

PFAS Newsletter, September 2023

Dear Islanders,

Summary from the PFAS Scientific Advisory Panel meeting

The most recent PFAS Scientific Advisory Panel meeting was held on 6 September, where the Panel discussed their recommendations for the first of their reports, which is on therapeutic phlebotomy. I would like to share a summary of the discussions from the meeting.

The topics that the Panel discussed were:

1. **Inclusion criteria** - who is likely to benefit from a therapeutic phlebotomy service, and what blood level threshold where phlebotomy is advised?
2. **Exclusion criteria** - who is unlikely to benefit from a therapeutic phlebotomy service?
3. **Tests and measurement** - during the service, what tests and measurements should be taken, and what other data should be collected?
4. **Rhythm of donation** - how often and how much blood should be taken?
5. **High risk groups** - are there particular higher risk groups requiring additional attention?
6. **Recommendation** - does the Panel recommend a service should go ahead?

An overview of the discussion is summarised here:

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The Panel discussed the importance of prioritising access to the service for people who have higher PFAS blood levels, because if someone has lower levels (close to the background levels of the rest of the general population) there would be less to gain from having phlebotomy. After significant discussion, the Panel agreed that the inclusion criteria they would recommend would be a total sum of PFAS at greater than 10 nanograms per millilitre of blood.

If the phlebotomy service does go ahead, it would be for people who have already had their blood tested as part of the Government-funded testing in 2022. The service would require a clinical lead (such as a haematologist) who can clinically assess service users on an individual basis as to whether they should be included where the inclusion criteria are not met, for reasons other than PFAS blood level.

The Panel recommends that the starting point for inclusion and exclusion criteria are based on the general blood donation service, but if there is demand for the service from someone outside of this range, patients should be assessed on a 1:1 basis by the clinical lead for the service. This 1:1 clinical review would apply to anyone who is younger than 16 or older than 65, or under 50kg in weight. Blood donation is not common in pregnancy, so pregnant

women would be excluded based on safety. Specific health issues, for example determining if a person with a heart condition could be more at risk, would be picked up by clinical review.

During the service, what tests and measurements should be taken, and what other data should be collected?

Any programme should include repeat blood testing for PFAS levels to monitor the effectiveness of the service. To ensure that service users are healthy enough to continue to participate, testing haemoglobin and iron levels should be undertaken, and blood pressure checked. The Panel recommended testing cholesterol given the potential association with PFAS, and measures of symptoms and wellbeing should be undertaken.

How often and how much blood should be taken?

The Panel gave a general recommendation that the default frequency would be one blood draw every two months. Clinical judgement from the service lead should be used based on factors such as lower body weight, blood pressure and iron levels etc.

Does the Panel recommend a service should go ahead?

The Panel have recommended that a programme of therapeutic phlebotomy should go ahead. The section below outlines what will happen next.

Next steps

We will hold the in-person report consultation launch event for affected Islanders with the PFAS Scientific Advisory Panel on **Wednesday 11 October 2023, from 5:30pm to 7:30pm**. Venue details will follow.

This will be an opportunity to meet the PFAS Panel members, who will explain the first interim report on a therapeutic phlebotomy service. There will then be a two-week consultation period in which you can submit any further comments. The consultation period will run until 25 October 2023. This will be an email consultation and we will send out further details prior to the event.

The event will also launch the consultation for the draft scope of the second report, which will be an assessment of the impact of PFAS exposure on health.

Once the consultation on the first report has finished it will be presented to Ministers. We expect to hold a meeting with Islanders to launch the report in early December, when Ministers will confirm how the recommendations made by the panel will be progressed.

Next Panel meeting dates (online)

Thursday 12 October, 10:00am – 1:00pm
Thursday 16 November, 10:00am – 1:00pm

We will be adding agendas and minutes to the website [PFAS in Jersey \(gov.je\)](https://www.gov.je/PFAS)

As always, if you have any questions, please email publichealth@gov.je.

Best wishes

Professor Peter Bradley

Director of Public Health