

HIV Testing

What's New

No new changes

Background - Why it's important to test for HIV

HIV is a treatable medical condition and the majority of those living with the virus remain fit and well on treatment.

People with HIV who are unaware of their infection continue to have risk to their own health and of unknowingly transmitting HIV to others.

Late diagnosis is the most important factor associated with HIV-related morbidity and mortality in the UK.

Current BASHH guidelines recommend that all patients attending sexual health or TOPAR services should be offered an HIV test.

Who should test for HIV

All patients attending Sandyford should be given information on the availability of having a sexual health screening inclusive of an HIV test.

If there is no opportunity to test at the initial consultation, a further appointment should be offered. This is particularly important if the patient indicates a higher risk of HIV transmission. The offer and the outcome of the discussion should be documented in the patient's notes.

When a test for HIV is declined, this should be documented in the client's notes, with the underlying reason if given.

When should an HIV test be obtained

All patients attending Sandyford for a sexual health screen should be tested at their appointment.

It is good practice to document the date of last sexual exposure and any significant risk since the last negative HIV result.

Patients should be informed of the window period. This is the time after infection during which the antibody response cannot be detected by the test. It is important to establish whether the person being tested could be in the window period. If they are, and do not already attend for regular sexual health screening a further appointment should be arranged or a recall added to NaSH for a text reminder to repeat the HIV test (see appendix 1).

HIV CEG June 2021 Page 1 of 4



HIV Window Period Guidance

Blood samples sent to the virus laboratory for testing are tested by a fourth generation test. Latest guidance advises that the window period for this test is 45 days.

Other types of HIV test such as point of care may have longer window periods, the clinician must check the manufacturers guidance for the specific test chosen.

Point of Care HIV test

A point of care (POC) test involves using a fingerprick sample to achieve an HIV result within minutes.

An INSTI POC test can be used when clinically indicated, for instance as a guideline for safe starting PrEP or when venepuncture isn't possible.

POC tests should only be used for patients who indicate a transmission risk from a population with a higher HIV prevalence for example, MSM, PWID or contact of someone known to be HIV positive.

Due to the lower specificity of POC tests and the resulting poorer positive predictive value there is a risk of false positive results, particularly in lower prevalence groups. Reactive POC tests should always be confirmed by a fourth generation test.

A POC test should not be used to confirm reactive HIV results from tests ordered online or via another agency.

Only staff who have attended training should perform the test. A list of Sandyford nursing staff who have attended Pasante INSTI test training can be found in Appendix 2.

Dried Blood Spot (DBS) Tests

Dried blood spot testing (DBS) is a form of biosampling where samples are obtained from a finger-prick and are blotted and dried on filter paper. DBS tests are useful for individuals with poor venous access and can be used to test for Hepatitis B virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C virus (HCV) as well as HIV. DBS sample kits, lab request forms and clear instructions for using the test can be found in the Staff Base at Sandyford Central and should also be available at Hubs/connects.

Instructions for using the test and obtaining results in NHS GGC can be found here: https://www.nhsqgc.org.uk/media/256162/dbs-testing-instruction-sheet-for-users.pdf

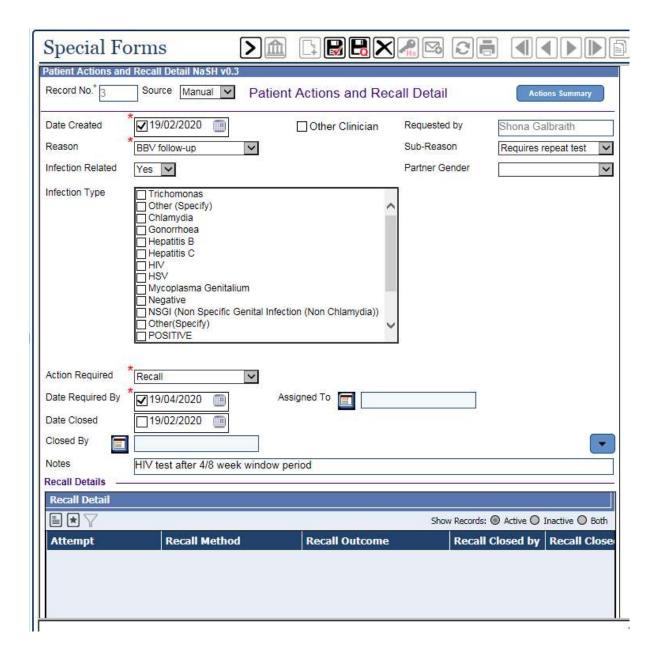
References

BASHH/ BHIVA/ BIA Adult HIV Testing Guidance 2020 https://www.bashhguidelines.org/media/1246/hiv-testing-2020.pdf accessed 07/12/2020

HIV CEG June 2021 Page 2 of 4



Appendix 1



HIV CEG June 2021 Page 3 of 4



Appendix II

Staff who have attended INSTI poc test training

Janice Abrami Christine Baume
Kristie Bell Caroline Donnelly

Sheena Forsyth Shona Galbraith

Batool Hasan Ian Lowry

Lesley Maxwell Karen MacLaren
Ashley Milrine Fiona Mollison
Louise Moultrie Martin Murchie
Deborah Potter Deborah Reilly

Sarah Reilly Val Smith

Yvonne Stanway Emma Thomson
Hayley Tomkinson Fiona Tweed
Pauline Ward Lisa Woodrow

Moira Young

HIV CEG June 2021 Page 4 of 4