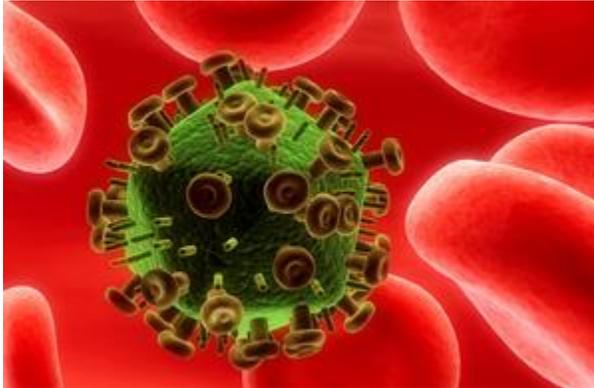


## Public Health England (PHE) Press Release 18 November 2014

### (taken from PHE Website)

PHE publishes the latest statistics for HIV in the UK. The figures highlight the need to increase both the number and frequency of HIV tests.



A new report published by Public Health England (PHE) today (18 November 2014), in advance of National HIV Testing Week, shows that there are now nearly 110,000 people living with HIV (Human immunodeficiency virus) in the UK. Around a quarter of these (26,100) are unaware of their infection and at risk of passing on the virus to others through unprotected sex. Encouragingly, the proportion of people diagnosed with a late stage of HIV infection fell from 57% in 2004 to 42% in 2013.

The report shows around 6% of gay and bisexual men are now living with HIV, rising to 13% in London - with 3,250 newly diagnosed in 2013, an all-time annual high. It is estimated that over 7,000 gay men have an HIV infection that remains undiagnosed and that an estimated 2,800 men acquired HIV in 2013. These figures underline the need to further increase both the numbers and frequency of HIV tests, which is critical to tackling the ongoing high levels of HIV transmission.

Whilst the large majority of black Africans do not have the HIV infection, the report also draws attention to the fact that one-third of the 40,000 black African heterosexual men and women living with HIV in the UK do not know they have HIV.

Dr Valerie Delpech, head of PHE 's national HIV surveillance, said:

We can't overstate the importance of testing for HIV to ensure an early diagnosis.

People diagnosed promptly with HIV infection can expect to live long and healthy lives. However, in 2013 people diagnosed with HIV late were 10 times more likely to die in the first year of diagnosis compared to those diagnosed promptly. People who remain unaware of their infection are also at risk of transmitting HIV to others.

Knowing one's HIV status is the key to both effective treatment, and to preventing onward transmission. This is why we are promoting the National HIV Testing Week. The campaign encourages people who are most affected by HIV to take an HIV test. This includes gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) and black Africans in particular.

Professor Noel Gill, Head of PHE's HIV & STI department, said:

Used correctly and consistently, condoms remain an inexpensive and effective way to prevent HIV. We are also now seeing important and exciting data on ways to use antiretroviral medication to prevent HIV. PHE has accelerated its support of the evaluation of these measures as they may help to turn the tide on the HIV epidemic.

### **HIV testing and safer sexual behaviour to reduce risk**

Early diagnosis of HIV enables better treatment outcomes and reduces the risk of onward transmission. Have an HIV test if you think you may have been at risk. Get tested regularly for HIV if you are one of those most-at-risk:

- men who have sex with men are advised to have an HIV and STI screen at least annually, and every 3 months if having unprotected sex with new or casual partners
- black African men and women are advised to have an HIV test and a regular HIV and STI (Sexually transmitted infections) screen if having unprotected sex with new or casual partners

Always use a condom correctly and consistently, and until all partners have had a sexual health screen.

Reduce the number of sexual partners and avoid overlapping sexual relationships.

Unprotected sex with partners believed to be of the same HIV status (serosorting) is unsafe. For the HIV positive, there is a high risk of acquiring other STIs and hepatitis. For the HIV negative, there is a high risk of HIV transmission (over 7,000 of HIV positive MSM with HIV infection are unaware of their infection) as well as of acquiring STIs and hepatitis.

### **How to get an HIV test**

Go to an open access STI clinic (some clinics in large cities are offering 'fast-track' HIV testing) or go to a [community testing site](#).

Ask your GP for an HIV test – nowadays there is no need for lengthy discussion about the test, it just involves having blood taken, or even a finger prick.

[Ask online for a self-sampling kit](#)

## Ends

### Notes to Editors

#### [Read the HIV in the UK 2014 report](#)

Additional key findings from the report include:

- an estimated 107,800 people were living with HIV in the UK in 2013. The overall prevalence was 2.8 per 1,000 population aged 15 to 59 (1.9 per 1,000 women and 3.7 per 1,000 men)
- A quarter (24%, 26,100) of people estimated to be living with HIV were unaware of their infection in 2013 and remain at risk of passing on their infection if having sex without condoms
- In 2013, an estimated 43,150 (40,200 to 48,160) MSM were living with HIV equivalent to 58.8 per 1,000 MSM aged 15 to 59 years. An estimated 16% were unaware of their infection
- among MSM, the proportion of late diagnoses reduced from 43% in 2004 to 31% in 2013, but the absolute number of late diagnoses remained stable at around 1,000 cases annually
- an estimated 2,800 MSM acquired HIV in 2013, an increase compared to the annual average of 2,600 over the past decade
- almost 2 in 5 (38%) black African men and 1 in 3 (31%) black African women living with HIV remained unaware of their infection. Rates of undiagnosed infection are higher outside of London at 50% and 41% respectively
- in 2013, 6,000 new HIV diagnoses, 320 AIDS cases and 530 deaths were reported in the UK. The proportion and number of people diagnosed late has declined from 57% (4,292 out of 7,350) in 2004 to 42% (2,504 out of 5,961) in 2013
- a total of 81,512 people (55,200 men and 26,312 women) received HIV care in 2013, a 5% increase on the previous year and almost double the number of people accessing care a decade ago (41,157)

#### [More information on National HIV Testing Week](#)

PHE plays a crucial role in supporting prevention and commissioning activities and in the monitoring the quality of life of people living with HIV. In addition to providing local support and advice, national activities include:

Prevention activities:

- developing, monitoring and evaluating the current national contract, held by HIV Prevention England, for HIV prevention activities targeted at gay and bisexual men and African communities
- providing resources to support the PROUD pilot (a study to investigate the effectiveness of pre-exposure prophylaxis to prevent HIV acquisition in gay and bisexual men)

- developing and evaluating the management of HIV self-sampling kits which offer an innovative and low cost solution to increasing HIV testing for the groups most at risk of HIV. In HIV testing week, PHE will fund provision of kits by [Dean Street At-Home](#) and [Terrence Higgins Trust/HIV Prevention England](#)

Supporting commissioning:

- in 2014, PHE published [Making it work: a guide to whole system commissioning for sexual health, reproductive health and HIV](#) in partnership with NHS England, the Local Government Association, Association of Directors of Public Health and the Department of Health. The guide is designed to help local teams bring the whole system together through effective partnership working, which in turn will secure the best outcomes for people and for populations
- the 'Framework to improve the Health and Wellbeing of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men' is under development by PHE and key national partners. This framework aims to reduce newly acquired HIV infections in gay and bisexual men through tackling the determinants and management of 3 inter-related health inequalities: sexual health, mental health and use of drugs alcohol and tobacco

Monitoring the quality of life of people living with HIV:

- PHE has piloted a survey of people living with HIV in the UK. The survey collects important information relating to quality of life, health and wellbeing, behavioural data and satisfaction with services
- PHE is supporting the development and roll out of the 2015 STIGMA INDEX among people living with HIV in the UK recruited through community organisation and HIV clinics

Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through advocacy, partnerships, world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. [www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe) Follow us on Twitter @PHE\_uk

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