

IBTS makes urgent appeal for blood donors to meet high hospital demand.

The Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) are today (Tuesday) urgently seeking an additional 2,000 blood donations over the next 4 weeks to support the national blood supply as most blood groups have fallen to under 3 days of stock. "The IBTS aims to have 7 days supply, but current levels including O negative, A negative and B negative are under 3 days supply and O positive (at nearly half the population) is very low at 3.5 days," said Paul McKinney, Director of Donor Services and Logistics.

"There has been a consistently high hospital demand for blood over the summer months and in August we issued the highest amount of blood units to hospitals in over a decade. This high demand has continued through September and with a Bank Holiday fast approaching we need to boost our collections by nearly 500 donations per week in all blood groups to be able to continue to meet the demand. High sickness levels, holiday travel combined with the traditional back to school demands, have all had an impact on donor availability throughout the Summer and now into Autumn.

" We are asking regular donors who are texted for upcoming clinics over the coming weeks to make an extra effort to attend, especially in Dublin and Cork where we have clinic availability every week. This is vital to address the increased demand from hospitals.

"Potential new donors should visit giveblood.ie and take our quick eligibility test and call us on 1800 731137 to make an appointment. We would particularly encourage new donors of African Heritage to join the National blood donor panel to help us diversify the donor base and get better blood type matches for patients.

"A pre-amber alert letter was issued to all hospitals on the 27th of September, restricting issues of certain blood groups and hospitals have been asked to reduce their stock holding. This enables the IBTS to manage the limited blood supply available more effectively across the health service. If the IBTS has to issue an 'amber alert letter' which is the next escalation level of the blood shortage plan, it would have an immediate implication for hospitals and for elective surgical procedures requiring blood support" he added.

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For further information contact Mirinda O'Donovan on 1800 731 137

Notes to editor

- Only 3% of the eligible population are blood donors but it is estimated 1 in 4 people will need a blood transfusion at some point in their lives

- Approximately 8% of these donors are O negative. However, as this blood can be transfused to patients of all groups, issues of this blood group to hospitals are frequently greater than 15% thus requiring more frequent calls on donors of this group.

- The IBTS needs to collect over 3,000 units of blood every week to maintain the national blood supply