

**The German Red Cross (DRK) warned this week that private clinics offering money for blood could pose a threat to the country's national blood banks, who do not offer cash for donations.**

- [Donor day designed to ease organ shortage](#) (02 Jun 12)
- [New organ donor law will ask everyone](#) (25 May 12)

Despite a European law banning payments for blood donors, some private clinics, universities and pharmaceutical companies are known to pay donors. They pass the payments – normally around €25 – off as expenses, said DRK spokesman Friedrich-Ernst Düppe.

In the past this competition would not been too much of a concern, he said – but high unemployment and poverty levels were now making the paid donation schemes more attractive.

“€25 is three times the daily allowance that someone on unemployment benefits gets. You don't have to say anything more than that.

“Covering a parking ticket or travel costs would be permissible, but €25 in cash just is not,” he said.

The DRK used the World Blood Donor Day on Thursday to promote how important giving blood is – and to warn that reserves are only just enough to cover those in need, such as cancer patients and accident victims.

Young people need to start donating giving blood, he said. At the moment, Düppe said the country's older regular donors give far more blood than the young.

On average, a regular, older, donor offers up their arm three to five times a year. A regular young donor goes, on average, less than two times a year.

But the country's population is ageing, and will thus need more blood, as well as be less able to fill the reserves. If more young people do not start coming forward to replace the older generation of dedicated donors, Germany could end up with a shortage.

“We would need two or three times the number of young people that are donating now to replace people when they become too old to do it,” Düppe said.

At the moment, around three percent of Germans are active blood donors, which Düppe said was just about enough. More would, of course, be better and the DRK is working on how to get more people to sign up.

And although the DRK does not offer donors money, Düppe explained that there were plenty of other positives aside from the cash. Donors automatically find out their blood type and are screened for illness, for example.

“Anyone can donate over the age of 18 and under the age of 71,” he added.

There are restrictions though, from the logical ones, such as not taking blood from people who are sick – to the inexplicable, such as the ban on homosexuals from donating blood in Germany.

*DAPD/The Local/jcw*

The Local ([news@thelocal.de](mailto:news@thelocal.de))