

PRESS INFORMATION

Scottish people living with HIV experience stigma in the workplace

Waverley Care, Scotland's leading HIV charity providing care and support to people with HIV and Hepatitis C, regularly comes across the lack of knowledge and understanding of HIV which is highlighted so alarmingly in a newly-published survey commissioned by the National AIDS Trust from Ipsos MORI and entitled '*HIV: Public Knowledge and Attitudes 2010*'.

Employment is one particular area, highlighted by the survey, where Waverley Care is aiming to educate and help minimise the impact of HIV stigma in the workplace. As part of a Big Lottery-funded project, (called **Positive Scotland** and run jointly with Terrence Higgins Trust), Waverley Care works with employers to educate them on the rights and responsibilities of employing people with HIV.

According to the survey, a growing number of the public in the UK (38%) think that their employer should tell them if one of their colleagues is HIV positive. **In Scotland, this figure stands at 46%.**

David Johnson, Director of Waverley Care, said: "People living with HIV have the right for their status to be kept confidential in a work setting. HIV is covered by the Equality Act (2010), meaning that people living with HIV no longer have to fill in pre-employment health questionnaires. There is no need for them to disclose their HIV status to their employer or colleagues, unless they wish to do so.

At Waverley Care we hear numerous examples of people who have been discriminated against in the workplace because of their HIV but who do not feel strong enough physically or emotionally to take out a grievance. In some cases it is simply easier to resign. A greater understanding of HIV and its transmission amongst the general population would go a long way to reducing work place discrimination.”

Positive Scotland provides training and information to employers, as well as working on a one-to-one basis with individual service users who are either in employment or considering returning to work.

For further information please contact: Karen Docwra, Fundraising & Communications Team, Waverley Care on 0131 556 9710 or email karen.docwra@waverleycare.org

Notes to Editors

Waverley Care provides care and support to people affected by HIV and Hepatitis C in Scotland. Whether someone is living with HIV or Hepatitis C or are the partner or family member of someone affected by these conditions, we have services that can support them and provide up to date, accurate information and resources.

Our Services

Below is a summary of the services we offer

- **Short-term Residential Intensive Support**

- **Support Services for all, including specialist services for**
 - Africans
 - Children & Young People
 - Gay Men
 - People affected by Drug Misuse
 - Women

- **Community Projects & Support Services including**
 - Advocacy and Information
 - Arts Project
 - Befriending / Buddying
 - Spiritual and Pastoral Care

- Complementary Therapies
 - Counselling
 - Health Promotion
 - Outreach and Support
 - Skills and Employment
- **Prevention & Awareness Raising**

 - **International Development work in Malawi**

PLEASE NOTE - On behalf of our service users we are asking journalists to avoid words such as “victim” and “sufferers”. Where possible, please use the words “people living with HIV” or “people with HIV”. Thank you.