

**NHS BLOOD & TRANSPLANT
ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION DIRECTORATE
PANCREAS ADVISORY GROUP**

TIER A OF THE NATIONAL PANCREAS OFFERING SCHEME

LAY SUMMARY

A new priority tier (Tier A) was introduced into the National Pancreas Offering Scheme in 2019. Tier A prioritises patients within the offering scheme if they are difficult to match with a donor, highly sensitised or have been waiting a long time for a transplant. It was highlighted that a greater number of blood group O and easy to match patients were waiting a long time in Tier A. This paper aims to quantify this issue that was raised.

The Tier A cohort increased to 9% of the pancreas and islet waiting list in 2026, compared to 3% in 2021. In 2026, most of the patients in Tier A were of blood type O and defined as easy to match. Most of these patients in Tier A had received at least one offer. However, 10 (29%) of wait-listed patients in Tier A had not received any offers, despite being defined as easy to match.

INTRODUCTION

- 1 The National Pancreas Offering Scheme (NPOS) was revised on 11 September 2019, at which point a new Tier A group was introduced. Tier A includes those wait-listed patients who are 100% sensitised (calculated reaction frequency 100%), difficult to achieve a level 1 or 2 mis-match (matchability score of 10) or long waiters (waiting more than three years for a pancreas or islet transplant). Patients in Tier A are ranked in matching runs by descending matchability score and then waiting time. This is similar to Tier A of the National Kidney Offering Scheme (NKOS). Patients with a kidney waiting time of 7 years or more, matchability score of 10 or 100% sensitised will be included in Tier A of NKOS.
- 2 It was recently raised by members of PAG that an increasing number of blood group O patients and those with low matchability scores were entering Tier A and waiting a long time for a transplant. The aim of this paper is to provide a summary of NPOS Tier A, to further understand the issues raised.

DATA AND METHODS

- 3 The pancreas and islet transplant waiting list data at 31st March each year between 2021 and 2026 were analysed. Data on all named-patient offers made to Tier A patients from the start of their current registration up until 31 March 2026 were also analysed. The paper summarises the number of patients in Tier A since 2021, and the characteristics of Tier A patients as at 31 March 2026.

RESULTS

- 4 **Table 1** shows the number and percentage of patients on the pancreas and islet waiting list, by tier and scheme, on 31st March annually from 2021 to 2026. In 2021, 6 (3%) of patients on the waiting list were in Tier A of NPOS, this increased to 34 (9%) in 2026.

Table 1 Patients on the waiting list, by tier, as at 31 March 2021 to 2026 – n (%)						
Tier	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
NKOS Tier A	7 (4)	11 (4)	7 (2)	14 (4)	6 (2)	10 (3)
NPOS Tier A	6 (3)	4 (1)	7 (2)	12 (4)	26 (7)	34 (9)
NPOS Tiers B & C	159 (92)	263 (95)	276 (95)	308 (92)	338 (91)	335 (88)
Total	172 (100)	278 (100)	290 (100)	334 (100)	370 (100)	379 (100)

NKOS: National Kidney Offering Scheme, NPOS: National Pancreas Offering Scheme

- 5 **Table 2** presents the characteristics of Tier A patients on 31st March 2026. This shows the criteria which patients have met to enter Tier A of the NPOS and other factors of interest, e.g., the patient's blood type, transplant type, waiting time. **Appendix Table 1** presents this data with a breakdown by whether the patient was also waiting for a kidney.
- 6 This shows that of the 34 patients in Tier A of NPOS in March 2026, the majority of them were in this tier due to waiting time (n=31, 91%) rather than sensitisation or matchability score. 29 (85%) of patients were blood type O. Most of the patients had low sensitisation and matchability scores and were not listed with restrictive HLA mismatch grades.

Table 2 Characteristics of NPOS Tier A patients, as at 31 March 2026 – N (%)	
	N (%)
Total in NPOS Tier A	34 (100)
Tier A criteria met	
cRF or matchability score	3 (9)
Waiting time	31 (91)
Waiting time	
Less than 3 years	2 (6)
3 – 4 years	17 (50)
4 – 5 years	8 (24)
5 or more years	7 (21)
Transplant type	
Pancreas alone	3 (9)
SPK	25 (74)
Islet alone	2 (6)
SIK	4 (12)

Blood type	
O	29 (85)
A	2 (6)
B	3 (9)
AB	0 (0)
Sensitisation (cRF%)	
0 - 30	21 (62)
31 - 74	6 (18)
75 - 99	6 (18)
100	1 (3)
Matchability score	
1 to 3	25 (74)
4 to 7	2 (6)
8 to 9	4 (12)
10	3 (9)
Age group	
Less than 40 years	14 (41)
40 – 49 years	15 (44)
50 – 59 years	5 (15)
60 years or older	0 (0)
HLA mismatch at listing	
2**=2	1 (3)
222	33 (97)

- 7 **Figure 1** shows the distribution of the number of offers received by patients in Tier A of the NPOS. The number of offers ranged between 0 and 34 offers.
- 8 **Table 3** then shows the characteristics of patients in Tier A of the NPOS by the number of offers received as at 31 March 2026. This includes all named patient offers received for the current active registration. The number of offers were grouped as zero, 1-4, and 5+ offers.
- 9 14 (41%) of patients in Tier A NPOS received at least five offers in their current registration. There were 10 patients who had not received any offers, even though they were easy to match and not highly sensitised.
- 10 Within Tier A, patients are prioritised according to descending matchability score and then waiting time. Therefore, some Tier A patients with a low matchability score may not have received many offers whilst in Tier A. **Table 4** summarises the number of offers received whilst in Tier A, stratified by matchability score. Of the 17 Tier A patients with a matchability score of 1, 7 (41%) had received an offer whilst in Tier A. However, patients will have been in Tier A for varying lengths of time, with some only recently having entered Tier A.

Figure 1 Patients in Tier A of NPOS by the number of offers received, at 31 March 2026

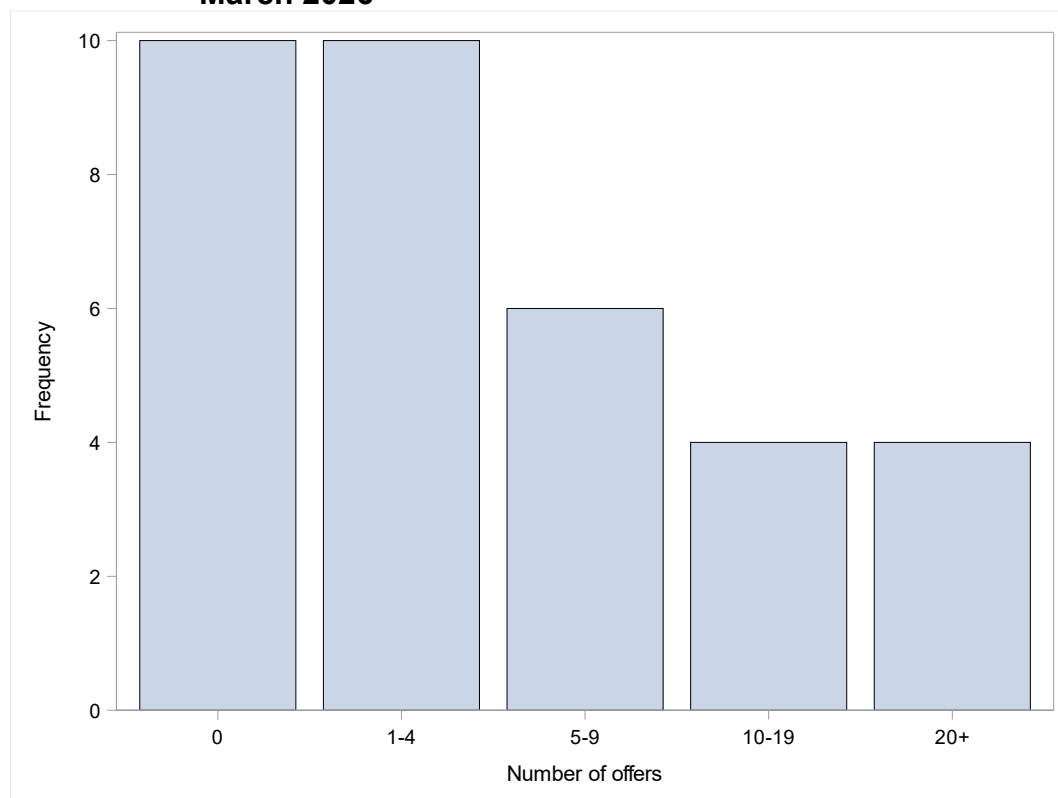


Table 3 Patients in NPOS Tier A by number of offers, as at 31 March 2026 – n (%)

	No offers	1-4 offers	5+ offers
Total in NPOS Tier A	10 (100)	10 (100)	14 (100)
Waiting time			
Less than 4 years	7 (70)	8 (80)	4 (29)
4 or more years	3 (30)	2 (20)	10 (71)
Matchability score			
1	9 (90)	1 (10)	7 (50)
2 to 3	1 (10)	3 (30)	4 (29)
4 to 7	0 (0)	2 (20)	0 (0)
8 to 10	0 (0)	4 (40)	3 (21)
Sensitisation			
0 - 74	10 (100)	6 (60)	11 (79)
75 - 99	0 (0)	3 (30)	3 (21)
100	0 (0)	1 (10)	0 (0)
Blood group			
O	10 (100)	8 (80)	11 (79)
A, B or AB	0 (0)	2 (20)	3 (21)

Table 4 Patients in NPOS Tier A by number of offers received whilst in Tier A, as at 31 March 2026 – n (%)			
	No offers	1-4 offers	5+ offers
Total in NPOS Tier A	13 (100)	11 (100)	10 (100)
Matchability score			
1	10 (77)	2 (18)	5 (50)
2 to 3	2 (15)	2 (18)	4 (40)
4 to 7	1 (8)	1 (9)	0 (0)
8 to 10	0 (0)	6 (55)	1 (10)

SUMMARY

- 11 The NPOS Tier A cohort has increased to 9% of the whole list in 2026, compared to 3% in 2021. In 2026, 91% of the patients in Tier A were in this tier due to their long waiting time, not because of high sensitisation or matchability score. In 2026, 85% of Tier A were blood group O patients and 74% were easy to match. 71% of patients currently in Tier A had received at least one offer, with some patients having received many offers. However, 10 (29%) of patients had not received any offers even though they were not highly sensitised or difficult to match.
- 12 Due to the way in which patients within Tier A are prioritised, we might have hypothesised that some Tier A patients with a low matchability score may wait a long time for an offer. Of the 17 Tier A patients with a matchability score of 1, 7 (41%) had received an offer whilst in Tier A.
- 13 The high proportion of blood group O patients in Tier A may be due to elements of the NPOS and NKOS, which allow blood group O donors to match with patients of other blood types. See Appendix Tables 2 and 3 for more information about the policies, and PAG(26)18 for data on transplants by donor and recipient blood group.

ACTIONS

- 14 PAG members are asked to consider this information and discuss whether any amendments to the NPOS Tier A criteria or prioritisation are required.

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Statistics and Clinical Studies

April 2026

APPENDIX

Appendix Table 1 Characteristics of NPOS Tier A patients by organ type, as at 31 March 2026 – N (%)			
	Pancreas or islets N (%)	SPK or SIK N (%)	Total N (%)
Total in NPOS Tier A	5 (100)	29 (100)	34 (100)
Tier criteria met			
cRF or matchability score	3 (60)	0 (0)	3 (9)
Waiting time	2 (40)	29 (100)	31 (91)
Waiting time			
Less than 3 years	2 (40)	0 (0)	2 (6)
3 – 4 years	0 (0)	17 (59)	17 (50)
4 – 5 years	1 (20)	7 (24)	8 (24)
5 or more years	2 (40)	5 (17)	7 (21)
Transplant type			
Pancreas	3 (60)	0 (0)	3 (9)
SPK	0 (0)	25 (86)	25 (74)
Islets	2 (40)	0 (0)	2 (6)
SIK	0 (0)	4 (14)	4 (12)
Blood type			
O	2 (40)	27 (93)	29 (85)
A	0 (0)	2 (7)	2 (6)
B	3 (60)	0 (0)	3 (9)
AB	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Sensitisation (cRF%)			
0 - 30	0 (0)	21 (72)	21 (62)
31 - 74	0 (0)	6 (21)	6 (18)
75 - 99	4 (80)	2 (7)	6 (18)
100	1 (20)	0 (0)	1 (3)
Matchability score			
1 to 3	1 (20)	24 (83)	25 (74)
4 to 7	0 (0)	2 (7)	2 (6)
8 to 9	1 (20)	3 (10)	4 (12)
10	3 (60)	0 (0)	3 (9)
Age group			
Less than 40 years	1 (20)	13 (45)	14 (41)
40 – 49 years	4 (80)	11 (38)	15 (44)
50 – 59 years	0 (0)	5 (17)	5 (15)
60 years or older			
HLA mismatch at listing			
2**=2	0 (0)	1 (3)	1 (3)
222	5 (100)	28 (97)	33 (97)

The following tables and text have been taken from the policies for NKOS and NPOS, to show the blood group eligibility criteria set in the policies.

Appendix 2 Information from the National Kidney Offering Scheme policy on blood type eligibility

Patients with blood groups incompatible with the donor's blood group (as defined in Table A) are not eligible to receive that donor's organs. There are restrictions on blood group-compatible (but not blood group identical) patients, detailed in Table A.

Table A Donor – recipient blood group matching policy				
Donor	Recipient			
	O	A	B	AB
O	✓	✓*	✓	✓*
A		✓		✓
B			✓	
AB				✓
* Tier A only				

NHSBT policy for Kidney Transplantation: Deceased Donor Organ Allocation, POL186,
<https://nhsbtdbe.blob.core.windows.net/umbraco-assets-corp/35789/pol186.pdf>

Appendix 3 Information from the National Pancreas Offering Scheme policy on blood type eligibility

Donor blood Group	Potential recipient blood group			
	O	A	B	AB
O	✓	✓**	✓*	✓**
A		✓		✓
B			✓	✓**
AB				✓
* Patients with a calculated reaction frequency of 75% or more only				
** Patients with a calculated reaction frequency of 90% or more only				

NHSBT policy for Pancreas Transplantation: Organ Allocation, POL199,
<https://nhsbtdbe.blob.core.windows.net/umbraco-assets-corp/36528/pol199-pancreas-transplantation-organ-allocation.pdf>