

Men Only Tayside (MOT)

NHS Tayside has launched a new clinical service to help prevent HIV and improve the sexual health of gay and bisexual men.

Gay and bisexual men remain at highest risk of acquiring HIV, hepatitis B and other serious sexually transmitted infections and account for the largest proportion of individuals diagnosed and living with HIV. NHS Tayside has acted on a number of recommendations to improve services and awareness locally following a needs assessment carried out by Terrence Higgins Trust (THT) in 2012 with local men, and additional input from focus groups and semi-structured interviews provided valuable insight into what services men felt would be beneficial to them.

108 men completed an online survey. This was accessed via our Gay Men's Health and Sexual Health Tayside websites. The survey was advertised on Gaydar, a social networking site for gay men, posters in washrooms in pubs and clubs across Tayside, beer mats and local press. Men who completed the survey received a complimentary pass to a local gym.



The Men Only Tayside Team

3 focus groups were held with men who have sex with men (MSM), facilitated by THT and local staff from either statutory or voluntary agencies. The focus groups reflected the diversity of gay and bi-sexual men within Tayside and included an LGBT Youth Scotland group, a group of sauna attendees and a group of men living with HIV. Support from local voluntary agencies and the commercial "scene" were invaluable in engaging with MSM.

17 semi structured interviews were held with men who are HIV positive including younger men who were recently diagnosed. These were face to face or by telephone. The fact that this number of men participated is a testament to the excellent relationship staff in the HIV and Sexual Health Service have with service users. Researchers in the field have acknowledged this is a high level of engagement with this population group.

Outcome of the Engagement Activity

11 recommendations were included in the final report detailing how NHS Tayside can improve HIV prevention for MSM and provide services that are responsive to the needs of the local community. Sharing evidence of best practice with MSM and getting community insights allowed us to have more meaningful discussions with MSM and design more patient-centred prevention and treatment services and interventions.

A number of the themes that emerged from the focus groups and interviews were not ones that we had considered. An example is that a small number of men identified they had been raped or sexually assaulted and this may have been how they contracted HIV. We therefore intend to review and strengthen the male rape and sexual assault pathways making it easier for men to get support and access to Post Exposure Pro-phylaxis for Sexual Exposure which can prevent HIV infection if given with 72 hours.

The final report of the needs assessment was published and made available publicly. A summary was produced and a copy of both the summary and the full report was sent to each man that participated in the focus groups or interviews with an invitation to continue to be engaged as we develop services to meet the recommendations.

A copy of the full report is available here:

<http://www.bbvmcntayside.scot.nhs.uk/Home/Improving%20HIV%20Prevention%20and%20Services%20for%20MSM%20in%20Tayside%20April%202012%5B1%5D.pdf>

As a result of the assessment, the Sexual Health & Blood Borne Virus MCN designed a service for MSM which includes a specialist sexual health clinic, a community clinic, outreach work on the “scene” and in commercial sex venues, a local condoms by post scheme, volunteering opportunities and peer led education.

How has the process built capacity?

On-going engagement with MSM shows support for clear branding of all information, services and support aimed at MSM. Focus groups considered a number of options in May 2012, with a majority in favour of **MOT – Men Only Tayside**. By involving men in the co-design of the service we hope to engender a sense of ownership and trust in the brand. Focus groups and feedback from evaluation continue to shape the service and the next focus group will focus on the city centre community clinic and how to raise the profile of the service to engage with the harder to reach MSM population.

How are mutual roles and responsibilities defined?

As part of the needs assessment incentives of gym passes were given men to take part, however, seeing their ideas come to life e.g the website, the MOT branding, the bus campaign, etc have been a bigger incentive with men seeing their input come to life and being valued.

The first step to improve the availability of local service information and HIV prevention information online was the development of the Men Only Tayside website: www.menonlytayside.com This was co-designed by MSM who were involved with all aspects of the development of the website, providing input on the name, logo, design, content and advertising mainly through focus group work.

The MCN, in partnership with Terrence Higgins Trust is working to co-deliver services with the introduction volunteers offering a “meet and greet” service in clinics and delivering peer led educational interventions. The needs assessment has provided the basis for ongoing engagement with MSM and we will continue to nurture and build on the relationship we have developed with local MSM and “scene” venues to ensure we have an open dialogue and they have the opportunity to engage in all aspects of the design and delivery of the MOT service.