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news release

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Scots Urged to Make a Life Saving New Year Resolution as Blood Donors Save Miracle Baby

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Photocall: Tuesday 29 December 2009, 10am, Blood Donor Centre, 8 Nelson
Mandela Place, GLASGOW.

*Glasgow baby 4 month old Charlie Carr, who was born in August
with a 3lb tumour, available with his parents for photo and interview*

BODY TEXT:

The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) is asking donors to come forward to help replenish our supplies and ensure that we will have enough blood to support patients in Scotland over the busy Hogmanay and New Year period. Recent Arctic weather has adversely affected the blood supply, with many donors unable to come forward and donate. Furthermore, several sessions had to be cancelled entirely due to snow in parts of Scotland, which made travel impossible. It is essential that we now rebuild our supplies for the New Year.

Demand for blood has been high recently, especially for blood platelets, which help prevent bleeding. Many patients, including those receiving treatment for cancer and leukaemia, received 'transfusion top-ups' to allow them to leave hospital and spend Christmas with their families at home. The blood supply must also support winter illnesses, accidents and many other patients over the coming months.

Dr Moira Carter, National Donor Services Manager said "We are asking donors to come forward to help rebuild our supplies over the next few days. This will ensure we have enough blood to support Scotland's patients over the busy Hogmanay period and allow NHSScotland to get up and running early in 2010. During 2010 we need 55,000 new donors to make a resolution to come forward and give blood. Blood has a short shelf life and cannot be stockpiled. Some components only last 5 days so we need to constantly restock our supplies. We ask regular donors to give blood at least once in 2010 to make sure we always have enough blood for patients in Scotland.'

"SNBTS are also very proud to celebrate their 70th birthday in 2010. This is a wonderful opportunity for Scotland to thank the blood donors who have consistently supported Scotland's patients on a voluntary basis for seven decades by giving blood. Medical advances mean that giving the gift of life is more important than ever – there is no substitute for blood."

Delighted parents John and JulieAnn Carr, from Glasgow, would like to thank blood donors for helping provide emergency treatment for their son – 4 month old Charlie. Mum JulieAnn says, "Charlie was



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE



National Director Keith Thompson

born on 8 August 2009 with a 3lb tumour on the base of his spine and in his tummy. He immediately needed a nine hour operation to correct this, and was in hospital for four weeks. When he was born, he weighed 8lb 8oz. Unbelievably, after the operation to remove the tumour he weighed only 5lb. Charlie received lots of blood, plasma and platelets to help him recover. He is now a thriving beautiful baby. I'd like to express our heartfelt thanks to all the blood donors in Scotland, and particularly O negative blood donors, as this is Charlie's blood group."

Help us show patients in Scotland they are not fighting alone. To register as a blood donor or to find out where your nearest donation session is, call 0845 90 90 999, text 'blood' to 61611, or visit www.scotblood.co.uk.

Notes to Editors:

- SNBTS needs everyone in Scotland, from aged 17 upwards, to come forward and give blood at least once in 2010.
- Platelets help blood clot and prevent bleeding. Platelets are essential for treating cancer and leukaemia patients. Many babies also require platelets.
- 180,000 donors have given blood in the past 12 months.
- An active donor must give blood at least once per year.
- SNBTS are proud to celebrate their 70th birthday in 2010. A series of events are planned throughout the year, the highlight of which will be a high profile educational conference in June at the University of Stirling – Scotblood 2010.
- O negative is the universal blood group that can be safely transfused to all patients. Only 9% of donors have this precious blood group, yet 100% of us may need it. Without O negative, A&E wards could not operate. If you are O negative, it is important to give blood three times per year. If you don't know your blood group, come along to give blood and we'll tell you it.
- Everyone at SNBTS would like to thank all blood donors of the past 70 years. The need for blood remains great, as more patients than ever are benefiting from medical advances in blood transfusions.
- Each blood donation is split into three separate parts: red cells, platelets and plasma. Platelets have shelf life of only 5 days, and supplies must be constantly replenished.
- Over 400 premature babies are born every month in Scotland. Many of these babies simply could not survive without blood and platelets. Just three teaspoons can save the life of a premature baby.
- SNBTS are monitoring the Swine Flu situation very closely. Swine Flu has not yet created a reduction in donors coming forward to give blood. If this situation changes, donors and the media will be informed immediately.
- Major advances have been made in patient care, which rely on blood donors. One of these is Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO), most commonly used to treat a variety of conditions including the respiratory system. The SCMO machine takes the blue blood (without oxygen) out of the right side of the heart and pumps it through the artificial lung (oxygenator). The blood is now red blood (with oxygen). ECMO is often used as a means of support either before or after heart surgery when the heart is too weak to work properly.
- SNBTS collect blood every day of the year in Scotland except Christmas Day and New Years Day. To find out where you can donate, visit www.scotblood.co.uk
- Call **0845 90 90 999**, text **blood** to **61611** or visit www.scotblood.co.uk to register
- **ENDS.**