

NATIONAL HIV TESTING WEEK

18-24 NOVEMBER 2017

HIV PREVENTION ENGLAND

**Campaign briefing for clinicians,
general practitioners and other
primary care professionals**

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.**

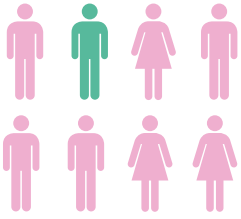
The largest decline in diagnosis rates are in parts of London which have the highest testing rates and prompt access to treatment (PHE, 2017).

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 clinician, 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. If you have screens in your patient waiting rooms, we invite you to play our HIV testing promotional videos. Contact us to get a copy: hpe@tht.org.uk
2. Organise local testing events in clinic and as part of outreach in community settings.
3. If you are in a high or very high prevalence area, arrange for opportunistic HIV testing in your primary care facility, including blood tests and new patient registrations. In all prevalence areas, offer an HIV test for patients presenting with indicator conditions. For help on how to set this up, visit www.opttest.eu/planningguide
4. 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.
5. Co-ordinate any outreach activities with your Local Authority and other community groups.
6. Invite your local MP, mayor or other public figures to test or pledge their support.
7. Promote the 'When to Test', 'Test Finder' and 'Which Test' tools available on the www.startswithme.org.uk website.
8. 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**.
9. 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 do this by linking with local HIV and sexual health services or promoting the digital information and services on the www.startswithme.org.uk website through their own social media channels.
10. 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/>
11. 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
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng60
www.bhiva.org/guidelines.aspx
12. Complete the free, two-hour Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Sexual Health in Primary Care online course. It includes normalising testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and overcoming barriers to discussing HIV and sexual health:
www.rcgp.org.uk/learning/online-learning/ole/sexual-health-in-primary-care.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**

**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 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

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

Sexual Health Programme Board, Brighton & Hove

'For **National HIV Testing Week** 2016, we introduced an alert on the electronic blood test request form that clinicians use when ordering blood tests. This was designed to prompt them to request an HIV test when ordering blood tests for a patient. The initiative was supported with funding from our local Public Health department, who paid for all HIV tests requested in higher-risk groups. The coding for these tests was built into the request form. The initiative was supplemented by an awareness campaign leading up to and during **National HIV Testing Week**, explaining what the alert was and how to use it. The initiative ran over **National HIV Testing Week** and the alert was used by 37 GP practices across Brighton and Hove.

It was a work of partnership, and we worked with the Lead Commissioner for Sexual Health and HIV, the Director of Public Health, a local consultant in HIV/GUM and the local laboratory to make it work.

In terms of impact, it definitely raised awareness. Anecdotally, clinicians were impressed with the fact that such an alert could be added and it was a point of discussion. They were also impressed that something so streamlined was built into the request system, so it did not create any extra work for them. A medical student from Brighton and Sussex Medical School collected HIV test data before, during and after the intervention. Three months prior to **National HIV Testing Week**, an average of 36 tests per week were performed across 37 GP practices. During **National HIV Testing Week**, this increased to 96 tests (for the week), reflecting a three-fold increase. There was one new diagnosis as a result of the extra testing.

In terms of longer-term impact, during the three months after **National HIV Testing Week**, an average of 41 tests per week were performed, although the statistical significance of the increase was not measured. We learnt lessons locally about barriers faced during the preparation and roll out and hope to make the intervention even better this year.

Our Number One tip for other clinics wanting to do something similar is to start early, keep it simple, go for maximum impact and get key stakeholders like public health and the lab on board at an early stage. Don't give up!'

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The HIV and sexual health charity for life

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To find out more about our work visit: hivpreventionengland.org.uk



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