

# HIV AWARENESS & STIGMA

## STAFF SURVEY 2013



### Patients living with HIV told us

They lacked confidence in healthcare staff outside of specialist HIV clinics and this leads to worry about the treatment patient's will receive. Patients fear disclosure of their HIV

status in health care settings. They fear that this could result in both poor attitudes and inferior treatment due to (unnecessary) fear of HIV transmission.

### The Staff Survey

Following feedback from patients we planned a staff survey on HIV awareness and stigma. Almost 4000 members of NHS GGC staff responded

from across sectors, settings and staff groups. *Thank you to all who took time to complete the staff survey it has been extremely valuable.*

### What staff told us about their HIV knowledge

Good	Need to Improve	Learning Point
<i>High awareness of HIV transmission via blood and sexual fluids.</i>	<i>Low awareness that HIV can be transmitted via breast milk from mother to child.</i>	<i>HIV positive mothers are supported to bottle feed their children through specialist infant feeding services.</i>
<i>High awareness of HIV treatment advances.</i>	<i>Poor knowledge of the greatly reduced risk of transmitting HIV when someone is responding well to treatment.</i>	<i>HIV treatment can reduce the amount of HIV in someone's blood to such a low level that we cannot detect it ('an undetectable viral load'). This greatly reduces the risk of passing HIV on to someone else.</i>
<i>High awareness of reductions in HIV mortality and morbidity with treatment.</i>	<i>Low awareness that HIV is a protected characteristic in the Equalities Act (2010)</i>	<i>It is unlawful to discriminate, including withholding medical treatment, against someone based on their HIV positive status.</i>

## Staff attitudes to people living with HIV

Areas to improve	Learning point
<i>Negative attitudes expressed towards HIV positive women who wish to become pregnant.</i>	<i>Treatment advances now allow HIV positive women to become pregnant and give birth safely to an HIV negative child.</i>
<i>Some staff wrongly believed that some migrants may come to the UK to access free HIV treatment and care.</i>	<i>There is no evidence that this is what motivates individuals to come to the UK.</i>

### Next Steps

We will be reviewing our HIV staff training over the coming year, and will be considering the feedback staff provided through the staff survey.

We are working alongside patients to develop staff facing information and campaign materials.

### Patient feedback on the survey results

We shared the survey findings with HIV positive patients. Patients would like to be involved in the design of training resources and campaign material to ensure that content reflects and validates their experiences.

This will include developing a patient toolkit to increase their knowledge around inequality and empower them to challenge any HIV stigma and discrimination they experience.

### Further Learning on HIV

- HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- HIV attacks the immune system gradually causing damage
- Without treatment HIV will compromise the immune system making a person susceptible to serious infections and cancers that a healthy immune system would fight off.

## HIV transmission

HIV transmission occurs when body fluid containing HIV from an infected person enter the body of an uninfected person. These fluids include:

- **Sexual fluids** (semen; pre-seminal fluid; and vaginal fluid)
- **Blood**
- **Breast Milk**

HIV is transmitted from one person to another by:

- **Having sex** (vaginal or anal) without a condom
- **Sharing needles** or injecting equipment with others
- **From mother to child** during pregnancy, during birth, or through breastfeeding.

HIV is not transmitted through social contact or providing healthcare.

**Standard Universal Precautions will protect Health Care workers  
in all circumstances**

## HIV treatment

HIV treatment reduces the amount of HIV circulating in a person's body, and therefore allows the immune system to function normally. This does not cure HIV infection but does allow a HIV positive person to live a long and healthy life. Treatment also allows people with HIV to become pregnant

and have a healthy child. Successful treatment can greatly reduce the amount of HIV in someone's body and they can be described as having an 'undetectable viral load'. This also greatly reduces the risk of them passing HIV onto others.

To find out more about HIV click here:

<http://www.aidsmap.com/hiv-basics>

To attend some Blood Bourne Virus training click here:

<http://www.sandyford.org/clinicians/training-.aspx>