

Blood and Transplant

To: Transfusion Laboratory Managers, Transfusion Practitioners, Chair of HTC, Chair of RTC, Consultant Haematologist with responsibility for Blood Transfusion, England EPRR, Chief Nurses

18 July 2025

RED CELL SHORTAGE: Return to Pre-Amber Status on 21 July

Dear Colleagues,

After being in an Amber alert for O red cells for almost a year, our stock levels have improved, and **we are returning to Pre-Amber status from 21 July**.

This has been possible thanks to your continued support, new measures we have put in place and an amazing response from donors in National Blood Week. You are no longer required to implement any emergency blood stock management arrangements, but we request that you continue to transfuse patients appropriately using patient blood management guidance.

We expect blood stocks to remain stable over the next six weeks, and the mid-term outlook is for stocks to grow. However, stocks remain fragile, and the risk remains if demand from hospitals increases.

To help, please consider if you need to increase your stock holding back to recommended Blood Stocks Management Scheme levels and please prioritise the management of O D Neg blood to minimise wastage and optimise stock.

Hospital Action:

1. If you need to increase your stock levels, please do this gradually over the next 6 to 8 weeks. This will help us manage any sudden changes in demand.
2. Continue actions to conserve red cell stocks in-line with [NHSBT Guidance](#) for a pre-amber shortage. This includes:
 - a. Treat haematinic deficiencies with the appropriate supplement ([iron](#), [B12](#) or [folate](#)), unless the patient has haemodynamic compromise.
 - b. Follow [CPOC](#) guidance on identification and management of anaemia for patients having surgery.
 - c. Use tranexamic acid, unless there is a contraindication, if intraoperative blood loss could be greater than 500ml (in adults).
 - d. Use cell salvage where available and especially if unpredictable blood loss can occur.
 - e. Minimise [iatrogenic anaemia](#) (reduce frequency or volume of blood sampling where appropriate).
3. Please continue to review stock holding and submit blood stock levels and wastage data via VANESA.

4. Review if you are able to share Ro red cells within networks, and with neighbouring hospitals. We have produced a [service level agreement](#) (see Best Practice) to support stock sharing between hospitals.

We would like to thank you again for your support during the past 12 months. We apologise for the extra work and inconvenience these restrictions have caused.

We may need to use amber alert again in the future. This is a legitimate supply management tool to avoid a national blood shortage that could impact patients.

We will continue to provide regular updates throughout the shortage period. 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 forward this letter to your consultant lead for transfusion and cascade to laboratory and clinical staff as appropriate.

Kind regards

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

Prof. Cheng-Hock Toh
Chair
National Blood Transfusion Committee

