

Welcome

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This newsletter was suggested by our BWC Patient Focus Groups and has been designed with help from some of our service users and our third sector partners (BHA Skyline and The Brunswick Centre). We hope you find it useful. If you have any suggestions for our next newsletter please let one of the BWC team know or email us.

Staff News

A goodbye message from Dr. Hugh McGann: 'I wanted to let you know that, for personal reasons, I have decided to stay in New Zealand. I am working here as a doctor in a very similar role to my job in Leeds. I will miss all of you very much. It feels as if we have become like family over our years together. I am happy that you have such an excellent team in BWC to continue with your care.' Whilst all are very saddened by this news we wish Hugh all the best in his new life in New Zealand. Welcome to Rob White (HIV nurse specialist) - we are thrilled to have Rob join our BWC team.

BWC Webpage

Please have a look and let us know what you think - just google 'HIV service Leeds' or use the link below:

<http://www.leedsth.nhs.uk/a-z-of-services/hiv-outpatient-service/>

New national HIV medication prescribing process

HIV medications are now bought by NHS England through a single national contract which started on 1st February 2022. This means that access to HIV medications is now the same for all people living with HIV across England. It also means that HIV drug supplies are now more reliable and resilient. All HIV treatments are still available.

However, a few medications, namely Symtuza®, Rezolsta®, Evotaz® and Eviplera®, can no longer be routinely prescribed as the individual components of these combination tablets are now available to the NHS at a significantly reduced cost. Like all other HIV clinics across England we will, therefore, be talking to all of our service users who are currently on these four combination tablets to decide the best future treatment options for them. Most people will be able to safely move away from these combination tablets to their generic equivalents or a clinically suitable alternative. For individuals who need to stay on these tablets to control their HIV, we will still be able to continue to prescribe them.

New injectable HIV treatment

As NICE have approved this new treatment and it is now available on the NHS we, like all other HIV services across the UK, are making plans to start our new injectable HIV treatment service.

In order to do this safely we need to start this new service in Leeds initially and then hope to be able to roll it out to our Wakefield and Dewsbury clinics as soon as possible.

Injectable treatment is not suitable for everyone. People on injectable treatment need to be able to attend clinic every 2 months for 2 injections (one into each buttock muscle) and blood tests. It is also important to be aware that recent evidence has shown that this treatment stopped working after 3 years for 1 in 40 people despite these individuals having all their injections on time.

If you are interested in, or have questions about, the new injectable treatment, please ask your doctor/nurse at your next clinic visit. We also have more detailed information about this treatment for you to read in clinic and on our website.

COVID-19 vaccines

Are safe and recommended for everyone living with HIV. They don't cause any HIV medication problems. Have you had your Spring booster? It's recommended for all people living with HIV.

BWC 2022 service user satisfaction survey results in brief

383 service users completed our BWC survey between December and April = 17% of all of our service users. Thank you to everyone who took part. We really appreciate all your thoughtful feedback, comments and suggestions.

97% of service users said that they would encourage other people living with HIV to use this service and 99% said that their overall experience of using the service was 'good/very good'. Please visit our website for the full survey report.

Research Update

LAPTOP - an international trial which started at BWC in July 2019. This study is comparing two different HIV treatments, Bikarvy vs Symtuza, in people who are diagnosed late. We are hoping to recruit 8 people to this study, 5 have been recruited so far.

Cov-Africa (Gen-Africa sub-study) - a national study which aims to explore the impact of COVID-19 on black people living with HIV in the UK has started at BWC. Recruitment on-going.

Gen-Africa - a national study investigating the genetic basis of chronic kidney disease. 243 BWC service users were recruited to this study and whilst recruitment is now closed the research team are feeding back individual results to those who took part in this study.

FLAIR - an international trial and the first to compare injectable HIV medication to daily tablets. All of our places for this trial have now been filled but as a result of this trial we are now able to offer injectable treatment to suitable patients.

POSITIVE VOICES 2022 - a national survey of people living with HIV. It aims to capture the lived experience and needs of people receiving HIV care in the UK. This survey is currently running at BWC.

Inside Out Health project - aims to learn about the experiences of people living with HIV who have been to prison and received healthcare whilst they were in prison in order to help improve care for people in prison. Please email Felicity Young at insideouthhealthproject@gmail.com if you would like to take part or have any questions about this research project.

Thank you to all of our patients who take part in our research studies. If you want any more information about research at BWC please ask one of the team.

Personal Stories

If anyone would like to share their personal story about their HIV journey please let us know. These can be anonymous.

Do You Know About U = U?

Undetectable = Untransmittable

Did you know that having an undetectable viral load on HIV treatment (ART) stops HIV transmission? For more information please ask one of the BWC team or read

<http://li-base.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/A5-factsheet-UU.pdf>

Do you know about PREP?

PREP is for HIV negative individuals who are at high risk of being infected with HIV and is available free on the NHS. If you are not taking HIV treatment yet, have recently started treatment or you are struggling to take your HIV treatment, then your partner(s) may benefit from PrEP. Please ask one of the BWC team if you have any questions about PrEP.

Sexual health screens to check for infections

These are quick and easy to do and available for all of our service users at their routine clinic visits. At Leeds please pop down to the 'bloods room' and ask for a self-screening pack. You can then do your swabs yourself - the team will show you how. At Wakefield and Dewsbury please ask the doctor or nurse at your appointment and they will help you with this.

If you have symptoms or have been in contact with an STI and need help arranging an appointment at your local sexual health service please let one of the BWC team know and we will do everything we can to help you with this.

Would you like to talk to someone else living with HIV?

Our peer mentors are people living with HIV who have been trained by Project 100 (a nationally recognised scheme). They offer peer support to anyone accessing care at BWC. If you think you would benefit from talking to someone else living with HIV please ask the BWC team or BHA Skyline about the peer mentor service.

BWC Service User Focus Group meetings

We run service user focus groups at least twice a year – usually in May and November. When the new dates, times and venues are finalised we will add these to the BWC webpage. If you would like to attend one of these meetings please inform a member of the BWC team or email us: leedsth-tr.bwcadmin@nhs.net.