

Media Reporting Guidelines: **HIV**

Advice and guidance for editors and journalists reporting on HIV in Ireland

More information at: hivireland.ie/MediaReportingGuidelines

Media coverage can play an important role in educating the public and in reducing fear of, and stigma surrounding, HIV. All audiences deserve full, accurate, and intelligent coverage of HIV and HIV-related issues which is easily understood.

Significant scientific advancements have been made in the treatment and prevention of HIV in recent years which has seen the narrative change in relation to how HIV is reflected in media reporting. Good media reporting can educate the public about successful developments and play a part in ending HIV transmissions. We encourage the media to include progressive messages when reporting on HIV and to follow our Best Practice Tips for Reporting on HIV to help reduce stigma and improve the quality of life for people living with HIV.

BEST PRACTICE TIPS FOR REPORTING ON HIV

1. Understand the science of HIV.
2. Frame HIV as a health issue.
3. Use appropriate language and correct terminology.
4. Ensure that HIV data is current and correctly interpreted.
5. Challenge myths and misinformation about HIV.
6. Be sensitive and do not stigmatise.
7. Challenge stereotypes.
8. Tell the stories of people living with HIV.
9. Respect confidentiality.
10. Seek verification.
11. Refer to support services.

ESSENTIAL HIV MESSAGES

- HIV is a treatable, chronic condition.
- HIV cannot be transmitted through sex when a person living with HIV is on effective treatment.
- Testing reduces and prevents HIV transmission.
- PrEP can prevent HIV acquisition.
- PEP can prevent HIV acquisition.
- There is currently no evidence that people living with HIV on effective treatment are at an increased risk of acquiring COVID-19 or at higher risk of serious illness if they acquire COVID-19.

HIV-RELATED DISCRIMINATION

In Ireland, it is illegal to discriminate against a person who is HIV positive.

THE IRISH CONTEXT: RECENT TRENDS IN HIV DIAGNOSES

- The highest number of HIV notifications in Ireland in recent years are amongst gay, bisexual, and men who have sex with men (gbMSM).
- A high proportion of HIV notifications in Ireland in recent years occurs in people who have had a previous HIV diagnosis in another country before arrival in Ireland, many of whom are transferring their HIV care from abroad to Ireland.
- The number of people who acquire HIV through injecting drug use has been declining in Ireland since the early 2000s.
- The proportion of people presenting late amongst some population groups is concerning as identifying HIV infection as early as possible is vital to improve health outcomes and to reduce the risk of the onward transmission of HIV.

More information at hpsc.ie

THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

It is estimated that since the epidemic began, over 78 million people have acquired HIV globally. The population groups most vulnerable to HIV are sex workers, people who inject drugs, gay, bisexual, and men who have sex with men (gbMSM), transgender people, prisoners, and the partners of individuals in these groups.

More information at unaids.org

POLICY FRAMEWORKS DRIVING THE HIV RESPONSE

- National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020
- Healthy Ireland - A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025
- National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy 2019-2021
- Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery (National Drugs Strategy) 2017-2025
- Second National Intercultural Health Strategy 2018-2023
- 90-90-90 UNAIDS Strategy
- Fast-Track Cities initiative
- Dublin Declaration on Partnership to fight HIV and AIDS in Europe and Central Asia
- Sustainable Development Goals

KEY ANNUAL CALENDAR DATES



Acknowledgements

HIV Ireland wishes to acknowledge the following people for their input, advice and feedback during the development of these guidelines: *Órla Ryan, Journalist, thejournal.ie; Kate O'Donnell, Health Protection Surveillance Centre, HSE; Michael McFarland Campbell; and Jeanne McDonagh, HIV Ireland Board Member.*

These Guidelines were compiled by Susan Donlon, Prevention Education and Training Manager, HIV Ireland.