

Our ref: SD/242217

Dear Perry Icso

**Re: Information request**

Thank you for your request dated the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2013, for information from NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) regarding information on our prisoner policy.

I am writing to advise you that we are able to provide you with the following information in response to your request.

**1) Please confirm that you do not collect blood from serving prisoners, and if this is the case, please outline the reasons.**

Our current guidelines state that serving prisoners should not donate blood. This is based on the fact that the prisoner population is at increased risk of transmitting an infection which could then be transmitted to a patient from their blood donation. Although the testing techniques we use are generally very sensitive, they do not always detect a virus in the very early stages of a person's infection. This means there is still the possibility that a virus may be present in the donor's blood in the interval between acquiring the infection and our ability to detect that infection (this is known as the 'window period').

Although any individual prisoner may not be at 'high risk', the prisoner population as a whole is. Unfortunately, the 'window period' cannot currently be reduced to zero; therefore to make the blood supply as safe as possible all donors must meet our donor selection criteria before they can donate.

There are a wide range of measures in place to protect the safety of the UK blood supply, including careful selection of blood donors, processing steps to minimise the risk of infections, and testing for evidence of infections which can be transmitted by blood. Donor selection guidelines relating to the safety of blood are recommended to the Government by the Department of Health's independent Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissue and Organs (SaBTO). The full range of measures in place to protect the safety of the blood supply are broadly outlined on the Joint Professional Advisory Committee of the UK Blood Services (JPAC) website:

<http://www.transfusionguidelines.org.uk/index.aspx?Publication=DL&Section=12&pageid=389>.

However, our donor selection guidelines are under constant review and are subject to change.

**2) As regards mobile donation sessions for whole blood in typical community venues, please give details of the minimum expected**

**number of donations that you require in order to consider a session practically viable.**

An average 4.5 hour, 9 bed session has a target of 120 donations

**3) Please give details of any estimates you have made regarding the number of donations from clinically eligible donors that you could expect to collect in a typical session in a prison if you were to conduct such sessions**

As we do not collect blood from serving prisoners we are unfortunately unable to provide this information. However, we do have at least one blood mobile session at a prison, which is strictly for prison staff. Again an average 4.5 hour, 9 bed session would have a target of 120 donations

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If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications. In addition if I can be of any further assistance in any other way please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Ian Hamerton**  
**Head of Donor Services**

E-mail: xxxxxxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxxxx.xxx.xx

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request an review of our decision, you should write to: Head of Donor Services, NHS Blood and Transplant, Oak House, Reeds Crescent, Watford, Hertfordshire WD24 4QN (Email: [xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxx.xx](mailto:xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxx.xx))

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT). The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.