

26th January 2021

Dear Members,

Progress towards inclusive blood donation

GLADD – The Association of LGBTQ+ Doctors and Dentists welcomes the announcement that the Department of Health and Social Care has accepted in full the recommendations of the FAIR (For the Assessment of Individualised Risk) steering group, moving the UK towards inclusive blood donation whilst maintaining the safety of our blood supply.¹

The current 3 month deferral for all men who have sex with men (MSM) is discriminatory, overwhelmingly targeted against the LGBTQ+ community, and has led to public campaigns against NHS Blood and Transplant.² The proposed changes, to be implemented by Summer 2021, allow for an individualised risk assessment that is gender-neutral and evidence-based, and place the UK as a world leader in inclusive blood donation.

This important advance is a result of a broad collaboration between the four UK blood services, Public Health England, academics and LGBTQ+ charities, and involved members of the public, donors and patients who have received blood products. This model of stakeholder engagement should serve as an exemplar for all organisations seeking to address discriminatory practices, where historical conventions are neither supported by the groups they serve nor current evidence.

We look forward to continued progress in this area, including future recommendations based on the ongoing review of the impact of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) on HIV testing. Blood is a precious resource, and it is high time that we move away from outdated policies that alienate and exclude cohorts of potential donors.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Graham McIlroy

Secretary, GLADD – The Association of LGBTQ+ Doctors and Dentists

On behalf of the GLADD Executive Committee

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[www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)00199-9/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)00199-9/fulltext)

References

1. www.nhs.uk/news/steering-group-concludes-on-a-safe-way-for-more-men-who-have-sex-with-men-to-give-blood [accessed 26/01/21]
2. www.unilad.co.uk/featured/bloodwithoutbias/introducing-the-illegal-blood-bank [accessed 26/01/21]