

## Success Stories Profile

### Renaissance at Drugline, Charity Organisation, Lancashire

#### HIV in Lancashire, United Kingdom

Overall, the number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the UK continues to increase and the number of people living with undiagnosed HIV remains high.<sup>1</sup> In 2014, an estimated 18,100 (17%) of PLHIV were unaware of their infection and were at risk of unknowingly transmitting it onto others.<sup>1</sup> In the UK, HIV prevalence is largely concentrated among men who have sex with men (MSM) however, testing coverage was reportedly highest amongst this group. The ongoing high rate of HIV transmission among MSMs, emphasises the need for high impact, targeted combination prevention strategies and programmes.

The prevalence of diagnosed HIV in Lancashire is significantly lower than the average of England; however the uptake of testing across all groups is significantly worse than the average of England.<sup>2</sup> In order to get more people tested, the charity-based organisation, Renaissance in Lancashire, participated in European HIV-Hepatitis Testing Week 2015 (ETW 2015) and had great success.

#### Testing Week 2015

Renaissance is a UK charity working in the North West of England. Based across Lancashire, Renaissance amongst other things, provides HIV and hepatitis C support through the Blackpool HORIZON Partnership and HIV support, with Healthier Living in Lancashire and Blackburn in the Darwen district. Renaissance at Drugline Lancashire works hard every day to provide services for substance misuse and sexual health services throughout Lancashire and Blackpool. During ETW 2015, they raised the bar to get people tested and launched numerous activities that promoted testing awareness and services.

Renaissance at Drugline Lancashire organised **four** different events and activities for ETW 2015 and had achieved great success. The events included:

1. Pop-up testing events across the county offering Rapid HIV testing (RDTs)
2. In-house drop-in testing sessions for HIV, hepatitis B & C
3. A wide-reaching social media campaign
4. Promotional activities with local celebrities

Throughout ETW 2015, pop-up testing events were held all over Lancashire at local libraries and universities. This added convenience helped people to access and promote HIV testing, as well as the other services that are provided in-house at Renaissance. In addition, Renaissance also held drop-in testing for hepatitis B & C.



Workers and volunteers from Renaissance promoting their #JustALittlePrik campaign for European HIV-Hepatitis Testing Week 2015.

Renaissance's biggest success of ETW 2015 was their wide-reaching social media campaign, launched on Twitter and Facebook. Keeping in line with the UK's National HIV testing week and ETW, they came up with a clever campaign with use of the hashtag #JustALittlePrik for all of their testing week activities. The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness of the simplicity of HIV and Hepatitis screening and that it is "Just a Little Prik." They had great success with the #JustALittlePrik tagline with local organisations, businesses and even local celebrities getting involved!



The cast of Funny Girls "Inbetween" show in Blackpool participated in the #JustALittlePrik promotional activities and even got tested themselves. In addition, English actress and singer, Jodie Prenger, best known as the winner of the BBC television series 'I'd Do Anything', also partook in the #JustALittlePrik campaign and showed off her use of rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs).



*Pictured Left: Bonnie La Blue posing with a promotional #JustALittlePrik photo frame.*

*Pictured Right: Actress and singer, Jodie Prenger, promoting #JustALittlePrik.*

Organisers at Renaissance were delighted to be a part of European HIV-Hepatitis Testing Week. Although they have always and will continue to be involved in the UK's National HIV testing week, they felt great pride to stand with their European cousins to unite and increase awareness, as well as reduce stigma surrounding HIV and Hepatitis, across the continent.

### Looking Ahead

With the success of combining European HIV-Hepatitis week and the UK National HIV testing week, Renaissance at Drugline Lancashire plan to again fill the week of the 18 – 25 November 2016 (ETW 2016) with lots of HIV testing activities. The public response was very positive in 2015 and they expect to have another great week in 2016.

**The exhaustive efforts made by all of the hard-working employees and volunteers at Renaissance demonstrate that when communities band together, they can make an impactful response to the HIV epidemic.**

<sup>1</sup> Skingsley A. et al. HIV in the UK – Situation report 2015: data to end 2014. November 2015. Public Health England, London.

<sup>2</sup> Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Lancashire: Lancashire County Council. 2015 (<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/Lancashire-insight/health-and-care/infectious-disease/human-immunodeficiency-virus-hiv.aspx>, accessed 23 September 2016).