

## editorial

Hello all!! Its issue Number 6! While we are on that, apologies for running the last issue as issue 4, it was actually issue 5. Due to human error Issue 5 was out masquerading as issue 4. Special thanks to our readers for pointing that out to us. Its been an exciting last quarter with major developments taking place, I am happy to announce that we have now expanded our catchment area to include Enfield and Haringey. We also celebrated Black History month in October by holding workshops and concerts. World AIDS Day is upon us and this issue is dedicated to it. This year's theme in the UK is HIV: Reality. In keeping with the realities of HIV, we discuss confidentiality, dealing with disclosure and the dilemmas that come with it.

The *leat street* activity picture wall is also back in this issue as promised so look out for your pictures. Thanks again for granting permission to publish your pictures. Have a great quarter!!!

Natasha Sakala  
Editor

### special interest articles:

- Confidentiality: dealing with disclosure
- HIV: Reality, the 2009 World AIDS Day theme

## world aids day 2009 for the uk- *hiv:reality*

According to the National AIDS Trust (2009) there are now over 80 000 people living with HIV in the UK and that new infections continue to increase every year. The Trust also highlights that over a quarter of the people living with HIV in the UK don't know they are infected. World AIDS Day offers an opportunity for people in the UK and indeed the world over to be reminded about how HIV continues to affect people.

The UK World AIDS Day theme for this year is REALITY. The idea behind this is to encourage each one of us to tune into the realities of HIV which continue to affect everyone. Like many others that support the cause for HIV, we at LEAT will be commemorating World AIDS Day through a number of activities. One of the activities is in conjunction with the London Centre for Spirituality. LEAT will host an exhibition of its work and an evening of reflection for World AIDS Day. The evening will contain information, music, movement, readings and time for personal reflection for those affected by HIV.

The National AIDS Trust's research has shown that public knowledge of HIV in the UK is declining and there is evidence of a worrying lack of

understanding about HIV and its relevance in a UK context. The survey also revealed that 69% of people feel there is still a great deal of stigma in the UK around HIV. As we learnt in the last issue of *leat street news*, 1 in 3 people living with HIV report having experienced HIV related stigma and discrimination. For people to respect and protect themselves and others, they need to understand the facts and *reality* of HIV in the UK and indeed in the world at large.

For almost 20 years LEAT has been working in that reality by providing prevention, care and support to people in London affected by HIV.

Please join us at this years World AIDS Day celebrations to learn more about the realities of HIV, our work and ways you could contribute to support people affected by HIV. See page 4.



# confidentiality

The reality of HIV is such that a HIV positive diagnosis is highly sensitive. This is because people living with HIV have, and continue to experience stigma and discrimination. As a result they will rightly expect information about their status to be kept at a particularly high level of confidentiality. [www.medicalprotection.org/](http://www.medicalprotection.org/) may 2006).

In conversations with people that are affected by HIV, many have alluded to the fact that other than the impending stigma which they have to confront on a fairly regular basis confidentiality processes have been seriously



compromised in cases where they have disclosed their status to people who they would have thought could be trusted. In contrast, persons who may be privy to this information have often questioned what constitutes confidentiality when dealing with HIV status disclosure. This they say is because they are normally faced with the challenge of dealing with whether keeping confidentiality will threaten the wider public's safety. The first instinct they have argued is "*I was acting in the public interest.*" It is for this reason that it is in order, to explore the issues around confidentiality and HIV.

## ***confidentiality vs. 'I was acting in the public interest'***

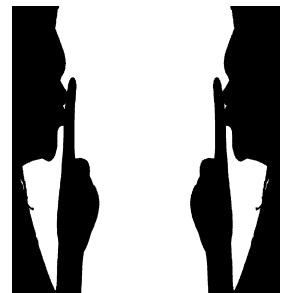
At the very basic confidential information is defined as information disclosed to another in circumstances which give rise to a duty on the part of the confidant not to make unauthorised disclosure of information. On the other hand, acting in the public interest refers to a acting to protect the common wellbeing of groups, communities, the public as a whole. For example, the public interest may be threatened if an individual or group puts the public in a position of vulnerability. Consider the following case:

Greetings, I am in a very difficult and quite painful situation. I have sought emotional/spiritual guidance from an elder and Bible study leader in my church. I shared with them that I am HIV positive... I

told them that I am seeing my primary care doctor but that I am not emotionally ready to see a specialist at this point in time because of my psychological/emotional state. I even went as far as obtaining a brief note from my doctor that stated that he is treating me and I am receiving appropriate medical care. The problem is that they think I need to see a specialist and that I am actually 'harming' myself by holding off on it [even in spite of the assurance from my doctor]. The elder has said that if I do not allow him to be involved in my medical care, he will have to talk to the other elders for advice on what to do next (sharing my status with them against my will) and basically this awful situation will escalate. These are people who I deeply respect and love, so this reaction comes as a slap across my face. They are so concerned because they care for me but they will not take me at my word concerning my healthcare. I guess I am just wondering if this is illegal if my status is shared with the other elders against my will and without my consent, when I had shared this very private information in confidence? I feel so violated and betrayed and it is weird because they think they are helping me but they are causing a very unnecessary, humiliating, painful situation... I will probably not be allowed to be in leadership in my church any longer because I am not allowing the elders to be involved in my medical care. Is this discrimination--- or is it different since it is the church? This all hurts so much. I feel like I am being nailed to a cross. (Thebody.com forums Feb. 2005)

There are many anecdotes of people expressing how people sometimes do the wrong thing in the name of care. The above case shows a clear indication of how the person affected has clearly stated that they do not wish their status disclosed to other persons other than the pastor from whom guidance was sort. In which case the Pastor ought to comply otherwise he would be in breach.

According to the common law of confidentiality information passed on in confidence is protected against disclosure unless there is consent or some overriding legal reason justifying disclosure such as murder, rape, manslaughter, treason and child abuse which



does not appear to be the case here. The notion of acting in the public interest would only come into place if the patient is for example knowingly exposing others to an HIV risk (see *leat street news issue 1* for HIV routes of transmission). The preservation of confidentiality is important because it encourages people to voluntarily come forward and seek treatment or advice "...without promises of confidentiality patients are far less likely to share the private and sensitive information required for their care" (McClelland R.,2001).

## news bites!!

**Obama lifts a ban on entry into US for HIV positive people** - according to the New York times dated 30th October 2009 President Obama announced the end of a 22-year ban on travel to the United States by people who had tested positive for the virus that causes AIDS he said the restriction was "rooted in fear rather than fact." At a White House ceremony, Mr. Obama announced that a rule cancelling the ban would take effect after a routine 60-day waiting period. (New York times accessed 10/11/09)

**GSK and Pfizer launch joint HIV venture -** According Nick Fildes of Timesonline dated 3rd November 2009, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and Pfizer, the pharmaceutical giants, have pooled their HIV-related activities in an independent company. Viiv Healthcare, to be based in London, and will focus solely on the HIV market, which has proved a tough sector for the two parent groups over the past few years. GSK, who will provide start-up costs, will be the major shareholder with an initial 85 per cent of the equity. Dominique Limet, the chief executive of the new company after stepping down as GSK's head of personalised medicines, believes the drug sector has failed to address the needs of people with the condition over the past few years, particularly when developing drugs for children. Despite great strides in the treatment of HIV over the past two decades, Dr Limet argued that infection rates are rising and that even when a patient has access to proper treatment, those with the virus live, on average, ten years less than people who are not infected. "This is unacceptable and we must stay relentless in the pursuit of new medicines," he said. (Timesonline accessed 10/11/09)

## leat street activity picture wall



Pam at Speak out Act now launch

Speak out Act now launch event

Faith leaders forum

Youth Breakfast

Lynwood Christian fellowship workshop

Divine Grace Ministries workshop



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We're on the Web!  
 See us at:  
[www.leat.org.uk](http://www.leat.org.uk)

## upcoming events

We have made further notable strides this quarter in terms of our engagement with the community culminating in some exciting upcoming events. The following are just some of the planned events for this quarter:-

- World AIDS Day LEAT Exhibition 1st Dec 2009. The London Centre for Spirituality The Church of St Edmund the King, Lombard Street, London, EC3V 9EA. 10.30 hrs—17.00 hrs.
- An evening of reflection for World AIDS Day. The London Centre for Spirituality (as above). 1830 Hrs—19.15 hrs
- Stockwell and Clapham Methodist Church Congregational workshop 6th December 2009 13:30pm
- EMBRACING FAITH — A Multi-Faith Approach to Relationships and Sex - Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009 18.00hrs - 21.00hrs. To register, please email [intern@jat-uk.org](mailto:intern@jat-uk.org)
- Divine Grace Ministries Faith Leaders' Workshop-12th December 2009

## in the next issue of leat street news

- Lets get talking : Myths about HIV
- Challenging Christians to take up HIV prevention in a holistic manner

## notices

### VOLUNTEERS

#### Not feeling challenged!?

Leat's HIV Programmes provides support to people in Lambeth, South-wark, Lewisham. Whatever your skills and experiences they will be used to support people at home, through group work activities and in our Education Outreach services.

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In return you can expect to benefit from; the joys that comes with supporting people, our comprehensive accredited training package and personal development support that will ensure your career moves forward.

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#### **Our next volunteer training programme starts: 3rd of December 2009**

For further information please contact Paul on 02077012200 or [paul@leat.org.uk](mailto:paul@leat.org.uk)