

Key Change From Previous Revision:

Updated into new format

1. STATEMENT

Upper age limits for blood and component donation have traditionally been set to protect the donor's safety. Regular and returning donors (as defined in the Joint United Kingdom (UK) Blood Transfusion and Tissue Transplantation Services Professional Advisory Committee *Donor Selection Guidelines*) may be allowed to donate beyond their 66th birthday with permission of a physician in the Blood Establishment, given annually. This policy sets out the JPAC UK Donor Selection Guidelines (UK DSGs) which are followed by NIBTS.

2. OVERVIEW

The following policy is in keeping with the UK Donor Selection Guidelines (UK DSGs). The provisions noted below are subject to the normal fitness criteria for donation being met.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

ALL STAFF INVOLVED IN DONOR SELECTION: MEDICAL TEAM; NURSING STAFF; DONOR SESSION ASSISTANTS; DONOR RECRUITMENT AND DONOR ADMINISTRATION STAFF.

4. POLICY**4.1 DEFINITIONS****First Time Donor**

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).

Regular Donor

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 70 years, this must also include giving a full donation.

Returning Donor

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.

Full Donation

An amount above the minimum required volume has been collected.

4.2 UPPER AGE LIMITS

**Whole blood and component donors.
Must not donate if:**

- a) They are a first time donor who has had their 66th birthday.
- b) They are a returning donor who has had their 70th birthday.

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. Audits have shown a decreased incidence of adverse events in older donors compared to younger donors. Experience in other blood services has shown no increased harm to donors over the age of 70 years. Donor adverse event monitoring will continue to inform the need for any modification to this guidance.

To donate after their 70th 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.

When appropriate, donors may be accepted on their birthday.

5. EQUALITY SCREENING OUTCOME

This policy has been drawn up and reviewed in light of the statutory obligations contained within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998). In line with the statutory duty of equality, this policy has been screened against particular criteria. If at any stage of the life of this policy there are any issues within the policy which are perceived by any party as creating adverse impacts on any of the groups under Section 75, that party should bring these to the attention of the Head of HR & Corporate Services.

The Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity of staff, donors and service users. We strive to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and that their rights are respected at all times. We believe that it is important that our policy is understood by all those whose literacy is limited, those who do not speak English as a first language or those who face communication barriers because of a disability. On request it may be possible to make this policy available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio file, audio cassette, Easy Read or in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.

6. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

All staff under responsibility section should have read and understood this policy.