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THE INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICE

AN **EFFECTIVE** SOLUTION FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AND COMPLEX NEEDS IN GREATER MANCHESTER

MANAGE · PREVENT · TEST · HIV

Some people need extra help to follow their HIV treatment plan

National and global targets seek to halt HIV transmission by 2030. One approach is to ensure people living with HIV follow an effective treatment plan. This will achieve undetectable, and therefore, untransmittable viral levels (often referred to as U=U).

Some people, particularly those with high levels of social needs, such as mental or physical health challenges, substance misuse or those experiencing financial difficulties require extra help to follow their treatment plan.

A solution for people living with HIV and additional complex needs

In Greater Manchester the **Intensive Support Service (ISS)** was developed to provide extra support for people with additional health or social care needs living with HIV.

It is run by the charity George House Trust and is part of a larger project working towards ending HIV transmission (HIVe) in Greater Manchester.

The ISS offers one-to-one support for people living with HIV who have complex needs, to help them achieve undetectable viral load. The support addresses problems like housing, finances, poor mental health, drug/alcohol issues and domestic abuse. The ISS works with the individual, their medical professionals and all other agencies to help resolve these issues and better manage their HIV.

Research evaluating the effectiveness of the ISS
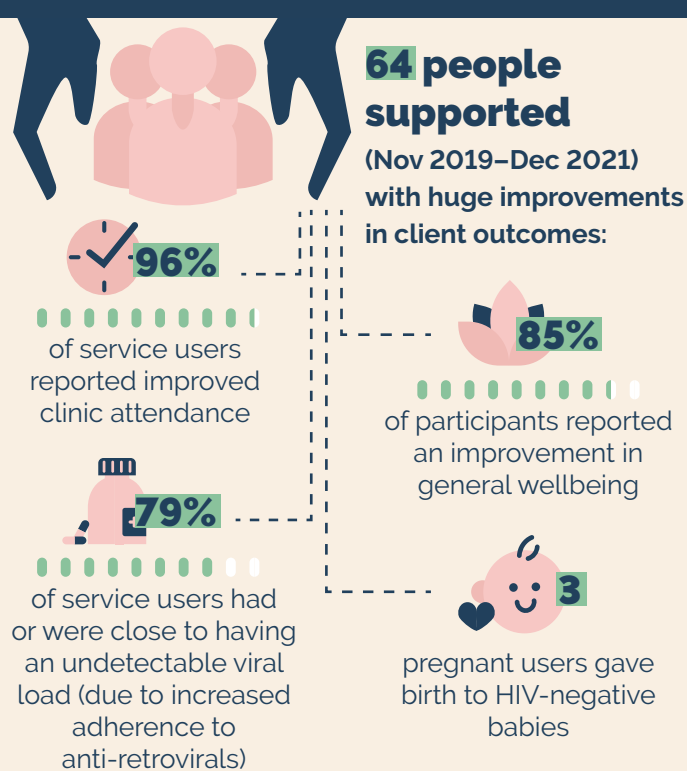
Researchers:

gathered monitoring data

conducted telephone interviews with 31% of service users (20 people)

surveyed 17 professionals involved in the wider HIVe project

The ISS is very effective in helping people manage their HIV

64 people supported (Nov 2019–Dec 2021) with huge improvements in client outcomes:

96% of service users reported improved clinic attendance

79% of service users had or were close to having an undetectable viral load (due to increased adherence to anti-retrovirals)

85% of participants reported an improvement in general wellbeing

3 pregnant users gave birth to HIV-negative babies

After participating in the ISS, people felt more able to:

- come to terms with their diagnosis
- manage their treatment
- access the support they needed
- improve their mental and physical health, finances and wellbeing

The key to success: a collaborative cross-sector approach

- Participants accessed a wide variety of support highlighting the need for a model that provides individual and holistic care via a single point of contact.
- Stakeholders emphasised that the **success of the service** was due to a collaborative cross-sector approach which bridged clinical care and social care and was delivered by a voluntary-sector organisation.

This shows the benefits of joined-up services for people with complex lives and chronic health conditions.

Recommendations to continue building on the success of the ISS

Health and social care delivery staff can:
- **use the ISS as a model** to develop similar interventions to reduce HIV transmission;
- **create and properly resource bespoke non-clinical support teams** to help people living with HIV manage their treatment plan; and
- **enable strong working relationships** between clinical teams and voluntary sector providers.

Commissioners and health and social care planners should consider funding similar services and supporting the delivery of similar intensive care offers elsewhere.

UK policymakers can shape the UK HIV action plan 2022–2025 using insights from the success of ISS.

Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership

Manchester Metropolitan University

GEORGE HOUSE TRUST HIV POSITIVE LIVING

NHS Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust