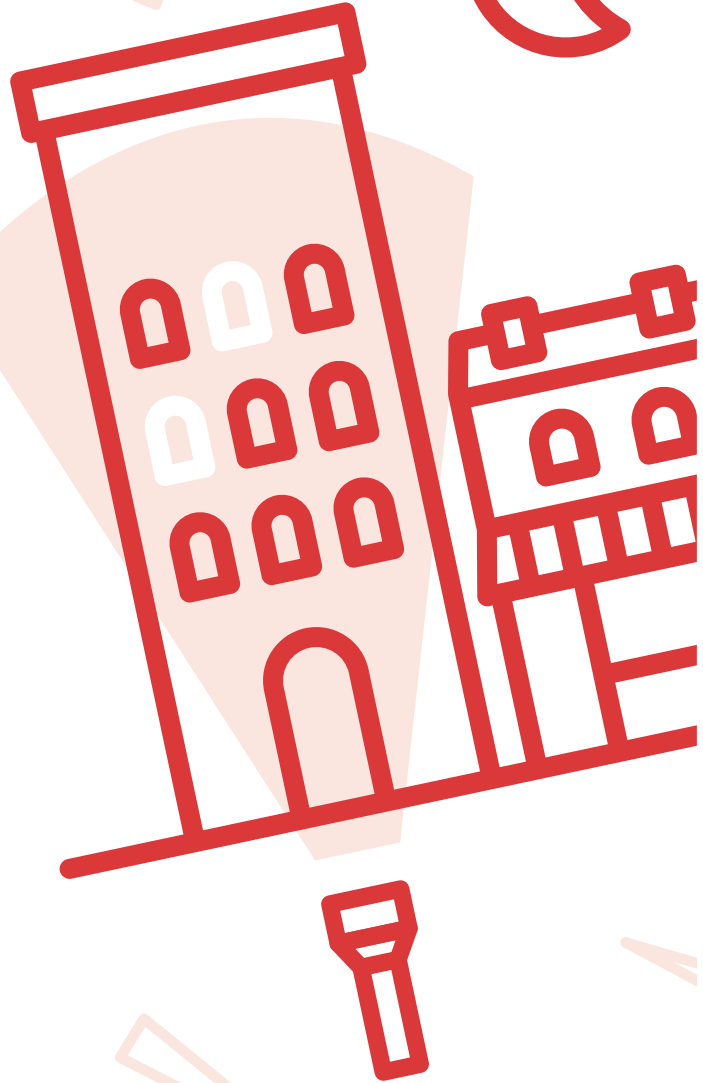




*HIV
Ireland*

*Annual Report
2020*



**Glow Red for
World AIDS Day
December 1st
Together We
Can End HIV**

Introduction



New projects and new activities continued to be developed, in some cases as a direct response to the pandemic. A new HIV Self-Test and support programme was launched providing access to simple, easy-to-use self-test kits suitable for use at home. A new daily community-based HIV and STI screening programme operating from our offices in Dublin was launched in partnership with the Mater STI Clinic. This will significantly increase the capacity of the organisation to screen people for HIV/ STIs and refer them for appropriate care.

Funding was also secured to develop a pilot training programme to establish a national peer support network for people living with HIV. An online distribution portal for condoms and lube under the National Condom Distribution Service was piloted. The development of new online/e-learning tools aimed at healthcare providers also commenced while existing training programmes were adapted for delivery online. Finally, new approaches to community outreach and counselling were pioneered in the absence of face-to-face contact.

Throughout the pandemic period, HIV Ireland has worked to adapt as many of our services as possible, while working closely with new and existing partners to ensure continuation of existing services and to identify alternative supports. While we have faced many obstacles due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are pleased to have continued supporting people living with, and vulnerable to acquiring, HIV in line with our mission and core values.

Stephen O'Hare
Executive Director

HIV Ireland is pleased to present our Annual Report for 2020. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic towards the end of the first quarter had a significant impact on our ability to conduct many face-to-face services including one to one support, counselling, outreach, education, and training activities. To minimise disruption, staff worked to adapt services for delivery online and through remote settings.

Following the imposition of the first lockdown period in March 2020 and the phased reopening of society, HIV Ireland partnered with the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme to map existing sexual health services and provide ongoing up-to-date information on their availability throughout the year. Information on COVID-19 for people living with HIV and for groups vulnerable to acquiring HIV was published and updated on a regular basis. Our MPOWER team re-established its community based rapid HIV testing programme to our headquarters in order to continue to offer screening services. Query handling and new outreach activities by our community support team also increased dramatically over the course of 2020.

Our Mission

Advocating for individuals living with HIV, preventing new HIV infections, and combating HIV – related stigma and discrimination.

Our Vision

To contribute towards a significant reduction in the incidence and prevalence of HIV in Ireland and towards the realisation of an AIDS free generation.



Chairperson's Foreword

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Annual Report of HIV Ireland for the year 2020. Despite the immense challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, significant progress has been achieved in many areas of our work and on many new initiatives.

In January 2020, the Government announced the date of the General Election. The decision prompted HIV Ireland to publish a 'manifesto' seeking commitments on HIV-related issues. Candidates were invited to pledge support for meaningful progress on the outgoing Government's stated commitment to end new HIV transmissions by 2030.

By March, the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic had changed almost every facet of Irish life. Employment, education, health care, social supports, care for older and vulnerable populations, migration, travel, social and community life were all impacted. Many families suffered unexpected grief and loss and our thoughts have remained with them through this difficult time. Throughout the year many vital health and community-based services were closed or redirected towards combatting the effects of COVID-19. HIV Ireland was one such service.

During the initial and subsequent 'lockdown' phases experienced in 2020, HIV Ireland was forced to limit access to our building and redeploy staff to remote work settings. Social and community venues, at which rapid HIV testing is routinely conducted, were closed and testing could not take place. In-person education and training, usually conducted at our offices, ceased. Community support, counselling and outreach services could no longer offer one-to-one appointments. Bi-monthly community-based screening services for HIV and STIs provided in collaboration with our partners at the St James's Hospital GUIDE Clinic were suspended.

Opportunities for traditional fundraising activities were also disrupted, while corresponding business costs continued to rise. The cancellation of our annual flagship Red Ball fundraising event was disappointing.

I am pleased to say that, in the face of these challenges, staff, volunteers and supporters of HIV Ireland worked tirelessly to ensure that services were maintained throughout the year, through a combination of innovation, adaptation and no small amount of selfless dedication. Details of a significant increase in contacts with service users, development of new and progress on existing programmes are set out in detail on the following pages.

Despite the difficulties imposed by the pandemic, the organisation has maintained and, in many cases, grown its base of activities. Continued growth will be contingent on securing new and sustainable funding. Loss of revenue as a result of restrictions on fundraising in 2020 and again in 2021 highlight the precarious nature of community-based advocacy and service provision for communities living with and vulnerable to HIV. The commitments to reach the targets set out under Global Fast Track Cities initiative and the UN Sustainable Development Goals to which Ireland is a party remain to be achieved. As we enter the 40th year since the emergence of HIV, we must remain resolute in our determination to end new HIV transmissions by 2030.

We have all the tools we need.

JEANNE MCDONAGH, RETIREMENT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our colleague, Jeanne McDonagh, who has faithfully served HIV Ireland as a Company Director for the past 7 years. Jeanne's extraordinary leadership and dedication has had a transformative and profoundly positive impact on HIV Ireland. She has always applied her vast knowledge and expertise to supporting, improving and, through many innovative fundraising activities, helping to sustain the organisation. On a personal note, I will miss her good humour and good counsel as a member of the Board and take this opportunity wish her continued success in all her future endeavours.

Bernard Condon SC
Chairperson, HIV Ireland

Service Delivery 2020



COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

HIV Ireland’s Community Support services include advocacy, support, and counselling for people living with HIV (PLWHIV) or affected by HIV, the capacity building of people living with HIV to self-advocate, community HIV and STI testing, and a street outreach service in which sexual health literature and information on our testing service is disseminated to communities vulnerable to HIV. Community Support staff also respond to public queries in relation to HIV and STIs and accommodate agency visits and researchers seeking information on HIV Ireland as well as on issues for people living with HIV or AIDS. Staff also present on the work of HIV Ireland to various agencies and businesses and provide training on issues relating to Outreach, Direct Provision, and Counselling.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN THE TIME OF COVID 19

From the onset of the pandemic on the island, our Community Support team began fielding queries from many worried service users: What did we know about Covid 19? How was it going to impact on people living with HIV? Is it going to kill us because of our immune systems? Will HIV anti-viral medications protect us from Covid 19? Will it affect me more if I haven’t been taking my meds lately? How do I get my medication if the clinics are closing?

A dearth of information from Irish based medical sources led our Community Support team to seek out relevant information from the British HIV Association (BHIVA) until indigenous information was produced. This helped reassure our service users that if they were adhering to their HIV medications and maintaining an undetectable viral load, they would be no more or less at risk of contracting Covid 19, or being severely impacted by it, than a person who was not living with HIV. This information also helped us highlight, for those who may have been taking their medication haphazardly, the importance of now adopting a consistent medication regime.

The uncertainty surrounding the closure of national HIV clinics caused much angst amongst many service users and they turned to HIV

Ireland for guidance on how to access their medications. Due to HIV clinics not being able to take phone calls or reply to emails at this time, a significant amount of time was spent by our team mediating between service users and clinic staff.

Simultaneously, a new cohort of people living with HIV started to access our service: those living and working on the island of Ireland but unconnected to HIV clinics or services here. Many people, having been accustomed to returning to their home country for appointments and medication every six months, now found themselves unable to return due to grounded flights. In 2020, our team worked to connect over 220 people to HIV clinics around the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland at a time when communication channels were less than optimum.

Service users, living in the Direct Provision system, also presented very quickly with Covid 19 related worries. Shared accommodation was proving highly stressful to them, particularly as many were sharing with people they regarded as strangers. Unlike family members who they could negotiate and monitor Covid 19 risk factors with, strangers were often unwilling to engage in assessing and addressing these risks.

Perhaps the biggest impact overall of Covid 19 on our service users was the rise in self-identified mental health issues. Depression, anxiety, fear, loneliness, and hopelessness were all manifesting in some way or another in most of our service users. Our counselling team remained at over-capacity throughout the year and an on-going waiting list was dealt with mostly through referrals to other agencies. Throughout 2020, our support workers kept contact with many service users on a weekly, if not daily, basis.

During the year, 9 service users were referred to crisis intervention services including A&E Departments (Mental Health) and Domestic Violence Services.

Our Community Support team exercised great flexibility in meeting the needs of our service users during this time. Working from home, we engaged with service users by phone, email, on Zoom, or through MS Teams, both in-hours and out-of-hours. Adhering to all Covid 19 restrictions

at any given time, our team met people who were most in need face-to-face for one-to-one support, whether outside Direct Provision Centres or cafes, in parks, or for walks on local promenades and beaches.

INTERVENTIONS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

In 2020, HIV Ireland supported approximately 755 people living with HIV with a total number of 2,878 interventions. (See Table 1). The vast number of interventions related to advocacy, 1-to-1 support/counselling, and Covid 19 information.

Advocacy interventions in 2020 related mostly to helping PLWHIV access medications and clinic appointments, HIV-related discrimination, housing and homelessness, issues with Direct Provision centres, and Social Protection. Support interventions centred primarily on issues relating to mental health, disclosure in both personal and formal settings, and on accessing peer support. Where possible, staff sought to ascertain every clients’ current health status if further HIV or Covid 19 medical interventions may be needed. This was particularly so with vulnerable groups such as the homeless, people who use drugs, and migrants still navigating the Irish health system.

Table 1: Summary of Interventions for PLWHIV 2020

Type of Support	Total Number of Interventions
Advocacy (Accessing Medication, Discrimination/Mortgages/Housing and Homelessness/Direct Provision/Social Protection)	1,049
Covid Related Information (Symptoms, Testing, Protocols, Impacts on PLWHIV/Direct Provision)	616
1-to-1 Support/Crisis Referral	879
Counselling	179
Moving to Ireland (Students)	46
Welfare Information	13
Legal Information and Support	29
Peer Support	67
TOTAL	2,878

The Women’s Group

HIV Ireland and Positive Now continued to support The National Women’s Group throughout 2020 by continuing to supply the group with updated information on Covid 19, providing one-to-one and peer support to women in the group, and referring newly diagnosed women to the group.



3RD NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

On February 1st, HIV Ireland supported Positive Now and the All-Ireland Network to hold the 3rd National Conference for People Living with HIV. Held in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin 8, the conference was attended by 93 individuals from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. A social event for all attendees, sponsored by Dublin City Council, was held the previous night in the hotel. The conference also celebrated Positive Now’s 10th anniversary. Speakers on the day were:

- Ann Piercy (GOSHH) *Social Inclusion and Support for Migrants Living with HIV In Ireland.*
- Tom Strong (Maynooth University) *What HIV Activism Means Today: A Perspective on ACT UP Dublin.*
- Mark Costello (UISCE) *Historical and Current Issues for Drug Users Living with HIV.*
- Ellie Marley (PhD Candidate, Dublin City University) *An Exploration into How Shame Features in the Narratives of Women Living with HIV: Preliminary Insights.*
- Sinead Fitzpatrick (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission) *Equality Protection for People Living with HIV.*
- Shaun Mellors, (ViiV Healthcare /Positive Action) *Say What? Community Empowerment! Does it Really Matter? For Who, for What?*

THE NATIONAL HIV PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMME (PILOT)

In 2020, HIV Ireland was successful in securing monies from Rethink Ireland (previously Social Innovation Fund Ireland) to support Positive Now and the All-Ireland Network of People Living with HIV in designing and piloting a five phase HIV peer support programme with the aim of rolling out the service in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. This programme will also be supported by Positive Life Northern Ireland, who will work alongside HIV Ireland and Positive Now to ensure the programme meets the needs of people living with HIV on the island of Ireland. In the 3rd quarter of 2020, work began on conducting a preliminary literature review and on drafting a pre-development survey for PLWHIV to help feed into the design of the training curriculum.

HIV CLINICAL RESEARCH

HIV Ireland partnered in 2020 with DCU School of Nursing, Psychotherapy, and Community Health to design research which will examine the experiences of people living with HIV who have undergone HIV Clinical Research, and which will help us learn more about how the results from HIV clinical trials are communicated to participants. Understanding how and when clinical trial results are, or should be, communicated by researchers will help to improve how such information is provided to clinical trial participants in the future.

ANNUAL LECTURE – PROFESSIONAL CLINICAL PRACTICE (UCD)

This lecture, now in its 12th year, is an integral part of the “Professional Clinical Practice” module offered to both junior and senior medical students at University College Dublin. Presented by our senior counsellor in Community Support, the lecture offers insights into the differing perspectives of clients living with HIV or AIDS and emphasises the impact that words and the delivery of information by professionals can have on often vulnerable individuals. The lecture was held on-line on March 6th.

THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND COVID 19

With the severe curtailing of most public Sexual Health testing services around the country due to staff being redeployed to Covid 19 related work, our Community Support team fielded over double the amount of general public queries in 2020 compared to 2019.

The vast majority of those who called or emailed in 2020 were concerned about where to access HIV and/or STI screening. Service users were encouraged to first contact their local STI clinic, particularly if they were symptomatic and if unsuccessful, contact their GP, avail of a home testing kit, or seek private testing. If only seeking HIV testing, service users were referred to our MPower Programme for gbMSM who conducted rapid HIV testing during January and February and then throughout the latter half of 2020.

Professional queries centred on helping clients access HIV testing or if their clients are living with HIV, to access medication or sexual health testing.

INTERVENTIONS FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

In 2020, Community Support conducted 811 interventions with the general public (See Table 2). The vast number of interventions related to accessing HIV and STI testing, PrEP, PEP, and Transmission Risks.

Table 2: Summary of Interventions for the General Public 2020

Type of Query	Total Number of Interventions
HIV and STI Testing	568
PrEP/PEP	57
HIV/STI Symptoms	86
Transmission Risks	69
Professional Queries	13
Other	18
Total	811

COMMUNITY HIV AND STI TESTING

HIV Ireland is committed to reducing barriers to HIV and STI testing by providing low-threshold access to community testing. In 2020, HIV Ireland conducted free HIV and STI testing in Dublin in conjunction with the GUIDE Clinic, St. James’s Hospital and partnered with both the Red Door Project and Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in providing this service in Drogheda. Prior to the first government restrictions in March, 4 testing sessions were conducted in Dublin with a total of 102 testing participants and 2 sessions were conducted in the Red Door Project with a total of 27 participants.

STREET OUTREACH

HIV Ireland has a longstanding and unique history of conducting community outreach with marginalized and groups vulnerable to HIV. Led primarily by migrant volunteers, outreach takes place on the streets and in migrant businesses and social spaces in Dublin 1, 3, and 7 as well as at various social events including those hosted by Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI), New Communities Partnership, and other migrant focused organisations. Information on sexual health and our sexual health testing services is disseminated and free condoms are offered to those who may not otherwise be able to access or afford them. Outreach is also conducted on the streets of Drogheda, County Louth, with outreach workers from the Red Door Project, who promote our free HIV and STI service targeting intravenous drug users, the homeless, and migrants. In total, 16 community outreach sessions were conducted in 2020 prior to government Covid 19 restrictions, reaching over 1,000 individuals from marginalised groups vulnerable to HIV. (See also Free Condoms Service).

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This service develops and delivers a range of HIV education and training programmes including prevention education, stigma and discrimination education, training for trainers programmes, training for professionals including counsellors, and education initiatives to advance our objectives to end new HIV transmissions in Ireland and eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Associated education and training also provided includes sexual health, safer sex and STI prevention, hepatitis, and drugs-related education including chemsex training.

Our primary focus for education delivery is the training of staff and professionals who work with populations more vulnerable to HIV and poorer sexual health outcomes. Education programmes can be accessed through an annual calendar or on request. Groups and organisations accessing our training include statutory bodies, voluntary agencies, youth and community groups, private sector organisations, healthcare professionals and education centres.

Our in-person education and training programmes were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions in 2020. In-person training was delivered during Quarter 1 only, and all further scheduled in-person programmes were cancelled for the remainder of the year. In Quarter 4 we commenced a webinar education series to provide ongoing access to HIV education.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING DELIVERY

A total of 10 (in-person) education and training programmes were delivered in Quarter 1, 2020 with a total of 152 participants.

Four of these programmes were delivered as part of our annual calendar of training:

1. HIV Prevention Education: ending new HIV transmissions in Ireland
2. STIs, Condoms & Safer Sex
3. Understanding Chemsex (in partnership with the Gay Men's Health Service)
4. HIV: Stigma & Discrimination (Zero Discrimination Day initiative)

Two programmes were provided as part of our training partnerships with Foróige (REAL U Programme) and the North West Inner City Network (Hepatitis education); and one HIV education initiative was delivered with the LGBT+ Network - Unity - at EY Ireland.

Three training for trainers programmes (*Let's Talk About Safer Sex*) were delivered in Quarter 1, 2020 with a total of 28 participants. One programme was delivered in partnership with Youth Work Ireland Laois, one with the Laois and Offaly Traveller Action Groups, and one was delivered in Dublin as part of our annual calendar of training. These programmes in 2020 were funded by the Adobe Community Fund.



Participants from Youth Work Ireland Laois who completed the *Let's Talk About Safer Sex* training for trainers programme in January 2020.



WEBINAR EDUCATION SERIES

To ensure ongoing access to HIV education during COVID-19 restrictions, we developed a series of education webinars.

1. HIV: Preventing new transmissions in Ireland
2. Let's Talk About HIV in Ireland
3. HIV: Stigma & Discrimination

Seven educational webinars were coordinated and delivered in Quarter 4, 2020 with a total of 194 attendees. One was delivered as part of the Talbot Centre's Learning Together, Working Together programme; four were organised as part of World AIDS Day initiatives; and two as part of a calendar of education events.

The Undetectables – Living with HIV in Ireland today: An Educational Resource pack for the Senior Cycle SPHE Classroom

Produced by RTÉ's Documentary on One, supported by funding from the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, and endorsed by HIV Ireland, this educational resource pack for Senior Cycle SPHE was launched in June 2020 to coincide with Irish AIDS Day. The resources are intended to be used with a radio documentary 'The Undetectables', which follows the lives of four ordinary Irish men and women who are living with HIV today, and was produced by Mary-Elaine Tynan and Nicoline Greer for RTE Radio One's Documentary on One.

FREE CONDOMS SERVICE

Our free condoms services, supported by the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme, are focused primarily on key population groups more vulnerable to acquiring HIV and STIs. We operate a walk-in service for individuals, and a request service to a range of organisations who wish to provide this service to their service users. This service is associated with our *Just Carry One* campaign.



Walk-in Service

Based at 70 Eccles Street, Dublin 7, individuals can access free condoms and lube via this service during opening hours, Monday to Friday. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this service was only available for Quarter 1, 2020 (up to mid-March) and during this time 157 individuals accessed the service with 900 condom and lube packs provided.

New Online Ordering Service

In November 2020, an online condom and lube ordering service was developed and launched, primarily targeting, but not exclusive to, gay and bisexual men as part of our MPOWER programme. Due to high levels of orders and limited resources, the service was subsequently paused.

REQUEST SERVICE

Organisations can access this service via our website and request free condoms and lube for their organisations for distribution to service users through their services or for specific events such as Health Promotion events, Sexual Health Education, Freshers and SHAG weeks, LGBT+ Pride events, and Irish/World AIDS Day events.

This service remained available throughout 2020, however demand for the service significantly decreased compared to previous years as events moved online and organisations were closed to service user groups and activities due to COVID-19 restrictions. 10,800 condoms and lube were provided via this service in 2020, to 24 groups/organisations.



FREE RESOURCES SERVICE

This service provides access to a range of HIV and related educational resources (information booklets, leaflets and posters, etc.) and is accessed by organisations providing this information to their services users and for distribution at events such as health promotion days, community health initiatives, education programmes, conferences and seminars.

This service remained available throughout 2020, however demand for the service significantly decreased compared to previous years as events moved online and organisations were closed to service user groups and activities due to COVID-19 restrictions. 50 requests were received and responded to in 2020, with 4,500 educational resources provided.

MPOWER PROGRAMME

The MPOWER Programme at HIV Ireland, previously known as the MSM Programme, is a suite of peer-driven community-level interventions which aim to achieve a reduction in the acquisition of HIV and STIs and an overall improvement of sexual health and wellbeing among gay, bisexual and men who have sex with men (gbMSM).

MPOWER devises sex-positive, judgement-free and harm reduction-based resources, services and supports where the needs of gbMSM have or can be identified. The programme strives to be inclusive of the diverse identities within the community of gbMSM and to incorporate the experiences of both HIV-positive and HIV-negative men.

The programme is delivered within the context of a broader sexual health and wellbeing framework which aims to take into consideration the range of social determinants of health that impact on sexual practices and vulnerability

in acquiring HIV & STIs. This includes mental, physical and social health. The MPOWER Programme is funded by the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme.

In 2020, the MPOWER Programme added new services and, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions, reorientated delivery of established services to adapt and respond to the challenges that the pandemic produced.





SERVICE DELIVERY

Programme free rapid HIV testing service was available to gbMSM on evenings and weekends in Dublin’s gay-identified community-based venues. These venues included a bar (Pantibar), nightclub (The George), sauna (The Boilerhouse) and Dublin’s LGBT+ community centre (Outhouse). The service was delivered by our team of gay and bisexual male volunteers, who represent a diverse range of ages, ethnicities, and serostatus. The volunteer team are trained to perform the rapid test and to offer information and referrals to service users. The overarching aim of this peer-led, community-based testing service is to reduce the number of gbMSM living with undiagnosed HIV and to ensure that getting tested for HIV is as simple, accessible, and convenient as possible.

In March 2020, the service was paused in line with government restrictions and on foot of public health advice. Following discussion with the HSE and the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency Team, the service was deemed an essential health service and could plan to reopen. Due to the continued closure of community venues which had previously been used for rapid testing, the service was moved to the HIV Ireland offices. Following adaptations to make the service COVID-safe and compliant, the MPOWER rapid HIV testing service reopened on June 15th to mark Irish AIDS Day.

Due to COVID-19 recommendations, the service could no longer operate a walk-in service, instead, appointments are offered online at mpower.hivireland.ie 24 hours before the testing session commences. Volunteers continued to deliver the service to community members

except for periods in which Level 5 restrictions were imposed, in which case the MPOWER Outreach Team continued the service in their place. An intake of new trainee volunteers was possible with initial training taking place online followed by practical training during periods of relaxed restrictions.

In total, 1013 rapid HIV tests were performed during the 146 testing sessions that took place throughout the year. 9 service users received a reactive result. All those who received reactive results were successfully connected with a clinical service for confirmatory testing and subsequently diagnosed positive. 99% of service users received a negative result and were offered information about their HIV prevention options.



A full report on the rapid HIV testing service can be found on the MPOWER website.

OUTREACH

The MPOWER Outreach service aims to connect with gbMSM where they meet to socialise and/or have sex. Our team of peer sexual health outreach workers offer information, support, resources, and referrals relating to HIV, STIs, and sexual health and wellbeing needs. Under normal circumstances, the MPOWER Outreach team would offer the service in four different ways: online, venues, clinics and one-to-one. Due to the onset of government restrictions, the team was unable to continue one-to-one, clinic or venue-based outreach from March 2020. However, the team continued to offer online outreach throughout 2020 without interruption and further developed opportunities to connect online.

response to government restrictions removing other community-based opportunities to engage with gbMSM, the outreach team were also available by Zoom, WhatsApp, text, email and by phone.

Throughout 2020, 2,124 gbMSM connected with our outreach workers using online platforms. The type of information and support offered varied across several sexual health and wellbeing topics. The most frequent topics discussed were PrEP, HIV & STI Testing, and Symptoms.

Venue Outreach

Gay bars, clubs, and saunas have traditionally acted as important meeting places for gay, bi and MSM. For many, these are venues to socialise and seek sexual partners. Our outreach team had an active presence at venues in Dublin offering information, support, and resources. In the first three months of 2019, our outreach team engaged with all gay-identified venues in Dublin City and several gay-identified club nights and events.

The outreach team promoted sexual health and wellbeing messages by making posters, fliers, and leaflets available throughout the venues listed in Table 3. It is our hope that we will be able to return to venue-based outreach in 2021 when circumstances allow.



Online Outreach

Many gbMSM use online platforms to seek, organise and meet their sexual partners as well as obtain information on sexual health. Our outreach team is available to offer information, support and referrals on popular hook-up apps and dating sites such as Grindr, Scruff, Squirt, BBRT, PlanetRomeo and Rent.Men. In addition, and in

Table 3: List of venues, club nights, and events for MPOWER outreach

- Pantibar
- The George
- Outhouse
- The Boilerhouse
- Street 66
- GLAMworld
- Basic Instincts
- Mother
- Sweatbox
- Sunday Social



Clinic-based Outreach

The outreach team often engage with men who have not accessed sexual health services before and others who have but find it to be a daunting experience. Our outreach workers are available to explain and familiarise people with the process of accessing testing, treatment, and vaccinations that happen at the Gay Men’s Health Service (GMHS) and the sexual health services at The Mater, St James’ and St Vincent Hospitals. Clinic-based outreach in 2020 was significantly scaled back as sexual health services themselves had reduced capacity or closed completely as staff responded to the impact of the pandemic.

In 2020, our outreach team engaged with 124 gbMSM at the Gay Men’s Health Service and St. Vincent’s Hospital sexual health clinics and offered information and support on several sexual health and wellbeing topics.

One-to-One Support

Throughout 2020 in-person sessions for individuals requiring additional support beyond what is provided through other interventions continued to be available. This intervention primarily provides a higher level of support, specifically for those with the greatest need and the most pronounced barriers around accessing services. These sessions are reactive to service-user needs; the length and focus is determined by the presenting issues. Although available throughout the year with necessary precautions in place, the pandemic and related restrictions impacted the numbers of men seeking this type of support. 9 gay, bi and MSM access this one-to-one support in 2020 with two main topics of discussion – Drugs & Alcohol and HIV anxiety.

A full report on the outreach service including the results of a feedback survey completed by service users can be found on the MPOWER website.

HIV Self-Test Service

The HIV Ireland self-testing pilot service sought to increase testing among those who continue to experience barriers to accessing testing and was timed to bridge the gap created by COVID-19. The strategic focus of the HIV self-testing pilot was to reach those most at risk of acquiring HIV, to do so as early as possible in order to link people to care if they receive a reactive result, and to offer prevention information and referrals to those who test negative.



Diego Caixeta, MPOWER Outreach Worker

The HIV self-testing pilot service was delivered by the MPOWER Outreach team at HIV Ireland. The MPOWER team took responsibility for processing and fulfilling orders and offered support and referrals to service users by phone, email, text and video calls. The self-test kits were offered free of charge, although those ordering a kit were given the option to donate if they wished to do so.

The service was launched on the 3rd of November 2020 and was accessible at selftest.hivireland.ie. Due to unprecedented demand, all 2000 HIV self-test kits were ordered within 13 days of the launch and so the pilot concluded on the 16th of November 2020. Order were fulfilled on a phased basis to ensure there was enough capacity within the MPOWER team to send orders, take support calls and make referrals as appropriate.

Of the 2,000 service users who ordered an HIV self-test, 5 people reported a reactive result to us. All five people who reported a reactive result were supported by the MPOWER Outreach team and attended their local sexual health service for confirmatory testing. There were no false positives reported and none of the individuals were subsequently identified as previously diagnosed HIV positive. All five individuals have been successfully linked to care. It is important to note that more than half (n=1,361) of service users who ordered and performed an HIV self-test did not report their results and so there may be an underreporting of reactive results.

A full report on the pilot service including the results of a feedback survey completed by service users can be found on the HIV Ireland website.

Online Condom and Lube Service

Ordinarily, the MPOWER outreach team maintain a supply of condoms and lube via wall mounted dispensers in LGBT-identified venues in Dublin City Centre. However, due to the closure of such venues as per government restrictions, the MPOWER team sought to reorient the delivery of this service by way of an online order and postal delivery facility.

Free condom and lube packs were made available to order online through the MPOWER portal of the HIV Ireland website. Packs of 10 condoms and 10 lube with MPOWER and Just Carry One branding was sent by national post to those who placed an order online.

Supplies of condoms and lube were made available to the service through the HSE National Condom Distribution Service. Input required to print, pack, and send packs was supplied by the MPOWER team and HIVI admin staff. Funding from HIV Ireland’s Prevention, Education and Training department, HIV Ireland’s





Mark Doyle, MPOWER Outreach Worker

MPOWER Programme and HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme was used to deliver the service.

In total, 1400 condom and lube orders were placed. Service users were aged between 17 and 59 across all genders and sexualities. Orders were received from twenty-five of the twenty-six counties in the Republic of Ireland. The service was available from 3rd of November 2020 until 11th December 2020 and will return in 2021.

A full report on this pilot service can be found on the HIV Ireland website.

New MPOWER Team Member

In August 2020 Davy Quinlivan joined the MPOWER team as a full-time Outreach Worker. Davy has a degree in Youth, Community and Family Studies. Taking a particular interest in the use of the term ‘Community’ as it applies to LGBTQI+ people, rather than just a locality. He spent his final year focusing specifically on gbMSM issues, with a focus on the impact of Minority Stress on sexual health and wellbeing. Davy has spent several years working and campaigning with community, student and activist groups to help end HIV stigma and inform the community about U=U and PrEP in bars, clubs, community spaces and sex-on-premises venues around Dublin by moving the conversation from sexual risk to dialogue around sexual health and pleasure.

While Covid-19 impacted outreach in physical community spaces, Davy’s addition to the team allowed for several new interventions to meet existing and emerging needs. Davy plays an integral role in the delivery of the free HIV self-test service and the free Condom and Lube service and leads on the support structures the MPOWER Programme offers these service users. In addition, Davy is the Rapid HIV testing volunteer coordinator and complements the work of the wider MPOWER outreach team.

As the MPOWER Programme develops, we hope to see the development of new services and to welcome new members to the team.



MATER HOSPITAL AND HIV IRELAND LAUNCH NEW COMMUNITY BASED STI CLINIC IN DUBLIN

In November, a new community-based HIV and STI sexual health screening service was opened by Minister Frank Feighan TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Public Health, Well Being and National Drugs Strategy. The initiative, a partnership between HIV Ireland and Mater Hospital STI Clinic led by Prof Jack Lambert, Consultant in Infectious Diseases.

Operating five days per week, services will facilitate routine testing, treatment, and follow-up including for individuals notified as contacts of infection. The clinic will also provide access to wellbeing services including access to support, education, provision of condoms and lubricants, as well as links to additional support services such as HIV Ireland’s Community Support for people living with HIV and its MPOWER programme for gay and bisexual men and men who have sex with men. Funding is provided under the Department of Health Sláintecare programme.

Back Row L-R

Paul Duggan, Nurse Manager; Shauna Walsh, Administrator, Mater STI Clinic; Susanne Dempsey, Mater Deputy CEO and Director of Nursing; Prof Jack Lambert, Consultant in Infectious Diseases, Mater STI Clinic; Josephine Ryan, Mater COO

Front Row L-R

Bernard Condon SC, Chair of HIV Ireland; Minister Frank Feighan TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Public Health, Well Being and National Drugs Strategy; Alan Sharp, Mater CEO

Campaigns & Events

HIV MANIFESTO: GENERAL ELECTION 2020

In the run-up to the 2020 General Election, we published an *HIV Manifesto*, calling on all candidates to voice their commitments to end new HIV transmissions, combat stigma and improve services for people living with HIV in Ireland.



The manifesto sets out eight key priorities:

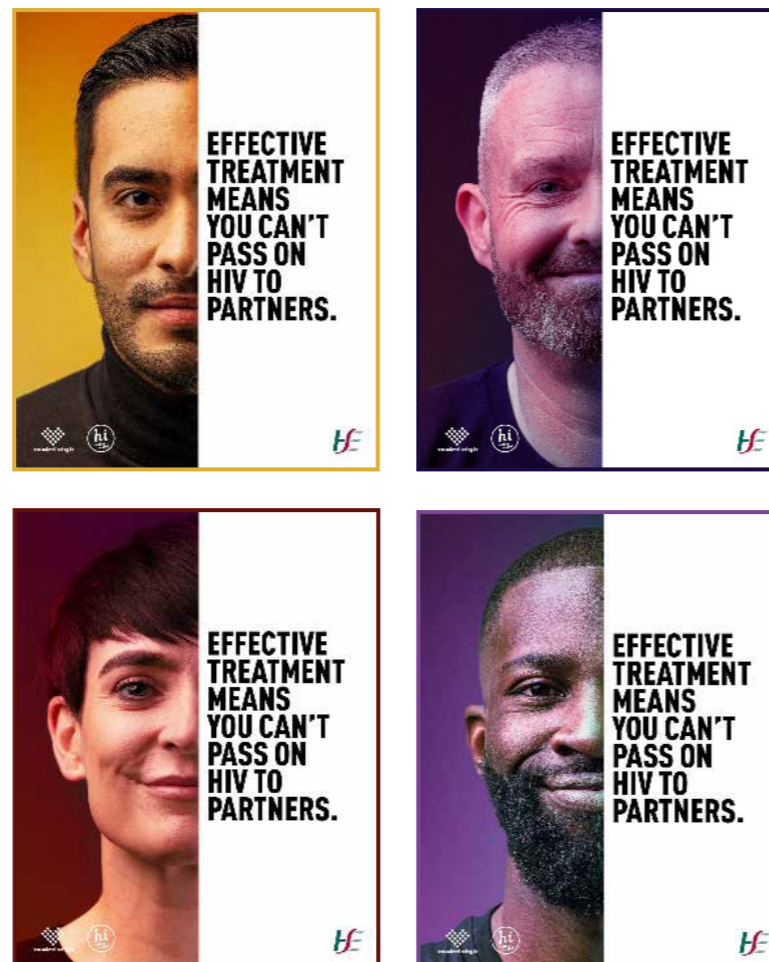
1. Deliver on the commitment to end new HIV transmissions by 2030
2. Develop and deliver a new National Sexual Health Strategy
3. Deliver on the Fast-Track Cities target to achieve zero HIV-related stigma and discrimination
4. Invest in public health and fully fund HIV services to meet the needs of all communities
5. Deliver on the statutory commitment to review the legislation that criminalises the purchase of sex
6. Develop and resource early harm reduction interventions for those engaged in chem sex
7. End the discriminatory 12-month deferral period on blood donations for gay, bisexual and men who have sex with men
8. Resource locally accessible peer support services for people living with HIV

HSE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS HIV-RELATED STIGMA

In January 2020, the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP) launched a new national campaign to address HIV-related stigma. The campaign was developed in consultation with a number of community groups and HIV & sexual health NGOs, including HIV Ireland. The campaign focuses on the fact that someone on effective HIV treatment cannot pass on HIV to sexual partners.

The campaign aims: (1) to highlight the importance of treatment for people living with HIV, and the benefits of treatment for their own health; and (2) to eliminate worry or fear people living with HIV may have about passing on HIV to sexual partners.

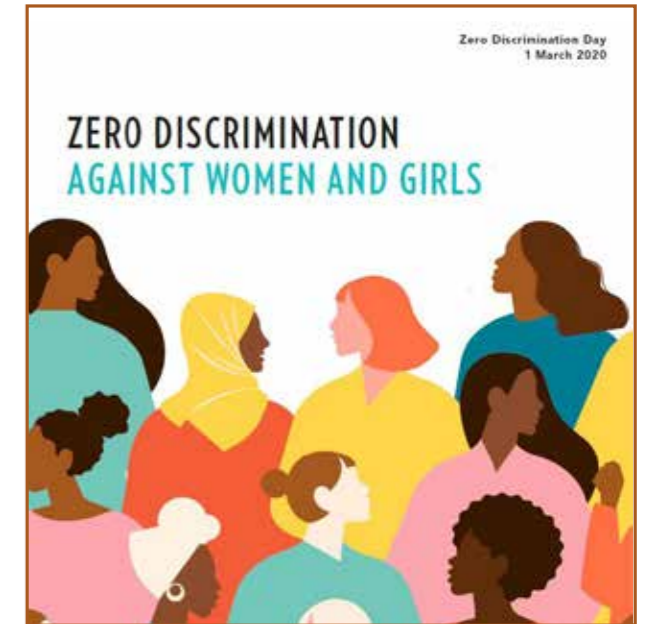
The campaign was advertised on public transport, in social venues and in college locations across the country, as well as on digital platforms.



ZERO DISCRIMINATION DAY

Zero Discrimination Day is a global event which takes place on 1st March annually. Led by UNAIDS, the event is a call to people everywhere to promote and celebrate diversity and reject discrimination, and HIV Ireland supports the initiative every year focusing on zero discrimination for people living with HIV.

The 2020 Global Zero Discrimination Day campaign called for an end to discrimination against women and girls and for equal rights, opportunities and treatment. Despite progress in some areas, in 2020 coercive practices, discriminatory legislation and gender-based violence are just some of the human rights violations that are continuing to have a disproportionate impact on the lives of women and girls around the world.



#LANGUAGE MATTERS

To coincide with Zero Discrimination Day 2020, we launched an online *#LanguageMatters* campaign and updated our *HIV Terminology and Appropriate Language Use Guidelines*. This campaign aims to challenge stigmatising, judgemental and inappropriate language use when talking or writing about HIV, and to encourage more respectful, inclusive, and person-centred language.



COVID-19 & HIV

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of restrictions on the provision of HIV and sexual health services, we compiled a platform of online information (hivireland.ie/covid19andhiv) with advice for people living with HIV and accessing HIV services, sexual health information for gay and bisexual men, HSE advice about sex and coronavirus, information about restrictions to sexual health testing services, and where to get support during the pandemic.





IRISH AIDS DAY 2020: #NOWMORETHANEVER

Launched to coincide with Irish AIDS Day 2020, 'Now, more than ever...' is a set of priorities to highlight the urgent need to end HIV and HIV-related stigma through planning and investment in key HIV prevention measures.

NOW, MORE THAN EVER...

1. ... we must expand HIV testing services.
2. ... we can end new HIV transmissions.
3. ... we must end HIV-related stigma.
4. ... we must ensure barrier-free access to PrEP.
5. ... we can get to Zero.

The campaign seeks to promote the re-evaluation of the current approach to ending HIV transmission in the wake of record high rates of newly notified cases of HIV and the Government's robust response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and HIV Ireland recommends that these priorities be reflected in any new Programme for Government.

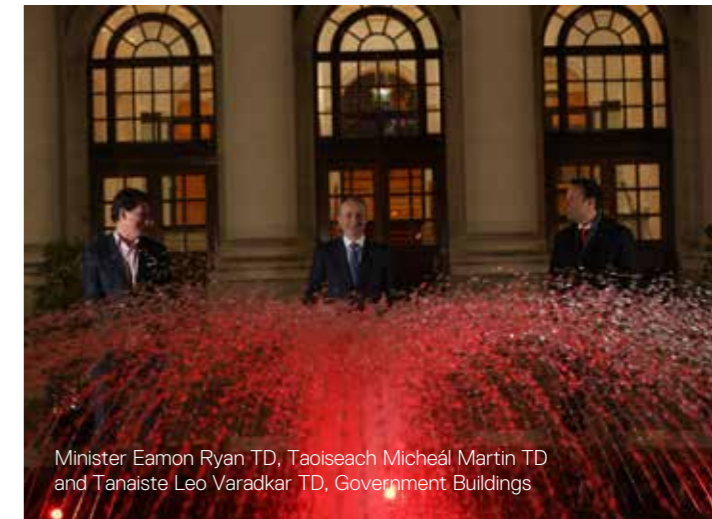


WORLD AIDS DAY 2020

World AIDS Day takes place annually on 1st December. 2020 marked 32 years of this pioneering global health campaign, first initiated by the World Health Organisation in 1988. The global UNAIDS theme for 2020 was 'Global Solidarity, Shared Responsibility', inviting us to view global health responses, including the HIV and AIDS response, in a new way. It requires the world to come together to ensure that health is fully financed, health systems are strengthened, access is ensured, and human rights are respected.

GLOW RED for World AIDS Day #GLOWRED4WAD

We called on Ireland's buildings and monuments to stand in solidarity with people living with HIV and GLOW RED for World AIDS Day. Tánaiste Leo Varadkar TD led the way by lighting up Government buildings and Lord Mayor of Dublin, Ms Hazel Chu lit the Mansion House to mark the day. Other buildings and monuments lighting up for the day included: The Rock of Cashel, the Guinness Storehouse, Liberty Hall, Dublin City Hall, Deloitte, the Bedford Tower at Dublin Castle, Rathfarnham Castle, the Royal College of Surgeons at St. Stephen's Green.



Minister Eamon Ryan TD, Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD and Tanaiste Leo Varadkar TD, Government Buildings



Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary

Glow Red for World AIDS Day

1st Dec 2020

Together We Can End HIV

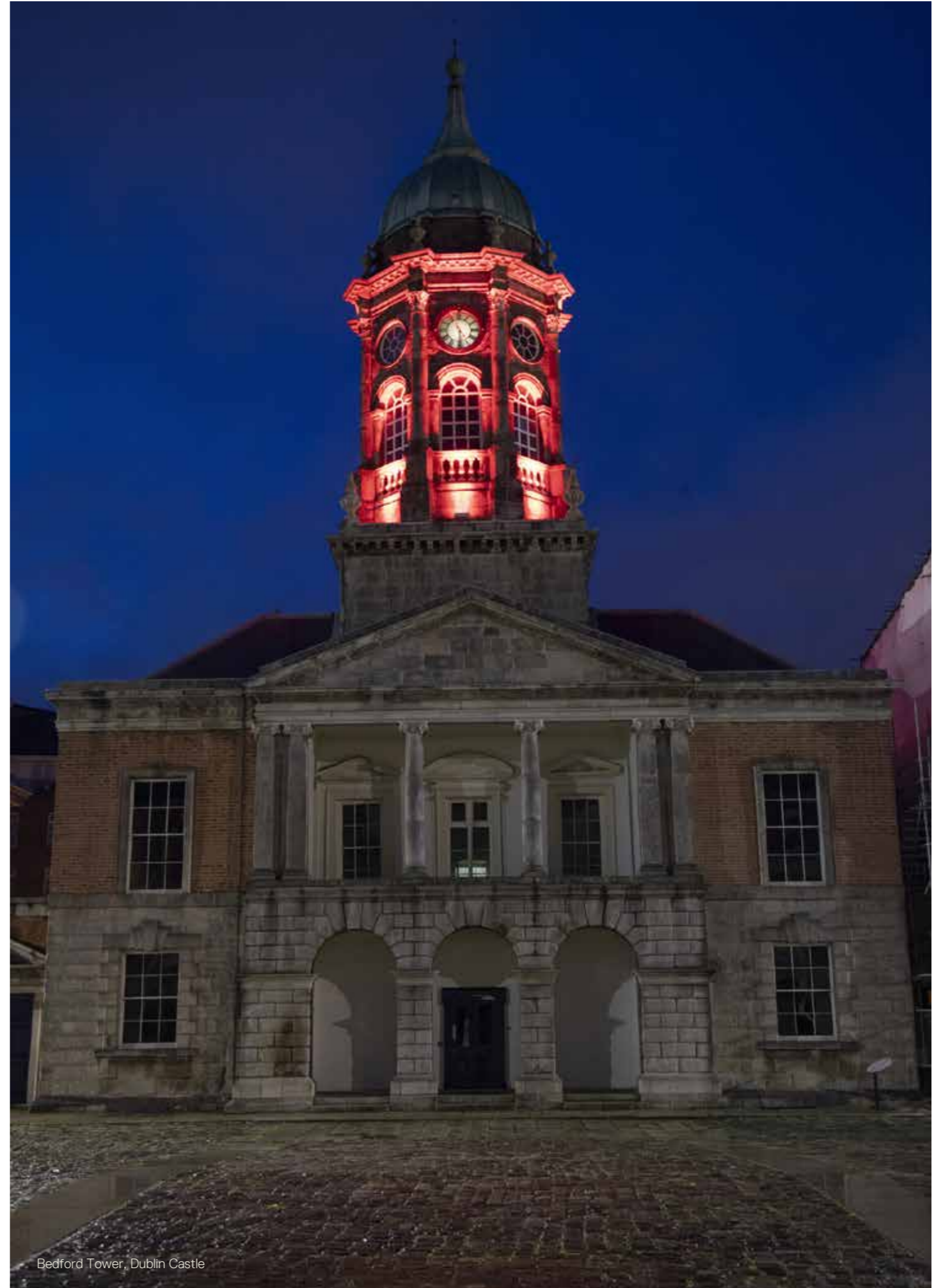
#GLOWRED4WAD Visit: hivireland.ie/WAD2020



Mansion House, Dublin



City Hall, Dublin



Bedford Tower, Dublin Castle

We also put a call out to the general public to wear something RED for the day and to share photos on Twitter using the hashtag #GLOWRED4WAD.



Community Conversations with Panti Bliss

GCN and HIV Ireland presented our third annual joint World AIDS Day awareness-raising and fundraising event, an evening of conversation with the Queen of Ireland, Panti Bliss. The virtual event was broadcast live on Tuesday 1st December 2020.

Panti spoke to a number of prominent HIV activists in the Irish community. Judith Finlay, one of the founders of Queer Culture Ireland spoke about 'The Quilt: Echoes & Memories', an exhibition of the Irish Names Quilt by Queer Culture Ireland in collaboration with Dublin Pride, and dedicated to the project's first Custodian, Mary Shannon, who sadly passed away in July 2020. Panti was then joined by Drag sensation VEDA who shared her experience coming out as HIV-positive in 2019. Adam Shanley, HIV Ireland's MPOWER Programme Manager spoke about the challenges facing Ireland's LGBTQ+ community

from a sexual health perspective during the COVID-19 pandemic. Andrew Leavitt was the final guest of the evening and shared the U=U message that effective HIV treatment, and an undetectable viral load, means that the risk of HIV being passed on through sex is zero.



Lunch and Learns: Let's Talk about HIV in Ireland

HIV Ireland's education team presented Lunch & Learn webinars for World AIDS Day. These events are provided on request to a range of organisations, including private companies and corporations, to raise awareness about HIV in Ireland. In 2020 four organisations participated in these online events: State Street Corporation (Pride Ireland Group), OUTLaw (hosted by EY Ireland), Accenture Operations Ireland, and Baxter.



Positive Perspectives Webinar

On Monday 30th November, ahead of World AIDS Day, GSK and ViiV Healthcare held a webinar to highlight the findings of the *Positive Perspectives* Study in both a global and Irish context. The webinar was launched by the Minister of State with responsibility for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy, Frank Feighan TD, and supported by HIV Ireland and Sexual Health West.



JUST CARRY ONE

Just Carry One is a national social media campaign targeting young people, primarily those aged 17 to 25 years, promoting the consistent use of condoms for STI prevention. Promotion of the campaign is carried out primarily through a dedicated Facebook page (www.facebook.com/justcarryone) with over 17,000 followers, highlighting key messages about condom use, STI prevention and testing.

Free condoms services are provided by HIV Ireland as part of the *Just carry One* campaign, including a walk-in service for individuals and a free resources service for organisations. These services were impacted in 2020 by restrictions and closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this, HIV Ireland developed an online ordering service to facilitate ongoing access to free condoms and lube.

The Christmas 2020 campaign promoted the consistent use of condoms to prevent STIs.



MPOWER PROGRAMME LAUNCH AT IMMA

On the 20th of February 2020, a new initiative by HIV Ireland which aims to empower gay and bisexual men with sex-positive, judgement-free and harm-reduction based responses to their sexual health and wellbeing needs was launched at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA). The MPOWER Programme, a peer-led, community-based sexual health programme, is funded by the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme.

The MPOWER Programme is a suite of peer-driven community-level interventions which aim to achieve a reduction in the acquisition of HIV and STIs and an overall improvement of sexual health and wellbeing among gay, bisexual and men who have sex with men (gbMSM). The MPOWER team devise and deliver services, resources and supports where the needs of gbMSM have or can be identified. The programme strives to be inclusive of the diverse identities within the community of gbMSM and to incorporate the experiences of both HIV-positive and HIV-negative men.

The work of the MPOWER Programme is delivered within the context of a broader sexual health and wellbeing framework which aims to take into consideration the range of social determinants of health that impact on sexual practice and vulnerability in acquiring HIV & STIs. This includes mental, physical, and social health.

The launch took place in the surroundings of Niall Sweeney’s Club Chroma space, a glittering stage for celebrating colourful community, and made part of the Derek Jarman PROTEST! Exhibition at IMMA. The exhibition showcased the work of noted British artist, filmmaker Derek Jarman, who, prior to his death in 1994, had been living with HIV.

The event also coincided with the 25th anniversary of The Diceman, Thom McGinty, who passed away on 20th February 1995. Often known as one of Dublin’s true characters, Thom was a pioneering HIV activist. His appearance on the Late Late Show in 1994 when he spoke openly about living with HIV was a ground-breaking moment in Irish television history.



Stephen O'Hare, Executive Director HIV Ireland



Adam Shanley, MPOWER Programme Manager

AIDS
20



GLOW RED

For World AIDS Day,
1st December 2020



Mansion House, Dublin

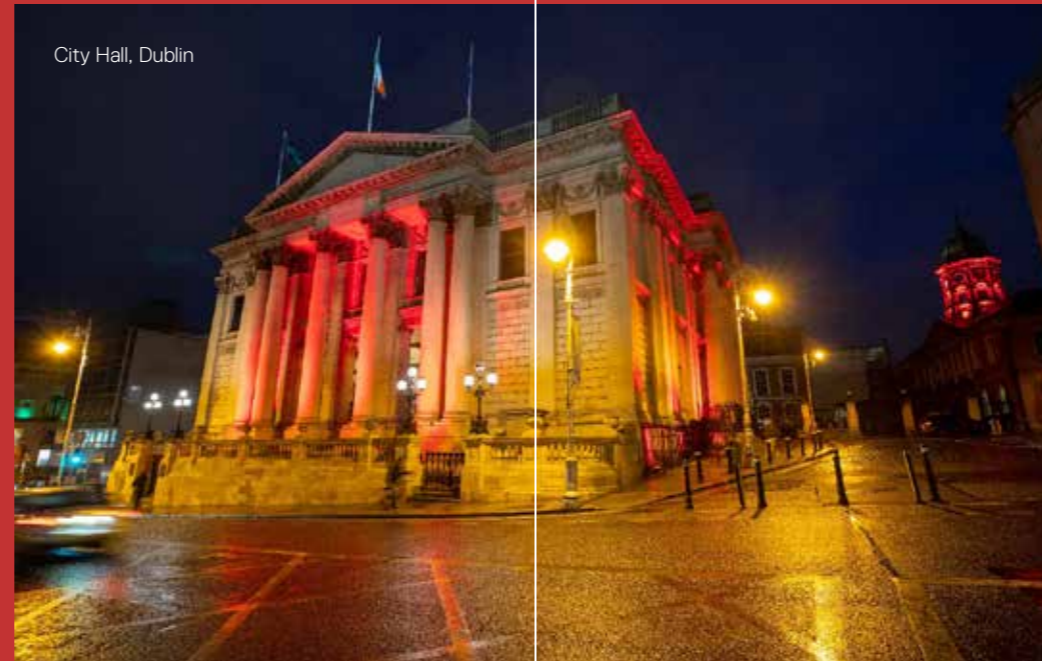
This year, buildings and monuments across Dublin and nationwide GLOWED Red for World AIDS Day on the 30th of November to 1st of December.

Tánaiste Leo Varadkar TD led the way by lighting up Government buildings and Lord Mayor of Dublin, Ms Hazel Chu lit the Mansion House to mark the day.

Other buildings and monuments lighting up for the day included:

The Rock of Cashel, the Guinness Storehouse, Liberty Hall, Dublin City Hall, Deloitte, the Bedford Tower at Dublin Castle, Rathfarnham Castle, the Royal College of Surgeons at St. Stephen's Green.

Special thanks to Tánaiste Leo Varadkar TD, Her Excellency the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Ms Hazel Chu, Dublin City Council, The Office of Public Works, SIPTU, Diageo, Deloitte, and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland for supporting this campaign and standing in solidarity with people living with HIV.



City Hall, Dublin



Government Buildings, Dublin



Deloitte main office, Dublin



Guinness Storehouse, Dublin



Liberty Hall, Dublin



Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary



Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin



Rathfarnham Castle, Dublin



Bedford Tower, Dublin Castle



Government Buildings, Dublin



Minister Eamon Ryan TD, Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD and Tanaiste Leo Varadkar TD, Government Buildings



Barbara Lunga, Volunteer HIV Ireland, Tanaiste Leo Varadkar TD, Bernard Condon SC, Chairperson HIV Ireland



Minister Eamon Ryan TD, Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD and Tanaiste Leo Varadkar TD, Barbara Lunga, Volunteer HIV Ireland.



Bernard Condon SC, Chairperson HIV Ireland, Stephen O'Hare, Executive Director HIV Ireland, Barbara Lunga, Volunteer HIV Ireland, and Jeanne McDonagh, Board Member HIV Ireland

Committee Representation & Policy Work

NORTH INNER CITY DRUGS AND ALCOHOL TASK FORCE (NICDATF)

HIV Ireland's work is strongly linked with the National Drugs Strategy – Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery. HIV Ireland participates on the Prevention and Education sub-committee of the NICDATF and receives support funding for the delivery of education and training services.

NATIONAL SEXUAL HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

HIV Ireland participates on this Working Group, the establishment of which is one of the priority actions within the National Sexual Health Strategy Action Plan. Chaired by the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme, the group was established to coordinate sexual health communications activities between HSE and non-statutory organisations to ensure joint resources are used in the most effective manner.

HEALTH PROTECTION SURVEILLANCE CENTRE, AND THE SEXUAL HEALTH CRISIS PREGNANCY PROGRAMME (COMMUNITY HIV TESTING WORKING GROUP)

In 2020, HIV Ireland continued to participate on the Community HIV working group in conjunction with the Health Protection Surveillance Centre, and the Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme, and relevant NGOs, attending on-line meeting and reviewing documents.

HSE STEERING GROUP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SH:24 PILOT PROJECT

HIV Ireland was invited to join the Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme led Steering Group to oversee the roll out of the pilot project to supply STI self-test kits in three counties – Dublin, Cork and Kerry.

COMMITTEE MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL LGBTI+ INCLUSION STRATEGY 2019 - 2021

In May 2020, Minister David Stanton, Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration invited HIV Ireland to join the Committee Monitoring the Implementation of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2021. The Committee is tasked with reviewing progress made by Government Departments in implementing the agreed strategy actions.

HSE SEXUAL HEALTH NEWS MAGAZINE

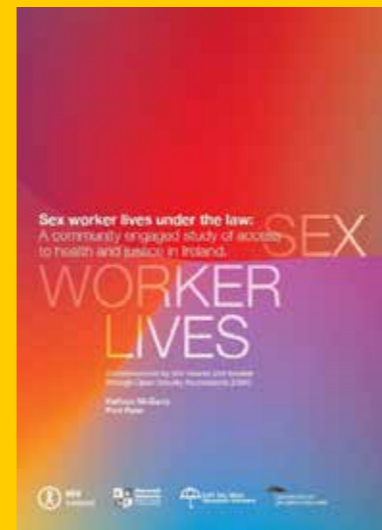
Six articles were submitted for publication in the HSE's Sexual Health News Magazine – Issue 10 (Summer 2020) and Issue 11 (Winter 2020) – covering our #LanguageMatters and #NowMoreThanEver campaigns, COVID-19 & HIV advice and information, the publication of the Sex Worker Lives under the Law report, the launch of our MPOWER Programme, and HIV Prevention Education, highlighting the many options now available to prevent the acquisition and transmission of HIV, and how, as educators, we have a key role to play to ensure the inclusion of the range of HIV prevention strategies available.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR THE PROVISION OF SEXUAL HEALTH PROMOTION TRAINING

HIV Ireland was invited by the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme to engage in a consultation survey to inform the compilation of good practice guidelines for the provision of sexual health promotion training (non-clinical). Feedback was provided by us outlining the key considerations to be addressed when developing, delivering, and evaluating this type of training.

SEX WORKER LIVES UNDER THE LAW

In September 2020, HIV Ireland published a new report – *Sex worker lives under the law: A community engaged study of access to health in Ireland* – highlighting that the law banning the purchase of sex, introduced in 2017, has had a profoundly negative impact on the health and wellbeing of sex workers. Commissioned by HIV Ireland and funded by the Open Society Foundation, the research was conducted by Dr Kathryn McGarry and Dr Paul Ryan of Maynooth University, with the support of the Irish Sex Worker Research Network (ISWRN) and the Sex Workers Alliance Ireland (SWAI).



2020 REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF PART 4 OF THE CRIMINAL LAW (SEXUAL OFFENCES) ACT 2017

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 was commenced in March 2017, and Part 4 of the Act introduced two new offences: paying for sexual activity with a sex worker and paying for sexual activity with a trafficked person. The Act includes a provision that a review would take place three years following its commencement.

In July 2020, pursuant to section 27 of The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, the Department of Justice and Equality commissioned an Independent Expert to review the operation of Part 4 of that Act, which deals with the Purchase of Sexual Services. The review included a general public consultation survey and an invitation to individuals and

stakeholders to make written submissions.

Often referred to as the Swedish or Nordic model, HIV Ireland is opposed to this model, which is not in line with international best practice and policy recommendations for HIV and Sex Work. HIV Ireland supports the recommendation of the UNAIDS Advisory Group on HIV and Sex Work “that States remove criminal penalties for the purchase and sale of sex to establish legal and policy environments conducive to universal access to HIV services for sex workers.”

Read the *HIV Ireland policy submission* to the Department of Justice on our website (hivireland.ie), recommending that sex work be fully decriminalised in order to respect, protect and fulfil the right to the highest attainable standard of health of sex workers.

NATIONAL HIV AND AIDS ARCHIVE

The National HIV and AIDS Archive is a comprehensive collection of material in Ireland charting the story of HIV and AIDS over three decades. In 2020, HIV Ireland continued to facilitate access to the archive on request from researchers.

We supported Queer Culture Ireland and Dublin Pride with access to the archive for *The Quilt: Echoes & Memories* exhibition, marking the 30th anniversary of the first panel of the Irish AIDS Quilt, and the 35th anniversary of the foundation of Gay Health Action.

Resources and articles from World AIDS Day in 1990 were published on our website from the archive and can be viewed at hivireland.ie/nationalhivarchive

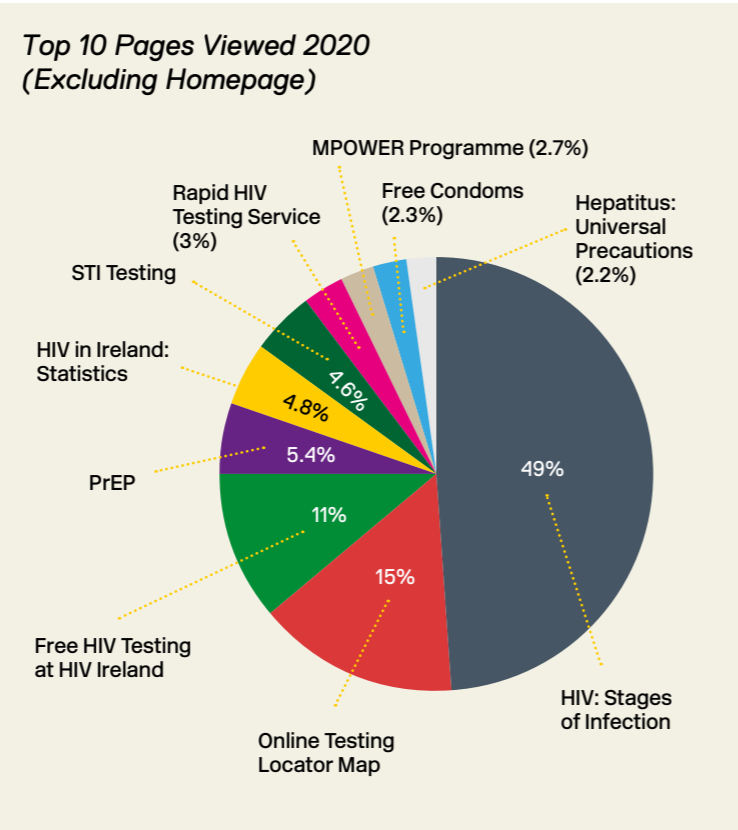
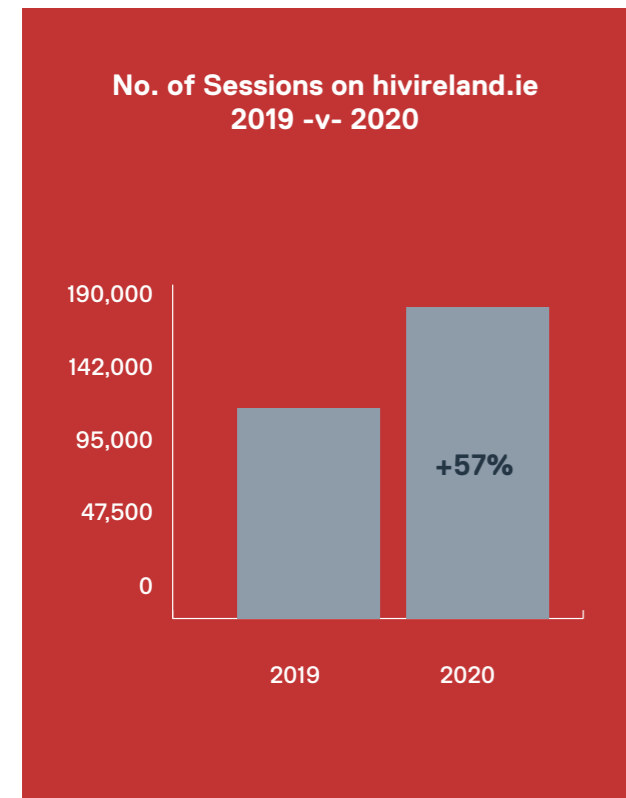


Digital & Social Media

HIV Ireland utilises social media platforms to promote available services, to publish and promote harm reduction information about HIV, STIs, hepatitis, and sexual health, to promote specific campaigns and to highlight our policy and research work. Our primary platforms are our website, Facebook and Twitter pages, and publishing a weekly NewsDesk with a round-up of all the national, European and international news and policy issues about HIV and related issues.

WEBSITE (www.hivireland.ie)

In 2020 there were a total of 184,569 sessions on the HIV Ireland website (+57% over 2019), and 156,251 users (+64% over 2019). 90.5% of users were new visitors with 9.5% returning visitors. There was a total of 271,191 page views (an increase of 39% over 2019).



NEWSDESK WEEKLY

NewsDesk Weekly is a free service provided by HIV Ireland to a range of organisations and individual subscribers. This resource offers a summary of national, European and international news, research and policy issues about HIV and related issues from various online sources.

The service was impacted in 2020 by limited staff resources during COVID-19 restrictions. 23 editions of *NewsDesk Weekly* were published in 2020, with a 7% increase in subscribers.

FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

Our Facebook and Twitter platforms have just over 11,700 followers. Campaigns and trending hashtags in 2020 included:

- #HIVManifesto
- #NowMoreThanEver
- #ZeroDiscrimination
- #LanguageMatters
- #JustCarryOne
- #IrishAIDSDay
- #UequalsU
- #WorldAIDSDay
- #GLOWRED4WAD



MPOWER PROGRAMME PORTAL

In November 2020, the MPOWER Programme portal (mpower.hivireland.ie) was launched on the HIV Ireland website. The portal was created as a dedicated space for gbMSM to reach out to the MPOWER team for supports and in response to the needs for new and established services as part of the programme.

Following public health guidance on the control of COVID-19 transmission, the walk-in service for rapid HIV testing was replaced with an appointment system which was facilitated with an online booking system on the MPOWER website. New initiatives including the HIV self-testing

and condom and lube order systems were also made available on the MPOWER portal alongside contact details for the MPOWER outreach team and our research and advocacy work.

The MPOWER Programme also started to create pages on Facebook (facebook.com/MPOWERprogramme) and Instagram (instagram.com/mpowerprogramme) to keep connected with the community of gbMSM online.



Our Work in Numbers 2020

17

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
EVENTS

346

EDUCATION PARTICIPANTS

INTERVENTIONS FOR
PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

2,878

6

FOLLOWERS ON SOCIAL
MEDIA PLATFORMS

HIV AND STI TESTING
SESSIONS WITH 129
PARTICIPANTS

28,800

811

INTERVENTIONS WITH
THE GENERAL PUBLIC WHO
RECEIVED INFORMATION
ON SEXUAL HEALTH
SCREENING, HIV AND STI
SYMPTOMS, PrEP, PEP,
AND TRANSMISSION RISKS

35

RAPID HIV TESTING
VOLUNTEERS

156,251

UNIQUE VISITORS
TO OUR WEBSITE

APPROX
755

PEOPLE LIVING WITH
HIV WHO RECEIVED
ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT
SERVICES

2,124

ONLINE INTERACTIONS
WITH MPOWER
OUTREACH TEAM

RAPID HIV TESTS
PERFORMED ON gbMSM

16

COMMUNITY OUTREACH
SESSIONS CONDUCTED
ON THE STREET AND IN
MIGRANT BUSINESSES
AND SOCIAL SPACES
REACHING 1000+ PEOPLE
VULNERABLE TO HIV

RAPID HIV TESTING
SESSIONS

146

CONDOM AND LUBE PACKS
DELIVERED ACROSS IRELAND

1,013

2,000

HIV SELF-TEST
DELIVERED ACROSS IRELAND

1,400

1,247

FOLLOWERS ON MPOWER
FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM

6,505

UNIQUE VISITORS
TO THE MPOWER WEBSITE

11,700

JUST CARRY ONE CONDOM
PACKS PROVIDED

Community Employment Scheme

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME (JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2020)

The Community Employment (CE) Scheme is a government-sponsored intervention by the Department of Family Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) that provides practical work experience for the long term unemployed and provides them with access to relevant certified training, to prepare them for the mainstream labour market, or full-time education.

Throughout the year severe restrictions were imposed on recruitment, training and workplace attendance by staff due to Government measures to deal with the global outbreak of the Covid-19 virus. Most CE staff had to work from home and our sub-sponsor organisations Cairde, Outhouse and New Communities Partnership (NCP) had to restrict access to the public and where possible, allow staff to work from home. From March, HIV Ireland also had to reduce access to the public, except for essential services and encouraged staff to work from home.

CE Staff:

The year started with 13 CE participants and ended with 8. Our participants originate from many different countries, including Mauritius, Russia, Poland, Estonia, Romania, Zambia and Italy, with many working our sub-sponsor organisations - New Communities Partnership (NCP), Cairde and Outhouse.

Training:

Despite the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions for most of the year, all staff successfully completed the mandatory “Introduction to Children First” online course for all staff in HSE-funded organisations. Many staff completed between two and twelve HSE-approved personal development courses online. Some of these included: Dignity and Diversity; LGBT+ Awareness & Inclusion Training: the basics; The Fundamentals of GDPR; Equality and Diversity; Intercultural Awareness E-Learning Programme, as well as Communicating Effectively through Open Disclosure.

Unfortunately, relevant QQI-approved courses, as well as those from other professional bodies were temporarily suspended for the year. However, before the lockdown, we had two staff engaged in English Language classes with the Dublin Adult Learning Centre (DALC) and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb). One staff successfully completed (with Distinction) a QQI-Level 5 course in Word Processing.

Progression:

During the year most staff received extensions for another year and we had only two new participants. Of the four that completed the programme, one returned to the live register, two went into full-time jobs with NCP and BelongTo and one obtained part-time employment as a Care Assistant. One participant chose to complete the programme with another project.

The year ended with 8 active participants.

Financial Report



Financial Report

DUBLIN AIDS ALLIANCE LIMITED TRADING AS HIV IRELAND

(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)
Summarised Financial Statement extracted from the Director's report
and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2020

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

	2020		2019	
	€	€	€	€
Income				
Donations & Fundraising	17,633		119,992	
HSE Dublin North City Social Inclusion	320,515		307,994	
HSE National Social Inclusion	12,000		22,000	
D.S.P.	202,473		234,349	
HSE (NICDAFT)	69,897		68,400	
HSE MPOWER Programme (SHCCP)	205,793		137,433	
HSE (SHCPP)	14,820		1,072	
Other Grants	54,989		116,406	
Other Income	3,636		11,018	
		901,756		1,018,664
Expenditure				
Salaries incl. Employer's PRSI	710,644		670,698	
Training & Consultancy	1,898		29,960	
Rent payable	54,017		36,470	
Project costs	127,687		172,069	
Combined Overheads	47,797		59,665	
		942,043		968,862

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

	2020		2019
	€	€	€
Current Assets			
Debtors	28,901		51,099
Cash at bank and in hand	308,509		293,300
	337,410		344,399
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(216,582)		(183,284)
Net current assets	120,828		161,115
Total assets less current liabilities	120,828		161,115
Funds			
<i>General Fund (Unrestricted)</i>	120,828		161,115
Total Funds	120,828		161,115

Acknowledgements

HIV Ireland would like to express sincere thanks and appreciation to all who worked with and supported our organisation throughout 2020.

Board of Directors: The Directors holding office during the year comprised: Bernard Condon SC (Chairperson), Jeanne McDonagh, Tim Lee (Treasurer), Fergal O'Sullivan, Claire Power, Gerry Kennedy BL (Company Secretary), Prof. Patrick Mallon.

Executive Director: Stephen O' Hare

Operations staff team: Marie Hamilton (Manager), Patricia Dillon-Killeen, Olusola Martin Ade-Onojobi, (CE Supervisor), Charity Makala (until February), Tara Sinclair, Aideen Healy-Brady, Valerie Beklesov.

Community Support staff team 2020: Dr Erin Nugent (Manager), Anthony Newsome, Evonne Mushonga, and Richard Boyle.

Volunteers 2020: Joel Biongo, Martha Mutanda, Guylaine Ndonga Mbaki, and Gerald Browne.

Volunteer Counsellor: Arran Whelan

Education & Training Programme staff team: Susan Donlon (Manager), Sue Carter, Silvana Avigliano.

MPOWER staff team: Adam Shanley (Manager), Davy Quinlivan, Diego Caixeta and Mark Doyle.

MPOWER Volunteers: Jon Weir, Jason Doyle, Andrew Leavitt, Bill Foley, Stephen Quinn, Karl Hayden, Senja Trinh, Thomas O'Carroll, David Lee, Barry Mulcahy, Michael O'Higgins, Aleksander Krstic, Billy Flynn, Luke Walsh, Drew Flood, Jason Doyle, Ciaran McKinney, Mark O'Neill, John Byrne, Keith Donaldson, David Maguinness, Karol Jakubowski, Kevin Morrissey, Eduardo Presoti, Joseph McNeela, Ewerton Dias, Tom Armstrong, Gary Halpin, Darren Lacken, Cleitom Miranda, Sé McCabe, Shane Scully.

Our sincere thanks to our funders

Health Service Executive CHO9 Area, Health Service Executive CHO8 Area, Health Service Executive Office for Social Inclusion, Health Service Executive Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme; Department of Social Protection, Parnell St; North Inner-City Drugs and Alcohol Task Force; HSE National Lottery Fund; Adobe Foundation; Community Fund; MAC AIDS Fund; Open Society Foundations; Rethink Ireland; TUSLA; The Community Foundation for Ireland/RTE Comic Relief Fund; Gilead Sciences; Viatrix (formerly Mylan).

...We wish to thank the individuals and organisations who supported GLOW Red for World AIDS Day 1st December 2020

Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD, Tánaiste Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications & Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan TD, Her Excellency the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Ms Hazel Chu Dublin City Council, The Office of Public Works, SIPTU, Diageo, Deloitte, The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

We would also like to thank members of the general public who wore something RED for the day and who took a photo to share with us on Twitter [#GLOWRED4WAD](#)

.... We wish to thank the individuals and companies who donated or fundraised for us in 2020, including

Bank of Ireland Begin Together, Container Coffee, Diageo, EY Ireland, State Street Corporation, UCD LGBT, and all those who created a birthday fundraiser through Facebook.

...and additional organisations and individuals for their support in 2020

Dr Derval Igoe, Kate O'Donnell, Melissa Brady, and the team at the Health Protection Surveillance Centre; Maeve O'Brien, Caroline Hurley, Janice Donlon, Owen Brennan, Anita Ghafoor Butt, Ray Madden, Rachael Metrusty and the team at the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme; Dr PJ Boyle, HSE, and

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Dublin City University; Mark Costello, (formerly UISCE); Paul Neale and the staff at Capital Financial Planning; Jacquie Richardson and Gavin Armstrong, Positive Life, Belfast; Declan Hayden, Dublin City Council; Ceara O'Neill, Dublin City Council; Ken McCue, Sports Against Racism Ireland; all the support workers in GOSHH, Martin Davoren, Catherine Kennedy and the team at Sexual Health Centre Cork; Joe McDonagh and the team at Sexual Health West, Richard Carson and the team at ACET; the shops and businesses on Dorset St., Moore St., Parnell St., Henry St., and Frederick St. who support our outreach programme. Peter Staley, PEPFAR; Cleve Jones, San Francisco AIDS Foundation; Positive Now and the All-Ireland Network of People Living with HIV; Lisa Connell, Peter Dunne and the team at Gay Community News; Rory O'Neill, aka Panti Bliss; Shane Harte, Bruno Aguir and all the staff at Pantibar and Pennylane; Veda, Judith Finlay, Queer Culture Ireland; Andrew Leavitt and the members of ACTUP Dublin; Jimmy Lacey and all at The Boilerhouse; Jed Dowling, Eddie McGuinness, Jamie Kenny and all at Dublin LGBTQ Pride; Pdraig Burke and all at the Gay Health Network; Martha Whyte and all at Outhouse LGBT Community Centre; Matthew Vaughan and all at ACON Health; Emmett Paterson and all at Grindr4Equality; Ian Green, Jim Fielder, Dominic Reilly and all at Terrence Higgins Trust; Yasmin Dunkley and all at Positive East; David Stuart and all at 56 Dean Street; Dr Will Nutland and all at Prepster; Bertrand Audoin and all at IAPAC and Fast Track Cities; Ursula Liston, John Lannin, Aoife Nash, Declan Groves and all at GLEAM Microsoft; Sean Kissane, Caroline Orr and all at the Irish Museum of Modern Art; David Delaney and all at Viatrix; Daire Ryan, Bahar Tugluku and all the team at Gilead Science; Jennifer Hyland and Rachel Purcell and all the team at Edelman Ireland; Ciara Ní Mhurchú, Emma Walshe and all the team at GSK; Prof Paddy Mallon, Elena Alvarez Barco and the team on the Clinical Trials Network on Infectious Diseases in Ireland; Louise Mc Sharry, Adam Hogan and all at RTÉ 2FM; Siobhan Smith and all at Expleo; Eamonn Maguire at Maguire Chartered Surveyors; Donal Ryan and the team at Donal Ryan & Associates; Philip Mc Mahon, Philip Connaughton, Carla Rogers and all at THISISPOPBABY; Babs Daly, Will St Leger, John Paul O'Brien, Stephen Moloney, Luiz Gasparelli Junior, Ray O'Neill, Andrea Horan, Gda Paul Frayney, Michelle Layden, Eugene Bigley, and Francisco Figueroa.

All our service users in 2020.

RETIREMENT OF OLUSOLA MARTIN ADE-ONOJOBI

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and our many supporters, I would like to take this opportunity to wish our friend and colleague, Olusola Martin Ade-Onojobi, every good wish for his forthcoming retirement (May 2021) and to thank him for his years of service with HIV Ireland. 2020 will mark the last full year of Martin's tenure at HIV Ireland as CE Supervisor, a role he has fulfilled with the upmost skill, diligence, and professionalism. He will be sorely missed among colleagues for his integrity, wit, and compassion. He is, and always will be, held in genuine affection and esteem by colleagues and supervisees alike. Wishing Martin every success for the future.

Stephen O'Hare – Executive Director



DONATION OF SELF-TEST KITS - VIATRIS

Special thanks to our friend David Delaney, Head of Policy & Market Access, Europe N.W, and the team at Viatris for their donation of HIV self-test kits in support of Our HIV Self-Test service.



SPECIAL TRIBUTE

Eugene Arkins

In October, we lost our good friend and long-time volunteer, Eugene Arkins. Eugene was an all-round volunteer. Whether it was dressing up in a sperm costume and shaking a bucket on O'Connell Street, carrying heavy boxes up three flights of stairs, handing out red ribbons, acting as security at events, or working in our HIV and STI testing service, Eugene was always willing to lend a hand whenever it was needed. Although illness prevented Eugene from volunteering in the last few years of his life, he continued to champion and promote the work of HIV Ireland in his beloved Dublin's north inner-city. Eugene and his indomitable spirit will be greatly missed.



Mary Shannon

In July, the sudden passing of Mary Shannon, custodian of the Irish Names Quilt, came as a shock to all in the HIV community. Mary was the heart of our community and worked alongside us since 1987 when the Irish Names Quilt came under the umbrella of the Dublin AIDS Alliance. Mary's dedication to preserving the names and stories of those who were lost to AIDS related illnesses, along with her compassion for the family, lovers, and friends who mourned them, was unwavering. Mary was there when each quilt was being crafted in love and sorrow; her legacy is enshrined in every stitch. She will be greatly missed and always treasured.





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