

To: Transfusion Laboratory Managers, Transfusion Practitioners, Consultant Haematologists with Responsibility for Blood Transfusion.

4th August 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Red Cell Stock Update

Following our recent communication on 23rd July 2021, we thought it would be helpful to provide a further update on red cell stock.

Whilst our stock levels are sufficient to meet current demand, we continue to face ongoing challenges in collecting the required units of red cells. In particular, our stock of **B D negative, A D positive, O D negative and O D positive red cells** are lower than target and we remain concerned about sufficiency of supply for these specific groups over the coming weeks.

We are not asking you to implement your Emergency Blood Management Plans at this stage, but we are seeking your help in the following areas to minimize the risk of blood shortages over the coming weeks.

1. Stock Management:

- Please review your stockholding of these groups and reduce where possible. A small reduction will make a significant difference
- Accept substitutions, where clinically appropriate
- Please accept shorter dated red cells, where you are confident that they can be used
- 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
- Limit requests for “fresh red cells” and take a proportional share of K+ units
- Please enter daily red cell stock levels via the VANESA site as soon as possible. This will help us determine quantities of red cells across the system
- Please also consider if it is safe to do so
 - Reduction in reservation periods
 - Reducing levels of stock in remote fridges
 - Reducing levels of irradiated stock and ordering more often
- The National Blood Transfusion Committee Laboratory Managers Group have produced information about appropriate specification for emergency red cells. This and a number of tools to help stock management and they can be found [here](#)

2. Appropriate Use of Blood Components:

There are a number of tools available to support decisions to administer transfusions and to consider alternatives to blood including an ‘app’ summarising national clinical indications for transfusions and the Patient Blood Management toolkit. Please follow this link [here](#).

What are we doing to help maintain sufficiency of supply?

We are taking additional measures to ensure sufficiency of blood component supply including:

- Contacting donors to encourage them to keep their appointments
- Increasing national and local media activity to promote all available appointments in our donor centres
- Recruiting temporary staff to cover any gaps

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 information to covid19bloodrecovery@nhsbt.nhs.uk or discuss with your Hospital Customer Service Manager or Patient Blood Management Practitioner.

Thank you in anticipation of your ongoing support.

Please cascade to laboratory and clinical staff as appropriate.

Kind regards,

Louise Sherliker
National Lead – Patient Blood
Management Team

Dr Farrukh Shah
Medical Director - Transfusion