

Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO)

The Committee will advise Health Ministers in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; the UK Health Departments; the UK Blood services and Transplant service, and the NHS more widely on the most appropriate ways to ensure the safety of blood, cells, tissues and organs for transfusion / transplantation. Its remit includes providing advice on the microbiological safety of gametes and stem cells, in liaison with the relevant regulatory authorities. The Committee will provide independent advice on risk management for Ministers, UK Health Departments, UK Blood and Transplant Services and the wider NHS to consider.

In formulating its advice, the Committee will:

- take into account sufficiency of supply, and the need to maintain adequate supplies of blood, cells (including gametes and stem cells), tissues and organs of appropriate quality;
- consider the efficacy of transfusion / transplantation and consider the cost-effectiveness of interventions, including the introduction of new safety measures and/or the reduction, phasing out or withdrawal of current measures;
- interpret and where appropriate, commission risk assessments from a wide range of sources, including DH and Health Protection Agency Analysts, UK Blood Services, other advisory committees such as the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens, and independent researchers;
- take full account of scientific uncertainty and assumptions used in reaching conclusions, and clearly convey the nature and extent of such uncertainties with its advice;
- identify where research to reduce uncertainty is most urgently required, and where possible identify specific research needs;
- monitor and influence the EU Directives on blood, cells, tissues and organs to ensure that the guidance of the committee is consistent with the directives in conjunction with the relevant competent authorities;
- consider the potential impact of its advice on both donors and recipients.