

# Dhiverse Newsletter

## November 2017

We have had a very busy few months with Sexual Health Week schools, colleges and universities starting up again after the summer break and yet another very successful ABC Event celebrating their second year of the service running.

We have a few busy months ahead of us with National HIV Testing Week coming up in November, World Aids Day on the 1st of December and lots of sessions, workshops, trainings and testing to do.

### Dhiverse— where we are at the end of 2017

Looking at the HIV epidemic in the UK towards the end of 2017 – there's a lot of good news! The figures for new diagnoses have been gradually declining since 2007, and since 2015 there has been a remarkable drop in new transmissions of HIV among gay and bisexual men, particularly in London. Changes in treatment have had a significant knock-on effect on the onward transmission of the virus. As HIV is now normally treated with anti-viral drugs on diagnosis, more and more people living with HIV are on treatment and show an undetectable viral load – very significantly reducing the risk of passing on the virus. New prevention technologies such as Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) are also expected to have a major impact on reducing HIV transmission.



However, the outlook on HIV is not one of unvarnished optimism. After an unseemly squabble between Public Health England and NHS England as to who should be responsible for funding provision for PrEP, access has been delayed, and we are waiting for the implementation of a 'trial' which will offer limited access to 'high risk individuals'. Meanwhile, individual gay and bisexual men are buying PrEP privately and will need advice and support to ensure that they use this medication safely and effectively.

So how is DHIVERSE responding to this gradually changing landscape of HIV in the UK?

- \* We will continue to focus our campaigns on promoting HIV diagnosis and offering HIV Insti testing – to make it as easy and convenient as possible for people to take an HIV test.
- \* We will continue to support people living with HIV – offering psychological and social support to ensure that they can get the best out of the medical treatments available and challenge the stigma and prejudice which can still surround HIV.
- \* We will offer training to professionals and other stakeholders on HIV, the rights of people living with HIV, and resources to support people living with HIV.
- \* We will work with clinical services to ensure that information on the accessibility of PrEP is disseminated as widely as possible and that non-medical support and information services are available to those accessing PrEP or thinking of accessing PrEP.
- \* DHIVERSE will expand its targeted outreach work with older people, using some of the data collected through our '45+' Sexual Health Needs Questionnaire, with a particular focus on HIV.

## ABC Event – A Very Fun Day!



On Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October eighty people with learning difficulties, carers, teachers and other professionals came together to attend the ABC event. The event was organised by the ABC team at Dhiverse and was held at Orchard Park Community Centre.

As many of you may already know, the ABC (Awareness, Balance and Choice) relationships and sexual health programme has been delivered by Dhiverse for the past two years and is funded by the Big Lottery. We work with people with learning difficulties and autism in a way that is accessible to them to help develop understanding around relationships. The overall aims of the programme are for participants to be able to make informed choices about their relationships and understand how to keep themselves and others safe. We also deliver a workshop for parents, carers and other professionals to help them feel more confident when talking to someone with LD about sex and relationships and to have a greater understanding of their needs.

The Event was a great success with eighty people joining us for the day. It was an opportunity for people with LD to socialise, take part in activities, find out about the ABC programme and just enjoy the day including lunch. It proved to be extremely popular with carers, teachers and other professionals also taking part. There were many highlights during the day including a dance session run by Filipa Pereira-Stubbs from Dance Moves who made the session accessible to everyone. In the afternoon Papworth Trust's OWL Centre members involved the audience in a lively, interactive session and performance. Adam Makey, who is autistic, came from Niche Comics in Huntingdon to tell us how he set up and runs his own business with his brother. Other activities that attendees enjoyed taking part in included making friendship bracelets and cards and entering a competition to produce a piece of art around the theme of relationships. The ABC team were very impressed with the entries and with how much thought and work went into them.



Throughout the day people were letting us know how much they were enjoying the event and highlighted the need for our service and further events in the future.

Thank you to everyone who came along and helped to make it such a fun and successful day.

If you would like more information about the ABC programme or the workshop please get in touch.

Liz MacKenzie, ABC Programme Manager—01223 508805, 07985 447846, [elizabeth@dhiverse.org.uk](mailto:elizabeth@dhiverse.org.uk)



## Changes in HIV Support

It's been a busy time over the past few months from closing the Diverse Counselling Service to taking over the role of HIV Support Worker for Cambridge.

I'm looking forward to meeting old and new clients and making lots of new connections around Cambridge and further afield in the Fenland area.

Since taking over the role in October I've been pretty busy with PIP applications and assessments, ESA claims, housing benefit applications and also providing 1-1 Emotional Support.

An HIV diagnosis is a shock for most people and we can support you through this, whether you need a chat to talk things through, support applying for benefits or information around transmission.

I cover Cambridge, Huntingdon, Wisbech and all the Fenland area, if you have any questions or you are in need of support please feel free to contact **Lisa on 07983150429**.



## National HIV Testing Week

National HIV Testing Week starts on the 18th November and will keep going until the 1st of December, which is World Aids Day.

This year we are going to be present all over Cambridgeshire, including Wisbech, carrying out HIV Insti Testing and raising awareness around early HIV diagnosis.

There will be an **Interact (MSM)** group meeting in November; the Huntingdon group is meeting Saturday 4th at 11am to 1pm and the Cambridge group is on Thursday 9th at 6pm to 8pm

In December the Huntingdon group will meet on Saturday the 2nd at 11am to 1pm and the Cambridge group on Saturday the 16th at 12noon to 2pm.

We will also be holding a conference on PrEP at the fire station on the 22nd November from 12-4pm, where there will be a medical professional present and an opportunity for anyone who wants to find out more, to ask questions.

We will have stalls at Addenbrookes and Hinchingbrooke Hospitals on World Aids Day.

## **World AIDS Day**

### **CHEESE & WINE FUNDRAISING**



**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017, 6.45pm - 9pm**  
**Parkside Fire Station, Cambridge, CB1 1FJ**

**Entry fee: suggested donation of £2 per person**  
(Pay on the night)

**Maximum of 4 people per team**  
**Prize for the winning team**

Places are limited, so to help us organize refreshments please register your team by **Monday 20th November**

Contact: Lucy Hills

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**dhiverse**  
sexual health matters

You've helped us fight HIV. Now, let's end it. This World AIDS Day join the fight to end the negative impact of HIV.

## National Hate Crime Awareness Week

Each year, the UK holds a week long awareness raising event about Hate Crime. This event was started following the nail bomb attacks of 17, 24 and 30 April 1999. These attacks targeted the BAME and LGBT communities in London.

According to the Home Office, in the year of April 2016 to March 2017 there were 80,393 hate offences - an increase of 29% on the previous years.

You may be wondering why this is important to Diverse.

People living with HIV are affected by stigma and discrimination. People are targeted by a hate crime because of their Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Faith or because they are Transgender. Stigma, discrimination and hate crime can impact on their physical and emotional wellbeing. This in turn could impact on the choices people make – not taking their medication, drinking alcohol or taking drugs to excess or participating in risky sexual behaviour.

As part of my role as a Health Promotion Worker, Diverse kindly allowed me to work in partnership with Encompass Network to organise a networking event for the LGBT community to learn more about hate crime, how to report it and the support available. As part of the event we also looked at the barriers that people may face to reporting and accessing support and how these could be resolved.

During the event there were brief talks from Charles Kitchener (Director of Communications from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire), Kevin Misik (Police, community cohesion), and Jenni a volunteer from the Victims Hub.

People shared their experiences of the reporting things to the police. Not all experiences were positive and, understandably, it is these experiences that people tell their friends. When we talked about what would make it easier to report to the police, the one big thing that came across was that people felt that Police Officers and the support staff need training in LGB and T issues, so that they understand the history of where people are coming from and the impact hate crime may have on a person.

Charles Kitchener stated that he would discuss this with the Police and Crime Commissioner. It was very much felt that if the police were open about the training they received, victims of hate crime would more readily report it.



### Contact Us

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**Opening hours;**

**Monday- Friday**

**9.30am-5.30pm**