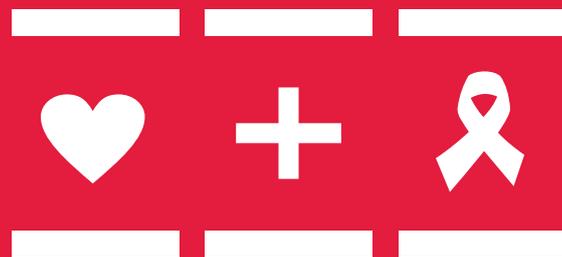


GEORGE  
HOUSE  TRUST  
HIV POSITIVE LIVING



ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14





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GEORGE  
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## GHT'S VISION

GHT's vision is for all people living with HIV in the North West to live happy and healthy lives, and be free from stigma and discrimination.

GHT's vision is for all people to know their HIV status and to be HIV aware.



[www.ght.org.uk](http://www.ght.org.uk)



## A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR & JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVES

The past year has been a positive one for George House Trust (GHT), and better than we anticipated at this time last year.

GHT successfully survived the major NHS restructuring exercise, which took place in April 2013. At that point, responsibility for funding and commissioning HIV support services transferred from the NHS to the newly formed Public Health Departments in the ten local authorities across Greater Manchester. We survived this transition, and this has given us a stronger sense of security. GHT is now the Public Health Commissioners' preferred provider of support services to adults living with HIV across Greater Manchester.

A new referral pathway has been established to encourage HIV clinicians and specialist nurses to refer every newly diagnosed person to GHT, so that everyone has an awareness of our services and the opportunity to use them if they need to. This means that the partnership between GHT and our colleagues in local clinics and hospitals is stronger than ever.

Our desire to be a genuinely service user led charity is a step nearer. We have appointed the first Service User Representatives, who have responsibility for undertaking peer reviews of our services to be fed back directly to the Chair and Joint Chief Executives. This in turn will inform how services are delivered and developed in the future.

Our focus on peer support services has continued. Following on from the success of the African peer support service, we have developed a new peer support service for positive young gay men and positive gay men in employment; our being+ service. We will shortly be launching a new peer support service for people aged 50+ who are ageing with HIV. None of this would be possible without our peer support volunteers.

Volunteers are central to our work and in 2013-2014 they gave 8,365 volunteering hours to GHT, boosting our capacity by over 35%, which is a huge contribution to supporting people living with HIV.

Our Ambassadors also deserve a special mention. They come from a broad range of backgrounds and bring a wealth of expertise. Their role is to help GHT achieve its goals, and they do so in many ways, often working quietly behind the scenes. They are motivated to use their skills and knowledge to benefit GHT because they believe absolutely in what we are trying to achieve for people living with HIV in the North West.



## DID YOU KNOW?

We supported  
1,966 people  
living with HIV



There were 171 peer support interactions

814 people accessed  
group spaces

We supported  
458 people  
over the age  
of 50

1,131 food  
parcels were  
distributed

135 volunteers  
delivered 8,618  
hours of  
vital support

We delivered 21  
Positive Speaker  
sessions to  
approximately 835  
people across  
Greater Manchester



584 service users  
benefited from  
our Welfare Fund

We provided 1,586 1:1  
service adviser appointments



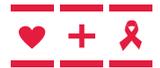
36.5% of this  
support came from  
GHT's Welfare  
Fund

£££

We managed  
over £48,000 worth  
of debt for  
service users

38  
community  
fundraising  
events  
were held  
in aid  
of GHT

A staggering  
£151,595 was  
given to GHT  
service users to  
tackle financial  
hardship



# THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

"Volunteering at GHT has made me a stronger woman than what I was before"

**"INSPIRING"**

"Volunteering at George House Trust was very useful to me in that it helped build my confidence. I have also managed to secure a job and if it was not for GHT it would have been very difficult for me to get references and all other support"

"I had many friends you know, who were affected by HIV, and what little support in the mid to the late 80s there was, around people accessing support and help. And then I've lost many friends as well, through HIV, so that's kind of motivated me to get involved"

**"CHALLENGING BUT FANTASTIC"**

## MOTIVATION FOR VOLUNTEERING

**60%**  
of people also said they volunteered to build their confidence

**76%**  
gained new skills or experience

**60%**  
of the respondents agreed that a personal connection to HIV was another motivation to become a volunteer for GHT



**"LIBERATING"**

"I just thank GHT for empowering me and making me gain my confidence"

GEORGE  
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HIV POSITIVE LIVING



## GHT'S MISSION STATEMENT

GHT will provide good quality services to people living with HIV, which enable them to feel empowered and able to live happily and healthily with HIV.

GHT will raise awareness of HIV, promote safer sex and encourage all sexually active people in the North West to know their HIV status.

GHT will ensure that HIV is prioritised by public bodies across the North West, given that it has the biggest population of people living with HIV outside of London.

GHT will challenge HIV stigma and discrimination and promote a better understanding of HIV.



[www.ght.org.uk](http://www.ght.org.uk)



## INCREASING EFFICIENCY



George House Trust is committed to consulting with people who use our services, and we spend time analysing the feedback and comments which are made.

We have talked to other stakeholders such as commissioners and funders for their views of how we can improve our services for people living with HIV. As a result of this analysis during 2013, we recognised that many people in Greater Manchester who are living with HIV were not being given information about the services which we offer and sometimes had to depend upon their own initiative to find out what we do and how we could support them. We thought this could be very easily improved. As a result, and in consultation with the commissioners we developed a new Service User Pathway which would address the inequality of access to our services. The new pathway means that everyone who has a positive diagnosis for HIV is automatically referred to us for a wellbeing assessment. The assessment takes a snapshot at that time of how much knowledge the person has about

HIV, how they are feeling emotionally about the diagnosis, their confidence to disclose their status should they wish to and feelings about the future amongst other things.

This then enables our Service Advisers and counsellors to work with the service user on the things which are most significant to them at that time.

There is an option to have 1:1 sessions on a particular issue or to access specialist advisers who can help with practical questions about disclosure, isolation, money and facing the future.

Consultation with service users, George House Trust members and commissioners confirmed that this model was the way forward. It ensured that every person living with HIV, either as a newly diagnosed condition or something they had been living with for a while, would have the same equal access to our services. From 1st April 2014 the new model of working was introduced to all Genito Urinary Medicine (GUM) services across Greater Manchester.

We look forward to reporting on the progress of the new Service User Pathway in the future.

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Life-time treatment costs for someone living with HIV are in the region of £280,000 – £330,000 according to the National AIDS Trust. These costs exclude hospital admissions.

So, when GHT supports a newly diagnosed person and increases their knowledge and confidence to negotiate and practice safer sex, they are able to avoid onward transmission of the virus. As an example; if a newly diagnosed individual goes on to have, say, a total of 5 sexual partners following diagnosis, and they practice safe sex, adhere to their medication etc and avoid onward transmission, this could be saving NHS England at least £1.4M.



## GHT'S VALUES

**Dignity** - We treat everyone with dignity, show respect and value them.

**Respect** - We show respect by considering people's feelings, wishes and rights.

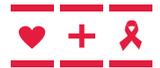
**Empowerment** - We believe that people need freedom to act, think, initiate and make decisions.

**Integrity** - We demonstrate integrity by being honest and having strong principles.

**Recognising Differences** - Everyone is unique! We embrace and celebrate diversity and difference.

**Passionate** - Our ambition is to put as much heart, mind, body and soul into our work- and it shows!





## TEAM GHT: TRUSTEES MEET JOSEPH

I decided to begin volunteering for George House Trust a couple of years after my diagnosis and have been volunteering for about a year now. I soon realised that even though I can't change my status, I can change everything else; that I didn't choose my status but I have the power to choose the way that I want to live my life. Volunteering at George House Trust was, from the onset, a large part of my decision to not only be someone who lives with HIV, but someone who lives well with it.

When I approached George House Trust I was much less confident about my status than I am now. I began by attending a couple of Gay Men's Social spaces, met a few other gay men living with HIV for the first time and became much more comfortable with the social aspects of being HIV positive and the decisions that I make surrounding my status, such as choosing not to be completely public about my status but still talking on a need-to-know basis to friends, employers, my partners and strangers.

I was eventually invited to be one of the two volunteers to join the Project Advisory Group that helped to launch George House Trust's new service being+. It has been great to have a say in how new services for gay men under 30 could be developed, to witness the launch of the service and to be one of the first peer supporters for gay men living with HIV.

I feel like I am contributing and actively taking part in one of the biggest issues facing the LGBT community and helping others who are in the same position as I was three years ago, in need of someone like me, with a little bit more experience who could help me integrate HIV to the rest of my life and who would show me that everything will be just fine.

One of the many reasons why George House Trust won the Co-operative's Respect Health & Wellbeing Charity of the Year award (2013) is the way it treats its volunteers. I have always felt appreciated, cared for and that my opinions counted whilst volunteering at

George House Trust. I have always been given the freedom to do as much as I want and in the way that I can and I have been guided along the way.

The experience so far has been really rewarding and I am very much looking forward to continuing and developing my involvement with George House Trust.

Joseph became a Trustee of George House Trust in 2013.



## TEAM GHT: MEMBERS MEET JOE

I moved to Manchester in 2000 and got involved with GHT about a year later. I'd done some voluntary work in Bristol for the Lesbian and Gay Switchboard as well as a mental health project and I wanted to combine the two things by helping with community support whilst meeting new people at the same time. It didn't quite go to plan. I had an unstable home life (men!) and didn't feel strong enough to support someone else. The team at GHT encouraged me to stay involved and asked me if I could do fundraising instead, so I did.

I met lots of people who were Members through volunteering at events, and took part in my first Pride parade in Manchester! My friends told me how they loved the GHT Pride parade entries which were always inclusive of everyone. Through my volunteering and meeting people I learned more about the work GHT did in communities throughout the North West as well as the support they were giving to my friends. I felt proud to be a part of GHT, so I became a Member and went to my first Annual General Meeting. I was unsure what to expect and sat quietly at the back listening to the order of business and the

debates. I loved the fact that the Membership was made up of service users and volunteers and that people were encouraged to get involved in decisions.

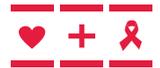
A few years went by and I did some support volunteering whilst remaining an active Member, and I realised just how important Members are to the way GHT runs. We needed to change as an organisation to accommodate new funding rules, growing demands and economic uncertainties whilst trying to deliver the same services and remain true to our values. As decision makers we had to be sure we were making the right choices. The Members proposed GHT become a limited company and re-register as a charity in 2011. We debated changing the voting system and I

realised how important it was to have a strong Membership with 1 Member 1 vote, and for everyone's vote to count so I spoke to the Chief Executive and Chair about it.

We all agreed that Membership and the Board of Trustees (elected by Members) needed to be re-invigorated. I was involved in changing the way Trustees work and increasing Member meetings. Members meetings are great as it involves us in the development of the organisation much more. We also do small groups work so more people can be heard and you don't have to be nervous about saying something in a big meeting. I would encourage all service users and volunteers to become Members so we can make sure that we keep GHT strong for the future.

### GHT Members are involved at all levels of the charity:

- Consultation on key issues e.g. business planning
- Annual election of 10 of their own to the Board of Trustees at the AGM
- Agreeing governance and constitutional changes
- Holding Trustees and staff to account for how GHT is run



## TEAM GHT: SERVICE USERS JANET'S STORY

Janet was trafficked into the sex industry from Nigeria to Italy. Her traffickers told her they had found 'a job' for her in Italy, where she would be able to earn money to send to relatives back home.

Eventually she made her way to the UK, and as a consequence she has had to manage a very convoluted immigration claim. On two occasions she has been taken by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) to get on a flight to Nigeria with her 5 year old child who was born in the UK, and who speaks only English. George House Trust intervened to get their removal stopped.

Despite other complex health issues in addition to HIV, Janet is a wonderful self-advocate who sought support letters from her HIV clinician, her child's school and her local MP. She has made a strong case to the Home Office, and it now appears that they have acknowledged that she was indeed trafficked into Europe.

She has had support from a specialist human trafficking support service, as well as George House Trust's counselling service. She has fought all of her battles in her own style.

Whilst she is still waiting for an official decision on her request for leave to remain in the UK, she has already decided that when this comes through she will go to college to train to be a social worker. Janet wants to help others who need support at difficult times in their lives.

Janet says of George House Trust, "It is a place I can call home. They have always been there for me and kept me going. They have supported me in all areas of my life, emotionally and financially. I don't know how I would have coped without George House Trust's support".

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"It is a place I can call home. They have always been there for me and kept me going."



## TEAM GHT: SERVICE USERS SAM'S STORY

Sam was 18 years old when he was diagnosed HIV positive in April 2014, and was referred to George House Trust by his HIV clinician. He phoned George House Trust on a Friday and came in to meet a Services Adviser the following Monday.

Sam is a young gay man who was completely shocked by his diagnosis. He was feeling really isolated and couldn't turn to his family for support. By his third appointment he said he was starting to "feel normal again". We helped him to develop some support networks, and he was offered a range of support services. He chose the being+ peer support service, and was matched with another young peer support volunteer, who was diagnosed himself one year ago. They have met over coffee several times now.

Sam was given the space to explore ways of talking about HIV with sexual partners, and how to take control of his own sexual health. GHT also referred Sam to a supported housing project for people living with HIV.





## TEAM GHT: SERVICE USERS JOSEPHINE'S STORY

Josephine is a French-speaking woman from the Ivory Coast who first started using our services in 2006. Her lengthy and complex asylum claim was rejected, and for a time she was completely destitute. George House Trust provided practical assistance such as food parcels and money in order for her to survive. Although she experienced very poor health, she didn't give up hope, and we didn't stop supporting her. Finally, two years ago, she was given leave to remain in the UK.

Josephine has made an amazing transition from destitution with no right to remain in the UK. Today she is living well with HIV and works hard as a paid carer for people with mental health problems. She has recently won a place at the University of Central Lancashire to train as a mental health professional. Josephine doesn't need our services any more. However, she has been back to volunteer as an interpreter for other French-speaking service users. She has shown what a determined, resilient and optimistic woman she is.





## TEAM GHT: VOLUNTEERS MEET JOEL

"Yes, it's been a tremendously challenging time, but I've been thoughtfully supported throughout."

For over 20 years I was prescribed antidepressants and just left to get on with my 'life'. Being depressed was normal to me and I was fairly timid. Nevertheless, I attempted to emulate my peers, to find love, to socialise, and even to contribute to my community by volunteering.

Each was a real challenge, but I learnt about myself and others, and eventually I got myself accepted on a degree course. Towards the end of my second year, however, and during what transpired to be a harsh sero-conversion illness, I was diagnosed with HIV. Through sheer determination not to be beaten, I graduated and began postgraduate studies, but the new combination of HIV and depression was just too much, and they won.

Eventually I mentioned my depression to my HIV consultant and he offered me a referral to a psychologist. I reluctantly accepted and then met with her fortnightly for a year. She in turn put me in contact with George House Trust and I was supported by advisers and volunteers. Over several months, they stopped me being isolated and assisted me through some very dark times.

Initially, I enquired about volunteering for just one reception shift a week, but during the recruitment process, getting involved in mentoring and befriending also appealed to me. So, I volunteered for that too, began training for both, and learnt a lot about myself in the process.

How did I feel on my first reception shift and the first time I met and supported a service user? Terrified, if I'm honest; but I did it! I rapidly began to believe in myself in a way I hadn't for a very, very long time. Over 250 hours of reception experience later, and having supported four service users, my confidence has skyrocketed.

Don't get me wrong, I'm still awkwardly self-conscious at times, but that hasn't had a negative impact on my volunteering here at George House Trust. I have now been depression-free for over a year and volunteering has shown me how I am able to use my experiences, gifts and aptitude to benefit others.

Each role has given me a hint—just a hint, I'm sure—of some of the difficult circumstances that George House Trust service users find

themselves in. The experience of meeting so many remarkable people - service users, volunteers and staff at George House Trust - has been inspirational and a true privilege. Whether it's helping someone newly diagnosed feel welcome in the building, assisting a service user to do something they otherwise wouldn't, or just franking the mail, I know I'm doing something worthwhile for people living with HIV. That makes me feel good. Yes, it's been a tremendously challenging time, but I've been thoughtfully supported throughout. George House Trust has given me the opportunity to be the whole me, and that same offer applies to everyone who comes through its doors.





## TEAM GHT: OUR STAFF

**Colin Armstead**

Service & Development  
Manager

**Susie Baines**

Marketing & Community  
Fundraising Coordinator

**Sandra Berlyne**

Health & Wellbeing Adviser

**Peter Boyle**

Lead Services Adviser

**Samuel Clarke**

Office & Facilities  
Administrator

**Jill Cooke**

Services Adviser

**Maria Gumbo**

Volunteer Coordinator

**Laura Hamilton**

Volunteer & Development  
Manager

**Lee Hardman**

Services Adviser/  
Money & Debt Adviser

**Yvonne Hepburn-Foster**

Fundraising Manager

**Stephanie Mallas**

Joint Chief Executive

**Damian McHugh**

Local Coordinator (Health  
Wealth & Happiness)

**Deborah Mgijima**

Services Adviser

**Mike Mpofu**

Services Adviser

**Siham Noureldin**

Services Adviser

**Naome Phiri**

Services Adviser

**Rosie Robinson**

Joint Chief Executive

**Neal Sharpe**

Finance Manager

**Jayne Swain**

Finance Administrator

**Ben Whalley**

Services Adviser



## TEAM GHT: COMMUNITY FUNDRAISERS TEAM LAMERTON



Sally and Andy Lamerton heartbreakingly lost their Dad, Mark Lamerton, to non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in December 2013. Sally, Andy and some of their friends formed a team to take part in The Colour Run in Manchester in Mark's memory.

Mark gave many hours of his time during his life to help various causes, George House Trust was one he was particularly proud of. He had been a volunteer since 2009 and gave time to community fundraising, volunteer driving and in community support roles, and had a real impact on the lives of many people who were living with HIV.

Mark's daughter Sally says "George House Trust do fantastic things for people directly and indirectly affected by HIV. Mark was a keen runner as well as charitable in every way he could be towards many people and causes. We decided to honour his memory by following his example. A Colour Run that celebrates diversity seemed the perfect tribute to a wonderful man."



## TEAM GHT: AMBASSADORS MEET NICK

Nick Curtis became an Ambassador for George House Trust in 2012. A longstanding supporter of our work, Nick co-owns Eagle Bar, Richmond Lodge and Richmond Tea Rooms in the heart of Manchester's Gay Village. Nick ensures all his staff receive HIV awareness training, bringing a sense of responsibility to his team in being able to actively challenge HIV stigma at work and confidently talk to customers about HIV.

Nick has held numerous fundraisers in aid of George House Trust and his commitment to supporting those who access our services when most in need really shines through. Fundraising activities have included 80s nights, raffles, eating creepy crawlies in Eagle's very own 'Bushtucker Trials', World AIDS Day events and running challenges.

In the last year Nick and his team have raised almost £3,000 for George House Trust's Welfare Fund, which provides essential support to people living with HIV, who are experiencing financial hardship.

### GHT Ambassadors

Thomas Anderson; Michael Atkins; Lee Baxter; Ady Blake; Phil Collinson; Richard Copson; Jackie Crozier; Nick Curtis; Christian D'Arcy; Mark Geary; Chris Hague; John Hamilton; Aoibhinn MacManus; Steve Myers; Stuart Patterson; Rebecca Perry; Les Pratt; Rebecca Rae; Kevin Sargent; Jamie Scahill; Iain Scott; Andrew Stokes; Malcolm Struthers; Ash Sukthankar; Daniel Wallace; Darren Williams; Adam Zane



## WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT US

"Your organisation gave me the correct advice and guidance, which in turn helped me deal with the devastating news and the negativity and stigma that surrounds the condition of HIV. I feel now that I am a new person, I play rugby, I go to the gym, I try to eat healthier, none of which I would have done if I didn't get help from GHT. In short, along with my partner's support and your advice and guidance, I have gone from thinking I am a walking dead guy that people will avoid at all costs to what I am now."

"We thank you for your commitment to providing for the needs of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in your community; it is a privilege to support your life-changing and life-saving work."

**MAC AIDS Fund**

"being+ peer support gave me the chance to talk to someone who has been through this and I am leaving the project happier, confident, empowered and secure in myself."

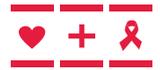
"Without counselling sessions and the newly diagnosed course, I would have felt alone.... I am now secure in my status, my treatment and my future life. I cannot express my gratitude enough. Your service is a phenomenal and necessary success. Thank you."

"Keep up the good work, this is like a second home to most of us and we would like it to continue to be so. Congrats all staff and advisers...Keep it up!"

"Both myself and life have changed and settled down quite a lot over the past few months but I am pleased to say I am coping well. It's around 12 months since my diagnosis and I have a new job, new home and a great support network of friends. I would like to thank all the team at GHT especially Ben who helped me remain calm at times when I thought my world was over. You do provide a fantastic, knowledgeable and caring service and I will be eternally grateful for your continued support."

"The Reviewer said we were the most positive team he'd met and were clearly doing great work to empower our learners."

**Open Awards**



"I wanted to say thank you to you personally. You've been very supportive as I build a life out of very complex circumstances (with my HIV diagnosis as a final breaking point) which remained dominant throughout my teenage years and adult life until about a year ago. Volunteering at George House Trust has been a very challenging time, but it's also been unbelievably rewarding, affirming and confidence building. All through my transitional journey, you've been easily approachable, friendly, and understanding; and you've helped me discern abilities I wasn't aware of, and to realise aspects of potential I'd just never recognised. Thank you; it's all really appreciated."

"I wanted to let you know how impressed I am with the quality of the service / management information you provide at George House Trust for Stockport as a commissioning organisation. I regard its breadth and detail as exemplary and I think it's worth considering whether GHT could run a Master Class for the wider GM voluntary sector on approaches to producing transparent and detailed service monitoring information."

**Sarah Newsam, Head of Health & Wellbeing, Stockport Council**

"Jeff has been great. When I was at the rehab place, he came all the way out there to see me and it reminded me that George House Trust was still here for me. He helped me speak to my consultant as well and now the consultant has reduced the number of meds that I take. I didn't really understand why I was taking so many but Jeff gave me the confidence to ask the right questions."



# THANK YOU

As a charity, strong funding relationships are vital to our sustainability, and to ensuring people living with HIV in Greater Manchester have services which provide the appropriate support they need to live healthy, happy lives.





HIV  
PREVENTION  
ENGLAND



Bolton  
Council

Wigan  
Council



Salford City Council



Bury  
Council

MAC  
AIDS FUND

United Utilities Trust Fund



The  
Henry Smith  
Charity  
founded in 1628



THE · MONUMENT · TRUST

LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION  
England & Wales



GEORGE  
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HIV POSITIVE LIVING

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[www.ght.org.uk](http://www.ght.org.uk)

George House Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales  
(No. 1143138) and a registered company limited by guarantee  
in England and Wales (No. 07575379)

AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR 2013-14 are available  
upon request from [neal@ght.org.uk](mailto:neal@ght.org.uk)



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