

GMHS15

ANNUAL REPORT 2006 / 2007



The Gay Men's Health Service (GMHS), HSE celebrated its 15th birthday in October 2007. As the last report was for 2005, this is a combined one for the years 2006 and 2007. Since the last report there has been both "good times" and "tough times", the most exciting being the name change from GMHP and realignment within the HSE. The purpose of GMHS remains as important as ever in relation to HIV and sexual health education and prevention. For instance, in 2006, the HPSC reported a 40% increase in HIV infections among MSM (men who have sex with men) with a near similar high rate 2007 when compared to 2005. (www.hpsc.ie)

The only statutory service in Ireland for gay and bisexual men, GMHS is administered by Local Health Area, Dublin South East in HSE Dublin Mid Leinster; but continues as a National Service. What follows is a short description of achievements and involvement of GMHS for 2006 & 2007.

- Updated the website www.gaymenshealthservice.ie in Dec 2007
- Publication of the Real Lives-All Ireland Gay Sex Survey Report 2006
- Continued the internet surveys 2006 and 2007 along with the Rainbow Project and Sigma Research
- Organised the 4th and 5th Annual All Ireland Gay Health Forums
- Involved in the The Irish Study Sexual Health and Relationships Report (2006)
- The Steering Committee for the HSE Mapping of LGBT Health Related Services
- The NASC Sub Committee Education and Prevention plan 2008 to 2012
- The Stamp Out Stigma Campaign Steering Committee www.stampoutstigma.ie
- Gay Health Network's publications, translations project and review
- The European Correlation Network
- Introduced a Triage service at the GMHS clinics
- Introduced TEXT (SMS) Results to clients attending the clinic
- Published in the International Social Work Journal on training for students
- Completed 29 of the Personal Development Courses for gay and bisexual men
- Collaborated in joint reports with TCD on Migrant Men and the Evaluation of the PDC Course
- Produced the first report "Men From Afar" on the cultural diversity of the men attending GMHS in 2004 and 2005
- Produced a GMHS service plan for 2008 (at www.gaymenshealthservice.ie)

SERVICE PLAN FOR 2008 / 2009

Though there are restrictions and difficulties in health provision, GMHS works to consolidate and serve according to its purpose and plan, operating from its defined budget in an innovative and flexible manner. Also, in the last number of years there has been an increase of LGBT related agencies and services such as Outhouse and BelongGTO who can deliver in some of the services in partnership with GMHS where originally they were delivered by GMHS. Apart from maintaining

critical services in the clinic and provide adequate outreach and counselling services, GMHS will continue to develop and promote ways of providing services to LGBT people. Some of these for 2008 / 2009 are as follows:

- Introduce and evaluate the HIV Rapid Testing provision for results at the time of visit to the clinic
- Increase support and partnership work with GHN, Johnny (peer action group), Belongto youth project and Outhouse amongst others.
- Publish the Real Lives report for 2005, 2006 and 2007
- Continue with the Real Lives Internet Survey in 2008
- Finalise both the HSE Mapping LGBT related services and develop a linked identity within the sector
- Complete and launch the NASC Education and Prevention Plan
- Commit to Gay Health Network review and Plans for 2008 - 2012
- Organise the 6th All Ireland Gay Health Forum
- Publish "Men From Afar" 2 with The Global Health Centre, TCD
- Produce leaflet on the clinic's operation and translate this information

Finally I want to thank all the team past and present and to David Walsh LHM and Mary Kenny, General Manager for their support and appreciation of the GMHS team. I particularly want to mention the clerical (administration) staff who are the central cog of the service provision and without whom GMHS could not operate. The GMHS team are committed in maintaining a comprehensive professional and friendly sexual health service.

GMHS CLINIC

The clinical and other services are outlined at www.gaymenshealthservice.ie

Provision of the sexual health clinic is vitally important for GMHS and the team continues to provide a friendly, confidential and professional service which is very welcomed by our clients.

Briefly in 2006 and 2007 the clinics were as busy as ever with the numbers attending similar to other years. There is a full STI screening service on Wednesdays and only blood tests and treatments on Tuesdays, the doctor's see thirty six men on Wednesdays and twenty men on Tuesdays. The introduction of Triage at first point of contact means that men with symptoms are seen and other men are requested to return or referred to other clinics. New clients attending averaged 550 per year bringing the total registration between January 1997 to December 2007 of 5 820 men.

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The introduction of the SMS results has proved has greatly appreciated welcome by the clients; who are text with the message "results ok", (and/or messages relating to follow-up for Hepatitis vaccine or blood test). For positive results, clients are advised that if a result indicates a reaction they will receive a phone call (from the health advisor) or an SMS message to attend.

DIAGNOSES

GMHS continues to diagnose nearly a third of the reported HIV cases (MSM) in Ireland. The preliminary clinical report shows that HIV diagnoses at the GMHS clinic numbered 19 in 2006 and 25 in 2007 (+32%). For other STI's Gonorrhoea cases accounted for 64 in 2006 and 89 in 2007 and Chlamydia cases were 46 in 2006 and 55 in 2007. Doctor Shay Keating will produce a full report in 2008.

REPORT IN NUMBERS:

Set out below are some facts in numbers for two years 2006 / 2007

200 Clinics	2 930 HIV Tests
1 095 New Clients	3 310 Syphilis Tests
9 530 Clients Visits	1750 Hepatitis B Blood Tests
3 672 STI Screens	1 810 Men received blood tests on completion of the hepatitis B vaccine course
16 200 Nursing Procedures	1 345 Pre Test HIV Counselling Sessions

AGE PROFILE

The combined figures for 2006 / 2007 shows that a quarter of the men attending were under 23 years of age this indicates that new clients are becoming younger.

5% were under age 20	24% under age 23
60% under age 30, (54% in 2005)	85% under age 40, (79% In 2005)
95% under age 50	99% aged under age 60+

ETHNIC AND CULTURAL PROFILES

The ethnic and cultural diversity the men attending the GMHS clinic has dramatically changed since the last "Men From Afar". In 2007 over 37% of the new attendees were born outside the Island of Ireland (representing 51 countries) with a significant number from Latin America and Eastern Europe. Further details "Men from Afar" 2 will be published by the Global Health Center TCD, and GMHS in 2008.

BORN	2004	2005	2006	2007
Island of Ireland	76%	74%	69%	63%
Abroad	24%	26%	31%	37%

Notably this increase is also reflected in the official HIV figures for MSM with 35% of the men born abroad in 2007 compared to 28% in 2006 (www.hpsc.ie) (these are not necessarily the same men attending GMHS).

OUTREACH

The Outreach was further reduced due to vacancy in 2006 and there in 2007 there was only one outreach worker / trainer based in Outhouse, (LGBT Community Centre). This services continues to be busy with individual client contacts, interventions, publications, distribution of safer sex packs, and dealing with the increased demand for training. Workshops such as "summer loving" on various topics for gay and bisexual men and the popular Personal Development Course. Outreach is also engaged in partnership work with Gay Health Network (GHN), Belongto (LGBT Youth Project) and Outhouse (LGBT Community Centre). Importantly GMHS depends greatly on our partnership outreach work with Johnny (gay peer action) who distribute the "Rubber Up" packs and information to gay commercial venues.

COUNSELLING

Due to changes and commitments the provision of counselling at the clinic was affected greatly. It was late 2007 before a new approach proved successful in providing an adequate number of counsellors. Pre-HIV test counselling is important especially for therapeutic interventions regarding risk taking. And especially to support men newly diagnosed with HIV and thereby reducing the chance of onward infection.

On the other hand the counselling service based in Outhouse stopped in 2007 due to vacancy. This service was always in great demand with many receiving ongoing, intensive psychotherapy on a range of issues. In constant demand efforts are ongoing to re-establish this critical service to LGBT people and especially for those who still remain on a waiting list.

MANAGEMENT

The work of the manager reflects the business of the project and the other demands in supervision, co-ordination, promotion, research, training, publications and partnership work. Involvement in networks such as mentioned above and both national and regional steering committees such as the National AIDS Strategy Committee, the National Knowledge Attitude Behaviour Survey (KAB) and others. The goal for 2008 and beyond is to continue managing GMHS to deliver a quality and effective service.

GAY MEN'S HEALTH SERVICE CLINIC

SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN
STI CLINIC, COUNSELLING, OUTREACH, INFORMATION, TRAINING & RESEARCH

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