TO: Medical Director, Chief Executive, Transfusion Laboratory Manager, Transfusion Practitioner, Chair of RTC, Chair of HTC, Consultant Haematologist with Responsibility for Blood Transfusion, NHS England EPRR

30 August 2022

Low Stock – pre-Amber alert UPDATE – to remain at pre-Amber status for red cells and group A platelets until at least 3 October 2022

Dear Colleagues,

Since writing to you on 9 August 2022 our red cell stocks continue to be at levels lower than we would want across multiple blood groups. In addition, group A platelets are vulnerable to peaks in demand or drops in collection. We remain concerned about sufficiency of supply over coming weeks.

We are currently able to supply to orders, with some need for substitution, and will remain at pre-Amber alert until at least 3 October 2022. If the situation improves sufficiently, we will review this decision. We are NOT asking you to implement your Emergency Blood Management Arrangements at this stage.

The pressure on our stock levels reflects challenges in staff sickness, staff turnover, changes in donor behaviour and donor sickness. We are doing all we can to address these challenges to ensure we avoid issuing an amber alert. We hope to avoid issuing an amber alert, but there is a risk this may occur, especially if demand for blood components increases above normal baseline activity.

Actions to help stock recovery

Whilst we are tackling donation challenges, we ask for your continued support in:

- Optimising stock levels in accordance with the Blood Stocks Management Scheme stock level guidance (new red cell guidance issued this month).
- Implementing the actions in the National Blood Transfusion Committee’s shortage plans
- Ensuring best transfusion practice is implemented and maintained, in accordance with NICE Blood Transfusion Quality Standard, including:
  - Use of tranexamic acid prior to major surgery
  - Appropriate treatment of iron deficiency anaemia with oral or intravenous iron
  - Single unit red cell transfusions if not actively bleeding or on a transfusion programme

Working together we hope to rebuild stocks to a sustainable position so that we can move away from the pre-Amber alert state and return to normal service.

Supporting blood donation
We urgently need people to donate blood. We have capacity in some of our donor sessions now. You can check local appointment availability on our Blood donor appeal page or via the NHSGiveBlood app.

If you need any support or guidance, please contact your Hospital Customer Service Manager or Patient Blood Management Practitioner.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Please cascade to laboratory and clinical staff as appropriate.

Lise Estcourt
Acting Medical Director of Transfusion
NHSBT

Cheng-Hock Toh
Chair National Blood Transfusion Committee (NBTC)