

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, England EPRR, Chief Nurses.

21 May 2025

**Group O red cell shortage – Amber Alert continues – Risk of Red Alert
Group B D negative red cell shortage – Pre-Amber continues**

Dear Colleagues,

Red Cells

Regrettably, despite active hospital support and the work of our donation teams, our stock of O D negative red cells is reducing, and we have some concern that, **without increased intervention, we are at risk of having to declare a Red Alert.**

To support recovery and to protect vital O D negative stocks at Amber Status we are having to introduce further controls. We are therefore asking you to:

- Use O D negative red cells for females of childbearing potential of unknown blood group.
- Use O D positive red cells for males and females over 50 years of age of unknown blood group.
- If ordering to supply Pre-hospital medical teams (HEMS) or /Major Trauma Centres or Maternity patients please state this within the notes field in OBOS.
- If ordering for named O D negative patients, where O D positive is not an option, please state this within the notes field in OBOS. All other O D negative orders may be challenged.
- Do not increase O D negative stock levels because of the Bank Holiday, if required please order ad hoc deliveries instead.

Please ensure ALL actions required in the Amber stage of the [NBTC red cell shortage plan](#) are in place particularly best transfusion and inventory management practice. We hope by continuing to work together, we will be able to avoid the need to declare Red Alert.

Platelets

We are entering the bank holiday weekend with good stocks, however we expect pressure on donation and are anticipating lower stock levels of A D negative. Please support us by taking the following actions:

- Reduce stockholding of A D negative platelets where possible.
- Do not request long dated platelets.
- Match ABO group rather than rely on A group platelets as this provides better patient outcomes.
- Accept and use both apheresis and pooled platelets for your patients.

- Ensure transfusions are given in accordance with good clinical practice and national guidelines for [adults](#) and [children](#).
- Consider extending the interval between prophylactic transfusions if safe to do so.

Our stock levels are updated on our website each weekday; you can see them [here](#)

Our Donor Experience team is promoting donation through extensive media and advertising coverage in areas where we have booking capacity and targeting our O D negative donors. National Blood Week takes place from 9 – 15 June. The NHSBT comms team will be sharing key messages and content. Please get in touch with your comms team to encourage them to use National Blood Week to attract new donors in your area – particularly if you are close to one of the 27 town and city centre NHS Donor Centres. They can contact media@nhsbt.nhs.uk for more information.

We apologise for the extra work and inconvenience these restrictions will cause. We are working hard to rectify the situation and will update you regularly.

If you have any questions, please contact your Customer Service Manager. Alternatively phone 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.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Lise Estcourt
Medical Director for Transfusion
NHS Blood and Transplant

Professor Cheng-Hock Toh
Chair
National Blood Transfusion Committee

