



# WAVERLEY

**care** Positive about HIV, Hep C  
& Sexual Health in Scotland

## Update on Waverley Care activities

Since we opened our doors in 1989, Waverley Care has changed and adapted in response to developments in public health. The coronavirus pandemic has, once again, meant that we have had to relook at how we deliver care to those in need. Over the last ten weeks we have rapidly changed many areas of our work to respond to the needs of those we work with. With the exception of Waverley Care Milestone, we suspended all of our in-person support services on the 17th March 2020. Since that time, the majority of our staff have been working remotely. You can read more about the suspension of in-person services [here](#).

### Community services and support

Keyworkers from our frontline services, including our community projects, Hepatitis C Project, and African Health Project, have been working to stay connected with service users through regular phone contact. We've been delivering food, medication, and other essential items to those who are socially isolating or shielding. You can watch a short video about the work we've been doing to make sure people have access to essential items [here](#).

Our African Health Project and community projects staff have continued to run our infant formula milk scheme, delivering formula milk to families across the Central Belt. We've been using digital platforms to stay connected with our volunteers, peer mentors, and to continue to running some of our group work activities.



While the number of referrals into our services has decreased, we have found that many of the people we already work with have needed more intensive support in recent weeks. Many of our service users already experience poor mental health and social isolation, which has been worsened by the coronavirus pandemic. Those who are homeless, or who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) have also been severely impacted by the pandemic. We have recently been awarded funding from the Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund and the National Lottery Awards for All, to purchase essential items for the most vulnerable people we work with.



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Until recently, our HIV Street Support Project was participating in a crisis response team in Glasgow city centre, to ensure that people could access safe injecting equipment. The 7-day a week outreach service was delivered in partnership with health and social care partners from across the city. We've produced a short video about this work, [here](#). This piece of work has now concluded and, as described below, we're now working with a pharmacy outreach team to carry out HIV testing in Glasgow city centre.

## Waverley Care Milestone

In April we agreed with the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and NHS Lothian to temporarily repurpose Milestone as an interim care facility for people who are homeless (or at risk of) and have been treated in hospital for coronavirus. We began accepting referrals from hospitals at the end of April. .



Our role is to provide intensive support to people who are homeless and have been treated in hospital for coronavirus, enabling them to return to a safe life in the community. As well as providing emotional and mental health support, we've been supporting people to access alcohol and drug services. You can read more about these changes to Milestone [here](#).

## Prevention and Testing

With most sexual health clinics delivering essential services only, we've experienced an increase in demand for support around sexual health. As well as general sexual health advice, we've received many enquiries about access to condoms, PrEP and HIV testing. SX (our health and wellbeing service for gay and bisexual men and all men who have sex with men) and Wave (our sexual health and relationships service for young people) have been working to share information about prevention via social media, apps, and our live chat service.





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We recently launched HIV Self-Test Scotland in partnership with HIV Scotland. The project enables people to access a free HIV self-test service via a bespoke website and has been supported by NHS boards across Scotland. You can find out more about the new self-test service here, or visit the HIV self-test [website](#). So far, almost 400 people in Scotland have ordered an HIV self-test. The initiative has received [local](#) and [national](#) media coverage.

Our HIV Street Support Project resumed blood borne virus (BBV) testing in mid-May. The HIV outbreak among people who inject drugs in Glasgow remains a critical concern. We have been working in partnership with the Outreach Pharmacy Team to safely deliver testing where people who inject drugs access emergency accommodation and support. Testing is carried out alongside a full physical and mental health assessment. Our work was recently covered in a news article by [The Ferret](#) on the experiences of people who use drugs during the coronavirus pandemic.



Mhairi from our HIV Street Support Team delivering testing

Our Highland and SX teams have been delivering remote training sessions with professionals in Highland, Lothian and Forth Valley. The training has focused on LGBT awareness and mental health sessions. Just under 50 people have attended the training sessions so far, with overwhelmingly positive feedback.

## Research and Communications

After we made the decision to suspend our in-person services, we immediately expanded our existing live chat service so that we could respond to enquiries Monday – Friday 9-5. This service was previously only available three afternoons per week. We've seen an increase in the number of enquiries coming in via our live chat, as well as people raising more complex issues that take longer to resolve. With a reduction in sexual health clinic services, we're also seeing an increase in general sexual health enquiries.



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We've had to suspend many of the face-to-face research activities that were due to take place over this period. Where possible, we're continuing to engage with people remotely, and have used video conferencing platforms to continue some of our work. We're working with our peer researchers to re-design our work using remote engagement approaches, such as telephone interviewing.

We've been participating in policy work around coronavirus, BBVs, and sexual health. National AIDS Trust are collating fortnightly briefings on HIV and coronavirus, which we are contributing information to based on our experience of frontline service delivery. You can view these briefings on the National AIDS Trust [website](#).

We have also recently contributed to a 'call for views' on Covid-19 testing from the Health and Sport Committee at the Scottish Parliament, sharing our knowledge and experience of delivering HIV testing programmes. Finally, we recently joined with other organisations from across the migration and asylum sector to sign an open letter to the Home Office about the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on BAME people.

## Fundraising

All of this work is taking place at the same time as we are facing a significant drop in income. We rely on generous donations and fundraising from the general public to fund our vital services. We've had to cancel or postpone all of our fundraising events for the foreseeable future, and with the cancellation of the Edinburgh fringe, we're anticipating a significant loss of donations. At a time when our service users need us most, this drop in our income will put additional strain on our support services. If you'd like to support our keyworkers, you can make a donation [here](#) or check out our [website](#) for fundraising ideas.

Online



We are live and ready to chat with you now. Say something to start a live chat.



Our advisors are online from 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday. If you need help, simply reply to this message and we'll get back to you straight away during these hours. If you send a message while we're offline, make sure to leave your email address and our advisors will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

Customer Support