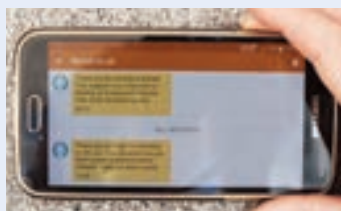
In that time, the online service, which allows you to book and change appointments in real time, has grown to become one of the largest of its type in the world with over two million appointments booked so far.

As part of the service you also have the ability to download our NHS Give Blood Mobile app that allows self service appointment booking. Nearly 90,000 of you have used the app in the last month alone!

Text alert success!

Our new text message service, telling you when your blood donation has been sent to a hospital is proving a big hit.

Helen Phillips said "I was delighted to get this text as it brought home to me the idea that my donation was going to be used by real people. The whole thing suddenly felt more personal."



Mike Stredder, Director of Blood Donation said "While donors don't get to meet the people who have benefited from their blood, our texts to donors will remind them that hospitals and patients rely on their donations."

Feedback from you on social media has been very positive as you proudly share your texts with friends. ●

FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/NHSBlood www.facebook.com/organdonationuk
TWITTER http://twitter.com/GiveBloodNHS http://twitter.com/NHSBT

We have also recently launched push messaging via our Mobile app as a new channel to keep in touch with you.

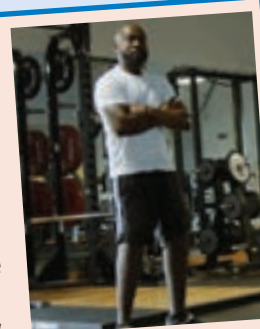
New animation

Have you ever wondered what happens to your donation once you've given it?

We've created a short animation that explains what we do with your donation. Click on the link below to watch 'The journey of a blood donation' animation on blood.co.uk. <https://www.blood.co.uk/the-donation-process/after-your-donation/the-journey-of-a-blood-donation/> ●



Former soldier **CORIE MAPP** doesn't know how much blood he received after he lost both his legs in 2010 when an improved explosive device (IED) in Afghanistan nearly killed him. But thanks to blood donors and the care he received, he survived. Now he's involved in two para-sports, bobsleigh and sitting volleyball, and won gold for Great Britain in the inaugural World Cup Para-bobsleigh last January. Corie says, "Blood donors save lives. More donors are needed from the black community so I'd urge everyone to do their bit."



PAUL BLAKE

won gold in the 400m at Rio, a triumph of ambition and training. But his life began uncertainly. Paul, who has cerebral palsy, is a twin and in the womb suffered twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome. This meant his brother, Alex, took nearly all his blood, leaving Paul seriously ill. He received his first transfusion at a few hours old; more followed. He said, "Blood saved my life, I can't thank donors enough...they do an amazing job. Blood donors help people when they need it most."



Competing, thanks to you

Four incredible sportspeople showed their support for blood donation during this year's Paralympic Games. They have all received blood. Here are their stories...

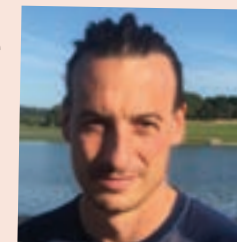
MARTINE

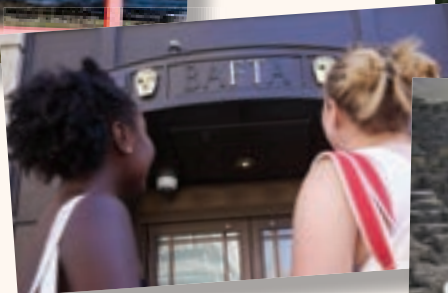
WRIGHT lost 80 per cent of her blood when she was injured on the Tube in the 2005 7/7 London bombings. A tourniquet stemmed the bleeding from her badly injured legs and saved her life but sadly both legs had to be amputated above the knee. Martine said, "Thanks to people who give blood, the blood I needed was there for me. I've done so much since then: got married, had my son, competed at the Paralympics (in the GB sitting volleyball team)."



NICK BEIGHTON

needed blood after he suffered devastating injuries from an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in Afghanistan. Thirty operations and 36 units of blood followed. But Nick has gone on to compete as a Paralympic rower at London 2012 and Para-canoeist in Rio 2016. He said, "I remember after I had come round...and my red blood cell count was very low, I could hardly see straight, my hearing (was) blurred and I felt truly awful. (After) a blood transfusion I felt, literally, like I had come back to life. Everything was sharp and clear, an incredible feeling."





Something's missing!

Confusion was sparked around the globe this summer, as As, Bs and Os disappeared overnight from iconic locations, signs and brands. No, it wasn't an act of vandalism, but an imaginative way to show how important blood donors are, against a background of a 30 per cent drop in new blood donors around the world compared to a decade ago.

We joined forces with 25 blood donor services across 21 countries to launch the 'Missing Type' campaign, with digital media helping to spread the message. The Sydney Opera House, the Giant's Causeway and Abbey Road were just a few locations that removed letters to support our cause, along with big brands including Cadbury, Tesco and Microsoft.

The campaign got heads turning and the public talking with over 54,000 mentions of #MissingType globally across social media. In England, the campaign inspired 24,000 people to register as new donors.

Different demands for blood

Every second, three people receive a life-changing blood transfusion. In a moving

There's been an international decline in new blood donors but, thanks to an intriguing campaign this summer, numbers have been boosted

video (YouTube: Represent feat. Lady Leshurr) patients from around the world thanked blood donors for 'filling the gaps', highlighting that in a world without As, Bs and Os, they would not be here.

Across the 'Missing Type' countries, which cover one billion of the world's population, there are differences in the numbers of donors and blood groups most in demand, but all share the need for more new donors.

In England, the focus is on attracting more young and black and Asian donors. Mike Stredder, director of Blood Donation, said, "Thanks to the generosity of our current donors, hospitals have the blood needed to treat patients and there is not a crisis in blood stocks. Despite overall blood use in hospitals declining, we need more young donors to safeguard blood donation for future generations. And it's vital the blood donor community reflects

Above: a selection of the images from the Missing Type campaign

the diversity of the population because blood types vary across communities and patients need well-matched blood. We particularly need new A negative and O negative donors, and people willing to

become dedicated platelet donors."

The need for more blood donors is constant though – so, please encourage family and friends to follow your lead, and give blood. ●

More A negative platelet donors needed

Grime artist Lady Leshurr helped us launch #Represent this October, a collaboration with MOBO aimed at boosting blood donation rates amongst young people, especially those with black and Asian heritage.

The campaign, part of our annual Black History Month celebrations, featured Lady Leshurr in a music video celebrating how black and Asian people are becoming more represented in all kinds of occupations. The final reveal is that only 3 per cent of blood donors are of black or Asian heritage, a huge underrepresentation.

Leshurr, who took home this year's best female act award, said, "I jumped at the chance to be involved with MOBO and NHSBT to lead the 'Represent' film'; it's a cause close to my heart



Lady Leshurr,

coming from the black community. I really hope it will make a difference and bring about real change and help those that need it most. The time is now to give blood and save a life."

The campaign also featured a competition

with two lucky winners getting their hands on a pair of VIP tickets to this year's MOBO Awards ceremony in Glasgow.

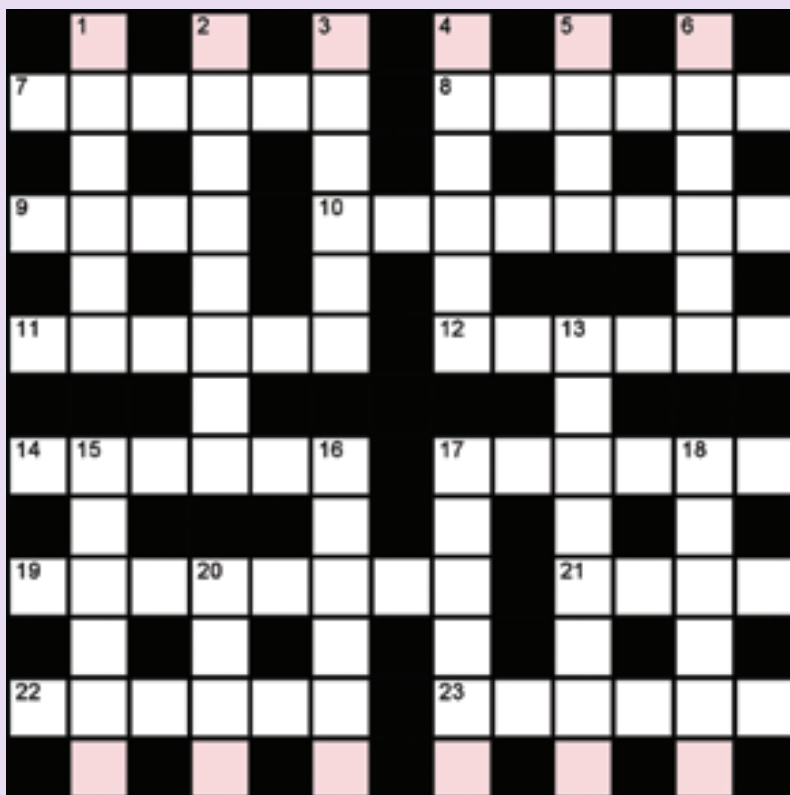
With half of all current blood donors aged 45 and over, more young donors are needed, especially black and Asian. Only 3 per cent of those who gave blood in the last 12 months were of black or Asian heritage.

You can find the full video on YouTube or on the #Represent campaign page of blood.co.uk. ●

CROSSWORD

Complete the crossword. The first and last rows spell out a blood-related word.

Send this phrase on a postcard or in a letter together with your name, address and daytime phone number to: Crossword Competition, The Editor, The Donor, NHS Blood and Transplant, Oak House, Reeds Crescent, Watford, WD24 4QN. You could win an "amazing" NHS Blood and Transplant prize. Answers and the winner's name will be in the next issue. All entries must be received by January 31st 2017.



ACROSS

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 7 Kind (6) | 17 Heavy rain (6) |
| 8 Foreign-looking (6) | 19 Lack of hair (8) |
| 9 Scheme (4) | 21 Armoured |
| 10 Stony matter in | vehicle (4) |
| avalanche (8) | 22 Prejudiced (6) |
| 11 Folly (6) | 23 Element (6) |
| 12 Leader of | |
| congregation (6) | |
| 14 Succulent plant (6) | |

DOWN

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Greek geometer (6) | 13 Aloneness (8) |
| 2 Outdoor garment (8) | 15 Slow musical |
| 3 Once every twelve | movement (6) |
| months (6) | 16 Firm (6) |
| 4 Vessel for drinker (6) | 17 Arid territory (6) |
| 5 Horny material | 18 Very clever |
| on foot (4) | person (6) |
| 6 District of Venice (6) | 20 Record (4) |