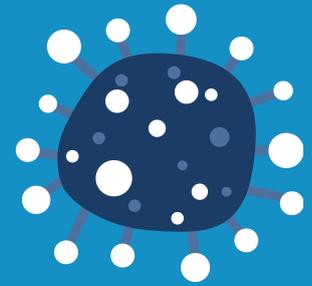


# PATH-GP

## Prevention and Testing for HIV in General Practice

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a virus that weakens the immune system.

- It is very important to find out early if someone has it to prevent them getting sick or passing it to others
- but sometimes even if they go to the GP with symptoms, it is not usual practice for patients to be tested for HIV
- there are many reasons for this, like healthcare staff: not feeling confident about testing for HIV, worrying about upsetting patients, time constraints and HIV stigma.



## Why is this research needed?



Healthcare staff can help in different ways, for example:

- Testing people for HIV, especially people who have a greater chance of being exposed to HIV or people who live in an area with a high number of people with HIV
- helping people get a HIV preventive pill called PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), that not many people know about, for free from NHS sexual health clinics.

This study will create a plan to help healthcare staff follow HIV testing guidelines, make HIV testing quick and simple and help people get HIV treatment and preventive pills.

## How were public members part of this study?

The patient and public involvement group was formed by three public members, all with different backgrounds and experiences relating to HIV.

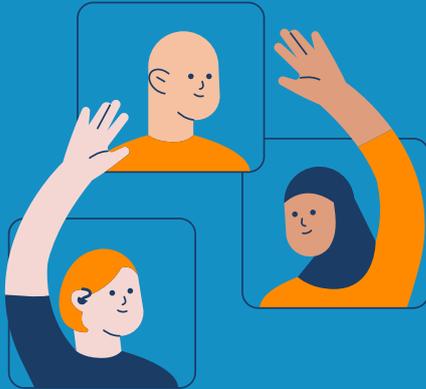
Three meetings were held with them and they were involved in the following activities:

- developing the application for funding
- shaping the research question
- contributing to the ethics application
- advising on ways to recruit participants
- review of research documents
- data analysis and interpretation



# How public contributors helped this research

Members of the public gave useful feedback on the study. Their suggestions helped make the information sheets and discussion guides clearer, and also improved the first part of the project



Our involvement work showed that the proposed project is acceptable to the public. Feedback highlighted the importance of including information about HIV in the patient materials and making it clear that testing is universal and not aimed at any specific groups.

Collaborating with the public to make sure this research meets the needs of those it aims to help and is well-designed has made the project stronger and contributed to its success.



## Reflections from the research team

Marsha Doran, public contributor, said:

Being involved in this work has been amazing. Knowing that I have been part of helping the communities know they are at risk of HIV, and that we have been able to raise awareness is incredibly rewarding. This is an illness that often goes 'under the radar' so it is important to let people know that they are able to take control of their sexual health and learn how to stay safe.

Jo Kesten, co-lead of the project said:

I never regret involving the public in research studies, and this work has been no exception. At the outset you can never predict the ways the public will shape a project and highlight things you hadn't considered. Sometimes you can be too close to a project to spot the things which would make it off-putting to take part in or for the findings to make sense. That is where patient and public involvement really adds value. And it's great fun too!

