

# HIV

**I am positive.**

[www.hivstigma.scot](http://www.hivstigma.scot)

NHS GGC Anti Stigma Staff Campaign April 2016

## HIV Facts

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) attacks the immune system, and without treatment, gradually causes damage. There is no cure for HIV but there are very effective treatments that reduce the amount of HIV in the body, so the immune system can work normally. Treatment allows people living with HIV to enjoy a similar life expectancy to everyone else. Treatment also means that they are not infectious and are highly unlikely to pass the virus onto others.

There are an estimated **6,000 people** living with HIV in Scotland (over 20% of people living with HIV are undiagnosed), with another **360 newly diagnosed every year**. This means that you are increasingly likely to come in contact with people living with HIV in your work setting, as people will require NHS care for issues unrelated to HIV.

In Scotland HIV is most commonly passed on through unprotected sex (sex without a condom). It can not be passed on through routine social contact.

You can't tell by looking at someone if they have HIV. The only way to know if someone is living with HIV is to have an HIV test.

# HIV

**I am positive.**

**I'm 60 years old with three amazing grown up kids. I worked for 43 years housing vulnerable people. Now I'm retired, enjoying life and spending time with my two adorable grandchildren.**

**Are you seeing the positive?**

A person diagnosed with HIV is considered to have a disability under the **Equality Act 2010**. This means they are protected in law from discrimination or unfavourable treatment because of their HIV status.

As NHSGGC staff, you have an obligation to treat people living with HIV with respect and not to discriminate or treat them differently from other patients.

### A quick guide to unacceptable practice:

- Do not ask how your patient contracted HIV.  
You might think you are making conversation, but people report that they feel uncomfortable and judged when asked this question.
- Do not use additional precautions or change processes and procedures thinking you are protecting other patients.
- Do not discuss a patient's HIV status with staff or the patient's visitors or contacts.

You must not assume they have disclosed their HIV positive status to their friends, relations or other staff. Patients should feel 100 per cent confident that when they are in our care their personal information is kept confidential and treated with respect.

### A quick guide to appropriate practice:

- Be patient centred.  
Focus on why the person is in your care not on their HIV status.
- Understand the rules around confidentiality.  
Safe information handling modules can be found on the NHSGGC LearnPro site.
- Follow Standard Infection Control Precautions.  
This will protect you, the person living with HIV and other patients.
- Be honest and admit when you don't know something and find out the answer.
- Ensure someone living with HIV has access to the HIV treatment they are taking.

You also have an ethical and legal duty to keep patient information confidential and secure as set out in the **NHS Scotland Code of Practice: Protecting Patient Confidentiality and Data Protection Act 1998**.

For more information visit [www.equalitiesinhealth.org](http://www.equalitiesinhealth.org)

# HIV

**I am positive.**

**I eat well, keep active  
and like most folk, I've  
had to attend hospital  
appointments for  
something or other.  
Unlike most, I'm  
always seen last.  
At least I've brought  
my book this time.**

**Are you seeing  
the positive?**

## Standard Infection Control Precautions

Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPs) are all that you need to protect your patients and yourself from infections, including HIV. There are 10 SICPs which apply to all staff, in all care settings, at all times for all patients, whether an infection is known to be present or not.

SICPs includes the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as disposable plastic aprons and gloves for taking blood; the management of blood and body fluid spillages and occupational exposure management.

Following the SICPs means that all patients are treated the same and there is no requirement for double gloving or placing people living with HIV last on a list if they are undergoing any kind of procedure.

For further information on SICPs visit  
[www.nhsggc.org.uk/standardprecautions](http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/standardprecautions)

# HIV

**I am positive.**

**I like it when I'm treated the  
same as everyone else.  
It makes me feel accepted.**

**I've sometimes experienced stigma  
when I've attended for health care.  
I don't think the staff realise they  
are doing it.**

**Recently some staff went on  
training to get an update on HIV.  
I've noticed a difference.  
Now they treat me the same as  
everyone else.**

**It would be great if all the staff did  
the training.**

**Are you seeing  
the positive?**

The HIV Anti Stigma Staff Campaign has raised awareness of unintentional stigma and discrimination that people living with HIV have experienced in NHS settings. The campaign has also given staff an opportunity to gain up to date knowledge about HIV.

Ask yourself these questions and decide if you or your team would benefit from some up to date knowledge.

- How would you treat your patient if you read on their notes they are living with HIV?
- How would you respond if your patient told you they were living with HIV?
- What would you do if you saw a colleague discriminating against a patient who is living with HIV?
- Do you know enough about HIV and how it is transmitted?

Update your knowledge about people living with HIV. Training is available online at [www.hivstigma.scot](http://www.hivstigma.scot)

Or as face to face (3 or 1 hour sessions), contact Jacqui McCreddie Tel 0141 211 8634 for further details: [GG-UHB.bbvtrainingteam@nhs.net](mailto:GG-UHB.bbvtrainingteam@nhs.net)