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GCHQ DOES A BLEEDING GOOD JOB!

GCHQ has been presented with a prestigious award by the National Blood Service to recognise the outstanding contribution its staff have made to the UK's blood donor programme.

It is well known that intelligence provided by GCHQ to the UK government can help save lives - countering threats from terrorists and supporting our armed forces - but staff at the intelligence centre have also been taking a more direct route by giving their blood.

Over the last nine years, staff at the GCHQ Oakley site have donated some 8,500 units which could have saved the lives of up to 25,500 people. To recognise this achievement, the National Blood Service (NBS) has presented GCHQ with a Supporter Loyalty Award. Rachel Yandell, communications officer for NBS said: "This award is a way of expressing our thanks to GCHQ for allowing us on their premises and freeing up people to donate blood during work time."

A GCHQ spokesman commented: "This award is very much appreciated. The NBS do a fabulous job and our staff always do their utmost to support their efforts. We are currently making arrangements at our new accommodation to ensure that we will continue to host blood donor sessions during the working day – hopefully, we will attract even more volunteers."

Rachel Yandell added: "We benefit immensely when organisations like GCHQ volunteer to host donor sessions. Currently only 6% of the population gives blood and we need to collect over 9000 units each day – so every single drop helps."

Interested in becoming a blood donor? Please call the National helpline on 08457 711711 or log onto www.blood.co.uk.

Notes for editors:

- The NBS supplies blood to 310 hospitals across England and North Wales.
- There are 1.9 million blood donors on the register, donating 2.4 million pints of blood each year
- The NBS loses 15% of donors each year through retirement, relocation and ill health, so it is essential that new donors come along to local sessions

- To become a blood donor you must be aged 17-60, weigh over 7st 11lb and be in good health.
- The NBS also runs the British Bone Marrow Register. If you would like to join the register, you must be aged 18-44 and be a blood donor.

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