

# NATIONAL HIV TESTING WEEK

18-24 NOVEMBER 2017

## HIV PREVENTION ENGLAND

### Campaign briefing for HIV, sexual health and other community based organisations

## NATIONAL HIV TESTING WEEK

**National HIV Testing Week** (NHTW) starts on 18 November 2017. The purpose of the week is to promote regular testing among the most affected population groups and to reduce the rates of undiagnosed people and those diagnosed late.

Last year hundreds of clinics and organisations participated by raising awareness, providing extra testing opportunities and promoting services – with many using the free and customisable printed and digital resources provided by HIV Prevention England.

### GET INVOLVED AND SUPPORT THIS GREAT EVENT.

## HIV IN THE UK

In the UK, people are testing more, staying protected by using condoms and Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), getting diagnosed and starting HIV treatment earlier. Thanks to this combination approach, the UK is witnessing a substantial decline in HIV diagnoses. In 2016, there was an 18% decline in new diagnoses from 6,286 in 2015 to 5,164 in 2016 (Public Health England (PHE), 2017). This drop is especially high among men who have sex with men (MSM).

- Overall: 1.91 million HIV tests were carried out in 2015 compared to 1.6 million in 2012 (PHE, 2012-2016).
- In London there was a 29% decrease in new diagnoses among MSM in 2016 compared to 2015, whereas in other parts of England there was an 11% decrease (PHE, 2017).
- Nationally, there was an 18.4% drop in new diagnoses among people of black African ethnicity (PHE, 2017).



**A finger-prick test  
is all it takes.**

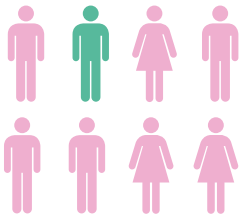
The largest decline in diagnosis rates are in parts of London which have the highest testing rates and prompt access to treatment (PHE, 2017).

**Testing, along with other prevention tools, is working. However, there are still challenges which remain, and we need to build upon this exciting progress in order to succeed in stopping HIV in the UK.**

# RATIONALE FOR NATIONAL HIV TESTING WEEK

## ✓ HIV testing is crucial.

- It identifies those who are undiagnosed, avoids late diagnosis for the patient's own benefit and avoids onward transmission to others.



**In total one in eight people does not know that they have HIV.**

**Early diagnosis = normal life expectancy** (PHE, 2016).

**Late diagnosis leads to a tenfold increase of death within one year** (PHE, 2016).

**Those who are undiagnosed spend an average of three to five years unaware they have the virus** (PHE, 2017).

## ✓ HIV testing is working, but more needs to be done.

- A 29% decrease in new HIV diagnosis rates in 2016 among London-based MSM has been attributed to high testing rates and prompt access to treatment.
- Rates of late diagnosis have reduced, especially among MSM. However, this figure still remains high, especially among heterosexual men and women (PHE, 2017).

**2015: MSM – 30%, heterosexual men – 48%, heterosexual women – 54%** (PHE, 2015)

**2016: MSM – 32%, heterosexual men – 60%, heterosexual women – 47%** (PHE, 2017)

## ✓ There are many testing options available.

- HIV testing in the UK is free and available to everyone in a range of options to suit individual situations. This could be at their local clinic, a community-based testing event or in the privacy of their own home. Testing can be carried out via a finger-prick test, an oral swab test or a clinical blood test.

## ✓ HIV testing is cost-effective.

- Diagnosing HIV early is cost-saving because it significantly reduces the costs of inpatient admission and treatment and also averts onward transmission.
- In areas of extremely high prevalence, opportunistic testing is cost-effective for everyone admitted to hospital or attending a GP surgery. The additional cost of an HIV test for a person already undergoing blood tests is likely to be low.
- In other settings or areas of lower prevalence, targeting specific groups who are most at risk is most cost-effective.  
(National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), 2016)

## ✓ Increasing HIV testing is widely recommended.

- National HIV testing guidance recommends the expansion of HIV testing across clinical and community settings in the UK. However, there is concern over limited implementation and lack of commissioning in some settings (NICE, 2016).

## ✓ National HIV Testing Week puts a spotlight on HIV testing.

- More than any other time of the year, National HIV Testing Week magnifies HIV prevention services, driving up opportunities for the whole health system to increase HIV testing and raise awareness of HIV issues.
- The different elements of National HIV Testing Week work to complement and amplify existing local services, with the ultimate goal of getting individuals who most need it - but who would otherwise never test - to do so.

## NATIONAL HIV TESTING WEEK PUTS A NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT ON HIV TESTING.

**National HIV Testing Week** provides amplified opportunities for individuals who would otherwise never test to do so, and prompts all individuals at risk to get tested.

The campaign seeks to raise awareness of the necessity, simplicity and ease of HIV testing, and provides increased opportunities to test – be it in clinical settings, in primary care, through community-based rapid testing or via postal testing.

### KEY ELEMENTS OF THE CAMPAIGN

An extensive outdoor advertising campaign will launch at the beginning of November 2017 in the following areas

- London
- Brighton
- Slough
- Leeds
- Luton
- Reading
- Plymouth
- Milton Keynes
- Corby
- Newcastle
- Blackpool
- Stevenage
- Norwich
- Manchester

National and local press and media coverage will be secured in targeted print and digital publications including Boyz, Attitude, Voice, Vox Africa and many others. The focus will be on sharing real stories of real people, individuals from most-affected groups talking about their testing experiences and encouraging others to get tested.

Social media influencers and celebrities will support **National HIV Testing Week** to increase the reach of the campaign, by creating and sharing photo and video content with messages on testing and other activities.

Social media imagery and video content will be used extensively on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other digital platforms to promote testing. The Twitter and Facebook handle for **National HIV Testing Week** this year is **#HIVTestWeek**.

We have an online 'Test Finder' tool, which people can use to find regular and additional testing services during **National HIV Testing Week**.

Free, high-quality and award-winning information resources are also available to support any clinics, organisations or groups which carry out HIV prevention work with MSM or African heterosexuals. These include:

- double-sided A4 posters, including posters to promote local testing services (customisable)
- leaflets on HIV testing and condoms
- interactive outreach resources including scratch cards and peel and reveal cards
- stickers, condom packs and other promotional items.

Please note, most items are free but the quantities of some may be limited. Requests for reasonable quantities will be met. Materials are funded only for distribution within England and the content is primarily targeted towards African people and MSM.

Additionally, we will be providing a comprehensive social media pack of **National HIV Testing Week** material for your organisation to promote via your own social media channels and networks.

As a service provider from a HIV, sexual health or other community based organisation, you are central to the campaign's success and have an incredibly important role to play in promoting local testing events and ensuring that access to testing is available to all during **National HIV Testing Week**.

### GREAT, I'M ON BOARD. HOW CAN I SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN?

We encourage you to do whatever is best for your local area and community. Consider the list of actions on the next page.

## TO DO LIST

1. Order and use **National HIV Testing Week** branded posters and resources in your service. Organise local testing events in clinic and as part of outreach in community settings.
2. Register the testing events you have scheduled for November through our online 'Test Finder' tool. This will be promoted to people at high risk in your local area via online promotion.
3. Co-ordinate any outreach activities with your Local Authority and other community groups.
4. Organise local publicity to raise awareness and explain the benefits of testing.
5. Invite your local MP, mayor or other public figures to test or pledge their support.
6. Promote the 'When to Test', 'Test Finder' and 'Which Test' tools available on the [www.startswithme.org.uk](http://www.startswithme.org.uk) website.
7. Share, repost and retweet **National HIV Testing Week** social media content to all public networks, and use the social media pack on our website to customise your posts. The Twitter and Facebook handle for **National HIV Testing Week** is **#HIVtestweek**.
8. Invite your partner organisations, including educational and health bodies as well as Social Services and other groups, to take part in **National HIV Testing Week**. They can also do this by promoting the digital information and services on the [www.startswithme.org.uk](http://www.startswithme.org.uk) website through their own social media channels.
9. Are you based in a high or very high prevalence area? Visit the PHE 'Fingertips' tool to find out the HIV and sexual health needs of your area: <http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/sexualhealth/>
10. Visit the PHE, NICE and BHIVA websites for the most up-to-date national data and best practice recommendations for HIV testing and prevention:  
[www.gov.uk/government/collections/hiv-surveillance-data-and-management](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hiv-surveillance-data-and-management)  
[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng60](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng60)  
[www.bhiva.org/guidelines.aspx](http://www.bhiva.org/guidelines.aspx)

**From 16 October 2017  
order information resources:  
<http://hperesource.nflex.co.uk>**

**Register all your testing events via our Test Finder:  
[www.aidsmap.com/nhtw](http://www.aidsmap.com/nhtw)**

**We would love to hear from you about your National HIV Testing Week plans  
and get feedback about the campaign.**

**Please email [hpe@tht.org.uk](mailto:hpe@tht.org.uk) for help facilitating National HIV Testing Week events  
or for more information or support.**

# FEEDBACK FROM NATIONAL HIV TESTING WEEK 2016

Last year, many of the clinicians participated by providing:

1. Additional sessions of an HIV testing service they usually provided.
2. Testing services that they did not usually provide.
3. Additional promotion of HIV testing services.
4. Use of National HIV Testing Week materials to promote HIV testing.
5. Encouragement to other services so they could provide or promote HIV testing.
6. Referrals to [www.startswithme.org.uk](http://www.startswithme.org.uk)

National HIV Testing Week had the biggest impact in the following ways:

- Sexual health clinicians and General Practitioners increased awareness of the importance of HIV testing in their local community.
- They delivered more HIV tests.
- They built local alliances with other agencies.
- They engaged local businesses in the HIV testing agenda.



## CASE STUDY

### Tomorrow's Women Wirral, Merseyside

'This year we held an HIV awareness and testing event at the Tomorrow's Women Wirral (TWW) centre, in partnership with Sahir House.

Sahir House has been offering HIV support, information and training across Merseyside since 1985. It offers a wide range of services to people living with or affected by HIV, HIV related training, up-to-date HIV information and opportunities to volunteer. We have also worked in partnership with Terrence Higgins Trust in the past - they gave us invaluable support with regards to dealing with the sensitivities of HIV.

Partnership work with Sahir House, alongside our own work with women in Wirral, enabled us to hold a successful event.

The session was relaxed and informative – Emma from Sahir House clearly knew her stuff and made everybody feel so comfortable about a topic which has the potential to feel strange, scary or 'taboo'. We want to thank Sahir House and Emma for coming and spreading awareness around HIV, demystifying the topic carefully and expertly. One impact was that several women volunteered to be tested – something they may not have done or been able to do without the event. Another effect was that staff, volunteers and service users were involved in open discussion about HIV, a topic that may previously have been off the table for many individuals.

Some long-term benefits from our National HIV Testing Week activities are that women, staff and volunteers at TWW are more knowledgeable of the causes and symptoms of HIV as well as preventative measures. This not only keeps women safer from contracting HIV but also helps people to be more informed and sympathetic towards those living with the virus. This all has a knock-on effect on the general mental health and wellbeing of the local community.

Getting involved in raising awareness, debunking myths and reducing stigma around HIV is not only worthwhile, rewarding and informative – it's vital. Our Top Tip would be to approach the subject with as little trepidation as possible – HIV is a condition like any other, without the need for stigmatisation or taboo. Taboos and stigma keep people in the dark, let's work together to combat that and keep ourselves safe!

#### References:

Public Health England, Annual reports 2012–2016; Health Protection BBV Reports 2013– 2016. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hiv-surveillance-data-and-management> [20 June 2017]

PHE, 2017. Annual data tables. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hiv-annual-data-tables>

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### The HIV and sexual health charity for life

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HIV Prevention England is the Government-funded national HIV prevention programme for England.

To find out more about our work visit: [hivpreventionengland.org.uk](http://hivpreventionengland.org.uk)



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