



# One Parliament Left

A manifesto for ending  
HIV transmission in  
Scotland by 2030



# Our vision

**Scotland could be the first country in the world to end HIV transmission. The next Scottish Government must seize that opportunity and urgently deliver on our historic goal.**

Medical advances mean that today, a person living with HIV and on effective treatment can live a long, happy, and healthy life and cannot pass HIV on to others<sup>1</sup>. This progress – combined with the availability of PrEP and rapid HIV testing – means we have all the tools we need to end new HIV transmission by 2030. We can achieve a historic first: ending the onward transmission of a virus without a vaccine or a cure.

Marked progress has been made in the 2021 – 2026 Parliament: the HIV Transmission Elimination Delivery Plan was published<sup>2</sup>, which set out a framework to end HIV transmission in Scotland by 2030. Bold action to address HIV stigma has been taken in our NHS<sup>3</sup> and a groundbreaking national HIV awareness campaign aired on Scottish TV with the strapline *'Stigma is more harmful than HIV'*, the first since the *'Don't Die of Ignorance'* campaign 40 years ago<sup>4</sup>. More and more people are accessing PrEP; and emergency department opt-out HIV testing is being rolled out in Scotland's three largest cities<sup>5</sup>.

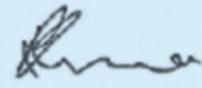
However, we must accelerate progress now if we are to succeed in our shared 2030 ambition. There are an estimated 400 people living with undiagnosed HIV in Scotland and up to 1,400 people who are diagnosed but are no longer accessing vital treatment and care<sup>6</sup>. They are at risk of getting seriously ill – some already are. While medical progress has been vast, the stigma surrounding HIV remains. The next Scottish Government must renew the HIV Transmission Elimination Delivery Implementation Plan and set out clear actions to urgently address these challenges. The third sector must be recognised as a core delivery partner within the renewed plan.

This manifesto sets out how we can achieve our shared vision for Scotland. A Scotland that has ended new HIV transmission, where prevention tools are accessible to all and where people living with HIV have the support they need to access treatment and care, free of stigma and discrimination.

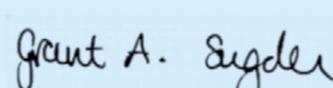
In developing this manifesto, we have held discussions with a wide range of people living with HIV, as well as NHS colleagues and our third sector partners about what they think is needed to achieve our shared 2030 ambition. We are very grateful to everyone who took the time to share their views and experience.



**Richard Angell OBE**  
Chief Executive of  
Terrence Higgins Trust



**Robbie Currie**  
Chief Executive of  
National AIDS Trust



**Grant Sugden**  
Chief Executive of  
Waverley Care

# Our recommendations

**We are calling for all political parties to re-commit to ending HIV transmission in Scotland by 2030. The next government must renew the HIV Transmission Elimination Delivery Plan within the first year and urgently deliver on existing commitments.**

To end new HIV transmissions in Scotland by 2030, the next Scottish Government must:

- 1 Roll-out opt-out HIV and blood borne virus testing in emergency departments in areas with a high HIV prevalence and to other health settings, in line with national guidelines.**
- 2 Deliver a national Online HIV Prevention Service that's a one-stop-shop for at-home HIV testing and online PrEP access.**
- 3 Develop a national programme to re-engage the significant number of people lost to HIV care.**
- 4 Ensure equitable access to peer and mental health support for everyone living with HIV by establishing a national baseline for peer support provision in NHS Boards and committing to sufficient and sustainable funding for HIV voluntary sector services.**
- 5 Fund multi-year campaigns to normalise testing, improve HIV awareness and tackle stigma, including through the development of a National HIV Testing Week for Scotland and education resources for all health and social care staff.**

# Testing

## **The next Scottish Government must roll out opt-out HIV and blood borne virus testing in emergency departments in areas with a high HIV prevalence and to other health settings, in line with national guidelines.**

There are 400 people living with undiagnosed HIV in Scotland and up to 1,400 people who are diagnosed but are no longer engaged with treatment and care. Finding and supporting these people is vital to improving their health and ending HIV transmission in Scotland.

Emergency department opt-out HIV testing has been a game-changer elsewhere in the UK in finding new cases of HIV and re-engaging those who are no longer accessing treatment and care. Data published by the UK Health Security Agency in October 2025 found that, in only 33 months, over 7 million tests were undertaken for blood borne viruses in 34 emergency departments (namely in London, Manchester, Brighton and Blackpool)<sup>7</sup>.

The testing programme found 719 new HIV diagnoses, 831 new Hepatitis C diagnoses and 3,667 Hepatitis B diagnoses. A significant majority (73.4%) of people newly diagnosed had no record of a previous test for blood borne viruses, highlighting the success of the opt-out programme in accessing populations who would not normally interact with traditional settings where a blood borne virus test may take place.

Early diagnosis of HIV helps to improve health outcomes and relieves pressure on a stretched health system. It also saves money, with an estimated £6-8 million in care costs saved as a result of £2.2 million spent in the first 100 days of the scheme in England<sup>8</sup>. In Croydon University Hospital, when they first started opt-out testing in 2020, the average hospital stay for a newly diagnosed HIV patient was 34.9 days. After two years of opt-out HIV testing, the average stay was reduced to just 2.4 days<sup>9</sup>.

In May 2025, the First Minister committed to roll out opt-out testing in NHS Grampian, NHS Lothian and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, with the intention for a wider roll out across Scotland at a later date<sup>10</sup>. We need the urgent roll out of opt-out testing across the health system, with a committed investment to vital third sector services including mental health and peer support for anyone newly diagnosed or re-engaged in care. HIV testing across the health system should be in line with British HIV Association (BHIVA) and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)<sup>12</sup> guidelines.

# Prevention

## **The next Scottish Government must introduce a national Online HIV Prevention Service, including at-home HIV testing and online PrEP access.**

Prevention must be one of the central pillars of our work to end the onward transmission of HIV in Scotland by 2030. However, we know that access to prevention tools, like HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and at-home HIV testing, is not equitable and that significant barriers remain in ensuring that those who could benefit the most from these public health interventions are able to access them.

As the Scottish Government looks to move to a 'digital first' approach to improve access to health services across the country<sup>13</sup>, an Online HIV Prevention Service must be introduced, allowing for a single point of access to HIV home testing and PrEP initiation.

### **Testing at home**

Testing is a key tool in ending HIV transmission: if you test negative, you can access prevention tools, like PrEP that will continue to prevent you from getting HIV; if you test positive, you can access the care and treatment you need to live a long, healthy life and not pass HIV on.

However, recent data from Public Health Scotland reveals that HIV testing rates in key settings – including sexual health services, GPs and prisons – have failed to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Scottish Government is yet to deliver the long-promised national online HIV and STI testing service<sup>14</sup>, meaning only 4 health boards in Scotland offer at-home HIV self-sampling services<sup>15</sup>. The delay in delivering this online postal testing service is also holding back progress in other areas, including by limiting the ability to roll out a national online PrEP clinic.

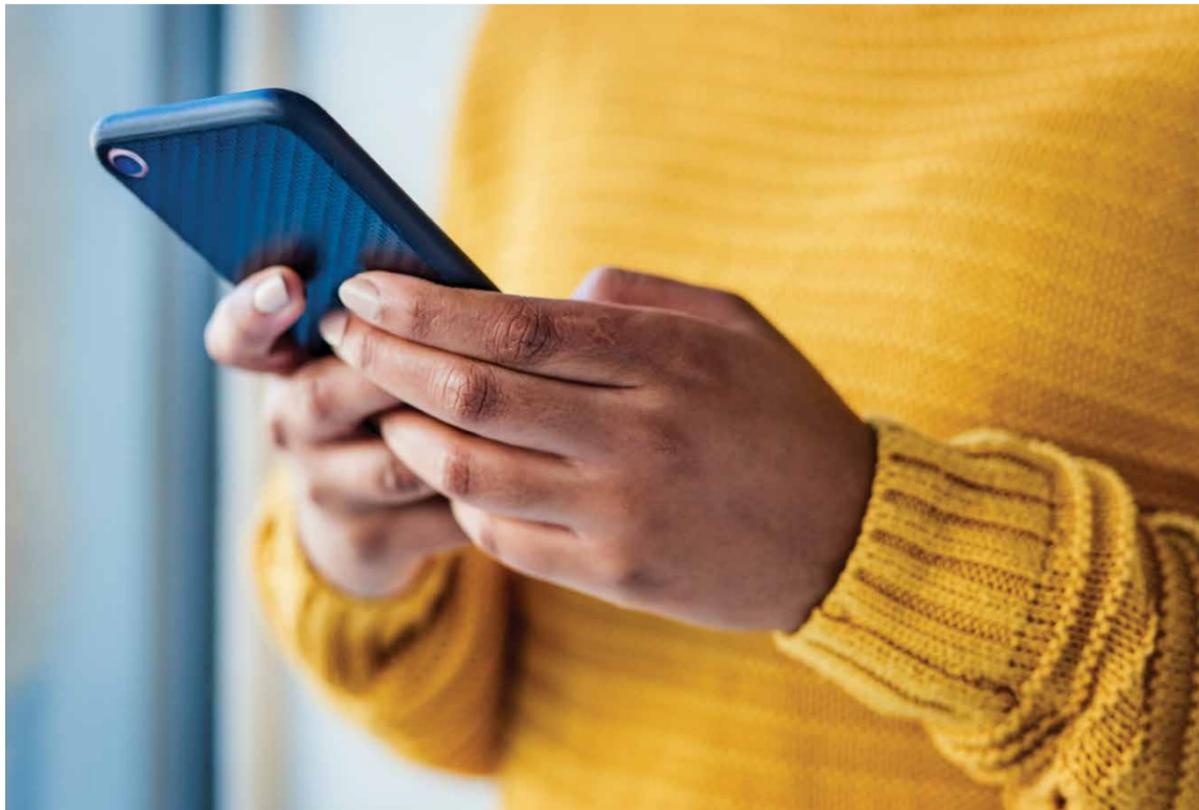
During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Welsh Government introduced its own national at-home HIV testing service<sup>16</sup> which now accounts for nearly 20% of all people accessing HIV testing in Wales<sup>17</sup>. As a component of its new HIV Action Plan, the UK Government also recently committed £5 million to trial national at-home testing in England through its NHS App<sup>18</sup>. The next Scottish Government should invest in a similar online service to end the postcode lottery in access to HIV testing and relieve pressure on our sexual health services.

## PrEP

In 2017, Scotland became the first UK nation to make the HIV prevention drug PrEP available through our NHS<sup>19</sup> and this has helped revolutionise how we are responding to the HIV epidemic in Scotland. Scotland has since approved long-acting injectable PrEP<sup>20</sup>, a game-changing advancement for those who find it difficult to take daily oral tablets. However, while PrEP uptake is increasing year-on-year, many barriers to accessing this prevention tool remain in place.

Across communities in Scotland, there remains a lack of knowledge about PrEP and how to access it<sup>21</sup>. This issue is compounded by the fact that PrEP is only accessible in sexual health services, deterring many from engaging with this prevention tool due to stigma and long waiting times for appointments. While women make up 29% of people diagnosed with HIV in Scotland, of the 2,472 people prescribed PrEP for the first time in 2024, only 88 were women (>4%).

Widening PrEP access to outside of sexual health services, including to primary care – GPs and community pharmacies – will help raise awareness of the game-changing prevention tool and encourage uptake among communities who are less likely to interact with specialist sexual health services. It is also crucial that sexual health services are fully funded to deliver injectable PrEP to those eligible. Important work is ongoing in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to pilot PrEP clinical care pathways online<sup>22</sup>. This work must be expanded across the country, aided by a national HIV home-testing service.



# Retention and re-engagement in care

## The next Scottish Government must develop a national programme to re-engage the significant number of people lost to HIV care.

Public Health Scotland reports that 7% of people living with diagnosed HIV in Scotland are not engaged with specialist treatment and care – meaning they have not attended HIV specialist services in the past 18 months – and nearly a further 1,000 people are 'lost to follow-up', meaning they have not attended HIV specialist services in Scotland for more than 36 months. These people are at risk of getting seriously ill and passing the virus on to others.

There are many factors that may lead someone to disengage from their HIV care, including experiencing complex health needs, poverty, discrimination and stigma<sup>23</sup>. In Scotland, the majority of those no longer attending HIV treatment and care are gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men. People who inject drugs are also over-represented in the disengaged cohort.

Pilots from HIV clinics and third sector organisations across the UK have successfully returned people to care through case-finding, focused follow up and wrap-around support for people<sup>24,25</sup>. Further, as a component of the new HIV Action Plan for England, the UK Government has committed £9 million to fund a national initiative to boost retention and re-engagement, in partnership with the voluntary sector<sup>26</sup>. We need a national approach to re-engagement to find and support everyone living with HIV and end HIV transmission by 2030, with the voluntary sector as a key delivery partner from the outset.

**The next Scottish Government must ensure equitable access to peer and mental health support for everyone living with HIV by establishing a national baseline for peer support provision in NHS Boards and committing to sufficient and sustainable funding for HIV voluntary sector services.**

HIV support services, including peer and mental health support, are vital in helping people living with HIV to come to terms with their diagnosis and engage in treatment and care. More widely, the HIV voluntary sector provides support for issues such as isolation, poverty, managing other disabilities, supporting people in employment and sharing their status with others.

Nine in ten people living with HIV in Scotland reported that they feel more empowered and confident in managing their HIV diagnosis after accessing support services<sup>27</sup> and research undertaken by HIV Outcomes UK found that 89% of people living with HIV felt that accessing HIV support services improved their overall life satisfaction and well-being<sup>28</sup>.

However, across the UK there is geographical variation in access to peer support services, with inconsistencies in health board commissioning leaving many people living with HIV with an unmet peer support or mental health need<sup>29</sup>. HIV voluntary sector (VCS) services in Scotland are also under threat, with research by HIV Outcomes UK finding 'increasing demand for services coupled with severe funding challenges'. The research found that no VCSE organisation in Scotland felt very confident that they would be able to deliver services over the next three years. These services are inexpensive, built on community insight, and skilled at providing trusted support that people need to live well with HIV.

Action must be taken to ensure peer support and mental health support is accessible to all, addressing inequalities and supporting people with HIV to live and age well with dignity. Clear referral pathways into support services must be established and specialist mental health support embedded within HIV services. These services should be accessible for people no matter where they live in Scotland so that everyone can receive high-quality HIV and mental health care to live well.



*[Peer-support] has been my anchor through my hardest times, always just a message away. Through peer support I've built lifelong bonds, received guidance, learned to support others. From shared laughter to expert advice, my peers feel like genies in a bottle. Their support made me a more resourceful, resilient person."*

**Monica**

**The next Scottish Government must fund multi-year campaigns to normalise testing, improve HIV awareness and tackle stigma, including through the development of a National HIV Testing Week for Scotland and education resources for health and social care staff.**

Stigma continues to seriously impact the lives of people living with HIV and is preventing people from accessing testing, treatment and support. Polling undertaken by Terrence Higgins Trust and YouGov<sup>30</sup> found that:

- **Only a third (35%)** of people in Scotland would be happy to kiss someone living with HIV, despite it being known since the 1980s that the virus cannot be passed on through saliva.
- **Almost half (46%)** would be ashamed to tell other people they were HIV positive.
- **Just a third of Scots (34%)** are aware that people living with HIV on effective treatment cannot pass it on.
- **A quarter (25%)** would feel worried about receiving medical treatment from a doctor or nurse living with HIV.

In 2023, Terrence Higgins Trust, in partnership with the Scottish Government and wider HIV sector in Scotland, launched a new campaign, **'Stigma is more harmful than HIV'**. This was the first HIV awareness campaign since the tombstone adverts of the **'Don't Die of Ignorance'** campaign in the 1980s. It raised awareness that people living with HIV and on effective treatment can't pass the virus on, but that stigma and common misconceptions about the virus have devastating impacts on people living with HIV, while stopping those most at risk from seeking the care they need.

Further, a 2024 Scottish Parliament inquiry into HIV found that people living with HIV in Scotland often encountered stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings<sup>31</sup>. With almost 30% of people living with HIV now over 55, it is vital they receive compassionate, stigma-free care as they grow older. **HIV Informed**, developed in partnership with NHS Scotland and people living with HIV, is a new learning hub funded by the Scottish Government as part of its national commitment to end new HIV transmissions and tackle stigma. It provides trusted, up-to-date information about HIV treatment, prevention, stigma, and care.

The learning hub aims to empower professionals across the workforce, from nurses, GPs and dentists to social care and community-based staff with accurate knowledge and practical tools to provide inclusive, stigma-free care. To ensure as many people as possible can benefit, the next government must provide long-term funding to maintain access to this resource and evaluate its impact to guide future anti-stigma initiatives.

Without its own national HIV testing campaign, Scotland is an outlier in the UK. National HIV Testing Week in England has proven success in raising awareness of HIV<sup>32</sup> and normalising HIV testing<sup>33</sup>. In Wales, the testing campaign has resulted in increased use of the national Test and Post service<sup>34</sup>. The next Scottish Government must take a national approach to HIV prevention and fund an HIV Testing Week to tackle stigma, improve prevention and find the 400 people living with undiagnosed HIV in Scotland.



“Every time I go to the hospital, I have the fear of being judged. You get so nervous about what they are going to say. You start panicking. It's very important to have a safe environment. If I feel judged, I might leave things out, and that's the real danger of discrimination.”

Agnes

## Footnotes

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<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government, 2024, HIV Transmission Elimination Delivery Plan

<sup>3</sup> Waverley Care, 2025, HIV Informed

<sup>4</sup> Terrence Higgins Trust, 2023, Stigma is more harmful than HIV

<sup>5</sup> Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, 2025, HIV Transmission Elimination Delivery Plan: Mid Plan Progress Report – Letter from the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health, 26 August 2025

<sup>6</sup> Public Health Scotland, 2025, HIV in Scotland: update to 31 December 2024.

<sup>7</sup> UKHSA, 2025, Public health evaluation of BBV opt-out testing in EDs in England, 33-month final report 2025.

<sup>8</sup> The Lancet, 2023, Opt-out HIV testing in the UK.

<sup>9</sup> Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, 2022, Groundbreaking HIV testing at Croydon University Hospital wins 'Top Global Winner' international award.

<sup>10</sup> Scottish Government, 2025, Programme for Government 2025-26: Building The Best Future For Scotland.

<sup>11</sup> BHIVA, 2020, British HIV Association/British Association for Sexual Health and HIV/ British Infection Association Adult HIV Testing Guidelines 2020.

<sup>12</sup> NICE, 2025, HIV testing: increasing uptake among people who may have undiagnosed HIV.

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<sup>15</sup> Public Health Scotland, 2025, Ending HIV Transmission in Scotland by 2030: HIV Transmission Elimination Delivery Plan 2023-26 Scottish Health Protection Network HIV Transmission Elimination Delivery Plan Implementation Group: Mid Plan Progress Report.

<sup>16</sup> Welsh Government, 2023, HIV Action Plan for Wales 2023-2026.

<sup>17</sup> Public Health Wales, 2025, Trends in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of HIV in Wales – Annual report 2025.

<sup>18</sup> Department of Health and Social Care, 2025, HIV Action Plan for England, 2025 to 2030.

<sup>19</sup> National AIDS Trust, 2017, Scotland first in UK to approve anti-HIV drug.

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<sup>21</sup> Waverley Care, 2023, Developing PrEP Care Models for Diverse Needs in Scotland.

<sup>22</sup> Glasgow Caledonian University, The Scottish ePrEP Clinic: An online clinical care pathway for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP): Phase 2 (2023-2026).

<sup>23</sup> HIV Outcomes UK, National AIDS Trust, 2024, Beyond the virus: Prioritising mental health for people living with HIV in Scotland.

<sup>24</sup> Fraser, A. et al, 2022, Service Evaluation of the Elton John AIDS Foundation's Zero HIV Social Impact Bond intervention in South London.

<sup>25</sup> Dr Laura Cunningham et al., 2024, HIV Engagement Project – Not Lost: A new approach to accessible care.

<sup>26</sup> Department for Health and Social Care, 2025, HIV Action Plan for England 2025-2030.

<sup>27</sup> HIV Outcomes UK, National AIDS Trust, 2025, HIV services at the crossroads: Scotland.

<sup>28</sup> HIV Outcomes UK, National AIDS Trust, 2025, HIV services at the crossroads: The role of the voluntary sector and needs of communities.

<sup>29</sup> UKHSA, 2024, Positive Voices 2022: Survey Report.

<sup>30</sup> BBC, 2023, HIV stigma campaign 40 years after tombstone ads.

<sup>31</sup> Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, 2024, HIV anti-stigma campaign/ Achieving Zero New Transmission of HIV in Scotland by 2030: Letter to the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health, 8 May 2024.

<sup>32</sup> UK Government, 2025, Prime Minister takes part in National HIV Testing Week.

<sup>33</sup> UKHSA, 2025, HIV testing in community settings in England: survey results from January to December 2023.

<sup>34</sup> Fast Track Cymru, 2025, Wales HIV Testing Week 2024: a community-led public health campaign to increase and diversify HIV testing in Wales.

