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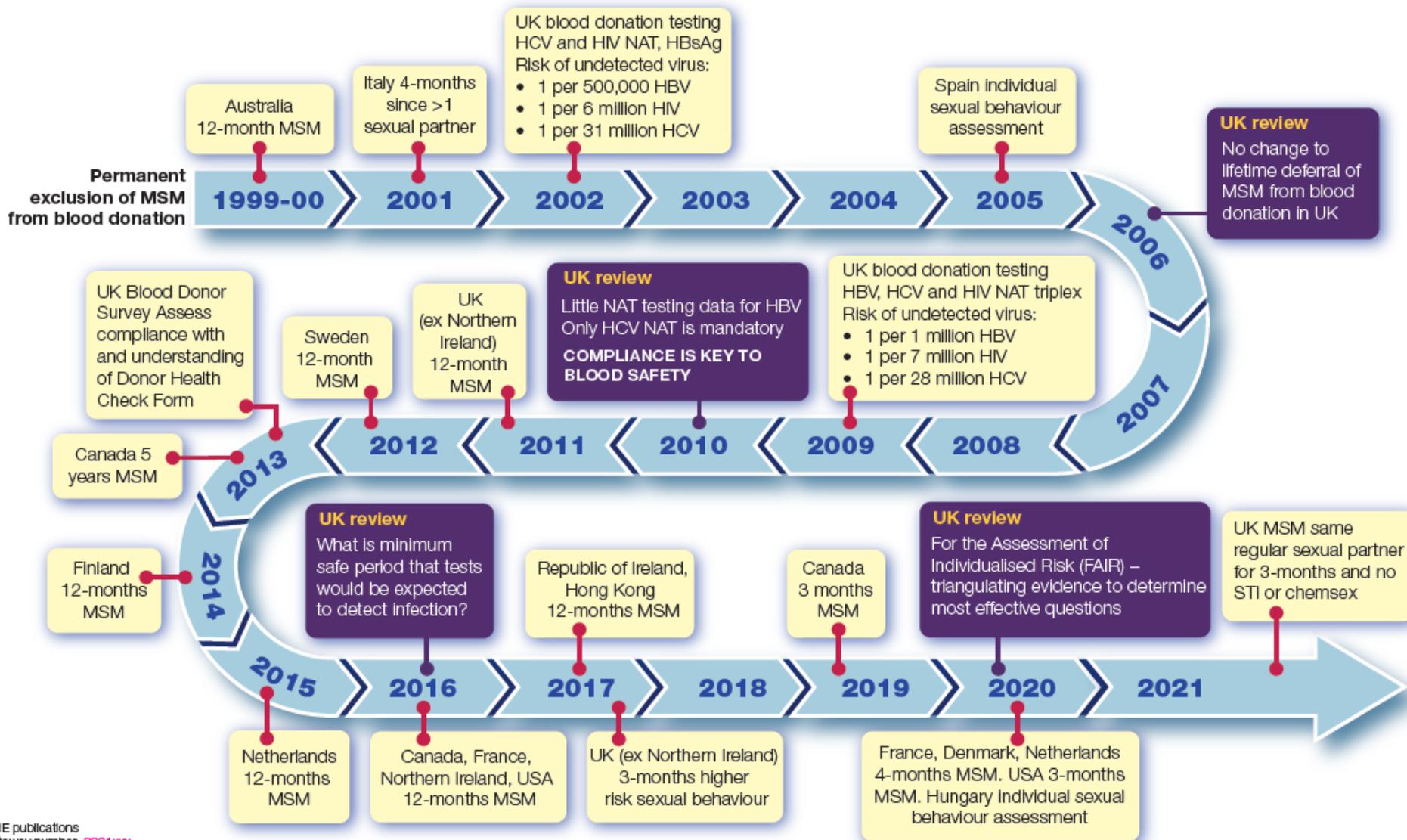
*Blood and Transplant*

Protecting and improving the nation's health

# FAIR Blood Donation Policy Change

Katy Davison on behalf of the FAIR Steering Group

# UK review of donor selection policy for men who have sex with men

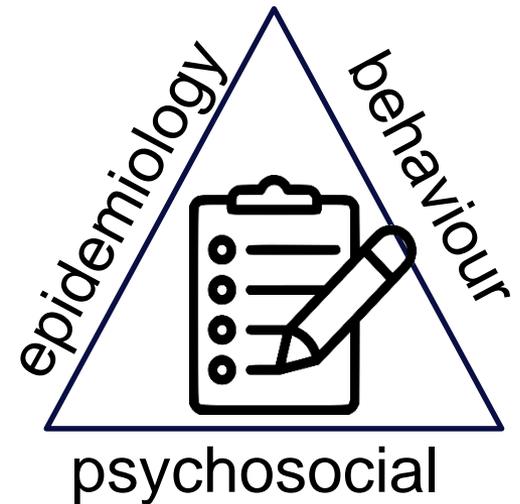


# Aim of FAIR

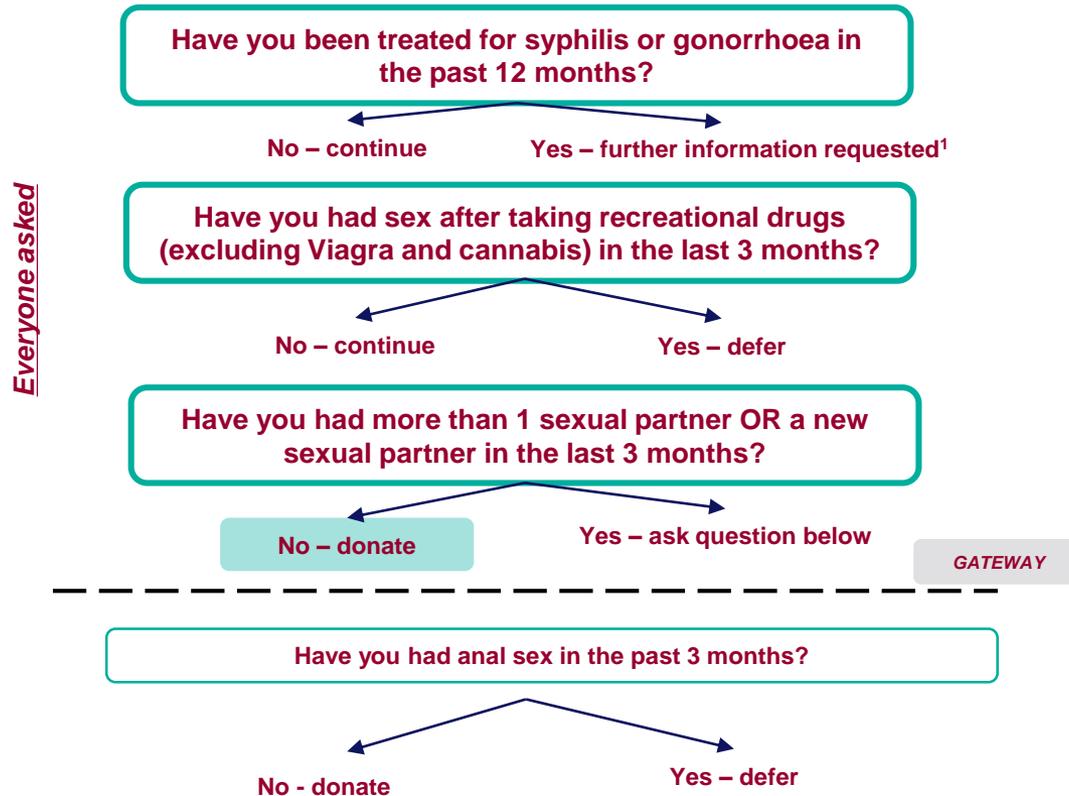
To assess whether the UK blood services could move to a more individualised donor selection policy

Work plan defined to:

- Gather epidemiological, behavioural and psychosocial **evidence** to determine the most appropriate **questions** for effectively assessing infectious **risk**



# Changes from FAIR



<sup>1</sup> The donor will be asked additional questions. For past syphilis – permanent deferral. For past gonorrhoea – 3 month deferral

Note: new donors are asked an additional question about if they have EVER had syphilis, if yes they will be permanently deferred

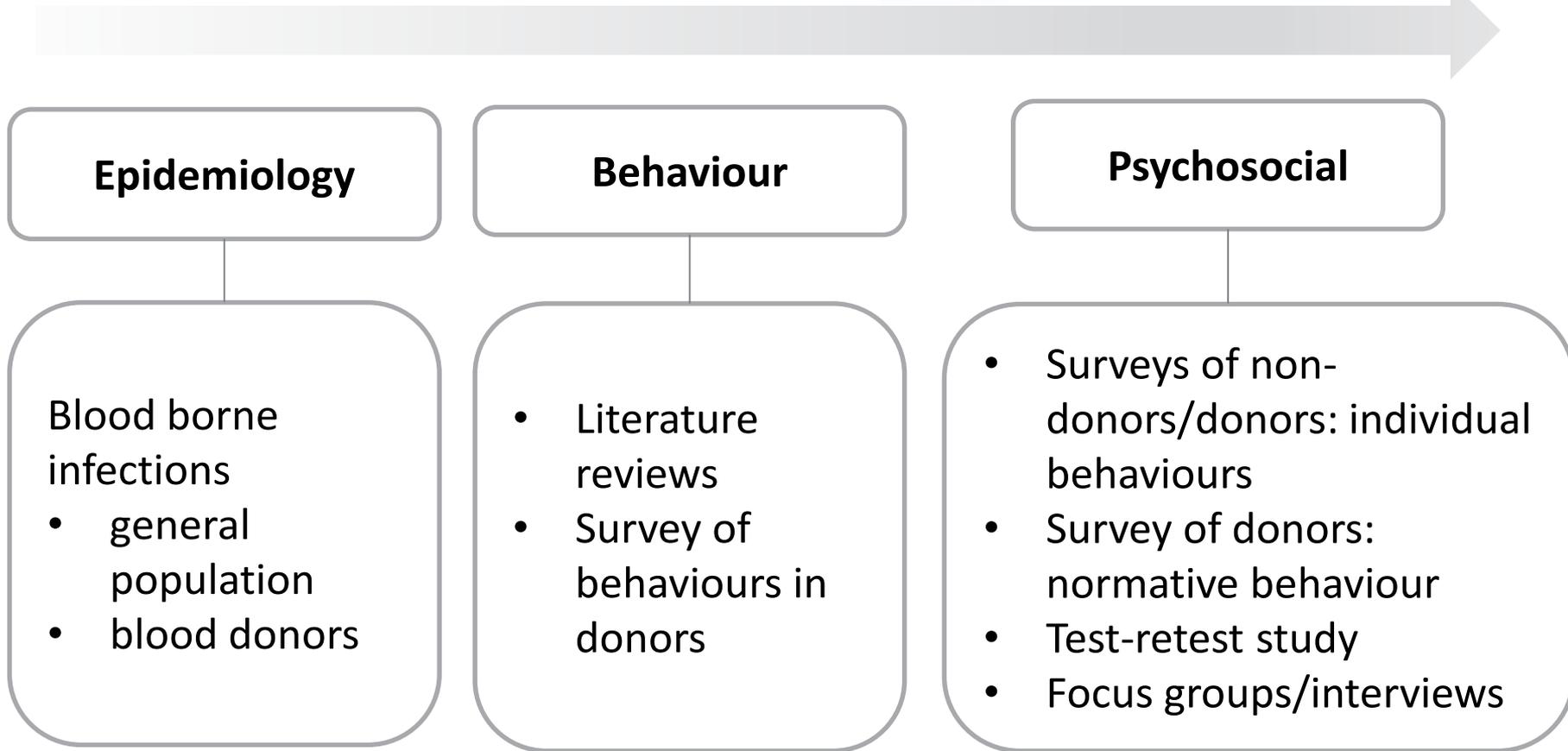
# Methods of FAIR

March 2020



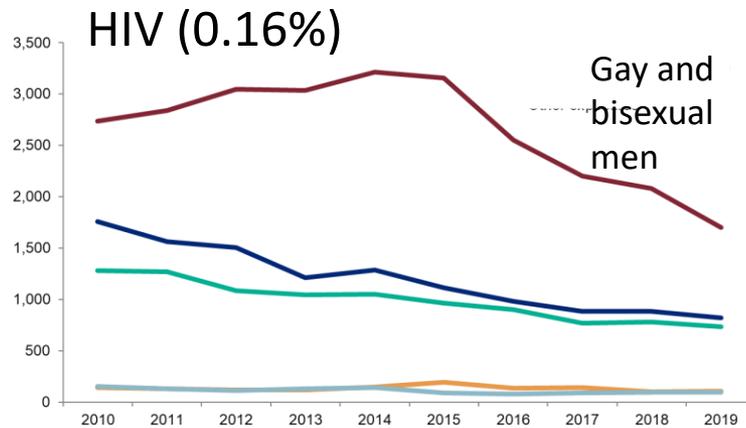
**February 2019**  
Steering group

**October 2020**  
Final report



# Epidemiology - viruses

## General population



HBV (<2%)

- Unprotected sex with multiple partners

HCV (0.21%)

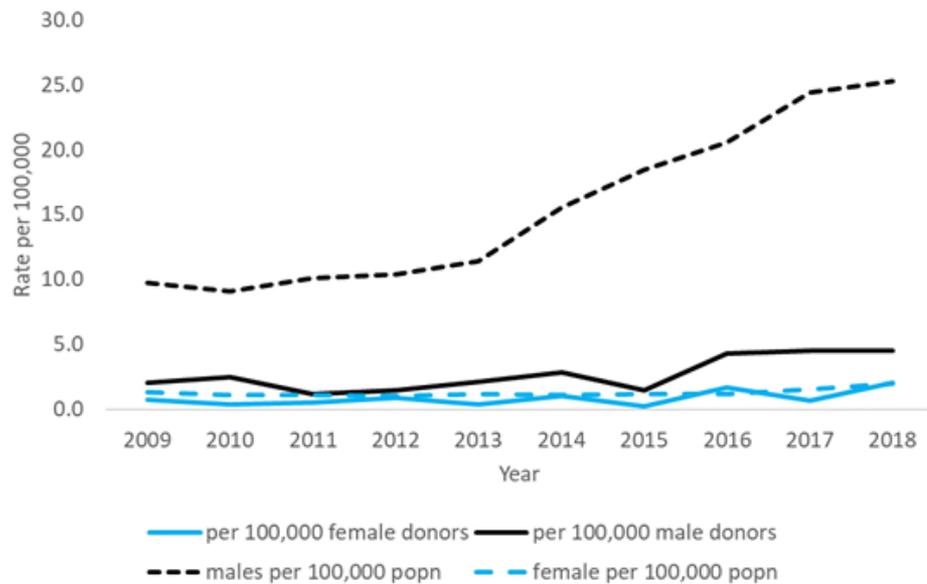
- People who inject drugs

## Blood donors

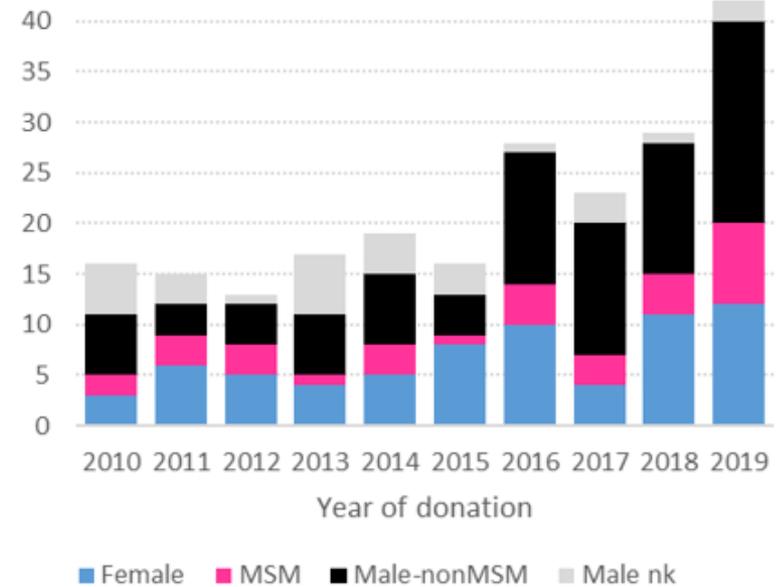
- Decreasing trend HBV, HCV HIV and HTLV
- 2019 - 5.7 per 100,000 donations
- Last 10 years, UK residual risk highest HBV at around 0.7 per million donations

# Epidemiology - syphilis

## General population and donors



## Recent infections in donors



# Increased risk sexual behaviours

## Literature review (17 key studies)

Association between behaviour and HIV/STI acquisition

Strength of evidence	Behaviour
High	Chemsex
	Bacterial STI
Medium	Number of sexual partners
	Less frequent condom use
	Type of sex (specifically receptive anal sex)
Low/none	Clinic attendance
	New sexual partner
	Exclusivity

## Donor survey (BEST)

Extent of behaviours in current donor population

1,311 responses (19%)

<5% reported increased risk behaviours

Low rates of deferrals expected

# Psychosocial surveys

## UK university staff/students 2019-2020

Individual's response  
N=732 (500 donors)

Test – retest  
2020 (N=31)

## UK donors 2020

Responses of others  
N=12,873 (16%)



11 sexual behaviours: accuracy, appropriateness, intention to donate

## Psychometric analysis

4 sexual behaviours statistically clustered: *STI diagnosis, Chemsex, new and number of partners*

- Reliably reported, associated with self-reported higher risk of infection and impression management bias
- Low and acceptable risk to patient safety
- Perceived accuracy of recall was reported as high

# Questions perceived as most likely to deter donors

Put 'me' put 'others' off

$\rho = .80$	Survey 1 'put you off'	Survey 2 'put others off'
Have you had anal sex in the last 3 months?	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Have you had ONLY oral sex in the last 3 months (AND no anal or vaginal sex)?	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
How many sexual partners have you had in the last 3 months, including oral, anal or vaginal sex (please indicate the number)?	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Have you received penetrative sex in the last 3 months?	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Drugs	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
Have you given penetrative sex in the last 3 months?	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
Do you believe your current relationship is exclusive (neither of you have sex with other people)?	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>
Did you use condoms every time you had sex in the last 3 months (oral, anal or vaginal sex)?	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
Have you been diagnosed with or been treated for gonorrhea, syphilis or chlamydia in the past 12 months?	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>
Have you had any new sexual partners in the last 3 months?	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
PrEP or PEP	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>

# Focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders

## MSM

5 focus groups  
11 interviews

## Donors

1 focus group  
6 interviews

## Staff

2 focus groups

## Recipients

4 interviews



Thoughts about blood donation. Donor behaviour. Donor health check. Ways to encourage donation.

## Qualitative analysis

Issues relating to accuracy, appropriateness, potential to deter and benefits triangulated with the psychometric findings

- Accuracy – safety for patient/communicate risk
- Deterrent – anal sex
- Benefit – more equitable and inclusive (attracting new donors)

# Recipient views

<b>Main Themes</b>	<b>Sub-Themes</b>
<b>Trust in Donors</b>	Trusted and Generous Donors – Not just saving lives, but giving a life
	Trust donors to Self-Defer
<b>Intersectionality</b>	Sensitivity to culture, ethnicity, sex and politics
<b>Donor-Recipient linkage</b>	safety to recipients

# Summarising the evidence

- Epidemiology revealed low levels of blood borne infections in general and donor populations, with most infections among key groups
- Behaviours associated with these were used to formulate potential questions for a policy to identify increased risk individuals
- Psychological analysis found cohesion of questions regarding epidemiological high risk behaviours and the acceptability, reliability and accuracy of responses



# Implementation & monitoring

- Implementation Project Board & Team across the 4 UK services
- *'Donation Safety Check'* to be finalised
- Donor comms, training & other donor information in development – 'safety' v 'risk'
- Sex in HIV endemic areas Q under review
  
- Go-live across UK summer 2021
  
- Post implementation monitoring:
  - Clinical/micro team regular review with go/no-go
  - UK surveillance positive donors, incidence, prevalence and RR
  - On session survey of who's attending & views on FAIR
  - Assessment of deferrals
  - Large scale compliance survey
  - Additional virology and PrEP use