

TERMS OF REFERENCE1. Committee on the Virological Safety of Blood (ACVSB)

"To advise the Health Departments of the UK on measures to ensure the virological safety of blood, whilst maintaining adequate supplies of appropriate quality for both immediate use and for plasma processing".

Note remit is UK-wide. Our concern is matters of major policy, not the detailed implementation of policy. The intention is that any proposed changes in requirements or practices of one of the main groups (transfusion service, fractionators, regulators) that has major implications for the others are brought to this group first for discussion. Whilst our specific remit is with blood donors, our advice will also be made available to those within the Department who have policy responsibility for tissue and organ donors. Where the advice is clearly not relevant to these other donors, it would be helpful if this could be indicated in the discussions.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF RELATED GROUPS2. Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) and the Biologicals Subcommittee

Gives advice to the Licensing Authority on the quality, safety and efficacy of medicinal products. The Licensing Authority covers the entire UK. The Medicines Act prohibits consideration of cost, need or supply. Whole blood and cellular components are not considered medicinal products.

3. National Transfusion Directorate and advisory groups

Implements the national strategy for the transfusion service and coordinates the activities of the BTS and the CBLA. England and Wales only, although frequent consultation with Scotland. Concerned with safety and welfare of donors, supply of safe fresh blood and blood components for patients as well as plasma for fractionators; subject to resource constraints.

4. UK Advisory Committee on transfusion transmitted diseases

This new UK group will be considering many of the same issues as the present committee, but only from a transfusion viewpoint.

5. NBTS/NIBSC liaison group

Formed between the NBTS/SNBTS and NIBSC to formulate (scientific) guidelines for the standardisation and safety of blood and blood products. The liaison group would be the appropriate forum for considering the detailed implementation of recommendations arising from the ACVSB.

6. NBTS/CBLA liaison group

A new group to discuss problems such as plasma supply and quality. Covers England and Wales only.

7. Expert Advisory Group on AIDS (EAGA)

Advises the Chief Medical Officers on matters relating to HIV infection. UK wide. Has given advice in the past on HIV1 and HIV2 testing for the transfusion service and will continue to do so if appropriate, but feeding through the Committee on the Virological Safety of Blood.

8. Advisory Group on Hepatitis

This group "provides medical advice to the Chief Medical Officers of the Health Departments on all aspects of communicable hepatitis" and has the appropriate expertise for detailed consideration of the technical aspects of screening donors and plasma for various forms of hepatitis, leaving the advisory committee on the virological safety of blood to consider the wider policy issues.

9. Microbiology Advisory Committee (MAC)

Advises the Department of Health (England) on disinfection and sterilisation applicable in and appropriate to the Health Service, and gives guidance on microbiological aspects of equipment etc. This committee should not overlap with the present committee.