

+The abolishment of discriminatory blood donation deferral period

Council notes:

The Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) needs 3,000 donations a week to supply 71 hospitals nationwide¹. Regular blood donations by a sufficient number of healthy people are needed to ensure that a supply of blood will be available whenever and wherever it is needed.

Council acknowledges:

The testing conducted on blood donations is an RNA test with a window of 10 days, in contrast to antigen tests which would be longer. This, combined with individualised risk assessment, ensures the safety of all donations for recipients.

Council further notes:

The lifetime ban on gay men donating blood to the Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) was lifted in January 2017 and replaced with a 12 month abstinence deferral period which means that Gay and Bisexual Men and other Men who have had sex with Men within the preceding 12 months are still prevented from donating blood even if they meet all other blood donor selection criteria.

Council believes:

Eligibility decided on sexual orientation is extremely discriminatory and no one should be prevented from donating blood based on their sexuality. Testing of donations and individualised risk assessment, well established as sufficient to ensure safety from heterosexual donors, should be applied across the board.

Council therefore mandates:

The VP's for Welfare and Equality to also run an information campaign around the ban. Also the VPs for Welfare to campaign with USI for the abolishment of this deferral period to ensure that everyone who meets best practise eligibility criteria will be eligible to donate blood in Ireland.

Proposed by: Fionn Collins, VP for Welfare and Equality CC

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