

Blood Supply update

22 July 2025

Blood Stocks Key Messages



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O-group red Cell stocks have been under 'amber alert' since July 2024 due to ongoing collection challenges. There is a risk that these pressures will continue, with lower donor attendance and higher deferrals.



Over the past few years, we have implemented several initiatives to increase donation appointment capacity and stabilise the workforce. We now deploy c.50k appointments per week (vs c.43k pre-pandemic) and Blood Donation workforce turnover has reduced to a record-low of 12.6% (vs 27% at peak).



However, key structural challenges continue to prevent stock growth: a sustained increase in on-session donor deferrals; lower appointment fill rates, particularly in city donor centre locations; and insufficient donors of key blood groups. Whilst we have seen good progress with a reduction in short-notice cancellations, there is more to do to remove this source of frustration for donors.



In the short-term, we have mobilised an Incident Response team to oversee blood stocks through the challenging Summer period. This team will drive a strong performance focus, seeking to optimise delivery and mobilise some urgent interventions to reduce deferrals.

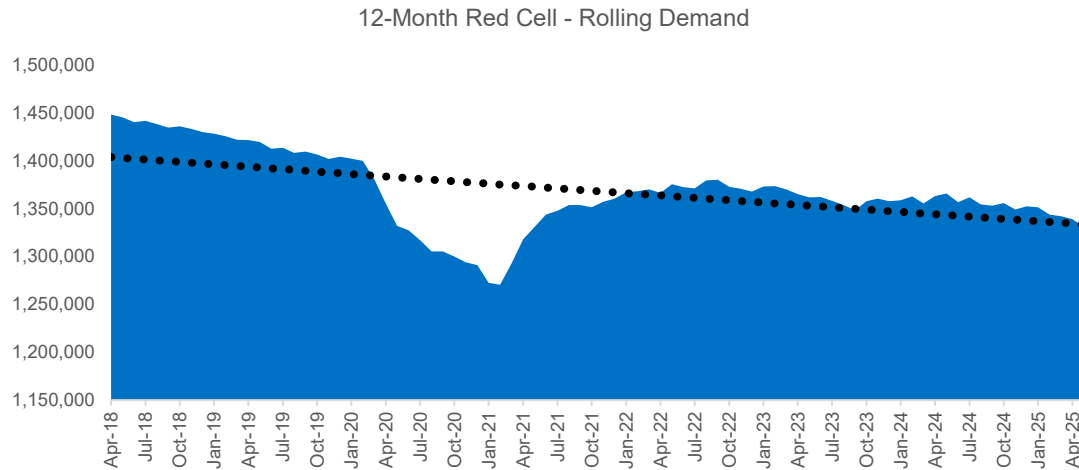


In the medium-term, we are making some big strategic investments to digitise the donor journey, including an online health check so donors can establish their eligibility to donate while booking an appointment. We are also investing in further increases to appointment availability and growing our donor base to ensure we can fill more of the appointments we deploy.

Demand

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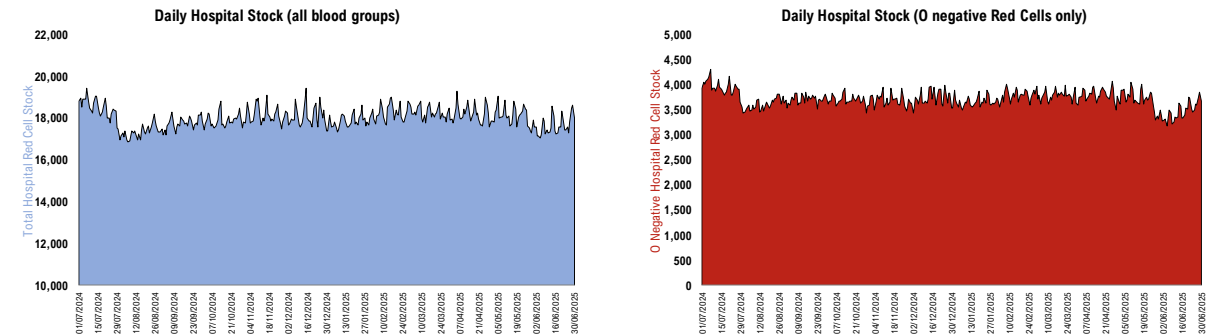
1. Historical demand



Key Insights:

- Red Cell Demand declined significantly during the Pandemic period. While this recovered by Summer 2021, it did not return to pre-pandemic levels.
- 21/22 and 22/23 Demand remained stable, however since then it has shown a slight decreasing trend with 23/24 and 24/25 showing a 1% reduction year on year.
- Red Cell Demand in FY 24/25 was 5.6% lower than in FY 18/19 (The last full year pre-pandemic)

2. Hospital stock levels



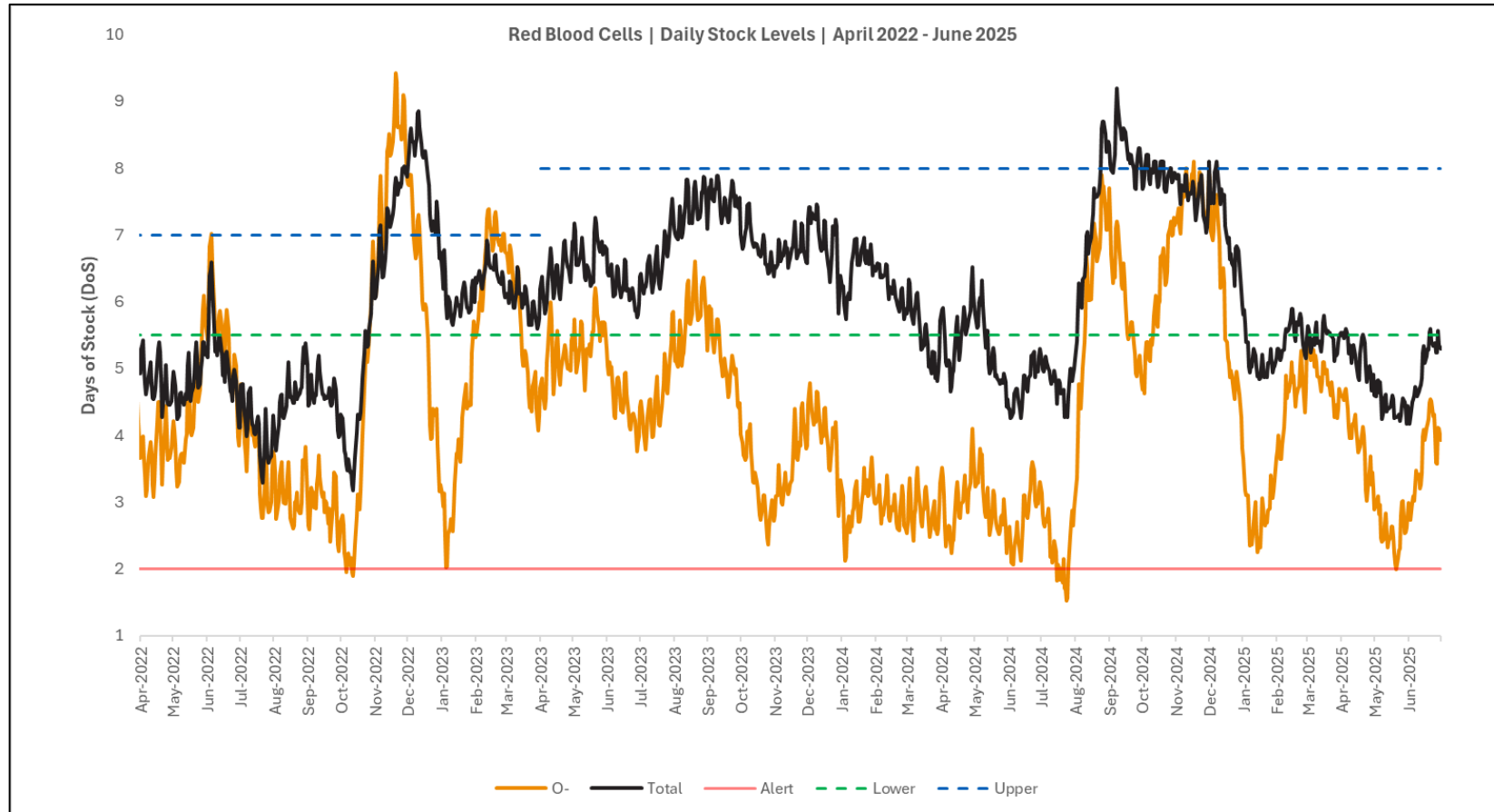
Key Insights:

- Since the amber alert in 2023, we have observed a reduction in stock holding by hospitals.
- We have been actively working with hospitals to champion demand reducing initiatives, such as the use of O-positive for male patients of unknown blood group and Patient blood management measures.
- We have established a Joint Blood Stocks working group to further support appropriate demand across hospital customers.

Blood stocks



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Key Insights:

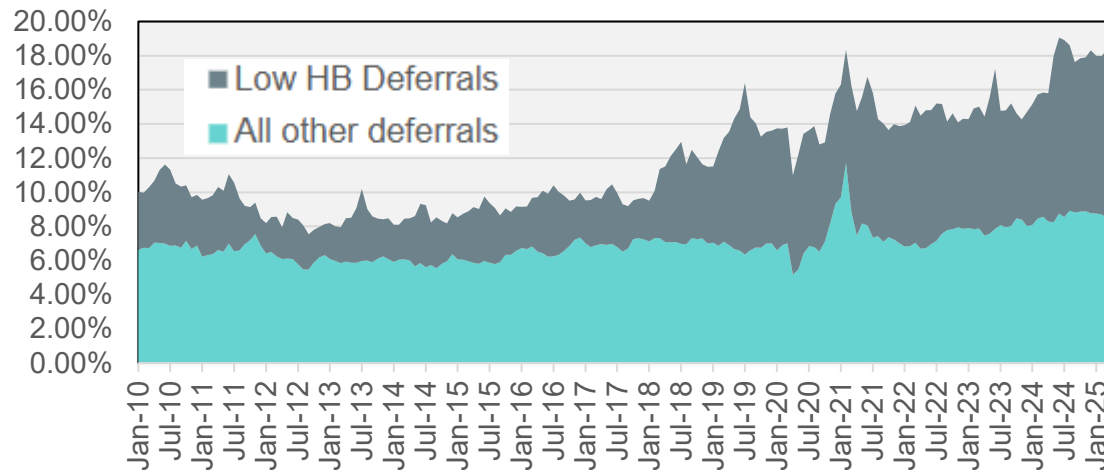
- At an overall level, blood stocks have fluctuated over the past 3-years.
- Overall stock, in the main has remained within our target banding.
- O-negative has proven harder to manage, with stock being below target levels through the period.
- O-negative is the universal group and in the past 12-months, 14% (29k units) of O-negative has been issued as an RO substitution.

We are experiencing key structural challenges that are impacting blood stock performance



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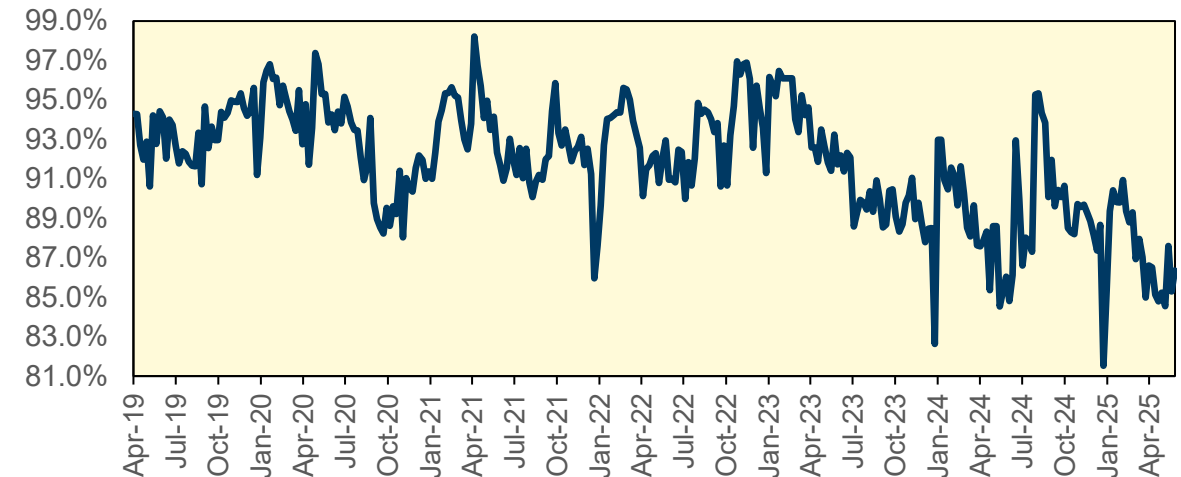
1. Sustained Increases in Donor Deferrals



Key Insights:

- Deferrals occur when a donor attends their appointment but is clinically assessed as ineligible to donate.
- Deferrals have been increasing over recent years and have recently risen to 18% of donors attending (from low point of 8%), primarily due to low HB (haemoglobin) deferrals more than trebling.
- This increase accounts for c.3,000 missed collection opportunities each week.

2. Sustained Decreases in Appointment Fill Rates



Key Insights:

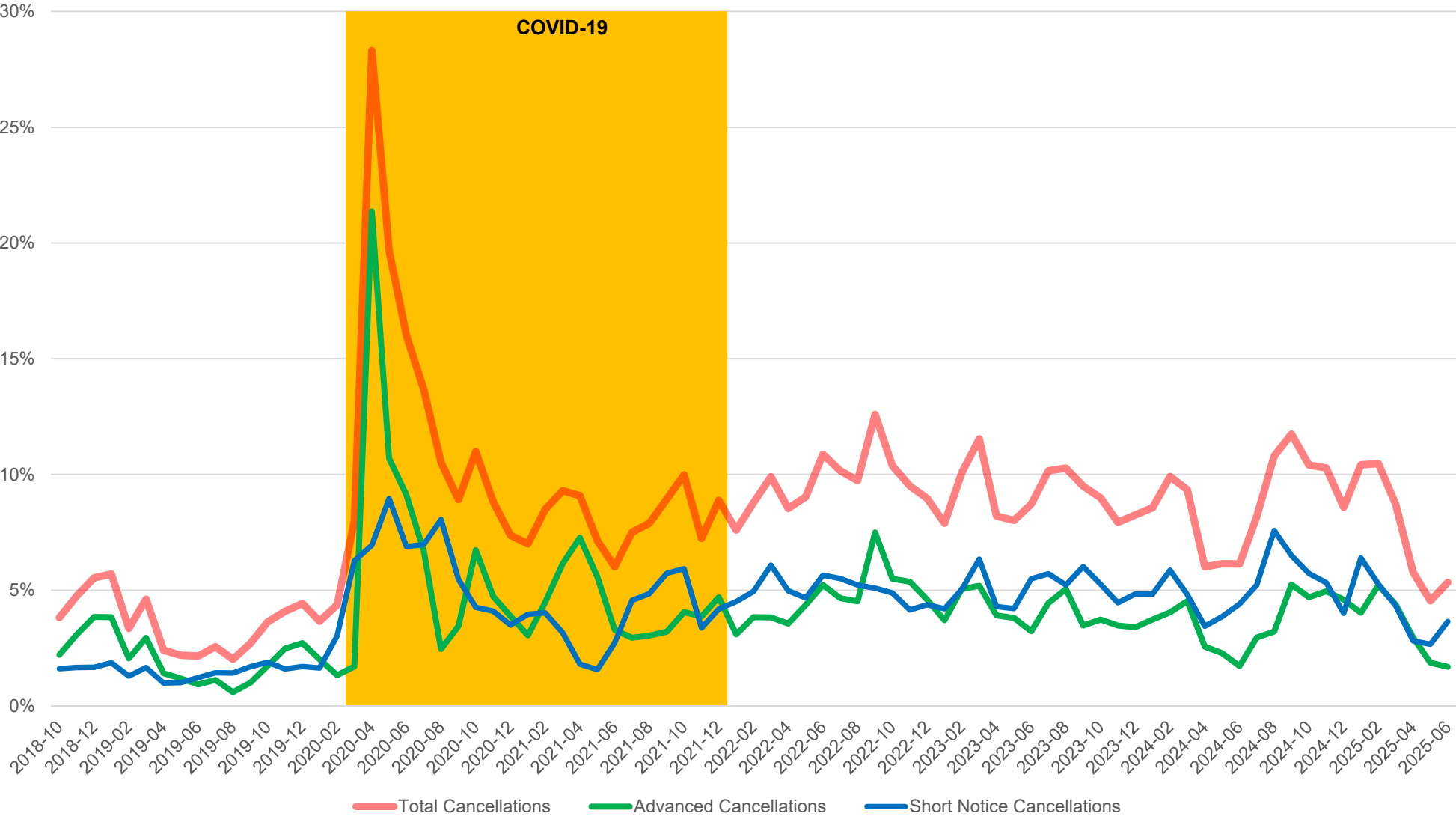
- The appointment fill rate represents the % of available donation appointments that are booked by donors.
- Since 2023, we have observed a trend of declining donor appointment fill rates, particularly in donor centres located in city centres.
- Large campaign activity and national media coverage has helped temporarily boost bookings, but these interventions have not led to sustained improvement.

We are making positive progress on workforce challenges, leading to recent reductions in NHSBT-led cancellations



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NHSBT Cancellations: **October 2018 - June 2025**



Key Insights:

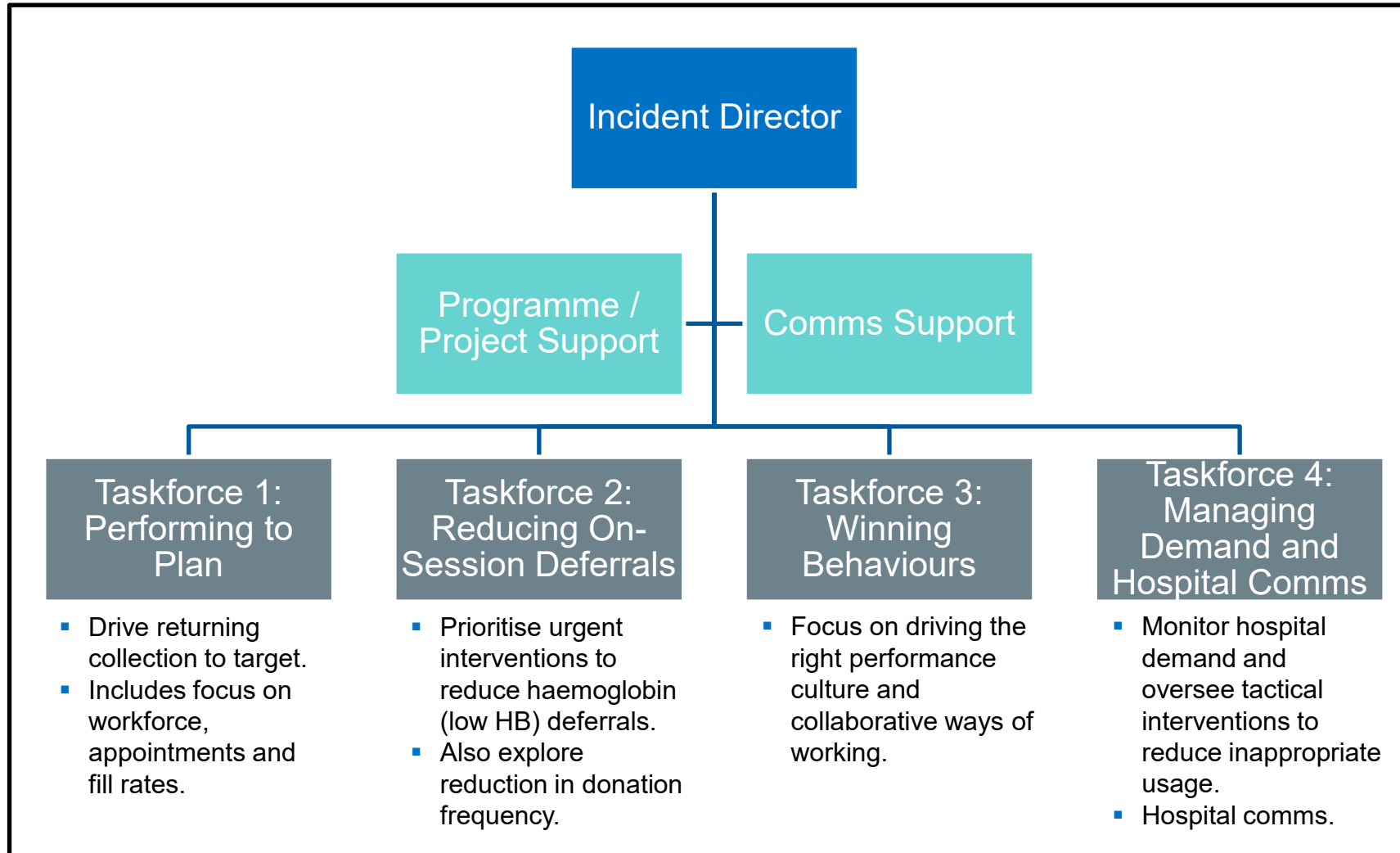
- NHSBT-led donor cancellations have reduced since January 2025, with typically 2-3% of appointments being cancelled on the day.
- Appointment cancellation is one of the top categories for donor complaints.
- More work is underway to reduce further.

In the short-term, we have mobilised an incident response team tasked with managing Summer blood stocks



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Incident Response Team Structure



Key Insights:

- Based on initial analysis of the challenges contributing to low stocks, four taskforce groups are being established to manage stock recovery, reporting to the Incident Director.
- The objective of this taskforce is to avoid red alert and improve stocks over the Summer period and beyond to provide winter resilience.

Performing to plan

Objective:

- Return collection performance, consistently, to target levels.

We are also running several large donor campaigns over the Summer, under the theme 'What's In Your Blood?'

	June	July	August	September
Campaign theme	Giving types, what's in your blood?			
Paid advertising	Video-on-Demand (VOD), Online Video (OLV), Linear radio, Digital audio, Community TV, Social, OOH - C4 Studios paid partnership will air in August and run through to March			
Theme of the month	Thank you - what's in your blood saves lives	The plasma in your blood helps make lifesaving medicines	Finding your perfect match is in your blood	Fighting sickle cell is in your blood
Key tactical activations	National Blood Week Southampton DC opening Ironheart	Additional Giving Type advertising content launches 7 July - AV, radio and social advertising Aimed at engage existing, lapsed and new donors in key geographies	First episode of Love is in Your Blood donation and dating partnership launches on Channel 4's digital channels	Laura Henry-Allain children's book launch for Sickle Cell Awareness Month Brighton DC opening
				



Key Insights:

- Taskforce activities are unlikely to close the gap consistently. Particularly given that collection targets will need to be increased to support stock growth.
- Performance to plan will be reliant on other taskforces to develop initiatives to mitigate the system issues and increase the number of appointments that convert into donations.

Key activities:

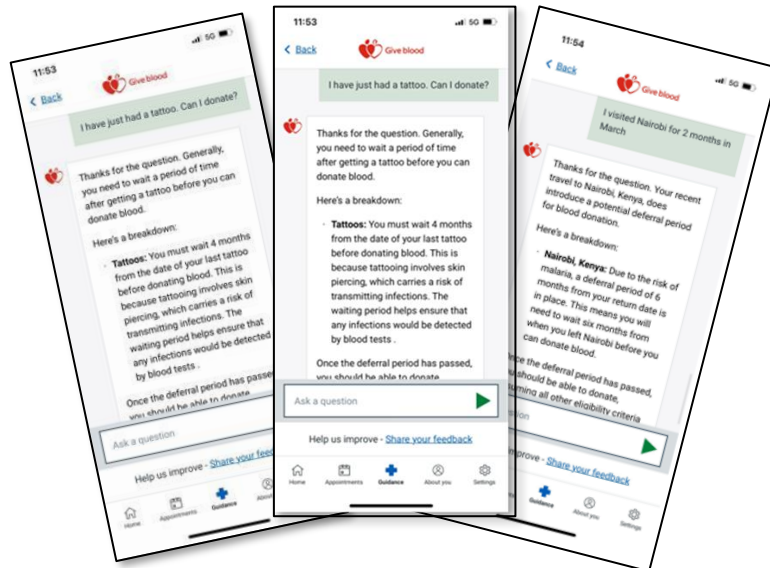
- Revise collection plan, to increase blood stocks through the summer and autumn to support winter resilience.
- Maximise appointment availability within the mobile collection programme.
- Enhance marketing activities to improve appointment fill rates and conversion, whilst maximising opportunities for donor base growth.
- Enhance and evolve performance reporting, with clear lines of responsibility for KPIs.
- Oversee collection to plan through monitoring, deploying interventions as required.
- Interface with wider Blood programmes to support delivery and benefits realisation.

Reducing deferrals

Objective:

- Safely reduce on-session deferrals to deliver a significant boost to collection.

Updated	Notes	Dependencies	PLAN START	PLAN DURATION	ACTUAL START	FORECAST DURATION	PERCENT COMPLETE	09 Jun 25	16 Jun 25	23 Jun 25	30 Jun 25	07 Jul 25	14 Jul 25	21 Jul 25	28 Jul 25	04 Aug 25	11 Aug 25	18 Aug 25	25 Aug 25	01 Sep 25	08 Sep 25	15 Sep 25	22 Sep 25	29 Sep 25
Existing Study Teams Go Live - Capillary 1st	Bradford DC, Oxford DC and Cumbria Mobile		1	1	1	1																		
Tranche 2 Teams Go Live - Capillary 1st/Venous hemocue 2nd	Brixton and Beckenham		2	1	2	1																		
Tranche 3 Teams Go Live - Copper Sulphate 1st/Venous hemocue 2nd	West Mids, Kent and Lancs		8	1																				
Tranche 4 Teams Go Live - Copper Sulphate 1st/Venous hemocue 2nd	NE&Cumbria, Central West, East Mids, Central South		8	1																				
Tranche 5 Teams Go Live - Copper Sulphate 1st/Venous hemocue 2nd	South West, South Anglia, Sussex & Surrey		9	1																				
Tranche 6 Teams Go Live - Copper Sulphate 1st/Venous hemocue 2nd	Sheffield South & Notts, North Anglia, South Mids,		11	1																				
Tranche 7 Teams Go Live - Copper Sulphate 1st/Venous hemocue 2nd	London, Cheshire Staff & Mersey, Solent, Yorks & Humber		13	1																				



Initial Focus to reduce on-session deferrals by assessing donor eligibility before attendance



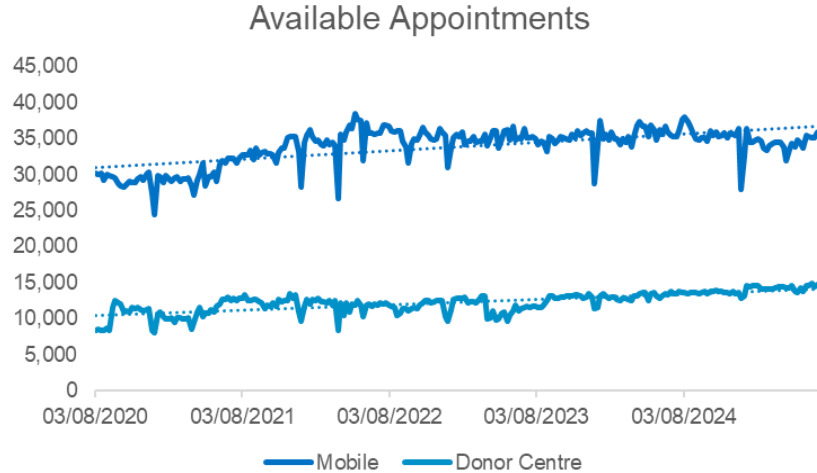
Off session eligibility and deferral and clinical safety

Key activities:

- Implement changes to the Hb screening process, moving to venous sampling as the secondary test.
- Develop plan to roll-out changes to Blood Donation teams by end of Summer '25.
- Strengthen business continuity by implementing donation interval reduction process (6-month contingency measure)
- Develop plans to reduce all other reasons for deferral (working alongside other NHSBT programmes as appropriate)

Appointment availability

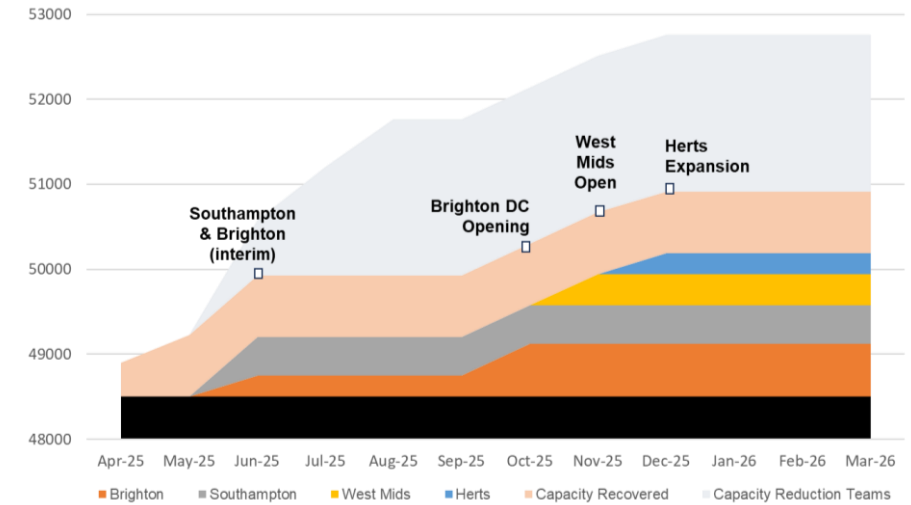
1. Appointment deployment



Key Insights:

- Total available appointments have risen in the past 5-years from c.40k per week to c.50k
- Post-pandemic, mobile appointments rose to a level of around 35k per week in 2021 and have remained roughly at that level.
- Donor Centre appointments have increased steadily in recent years with increased capacity at West End DC and new sites at Stratford, Twickenham and Brixton.

2. Appointment glidepath



Key Insights:

- We have a series of initiatives in place to increase appointment availability.
- Locations have been identified as a good fit to support wider organisational strategic targets.
- Further assessment is being completed to understand how we can increase collection opportunity in key areas to support donor base growth.

Beyond this, we are transforming the donation experience through investment in a flagship digitisation programme



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In the **Donor and Session Platform (DASP) Programme**, the ambition is to deliver:

- **A modern, accessible platform for booking and managing donation appointments**, increasing donor diversity and retention to enable more responsive, data-driven planning to better match blood and plasma collection with shifting demand.
- **Smarter scheduling** for clinically safe, more efficient sessions which will transform how we manage appointments and operationally deliver collection sessions to target.
- **Fully digitised end-to-end blood collection** that is staff- and donor-centred.
- **Real-time insight on frontline operations and donors** to improve quality, safety, and preparedness.

This will unlock several transformational benefits:

Patient Safety

Right product, right time, fewer shortages – safer care across NHS services as we are collecting to target.

Experience

Personalised donor experience and improved trust through transparency and communication with donors provides a resilient younger donor base.

Workforce Support

Easing the admin burden so staff can focus on compassionate, high-quality care, productivity and service resilience.

Health Equity

Improved engagement for underserved communities through digital inclusion and mobile-first booking, improving our ability to product match.

Data-Driven Improvement

Data to develop systemic evidence-based approaches for planning, clinical oversight and future service design.

Interventions to support donor base growth

An approach has been agreed to increase our donor base size through a blend of acquisition and retention activity that will span marketing, operational capacity and process improvements, with DX and Blood Supply working closely together to achieve the growth required. The Donor Base Resilience programme is in the early stages of mobilisation to deliver the growth required over the coming years with a £3m investment allocation from the B&G investment fund over FY25/26 – FY26/27.

Acquisition related – the “big bets” we will invest in to grow the “right” mix of donors. On top of our existing business-as-usual work for example, in the black heritage community to drive Ro donation and our paid media activities aimed at younger donors and overall growth

- **Paid, Owned and Earned Marketing** Using a focused place-based approach to recruit target audience in key locations where we have a strong media landscape, more appointment capacity and room for growth in our current donor base size and shape (type, age), mainly centred around DC's.
- **Blood Typing** We recognise the importance of typing as many people as possible to identify our O-neg, B-neg and Ro priority groups given their low prevalence in the population so will be seeking to do this through a number of routes; through partners and directly with our teams.

Operational related – working in collaboration with Blood Supply to provide the best conditions for and to enable donor base growth

- **Delivery of Future Proofing Blood** By Q3 of this year, additional capacity will have been created in Brighton, the West Midlands area and the Hertfordshire area. These locations have been identified as having opportunity to grow both the O-negative and Ro donor bases.
- **Reducing impact of reduction plans** Continuing the trajectory now established into the future.
- **On session Hb deferral processes** Mitigations for the recent increases.
- **New donor sessions** (*idea being investigated*) A model to provide additional opportunities for new donors.