

The

# PLATELETTER



## WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER PLATELETTER!

- 1,161 people have given platelets over the last 12 months.
- Scotland has a population of around 5,546,900
- That means you're one of an incredible 0.02% of the population

That's a very select club.

This newsletter contains platelet donor news and special messages of thanks. The patients who receive your donation can't thank you personally, so on their behalf and from all of us here at SNBTS - thank you!



## BOOK IN TO GIVE PLATELETS: SUPPORT SCOTLAND DURING THE WORLD CUP.

Scotland's first World Cup qualification in 28 years is a moment to celebrate – but it has already impacted blood donation. On the night they qualified, donor numbers dropped by more than 20%.

With further dips expected over the summer, giving platelets is more important than ever.

Fiona Gaskell, Head of Nursing at SNBTS, said:

"I'm urging both new and returning donors to come forward and help ensure lifesaving platelets are always available.

"By planning ahead and booking appointments now, donors can help ensure that hospitals have the blood products they need throughout the summer. Every donation plays a part in saving and improving lives across Scotland."





## A THANK YOU FROM SKYE

"To the platelet donors of Scotland who saved my life nine times.

"You don't know me, but you might live a life like my Mum and Dad – working, shopping, relaxing at home. You might think you're an ordinary person. But to me, you are a real-life superhero. You saved my life nine times before I was even three months old.

"I was born on 20 April 2015, but I came into the world very, very sick. Doctors said if I had been born just three hours later, I wouldn't be here today. My body was failing, and on my very first day, your blood saved me twice.

"By day two, I was in a coma and flown to a hospital in Glasgow, in a special NHS plane. My parents followed, terrified. For months, my life was hospital rooms, needles and transfusions. My mum watched me suffer, holding me while I cried – but she also watched your blood bring me back, turning my pale face pink again. One day, I got so upset that the tiny blood vessels all over my head turned bright red. My mum was scared I was going to bleed out right in front of her. But then your platelets arrived, and I actually smiled and laughed.

"Doctors never found out what caused my illness. I just know I needed you – and you were always there.

"Today, I am 11 years old. I get to do totally normal things like walk to school and play with my best friend, Elle. Best of all, I am a big sister now! Because of you, we are a happy family of four.

"When you sit in that donor chair, it might feel like a small thing. But to me, you gave me my life, my childhood and my future.

"Thank you for saving me."



**THE SHOW MUST GO ON!  
SPOTLIGHT ON CHRIS QUINN**

Chris Quinn helps youngsters to shine on stage, but he's also a star performer when it comes to platelet donation.

Now approaching his 100th donation, Chris has built an impressive giving record alongside a busy life in work and the community.

Outside of donation, Chris volunteers alongside his wife, Joan-Anne, and plays an active role in Movies to Musicals, a theatre group supporting young Scottish performers.

Chris first moved into platelet donation after spotting a leaflet at the Glasgow Donor Centre. Curious to learn more, he asked about the process, completed the necessary testing, and has been a platelet donor ever since.

**“Knowing my donation can help parents and their newborn have an amazing start is a brilliant feeling**

As an NHS Maintenance Technician in a Paisley hospital, where he will soon mark 42 years of service, donating remains an important and regular part of his routine.

During donation, Chris enjoys switching off. While he jokes about being too wary to nap in case staff think he's fainted, he often passes the time watching films or playing games on his phone.

Reflecting on what donation means to him, Chris said: “Tunnock's teacakes and tea! Seriously though, I'm one of the neo-nate donors. This means the world to me. Knowing that my donation can help parents and their newborn have an amazing start is a brilliant feeling, especially as I have personal reasons through friends.”



## **ABERDEEN OPENING HOURS**

### **PLATELETS**

Aberdeen donor centre is open for platelet donation Mon-Fri, plus Sunday

Make an appointment in your usual way

### **BLOOD**

#### **Monday**

8:30am-12pm, 1pm-2:30pm

#### **Tuesday**

2pm-4pm, 5pm-7.30pm

#### **Wednesday**

2pm-4pm, 5pm-7.30pm

#### **Thursday**

8:30am-12pm, 1pm-2:30pm

#### **Friday**

8:30am-12pm, 1pm-3pm

#### **Saturday**

Closed

#### **Sunday**

Closed

## **PARKING FOR ALL (IN ABERDEEN)**

Did you ever think you would be so happy to see parking spaces again? Aberdeen donors - platelets, plasma *and* whole blood - were all delighted to see the car park opened again, after months of essential repair work.

Head of Territory, Dr Sylvia Armstrong Fisher said,

"Now that work is complete, we are keen to welcome donors back and rebuild appointment levels to help maintain vital blood, plasma and platelet supplies.

"Unfortunately we've seen a significant drop in attendance since the work began in September 26, with the centre at times operating at less than 50% capacity.

"We're really looking forward to seeing our platelet donors again - and if you could help spread the word amongst your friends and family, we're extremely keen to welcome back old and new blood donors."

Thank you to everyone who continued to donate during the disruption. Your support and patience have made a real difference.

## A WORD IN YOUR CELL-LIKE

Unlike red or white blood cells, platelets are not true cells. They are small fragments derived from much larger cells in the bone marrow called megakaryocytes.

## SHAPESHIFTERS

In a resting state, platelets look like tiny plates. However, when activated by an injury, they grow long "tentacles" to stick to broken blood vessel walls and cling to one another.

## WHAT IS 'NORMAL'?

A healthy platelet count ranges from 150,000 to 450,000 platelets per microlitre of blood.



## WHAT DO PLATELETS DO?

Platelets help treat and prevent excessive bleeding by promoting blood clotting. As a medical treatment, transfused platelets are vital for a wide range of medical treatments and procedures:

- **Cancer treatments:** Approximately 70% of all donated platelets go to cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, as cancer treatments can severely deplete a patient's natural platelet count.
- **Trauma and major surgery:** Platelets are transfused to treat severe blood loss resulting from accidents, organ transplants, and intensive surgeries.
- **Intensive care:** Platelets are used to stabilise adults and babies receiving critical, intensive medical care.

However, because of their short lifespan (only around 5 to 7 days once donated), the platelet supply needs constant replenishing. That's why you - and every other platelet donor - are so important.



## **GORDON NOBES REACHES THE TRIPLE CROWN**

Aberdeen platelet donor Gordon sent us this message last month - we love it!!

"In April I completed what I'm calling the 'triple crown' - 25 years donating blood products, 100 platelet donations, and 150 donations altogether (whole blood and platelets). For me, this is a big thing. Since I started in Spring 2001 I've donated whole blood at 14 different venues throughout the north east. As soon as my 12 weeks was up I went to whatever session you were hosting and gave again.

"It has been a privilege to donate and to be looked after so well by the fabulous staff you employ - they are a credit to SNBTS.

"In fact, I have a surprise lined up for the staff at Aberdeen for my 150 donation to thank them for all the years of putting up with me and their excellent care!

"Can I just also put on record my thanks to every single person who takes the time and effort to go along and donate. Even if someone only goes once, it's a fabulous thing to do, and to me every one of them is my hero."

Thank you so much Gordon!

## GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH: NEW PLATELET OPENING HOURS

If you've recently donated platelets, you may already be aware that there will be some changes to when we collect platelet donations in our donor centres. From **Monday 1 June**, we will no longer offer platelet donations on a Wednesday in Glasgow Donor Centre, or on a Tuesday in Edinburgh Donor Centre. We have arrived at this after carefully balancing clinical requirements and evaluating which donation days and times suit donors best.

Our new opening hours are as follows:

### GLASGOW

Monday, 9am – 3:30pm

Tuesday & Thursday, 11:45am – 7pm

Friday & Saturday, 9am – 4pm

Sunday, 9:30am – 4pm

### EDINBURGH

Monday & Saturday, 9.45am – 2.30pm

Wednesday & Thursday, 12.15pm – 5.15pm

We do hope the new opening hours suit you, and we look forward to offering you a warm welcome. If you have not donated for a while, there has never been a better time to return.



Firefighters John Allen and Andrew Kerr give platelets at Glasgow Donor Centre



## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR HIGH-SPEC DONORS?

While times are changing, the need for high-specification platelet donations remains exactly the same.

If you're a high spec donor, you will be told that your platelets are suitable for specific types of patient (for example neonatal), or you have been matched to an individual patient.

Going forward, booking appointments in advance will play an increasingly important role in helping us meet patient demand. For Glasgow high spec donors in particular, booking 2-3 appointments ahead of time will help ensure vital platelet donations from high-specification donors are available when vulnerable patients need them most.

Our overall aim is to balance donor preferences with patient demand in the best and most sustainable way possible. We hope that, over time, this approach will help reduce any feeling of pressure to donate every three weeks, with donating every 4-6 weeks becoming more manageable for many donors. Of course, if donating every three weeks still suits, we are always incredibly thankful for that support too.

At the centre of all these changes are donors like you. Time and time again, you continue to support patients in need, and our gratitude towards you knows no bounds. If you have any questions, concerns, or feedback about these changes - or anything related to apheresis donation - please do get in touch. We always welcome hearing from you. Thank you once again for everything you do.

## TO SCOTLAND'S PLATELET DONORS

In Glasgow, Edinburgh, or Aberdeen,  
You sit beside our spinning machine.  
For ninety minutes, relaxed and bold,  
Giving Scotland's patients hope untold.

You roll up your sleeve, you answer the call,  
A quiet act of kindness means so much to all.  
As the machine hums softly by your side,  
You give hope, and strength, and a fighting tide.

These tiny platelets, small yet so strong,  
Help those who are struggling to carry on.  
From cancer wards to newborn cries,  
Your gift is the reason that courage arrives.

For bairns so brave and lives just begun,  
You shine like the warmth of a summer sun.  
Though your time is short, your impact is wide,  
With every donation, you stand side by side.

So here's to you, Scotland's very best -  
With generous hearts and selfless zest.  
Because of you, healing can start -  
You keep the beat of Scotland's heart.

*Gwen Fenton, Donor Recruiter*



Gwen Fenton -  
Dundee Donor Centre's honorary Makar -  
stands with Anna Ramsay from partner charity  
Give Blood For Good


## HOW DID WE DO?

If you enjoy this newsletter, let us know!  
Get in touch to tell us your stories.

Also - tell the world you're a platelet donor!  
We'd love to see you share your stories on social,  
and share our posts on Facebook and Instagram.

 [scotblood.co.uk](https://scotblood.co.uk)

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