

Health Clearance for Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV

**for
New Healthcare Workers with Direct
Clinical Contact with Patients**

Health Clearance for Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV

**for
New Healthcare Workers with Direct
Clinical Contact with Patients**

© Crown copyright 2008

ISBN: 978-0-7559-6998-2

Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Produced for the Scottish Government by RR Donnelley B55036 04-08

Published by the Scottish Government April 2008

Further copies are available from
Blackwell's Bookshop
53 South Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1YS

The text pages of this document are printed on recycled paper and are 100% recyclable.

**HEALTH CLEARANCE FOR TUBERCULOSIS, HEPATITIS B,
HEPATITIS C AND HIV**
for
New Healthcare Workers with Direct Clinical Contact with Patients

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Summary	3
Introduction	5
Summary of Action	
- Standard Health Clearance	8
- Additional Health Clearance	9
- Timing of Health Checks	9
- Existing health checks	9
Categories of New Healthcare Workers	10
- Medical students	10
- Nursing students	10
- Dentistry	10
- Other students	11
- Healthcare workers performing exposure-prone procedures (EPPs) for the first time	11
- Healthcare workers returning to the NHS who may have been exposed to serious communicable diseases	11
- Healthcare workers from locum and recruitment agencies, including NHS professionals	12
- Healthcare workers in the independent healthcare sector	12
Standard health checks for serious communicable diseases for healthcare workers new to the NHS	13
- Tuberculosis (TB)	13
o <i>Preventing infection in healthcare settings: occupational health</i>	15
- Offer of Hepatitis B immunisation	16
- Offer of testing for hepatitis C: non-EPP workers	16
- Offer of testing for HIV: non-EPP workers	17
Additional health checks for serious communicable diseases for healthcare workers new to the NHS who will perform EPPs and existing workers new to EPPs	18
- Hepatitis B	18
- Hepatitis C	19
- HIV	20
Other considerations	21
- Overseas recruitment	21

-	Laboratory tests	22
	o <i>Identification and validation of samples submitted for testing</i>	22
	o <i>Laboratories</i>	23
	o <i>Health clearance certificates</i>	23
	o <i>Healthcare workers applying for posts or training involving exposure-prone procedures who decline to be tested</i>	23
-	Occupational health advice	23
-	Confidentiality	24
-	Publicising the new arrangements to prospective employees and students	24
-	Audit and surveillance	24
	Annex A - Extract from Immunisation against infectious disease	25
	Annex B - Exposure-prone procedures (EPPs)	33
	Annex C - Regulatory bodies' statements on professional responsibilities	42

Standard Health Clearance

1. This guidance recommends that all new healthcare workers, including students, who will have direct clinical contact with patients (as opposed to casual or social contact):

- have checks for tuberculosis disease/immunity;
- are offered hepatitis B immunisation, with post-immunisation testing of response; and
- are offered tests for hepatitis C and HIV.

2. To be clear, in the case of hepatitis B the only requirement is the offer of immunisation and testing; although health care workers should be encouraged to commence immunisation and testing there is no requirement for them to do so. Likewise in the case of hepatitis C and HIV the only requirement is that health care workers be offered tests. Health care workers are not required to undertake such tests.

3. These standard health clearance checks should be completed pre-appointment before clinical duties commence. All checks for TB disease/immunity must be completed before clinical duties commence.

Additional Health Clearance

4. For new healthcare workers, including students, who will perform exposure-prone procedures (EPPs), additional health clearance will also be needed. Additional health clearance means being non-infectious for:

- HIV (antibody negative),
- hepatitis B (surface antigen negative or, if positive, e-antigen negative with a viral load of 10^3 genome equivalents/ml or less); and
- hepatitis C (antibody negative or, if positive, negative for hepatitis C RNA).

5. Additional health clearance checks must be completed before confirmation of an appointment to an EPP post, as the healthcare worker will be ineligible for appointment if found to be infectious.

Definition of New Health Care Workers

6. For the purposes of this guidance, a new healthcare worker includes:

- healthcare workers new to the NHS (see para 17);
- healthcare workers moving to post or training that involves EPPs for the first time in their career (see para 17 and 39); and

- returning healthcare workers, depending on what activities they have engaged in whilst away from the health service (see paragraphs 40 - 41).

7. The guidance is not intended to prevent those infected with blood-borne viruses from working in the NHS, but rather to restrict them from working in those clinical areas where their infection may pose a risk to patients in their care. This is consistent with existing policy, which imposes restrictions on the working practises of those healthcare workers known to be infectious carriers of HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Existing guidance

8. This health clearance guidance is additional to existing guidance on healthcare workers and bloodborne viruses and is intended to reinforce and extend existing measures to reduce the risk of healthcare worker to patient transmission of BBVs and TB.

Timing

9. The measures proposed in this guidance should be implemented and in place as soon as is reasonably practicable but by no later than 1 August 2008.

