



Northern Ireland's only HIV charity
positivelifeⁿⁱ.com



Annual Review 2024/2025

Every year I talk about the Annual Review providing space to reflect on a year gone by – an excuse to go back and review monitoring reports, social media platforms and Board minutes – to remind my ever-failing memory how we deliver on our strategic objectives – and this year is no different.

You'll see the evidence highlighted throughout this review, but at the risk of spoiling the read for you – I want to start by noting how proud I am of the work Positive Life has done to **support people affected by HIV** to live their best lives.

Staff have made 3,200 connections, providing folk with counselling, one-to-one, group and peer supports, information and social events alongside on-going opportunities to inform the development and delivery of services.

We couldn't do any of that without the involvement of our Associates – counsellors and therapists and our Volunteers. Their contribution throughout the organisation, whether serving on our Board or delivering services, is vital, particularly as we've seen our staff team shrink so significantly.

Most importantly though, I also want to acknowledge the people who use our services; **"the therapeutic, holistic support available by the compassionate, dedicated and highly skilled team at Positive Life has given me the chance and the courage to face this with them"**. Thankyou for trusting us – it really is a huge privilege.

Those closest to Positive Life will know that while service user support is our priority, to have any real impact, there is other work to do. That's why we continue to play a key role in the delivery of the Department of Health Sexual Health Action Plan, and lead on the Fast Track City initiative to achieve zero new HIV diagnosis by 2030.

We have contributed to a range of campaigns across the year including flooding twitter during Men's Health Week; having seven of our eleven Councils lit up red to mark World Aids Day alongside a digital screen takeover in Shaftesbury Square promoting U=U. We were also active during Sexual Health Week, highlighting the lack of accurate information available across NI from GP services, and challenging them to update their knowledge.

The year also saw Mayor Cllr Kurtis Dickson sign up to Fast Track Cities on behalf of Lisburn Castlereagh while we have continued talking to Armagh, Banbridge & Carigavon, North Down & Ards and Newry & Mourne with a view to securing their commitment over the coming months.

We've also continued with our awareness raising and education piece, attending 52 events across NI over the year including taking the issues challenging us to 10 Downing Street on World Aids Day 2024, and partnering with NAT on the 'HIV Services at a Crossroads' Report to highlight the current state of our sector and the ever-decreasing investment in HIV services and prevention.

And decreasing funding has been a huge issue for us this year as the Department of Health rejected our application for core funding. It would be disingenuous to say that this hasn't left us feeling frustrated that as the **ONLY** organisation in NI dedicated to supporting people affected by HIV and reducing new diagnosis that our work appears to be so under-valued.

But we've not been complacent – we launched our **#WheresTheFunding** / #WTF campaign and will continue to lobby at the highest levels to secure future investment.

So, as we go forward into 2025 – 26, the priority will be ensuring that we have the resources to continue to meet demand for services, bust the myths that still surround HIV in NI and continue to raise awareness around the importance of looking after your sexual health.

Until the next time.....



The Finances

A copy of the full accounts is available on request but the top lines for the 2024 – 2025 financial year are as follows:

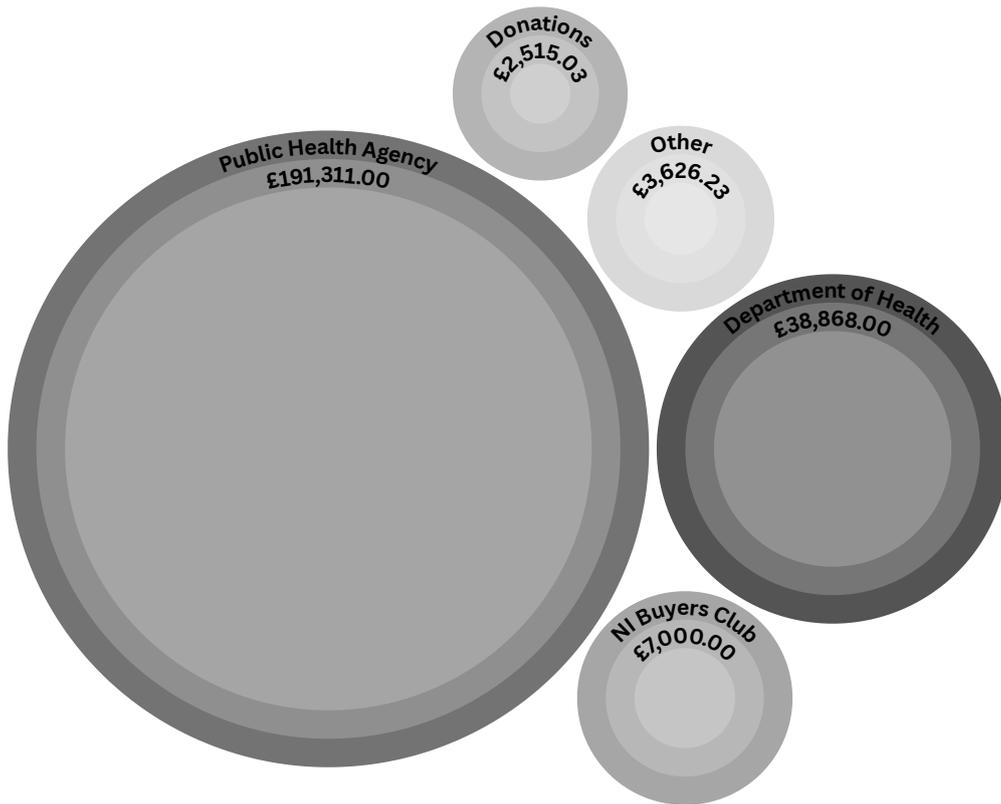
- Total income **£243,320** (previous year £348,012)
- Total expenditure **£352,880** (previous years £395,593)
- Overall loss **£109,562** (previous year £47,556)

There has of course been a reduction in salaries with staff numbers decreased significantly.

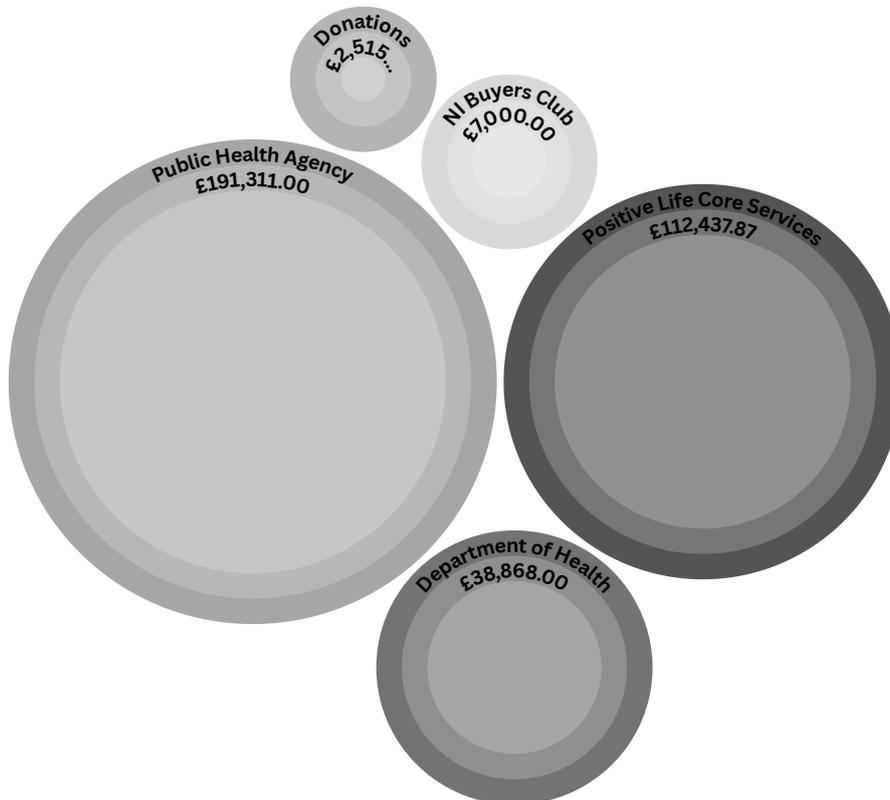
Despite the drop in income, we've been prudent over recent years and have been able to fund the deficit from reserves.

We've been working hard to diversify funding sources and are seeing the results of that as new income streams are established, and as we go forward, the year ahead will see a continued drive to secure sufficient funds to deliver on our aims.

Positive Life NI - Income 2024/2025



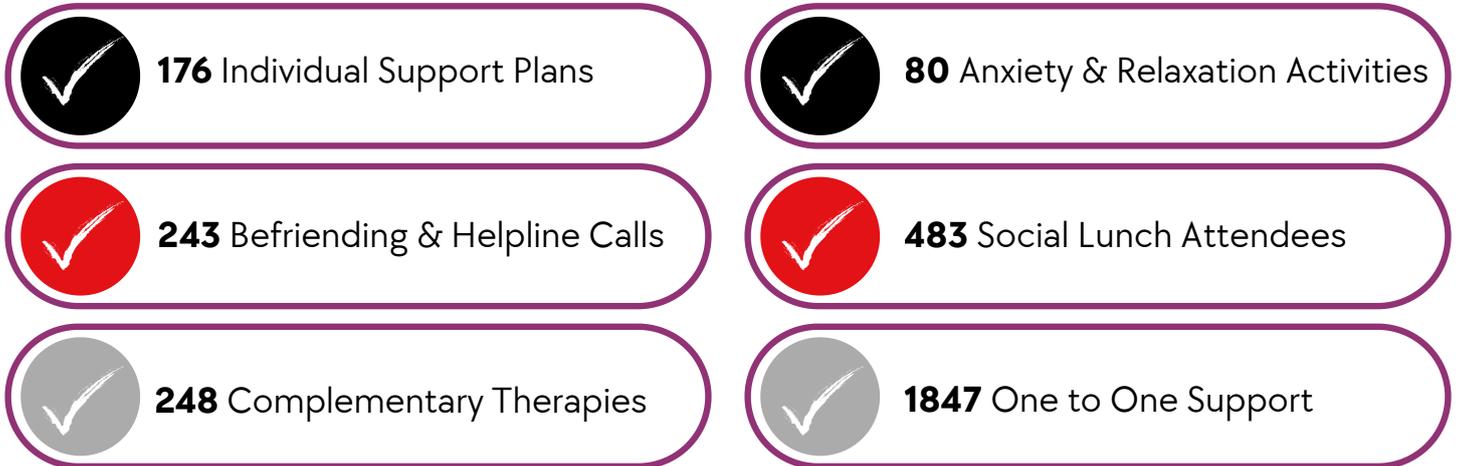
Positive Life NI - Expenditure 2024/2025



The Numbers

Positive Life have 277 registered service users

In the year ending 31st March 2025 we facilitated 3545 individual contacts including;



Our Service Users

“ Before attending Positive Life, I rarely left the house. After getting support from Positive Life I find that I am more sociable. ”

Robert

Robert is in his early fifties who has been attending Positive Life for just under a year and a half. He first came to Positive Life with a complex mix of issues including a history of addiction and homelessness and being diagnosed with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. He had only very recently received his positive diagnosis and is having trouble adjusting to the news.

Robert told us about how he frequently feels really isolated and overwhelmed and avoids situations where there are groups of people.

After agreeing to complete a needs assessment with a member of our team, a support plan was put in place and Robert was provided with one-to-one support - a safe space to discuss the impact of his diagnosis. He also began accessing counselling and complementary therapies which help with his anxiety, and more recently, we've been able to facilitate expert advice to resolve historical issues surrounding his benefits.

Robert has said that there's "still work to do" but that he doesn't think that he would still be around to do it if he hadn't walked through Positive Life's door - "it was the best decision (he) ever made".

“ Thanks to the work I have done whilst being at Positive Life, I am more comfortable with others knowing my status. ”

Megan

Megan is a woman in her late twenties. Living with HIV since birth, along with other members of her family, she has been accessing Positive Life's services for around 5 years. In addition to her positive status, Megan also lives with a life-long chronic condition that has required surgeries and this continues to affect her movement.

Positive Life are able to support Megan through providing a range of complementary therapies that help her cope with chronic pain, and also reduces her anxiety. She has also accessed one to one support and counselling and tells us that these have allowed her to build resilience enabling her to deal daily challenges in general, but most specifically when sharing or discussing her HIV status.

“ Facing up to many years of deep-rooted shame and trauma, reinforced by societal fear of HIV is not something I have ever been able to deal with until I found Positive Life. ”

“ I feel better knowing that there is always someone to talk to when I go to Positive Life. ”

Jeff

Jeff is in his early sixties and has been living with HIV for just over 10 years. Jeff referred himself to Positive Life at a time when he was facing challenges that triggered significant past traumatic experiences, bringing a range of unresolved issues to the fore.

He has been through a number of life crises and has a history of self-harm. Following assessment, Jeff benefitted greatly from immediately starting counselling and from intensive, daily one-to-one support. He's also accessed complementary therapy appointments to complement his counselling and work towards reducing anxiety.

Jeff has said that *"accessing Positive Life's services has literally saved (his) life"*.

“

Thank you for everything you do for me, its very greatly appreciated by the way.

”

Political Engagement & Events



Fast Track Cities Signing - April 2024



Freshers



Party Conferences - Lea Dickson and Positive Life Volunteer Charlie, with (L-R) Emma Little-Pengelly MLA, DUP; Mark H. Durkan MLA, SDLP; Robin Swann MLA, UUP and Danny Donnelly MLA, APNI.

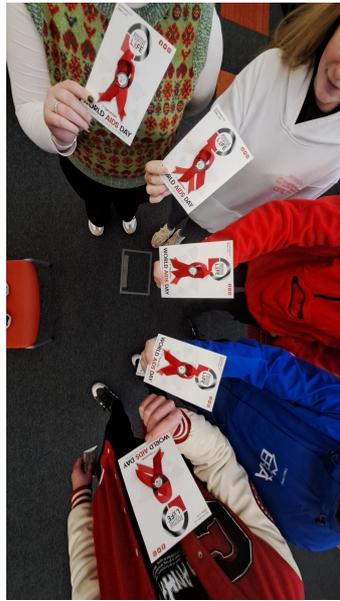


Fast Track Cities Celtic Nations Conference





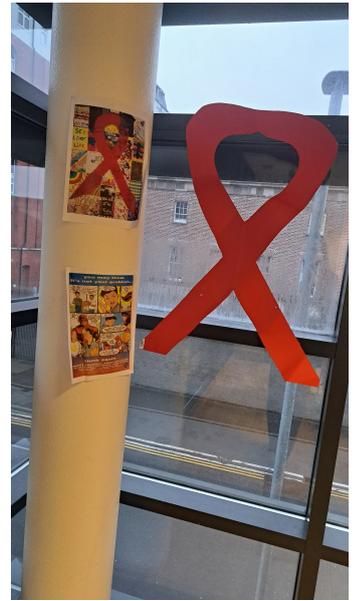
BHSCT Annual Sexual Health Conference 2024



World AIDS Day - SERC



WAD - Youth Action



WAD - Youth Action



World AIDS Day 2024 - Youth Action

Our Funders





Project supported by the PHA



Department of
Health

www.health-ni.gov.uk

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