

## World AIDS Day 2019 - Getting to Zero

HIV Scotland and Waverley Care have launched a joint campaign for World AIDS Day calling on action to ensure Scotland can reach zero new HIV transmissions, zero HIV-related deaths and zero HIV-related stigma by 2030.

This World AIDS Day, the charities are asking MSPs to commit to action on spending for HIV in the Scottish Government's annual budget, in order to realise the unique opportunity that we have to effectively eliminate new HIV transmissions.

### What action is needed?

- Time-limited investment in NHS, Local Authority and Health & Social Care Partnership services, ensuring people across Scotland can access testing, treatment and support.
- Additional investment in the third sector, to allow community organisations to reach people who are often ignored or feel excluded from statutory services.
- A multi-disciplinary, co-designed public awareness campaign to update the public consciousness about the modern-day realities of HIV, how it is transmitted and how to prevent it.

### Why is this action needed?

- We have a unique public health opportunity, alongside work to eliminate hepatitis C<sup>i</sup>, to eliminate new HIV transmissions from our society. We've not been able to consider that since smallpox.
- Eliminating new HIV transmissions is a global health priority for the World Health Organisation and UNAIDS<sup>ii</sup>. Scotland should play its part as a small, progressive nation.
- Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus services have been affected by reduction in budgets year-on-year. With increased pressure on NHS resources, access to prevention & testing has become more difficult. We need to ensure that everyone can access our combination prevention tools to eliminate new HIV transmissions.
- In Glasgow, our biggest city, four sexual health services have had to close with a further three on reduced hours due to staff shortages.<sup>iii</sup>
- Thanks to national procurement contracts, the NHS has benefitted from a switch from branded HIV treatment and prevention tools, to cheaper generic medication. This means the budget impact of treatment has fallen significantly freeing up resources that could and should be invested into HIV services to meet the increasing demand.
- During the first year of PrEP implementation on the NHS, 1,872 individuals were prescribed PrEP. Of these, 20% were attending services for the very first time, or for the first time in the previous 10 years.<sup>iv</sup> This is a significant increased demand on services.

- The savings generated from the falling cost of treatment have been invested back in to services in England with London recently announcing a £6m investment in to services and anti-stigma campaigning over the next three years, with a £3m improvement fund opened for tender.<sup>v</sup>
- Our national PrEP programme was assessed as cost-effective on high branded drug costs,<sup>vi</sup> and have since moved to less expensive generic versions has resulted in significant unforeseen savings which could provide additional resources to be invested to ensure everyone who needs PrEP can access it.
- The Scottish Government has set out a clear priority to reduce health inequalities in Scotland. HIV disproportionately affects some of the most marginalised groups in our society. To ensure people can access prevention, testing and treatment, investment will be needed for community-based services to reach groups of the population who often feel excluded from services.
- There hasn't been a public information campaign about HIV since the 90's in Scotland, and savings from the reduced cost of treatment should be invested to ensure that stigma, myths and misinformation is eradicated.
- The recent and ongoing outbreak of HIV among people who inject drugs in Glasgow<sup>vii</sup> shows us why we shouldn't be complacent. We must learn and adapt to ensure that the outbreak is contained, and eradicated.

### **When is this action needed?**

- In order for Scotland to play it's part on the global stage, we need to see time-limited investment, over the next 10 years, in our NHS, HSCPs and Third Sector in order to get to zero and ensure everyone living with HIV is able to have a good quality of life.
- If Scotland can scale up innovative programs to end new HIV transmissions and eradicate stigma, we will have improved the overall public health of the people of Scotland and within 10 years the Scottish Government will see significant costs savings.

### **Who will this action benefit?**

- HIV impacts on some of the most marginalised groups in society, which continues to compound other health inequalities. HIV is most prevalent amongst gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, trans people, African communities, and people who use drugs. Access to the right services is important for these groups to ensure their rights of access to healthcare.
- Approximately 2 young people (15-24) are diagnosed with HIV every month in Scotland<sup>viii</sup>, and continuing levels of infection among heterosexual couples, a public awareness campaign could enable everyone in Scotland to know how to prevent HIV, to reduce new HIV transmissions to zero.

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<sup>i</sup> Scottish Government's Eliminating Hepatitis C Plan (accessed 18/11/2019)

<https://www.gov.scot/news/eliminating-hepatitis-c/>

<sup>ii</sup> Global HIV Targets (accessed 18/11/2019) <https://www.avert.org/global-hiv-targets>

<sup>iii</sup> Sandyford Service Update (accessed 18/11/2019) <https://www.sandyford.org/sexual-health-services/service-updates/>

<sup>iv</sup> PrEP One Year On, Health Protection Scotland (accessed 18/11/2019) <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/implementation-of-hiv-prep-in-scotland-first-year-report/>

<sup>v</sup> Fast-Track Cities London Improvement Fund (accessed 18/11/2019) <https://www.healthylondon.org/our-work/fast-track-cities-initiative/fast-track-cities-london-improvement-fund/>

<sup>vi</sup> Scottish Medicines Consortium – April 2017 decisions news release (accessed 18/11/2019)

<https://www.scottishmedicines.org.uk/about-us/latest-updates/april-2017-decisions-news-release/>

<sup>vii</sup> Surveillance Report – HIV diagnoses in Scotland: Summary report to 31 December 2018 (accessed 18/11/2019) [https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2760/documents/1\\_hiv-diagnoses-in-scotland-summary-to-31-dec-2018.pdf](https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2760/documents/1_hiv-diagnoses-in-scotland-summary-to-31-dec-2018.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> HIV and Education: Guaranteeing Lessons for All (accessed 18/11/2019) <https://www.hiv.scot/news/hivand-education-guaranteeing-lessons-for-all>