

The It Starts With Me campaign

April 2013 sees the launch of HIV Prevention England's campaign **It Starts With Me**. It heralds a new era in which testing, treatment and condoms have the potential to dramatically curb the spread of HIV. Over the next two years the campaign will be boosted by regular 'blasts', each with calls to action – chiefly around testing and condoms.

Background to the campaign

HIV Prevention England (HPE)* will run a campaign, **It Starts With Me**, that over two years builds momentum, recognition and impact. At regular intervals amplification 'blasts' will tackle specific themes while keeping a shared identity, branding and key assets (such as a web site). The campaign will speak to Africans and gay and bisexual men, chiefly about testing and condoms. Each audience will be addressed separately through targeted imagery, dedicated media channels and a web site where the user journey is tailored accordingly.

It Starts With Me announces a new chapter in the history of HIV prevention. Thanks to the viral load-reducing effect of HIV drugs, major inroads into the HIV epidemic can now be imagined (see box). **It Starts With Me** communicates this game-changing development to its two audiences, aiming to mobilise them around it. The goal is that they understand how their individual behaviour plays a vital part in this new push to finally stop HIV harming their communities.

What is the strategy?

Viral load at the individual and community level falls when increased testing and earlier treatment reduces the numbers of the undiagnosed (the source of most new infections). This appears to have already led to substantial falls in new infections in parts of Africa and North America (1), (2), (3). Someone with an undetectable viral load (for at least six months and in the absence of STIs) has an extremely low risk of infecting others (4): transmission risk can be cut by at least 96% (5). Continued condom use is, however, vital; if this slips any fall in infections could be wiped out.

In short, testing + treatment + condoms = a dramatic drop in infections.

Page from gay men's leaflet



Campaign aims

The aims of this first instalment of *It Starts With Me* are:

- increased knowledge of the benefits of testing (for the individual and community)
- increased knowledge of the benefits of treatment (including its free availability and impact on infectiousness)
- increased knowledge of the acceptability of testing (including how, where and how often to test)
- increased opportunities to test (through the provision of a clinic finder, free postal tests and community testing by local delivery partners)

The above serves HPE's overall goal of more Africans and gay and bisexual men testing at least once a year.

Following exposure to the mass, small and social media elements of the campaign its audiences will know of the golden opportunity testing and treatment offers to reduce the harm HIV poses to their own lives and those around them. The key calls to action running across the campaign are: **Test. Treat. Protect. Take action.**

Messages stress the greater ease and acceptability of HIV testing – including the new option of home sampling (other testing services are signposted). Using insight from research into barriers to testing, small media and web content promote awareness of the benefits of testing and risks of undiagnosed infection.



Condom pack

Target audiences

The target group for gay and bisexual men is those under 35 (infections and diagnosis peak between men's mid twenties and mid thirties). For Africans it is 25-45, reflecting how African men in particular have HIV without knowing for longer than any other group.

Online pre-testing of the campaign's concepts, messages and imagery took place with hundreds of members of the target audiences, who were recruited through Facebook. It identified the *It Starts With Me* concept as one that scored well with both groups. Compared to alternative concepts *It Starts With Me* scored better on attracting attention, personal relevance, motivation to act, believability and optimism. Following testing feedback, the decision was made to cast non-professional models as the faces of the campaign to reinforce its sense of real people influencing others like them.

Media placement for Africans will use some of the limited UK African press titles and web sites but will concentrate on social media, with the possibility of outdoor advertising. Africans have been successfully engaged on Facebook through targeted ads. Gay men will be reached through channels with a proven track



One of the gay men's posters

record of success: gay press, dating web sites (including direct messaging to members of such sites) and Facebook.

HPE's local delivery partners will reach out to particularly at-risk groups through their face-to-face activity.

Campaign elements

Materials produced for the first testing-focused stage of *It Starts With Me* (running from late April until July) include:

- Website
- Separate Facebook pages for Africans and gay men and Twitter activity
- Adverts in national/regional gay press and lifestyle/faith-based UK African titles
- Adverts on Facebook and popular gay and UK African websites linking to the campaign website
- Direct messaging to members of gay dating sites
- Double-sided A4 printed posters. Also posters in editable pdf form with partner branding for promotion of local testing services
- Condom packs
- Leaflets (African and gay, one promoting testing, the other explaining the campaign and the role of testing and treatment)
- A short info graphic film (gay, African and generic versions) explaining the rationale behind the campaign and promoting testing (to be used on the website, Youtube, social media and in venues and clinics)
- Give-aways for use in outreach (travel wallet and sticker)
- Campaign T-shirt



Campaign sticker



Page from the campaign website (African content)

See the end of this briefing for enquiries about obtaining resources for use in your local area

Website

As *It Starts With Me* progresses over the coming two years the website (www.startswithme.org.uk) will expand. Traffic to it will be driven by online advertising. Users will choose whether they wish to see content for Africans or gay men

Content is centred around the **Test. Treat. Protect. Take Action** call to action and includes:

- Info graphic film
- Assessment tool advising when a person is next due an HIV test
- Clinic and testing services finder
- Free HIV home sampling kit offer
- Link to online discount condom seller (the NHS outlet Freedoms)
- Option to sign up to support the campaign or receive an annual testing reminder by email.

Once the initial launch is over additional content will be added to attract repeat visits, such as a membership scheme, and a wall onto which 'champions' of the campaign can upload messages, stories, images and film clips around campaign themes.

Condom-related content will be expanded when the campaign's condom blast appears in July.

Local delivery

Almost forty local delivery partners across England are contracted to support the campaign through one-to-one and group-based outreach, resource



Frames from the info graphic film clip

distribution, community events and increased testing activity. A particular effort will be made locally to target groups most at risk such as those with higher partner numbers. Engagement with African faith groups will encourage within congregations testing and supportive attitudes to those with HIV.

Engaging stakeholders

Prior to launch, tailored campaign briefings will be sent out by Terrence Higgins Trust, Black Health Agency for Equality (BHA) and MBARC. These will be received by every HIV clinician in the UK, sexual health clinics, Directors of Public Health, commissioners, and key contacts among gay businesses, African faith leaders and in the HIV voluntary sector. Terrence Higgins Trust is also amplifying the campaign's impact through work targeting African and gay media titles (including a front cover feature in *Boyz* magazine during launch week).

Measuring impact

Campaign monitoring and evaluation is co-ordinated by Sigma Research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Short-term measurable outcomes are web site visits, clinic finder and risk assessment usage, orders for home sampling kits, engagement with the campaign Facebook pages and the website's 'champions' content.

Targets have been set for the activity of local delivery partners, campaign recognition and increases in knowledge of the benefits of both treatment and testing.

For further information about It Starts With Me or details of obtaining resources for use locally contact andie.dyer@ttht.org.uk

***HIV PREVENTION ENGLAND** is the Department of Health-funded contract to deliver prevention campaigns to Africans and gay and bisexual men in England in the period 2012-2015. It is managed by Terrence Higgins Trust and supported by sub-contractors Black Health Agency for Equality, Sigma Research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, MBARC, NAM Publications and Yorkshire MESMAC.



Campaign t-shirt designs

References

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Another of the African posters



Travelcard holder

The HIV and sexual health charity for life

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This campaign is produced by **HIV PREVENTION ENGLAND**