

A Guide to George House Trust's Services

george house trust

still life with HIV



Contents

Welcome	4
George House Trust	5
Opening Times	6
Contacting Us	6
Accessing Our Services	7
Our Services Include	8
First Contact	9
Confidentiality & Data Protection	10
Our Centre	10
Providing Feedback or Complaints	12
Our Website	12
Partner, Relative or Friend?	13
Advice, Information & Support	14
Financial Help	17

Group Spaces	19
Counselling	21
Volunteer Mentoring Support	22
Courses for Gay Men Newly Diagnosed With HIV	23
Residential Weekends for HIV Positive Gay Men	24
African Weekend	25
Living With HIV Course	26
Welfare Rights/Debt & Money Advice	26
Health Trainer	27
Information Updates	28
Condoms	29
Taxis	29
Location Map	31

Welcome

There are now over 85,000 people diagnosed with HIV in the UK, around 5,000 of whom live in the North West.

This guide provides information about the support, help and information available for people living with, and affected by HIV, from George House Trust.

People living with HIV may need support at different times and for many different reasons. The services available at George House Trust are here to provide that support when you need it. We hope that you find this guide useful.

George House Trust

George House Trust is a charity supporting people living with or affected by HIV in the North West of England.

We've been around since 1985 and now support over 2000 people every year. We're committed to promoting the best possible quality of life for all people living with HIV through high quality support services and campaigning. We are based in Ardwick, just south of Manchester city centre (see map on page 39). There is a comfortable reception area with high speed internet access, information centre and counselling and advice rooms. We also provide local services in various locations outside of central Manchester. In addition you can contact us for support and information using our website, email or by phone.

Opening Times

We are open: Mondays: 9.00am - 8.00pm
Tuesdays - Fridays: 9.00am - 5.00pm

Please note we do not normally open at weekends or on Bank Holidays. If you want to see somebody in person, you need to make an appointment by phoning or e-mailing us. If you turn up without an appointment we may not be able to see you so we would always advise you to call us first.

Contacting Us

Telephone: 0161 274 4499
during the times above

Postal address: 77 Ardwick Green North
Manchester M12 6FX
see map at back of booklet

E-mail the team: support@ght.org.uk

Online services: www.ght.org.uk

Accessing Our Services

Our services are open to anyone who is HIV positive and living in the North West of England. In addition we can provide support and advice to partners, family and friends of people living with HIV in the North West of England.

Our services are provided entirely free of charge to you. You can contact us yourself or another agency can contact us on your behalf, with your permission. To support people to access our services we can provide travel expenses to people who are on low income.

Our Services Include:

- Advice, Information and Support - support on any issues relating to your HIV status
- Financial Support - if you are living in financial hardship or destitution
- Group Spaces - meet other people living with HIV
- Counselling - person centred counselling
- Volunteer Mentoring Support - if you need support to achieve a personal goal
- Information Updates
- Courses and weekends for people living with HIV
- Condoms - collected from our office or by post
- Welfare Rights and Debt Advice
- Health Trainer - support on health issues
- Transport to hospital appointments

More detail can be found about these services later in this booklet.

First Contact

We appreciate that contacting us for the first time can be a daunting experience. When you first contact us we will arrange an appointment for you to see one of our Advisers. This will be an opportunity for you to discuss which services, if any, you may need.

When you first contact George House Trust we will need to take down some details from you for our records. After we have seen you, we will also need a letter confirming that you are HIV positive from your consultant. We can obtain this from your consultant with your permission.

"After my diagnosis, I felt lost, confused and on the brink of despair. GHT was a beacon of hope for me, a shining light and support in the time of great need."

Confidentiality & Data Protection

All the information that you give to us is confidential and is not disclosed to anyone else unless you ask us to do so. On your first visit to our building we will ask you to read and sign a confidentiality statement and a data protection form.

Confidentiality is of paramount importance to us and everybody involved in George House Trust is required to sign up to our confidentiality policy.

Our Centre

We are based in central Manchester, 10 minutes walk from Piccadilly Station. We are accessible by public transport direct from both Stockport and Manchester. Please refer to the map on the inside back cover of this booklet for more information on how to find us.

The centre is in a quiet residential area and offers a supportive and welcoming environment to all our visitors. We offer high speed internet access and printing facilities free of charge.

Although our physical location is in Manchester we are able to offer a range of services by telephone, email, our website and our locally based services in clinics.

You can find more information later in this booklet.

If the cost of travel is a barrier to attending our services in Manchester please contact us and we can advise you if we can assist with travel costs.

Through our partnership with Barnardo's we are able to provide creche facilities to people attending individual appointments and our Women's and African's group spaces.

Providing Feedback or Complaints

We actively encourage people to give us feedback on our services. This ensures that our services continue to meet the needs of people living with HIV. You can do this in a number of ways including:

- Complete our annual Service User Survey
- Attend a focus groups
- Use our suggestion box in our reception area
- Contact us by email or through the website

Our Website www.gh.org.uk

Our website includes:

- news and information about us
- online services such as Welfare Fund application form, request an appointment form, complaints and suggestions form

- a directory of useful links to HIV-related sites
- a diary of our services and events

You can request information or advice through our website or by e-mailing support@gh.org.uk

Partner, Relative or Friend?

George House Trust can also help you if you are providing support for a person living with HIV. You might be a partner, relative or friend of someone who is HIV positive.

Our services team are able to speak to you over the phone or in person to talk through the issues around caring or providing support for someone who is HIV positive.

Advice, Information & Support

George House Trust can help with advice, support, and information on anything related to living with HIV. This might include having someone to talk to after your HIV diagnosis, help through a difficult time, advice and help with issues such as: money, debts, housing, sex and relationships, telling people, the law, employment, immigration, or housing.

We are able to provide supportive advice about how you can continue to have a healthy and safe sex life after a positive HIV diagnosis.

We can also tell you about services from other organisations and refer you to other organisations as appropriate. We deliver these services in various ways including in person, through our website, email and by telephone. Please read on to find the best option for you.

One-to-One Appointments

You can book an appointment to see one of our Advisers. This can be at our building in Ardwick, or at one of our regional hospital based services. The Adviser will tell you about George House Trust services and help you identify the kind of support you might need.

We may also refer you to specialist services provided by another organisation, with your permission. For appointments based at our building in Ardwick we can offer crèche support through our partners Barnardo's. Please notify us when you are booking your appointment if you need crèche support.

Telephone Advice

You can call us for advice and information during our office opening hours (including up to 8pm on Mondays) on **0161 274 4499**.

Locally Based Services

We provide regular appointments at a number of local services across the North West as follows:

- North Manchester General Hospital
- Manchester Centre for Sexual Health (Hathersage Centre)
- Salford Clinic (Oaklands Hospital)
- Oldham Sexual Health Clinic
- Rochdale Sexual Health Clinic
- Bury Sexual Health Clinic

If you wish to book one of these appointments please either call George House Trust or speak to the local clinic staff. Updated times of the clinic based appointments are available on our website.

Support via our website

You can email us for support via our website.

Financial Help

George House Trust offers financial support services to help reduce financial hardship for people with HIV.

Community Care Grants

If you receive Income Support, you may apply for a Community Care Grant from the Department for Work and Pensions to pay for some items. A Services Adviser can help you make an application.

George House Trust Welfare Fund

If you need money urgently because you have no money for essential items (food, gas etc.) then call our office as we may be able to offer a small payment straight away. Normally payments are between £10 and £15. Non-urgent applications or applications for larger amounts (up to £150) should be made in writing through our website.

Alternatively we can post a paper form out to you. Non-urgent applications are considered by our panel at the end of each month. Please remember that we always receive more applications to the Fund than there is money to pay out.

Sometimes we have to make difficult decisions and priority is always given to people in the greatest need. The George House Trust Welfare Fund is financially supported by Manchester Pride.

Children with AIDS Charity

We can apply for you for help from the Children with AIDS Charity Hardship Fund. They can give grants for essential items and expenses relating to children (clothes, bedding, bills etc), whether or not the child or young person has HIV.

We also have contacts with many other local and national funds that can provide financial help.

Group Spaces

George House Trust runs a number of different group spaces for people living with HIV. These take place at our premises in Ardwick Green North, Manchester. Group spaces provide a safe and comfortable environment to chat and socialise with other people living with HIV.

- light snacks, tea and coffee are provided
- travel expenses are paid if you are on lower income
- a free crèche is provided for the African and Women's spaces at the nearby Gregory's Place family centre
- George House Trust volunteers and staff are on hand if you need them
- regular information session and activities on relevant topics are provided

Feel free to come to one of the group spaces whenever you wish. If you have never been in contact with George House Trust before, please give us a call first.

Gay Men's Space

Every Monday evening (except on Bank Holidays)
5.00 - 8.00pm.

African Space

Alternate Tuesdays (check website diary & flyers)
12.00 midday - 2.30pm. Open to men and women.

Women's Space

Alternate Tuesday's (check website diary & flyers)
12.00 midday - 2.30pm.

Saturday Space

Open to anyone living with HIV. Every third Saturday (check website diary & flyers) 1pm – 4pm.

Counselling

George House Trust offers person centred counselling to people living with HIV. All our counsellors are fully qualified, supervised and registered with the BACP (a professional body for qualified counsellors). A counsellor can work with any issue, from the impact of an HIV diagnosis, living with HIV or any other issues you may have.

Your counsellor will help you try and understand and make sense of your thoughts and feelings which could be about what is happening in your life right now, events in the past or your worries about the future.

The length of the course of counselling will be negotiated with you but will not be longer than 16 weeks.

Volunteer Mentoring Support

Community Support is the name we use for our one to one mentoring service for people living with HIV. Specialist volunteers are fully trained and are able to help with working towards a goal or making some changes in your life. Most volunteers are providing support to people in the area local to where they live but not in your own home. On some occasions volunteers will visit people who are in hospital.

Examples of the type of community support that our volunteers offer include: going to the gym, swimming, accessing classes and groups, finding your way around a new area and regaining confidence after a period of ill health or after first being diagnosed.

Courses for gay men newly diagnosed with HIV

These courses are aimed at gay men who have been diagnosed with HIV within the 12 months prior to the course starting. We run 2 courses every year.

Each course consists of 5 separate sessions running on one evening per week for five weeks. Different topics are covered during the course including terminology of HIV, disclosure and sex and risk. Places are limited on these courses.

These courses are funded by the Elton John Aids Foundation.

Residential Weekends for HIV Positive Gay Men

These reflective residential weekends, held at a venue away from Manchester, are an opportunity for a small group of gay men to spend time in a relaxed, safe and comfortable environment, looking at some of the issues around living with HIV.

The weekends are completely free of charge to participants - including travel, meals and accommodation - and are held twice per year. The courses are targeted towards gay men who have been diagnosed HIV positive for longer than twelve months. Places on the weekend are limited. These weekends are funded by the Elton John Aids Foundation.

African Weekend

Each year we run at least one residential weekend for African people with HIV and their families. The weekend, which is completely free and takes place in Cheshire, is a chance for a relaxing break, as well as an opportunity to share support, experiences, and ideas.

Living with HIV Course

This course aims to help HIV positive people explore how to live well with HIV. The course looks at a number of topics including understanding HIV, disclosing your HIV status to others and issues around sex and relationships. Please note that this course is not open to gay men, as we offer a range of other courses, which are specifically for gay men.

Welfare Rights/Debt & Money advice

Welfare Rights and Debt Advisers from Manchester Advice provide regular appointments at our office. They can support you with advice on benefit entitlement, support with completing benefit application forms, benefit appeals and general money and debt advice. Please contact us to book an appointment.

"A helpful, friendly and accessible service."

Health Trainer

The service provides the opportunity for people living with HIV to discuss health issues directly related to their HIV status on a one to one basis. This could involve:

- Information relating to test results - CD4, viral load results
- Building effective relationships with consultants
- Managing side effects
- Understanding medication
- Information about sex and relationships

In partnership with Terrence Higgins Trust and the Elton AIDS Foundation.

Information Updates

We aim to ensure you are updated with key developments in HIV and other topics for example developments in treatments, research and government policy relating to HIV. We do this through in a variety of ways, highlighted below.

Information Sessions

We frequently hold information sessions on topics related to HIV including managing treatments, employment, relationships. See website for details.

E-mail Updates

Anyone with HIV can receive our regular information mailings by email. You can subscribe online via our website or by email to support@ght.org.uk

Condoms

We provide free condoms and lube to HIV positive people. You can pick these up from the office, or we will post these to you if you live in the North West. These are sent to you in an unmarked envelope. Please phone us or order through our website.

Taxis

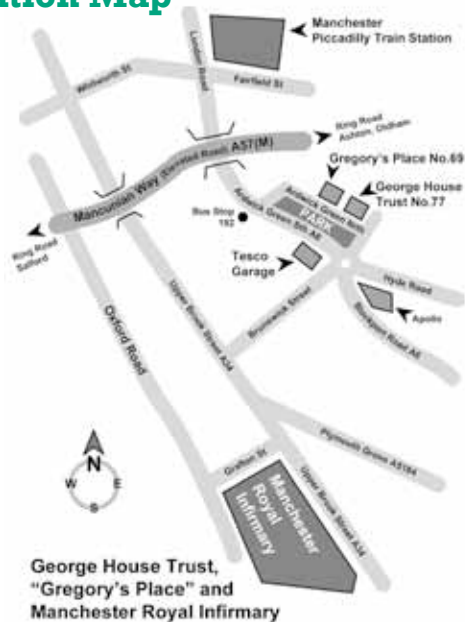
In exceptional circumstances we may be able to help with transport to hospital appointments. This is usually for families where there is an HIV positive child, a medical emergency or chronic ill health. This service is limited and relies on the availability of volunteer drivers and a small taxi budget. Please contact us to discuss accessing this service.

"George House Trust has provided me with exactly the right help at the right time"

"The advice and support given by GHT has been invaluable to me. It's made me realise that there is still life with a HIV+ diagnosis."

"Before my diagnosis, my knowledge of HIV was sketchy to say the least. The information given by GHT has increased my confidence and awareness of living with HIV. I can now clearly explain to friends or new partners about HIV and ensure a healthy living and sexual life."

Location Map



George House Trust
77 Ardwick Green North
Manchester
M12 6FX
0161 274 4499
www.ght.org.uk

Registered Charity 700364

Printed using 100% recycled (minimum 75% post-consumer waste) paper.
Please recycle after use.

