# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **HIV Action Plan Annual Progress Statement** |
| **DATE**  | **28November 2023** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

Members will be aware that the development of an HIV Action Plan and tackling HIV-related stigma were commitments in our Programme for Government. It is especially apt and poignant to make this first annual HIV Action Plan progress statement on the day that the Senedd commemorates World AIDS Day.

The HIV Action Plan was launched on 7th March this year and contains 30 actions aimed at meeting the World Health Organization’s goal of zero new HIV infections by 2030. The three-year Plan was co-produced with partners from the NHS, the voluntary and community sectors and, crucially, people who are living with HIV. This collaborative approach has extended to the delivery phase of the Plan and I would like to thank key partners, especially the health boards, Public Health Wales, the Terrence Higgins Trust, and Fast Track Cymru for their vital contribution to already turning many of the 30 actions into reality.

Much of the implementation and delivery work has been carried out within five workstream groups – Testing and Prevention, Training and Education, Peer Support, Fast Track Cymru establishment, and Measuring Success – which have met regularly since May and report to the HIV Action Plan Implementation Oversight Group.

Significant progress has already been made in the eight months since the launch of the Plan. I would like to highlight some of the key actions already delivered which are having a transformative impact on the way we approach HIV in Wales:

* We have established Wales as a Fast Track Nation making Wales only the third Fast Track Nation in the world, along with Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. Fast Track Cymru, a new collaborative network is hosted by Pride Cymru.
* Three more Fast Track coalitions have been established – Newport, Swansea, and North Wales – all involving health workers, local councils, academics, civil society organisations and people living with HIV, united in a desire to end new HIV diagnoses in Wales. Newport formally signed up on the 20th November as the

second Fast Track City in Wales, covering the whole of Aneurin Bevan Health Board.

* Wales HIV Testing Week led collaboratively by Public Health Wales launched last week promotes the importance of testing and increasing access. Getting tested means that those who need antiretroviral treatment, can access it to live a healthier life and not pass the virus to others. Initial indications are that the campaign has reached more people than ever before. I look forward to receiving a summary and analysis of the campaign in due course.
* The free online testing service for sexually transmitted infections and HIV established during the pandemic, continues to make a difference with the number using the service increases year-on-year and supports many individuals who would be reluctant to turn up at a clinic.
* All health boards have committed to tackle late HIV diagnosis. They are going to meet every six months under the chairmanship of a senior consultant from Cardiff and Vale Health Board, to look at each individual late diagnosis in Wales, to understand why they occur, and focus resources on the best strategies to end further transmission. The first meeting of this group took place in October and looked at late diagnoses in the first half of 2022. This group will report its lessons learnt to the Implementation Oversight Group.

We have made an excellent start in the delivery of the 30 actions. With the continued collaboration of our key stakeholders and partners, we can ensure that we reach our goal of zero transmissions of HIV by 2030.