

WEAR THE RED RIBBON FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

World AIDS Day - December 2023

To mark World AIDS Day we are sharing an update on current developments in HIV treatment and care, and information on local and national activity focusing on support for people living with HIV.



HIV statistics

- At December 2022, an estimated 6,613 people were living with HIV in Scotland, of whom 6,150 (93%) had been diagnosed.
- Of those engaged with HIV services, 98% were receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART) and, of those, 93% were recorded as having an undetectable viral load. Undetectable equals untransmissible (U=U), and thus, onward transmission is prevented.
- [Central Sexual Health Services](#) in NHS Forth Valley look after approximately 170 adults living with HIV, clinics are held twice a week. The team comprises doctors, nurses, dietitian, pharmacist, and healthcare workers. Most people only need to attend the service twice a year for a regular check-up.

HIV treatment update

A new type of treatment for HIV is now available in Scotland. Injectable Cabotegravir (Vocabria®) and Rilpivirine (Rekambys®) is suitable as an alternative to taking antiretroviral (ARV) tablets by mouth for some people who are living with HIV.

Injectables are not suitable for everyone. People living with HIV may be eligible if they:

- Have an undetectable viral load on blood testing, for at least 6 months on current ARV tablets
- Are able to attend clinic for injections every 2 months
- Have no resistance to certain ARV tablets (called NNRTIs and INSTI)

Some of our own service users have reported the positive impact on their lives since changing to injectables.



HIV Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

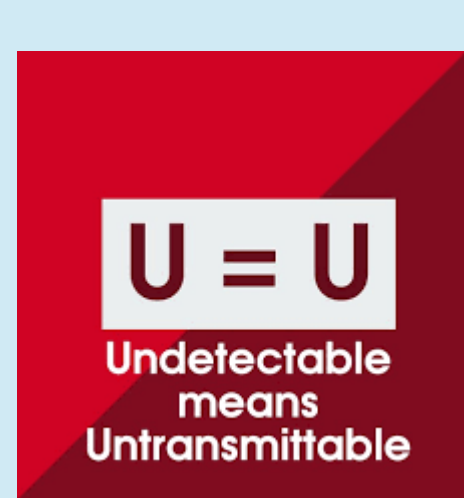
In Scotland between July and December 2022, 1142 individuals accessed PrEP for the first time - the highest since the PrEP implementation programme began in July 2017.



PrEP is available at the [Central Sexual Health Services](#) in Forth Valley. Anyone who thinks they are at risk can make an appointment at the clinic for advice.

[What is PrEP?](#)

Those who are on PrEP attend the clinic every 3 months for tests and medication supplies.



Undetectable = Untransmittable

means that people living with HIV who achieve an undetectable viral load through consistent antiretroviral treatment and monitoring cannot transmit HIV.

The implications of U=U are highly significant. For many years, being HIV positive has carried stigma, mainly because the person living with HIV was perceived as a risk to others. Understanding U=U can greatly reduce anxiety about HIV transmission.

It can empower people with HIV to be comfortable and confident to pursue a fulfilling sex life and secure relationships.

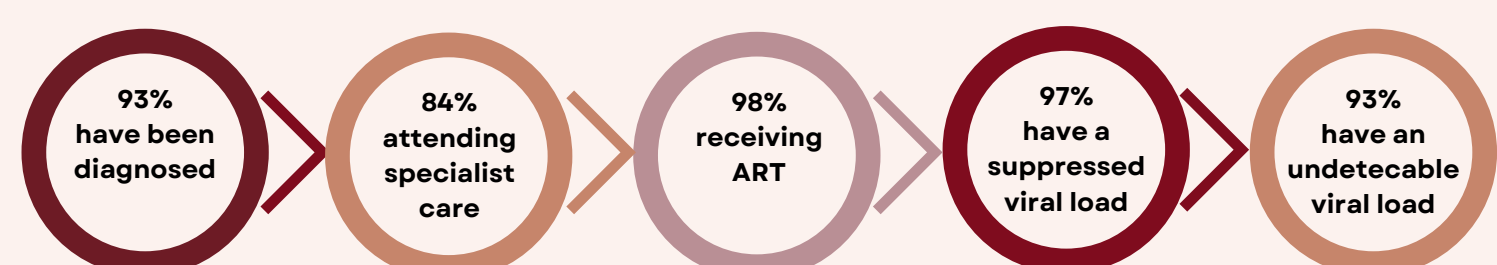
Ending HIV transmission in Scotland by 2030

The [HIV transmission elimination proposal](#) has been developed by an expert group of clinicians, academia and third sector partners commissioned by the Scottish Government. The proposal contains 22 recommendations to ensure progress is made to meet our goal of zero transmissions in Scotland by 2030.

This proposal recommends that Scotland achieves and maintains the UNAIDS 95:95:95 goals (95% of individuals with HIV diagnosed; 95% on treatment; 95% suppressed viral load) by 2025.

Recent data from Public Health Scotland suggests that Scotland is on track to meet these goals.

6613

 Estimated number of people living with HIV

High level goals:

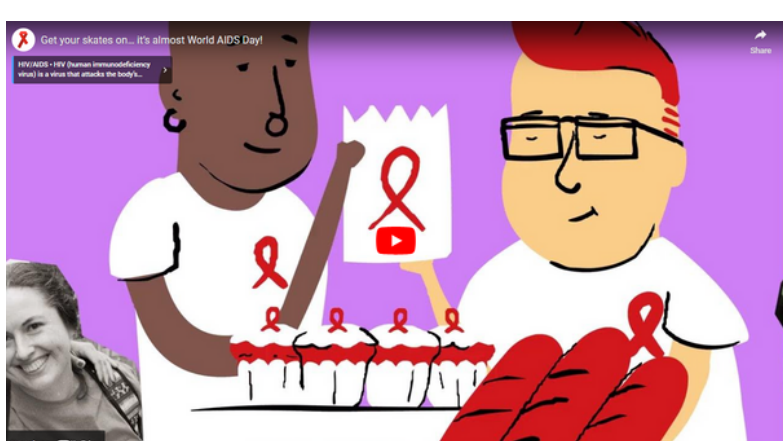
- To prevent people from acquiring HIV, regardless of age, sex, gender, identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, deprivation or disability status.
- To find people living with HIV (some of whom are undiagnosed) and support entry/re-entry into HIV care and treatment.
- To help reduce stigma and enable people to feel confident to access HIV prevention, testing and treatment services.



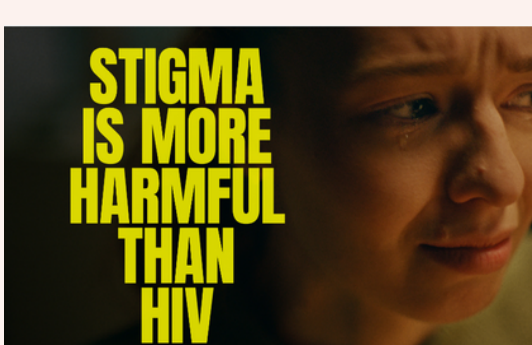
Wear a red ribbon in support of people living with HIV

Since 1988, communities have stood together on World AIDS Day to show strength and solidarity against HIV stigma and to remember lives lost.

World AIDS Day exists to shine a light on the real experiences of people living with HIV today, while celebrating the strength, resilience and diversity of the communities most affected. It is a moment to inspire the leadership needed to create a future where HIV doesn't stand in the way of anyone's life.



Watch [World AIDS Day](#) animation



National campaign against stigma

Scottish Government funded research released in October this year reports a lack of knowledge about how much progress has been made in the fight against HIV in the last 40 years, with just a third of Scots aware that people living with HIV and on effective treatment can't pass it on to partners.

The first major TV advert about HIV to air in Scotland since the 'Don't Die of Ignorance' campaign launched on STV on 16 October 2023. The film concludes with the message that stigma is more harmful than HIV, to encourage those watching to think about their role in perpetuating stigma and impacting the lives of people living with HIV.

[Watch ad](#)

Forth Valley condom distribution service

The Health Improvement Service offer a condom distribution scheme for organisations and agencies working across Forth Valley, to enable the provision of free condoms for their service users.

The scheme aims to provide free condoms across NHS Forth Valley to reduce sexual health inequalities in populations most vulnerable to poor sexual health outcomes.

The following populations have been defined as our priority groups:

- Young people under 21
- Care experienced young people
- People who inject drugs
- People living with HIV or other BBVs
- Gay and bisexual men who have sex with men (GBMSM)
- Ethnic minority groups in particular those from sub Saharan Africa
- Prison population
- Sex industry workers

To become a condom distribution outlet, click on this link to register with the Resources Service - [HPAC](#), you will receive confirmation of your registration and login details by email. You will then be able to order condoms to distribute to your service users.

For further information contact:

Louise Williamson, Health Improvement Officer ~ louise.williamson4@nhs.scot



Free condoms by post scheme



People living in Forth Valley can order condoms via the [Central Sexual Health website](#).

The scheme is free and aims to contribute to a reduction in inequalities in populations most vulnerable to poor sexual health outcomes.

Central Sexual Health website: www.centalsexualhealth.org

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