

The HIV & sexual health charity for life

News



Release date: Thursday 27th January, 2011

Contacts: Lucy Handford, THT
020 7812 1623
Simon Prytherch, Elton John AIDS Foundation
020 7603 9996

Out-of-hours: Duty Press Officer 07957 812691

Secretary of State for Health launches revolutionary new services for people living with HIV

The Rt Hon Andrew Lansley MP and HIV and sexual health charity Terrence Higgins Trust launch a new resource, Life Plus, today, which will transform the way people with HIV manage their condition long term. Created by the Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF), HIV and sexual health charity Terrence Higgins Trust (THT) and people with HIV, Life Plus is an innovative set of online, face to face and telephone support services that deliver cost effective, personalised support for people living with HIV in the UK.

Andrew Lansley will meet service users at the Harrison Wing, Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital, London later today to find out first hand the impact that Life Plus will have. St Thomas' is situated in South London, which has the highest prevalence of HIV in the UK, and is a leading hospital for HIV care.

Currently around 86,500 people are living with HIV in the UK, and every year around 7,000 more are diagnosed. This creates mounting pressure on an already constrained NHS. Life Plus, funded by the Elton John AIDS Foundation and developed in partnership with HIV organisations George House Trust and National Aids Manual (NAM), is designed to ease this pressure by offering vital free support to help people with HIV live long and healthy lives, whilst relieving clinical expertise to wholly focus where it is most needed.

Life Plus will partner NHS clinical care by providing face to face support in areas of the UK which have high rates of HIV prevalence; Brighton, Birmingham, Glasgow, Cardiff and Manchester. Clinic-based Health Trainers in each of these cities will provide people living with HIV with one-to-one support, to

The HIV & sexual health charity for life

become experts in managing their condition and the social care challenges that may jeopardise their health and medical treatment.

As part of the programme, a dedicated new website, www.myhiv.org.uk, will also enable people living with HIV to access interactive services tailored to their individual needs, requirements and stage of diagnosis, wherever they live in the UK, including:

- The option to privately and securely store information on their health and treatment so they can monitor and actively manage their HIV and stay adherent to treatment
- A reminder function for clinic appointments
- Forums for people to build communities and offer support to each other
- Online counselling and advice
- Information on how to become an active campaigner on HIV issues

For people who don't have access to the internet at home, THT is working with HIV clinics, including the Harrison Wing at St Thomas' Hospital in London, to offer free internet access to www.myhiv.org.uk and video conferencing facilities so that people can talk to experts from THT in clinics. People can also access confidential support from the charity's helpline, THT Direct, on 0845 12 21 200.

Anne Aslett, Executive Director of EJAF said: "When some 30% of HIV patients in the UK who attend their first clinic appointment don't return, and challenging ARV therapy can result in unplanned treatment breaks, we were looking for a programme that could really help people begin treatment if they needed it and stay adherent for the long term. Life Plus does this in a very flexible and responsible way that also complements and supports healthcare providers."

Sir Nick Partridge, Chief Executive for Terrence Higgins Trust said: "Life Plus is a very exciting new type of service provision and comes at a critical time to support the increasingly high numbers of people living with HIV in the UK. HIV is a complex condition so it's vital that people get the best possible level of support, accessible in a multitude of ways, to ensure they remain healthy."

"HIV service providers and clinicians across the country have been fundamental in shaping Life Plus and these services have been designed to reach people in both rural and urban areas, whether they're newly diagnosed or have been living with HIV for many years. Thanks to the Elton John AIDS Foundation these services will revolutionise support for people with HIV, helping them to manage their health and treatment more effectively."

Sir Elton John, Founder of the Elton John AIDS Foundation said: "In many ways, the UK response to prevention and treatment of HIV has led the world. I am proud to be launching a new era in HIV

The HIV & sexual health charity for life

services, delighted to be working with THT again, and hopeful that this approach may see opportunities for the management of other long term chronic conditions.”

Ends

Notes to Editor

1. The Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF) is an international non-profit organisation funding programmes that help to alleviate the physical, emotional and financial hardship of those living with, affected by or at risk of HIV/AIDS. Sir Elton John established the Elton John AIDS Foundation in the UK in 1993 to support innovative HIV prevention programs, efforts to eliminate stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS, and direct care and support services for people living with HIV/AIDS. Since its inception, EJAF has disbursed over £14.9m to 479 projects in the UK, making it the largest HIV grantmaking charity in the country. EJAF has also funded over 800 programmes across Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. For more information about The Elton John AIDS Foundation visit www.ejaf.com or contact Anne Aslett, Executive Director, or Simon Prytherch, Fundraising Director, on 207 603 9996.
2. Terrence Higgins Trust is the UK's largest HIV and sexual health charity with centres across England, Scotland and Wales. We're here to provide information and advice about HIV and sexual health and offer a range of services including sexual health checks, counselling and support groups. We campaign for a world where people with HIV live healthy lives, free from prejudice and discrimination and we promote good sexual health as a right and reality for all. Terrence Higgins Trust relies on donations to deliver a wide range of services. To make a donation, visit www.tht.org.uk.
3. George House Trust is the second-oldest HIV charity in the UK, and the largest voluntary sector HIV organisation outside of London.
The aim of George House Trust is to provide the best quality of life to people living with or affected by HIV. Our "still life with HIV" message is at the centre of the organisation's philosophy and campaigning. George House Trust seeks to empower people living with HIV to lead a full life.

Founded in July 1985, George House Trust provides support services to people living with HIV, their carers, partners and families across the North West of England. We are recognised nationally as a campaigning organisation, and through our experience as a service provider we have contributed to, and influenced the development of statutory and voluntary responses to the UK's HIV epidemic.
4. NAM works to change lives by sharing information about HIV and AIDS. We believe that, wherever you are in the world, having independent, clear and accurate information is vital in the fight against HIV and AIDS. It enables individuals and communities affected by HIV to protect themselves, care for others, advocate for better services and challenge stigma and discrimination. We produce useful information that you can trust, and make sure it is there for anyone who needs it.