

NHSBT: Situation Update - COVID-19

08 June 2020

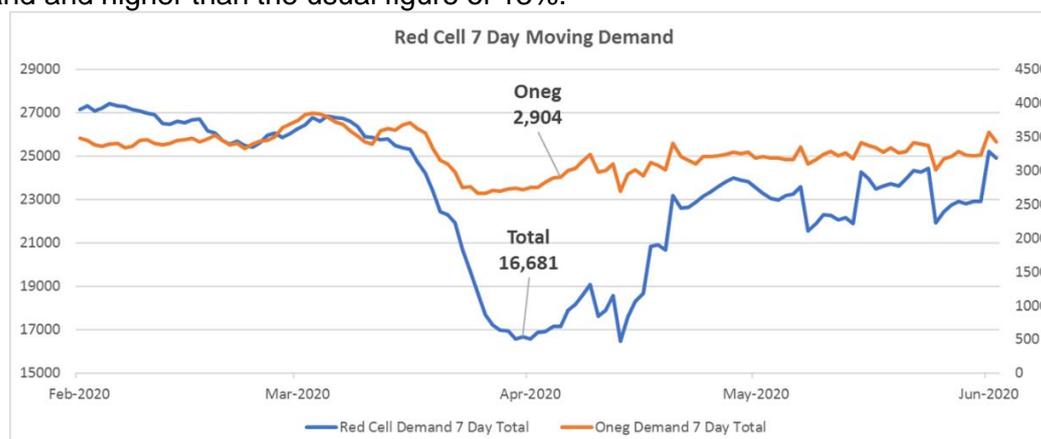
TO: Transfusion Laboratory Managers, Transfusion Practitioners, Consultant Haematologists with responsibility for Blood Transfusion, HTC Chairs, England.epr@nhs.net, NHS England Contacts.

Dear Colleague

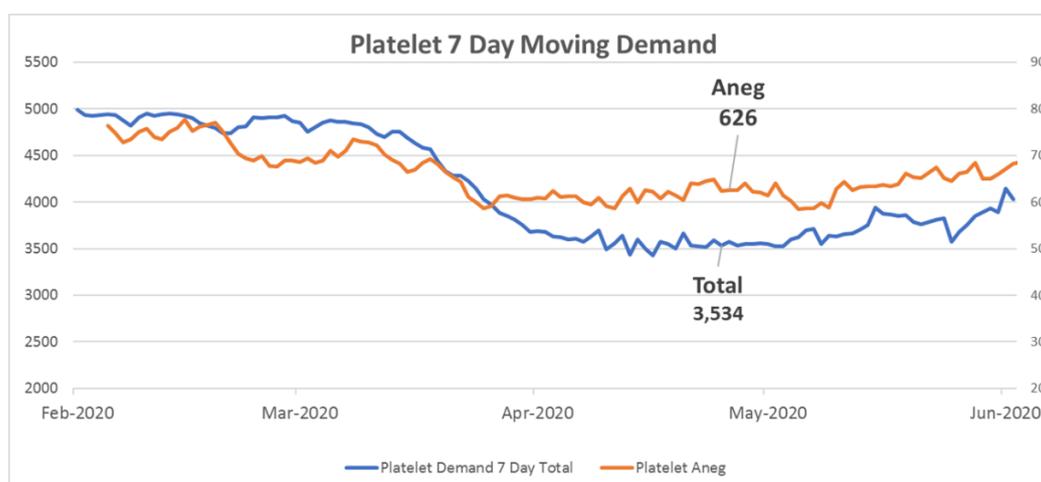
We would like to thank you for your ongoing support in helping to ensure that blood components are available for patients who need them. Our stock levels remain in a good position.

We are also grateful for the information that you have provided about your recovery and restoration plans, either through our dedicated inbox, [COVID-19 Blood Recovery](#), or through our Patient Blood Management and Hospital Customer Service teams. This information has been vital in helping us to forecast demand for components and to adjust our blood collection plans accordingly.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, total red cell demand fell very quickly by approximately 35%, increasing in the last few weeks to around 10% below expected demand for this period. Demand for O D neg red cells initially fell to 15% below expected levels, and this week is at 5% below our pre COVID-19 forecast, accounting for 14% of total red cell demand and higher than the usual figure of 13%.



In contrast, platelet demand fell by 25% in the first few weeks of the pandemic and remained at this level until very recently. Currently platelet demand is now just 16% below pre COVID-19 forecast. There has been a higher demand for A D neg platelets over the last fortnight.



How can you help?

The challenge will remain over the coming weeks to forecast increases in demand as hospitals start to restore and adapt services.

We would appreciate your ongoing intelligence about how you are making changes to your services and how this will impact on your stock levels. We are particularly interested in changes in requests for oncology/haematology patients including those undergoing transplantation, cardiothoracic surgery, and trauma. We would be grateful if you could continue to send information by email via the following link, [COVID-19 Blood Recovery](#).

How can we help?

Please let us know if you need any help, for example this could be providing data for further analysis or support in defining revised optimum stock levels.

What are we doing to help maintain sufficiency of supply?

Whilst we continue to monitor and maintain healthy blood stock levels during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have taken a number of additional measures to ensure sufficiency of blood component supply. These measures include:

Blood Donation

- Proactively managing communications with donors encouraging them to keep their appointments
- Working closely with venues to ensure that we can continue to run collection sessions
- Introducing social distancing measures on our collection sessions
- Recruiting additional staff to provide cover for those affected by COVID-19

Safety and Regulations

- Introducing measures to ensure the safety, wellbeing and resilience of our teams including the use of PPE where appropriate and enhanced cleaning practices
- Active engagement with the MHRA and regulators
- Ongoing review of donor selection guidelines and maintaining an active list of possible changes which can be considered as the pandemic progresses

Blood Components

- We gained approval for extending the shelf life of red blood cells to 42 days. This could be introduced if needed in the event of blood shortages
- We are reviewing opportunities for increasing access to platelets, including splitting units into smaller doses or extending the shelf-life to 8 days

If you have any questions, please contact your local PBM Practitioner or Hospital Customer Service Manager.

Thank you again for your ongoing support.

Catherine Howell, OBE

Assistant Director, Commercial & Customer Services

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