

**Change Notification for the UK Blood Transfusion Services**

**Date of Issue:** 31 July 2024 **Implementation:** to be determined by each Service

No. 22 – 2024

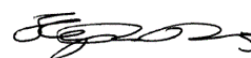
**Upper age limit for returning whole blood donors**

This notification includes the following changes:

|                            | BM-DSG<br>Bone Marrow & Peripheral Blood Stem Cell | CB-DSG<br>Cord Blood  | GDRI<br>Geographical Disease Risk Index | TD-DSG<br>Tissue - Deceased Donors | TL-DSG<br>Tissue - Live Donors | WB-DSG<br>Whole Blood & Components | Red Book<br>Guidelines for the BTS in the UK |
|----------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Age entry in WB-DSG     | <input type="radio"/>                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                   | <input type="radio"/>              | <input type="radio"/>          | <input checked="" type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>                        |
| 2. Chapter 3.5 – Donor Age | <input type="radio"/>                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                   | <input type="radio"/>              | <input type="radio"/>          | <input type="radio"/>              | <input checked="" type="radio"/>             |



**Dr Angus Wells**  
Chair of Standing Advisory Committee on Care & Selection of Donors (SACCSD)



**Dr Stephen Thomas**  
Professional Director of JPAC

Changes are indicated using the key below. This formatting will not appear in the final entry.

|               |                 |                         |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| original text | «inserted text» | <del>deleted text</del> |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|

## 1. Changes apply to the **Whole Blood and Components DSG**

### Age

(revised entry)

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <p><i>Definitions</i></p>            | <p><b>First Time Donor</b><br/>Is an individual who has not previously donated. It is also a person who has previously attended but, for whatever reasons, did not give a full donation (e.g. deferred because of selection guidelines, failed screen test, failed venepuncture, part bag etc).</p> <p><b>Regular Donor</b><br/>Is a donor who has been medically assessed at a donor session in the last 24 months. For component donors this must include mandatory infection screening and, for all donors over the age of <del>«72» 70</del> years, this must also include giving a full donation.</p> <p><b>Returning Donor</b><br/>Is a donor who has not attended a donation session or been medically assessed within the last 24 months, but who has previously given a full donation.</p> <p><b>Full Donation</b><br/>An amount above the minimum required volume has been collected.</p>  |
| <p><i>Obligatory</i></p>             | <p><b>Whole blood and component donors.</b><br/><b>Must not donate if:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) They are under 17 years of age.</li> <li>b) They are a first time donor who has had their 66th birthday.</li> <li>c) They are a returning donor who has had their <del>«72nd» 70th</del> birthday.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><i>Additional Information</i></p> | <p>The lower age limit takes account of national laws on age of consent.</p> <p>Upper age limits for blood and component donation have traditionally been set to protect the donor's safety. There is however little evidence to support this. <del>«Donor haemovigilance data show» Audits have shown</del> a decreased incidence of adverse events in older donors compared to younger donors <del>«, although there is an increase in local complications of donating (i.e. bruising and rebleeds)».</del> <del>Experience in other blood services has shown no increased harm to donors over the age of 70 years.</del> Donor adverse event monitoring will continue to inform the need for any modification to this guidance.</p> <p>To donate after their <del>«72nd» 70th</del> birthday a donor must remain in good health and have given at least one full donation in the previous 24 months. To continue donating they must give no less than one full donation every 24 months.</p> <p>When appropriate, donors may be accepted on their birthday.</p> |

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>Information</i>       | This entry is compliant with the Blood Safety and Quality Regulations 2005.   |
| <i>Reason for Change</i> | «The age limit for returning donors has been increased to 72 years.»<br><del>Definitions for 'First Time', 'Regular' and 'Returning' donors together with a definition of a 'Full Donation' have been added.</del>  |
| <i>Donor Information</i> | If you wish to obtain more information regarding a personal medical issue, please contact your <a href="#">National Help Line</a> .<br><br>Please do not contact this web site for personal medical queries, as we are not in a position to provide individual answers. |

## 2. Changes apply to the **Red Book**

### **Chapter 3: Care and selection of whole blood and component donors**

(no changes to sections 3.1 – 3.4)

#### **3.5: Donor age**

~~Donors shall be between the ages of 17 and 65 years; i.e. from their 17th to 66th birthday inclusive. Regular and returning donors (as defined in the JPAC Donor Selection Guidelines<sup>1</sup>) may be allowed to donate beyond their 66th birthday with permission of a physician in the Blood Establishment, given annually.~~

~~It is normal practice to set an upper age limit of 60 years (up to 61st birthday inclusive) for first-time donors. However, older donors may be accepted at the discretion of the physician in the Blood Establishment.~~

«[BSQR](#) sets the primary age limits for whole blood and component donors at 18 to 65 years inclusive, with the caveat that first time donors over 60 years of age are accepted at the discretion of the doctor in the blood establishment.

The JPAC [Whole Blood and Component Donor Selection Guidelines](#) set age criteria for the UK Blood Services to apply for donors who are younger or older than these limits:

- Donors aged 17 years may be accepted if they are assessed as being able to give informed consent (as expected for donors of all ages).
- First time donors may be accepted before their 66th birthday.
- Returning donors are defined as individuals who have given at least one full donation in their lifetime, may be accepted before their 72nd birthday.
- Regular donors can continue to donate on or after their 72nd birthday provided they have donated a full donation within the last two years.»

(no further changes to chapter 3)