



Social Support
for People Living
with HIV in the
Bradford District

01274 740 548

Funded by Bradford Social Services

What Will Happen When You Come To The Project?

The aim of the Our Project is to deliver services that are centred on the needs of the individual.

During our first contact with you there will be time and space to discuss what living with HIV means to you. At this time people will often tell us about many issues that are affecting them. This meeting gives us the opportunity to work with you to plan and prioritise how to address any areas that you would like support with. We use an assessment form so that there is less chance that things are missed during the meeting and to ensure that your needs are identified correctly.

We can support you around HIV related issues, for example, feeling isolated, diet, medication and sexual health. But we can also support you on issues that may not be directly related to your HIV status such as; housing problems, other health issues and income.

We can offer different levels of support. Some people may access support specifically during times of crisis while others access more regular support and advice. The sort of support you want is up to you.

The Our Project provides services to people affected by HIV this includes extended families and friends.

Confidentiality

In simple terms confidentiality is:

‘Not telling anyone that someone else has used a service, why or what happened, unless you have that person’s permission’. To access some services within the Our Project we will need to obtain proof of your HIV status. In order that your HIV status can be confirmed in writing by your sexual health clinic, you will need to sign a consent form to allow this exchange of information to take place.

Your personal information and details will be stored securely in a locked cabinet. The project does not disclose the HIV status of any person using the service without consent. Nor will the project disclose whether you are registered at the project without your consent. This consent can be either written or verbal.

Letters from a medical professional confirming your HIV status are often required by charities that provide grants for people living with HIV, this includes any grants that are applied for from the Our Project.

Within the initial contact meeting the Our Project’s confidentiality policy will be explained to you. You can ask the project worker any details that you are unsure of. Your preferred method for being contacted will be placed in your notes.

If you are accessing the project with your partner, the workers have a duty to respect the confidentiality of each individual person, this means that your partner will not be told the details of meetings that you attend without them, it will be your choice to decide what you tell them.

Confidentiality... continued

The Our Project's confidentiality policy is clearly on display within the meeting rooms. We cannot guarantee that the only people you will see in the building will be Our Project workers. Seeing another person at the project might mean that they work for another project or that they are accessing information. It does not mean that they are living with HIV or accessing the Our Project.

In exceptional circumstances, the project may have a legal requirement to disclose information if asked to do so by the police. If you would like certain types of information to remain unrecorded, please ask your support worker.

Grants

The 'Our' Welfare Fund and grant applications system plays an important part in offering some relief if you are living on a very low income. However, all we can ever hope to do is to offer limited, short-term financial support.

Apart from our own welfare fund we also access grants from charities such as The Children With Aids Charity, Crusaid, Vicars Relief and the Frank Buttle Trust.

Welfare Information

The Our Project can support people in obtaining the appropriate welfare support.

We acknowledge that this important area of work needs to be delivered using up to date information and we ensure that these skills are updated regularly within the staff team.

The support given around welfare and benefits can take many different forms, from telling you about other relevant agencies, to obtaining letters of support for health related welfare issues or challenging decisions that have been made in relation to welfare support.

We also have links with a range of organisations that provide specialist welfare guidance and services, for example, the Bradford Social Services Team working with people seeking asylum and refugees.

Advocacy

When we contact organisations for you or with you to make enquires, access services, make complaints and/or seek information and advice we will do so in a variety of ways:

- The information is sought together with you present so that the external organisation can gain direct permission from you and the worker then does not need to say where we are calling from.
- A letter or e-mail is written together.
- The information sought is generalized by the worker i.e. your name is not given and the circumstances are generalized. This is not effective if the enquiry needs to specifically mention your HIV status. It is not always acceptable to other services not to give the name of the organisation we are calling from e.g. “I am working with someone at the moment who is trying to find out...” Services have in the past refused to give details to the project staff unless a project/organisation name is given.
- The service/organisation is visited together.
- The project worker will have been given permission to disclose specific details during the enquiry, sometimes this has included HIV status. This method is most often used when the enquiry is urgent and people have had problems accessing the information e.g. due to illness or previously unsatisfactory outcomes.

One To One Support

Whilst most services are currently delivered from the project building, workers also meet with service users in other settings such as at home or in a social meeting space.

We will try and work out with you how best you can access support. One to one support is based around your needs. Such support is very informal and gives you the opportunity to discuss anything that you would like to talk about.

- You can request a home visit. Wherever possible, workers aim to meet this request and will take into consideration the circumstances of the individual such as dependants, travel time and cost, health and mobility.
- However, the first meeting will most often need to take place at the project building.
- You can also access one to one support by telephone. If you do the worker will offer to call you back.

Interpreters

If English is not your first language and communication levels are significantly affected, 'Our' have a list of interpreters who have shown that they can provide a confidential service in a professional and effective way. Contact the project to find out for which languages we can offer translation.

We also have a number of written materials in other languages. We can in emergency situations access Language Line or another translation service.

Please ask the project worker.

Immigration Advice and Information

Although we are not specialists in immigration advice Our Project staff do attempt to keep updated about asylum and immigration matters.

The Our Project can help you access local immigration services. In addition we keep up to date guidance from the Refugee Council on a range of issues which are clearly on display. We can help people with many different issues concerning asylum, for example, helping support Section 4 applications by obtaining all the relevant support letters from health professionals.

We also regularly access new information in relation to asylum and immigration matters.

The Our Project has previously helped service users to get welfare support reinstated when it had previously stopped.

Supporting Treatment Choices

Many of our service users are at very different stages of their HIV treatment options. The most common scenarios are listed below:

- Not requiring any treatment in relation to their HIV infection at present,
- Treatment has been recommended but the service user has chosen not to go onto treatment at present,
- Treatment is working well with no or little side effects,
- Treatment is working well but there are side effects,
- Treatment is not working at optimal levels,
- Temporarily taking treatments during pregnancy.

Most doctors work very closely with people in order that a positive state of well-being is obtained. This often means that your physical health (often measured by CD4 and viral load counts) is viewed in balance with your emotional well-being; for example, the doctor will not insist that you go onto medication if you do not want to. At the Our Project we will support your choices in relation to HIV treatments.

We also offer a wide range of written resources, for example: A Rough Guide to HIV, Sex and Relationships for Gay Men, African Women and Combination Therapy, African Men and Combination Therapy, Thinking about Pregnancy....

The 'OUR' Counselling Service

We can offer the following free services for people living with HIV in the Bradford District:

- Short term individual counselling,
- Short term individual counselling for partners,
- Couples counselling.

We also have information about counselling services locally that provide longer term counselling or specialised help (for instance with drug or alcohol problems).

Counselling may be useful if you are:

- Struggling to cope with your HIV status or the impact that living with HIV is having on your life,
- Wondering why, when, or how to tell people about your HIV status,
- Having problems in a relationship,
- Suffering because of your own or other people's attitudes to HIV,
- Feeling that you are not looking after yourself properly,
- Not feeling confident enough to negotiate the kinds of relationships you want,
- Having sexual problems,
- Coping with loss or bereavement,

Or if you have:

- Suffered torture or persecution,
- Experienced sexual or physical violence,

Counsellors are trained to listen and to help you clarify what is going on for you and what steps you personally need to take to improve your situation.

Counsellors will not advise you, be critical of you, or tell you what to do. They will respect you, your culture and values and your own special skills and abilities.

They will also respect your privacy and your right to live the life you choose.

Some advantages of finding a counsellor through the Our Project are:

- All Our Project counsellors are experienced, qualified counselling professionals,
- All Our Project counsellors have a good understanding of specific issues relating to living with HIV.

Complementary Therapies

The Our Project can help you access and fund a range of complementary therapies including acupuncture, reiki and massage. We can suggest a particular therapist or you can find your own, if you prefer.

A therapist must hold a recognised qualification and provide a copy of their Insurance.

The treatments may be provided within the 'Our' building or sometimes the therapist may be able to visit people at home. However, some therapists only work from their own treatment rooms.

People accessing the service, who are living with an HIV positive diagnosis can access up to 10 sessions per year.

This support is only free to people on low incomes. Please ask a project worker for further details.

Other Health Support Services

If you wish to access other health support services such as a gym you can apply for a contribution to provide this service. The payment for this can only be made directly to the gym or other registered business. This option is instead of, rather than as well as, complementary therapies. In this way people who use the service get a choice about their health support services.

The Our Project will also need to consider whether the rate for the service that you would like to access is competitively priced, so we will compare prices and services offered.

Alternatively, people who use the Our Project services have access to a free gym, which operates during the day from the Bridge Project near Foster Square train station.

The budget from which complementary therapies and additional health support services are paid is a restricted budget and may change at any time, as may the conditions for granting them.

This support is only available to people on low incomes. Please ask a project worker for further details.

Group Support

The Our Project recognises the importance of group support. The Our Project sometimes visit Begin (HIV support project in Wakefield) and The Brunswick Centre (HIV support in Kirklees and Calderdale) so that service users get the opportunity to access other groups. This gives people who use the service more choice in the groups that they attend.

The project has a weekly drop-in on a Thursday and supports other groups. Please ask a project worker for the latest group information.

Training

The Our Project recognises that we will never be able to provide every service that people using the project need. For this reason we include training as part of work, so that other services who may not regularly work with issues relating to HIV can obtain skills and knowledge in relation to HIV.

This training is free to community groups but a small charge is applied to other organisations.

The project fits training around the other services that are provided by the project, this means that dates will need to be negotiated with adequate advance notice.

Other Useful Services & Telephone Numbers

National Sexual Health Advice Line	0800 567123
African Aids Helpline	0800 0967500
Sexual Health Clinic, Trinity Rd, Bradford & CASH (Contraceptive And Sexual Health Clinics — Appointments and advice)	0845 0020021
Centre for Sexual Health LGI, Leeds	
Male Appointments	0113 3926724
Female Appointments	0113 3926725
Stop Hate Helpline	0800 133 1625
Bevan House Homelessness & Asylum Support Team	01274 227555
Bradford Royal Infirmary	01274 542200
St Lukes Hospital	01274 734744
Rape Crisis	01274 308270
Red Cross Bradford	01274 223293
Refugee Council Leeds	0113 3862210
Bradford Action for Refugees	01274 223240
Samaritans	01274 547547
Salvation Army	01274 731221
Bridge Project (Drugs Advice)	01274 723863
Piccadilly Project (Drugs & Alcohol Advice)	01274 735775
NHS Direct (Health Advice)	0845 46 47
Social Services (Children's Team)	01274 437500
Social Services (Adults Team)	01274 431704
Bradford Day Shelter	01274 393234
CONTACT Disabilities support run by Disabled people	01274 494121
CHAS housing aid (furniture for people on low incomes)	01274 731909

Notes



Our Project
PO Box 267
Bradford BD1 5XT

01274 740548

Email: our@mesmac.co.uk

www.mesmac.co.uk/our

for a large print version please contact us:

0113 244 4209 admin@mesmac.co.uk

Our is part of the Yorkshire MESMAC group of services

Registered Charity 1040407

Limited Company 2958336

Registered address 60 Upper Basinghall Street Leeds, LS1 5HR

February 2008