

# World AIDS Day

## Information Sheet

World AIDS day is an annual event held every year on 1 December. The day aims to raise awareness about people living with HIV, fight stigma and misconceptions associated with HIV and AIDS, and to raise funds for HIV and AIDS charities.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus which can lead to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). There have been great advancements in HIV treatment since HIV was first discovered 30yrs ago, meaning that the majority of people diagnosed with HIV in the UK today can go on to live normal, healthy lives.

HIV is passed on through vaginal or anal sex without a condom if a partner has an unknown HIV status, a detectable viral load and you aren't taking PrEP. You can also get HIV through sharing injecting drug equipment (high risk) or through oral sex (low risk). A woman can pass HIV onto her baby in the womb, during childbirth and from breastfeeding, though effective HIV medication makes this extremely unlikely.

### Key HIV statistics

- Over 88,000 people, including 315 children aged under 15, received HIV specialist care in 2015.
- Over the last decade, the number of people accessing specialist care for HIV has steadily grown. Over the decade 2006 to 2015, there has been a 73% increase in the number of people accessing HIV care.

- More than half of people newly diagnosed with HIV in 2015 were men who have sex with men (MSM), despite this group only making up an estimated 2-3% of the male population.
- Black African men and women living in the UK are disproportionately affected by HIV, making up 1.8% of the UK population but 31% of all people accessing HIV care.
- In 2015, 36.7 million people were living with HIV globally ([UNAIDS](#))

### National HIV Testing Week

**19 -25 November 2016**

[ItStartsWithMe](#)

National HIV Testing week is run by the Terrence Higgins Trust (THT) for the week before World AIDS Day. The week aims to raise awareness of why getting a HIV test is so important and where and how to get a HIV test. It encourages everyone to go get a HIV test and especially those who are more likely to be affected by HIV: men who have sex with men and Black African men and women. HIV testing reduces the rate of infection and late diagnoses.

## What can you do?

- Promote HIV testing. You could do this via word of mouth/information stalls, on social media, or by blogging about your experience of taking a test. You could even get prominent people (sabbatical officers/Vice chancellor) to get tested and talk about their experience.
- Raise awareness of how you can test. HIV testing is predominantly carried out at a sexual health clinic. Anyone can book a free appointment. Healthcare professionals test an individual's blood. A full test takes a blood sample, but a rapid test needs just a finger-prick.
- You can also distribute information about HIV Home testing kits. These involve someone doing a finger-prick test at home and sending the sample in the post to be tested. If you live in Scotland you are eligible to get [free HIV Home testing kits](#) from THT.
- In 2014 it also became legal to sell [HIV self-testing kits](#) in the UK. Self-testing kits give you the result there and then, without anyone else being involved and without having to send a sample back to tested. In the UK, you can buy a reliable self-testing kit from [BioSURE](#).

## What can I do for World AIDS Day?

There are many different events you can organise at your university or college to raise awareness about World AIDS Day. Visit the [WAD website](#) to find out whether there are events going on near you and how you might get involved. You can also have a look at [THT's website](#) to get inspiration about what you can do. Here are some initial ideas...

- Wear a red ribbon. This simple gesture raises awareness of HIV and AIDS. You can buy a red ribbon from the National AIDS Trust or THT.
- Raise awareness on social media. This year's themes are around ensuring we continue to support people living with HIV and reduce HIV stigma. THT's theme for World AIDS

Day is It's Not Over ([#ItsNotOver](#)). NAT's World AIDS Day focus is around making HIV stigma a thing of the past ([#HIVNotRetro](#)).

- You can also raise money for HIV charities through distributing red ribbons to students and staff. Usual donations of £1 are recommended for each red ribbon you give away.
- Raise awareness about the campaign to get the NHS to provide PrEP by joining the '[United 4 PrEP coalition](#).' PrEP stands for pre-exposure prophylaxis and is a drug which is shown to be very effective in preventing someone from getting HIV. Despite PrEP being available in other countries public health care systems, it is still not available on our NHS.
- Organise film showings. Book a lecture theatre or community venue and play a relevant film. "*And The Band Played On*" and "*We Were Here*" are two very good films about HIV and AIDS. This could be free, or again you could ticket the event or ask for donations. Have red ribbons available here too.
- Candle lit vigils. Many cities, especially those with a large HIV positive community (London, Brighton, Manchester etc.) hold Candle lit vigils for those who have died, are living with or are affected by HIV and AIDS. Organise a trip to your local one. If there isn't one, then organise your own. Talk to local LGBT+ charities to see if they can assist you with the organisation and publication. People such as local councilors and MPs are usually quite happy to speak at these events, which will help attract attention in the media and spread the word.

**Many people don't like to talk about HIV because of HIV stigma - don't be disheartened! By being visible on campus you are raising awareness!**

## Useful websites

### **National AIDS Trust;**

<http://www.nat.org.uk/> Facts, resources, research and red ribbons

### **Terrence Higgins Trust;**

<http://www.tht.org.uk/> UKs biggest sexual health charity

### **United 4 PrEP coalition**

<http://united4prep.org/> A coalition of nearly one hundred organisations and individuals committed to encouraging the UK government to provide PrEP.

### **HIV Prevention England;**

<http://www.hivpreventionengland.org.uk>  
Has a good list of local HIV groups

### **Positively;**

<http://positivelyuk.org/women/> Pages about HIV+ Women

**NAZ;** <http://www.naz.org.uk/> London based charity for HIV+ Black Minority Ethnic people