



Living Well North Tyneside

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Organised by **UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), NHS, and local sexual health services, National HIV Testing Week (NHTW)** returns from Monday, **10th February 2025**, encouraging people across the UK to get tested, know their status, and take control of their health. Testing remains one of the most important tools in ending new HIV transmissions and ensuring that those living with HIV receive the treatment they need.

This year's campaign focuses on raising awareness, reducing stigma, and making testing more accessible for everyone.

Why HIV Testing Matters

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a lifelong condition that weakens the immune system. However, with early detection and effective treatment, people with HIV can live long, healthy lives.

Many people can live with HIV for years without symptoms, making regular testing essential. Early diagnosis means early access to treatment, which can reduce the virus to an undetectable level, meaning HIV cannot be passed on (known as U=U, or Undetectable = Untransmittable).

Key Facts About HIV Testing

- **HIV affects everyone** – While some groups are at higher risk, anyone can contract HIV.
- **Testing is quick and easy** – Many testing options are available, including home kits, sexual health clinics, and GP testing.
- **Early treatment saves lives** – People diagnosed early and on treatment can live as long as those without HIV.

Stigma remains a barrier – Normalising HIV testing helps reduce discrimination and encourages more people to get tested.

Who Should Get Tested?

Testing is recommended for:

- Anyone who has had unprotected sex (without a condom or PrEP).
- People with multiple sexual partners.
- Anyone who shares needles or drug-injecting equipment.
- People from high-prevalence communities, including some ethnic minority groups and men who have sex with men (MSM).
- Pregnant women, as part of routine antenatal care.
- Anyone who has never had an HIV test before.

Routine testing is essential for anyone who may be at higher risk of exposure.

Where Can You Get an HIV Test?

There are several ways to access free and confidential HIV testing in the UK:

1. **Sexual Health Clinics & GP Surgeries** – Many offer free and confidential testing.
2. **Community Testing Services** – Some charities and organisations provide walk-in or outreach testing.
3. **Home Testing Kits** – Many areas, including North Tyneside and Northumberland, offer free home test kits for those over 18.
4. **Order a Free HIV Home Testing Kit**

Residents of North Tyneside or Northumberland can order a free STI home testing kit, which includes tests for:

- ✓ HIV
- ✓ Syphilis
- ✓ Hepatitis B & C
- ✓ Chlamydia & Gonorrhoea

Home testing is discreet, quick, and reliable, making it easier than ever to check your HIV status from the comfort of your home.

How Can Organisations Get Involved?

HIV Testing Week is an opportunity for healthcare providers, workplaces, community organisations, and educational institutions to help raise awareness and encourage testing.

Ways to Support HIV Testing Week 2025

Promote Testing on Social Media – Share key messages using official campaign resources.

Host Awareness Events – Run workshops, health stalls, or educational talks in workplaces, colleges, and community spaces.

Encourage Routine Testing – Healthcare professionals should offer HIV tests to all eligible patients.

Book Training Sessions – Staff can access free HIV awareness and sexual health training through Northumbria Healthcare.

If you'd like to book workshops, stalls, or sexual health events, contact:

North Tyneside: C-CardScheme@northumbria-healthcare.nhs.uk

Northumberland: C-CardNorthumberland@northumbria-healthcare.nhs.uk

Organisations such as NRP, Home Group, Northumberland College, and Working Well are supporting HIV Testing Week 2025, helping to increase access to information and testing.

Training Opportunities for Professionals

Healthcare professionals and those working in sexual health services can enhance their knowledge of HIV prevention and testing through free online training.

[Northumbria Healthcare Free Sexual Health & C-Card Training](#)
[Sexual Health and HIV Programme \(E-Learning for Healthcare\)](#)
[British HIV Association \(BHIVA\) E-Learning](#)

These resources provide essential training for those supporting individuals at risk of HIV.

Recent Data & Best Practices for HIV Prevention

For those looking to stay informed on the latest research, here are key national reports and guidelines:

[UKHSA HIV Surveillance Data](#)
[NICE HIV Testing Guidelines](#)
[BHIVA HIV Testing Recommendations](#)
[Positive Voices National HIV Survey](#)

These reports provide crucial insights into HIV testing trends, best practices, and experiences of people living with HIV in the UK.

Breaking the Stigma Around HIV

Despite medical advancements and increased awareness, stigma remains a barrier to testing and treatment. Many people still fear discrimination, preventing them from getting tested.

How to Reduce Stigma

- ✓ Normalise HIV Testing – Encourage it as part of routine healthcare.
- ✓ Use Inclusive Language – Avoid outdated or judgemental terminology.
- ✓ Share Stories – Hearing from those living with HIV helps challenge myths and misconceptions.
- ✓ Promote U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable) – A person on effective treatment cannot pass on HIV.

By talking openly about HIV, we can help remove fear and misinformation, ensuring more people feel comfortable getting tested.

Final Thoughts: Take the Test, Protect Your Health

National HIV Testing Week 2025 is a reminder that getting tested is quick, easy, and essential for stopping the spread of HIV. Knowing your status is the first step in protecting your health and others around you.

Take action today:

Order a free home test if you live in North Tyneside or Northumberland.

Visit a local sexual health clinic for in-person testing.

Encourage friends, family, and colleagues to get tested.

Support awareness efforts by sharing key messages on social media.

Together, we can work towards a future where HIV transmission is eliminated.

Related Links

- [UKHSA](#)
- [NICE](#)
- [BHIVA](#)
- [The latest report from Positive Voices, the national survey of people living with HIV](#)

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