# 11th December 2018

# IBTS urges people to give the gift of life this Christmas to maintain the blood supply over the holiday period

The IBTS is concerned that blood supplies will be difficult leading in to and over the Christmas/New Year period and is urging donors to make a special effort to give blood in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

During this time, the IBTS needs more than 10,000 attendances from December 10th to January 6th to maintain the blood supply, and is running 23 additional clinics between Sunday 16th December and Sunday 6th January, to make sure there is blood available for patients.

“Traditionally holiday periods and especially the lead into the Christmas/New Year festivities present significant challenges in sustaining the blood supply. On any given day 200 patients receive transfusions in Irish hospitals”, said Operations Director, Paul McKinney.

“We are effectively losing the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday collection days around Christmas and Monday/Tuesday at New Years which could have a serious impact on the blood supply, especially collecting blood for babies for whom blood can be no more than 5 days old when used for a neonatal transfusion.

 “The demand for blood is constant. We supply product 365 days a year and will issue blood for transfusion to hospitals on Christmas Day, St Stephen's Day and New Year's Day, so we are urging donors to give a priceless gift this Christmas, the gift of blood.”

Clinic details and the eligibility quiz can be accessed at www.giveblood.ie.

**ENDS**

**Note to Editor - Some facts about blood**

**1 in 4 people will require a blood transfusion**

**Only 3% of the eligible population are active blood donors**

**Blood lasts just 35 days
Blood for new borns must be less than 5 days old
Donors with O negative blood are known as universal donors**
We need 3,000 blood donations a week to keep hospitals supplied