

**NHSBT: Red cell demand - COVID-19****21 July 2020**

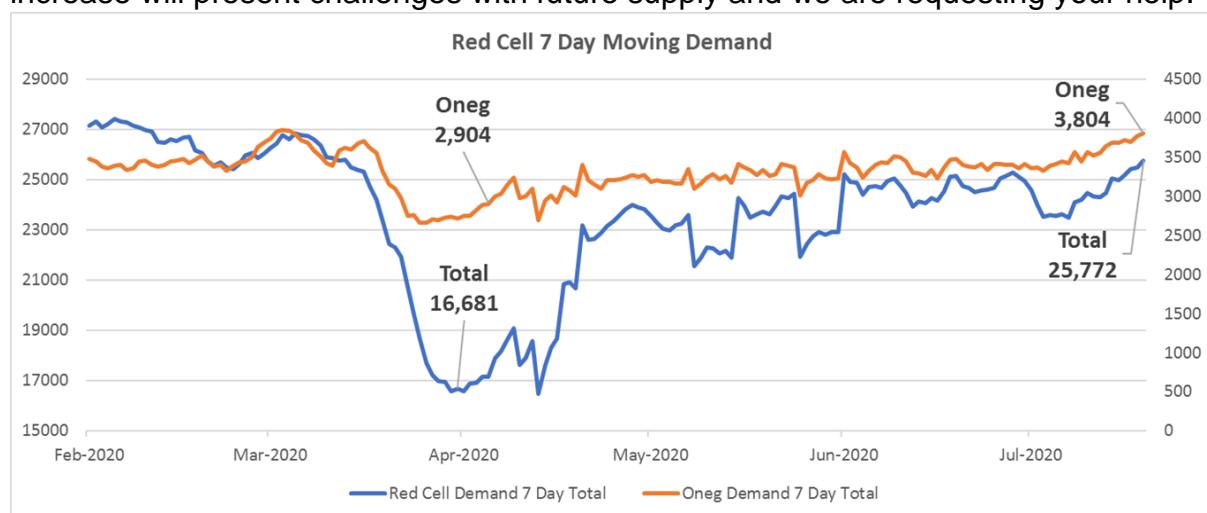
**TO: Transfusion Laboratory Managers, Transfusion Practitioners, Consultant Haematologists with responsibility for Blood Transfusion, HTC Chairs**  
[England.eprr@nhs.net](mailto:England.eprr@nhs.net), NHS England Contacts.

Dear Colleague

We would like to thank you for your ongoing support in helping to ensure that blood components are available for patients across the NHS.

Although our stock levels remain in a good position, red cell demand increased by 6% over the last week. Demand is now approximately 94% of pre-covid levels, whilst we know some clinical activity in Trusts is yet to resume.

Of concern, is the disproportionate increase in O D negative red cells which is now 10% above pre COVID-19 levels. O D neg accounts for 14.8% of total red cell demand, higher than the usual figure of 13%. We are concerned that this trending increase will present challenges with future supply and we are requesting your help.

**How can you help NHSBT?**

As hospitals work hard to restore and adapt services, the challenge remains for NHSBT to accurately forecast demand for blood components to ensure sufficiency of supply.

We would be grateful if you could:

- Ensure stock targets are appropriate for local demand and where possible, operate a “first in, first out” policy for issue of red cell components; this will assist in preserving O D negative red cells and minimise transfusion to avoid time expiry.
- Limit overspecification of O D negative red cell requests unless patient specific.
- Limit requests for “fresh red cells” and take a proportional share of K+ units
- Inform your local NHSBT customer service representative of any service reconfiguration that might be impacting current demand.

## What about red cells for patients who require R<sub>0</sub>?

We are working hard to increase supply of R<sub>0</sub> please support us by:

- Submitting orders 5 working days in advance where possible, as units are held at sites with the largest demand
- Accepting the substitutions we make in accordance with the substitution matrix
- Deleting outstanding orders on OBOS if the order is no longer required, the order can then be used for other patients
- Ordering R<sub>0</sub> units for R<sub>0</sub> patients so we have accurate demand data
- Discussing any ordering issues or suggestions for improvement with your Customer Services Manager

## How can we help you?

Please contact us if you need any help, for example in providing data for internal analysis, or support in defining revised optimum stock levels.

Thank you in anticipation of your support during this challenging time.

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

Kind regards

Catherine Howell, OBE

Assistant Director, Commercial & Customer Services

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