

NHSBT Blood Supply Update

14 December 2020

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

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. As we move towards the Christmas holiday period, we felt it important to provide an update on our blood stocks and hospital demand.

We have worked hard over the last few weeks to maximize our collection activity and our overall blood stock levels remain in a good position.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, total red cell demand fell by approximately 35%, increasing in the last few months to around 5% below expected demand for this period. In contrast, O D negative red cell demand recovered quickly and is now within the target of 13% of total red cell demand.



We face a challenge over the coming weeks in accurately forecasting demand as hospitals continue to adapt services to manage the ongoing challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. We want to ensure that our stock profile across all blood groups and components remains adequate to meet patient need.

We would be grateful for your help with the following:

1. Stock Management

- Please do not increase your stock for the Christmas holiday period. We have enough stock to meet your requests.
- Please 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.
- Limit over specification of O D negative red cell requests unless a patient specific requirement.
- Limit requests for “fresh red cells” and continue to take a proportional share of K+ units. We are currently issuing red cells at 23 days’ age at issue, and beyond to a small number of hospitals. This will be extended if our stock position further declines.

2. Intelligence to support NHSBT demand forecasting

- We continue to rely on you to keep us updated with any changes in your hospital activity that may result in a change in demand for blood components.
- Please email any intelligence to covid19bloodrecovery@nhsbt.nhs.uk or discuss with your local PBM Practitioner or Hospital Customer Service Manager.

We are very grateful for the Trusts that our keeping us regularly updated, and the support of the National Transfusion Laboratory Managers Group with this.

3. Maintaining supply of blood components

We have taken a number of additional measures to ensure sufficiency of blood component supply during the pandemic. These measures include:

- 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
- Maintaining social distancing measures on our collection sessions
- Recruiting additional staff to provide cover for those affected by COVID-19

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

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for working with us over the last to maintain the supply of blood for patients and thank you in anticipation of your ongoing support during this ongoing challenging time for the NHS.

Please find the online version of this communication [here](#).