



HIV stigma rife in UK

The APPG is calling on the Government to tackle HIV discrimination in the light of a report showing that a third of people with HIV have been verbally assaulted, harassed or threatened in the last 12 months.

A ground-breaking survey on HIV stigma in the UK showed that stigma was also prevalent in the NHS where one in five had reported being denied a service because of their HIV status. 18% said their NHS records had not been kept confidential.

‘The NHS must lead the way in tackling stigma.’ said David Borrow MP, Chair of The All Party Parliamentary Group on AIDS.

‘Discrimination on the grounds of a health condition is totally unacceptable anywhere, but public servants

have a special responsibility to treat all the people they serve with respect.”

There were positive findings too. More than 60% of the people who participated in the research in the UK said they feel they can influence positive change for the future.

The statistics appear in “Give Stigma the Index Finger!” a report written by the Stigma Index, and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and launched with Annie Lennox and The Secretary of State for Health, Andy Burnham MP.

The Stigma Index, run by people living with HIV, conducted a nationwide series of interviews. These interviews are being replicated around the world to paint a global picture of society’s attitudes towards people with HIV.

THE APPG IS CALLING FOR:

- 1) Government to listen to the voices of people living with HIV when developing sexual health policy.
- 2) More HIV awareness training for NHS staff, including GPs, dentists, and nurses.
- 3) Zero tolerance to breaches of confidentiality in the NHS.
- 4) A cross-departmental strategy to tackle HIV stigma in all areas, from in the workplace to inside schools.

APPG report wins praise from Cape Town to Geneva.....see back page

Momentum for Patent Pool gathers pace.

One hundred and sixty MPs have called on drugs companies to sign up to a patent pool to help provide new cheap medicines for HIV in the developing world.

The establishment of a patent pool was a key recommendation in the APPG’s Treatment Timebomb report into access to HIV medicines.

DFID Minister Mike Foster

said: “The pharmaceutical industry has an opportunity to act now to help prevent future human catastrophe.

It is time for them to state their clear commitment to make new HIV medicines affordable to those who need them most, by working with UNITAID to develop a patent pool.”

Gilead, GSK and Boehringer are among the companies in talks with UNITAID.



Patent Pool Photo: Emma Critchley

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HIV investments paying off- but millions still untreated.



David Borrow MP, Chair of the APPG on AIDS, reflects on the new global AIDS figures.

“The new global AIDS figures from UNAIDS show how much can be achieved when Governments, other major donors and campaigners put their minds to a task.

Four million people are now on HIV treatments – ten times the number treated in 2003. Back in the nineties, we would never have thought treating these kinds of numbers was possible.

But still today the majority of people living with HIV do not get the drugs they need to stay alive.

The figures also show that prevention strategies are working.

New infections are now decreasing, and the number of children acquiring HIV from their mothers during pregnancy, birth or infancy is reducing. However, each new infection means a lifetime of treatment need. Last year around half a million children were infected in this way.

Prevention and treatment go together. Each person on treatment is less likely to pass on their infection on to others – as the

drugs lower the level of virus in the body.

HIV is with us for the long-term but the more we can do to prevent new infections now, the less daunting the challenge will be in future.

The UK’s Department for International Development is a world leader in its response to HIV. It needs the support of companies, parliamentarians, the public and the media to ensure there is no let up in our fight against the disease. We’ve made progress but the story is far from over.”

New Global UNAIDS figures

People living with HIV: 33.4 million

New HIV infections in 2008: 2.7 million

Deaths due to AIDS in 2008: 2 million

New HIV/AIDS figures for the UK

People living with HIV: 83,000

New HIV infections in 2008: 7,298

People with undiagnosed HIV: 22,000

Scrutinising Policy: Bill round up



The APPG has been working on the Health Bill, the Equality Bill and the Welfare Reform Bill over the last few months.

In the **Health Bill**, Lords members of the APPG won a review of the charging currently in place for the treatment of some HIV+ migrants.

Charges deter migrants from testing and contribute to undiagnosed HIV in the UK.

Since the people concerned are not usually allowed to work, bills are being sent to people who are already destitute and have no means of payment. Some no longer attend appointments, for fear of charges, and without treatment become extremely ill. Many appear later for emergency care, which is more expensive. The Review is ongoing.

In the **Equality Bill** the APPG pushed for an end to pre-employment health questionnaires. People with stigmatised conditions such as mental health problems or HIV can find that declaring their condition excludes them from a job offer – but until now this has been impossible to prove.

By only allowing health questions after the job offer, it is clear whether there would have been an offer if it weren't for the condition.

Where the condition is a genuine barrier, employers will be able to withdraw the offer, but where reasonable adjustments can be made to accommodate the candidate, the offer must stay in place. This is the system in

the USA. The Bill has been carried over into the 2009/10 session.

In the **Welfare Reform Bill**, Lords members of the group successfully lobbied to ensure that health records of people applying for employment support allowances are kept confidential.

Without this measure there was a risk that benefits workers could have access to medical records, particularly in the case of people suspected of using drugs. The APPG, the British Medical Association and Liberty had serious concerns about the implications of this for doctor/patient confidentiality.

Parliamentarian charity focus

The Food Chain this year celebrates 21 years of work, helping to change the lives of people living with HIV in London, by providing nutritional services to help them regain health and stay well.

Over 34,000 nutritionally balanced meals are delivered each year through the Sunday

Meal Delivery Service. Grocery Boxes are provided for those who are unable to shop for themselves. The Food Chain provides bespoke Emergency Hampers for a month, for people just out of hospital, at risk of malnutrition or with financial difficulties.

A new service, "Eating Positively" offers practical

advice and nutritional information to those who are well enough to shop and cook for themselves.

Services are provided free of charge through the hard work and dedication of over 850 volunteers, generous financial supporters and just six full-time staff.

The Food Chain



Rt Hon Lord Chris Smith: Patron of The Food Chain

Ugandan campaigner to visit Commons in bid to quash anti-gay laws

A campaigner from Uganda is gathering global support for his bid to quash proposed new anti-gay laws in his country. He is visiting Parliament in December.

The laws he is fighting have serious implications for HIV prevention and human rights in the country. Anyone engaging in a same-sex relationship in which one of the members is under the

age of 18 or HIV-positive would potentially face the death penalty under the new regime. The laws have caused outrage worldwide amongst human rights campaigners. The Foreign Office has also issued a statement expressing its concern.

Frank Mugisha from Sexual Minorities Uganda will be sharing a platform with Chris Bryant MP, the FCO Minister for Diversity

issues. They will be joined by the Director of the International AIDS Alliance, who has identified a wider trend in laws unhelpful to HIV prevention globally.

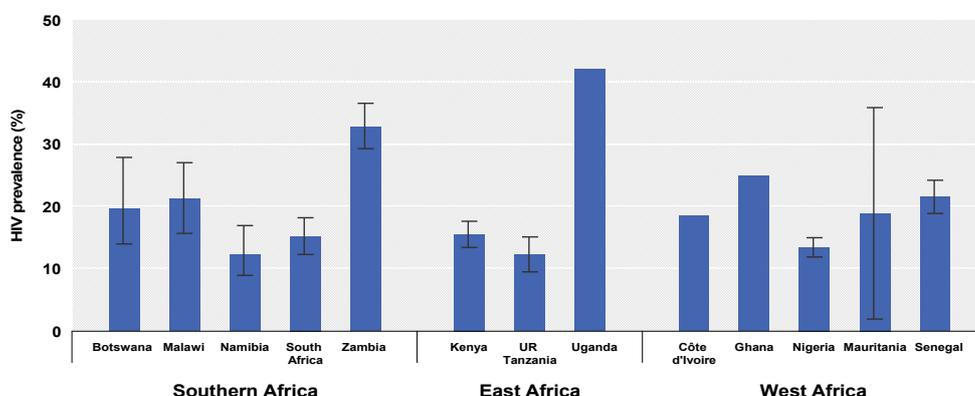
When gay men are forced underground it is more difficult for them to access advice about how to protect themselves and their partners from HIV. Outreach programmes become impos-

sible, and HIV prevention workers risk being accused of 'promoting homosexuality'.

Uganda's president, Yoweri Museveni, has accused European gays of coming to his country to "recruit" people into homosexuality.

The event is open to all parliamentarians and will be on 14th December at 4.30pm in Com Rm 16.

HIV prevalence among men who have sex with men in countries in sub-Saharan Africa, 2000–2008



The APPG on AIDS: Keeping HIV/AIDS on the political agenda

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Members of The All Party Parliamentary Group on AIDS believe that HIV/AIDS is one of the most serious threats facing the world in the 21st century and that as Parliamentarians we should play our part in addressing the epidemic. In the UK, where around 83,000 people are infected with HIV, careful policy, respectful of human rights, is critical to tackling the disease and the serious social exclusion that can go along with it. Abroad, where HIV infection rates run as high as 26% and people die every day, we believe we have a responsibility to help.

If you would like to help keep HIV/AIDS on the political agenda please contact David Borrow MP, Chairman of the Group or Veronica Oakeshott, its Policy Adviser.

APPG report wins praise from Cape Town to Geneva

The APPG report on long-term access to HIV treatment has won praise from the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the President of the International AIDS Society and charities all over the world.

It describes how by 2030 over 50 million people will need HIV treatment compared to just nine million today.

Coverage of the report in the BBC, Guardian, Financial Times and Lancet painted the scale of the challenge.

Millions will need more expensive 'second-line' medicines in future, having become resistant to the basic therapies.

The report says that action must be taken now to reduce the price of second-line medicines so that they can be accessed by the millions who will need them in future.



Better HIV prevention could save NHS £1.1bn

Preventing the 3,550 HIV infections acquired in the UK, and subsequently diagnosed in 2008, would have saved the NHS more than £1.1 billion in treatment and care costs. This was one of the conclusions of the latest Health Protection Agency report into HIV in the UK.

The report also shows that late diagnosis and undiagnosed HIV are serious problems in the UK. Over half of those diagnosed last year were diagnosed late. Over 22,000 people with HIV in the UK have not been diagnosed at all.

The issues of prevention and prompt diagnosis are linked. Undiagnosed HIV and late diagnosis contribute to new infections, since diagnosis tends to lead to safer sexual behaviour. Treatment, which can only be given once an individual is diagnosed, also lowers the level of virus in the body, reducing infectiousness.

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The Treatment Timebomb



Report of the Inquiry of The All Party Parliamentary Group on AIDS
into long-term access to HIV medicines in the developing world.
July 2009

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