



Positive Life
Annual Review
2020/2021

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Positive Life Annual Review 2020/2021

A word from the CEO

It would be easy to look back on the year that was 2020, and think about Coronavirus lockdowns, face coverings, hand sanitiser and social distancing. I prefer to think of it as the year when Positive Life responded to a crisis and stepped up, demonstrating it's true worth for the people we work for.....I think the quotes from service users included in this review are testimony to that!

Overnight, we moved our service delivery to an online model, maintaining and increasing access and contact with our service users, alongside facilitating continued engagement with our Associates and partner agencies including Belfast Trust, Advice Space and Relate NI.

We secured two further years funding for our +Family Life Project from the National Lottery Community Fund and began work with HIV Ireland on an all-island Peer Support Project.



We brought service users, staff and Board thinking together and began work on our next Strategic Plan.

We conducted twenty virtual meetings with local MLA's and established engagement with the APPG for HIV and AIDS at Westminster. 2020 was the year that we raised the issue of HIV across printed, social and news media over fifty times including a challenge to the Department to clarify their advice around COVID-19 for people affected by HIV. We continued to highlight the impact of an HIV+ diagnosis for people living in Northern Ireland and we led a Sexual Health Survey in partnership with Belfast Live.

And to top it all off, our five-year long campaign to have Belfast City Hall lit up red came to fruition on World Aids Day 2020 supported by Councillor Kate Nicholl, and with the added benefit of activating 30 local politicians to wear T-shirts and red ribbons and post on their social media platforms to mark the day.

So all in all, it was a pretty big year for Positive Life as we continue to work to remove the stigma that still surrounds HIV in NI. We're looking forward with a sense of enthusiasm to 2021 - watch this space!



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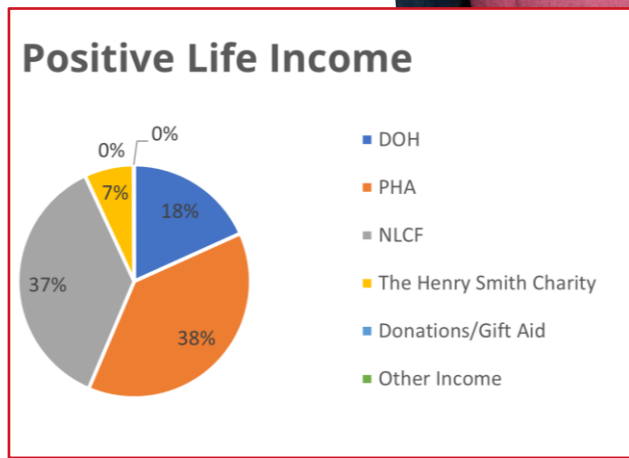
The Numbers

Positive Life received income of £425,489 during 2019/20 with expenditure of £335,796 resulting in an increase in reserves of £89,693. Funding sources are detailed below.

Positive Life's accounts 2020/21 were independently audited by chartered accountants and registered Auditors Exchange Auditing Ltd. Full copies are available on request.

Income received 2020/21

Department of Health	77,735
Public Health Agency	162,288
National Lottery Community Fund	155,895
The Henry Smith Charity	29,200
Donations/Gift Aid	172
Other Income	199
Total	425,489





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From our service user's

With almost the entire year spent in the virtual world, we're proud to report on 12 months well spent. While the numbers speak for themselves, our service user's words resonate so much more powerfully, so this review is given over to their feedback over the past year.

"I would not have survived were it not for the regular phone calls."

"Positive Life, lead me out of my maze - has really given me hope to go forward and feel like a worthy human being. I sincerely feel optimistic about my future now and want to continue to avail from the support of this wonderful group of professionals. Thank you from the bottom of my heart Positive Life."

"PL is an really important organisation run by an amazingly dedicated team everyone of whom offers an incredibly caring, friendly and constant professional service without prejudice or favour to all the service users. We are never made to feel that they will not be there to offer care and advice and always in a positive way. It is also fun being part of the Positive Life family which is how i see it."

"Great support especially at this crazy time."

"My expression of gratitude to the team for all your support during this crisis."

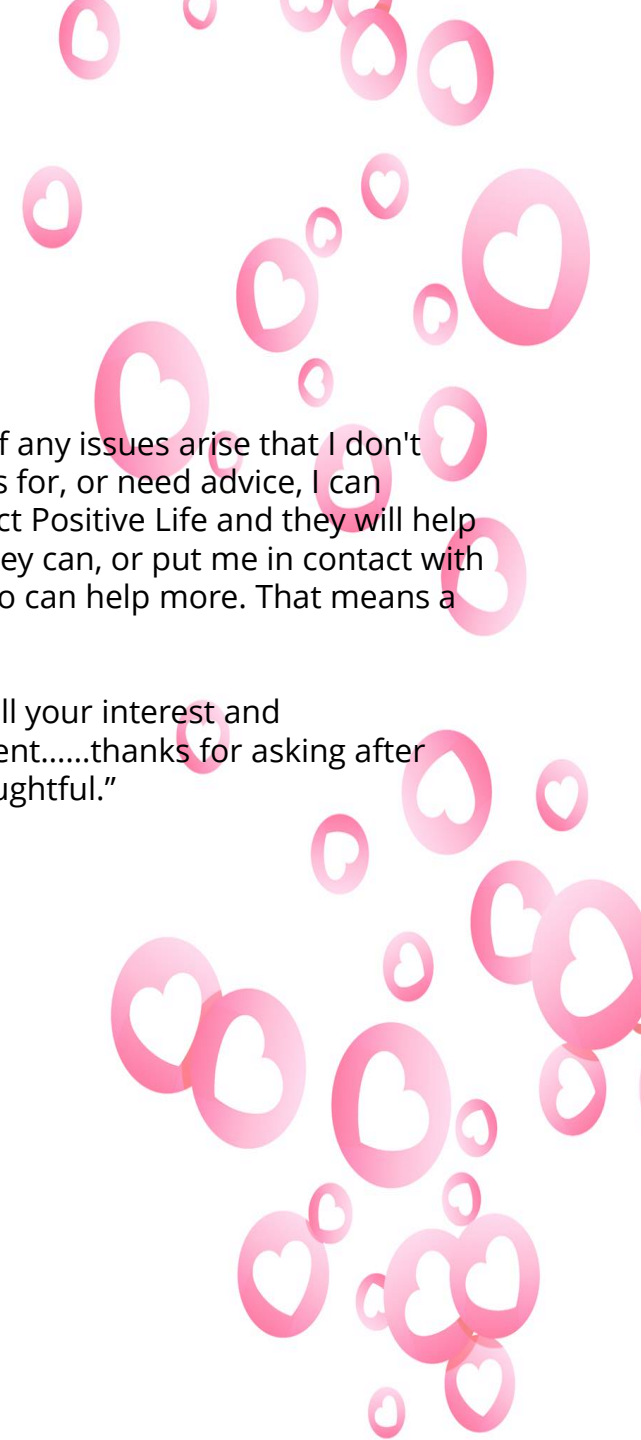
"A great comfort knowing I can get in touch."

"Thanks for listening."

"I would never have got this far if it wasn't for the support I've been given. Thanks to Positive Life for believing in me when no one else did."

"I know that if any issues arise that I don't have answers for, or need advice, I can always contact Positive Life and they will help in any way they can, or put me in contact with someone who can help more. That means a lot."

"Thanks for all your interest and encouragement.....thanks for asking after me, very thoughtful."





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Some More Numbers

Positive Life Service User Engagement 2019/2020	
11	New Families
41	Just + engagements
254	Volunteer Hours
163	Advice Sessions
280	Advice issues dealt with
£89,186.92	Income generated from benefit maximisation
4,262	Psychosocial Interventions
63,000	Facebook
4,500	Twitter
500	Instagram



Ending of lockdown 'could lead to

By Lisa Smyth

THE end of the latest lockdown could lead to a spike in sexually transmitted infections in Northern Ireland, a leading HIV charity has warned.

Around 1,200 people here are living with HIV, and while the number of new cases of the virus was down in 2019, the chief executive of Positive Life has said she is concerned numbers will rise again as a consequence of a relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions.

In an interview to mark the beginning of Sexual Health Week today, Jacqui Richardson said it is essential that everyone takes

care of their sexual health by wearing a condom during sex.

"She also revealed that people with HIV still face alarming and outdated misconceptions – even when dealing with medically trained staff."

"Of course attitudes have improved over the years but life can still be very difficult for people living with HIV," she said.

"People still make judgments about people with HIV, about their sexuality and their sex lives."

"I was speaking in a service user as recently as a week ago and they were telling me they had been making an equality about the insurance and the person couldn't get them off the phone quick enough when they said they had HIV."

"They were told there was nothing they could do for them – and that sort of thing isn't unusual, it happens quite frequently, actually that people with HIV can't get life insurance."

"We also had a service user who was at the dentist and there was a needle prick incident and the dentist subsequently zoned and asked all sorts of inappropriate and completely irrelevant questions."

"The patient was asked if they were gay and when they just said no, this was a dentist in a very

a surge in sexually transmitted diseases'

busy dental practice, so it's quite worrying.

"I think we are in danger, once the restrictions are lifted, we don't make sure and get the message out there that looking after your sexual health is paramount. I am worried that we will see a lot in HIV cases again."

"The profile of people being affected is changing – 50% of people with HIV are from the heterosexual community and there has been an increase in the number of women from a particular age. We are seeing more women from their 40s and 50s groups who were growing up when HIV emerged but at that time, it was very much

thought of as a gay man's disease.

"The biggest thing these women had to worry about as far as they were concerned was getting pregnant, so we now have women in this age group who are having long-term relationships and they aren't worried about getting pregnant and they aren't thinking about HIV."

"Trying people to take precautions, Ms Richardson said that she has seen people now carry a face covering with them when they leave homes, they should also get into the practice of carrying condoms to ensure they are growing up when HIV emerged but at that time, it was very much

"No sorry of telling if we are holding back the dam"

about all this. We've had various extended periods of lockdown for the last year and we're not ignorant to the fact that to be a lot of pent up desire for many to get back to their homes when we can and have some fun. People have said, 'Let's face facts. We have to be grown up about it and understand that some will be highly active after repeated lockdowns.'

"There is really no way of telling if we are holding back the dam, but we want to make sure that when people can get back out there again, that they look after their own sexual health and well-being. No one else will, this is an issue of personal responsibility."



Working in partnership with



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