**Thursday 1st December 2022**

**IBTS imports blood from the NHSBT to supplement stocks**

The IBTS announced today (Thursday) that it is importing a consignment of blood from the NHSBT to address a current shortage in the blood supply. In all, 390 units of O Negative, A Negative and B Negative red cell concentrates were imported early this morning. The IBTS does occasionally import a small number of rare blood units.

“The IBTS is again activating our contingency arrangement with the NHSBT to supplement blood stocks of the RhD Negative groups,” said Barry Doyle, Director of Production and Hospital Services.

“Maintaining RhD Negative blood groups has become difficult and with just 2 days of O negative blood in the bank, we have activated our contingency to address the immediate shortfall in supply of these blood groups. RhD Negative donors are a small proportion of the donor population, however the patient demand for RhD Negative blood is significantly higher. Support from our RhD Negative donors has been superb but in recent weeks, an increased amount of illness circulating in the community has contributed to a high incidence of appointment ‘no shows’ and cancellations. Also, over the last number of weeks we have been issuing more RhD negative blood to hospitals than we have been able to collect so the IBTS has made the decision to import from the UK to ensure continuity of supply for those groups of patients who need that blood support.

“In addition, the IBTS is asking for public support over the coming weeks to maintain the blood supply over Christmas and New Year. Blood lasts just 35 days, so to ensure continuity of supply over the festive period, we need donors to attend donation clinics right up to Christmas and into the New Year. If you receive a text message from us, please respond to the number provided, make an appointment and once you have made that appointment please keep it if you can,” he added.

The IBTS continues to adhere to public health guidelines to ensure the safety of its donors.

**An NHSBT spokesperson said:** “Blood stocks of O, A and B negative in England are currently within our target of six days and are expected to remain at these healthy and robust levels over the coming weeks. For this reason we are in a position to help the Irish Blood Transfusion Service with its current stocks challenges and have provided the 390 units requested this week – this represents a tiny proportion of our stock holdings, around 0.1 days.”

For further information on donation please go to [www.giveblood.ie](http://www.giveblood.ie).

**ENDS**

**Note to editor**

Only 3% of the population are blood donors and 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 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.