

1992

2017

GMHS  
**25**  
YEARS



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive



Celebrating 25 Years of  
The Gay Men's Health Service



## History of GMHS

The Gay Men's Health Service (GMHS) opened its first clinic on 6th October 1992: 25 years ago this year. In that time the service has facilitated over 100,000 visits from gay and bisexual men, men who have sex with men (MSM) and trans people for STI testing, prevention, diagnosis and treatment and HIV testing, prevention, diagnosis and onward referral. This service bravely opened its doors 9 months before decriminalisation of homosexuality by the Irish Government. Established as the Gay Men's Health Project (GMHP), a statutory service of the Eastern Health Board (EHB), it was the first dedicated service for MSM in Ireland and also one of the world's first. 25 years later it remains the only national statutory public health service for MSM, now funded by HSE CHO Area 6.



Established in 1992, Gay Men's Health Project changed to Gay Men's Health Service in 2006.

## Background to GMHS

In 1989, in response to an increase in HIV/AIDS and heroin use, the EHB set up the AIDS Resource Centre (ARC) to provide methadone maintenance treatment, needle exchange and outreach HIV prevention services for people who inject drugs (PWID).

A HIV testing only drop-in centre was also opened for the general public. This service was also used by many gay and bisexual men. In late 1991 two outreach workers (Mick Quinlan and David Wyse) from the Drugs/AIDS services carried out a survey in gay bars, clubs and saunas on the sexual and HIV risk behaviour of gay and bisexual men in Dublin. As a result of the findings from the 481 respondents the EHB established the GMHP.

There were concerns at the time that the name of the project might discourage some men from attending the service. However those closely involved with the project felt that its name was a clear statement of what the service was about and would serve to empower those using the service and the larger LGBT community.

Initially the service ran one night weekly. This quickly increased due to demand and its popularity among service users. GMHS was developed and managed by Mick Quinlan for over 23 years. Mick's pioneering work, commitment and vision were vital components to the success of the project.

### 1992

Gay Men's Health Project is established by Eastern Health Board (EHB).

### 1994

GMHP organised community meetings addressing the need for an LGBT community centre leading to the establishment of Outhouse.

GMHP initiated a community meeting on violence which lead to the first ever appointment of a Garda Liaison Officer for the gay community.

### 1996

Involvement with GCN and In Sight publication World Aids Day.

### 1997

GMHP and EHB launch the first ever study in Ireland on Males in Prostitution.

### 1998

GMHP is country coordinator for European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP)

### 1999

Two outreach workers appointed to GMHP with another two added in 2001 due to workload demands.

GMHP involvement in the founding of Irish and European networks Males in prostitution Forums.

GMHP set up and support of peer action group, 'Johnny'  
Joint Sauna project with Gay HIV Strategies.

### 2000

GHN & Sigma survey of 1,500 men *Vital Statistics Ireland*

GMHP outreach staff and coordinator involved in commissioning a report on service needs and provision for males in prostitution entitled, *Such a Taboo*.

### 2001

Full time counsellor appointed, providing support and therapeutic intervention regarding risk taking.

Syphilis Outbreak control team set up (ERHA) in 2000 / 2001. The first on-site testing at gay pubs, clubs and saunas takes place with 896 men tested.

Outreach workers conduct a Syphilis Awareness, Knowledge & Action (SAKA) survey of 874 MSM.

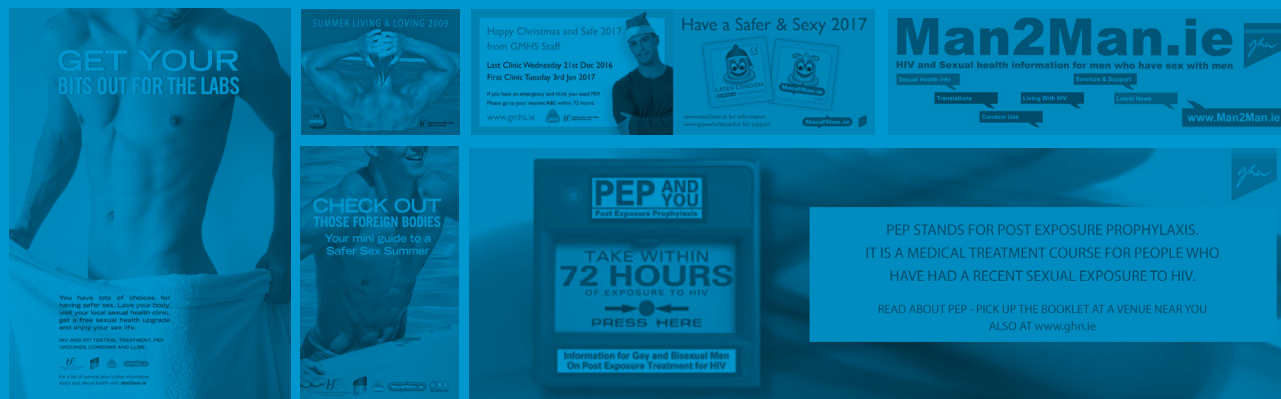
### 2002 - 2003

GMHP launch personal development courses.

First ever Gay Health Forum is held in Dublin, entitled, "Viva La Difference."

GMHP set up an outreach team directly supported and advocated for immigrant gay and bisexual men.

GMHP launch new website [gaymenhealthproject.ie](http://gaymenhealthproject.ie)



## Services at GMHS

GMHS currently provides free HIV & STI testing clinics three days a week. GMHS Monday clinic is a nurse led, HIV & STI testing service for routine asymptomatic screening and a rapid HIV test. Tuesday's and Wednesday's clinics provide a comprehensive HIV & STI testing, treatment and prevention service for gay and bisexual men, MSM and trans people who have symptoms or concerns. The presence of a medical scientist for on-site laboratory testing during clinic times allows a rapid presumptive diagnosis and facilitates immediate treatment. Service users can also avail of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and vaccinations for Hepatitis A & B. In 2017, a vaccination program for HPV was introduced for MSM under the age of 26.

Over the past two decades GMHS has launched several outreach initiatives. Peer to peer outreach forms a vital link between MSM and related services, especially in areas of sexual health, HIV, STIs, drugs and alcohol, PEP and Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).

In 2016, an outreach pilot programme was introduced to deliver peer led HIV and STI education and prevention in community settings such as bars, clubs, saunas and Outhouse LGBT community centre. The team also provides online outreach through social media apps and forge relationships with sub-populations and traditionally hard to reach vulnerable groups. This innovative work has encouraged a number of people, who may not have done so in the past, to access services. HSE Health and Wellbeing have funded this service.

Counselling at GMHS was originally setup in the late nineties to support clients attending the clinic during the HIV/AIDS crisis. Demand for this service demonstrated the need to expand counselling for those who presented difficulties around their sexuality or issues about their sexual identity. This extended counselling service is provided at the Outhouse LGBT community centre.

### 2005 - 2006

Gay Men's Health Project changed its name to Gay Men's Health Service.

*Real lives 2:* An all-Ireland MSM internet survey carried out.

Introduction of SMS results and appointment reminders.

### 2007 - 2008

*Real lives 3:* An all-Ireland MSM internet survey was carried out.

### 2009

A national Syphilis Awareness Campaign (Syph-Test and Syph-Action) was launched by GMHS, Rainbow Project and GHN to promote awareness of syphilis and to encourage testing.

### 2010

Produced the Poppers Card and 4 Steps to Immunity information card.

Launch of EMIS the European MSM internet survey - GMHS manager was country co-ordinator for Ireland.

### 2011 - 2013

GMHS member of advisory committee for; *Visible Lives* a research project to explore the lives and experiences of LGBT people over 55. Commissioned by GLEN

Involvement in production of *Love Bugs* - STI information campaign.

### 2014 - 2015

Launch of, Man2Man.ie The 1st National HIV Prevention & Sexual Health awareness programme for MSM.

Involvement in *Laid Bare* - STI information campaign.

Published MSM Internet Survey Ireland (MISI)

### 2016

Involvement in HIV+ Sex Booklet.

GMHS manager retires, new manager appointed.

Involvement in ChemSex information, training and research.

Introduction of a nurse led, asymptomatic STI testing clinic on Monday.

Introduction of 4th Generation Rapid HIV test.

Two community outreach workers appointed part-time to GMHS.

### 2017

Introduction of vaccination for HPV for MSM under 26.

# SAFER SEXY PRIDE 2014 - WITH CONDOMS



Get your Condoms, Lube and Sexual Health Information at the Man2Man Stall Pride Village

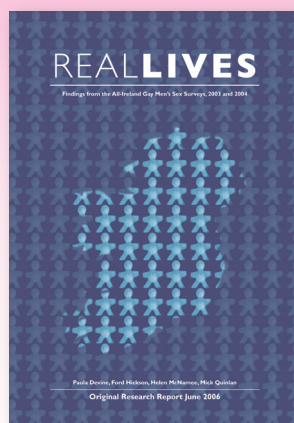
HIV & Sexual Health Promotion brought to you by:



## GMHS Research and Forum

Since 1992 there have been several specific research surveys related to gay, bisexual and MSM in Ireland. These surveys evaluate the sexual health, behaviour and knowledge of MSM. Results from these studies have been instrumental in helping to inform planning and development of sexual health services for this cohort.

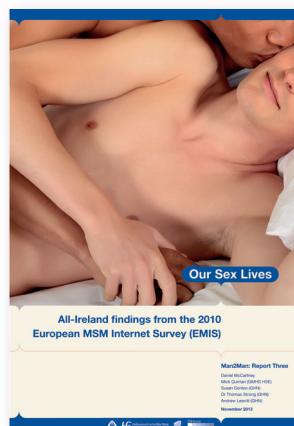
Since 2003 the GMHS and the Gay Health Network (GHN) have organised the annual Gay Health Forum (GHF). The forum is supported and funded by the Department of Health and the HSE. The forum provides an outlet for attendees to learn and share knowledge, experience, research and skills, in addition to it being an important networking opportunity.



Real Lives Report - 2006



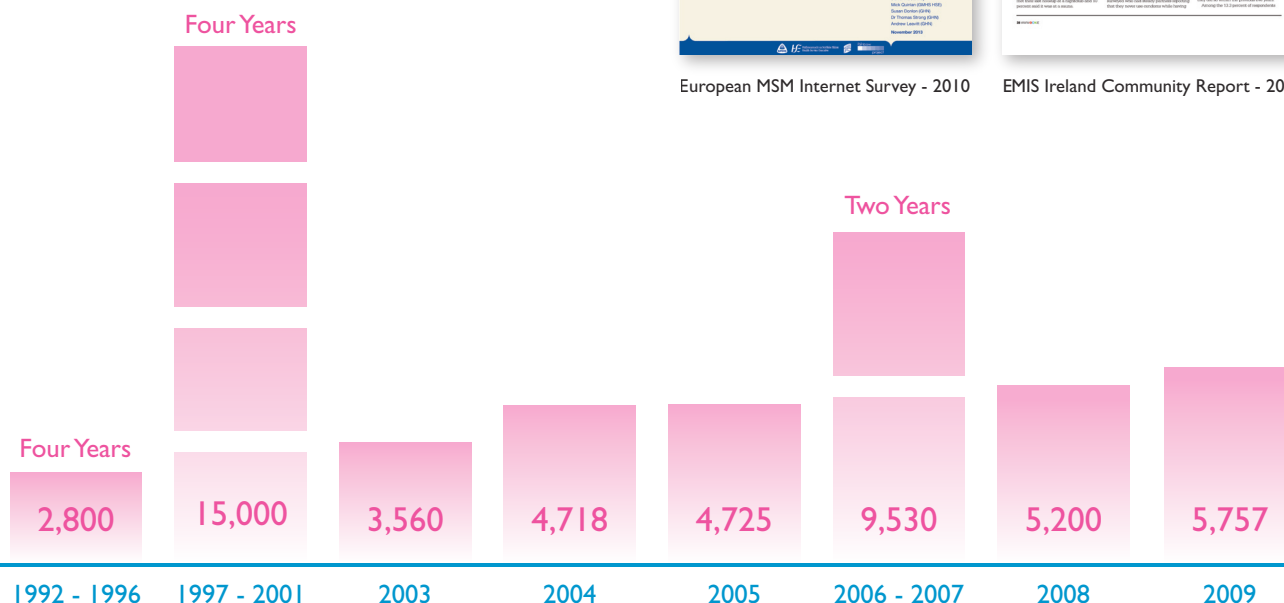
Infographic from MISI Report - 2015



European MSM Internet Survey - 2010



EMIS Ireland Community Report - 2010



*Syphilis is a common STI among men who have sex with men.*

*Get tested: free tests for Syphilis and other STIs are available at:*

GMHS STI Clinic  
 Baggot St. Hospital, Dublin 4. [www.gmhs.ie](http://www.gmhs.ie)  
 Walk-in Tues & Weds - Open 5pm to 6.30pm  
 Tel: 01 6699 553 SMS 087 9410 934  
 Your nearest STI/GUM clinic  
 See [www.Man2Man.ie](http://www.Man2Man.ie) for a list.

*Only some men get symptoms.*

*For More Information:*

[www.Man2Man.ie](http://www.Man2Man.ie)  
 STIs and HIV information in Arabic, English, French, Irish, Mandarin, Portuguese, Polish, Spanish & Russian.  
 Gay Switchboard Ireland 01 872 1055  
 Confidential support & information, 7 days a week.  
 Pick up an info card at a social venue or Outhouse.

Have you tested?  
 Sexual Health Information for men who have sex with men.

## Working at GMHS

The GMHS team is made up of a multidisciplinary team of the manager, doctors, nurses, care assistants, outreach workers, psychotherapists, health advisors, medical scientists, community advocates, administration and security staff. Our team strives to deliver and maintain the highest standard of sexual health and wellbeing for the community it serves.

25 years of the service has taught us the importance of building trust and creating a collaborative approach in order to enhance service delivery. GMHS strives to understand the needs of our service users and so works in collaboration with the community to improve sexual health and wellbeing.

The work of the GMHS team is underpinned by the values of community, trust, non-judgement, compassion and professionalism.

## Partnerships with GMHS

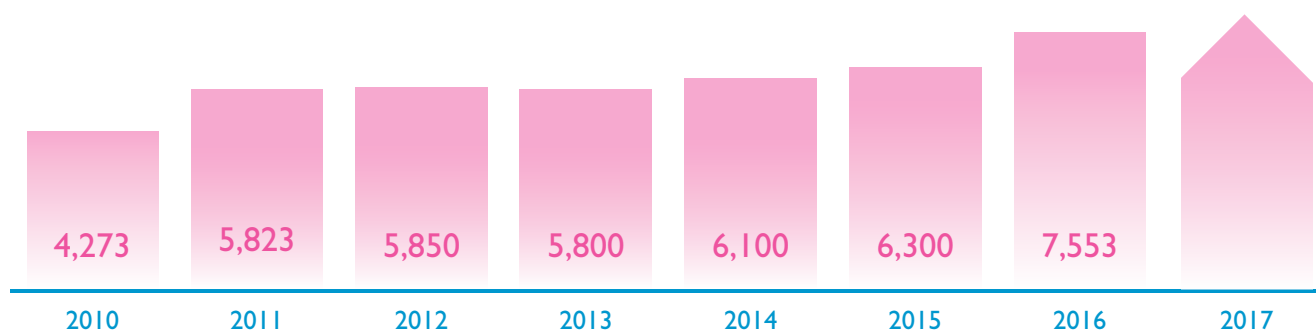
Since its inception, GMHS has understood the value of partnerships with state agencies, non-governmental organisations and community groups. Working together on joint projects can make frontline activities more effective.

GMHS has a strong working relationship with the HSE Sexual Health & Crisis Pregnancy Programme and works closely with this office to help achieve the goals of the National Sexual Health Strategy. HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre, Health and Wellbeing and the Department of Public Health are close allies to GMHS in responding to trends in HIV & STIs and developing innovative approaches to testing and treatment.

Gay Health Network (GHN) is the expert network of organisations and individuals in Ireland providing the national response to HIV and STIs including the promotion of HIV prevention, sexual health and wellbeing for MSM. Founded in 1994, GHN has continually provided peer-led and peer-engaged activities and actions, and produced much of the promotion material aimed at MSM in Ireland and has also initiated and led on key research. The GMHS works closely with the GHN and values this partnership.

**100,327**  
 MSM clients

From 1992 to 2017  
 Gay Men's Health Service  
 has delivered sexual health  
 services to over 100,000  
 people.





# Your Free Safer Sex Pack...



Available from:  
Outhouse LGBT Community Centre, 105 Capel St., D1. [www.outhouse.ie](http://www.outhouse.ie)  
The GMHS STI Clinic, Baggot St Hospital, D4. [www.gmhs.ie](http://www.gmhs.ie)  
Free samples or low cost bulk packs online [www.Man2Man.ie](http://www.Man2Man.ie)

## ...Pick it up!

The safer Sex Pack (condom and lubricant) are supplied by GMHS for men who have sex with men (MSM).   Referenced to Outhouse LGBT Community Centre

## Future of GMHS

Over the last 25 years, gay and bisexual men, MSM and trans people have been recognised as a key population for HIV & STI testing, treatment, prevention, sexual health awareness and wellbeing services. GMHS has played a key role in delivering HIV & STI testing, treatments, prevention, vaccinations and ongoing support for this target group.

The trends in STIs indicate that services will need further expansion to address this critical public health issue. To ensure that the GMHS can deliver an appropriate response it will need a fit-for-purpose building, computerisation of medical records, extension of peer-led outreach programme, closer links with allied services such as HSE addiction and the expansion of services and treatments including the introduction of Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).

Essential to increasing knowledge and information gathering is the development of a dedicated research component within the service.

## Community and GMHS

The engagement and involvement of service users in the GMHS has been critical to its ongoing success. The project has always been supported by the men using the service and by the greater community. Collaboration between service users, the multi-disciplinary team and HSE management has been fundamental to the success and improvement of the service.

The GMHS would like to acknowledge and thank our service users for their support over the 25 years. We would in particular like to remember those who have died in the intervening years. Their memories endure and their contributions are not forgotten.

Gay Community News November 1992

# Drop-in Clinic Opens

It has been true in the past and continues to be true that the needs of the gay community where HIV and AIDS are concerned are not being met. The history of the HIV virus has been very different in the gay community than in the other groups at risk in Ireland. Gay men were the first to die with AIDS in this country in the early 80's and were the first to make an effort to inform and educate people to the dangers HIV posed, with no help from Government or the Dept of Health.

Now, ten years after the onset of the HIV epidemic it is being recognised that the needs of gay and

bisexual men deserve special treatment. Every Tuesday evening from 7.30p.m. to 9.30p.m. a drop-in clinic for gay and bisexual men only operates free of charge at the Aids Resource Centre, Haddington Road, Dublin. The clinic is designed to meet the needs of gay men around HIV and other STD's. At the clinic HIV testing is offered with free and fast test counselling. There is support and advice for men with HIV from gay counsellors. The clinic also offers full STD screening and Hepatitis B testing and vaccinations for some where appropriate.

The clinic is run in an informal and friendly manner, with tea and coffee

offered on arrival, where you will see one of the two gay counsellors who will talk over with you what you need and want from the clinic. Later you will see the doctor where all appropriate tests will be taken. If necessary you may talk to your counsellor before leaving, and a date will be given for your return visit for the test results.

My experience of this clinic was very positive and I have no hesitation in recommending a visit to it for sexually active gay and bisexual men. My hope is that this clinic will continue and that gay men will use it to make our sex lives safer.

**Patrick Reeves**

# Gay Men's Health Service

## STI Checkpoint at Baggot Street Hospital

Free STI screening service for all gay, bisexual, men who have sex with men (MSM) and trans people.

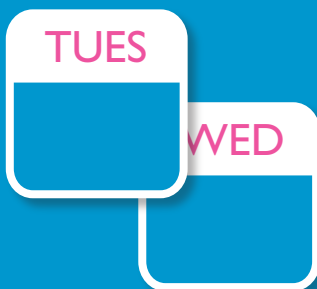


### Monday Clinic (Drop in)

This is an asymptomatic clinic service for men who have sex with men. If you have no symptoms but would like a routine sexual health check-up.

- Rapid HIV test (results while you wait)
- Nurse led STI screening (No Doctor at this clinic)

Clinic opens at **2pm** (Places are limited)



### Tuesday & Wednesday Clinic (Walk in)

This is a full STI screening clinic for men who have sex with men.

- Full STI screening
- Doctor present
- Treatments available
- Vaccinations for Hepatitis A, B and HPV
- Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) available

Clinic opens at **4pm** (Places are limited)



**GMHS Clinic**, Baggot Street Hospital,  
18 Upper Baggot Street, Dublin 4.

Tel: + 353 | 669 9553

SMS: 087 941 0934

E: [gmhsclinic@hse.ie](mailto:gmhsclinic@hse.ie)



**GAY MEN'S  
HEALTH SERVICE**