

## Blood Donors Can Be Heroes, For More Than One Day

Bowie-inspired poster appeals for donors to 'come back'  
during National Blood Week (10-16 June 2013)

To help halt a decline in regular blood donors NHS Blood and Transplant is appealing for people to 'come back' and register to donate during this year's National Blood Week, with a new celebrity poster campaign inspired by this year's come-back king David Bowie.

Actresses Claire Sweeney, Dawn Steele, Wendi Peters and Pooja Shah have all re-created Bowie's iconic Aladdin Sane album shot\* to encourage people to 'come back' and register.

Each celebrity has a personal connection to blood donation. Claire's brother and Wendi's husband are both alive due to blood transfusions, Dawn received one after the birth of her daughter and Pooja has been a regular donor for years.

Claire Sweeney said: "My brother's still here today thanks to a blood transfusion so I know how important it is. Giving blood saves lives - you really can be a hero, for more than one day. So if you haven't donated for a while or ever before do consider coming forward to register."

Over the last decade the number of regular donors has fallen by almost a quarter (23%). The decline has been highest among people in their 30s, with a 48% drop. Lack of time is a barrier to donation for 9% of people, and for more than one in ten (11%)\*\* not knowing what's involved has stopped them from donating.

Throughout National Blood Week information will be shared on NHS Blood and Transplant's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/NHSBlood](http://www.facebook.com/NHSBlood)) and on Twitter (@GivebloodNHS) about how and where to donate and to answer any questions. Regional recruitment events will also be driving awareness and enabling people to sign up.

Jon Latham, Assistant Director of Marketing at NHS Blood and Transplant, said: "We know people's busy lives can sometimes stop them from donating blood regularly and while it isn't possible to collect in every village, town and city we are never far away. A quick call to our contact centre or postcode search on our website will give people information about their nearest sessions.

"For this year's National Blood Week, we're asking people to come back and give blood. We need a steady supply of blood, which has a short shelf life, to help save and improve patient lives. To achieve this we need a large group of regular donors, so we hope David Bowie isn't the only one making a welcome return this summer."

Anyone aged between 17-65, weighing more than 50kg (7st 12lbs) and in general good health could potentially start saving lives by becoming a blood donor. There is no upper age limit for donors who have donated in last two years. For more information or to book an appointment visit [www.blood.co.uk](http://www.blood.co.uk) or call 0300 123 23 23.

**- Ends -**

\* Album cover shot by photographer and film producer Brian Duffy

\*\* ICM research May 2011

**For more information or to speak to a case study blood donor or recipient or a relevant spokesperson, please contact the NHSBT team at The Red Consultancy:**  
[nhsbloodteam@redconsultancy.com](mailto:nhsbloodteam@redconsultancy.com) / 020 7025 6500 / 0781 415 4705 or the NHSBT Press Office at [pressoffice@nhsbt.nhs.uk](mailto:pressoffice@nhsbt.nhs.uk) / 01923 367600.

#### Notes to editors:

- The third annual National Blood Week will be held from 10<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> June 2013 with events held across England and North Wales to thank the 4% of the eligible population who are currently blood donors and encourage the remaining 96% of people to come forward and make a date to donate
- The focal point of the week is World Blood Donor Day on June 14<sup>th</sup>. A World Health Organisation global health awareness day, World Blood Donor Day marks the birth of Nobel Prize winner Karl Landsteiner, who first discovered the main blood grouping system in 1901. The day aims to encourage people across the globe to donate blood and also lead the way to improving the safety and self-sufficiency of blood supplies in each country
- NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) is a joint England and Wales Special Health Authority. Its remit includes the provision of a reliable, efficient supply of blood and associated services to the NHS in England and North Wales. It is also the organ donor organisation for the UK and is responsible for matching and allocating donated organs
- NHSBT's donor line - **0300 123 23 23** - is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week with all calls charged at the standard local rate, even from mobile phones
- NHSBT collects approximately two million units of blood each year from 1.3 million blood donors
- Hospitals in England and North Wales need around 7,000 units of blood every day to treat patients with a range of health issues
- Only four per cent of the eligible population are active blood donors
- A unit of blood is measured as 470mls (or just under a pint)
- There are four main blood groups – O, A, B and AB. Group O is the most common and therefore the most in demand. Over 95% of the blood collected is processed into its main components – red cells, platelets and plasma. A regular supply of blood is vital – red cells last 35 days and platelets only seven days
- Female whole blood donors can give blood every 16 weeks, while male blood donors must wait 12 weeks between donations
- There are apps available for Android and Apple Smartphone and tablet devices which enable donors to search for their nearest blood donation session