

NHSBT: Red cell demand - COVID-19

18 August 2020

To: Transfusion Laboratory Managers, Transfusion Practitioners, Consultant Haematologists with responsibility for Blood Transfusion, Hospital Transfusion Committee Chairs

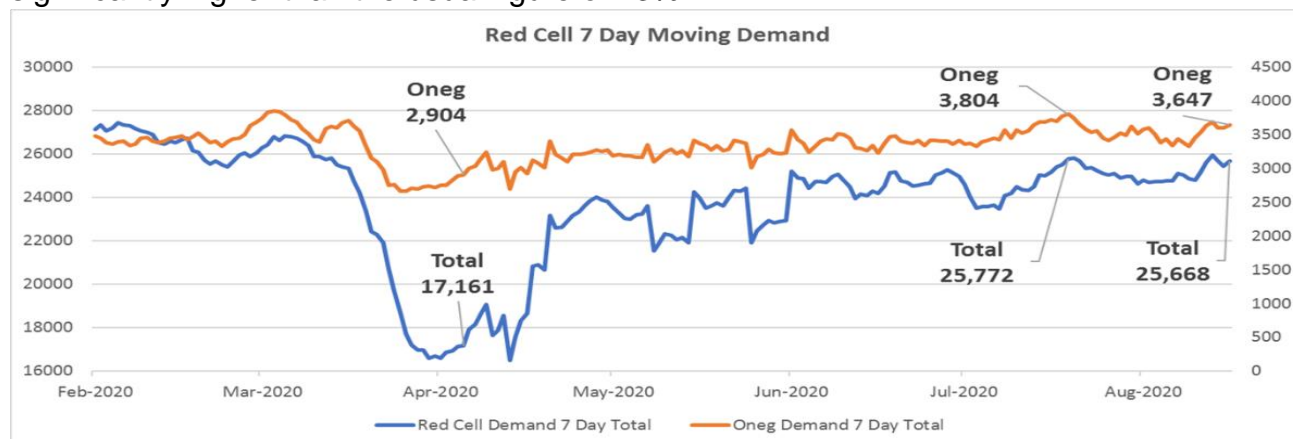
Dear Colleague

We last provided an update on our stock position mid July 2020. We felt it important to provide a further update as demand for blood components is now nearing pre Covid-19 levels.

We have been very grateful for the support of Trusts in helping us to manage the supply of blood components during the pandemic. We are proud that this collaboration has to date ensured that the supply of blood components across the NHS, has been maintained during this challenging period.

Although our stock levels are sufficient to meet current demand, we are facing increasing challenges in collecting the required units of red cells on a daily basis and our overall stock position is currently lower than target. Despite our best efforts, constraints such as the need for social distancing at donation sessions are impacting on our ability to collect blood. We are concerned that if this continues, we may experience supply issues in the coming weeks.

Demand for O D neg remains of particular concern at 14.2% of total demand; significantly higher than the usual figure of 13%.



We are therefore again asking for your help to prevent shortages in the coming weeks, particularly over the forthcoming Bank Holiday period.

We would be grateful if you could:

1. Ensure stock targets are appropriate to meet 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.

Blood and Transplant

2. Limit over specification of O D negative red cell requests unless a patient specific requirement.
3. Limit requests for “fresh red cells” and take a proportional share of K+ units. We are currently issuing to a small number of hospitals red cells at 23 days’ age at issue, and beyond. This will be extended if our stock position further declines.
4. Accept substitutions, where clinically appropriate.

The National Blood Transfusion Committee Laboratory Managers Group have signalled their intention to produce a briefing to help Trusts with hospital stock management. Anticipating publication next week, we are grateful for the ongoing support from this group in helping us to manage the supply chain.

As hospitals work hard to restore and adapt services, the challenge remains for NHSBT to accurately forecast demand for blood components. As previously requested, we would appreciate it if you could keep us updated with planned changes to activity that might increase demand for blood components.

Please email any intelligence to support our demand planning process to covid19bloodrecovery@nhsbt.nhs.uk or discuss with your local PBM Practitioner or Hospital Customer Service Manager

Thank you in anticipation of your ongoing support. We commit to keep you regularly updated with our stock position.

Kind regards

Catherine Howell, OBE

Assistant Director, Commercial & Customer Services

Email: NHSBT.customerservice@nhsbt.nhs.uk

