**IBTS makes urgent appeal for blood donors**

The IBTS are today (Monday 1st July ) seeking an additional 2,000 blood donations over the next 4 weeks  to help the national blood supply as some blood groups have fallen to under  3 days of stock. “The IBTS aims to have 7 days supply, but current levels including O negative and B negative are at just 2 days supply, and O positive which relates to nearly half the total population is at just over 3 days”, said Paul McKinney, Director of Donor Services and Logistics.

”There has been a consistently high hospital demand for blood since the June bank holiday weekend and we need to boost our collections by nearly 500 donations per week in the above  blood groups to meet that demand. The start of summer holiday travel and high sickness levels in the community has also had an impact on donor availability.

’”We are asking regular donors who are texted over the next few weeks to make an extra effort to attend their nearest clinic, especially in Dublin and Cork where we have clinic availability every week. This is vital to address the current increased demand from hospitals. For the longer term, we would also urge donors to consider giving blood if they are eligible before they go on holidays this summer.

“In addition, new  donor attendances  have not recovered fully since pre Covid and anybody interested in giving blood should visit https://www.giveblood.ie/become-a-donor/ to check their eligibility before coming to a clinic 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 25th of June, restricting issues of O negative blood 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.

 ENDS

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