

**Wednesday 12 October 2022**

Dear Sickle Cell Society Members and the wider Sickle Cell Community

**Re. BLOOD SHORTAGES in ENGLAND**

We understand how frightening the recent news from NHS Blood and Transplant regarding blood shortages in England will be for you and your family. **However, we want to reassure those of you receiving regular blood transfusions, and those who only need blood transfusions occasionally, that these will not be stopped in any way.**

Sickle cell anaemia, along with other red cell dependent conditions such as transfusion dependent thalassaemia, diamond blackfan’s anaemia, and others, are categorised as “priority”, meaning individuals living with these conditions that require life-saving blood products will continue to receive them as prescribed.

It is important to note that what may change if blood stocks continue to deplete is the date of the red cells you may be given. In most cases, individuals living with red cell conditions are prioritised to receive cells donated within 10 days, however, if stocks are low or must be outsourced from other regions of the country, you could receive cells that are older. This is entirely safe and does not affect quality of blood itself.

NHS Blood and Transplant have assured us that they are doing everything in their power to resolve the challenges with blood stocks as soon as possible. The Sickle Cell Society will continue to update you as we receive new information.

**How can you help?**

Please do ensure you attend your blood transfusion appointments. Also, please be aware that fresh blood may not always be available, especially if you have several antibodies, in these cases, hospitals may need to give you older units to treat you safely.

If you have any concerns, please talk to your specialist team, or contact the Sickle Cell Society for questions related to sickle cell disorders.

Please be assured that we are here to support you throughout this challenging time.

**John James OBE**

Chief Executive

Sickle Cell Society

**Sickle Cell Society Helpline**

Email helpline@sicklecellsociety.org or call us on 020 8963 7794 (Monday-Friday excluding bank holidays, 10am-5pm.)