**IBTS imports blood from the NHSBT for a second time**

The IBTS announced today (Tuesday) that it is importing a consignment of blood from the NHSBT to address a current shortage in the blood supply. 210 units of Rh Negative blood groups, O negative, A negative and B negative and 200 units of A positive are being collected in Manchester today. This is the second time this year IBTS has imported blood from NHSBT. The IBTS does occasionally import a small number of rare blood units.

“The IBTS is again activating our contingency arrangement with the NHSBT in England to supplement blood stocks and avoid raising an alert under the Irish national blood shortage plan, which could have a serious impact on patient care,” said Medical & Scientific Director, Professor Stephen Field.

In addition to importing blood from the NHSBT, the IBTS is asking for public support to maintain the blood supply over the winter months. “Since moving to an appointment based system at the start of the pandemic donors have been incredible in their support. However, it has been increasingly difficult to keep the blood supply at the level we need to see us through Christmas and New Year. Storm Barra resulted in a number of clinics being cancelled and that cost us approximately 300 donations.

“In recent weeks appointment cancellations and the high level of COVID-19 circulating in the community has made it difficult to fill all of our donation appointments. This means that for the last number of weeks we have been issuing more blood to hospitals than we have been able to collect. This trend is being encountered by most blood services internationally.

“Stocks of the main Rh negative blood groups are under particular pressure, especially O negative which is considered the universal blood group and is always in demand.

“It has been a very tough couple of years for everyone but as hospital demand remains strong right up to Christmas, the demand for blood is as great as ever and we are urging donors to make an appointment to give blood. If you receive a text message from us, please respond to the number provided to make an appointment,” he added.

The IBTS continues to adhere to public health guidelines to ensure the safety of its donors. To donate please go to [www.giveblood.ie](http://www.giveblood.ie) for the latest information on COVID-19 measures and how to give blood safely through the appointment system. For first time donors please complete the eligibility quiz and register your interest to donate online and we will contact you when we have a clinic in your area.

**ENDS**

**Note to editor**

Only 3% of the population are blood donors and approximately 9% of these are O negative. However, as this blood can be transfused to patients of all groups, issues of this blood group to hospitals frequently hits 15% thus requiring more frequent calls on donors of this group. The IBTS needs to collect 3,000 units of blood every week to maintain the national blood supply.