

# APPG Newsletter

SPRING 2012

## APPG Chair:

Pamela Nash  
MP

## Vice Chairs:

Lord Fowler

Baroness  
Masham

Pauline  
Latham MP

Russell  
Brown MP

Simon Kirby  
MP

## Lord Fowler stresses need for Harm Reduction in the Ukraine

APPG Vice-Chair and Lord Fowler visited Ukraine with the International HIV and AIDS Alliance, and stressed the importance of a public health oriented approach to tackling HIV and AIDS with senior Government officials and Parliamentarians. During his trip he visited a range of partners including people who use drugs and sex workers.

There are currently over 400,000 people living with HIV in the Ukraine, and HIV infections drug users are estimated to be up to 60%.

The trip also highlighted the importance of the Global Fund financing

grant comes to an end. Writing in the Evening Standard about his visit,

Lord Fowler said: "Injecting drugs and dirty needles are not new issues in the world of HIV. All other countries in Europe



to the Ukraine, and the need for the Ukrainian Government to take ownership of the funding once the current

have faced the challenge and most are containing it at low levels — Russia is a stark exception"

## UK Government grants free HIV treatment to all those who need it!

The Government has agreed to remove the charges for HIV treatment for some overseas visitors, bringing the policy in line with other infectious diseases. The House of Lord's Select Committee on HIV in the UK reported in September that this policy

"deterred a high prevalence group from testing, and missed an opportunity to reduce infectivity through treatment, with only anecdotal evidence to support it."

The APPG has been campaigning along with

HIV charities and health professionals for these charges to be removed since 2004, and the move represents a significant victory for people living with HIV and for public health.

## MPs call for more support for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria

Following a one-off hearing on the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, MPs on the International

Development Select Committee have concluded that more money should be given to the Global Fund to support AIDS, TB and Malaria, which provides over half of all anti-retroviral drugs to people living with HIV across the developing

world. The committee recommended that DFID “**should do all possible to commit additional funds earlier than 2013.**” The report also acknowledged the “diametrically opposed views” of NGOs working in the field and DFID about the impact of the recent funding difficulties at the Global Fund, and recommended that an

independent impact assessment should be conducted.

APPG evidence submitted to the inquiry can be accessed on the International Development Select Committee website.

*“The right to marry is far from the minds of homosexuals in Uganda.”*

## MPs continue to raise issues of LGBT rights in Africa

APPG Vice-Chair Pauline Latham OBE MP hosted a meeting with Frank Musigha, executive director of sexual minorities Uganda and Maurice Tomlinson, winner of the David Kato Human Rights Award. Maurice has been forced to flee his home country of Jamaica due to being persecuted as a result of his sexuality. During the meeting Maurice highlighted that UK Government currently funds the training of Jamaican police force, and urged that Human rights training be included as a condition of this training. Meanwhile, in a Westminster Hall debate on Human Rights in Uganda, APPG

Chair Pamela Nash and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs Kerry McCarthy MP raised concerns about the human rights of sexual minorities and the impact on the HIV epidemic during a 90 minute Parliamentary debate on human rights in Uganda.

*“The right to marry is far from the minds of homosexuals in Uganda. All they are asking for at the moment is the freedom to live their lives without fear and discrimination—or possibly, even, the freedom to live at all.”*

Responding to the debate, Foreign Office Minister Jeremy Browne said: “Often those at greatest risk

of human rights abuses in developing countries need our help the most. We do not attach conditionality to our aid for that very reason. We do, however, hold full and frank discussions with recipient countries about issues of concern, including human rights, as we have done with the Ugandan Government on the importance that we attach to equality and non-discrimination.”

## HIV Respite Centre forced to close its doors due to lack of funding

The APPG was saddened to hear of closure of the Tyddn Bach respite centre, which has provided a sanctuary for people living with HIV for many years. As the nature of the virus has changed, so had the services provided by the centre, as it provided support to people living with HIV who have complex physical and physiological needs, and well needed breaks to families and carers across the UK.

As one former resident has attested:

*“I arrived stressed, very tired and emotional and left focussed and calm. It’s not a nursing home and it’s not a sterile hotel - it’s my new sanctuary by the sea where I have friends”*



Local MP and APPG member Guto Bebb, and APPG Chair Pamela Nash and Vice Chair Simon Kirby MP met with staff from Tyddyn Bach to discuss how they could help the centre.

## Public Health Outcomes Framework

We were pleased to see that late HIV diagnosis has been included amongst the list of Public Health outcome indicators in the Department’s Public Health Outcomes framework. This provides a strong incentive for local authorities to priorities local HIV testing.

NICE recommends **routine HIV testing** in any area which has a HIV prevalence of more than 2 per 1,000. **37 local authorities** in the UK fit this description, with 9 of them being based in London. The top 10 areas of highest HIV prevalence are listed in the table opposite. MPs in areas of high HIV prevalence are encouraged to ask their Directors of Public Health what plans they have to facilitate HIV testing in their localities.

Area	HIV prevalence per 1,000	Numbers of patients accessing HIV care
Lambeth	13.28	2712
Southwark	10.39	2103
Islington	9.07	1244
Kensington and Chelsea	8.33	946
City and Hackney	8.25	1265
Hammersmith and Fulham	967	8.15
Newham	8.12	1290
Brighton and Hove	7.57	1273
Camden	7.50	1235
Lewisham	7.03	1262

### Questions and Debates on HIV...

You can find details of all **Parliamentary debates** and **oral questions** relating to HIV in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords on the APPG website at: <http://www.appghiv aids.org.uk/parliament/debate.html>

MPs Peers have tabled over 100 question about HIV in the past calendar year! Please contact APPG Policy advisor [heather.alcock@parliament.uk](mailto:heather.alcock@parliament.uk) if you would like a full list of all questions asked.

## APPG meets with Scottish Government

APPG Chair Pamela Nash MP and policy advisor Heather Alcock met with the Scottish Health Minister, Michael Matheson and members of the Cross Party Group on HIV to discuss HIV policy in Scotland. Unlike England, Scotland has a blood borne virus framework which sets out the country's strategy for tackling the diseases at a national level.

They also met with Waverley Care, who provide treatment, care and support services to people living with HIV, and local HIV testing services in Pamela's constituency of Lanarkshire.

## Lord Fowler trains Macedonian Parliamentarians in HIV and AIDS awareness

Lord Fowler visited a group of Macedonian Parliamentarians to share his experiences of leadership in HIV and AIDS, running a workshop called "*The Legislator and HIV: Policies, Laws and Advocacy.*" Following the workshop the Parliamentarians agreed to a number of very positive actions including the formation of an All Party Group on HIV and AIDS in Macedonia, to organize a parliamentary hearing on stigma, to discuss possibilities of introducing sustainable system of continued procurement of ARVs in the country and to review the current implementation of the National HIV strategy.

## Government launches consultation on long term conditions

The Department of Health has launched a public cross-governmental strategy on the management of long term health conditions, including HIV. Individuals living with HIV are encouraged to submit their views- the deadline is the **14<sup>th</sup> June**.

## APPG launches "Positive?"

Schools Minister Nick Gibb admitted last year in his evidence session to the House of Lord's Select Committee that it was "unforgiveable" that one in four young people did not learn about HIV in schools. Concerns about sex education in schools have been highlighted by the House of Lord's Select Committee on HIV in the UK, and the Government is currently conducting a review of the PSHE curriculum. The APPG has written to schools minister Nick Gibb to ask for a meeting with APPG members to discuss the PSHE curriculum review and hopes to hold this meeting shortly.

The APPG was delighted to launch a new interactive resource designed to teach both students and teachers about HIV produced by IPPF and Film Education. "Positive" features interviews with people living with HIV, as well as footage of APPG Chair Pamela Nash taking a HIV test.

We strongly encourage you to check it out!

<http://learningpositive.com/index.html>

## HIV positive Gold miners "sent home to die" in South Africa

The APPG hosted a meeting with the APPGs for TB, Earth Sciences and Results UK on HIV/TB and the Gold Mining industry in South Africa. Epidemiologist Jonathan Smith showed clips from his film "they go to die" which follows the plight of 4 mine workers co-infected with HIV and TB in South Africa. Rt Hon Peter Hain MP spoke passionately about his personal experience of meeting with the miners and the necessity for Mining companies involved to support their healthcare.

