**Information Leaflet for Patients: Testing for Blood Borne Viruses**

Whilst under the care of NHS Lothian, a member of staff has been exposed to your blood or body fluids via an injury at work.

This leaflet is to help you understand why you are being asked to have a test for HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C (blood borne viruses). The injury is not your fault and this process is not intended to cause you any distress.

* The injury that has occurred may put a health care worker at risk from becoming infected with a blood born virus.
* To work out what action needs to be taken, it would be invaluable if we could test your blood for the presence of infections Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV.
* If negative all minds are put at rest. If the test is positive for any of these viruses, it is important to be aware that Hepatitis C is curable, and both HIV and Hepatitis B are treatable.

HIV treatment has progressed over the years and people living with HIV take minimal tablets with few/ no side effects and have a greatly increased life expectancy on treatment.

**What happens next?**

A staff member will speak to you to ask you some questions about whether you are likely to have an infection like hepatitis or HIV. Some of these questions are personal but please do not be offended – everyone in this situation will be asked these. If any particular risk for infection is identified, then the injured staff member will start to take medicines to prevent HIV.

**So why should I have the tests?**

* If you are found not to have the virus (the test is **negative**), the injured staff member can stop taking the medicines.
* If you **choose not to have the test,** then the injured staff member will continue this treatment for 28 days. This may result in significant side-effects or complications as well as sick leave.
* If your test is **positive,** then it is good to know about it as soon as possible. You will have access to support and to treatment. People with HIV can now be expected to enjoy a near normal life expectancy if they are diagnosed early enough and have treatment.

**What will I be tested for?**

* **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV):** HIV is a virus which can cause the immune system to fail.
* **Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C**: viruses which can cause liver damage.

**How will I get the results?**

The results will be communicated to you by the team looking after your care.

**Will my results be shared with anyone?**

Your results are confidential which means they will not be communicated to anyone without your consent or knowledge. The reason for taking your bloods is to help to identify the appropriate care pathway for the injured staff member and, with your consent, the results may be shared with Occupational Health and kept confidentially within the staff members notes under ‘source patient’, without identifying who you are in the notes.

**What if I still do not want to have a test?**

You will not be tested for HIV or Hepatitis against your will. We will support your choice and your care will not be affected by your decision. You are welcome to change your mind and have a test at any point. If you would like further information, then please ask a member of staff.