

press release

For immediate release

New Online Campaign Against the Gay and Bi Blood Ban to be Launched

An online campaign fighting against the ban on gay and bisexual men giving blood is to be launched at the end of February. Birmingham based campaign group 'Project Negative' are launching their multimedia site to educate people about the ban.

The website will include podcasts, interviews, photography and blogs explaining the ban and exploring the issues around it as well as documenting their own events. Over the next few months they hope to set up demonstrations, petitions and protests to highlight the issue.

The founder of 'Project Negative', Adam Stewart says:

"The ban on gay and bisexual men giving blood is discrimination. At Project Negative we understand that safety is important, what we don't understand is why gay and bisexual men are the only ones being singled out as 'dangerous'. We think that anyone who has unsafe sex is at risk of infection so there should be policies put in place that screen sexual activity and not sexual orientation."

Currently there is a lifetime ban on any male who has had either anal or oral sex with another man. This is justified by the National Blood Service by the view that gay men have a higher risk of carrying HIV. They believe that this increases the risk of HIV being leaked into the system, despite rigorous screening.

Project Negative understands that safety is a priority but believes that the screening should be based on sexual activity not sexuality. This means that there should be a temporary ban for anyone practicing unsafe sex, whether that is heterosexual or

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homosexual sex. They believe that a life time ban on anyone who has had homosexual sex is discriminatory.

Although there was much excitement over the SaBTO (Advisory committee of Safety of Blood Tissue and Organs) meeting in October 2009 which was to discuss blood donor exclusions, very little came of it. Project Negative wants to keep the issue of donor exclusion in the public eye as well as educating more people about the ban.

The 'Project Negative' website is to be launched on the 19th March at a launch party in Birmingham.

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