



***SOCIAL SUPPORT  
FOR PEOPLE LIVING  
WITH AND AFFECTED  
BY HIV IN BRADFORD***

***A GUIDE TO SERVICES***

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Part of the Yorkshire MESMAC Group of Services  
Charity Number 1040407



# What Will Happen When You Come To The Project?

**The aim of the Our Project is to deliver services that are centred on the needs of the individual.**

During our first contact with you there will be time and space to discuss what living with HIV means to you. At this time people will often tell us about many issues that are affecting them. This meeting gives us the opportunity to work with you to plan and prioritise how to address any areas that you would like support with. We use an assessment form to ensure we don't miss anything.

We can support you around HIV related issues, for example, feeling isolated, diet, medication and sexual health. But we can also support you on issues that may not be directly related to your HIV status such as; housing problems, other health issues and income.

We can offer different levels of support. Some people may access support specifically during times of crisis while others may access more regular support and advice. The sort of support you want is up to you.

The Our Project provides services to people affected by HIV this includes extended families and friends. At present we have many families living with HIV registered at the Project including children from birth up to the age of 16.

# Confidentiality

*In simple terms confidentiality is:*

‘Not telling anyone that someone else has used a service, why or what happened, unless you have that person’s permission’. To access some services within the Our Project we will need to obtain proof of your HIV status. In order that your HIV status can be confirmed in writing by your sexual health clinic, you will need to sign a consent form to allow this exchange of information to take place.

Your personal information and details will be stored securely in a locked cabinet. The Project does not disclose the HIV status of any person using the service without your consent nor will the Project disclose whether you are registered at the Project without your consent. This consent can be either written or verbal. Letters from a medical professional confirming your HIV status are often required by charities that provide grants for people living with HIV, this includes any grants that are applied for directly to the Our Project.

Within the initial contact meeting the Our Project’s confidentiality policy will be explained to you. You can ask the Project worker any details that you are unsure of. We will also place within every person’s notes which method of contact you prefer.

If you are accessing the Project with your partner, the workers have a duty to respect the confidentiality of each individual person, this means that your partner will not be told the details of meetings that you attend without them, it will be your choice to decide what you tell them. The Our Project’s confidentiality policy is clearly on display within the meeting rooms in a reader friendly format. We cannot guarantee that you will not see any other people in the building except ‘Our’ workers. Seeing another person at the Project might mean that they work for another Project or that they are accessing information, it does not mean that they are living with HIV or accessing the Our Project services.

# Grants

The 'Our' Welfare Fund and grant applications system plays an important part in offering some relief if you are living on a very low income. However, all we can ever hope to do is to offer limited short-term financial support.

Apart from our own welfare fund we also access grants from charities such as Children With Aids, Crusaid, Vicars Relief and The Frank Buttle Trust.

# Interpreters

If English is not your first language and communication levels are significantly affected 'Our' has a list of interpreters who have shown that they can provide a confidential service in a professional and effective way. We also have written materials in different languages. Please ask the Project worker.

# Pre Testing Support

The Our Project provides pre testing support to anyone who would like any information about STI's, safer sex, and about accessing services from the GUM clinic. Members of staff at the Our Project are available to accompany you to your appointments if you require and can help to explain the process. The Our Project will also support you when you receive your results and can discuss the services that are available to you.

# One To One Support

Whilst most services are currently delivered from the Project building, workers can also meet with service users in other settings such as at home or in a social meeting space.

We will try and work out with you how best you can access support. One to one support is based around your needs. Such support is very informal and gives you the opportunity to discuss anything that you would like to talk about.

You can request a home visit, wherever possible, workers aim to meet this request and will take into consideration the circumstances of the individual such as dependants, travel time and cost, health and mobility.

However, the first meeting will most often need to take place at the Project building.

You can also access one to one support by telephone. If you do the worker will offer to call you back.

# Education And Training

The Our Project provides support in accessing further education, whether it be helping with application forms or setting up appointments with careers advisors. The Project also offers training in English and Maths Level 1, ESOL and NVQ's.

# Advocacy

When we contact organisations for you or with you to make enquires, access services, make complaints and/or seek information and advice we will do so in a variety of ways:

- The information is sought together with you present so that the external organisation can gain direct permission from you and the worker then does not need to say where we are calling from.
- A letter or e-mail is written together.
- The information sought is generalised by the worker i.e. your name is not given and the circumstances are generalised. This is not effective if the enquiry needs to specifically mention your HIV status. It is not always acceptable to other services not to give the name of the organisation we are calling from e.g. “I am working with someone at the moment who is trying to find out...” Services have in the past refused to give details to the Project staff unless a organisation name is given.
- The service/organisation is visited together.
- The Project worker will have been given permission to disclose specific details during the enquiry, sometimes this has included HIV status. This method is most often used when the enquiry is urgent and people have had problems accessing the information e.g. due to illness or previously unsatisfactory outcomes.

# Welfare Information

The Our Project can support people in obtaining the appropriate welfare support.

We acknowledge that this important area of work needs to be delivered using up to date information and we ensure that these skills are updated regularly within the staff team.

The support given around welfare and benefits can take many different forms, from telling you about other relevant agencies, to obtaining letters of support for health related welfare issues or challenging decisions that have been made in relation to welfare support.

We also have links with a range of organisations that provide specialist welfare guidance and services, for example, the Bradford Social Services Team working with people seeking asylum, and refugees.

# Arts And Crafts

We are currently developing an Arts and Crafts program which will enable group members to learn new skills such as knitting, sewing, clothes making, jewellery making and weaving. We are also open to suggestions in developing this group.

# The Allotment

The Our Project is committed to promoting healthy eating. To assist with this we have acquired an allotment in Bradford for everybody who accesses our services. The allotment provides the opportunity to grow your own fruit and vegetables and gain new skills.

# Information On Immigration Services

Although we are not specialists in immigration advice Our Project staff do attempt to keep updated about asylum and immigration matters.

We can help you access local immigration services. In addition we keep up to date guidance from the Refugee Council on a range of issues. We have helped people with many different issues concerning asylum, for example, helping support Section 4 applications by obtaining all the relevant support letters from health professionals.

The Our Project supports service users getting back into the NASS system when their support has stopped.

## Quit Smoking Support

The Our Project is able to provide stop smoking support to anyone who would like to stop. Aids such as patches or gum for example that are used to help with quitting are provided by the Project and support at each step will be provided.

# Supporting Treatment Choices

Many of Our Service users are at very different stages of their HIV treatment options. The most common scenarios are listed below:

- Not requiring any treatment in relation to their HIV infection at present.
- Treatment has been recommended but the service user has chosen not to go onto treatment at present.
- Treatment is working well with no or little side effects.
- Treatment is working well but there are side effects.
- Treatment is not working at optimal levels.
- Temporarily taking treatments during pregnancy.

Most doctors work very closely with people in order that a positive state of well-being is obtained. This often means that your physical health (often measured by CD4 and viral load counts) is viewed in balance with your emotional well-being; for example, the doctor will not insist that you go onto medication if you do not want to. At the Our Project we will support your choices in relation to HIV treatments.

We also offer a wide range of written resources, for example: A Rough Guide to HIV, Sex and Relationships for Gay Men, African Women and Combination Therapy, African Men and Combination Therapy, Thinking about Pregnancy....

# The 'OUR' Counselling Service

We can offer the following free services for people living with HIV in the Bradford District:

- Short term individual counselling.
- Short term individual counselling for partners.
- Couples counselling.

We also have information about counselling services locally that provide longer term counselling or specialised help (for instance with drug or alcohol problems).

Counselling may be useful if you are:

- Struggling to cope with your HIV status or the impact that living with HIV is having on your life.
- Wondering why, when, or how to tell people about your HIV status.
- Having problems in a relationship.
- Have suffered torture or persecution.
- Have experienced sexual or physical violence, suffering because of your own or other people's attitudes to HIV.
- Feeling that you are not looking after yourself properly.
- Not feeling confident enough to negotiate the kinds of relationships you want.
- Having sexual problems.
- Coping with loss or bereavement.

# What Do Counsellors Do?

Counsellors are trained to listen and to help you clarify what is going on for you and what steps you personally need to take to improve your situation.

Counsellors will not advise you, be critical of you, or tell you what to do. They will respect you, your culture and values and your own special skills and abilities.

They will also respect your privacy and your right to live the life you choose.

Some advantages of finding a counsellor through the Our Project are:

- All Our Project counsellors are experienced, qualified counselling professionals.
- All Our Project counsellors have a good understanding of specific issues relating to living with HIV.

## Compliments, Complaints And Feedback

The telephone number of the Project manager is provided for anyone who wishes to make a complaint about the Project. However for those who wish forms are supplied with stamped addressed envelopes for our head office in Leeds. These forms are available for compliments, complaints or feedback on our services and will be dealt with by the Project director.

# Complementary Therapies

The Our Project can help you access and fund a range of complementary therapies including acupuncture, reiki and massage. We can suggest a particular therapist or you can find your own, if you prefer.

A therapist must hold a recognised qualification and provide a copy of their insurance.

The treatments may be given within the 'Our' building or sometimes the therapist may be able to visit people at home. However, some therapists only work from their own treatment rooms.

Please ask a member of staff for further details.

# Gay Mans Group

The Project provides weekly drop in sessions for gay men to attend is supported by members of staff.

# Other Health Support Services

If you wish to access other health support services such as a gym you can apply for a contribution to provide this service. The payment for this can only be made directly to the gym or other registered business. This option is instead of, rather than as well as, complementary therapies. In this way people who use the service get a choice about their health support services.

The Our Project will also need to consider whether the rate for the service that you would like to access is competitively priced, so we will compare prices and services offered.

Alternatively, people who use the Our Project services have access to a free gym, which operates during the day from the Bridge Project near Foster Square train station.

The budget from which complementary therapies and additional health support services are paid is a restricted budget and may change at any time, as may the conditions for granting them.

## **Trips**

Every year members of staff discuss trips away for service users, whether they be day trips or weekends away. These ideas are put forward and arrangements are then made and all who access Our services are welcome to come along. The Project applies for funding for the trips to cover the costs of travel and accommodation.

## **Group Support**

The Our Project recognises the importance of group support. The Our Project works with Begin (HIV support Project in Wakefield) and The Brunswick Centre (HIV support in Kirklees and Calderdale) so that service users get the opportunity to access other groups. This gives people who use the service more choice in the groups that they attend.

In addition we also have a Gay and Bisexual Men's Group that runs within the building every first and third Monday between 7-9pm.

# Volunteering

At the Our Project we have a variety of volunteering opportunities for service users. Becoming a volunteer will enable you to meet people, make friends, develop new skills and build your confidence. No matter how much or how little time you have to spare, we want to hear from you. We currently have vacancies for:

- Positive speakers
- Allotment workers
- Buddy/Befriender
- Website design & content co-ordinator

Alternatively If you feel that you have skills that you could bring to the Our Project then please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to accommodate you.

# Training

The Our Project recognises that we will never be able to provide every service that people using the Project need. For this reason we include training as part of our load work, so that other services can obtain skills and knowledge in relation to HIV.

This training is free to community groups but a charge is applied to other organisations. There are always several free places available on our advertised training events.

We fits training around the other services that are provided by the Project, this means that dates will need to be negotiated with adequate advance notice.

## Other Useful Services And Telephone Numbers

National Sexual Health Advice Line	0800 567123
African Aids Helpline	0800 0967500
Sexual Health Clinic, Trinity Rd, Bradford	01274 365490
Centre for Sexual Health LGI, Leeds	
Male Appointments	0113 3926724
Female Appointments	0113 3926725
Stop Hate Helpline	0800 1381628
Bevan House Homelessness & Asylum Support Team	01274 227555
Bradford Royal Infirmary	01274 542200
St Luke's Hospital	01274 734744
Rape Crisis	01274 308270
Red Cross Bradford	01274 223293
Refugee Council Leeds	0113 3862210
Bradford Action for Refugees	01274 223240
Samaritans	01274 547547
Salvation Army	01274 731221
Bridge Project (Drugs Advice)	01274 723863
Piccadilly Project	01274 735775
NHS Direct (Health Advice)	0845 46 47
Social Services (Children's Team)	01274 437500
Social Services (Adults Team)	01274 431704
Bradford Day Shelter	01274 393234
CONTACT Disabilities support run by disabled people	01274 494121
CHAS housing aid (furniture for people on low incomes)	01274 731909

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