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Implementation: On or before 1st January 2009

Change Notification UK National Blood Services No. 7 - 2008

Age

Applies to the Whole Blood and Components Donor Selection Guidelines only

**Obligatory Whole Blood Donors
Must not donate if:**

- a) They are under seventeen years of age.
- b) They are a first time donor who has had their sixty-sixth birthday.
- c) They are a returning donor who has had their seventieth birthday.

**Component Donors
Must not donate if:**

- a) They have not previously given a whole blood donation without untoward effect.
- b) They are under eighteen years of age.
- c) They are a returning donor who has had their seventieth birthday.

Discretionary Regular donors can continue to donate past the age of 70 as long as they fulfil all other donor selection criteria. As with all donors they are assessed for their fitness to donate at every attendance.

Additional Information

The lower age limit takes into account national laws on age of consent.

An upper age limit on blood and component donation has traditionally been set to protect the donor's safety. There is however little evidence to support this. Audits have shown a decreased incidence of adverse events in older donors compared with younger donors. Further, experience in other blood services has shown no harm to donors over the age of 70 years.

A donor must have given at least one donation in the last two years to donate after their 70th birthday and continue thereafter with no less than one donation every two years to be considered a regular donor.

Provided donors remain in good health they may continue to donate within these guidelines.

When appropriate, donors may be accepted on their birthday.

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Reason for Change

Within the UK, donors have been accepted until their seventieth birthday since 1998. A full review of data acquired by the UK Blood Services of donor adverse events by the Standing Advisory Committee for the Care and Selection of Donors suggests that it would be safe to allow older donors to continue to donate past their seventieth birthday.

Donor adverse event data will be monitored closely and further modification of this guideline will be made in light of these findings.

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