

## Blood and Transplant

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

**17 October 2024**

### **Update - Amber Alert Continues for Group O Red Cells**

Dear Colleague,

We would like to thank all hospitals that have supported us already by reducing stock holding, deploying best inventory practice and Patient Blood Management initiatives. Your help has been fundamental to us being able to maintain supply.

Since we contacted you on 1 October our concern for a move to Red Alert level has diminished as collection has improved and demand reduced. Our concern at a risk of moving to Red has not been removed but is less probable.

Before we move out of Amber, we need to see a period of stability with no concern that we will see a reduction in stock. When we are confident that we can move out of Amber and remain out of Amber, we will confirm with you.

**We are asking you to ensure you are sustaining the actions required in an amber alert, particularly best transfusion and inventory management practice to avoid the need for additional measures.**

We are doing everything possible to bring in enough donations and need all hospitals to ensure every step within the Amber alert is in place.

We hope by continuing to work together, we will be able to avoid requiring further measures.

### **Hospital Actions**

#### **Supporting Supply:**

1. Maintain your Emergency Blood Management Arrangements for an Amber shortage including all Patient Blood Management initiatives.
2. Re-review your stock holding of O negative red cells and reduce it where possible. A small reduction will make a big difference to national stocks.
3. Only use O negative red cells for females of unknown blood group who are 50 years or less (i.e. have child-bearing potential)
4. Use O positive red cells for all males (any age) and any female over 50 years of age of unknown blood group.
5. Move to group specific red cells for the patient as soon as it is safe to do so.
6. To ensure that we use every available group O red cell, we ask that you accept short dated and K positive units where you are able to use them.
7. Please continue to submit daily blood stock management data to VANESA as this supports our planning.
8. Consider stock sharing to avoid wastage – we have produced a template [stock sharing agreement](#).

We apologise for the extra work and inconvenience these restrictions cause.

Thank you for your ongoing help. If you have any questions, please contact your Customer Service Manager. Alternatively, telephone our response desk on 0208 201 3107, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday; we'll be pleased to help.

**Please cascade to laboratory and clinical staff as appropriate.**

Kind regards

Dr Lise Estcourt  
Medical Director for Transfusion  
NHS Blood and Transplant

Professor Cheng-Hock Toh  
Chair  
National Blood Transfusion Committee

