**Monday 27th June 2022**

**Irish Blood Transfusion Service makes urgent national appeal for blood donations**

* **Additional 5,000 donations needed over next 8 weeks**

In an effort to increase blood supplies the IBTS will run walk-in clinics for this week only. This means that all donation clinics throughout the country will accept walk-in donors including our clinics at Stillorgan in Dublin and St. Finbarr’s in Cork which will operate on a dual basis of appointment and walk-in donors. Our hope is that the extra flexibility of walk-in clinics will enable more donors to attend. Our target is to get an additional 5,000 donations over the next 8 weeks so we can significantly increase our blood supply levels.

”Since the start of June, we have issued more blood than we have collected as hospital demand has remained strong. The decline in units collected is most likely due to more donors travelling and COVID-19 levels increasing across the country again,” said IBTS Operations Director Paul McKinney.

”We are asking regular donors who are texted this week to please attend their nearest walk-in clinic and new donors should register their interest on giveblood.ie, so the IBTS can contact them about attending a future clinic, when we are next at a location near them. For scheduled clinics after this week we are urging donors to book an appointment as usual and in particular to consider giving blood if they are eligible before they go on holidays.

“We appreciate it may take longer than normal to donate at walk-in clinics during this critical appeal. We sincerely apologise for that and would ask donors to bear with us. We feel this is a necessary step to take so we can bolster the supply.

“A ‘pre-amber alert letter’ was issued to all hospitals on 20th June, restricting issues to emergency orders and patient specific requests only for the O positive, O negative, A positive, A negative and B negative groups. In addition, hospitals have been asked to reduce their stock holding of red cells to a maximum of 3 days.

“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. Blood shortages are not unique to Ireland and many blood services in other countries are also experiencing difficulties at the moment. We are extremely grateful to our donors who have supported us throughout the pandemic and we ask that they please continue to do so.

“It is expected that we will revert to blood donation appointments the following week commencing the 4th of July’. Mask wearing is still mandatory for staff and donors on our clinics, to ensure a safe environment for blood donation,” he added.

**ENDS**

**Mobile blood donation clinics this week are as follows:**

**Mon 27th June**: Clara Co Offaly, Cooley, Co Louth, Kilkenny, Roscommon, Tralee, Co Kerry, Kilmallock, Co Limerick

**Tues 28th June**: Birr Co Offaly, Dunleer Co Louth, Kilkenny, Roscommon, Tralee, Co Kerry, Kilmallock Co Limerick

**Wed 29th June**: Birr, Co Offaly, Virginia, Co Cavan, Kilkenny, Roscommon, Tralee, Co Kerry, Kilmallock, Co Limerick

**Thurs 30th June**: Birr, Co Offaly, Virginia, Co Cavan, Kilkenny, Roscommon, Tralee, Co Kerry. Pallasgreen, Co Limerick

**Sun 3rd July**: Mount Bellew, Co Galway

For further information on the clinic opening times and venues, check www.giveblood.ie