

GAY MEN'S HEALTH
THE GUIDE
INFORMATION AND SERVICES



INTRODUCTION

Gay Men's Health (GMH) is the only Scottish organisation that delivers a community based service by gay and bisexual men for gay and bisexual men. Established in 1995, we deliver work across Scotland with offices in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

Our mission is to improve the physical, mental, emotional, social and sexual health of all gay and bisexual men. GMH consults widely and frequently with its volunteer base and the whole community,

who help steer the work we do. In this way we are able to identify new trends and health needs and can move quickly to address them.

This guide covers the range of different work we do, including details of our HIV and other STI (sexually transmitted infection) prevention work, our support services, volunteer opportunities and online initiatives, and the. As a constantly evolving organisation there's always more going on than we can list here, so please check our website or get in touch for the latest updates.

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GMH GLASGOW

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'Sex positive, gay positive' is our approach at Gay Men's Health. We believe gay and bisexual men should have a happy, healthy life and know that sex between men is something we can enjoy and feel good about. Our style is about informing without lecturing and all our materials, resources, staff and volunteers provide that information so men can make their own choices about their life.



Our website is regularly updated and has extensive information on sex, relationships, HIV and other STIs, as well as an online volunteer application form and news on all areas of GMH's work.

www.gmh.org.uk

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VOLUNTEERING

The role that volunteers play at GMH is absolutely fundamental to the work of the organisation. We welcome anyone aged 16 or over, regardless of sex, sexual orientation or gender.

"It's fun - you get to chat to lots of men in bars!"
GMH VOLUNTEER



"I feel like I'm giving something back to the community."
GMH VOLUNTEER



"I've made new friends and have been able to develop a wide range of skills."
GMH VOLUNTEER



There's a diverse range of work to be done and it's generally up to the volunteer what suits them best at an initial interview. Whether coming to the organisation with specific skills or looking to develop new ones, there are opportunities for everyone. Volunteers can take part in every aspect of GMH, from office support to working on the gay scene, here's a sample:

- Planning and running events – safer-sex theme nights, fundraising activities and volunteer recruitment nights.
- Direct one-to-one work with men on the gay scene and online.
- Delivering condoms, lubricant and promotional materials to venues.
- Developing and delivering training courses and workshops.

- Production of printed and other resources, involving writing, graphic design, photography and research.
- Developing new media outputs – videos, podcasts, animations and programming smartphone applications.
- Serving on the board of the organisation as a director.

We want volunteering to be of benefit to both the organisation and our volunteers. With a commitment to ongoing support and effective training, GMH believes volunteering should be a worthwhile and rewarding experience for all.

To find out more about volunteering and how to apply, visit www.gmh.org.uk/volunteer or contact any of our offices.



FREE CONDOMS & LUBRICANT

Hundreds of thousands of condoms and sachets of lubricant are distributed every year by GMH to venues in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. This service is at the core of what GMH does – helping to prevent HIV and other STIs amongst gay and bisexual men.

Volunteers distribute these materials on a weekly basis to over 29 venues including bars, clubs and saunas.

To find out more about where to get free condoms and lube and how to use them properly visit www.gmh.org.uk/condoms or contact one of our offices.

"Whenever I go into a gay bar or club I always make sure I pick up some condoms and lube. You never know when you might get lucky."
GAY SCENE USER



HIV & STI TESTING

Regular testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is an important part of gay and bisexual men looking after their sexual health. Through all of GMH's work we encourage men who are sexually active to have a full sexual health 'MOT' every six months, and more regularly if they are having a large number of sexual partners or are engaging in unprotected sex.

GMH works with our partner NHS Boards to increase the choice and variety of sexual health services that gay and bisexual men are able to access. We have pioneered the introduction to Scotland of sexual health testing in gay saunas and provide full sexual health screening, including a fast-test HIV with results within 30 minutes, from some of our offices.

To find out more about the range of HIV and STI testing options in your area contact one of our offices.

"I get nervous going for a test - well don't we all? Using the clinic at the GMH office made me feel more relaxed as it was a more informal setting. And getting my HIV result within half an hour meant I wasn't nervously waiting for results."
MAN GIVING FEEDBACK ON GMH TESTING OPTIONS



"It was good to see the sexual health clinic at the sauna. I hadn't had a test in a while as getting to the clinic is difficult with the hours I work. I took the opportunity to get tested there and then."
MAN GIVING FEEDBACK ON GMH TESTING OPTIONS





COUNSELLING

GMH offers individual and couple counselling to all gay and bisexual men in the NHS Lothian and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde areas.

Short and long-term counselling, depending on clients' needs, is provided by volunteer counsellors who are either Diploma qualified or students on Diploma courses. Our counsellors have a broad range of experience and are committed to ongoing personal and professional development.

Men seek help with a wide range of issues. They may be affected by current events in their life such as loss, redundancy, abuse, isolation, health issues or addictions. Or it may be more generalised anxiety built up over years as a result of prejudice; bullying; coming out issues; family relationships or abuse as a child. While some clients require a free service, others are able to make regular donations. This ensures everyone can access counselling regardless of their ability to pay. Whatever men's needs, GMH provides a safe, supportive and confidential environment.

To find out more about counselling, visit www.gmh.org.uk/counselling or contact our Edinburgh or Glasgow offices.

"I'm glad I dropped that email to GMH and you were able to give me the help I needed to get on with things. It was the first time I really expressed the pain I've been going through."

COUNSELLING CLIENT



SUPPORT

Counselling may not be what some men require but they may benefit from or need some confidential and sensitive support. GMH staff and our trained volunteers can provide support on a wide range of issues.

It could be providing support about going for a sexual health check or coming out to family and friends, discussing worries about going for an HIV test, giving advice on how to deal with being harassed by a homophobic neighbour or knowing what your rights are. Our staff and volunteers can provide and if need be sign-post to another service that is more specialised or has the expertise that the situation requires. We can also provide support accessing these other services.

Support can be given by telephone, by calling into one of our offices, by email or by going to www.gmh.org.uk/questions

"I phoned my local GMH office and arranged to drop by and have a chat about getting an HIV test. I knew I needed one but I'd built it up in my head as something that was quite intimidating. The people I spoke to at GMH told me what was involved in testing and gave me different options of where I could test. It reassured me and made me a lot less scared about going."

GMH SUPPORT CONTACT



HEALTH PROMOTION RESOURCES AND EVENTS



GMH produces varied materials in different formats as part of its health promotion work.

From a regular magazine to specific campaigns we utilise different distribution routes, including print and online, to get our messages across. GMH often works in partnership with other organisations to create these resources and continually seeks the best ways to communicate this essential information.

Resources have included GM8 magazine, a quarterly publication distributed to the scenes in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

Often resources are produced to accompany campaigns or an event. This could be a meeting of fifty people to discuss a particular issue, or an on-scene entertainment event attended by hundreds of men.

To find out more about our events and resources contact one of our offices.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the events that I've been involved in. Being able to work in a group where we are all helping each other, and supporting each other, also makes volunteering very appealing. I've also made some good friends among the other guys that are volunteering."

GMH VOLUNTEER



"The guys in the venues that we hold events in are interested in what we are doing. They are very responsive to what we do and the messages that we are trying to get across. Guys see that we are having a good time, so they want to join in too; some end up becoming volunteers themselves."

GMH VOLUNTEER



PEER EDUCATION (INFORMATION SHARING)

Much of GMH's work makes use of the process of peer education, which means simply that people with similar experiences and understandings of life and are best placed to educate and inform each other. This can happen informally through friends in social and sexual networks, and GMH also uses specially trained volunteers to carry out formal peer education outreach.

Volunteers make contact with men in a friendly and respectful manner. We use a range of methods, in a variety of settings (both on and off the commercial gay scene) including gay, bars and saunas; in chatrooms, blogs, social networking sites and on smartphone apps; at events; or through LGBT clubs and societies.

Working in supportive pairs or in larger groups, volunteers offer advice and signpost appropriate services. This can include locations for sexual health check-ups for regular HIV/STI testing, Hepatitis A and B vaccinations, health and skills workshops, where to pick up free condoms and lube and how to get involved in GMH community volunteering.

To find out how to get involved in peer education work, contact your local GMH office.

"Good to see gay and bi guys talking to other gay and bi guys about sex and testing. It's better when you can relate to the person - they know where I'm coming from."

PEER EDUCATION CONTACT



"I hadn't gone for a check-up in years. After talking with one of the GMH guys, I knew I'd rather know if I'd caught an infection or that I could be passing one on, so I arranged to get tested."

PEER EDUCATION CONTACT



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Gay Men's Health realises that some men have issues that need to be addressed alongside their sexual health needs. From time to time, we provide interventions focusing on issues such as promoting smoking cessation, promoting good mental health, and supporting men who have been the target of homophobic attacks.

For more information contact our offices.



SKILLS BUILDING WORKSHOPS

GMH facilitates a series of information sharing and skills building workshops covering a range of topics of interest to different groups of gay and bisexual men. Topics include getting the sex you want with less risk, stress management and healthy lifestyles. Some workshops are designed particularly for young gay and bisexual men and for men living with HIV.

The workshops are designed to; increase participants' confidence, make informed choices regarding sexual health and risk, increase understanding of a broad range of HIV and sexual health issues, and improve men's uptake of sexual health testing and other services.

For more information on any of these workshops contact our offices.

"I will be more thoughtful in future about making my own decisions."

SKILLS BUILDING WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT



"It was an exceptional learning experience."

SKILLS BUILDING WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT



MEN OVER 40

Primetime is an informal discussion and social group for gay and bisexual men over 40. The group has regular meetings that provide a space for men to get together to talk about things that matter to them, including housing provision, specific health topics of interest to older men, travel and holiday tips and inheritance and legal matters.

The group also organises a programme of social activities including film nights, theatre visits, day trips and parties.

New members are always welcome. For more information about the group, contact one of our offices or visit www.primetime.org.uk.

"I have been given the chance to do workshops, to listen to others in a similar position to my own, to speak openly about my life without fear of ridicule and to make new friends who support me."

PRIME TIME MEMBER



MEN LIVING WITH HIV

GMH provides direct services to gay and bisexual men living with HIV through LINK Scotland, a partnership of three agencies. Day workshops, courses and residential events provide safe and supportive environments in which men can develop personal strategies to maintain their health and wellbeing and reduce onward transmission of HIV.

LINK Scotland also facilitates peer support for gay and bi men living with HIV and seeks to reduce isolation and promote emotional wellbeing through sharing experiences. The workshops and courses are designed to empower men living with HIV by developing life skills to engage in the planning and provision of HIV services throughout Scotland.

For more information on LINK Scotland events, contact our offices.

"Great to be able to interact with others living with HIV and feel safe to talk and to ask questions"

RESIDENTIAL EVENTS PARTICIPANT



"It really helped me realise what I was looking for in a relationship and I can use this as a tool for the future"

RESIDENTIAL EVENTS PARTICIPANT



YOUNG MEN

GMH recognises the importance of involving young gay and bisexual men in the work that we do. From generic pieces of work aimed at all gay and bisexual men, to targeted work specifically for men aged 25 and under, young men can be involved at all levels of our work.

Work targeted at men under the age of 25 includes youth focused resources, peer support for young men, new media work, social networking, and working with gay and bisexual men in LGBT societies at colleges and universities.

To find out more about our young men's work, contact our offices.

GAYCON

GMH plays a key role in planning and delivering Scotland's biennial national conference on gay men's sexual health and wellbeing. The conference provides a motivational learning space for a wide range of professional workers from across Scotland and enables them to ensure that national, regional and local sexual health policy can be implemented in ways which meet the specific sexual health and well-being needs of gay and bisexual men.

For more information on GAYCON contact our offices.

"Useful update on current/emerging research being undertaken in Scotland."

GAYCON PARTICIPANT



"Useful update on current/emerging research being undertaken in Scotland."

GAYCON PARTICIPANT



TRAINING

Regular training sessions are held for staff working in commercial gay venues. The training recognises that staff in these venues can be key communicators with their customers in engaging in conversations about all aspects of sexual health and HIV.

The training includes: an introduction to GMH services, HIV prevention and treatment, safer sex and sexual risk taking, HIV and STI testing, PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) and challenging HIV stigma. We also provide training for health professionals and other groups on different aspects of gay men's sexual health and wellbeing.

For more information on these training sessions contact our offices.

"Extremely informative not only about HIV stigma / treatment but also regarding GMH and the work they do."

VENUE TRAINING PARTICIPANT



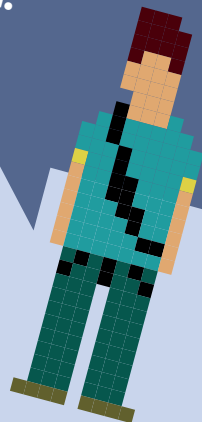
"I found the info about HIV most useful as it changed the perception I had. Nice to see I'm 27 and still have stuff to learn."

VENUE TRAINING PARTICIPANT



"As a volunteer I get a great sense of satisfaction helping to provide this service and giving something back to my community and I've also become good friends with the guys I work with."

PEER EDUCATION VOLUNTEER



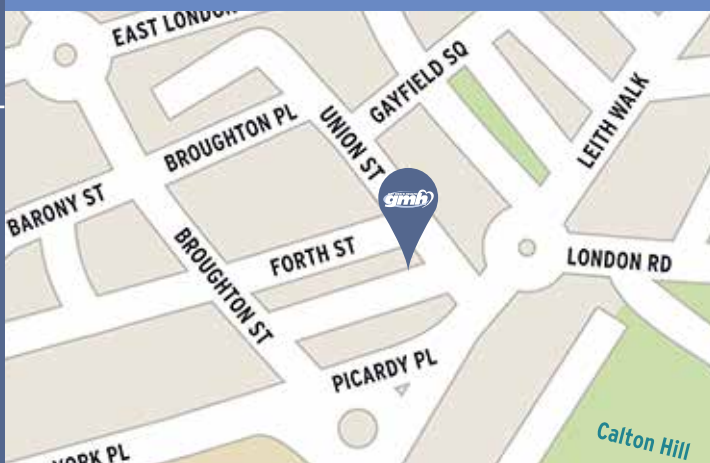
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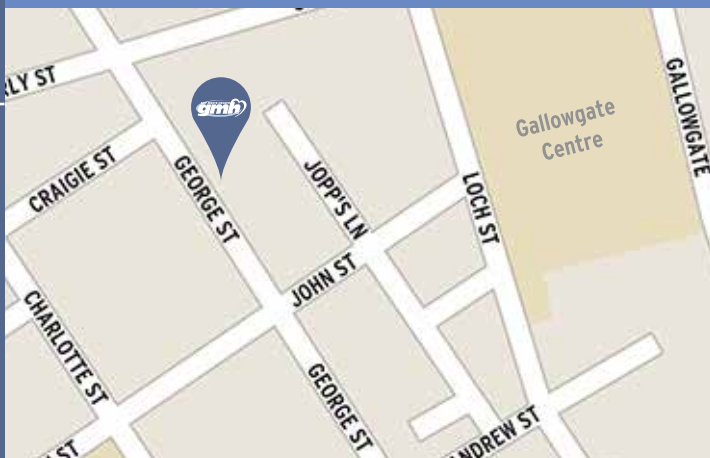
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