

An carthannas fad bheatha airson slàinte ghnèitheach is HIV

The UK's leading HIV and sexual health charity

Karen Adam MSP

Convener of Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP



17 May 2024

Dear Convener,

On behalf of Terrence Higgins Trust, I would like to thank you and your colleagues on the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee for the time taken to explore HIV in Scotland and the inequalities that remain in our response.

I would also like to extend my warmest thanks to the Committee Clerks and to members of the Scottish Parliament's Participation and Communities Team. The sensitivity and collaborative nature to which they approached this topic was extremely welcome. In particular, the dedication of these teams helped us put together the important lived experience session in a short time period. This allowed people living with HIV to share their own experiences in a welcoming environment and I believe this contributed greatly to the overall findings of the inquiry.

We are pleased to see that the Committee has published its findings and warmly welcome the recommendations put to the Scottish Government. The inquiry made clear that much more needs to be done if we are to end new transmission of HIV in Scotland by 2030 and that tackling health inequalities needs to be central to our response. In particular, we are pleased to see the focus the Committee has placed on the need to combat HIV stigma. The evidence was clear that, despite vast medical advancements, HIV stigma still remains across society and that this is often most acute within healthcare provision. We therefore welcome calls for additional funding to combat HIV stigma, including through public sector training programmes,

We hope that the Scottish Government take the recommendations of the Committee seriously and act accordingly. If we are to be successful in ending HIV stigma and eliminating new transmission of HIV by 2030, words need to be met with action and action with investment. We eagerly await their response and, if appropriate, would welcome a follow up meeting with the Committee to discuss their reply.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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