Change Notification for the UK Blood and Tissue Services

Notification date 16 November 2026
Effective date 14 December 2026
Implementation To be determined by each Service

CN 50-2026

Body piercing

	Content changed	Type of change	Guidelines affected
1	Body piercing	Updated entry	**Tissue (deceased)** **Tissue (live)**

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Note: this document indicates inserted and ~~deleted~~ text. This formatting will not apply in the published text.

1. Body piercing

Guidelines affected	Reason for change
Tissue (deceased) Tissue (live)	Additional information on memorial tattoos has been added.

Essential information

Includes	Derma-rolling, ear and body piercing, permanent and semi-permanent makeup, tattooing (including memorial tattoos), platelet rich plasma (PRP) facials, ritual self-flagellation.
Obligatory	**Must not donate if:** Less than 3 months after last piercing.
Discretionary	**Piercings performed within the UK in a commercial setting:** Accept. **Piercings performed outside the UK or within the UK in an unlicensed non-commercial premises more than 3 months ago:** Accept. **Painting, stencilling or transfers applied to the skin without piercing:** Accept.

Supporting information

Additional information	Under all current legislation, it is a criminal offence to trade without registration (licensing) or to be in breach of the relevant bylaws. Similar provisions are in place in Scotland in the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Skin Piercing and Tattooing) Order 2006. Some London boroughs also require a 'special treatment' license. It is expected that all premises will follow infection control processes including using single needles for treatments. In the UK, local authorities are responsible for regulating and monitoring businesses providing semi-permanent skin colouring procedures (micropigmentation, semi-permanent make-up and temporary tattooing). The focus of legislation covering local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (Local Government [Miscellaneous Provisions] Act 1982) is on

minimising infection risks using compulsory registration of practitioners and premises and optional powers to make bylaws.

For piercings performed outside the UK or within the UK in an unlicensed, non-commercial establishment less than 3 months ago, the donor may only be accepted following documented individual risk assessment and discussion with the transplant centre if the risk of delaying transplant outweighs the risk of transmission of infections.

Piercing has passed infection from person to person. Waiting 3 months helps to ensure that the infections tested for by the UK Blood and Tissue Services will be picked up.

Memorial tattoos are permanent or temporary body art designs that honour, celebrate, and remember a loved one or pet who has passed away. They may include a small amount of the cremated remains of the individual or animal mixed with the tattoo ink. The temperature required for cremation of both humans and animals safely exceeds that required to inactivate any known infectious agent that may have been present in the remains, and they should be considered as a standard body piercing when assessing risk.

Platelet rich plasma (PRP) facials (also known as 'vampire facials') have been associated with HIV transmission.

Ritual self-flagellation is carried out by some religious groups. The practice includes beating or flogging oneself with sharp objects. It may be associated with exposure to blood from other participants, either directly or through contamination of shared equipment.

This guidance presumes that a validated NAT test for HIV, HBV and HCV is negative; if this test is stopped for any reason, the guidance will change.