

Blood and Transplant

To: Transfusion Laboratory Managers & Transfusion Practitioners

Dear Colleague

We are writing to update you on our stock position, provide updates relating to COVID-19 and to provide information regarding our service provision covering the Easter Bank Holiday.

Stock Position

Our stock levels for all components remain in a good position. As previously advised, our daily stock levels for both red cells and platelets are available on our [website](#).

Sample labelling requirements for referred samples

For samples referred to our diagnostic laboratories where COVID-19 is confirmed/suspected, we would like to update our advice on packaging. Please follow the guidance according to [UN3373](#). We are no longer requesting any labelling to the outside of the package reflecting the patient's infection status.

Changes to delivery routes/points

We are aware that many hospitals are closing usual access routes into their hospital, and as such it may be necessary for the NHSBT drivers to use alternative routes with potential new delivery points. To ensure that we minimise delays to our deliveries, please can you inform us at the earliest opportunity, the new route and location of your temporary delivery points.

When considering your new delivery route and point, please be aware that our drivers do not have access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Service provision covering the Easter Bank Holiday

We wish to inform you of our adjusted service provision schedule for blood component deliveries and testing services for Red Cell Immunohaematology (RCI) and Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (H&I).

We are also providing guidance for placing platelet orders to assist our stock management. This will help to ensure that we are able to fulfil all hospital requests.

1. Deliveries

9, 11, 12 and 14 April (Thursday, Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday) – normal service.

10 and 13 April (Good Friday and Easter Monday) - Blood component deliveries will be for **emergency and ad hoc orders only**.

Standing orders due on 10 and 13 April will be delivered as ad hocs. If you do not require these orders, please cancel them in OBOS.

2. Collect orders

We will continue to fulfil collect orders. We would be grateful if you could give us as much notice as possible.

3. RCI samples

Routine samples taken on or before 8 April, must be received at RCI by Thursday 9 April (a.m) to allow sufficient time for testing to be completed.

Routine samples taken on 9 April must arrive at RCI by Tuesday 14 April to again allow sufficient time for testing to be completed.

An on-call service will be provided to cover the bank holidays and weekend period. RCI Colindale, Filton & Liverpool will be offering Saturday services (on Saturday 11 April) as per usual service provision. If testing is required urgently, hospitals must contact RCI (via your usual contact method) to request testing during the on-call period.

Routine samples will continue to be received at NHSBT sites on the non-working days but will not be processed by RCI until the next routine working day. Any samples received by RCI that are > 7 days old will be unsuitable for testing and rejected, even if they were in date when they arrived at an NHSBT site.

4. H&I

H&I will be providing an out of hours service only from 17:00 Thursday 9 April to 09:00 Tuesday 14 April.

Advice from a Consultant Clinical Scientist is available for advice on transplantation and transfusion from 17:00 Thursday 9 April to 09:00 Tuesday 14 April.

5. Ordering guidance for HLA selected platelets

To ensure we provide the best match for patients, please, where possible give a minimum of 24 hours' notice. We provide an **emergency only** service out of hours from 17:00 Thursday 9 April to 09:00 Tuesday 14 April (you may incur an ad hoc delivery charge to reach your hospital at the required time). A medical practitioner will be required to speak with the Consultant Clinical Scientist for urgent requests.

6. Ordering guidance for platelets

- Units requested for "Stock" will be supplied with a minimum of 48-hours shelf life from receipt, whenever possible.
- Please order in line with BSH guidelines to help us maintain the availability of higher specification platelets for those patients who need them.
- Consider the clinical requirement before specifying apheresis and / or CMV negative requirements. Please refer to the [Apheresis Platelet Myth Buster](#) on the Hospitals and Science website for further information.
- Do not request High Titre negative for ABO identical platelet transfusion.

- Accept substitution of D negative units for D positive requests, or irradiated units for non-irradiated requests. You will not incur any additional charge for substituted units.
- HLA selected platelets – please see H&I.

7. Pooled granulocytes

We will offer granulocytes 9, 10, 11 and 14 April. We are unable to supply on Sunday 12 and Monday 13 April. Delivery times may be longer, dependent upon location of the component at the point of issue.

Please refer to p51 of the NHSBT [Portfolio of Blood Components](#) for full details of the granulocyte provision we offer.

Summary of service provision for the Bank Holiday period

	Delivery	RCI	H&I	Pooled Granulocytes
9 April Thursday	normal service	normal service	normal service	normal availability
10 April Good Friday	emergency and ad hoc only	on call	on call	normal availability
11 April Saturday	normal weekend service	normal weekend service*	on call	normal availability with best endeavours
12 April Sunday	normal weekend service	on call	on call	not available
13 April Easter Monday	emergency and ad hoc only	on call	on call	not available
14 April Tuesday	normal service+	normal service	normal service	normal availability with best endeavours

+ Filton supplied hospitals only – delivery times will be according to your Monday delivery schedule

* Please refer to your local working arrangements for weekend service

If you have any questions, please contact your Customer Service Manager. Alternatively, telephone our response desk on 0208 201 3107, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday; we'll be pleased to help.

Please forward this letter to your Consultant lead for transfusion and cascade to laboratory and clinical staff as appropriate.

Kind regards,

Commercial & Customer Services

NHS Blood and Transplant

Tel: 01865 381010

Email: NHSBT.customerservice@nhsbt.nhs.uk

