

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Background to the Inquiry**

Under current guidelines, there are a number of restrictions around who is able to donate blood. This includes a 12 month deferral criterion on those classed as men who have sex with men (MSM) and a complete blanket ban on anyone who has ever had sex for money or drugs or ever injected drugs. Scientific advances and new evidence means that such restrictions should be reconsidered whilst ensuring the safety of the blood supply.

The UK Government's advisory committee, The Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) undertook a review in 2011 into the deferral criteria. Based on the scientific and statistical evidence they had, they made recommendations that were subsequently adopted on the deferral criteria of those able to give blood. Five years later and in light of the advancements made not only in screening capabilities, but in immunisation levels, the time has come to once again look at who should be able to donate blood.

In 2015, the campaign group FreedomToDonate, were able to secure a review from the Advisory Committee into donation criteria, which is likely to begin reporting on individual criteria in 2017. Since this announcement, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Blood Donation was set up to build Parliamentary support, conduct its own research and to increase knowledge of the issue.

In this vein, the APPG in June 2016 subsequently announced a Parliamentary Inquiry into blood donation criteria, providing a unique opportunity to feed into the review led by SaBTO to identify what the future policy may look like and to provide a public and open forum for discussion and presentation of new evidence.

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In formulating its recommendations, the Inquiry will:

- Assess current scientific evidence and the reasoning for the current donation criteria;
- Consider the impact that current guidelines have on the availability of blood;
- Explore how a safe and sustainable supply of blood can be achieved using up to date evidence;
- Explore the arguments and merits for and against a behavioural/risk based policy; and
- Produce recommendations where there is a need for current criteria to change.

### **Governance of the Inquiry**

#### *Steering Group*

The Steering Group is formed of MPs and Peers with an interest in blood donation and is chaired by Stewart McDonald MP and Paula Sherriff MP, in their capacities as Chairs of the APPG on Blood Donation. The Steering Group will lead the development of the Inquiry, making key decisions about the evidence, conclusions and recommendations. Other members of the Steering Group are:

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## All-Party Parliamentary Group on Blood Donation Inquiry: The Future of a Safe & Sufficient Blood Supply



- Stuart Andrew MP
- Baroness Masham of Ilton
- Angela Crawley MP
- Will Wragg MP
- Stephen Doughty MP
- Joanna Cherry MP
- Dr Eilidh Whiteford MP
- Peter Kyle MP

### *Advisory Panel*

The Advisory Panel is made up of representatives from organisations and areas with expertise in blood donation, who support FreedomToDonate. The role of the Panel is to advise the Steering Group on key issues such as the scope of the Inquiry, what evidence should be sought, and from whom, and the content and recommendations of the report. The members of the Advisory Panel are:

- Stonewall
- National AIDS Trust
- Terrence Higgins Trust
- LGBT Foundation
- NUS
- PositiveEast
- GMFA

### *Secretariat*

FreedomToDonate provides the Secretariat for the APPG on Blood Donation, and is providing the Secretariat for the Inquiry, including both the Steering Group and Advisory Panel. Andy Clarke and Ethan Spibey from FreedomToDonate will be sitting on the Steering Group.

## **Structure of the Inquiry**

### *Written Evidence*

The APPG will issue a call for written evidence from organisations and individuals with an interest in blood donation including those currently excluded from donating, those responsible for the rules and those representing organisations who have an interest in the area.

### *Oral Evidence*

There will be three evidence sessions. Each will focus on a key area being investigated by the Inquiry: current regulations; the medical argument; the social argument; and solutions. As with written evidence, several individuals and organisations will be invited to give oral evidence.

### *Report*

Based on both the written evidence submitted and oral evidence presented, a short report making key recommendations to SaBTO will be published. Shorter review documents after each session will also be made available to SaBTO.

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