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news release

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Global campaign urges Scots to be blood group aware

Scotland unites to highlight the importance of blood groups, as new research reveals only 38% of Scots know their type

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Media Invite: 11am Monday 15 August 2016 (embargo 00.01am Tuesday 16 August)
Glasgow Donor Centre, 8 Nelson Mandela Place, Glasgow G2 1BT
14 year old Bobbi, who survived thanks to blood donors and stars in global new Missing Types video, available for interview

BODY TEXT:

Over 30 companies in Scotland are supporting a global awareness campaign today to highlight the importance of giving blood and knowing your blood group. This comes as new research undertaken by the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) shows only 38% of people in Scotland claim to know their blood type. This rises to 61% among those who have given blood.

Today is the start of Missing Type, a global campaign, joined by 23 blood services around the world. Designed to highlight the importance of the four main blood groups A,B,O and AB, more than 30 companies and organisations across Scotland will be removing As, Bs and Os from their social media posts and signage to highlight their importance.

Dr Moira Carter, Associate Director of Donor Services, SNBTS says: "Missing Type is a global campaign designed to highlight the need for new blood donors and promote awareness of your blood group. In total there are eight different blood groups of which SNBTS aims to maintain a 6 to 8 day supply at all times. We are asking the people of Scotland to register as blood donors, donate and support us by being blood group aware."

The new research surprisingly revealed that many current donors are uncertain on their own blood type. Additionally, both donors and the wider public are unclear about how to find out what type they are. SNBTS believe that it is increasingly important that both existing and new blood donors know their blood group as not every donor can help every patient. We value all of Scotland's blood donors, but sometimes we may need particular blood types more than others. By knowing your type, you may be able to help at a time when patients in Scotland need you most.



National Director Mary Morgan

Blood stock levels can change from day to day, for example, in recent weeks we have asked donors with the blood groups O negative and O positive to make an extra special effort to donate while we have more than adequate supplies of other types.

We have recently updated our website so you can clearly see what blood types we need on any given day. If you look on the SNBTS website, www.scotblood.co.uk, and your blood bag volume is low we need you to act now by answering our invitation to donate.

Further analysis of the research reveals that the number of new blood donors in Scotland has declined by 30% in the last five years. Additionally, the statistics also demonstrate that while 96% of new donors are under the age of 55 years, we increasingly rely on donors over 55 to make sure that there is always enough blood for patients. This tells us that, unfortunately, younger donors are not continuing to donate nor making a life-long commitment to saving lives.

Dr Carter continued, saying: “We are grateful for the support of all blood donors and recognise that life is very busy and it can be challenging to fit in giving blood. However by knowing your blood group, you can make the best use of your valuable time and make an even bigger difference to a patient when they need you most.”

Highlighting the importance of knowing your blood group is Bobbi McBurnie, 14, who received blood transfusions for the first 2 years of her life after she was born weighing less than 2lbs. Bobbi has taken part in a global film, created by Microsoft, to highlight the Missing Type campaign.

Bobbie says: “I have always known I was born very prematurely, and my mum has told me I was lucky to survive. Now I am 14, I understand that without blood donors I wouldn't be here. I'm proud to represent Scotland in the video, and hope it makes lots of people think about becoming a blood donor.”

To register as a blood donor call 0345 90 90 999 or visit www.scotblood.co.uk.

Follow SNBTS on social media at www.facebook.com/givebloodforscotland and Twitter @givebloodscot using the hashtag #MissingType.

Notes to Editors:

- Once you have donated for the first time, we will tell you your blood type.
- SNBTS update the blood stocks daily on www.scotblood.co.uk and the site has had more than a quarter of a million visits in the last year.
- Blood cannot be stockpiled, and has a shelf life of only 35 days.
- Less than 4% of the eligible population in Scotland are active blood donors (eligible population defined as 17-70 years old)
- There are 8 different blood groups. SNBTS manage a complex inventory across all blood groups to ensure supplies of each are at safe levels.
- There are currently 126,471 active blood donors in Scotland. An active blood donor is defined as a person who has attended a session within the last 12 months.

- Active Blood donors by age in Scotland:

Age group	No. of donors	Percentage
17-24	23533	18.6%
25-34	23875	18.9%
35-44	22942	18.1%
45-54	29448	23.3%
55-64	19933	15.8%
65 or over	6740	5.3%
Total	126471	

- Blood services from 21 countries are participating in the Missing Type campaign. A survey shows that these countries have seen a 30% drop in new donors across 21 countries last year compared to a decade ago.
- Countries joining the Missing Type campaign who provided data to the Missing Type survey 2016: England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Belgium, Republic of Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Canada, USA (United Blood Services locations does not incl. American Red Cross, Blood Centres of the Pacific, Inland Northwest or any other member centre), and South Africa.
- In a survey for Missing Type in April 2016, participating blood services reported the number of people becoming donors and giving blood for the first time was 1,830,003 in 2005 and 1,324,980 in 2015 – a drop of 27.6% in 2015 compared to 2005. Not all services were able to provide full responses.
- Countries joining the Missing Type campaign but which did not provide data for the global insights survey: Hong Kong, Lithuania, Nepal
- In 2015 the 25 blood services joining in the Missing Type campaign provided 14.7 million units of blood to treat patients thanks to the generosity of 8.16 million blood donors – 1.3 million were first time donors.
- SNBTS is a strategic business unit of NHS National Services Scotland (NSS). Accountable to the Scottish Government, NSS works at the very heart of the health service, providing national support services and expert advice to NHSScotland. It also plays an active and crucial role in the delivery of effective healthcare to patients and the public.

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