

September Sickle Cell Awareness Month 2026

Give love, spread love

Sickle cell is the UK's fastest-growing genetic condition, but many people still do not know what the condition is.

Sickle cell is a group of inherited red blood cell disorders where abnormal haemoglobin causes flexible, round blood cells to become rigid, sticky, and crescent or "sickle" shaped.

These misshapen cells die early, causing chronic anaemia, and can block blood flow in small vessels causing severe pain and, over time, organ damage. It is most common in people with African, Caribbean, Middle Eastern, Indian, and Mediterranean family backgrounds, but can affect any ethnic group.

Blood transfusions for sickle cell can be lifesaving. There is a national increased demand for certain blood types. Some patients with sickle cell require regular blood transfusions every 4 to 6 weeks to prevent or relieve the symptoms such as excruciating pain caused by sickle cell.

Best treatment for people with sickle cell who need transfusions is to have blood that is similar to their own. This is more likely to be found from a donor from the same ethnicity.

You can give blood if you have the sickle cell trait. Just let the blood donation team know when you donate.

For information regarding blood donation, see below:

[Sickle cell - NHS Blood Donation](#)

[Why more Black heritage blood donors are needed - NHS Blood Donation](#)

[Sickle cell disease - NHS](#)

[Blood Donation - Sickle Cell Society](#)

[Wessex and Thames Valley Haemoglobinopathy Coordinating Centre](#) delivers specialist services to adults and children with sickle cell, thalassemia and rare inherited anaemia within the region. For Haemoglobinopathy service-related information contact WTV.HCC@ouh.nhs.uk