

The Crescent News

Spring 2011



HIV Positive? Living in Hertfordshire or Buckinghamshire?
All the help you need is @The Crescent, 19 Russell Avenue, St Albans
AL3 5ES
Mon-Fri: 10am—5pm
Tel 01727 842532/Fax 07092 163874
Email info@thecrescent.org.uk
Www.thecrescent.org.uk
iText 07800473104

CHANGES AT THE CRESCENT

As many of you may be aware, The Crescent in Hertfordshire is unfortunately losing its funding and will be closing in June 2011. Members and staff alike are obviously devastated by this news, as the Crescent has been dedicated to providing support to those living with and affected by HIV for nearly 25 years. We have been asked by members to include the link of a website that they have set up for people's thoughts and comments on this issue, which anyone can log onto (anonymously if they so wish). The link is www.savethecrescent.wordpress.com. These comments will be passed on to the local MPs. The Crescent would like to emphasise that this will not affect service provision in Buckinghamshire, which will continue to run as normal. Stake holder and service user consultations will be held during this period of change, please see The Crescent calendar on page 6 for dates.

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The views and opinions expressed in the articles contained in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of The Crescent Support Group or its representatives.
It should not be assumed that any contributor or person featured is HIV positive.

Hello from Nigel French



I joined the Crescent team in August 2010 and have met many of the members already, but there are a few people that I haven't managed to meet. A BIG HELLO TO EVERYONE!

GUM clinics and delivering training workshops to schools and colleges in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Crescent Team, volunteers and Crescent Members for making me feel welcome.

I hope to meet you very soon.

Nigel French

Outreach/ Support Worker.

My background is in supporting children and families through Sure Start and the Children's Centre initiatives. This involved helping children and their families accessing a range of services such as health, employment and education.

I was involved with these projects for over 10 years and after a brief spell of unemployment, I decided it was time for a new direction!

Many of the skills that I gained through working with children and families have stood me in good stead, but there is still a lot to learn from the members and the Crescent Team!

The working week is varied, for example running drop ins, visiting clients at home, covering the

Hello from Fran Turner



Hi all, if I haven't met you yet I'm Fran, one of the new outreach/support workers! I first became interested in sexual health whilst studying psychology at Hull university. In a shameless attempt to beef up my CV I decided to do some volunteering in my final year. But where to go? I wanted to do

something a little bit different, so I volunteered with a local charity delivering sexual health outreach to young people—and I loved it from the very beginning.

After graduating I moved down south to work as a Health Care Assistant in St Albans GUM Clinic. However I missed the outreach aspect of the job, and so began volunteering with The Crescent. When the role of an outreach worker within the organisation arose, I jumped at the chance and was delighted to be offered the job. Since starting work at The

Crescent I have enjoyed every minute and the staff are kind and dedicated.



Nigel and I have been very busy, and we're hoping to get lots of new projects off the ground (ideas are always welcome!). This includes working with the local prison, drug and alcohol rehabilitation services and homeless charities. Nigel also runs a Gay Men's support group and Sandra and I run a Mother's support group (check the Crescent Calendar on the back page for dates!) . We'll keep you posted on any and all progress, and again all suggestions and involvement are welcome.

We also helped organise prizes for the World AIDS Day raffle on the 27th November at the Load of Hay pub. We had some cracking prizes, even if I do say so myself! See the next page to see how we did.....

So for those I've already met, thank you for the warm welcome. To those I haven't—hopefully I'll see you soon!

Fran Turner

Outreach/Support Worker



Over the Rainbow

World AIDS Day 2010

John Lewis

LUSH

Boots



CRABTREE
& EVELYN®

the Slug and Lettuce

Thorntons
the Art of the Chocolatier



W
Waterstone's



CHAMPNEYS

MARKS &
SPENCER

the
cove spa

benefit
SAN FRANCISCO

LEGENDS
BRIGHTON

The above logos represent just some of the generous retailers and companies that kindly donated gifts as raffle prizes to The Crescent for our World AIDS Day Event "Over The Rainbow". The night was a great success and we managed to raise £900 in total, which is largely due to the generosity of the above businesses—a huge thank you for your kindness, we could not have done it without you!

Joe Hickey

The Crescent is very sad to inform everyone of the death of Joe Hickey, aged 46. Joe unfortunately had a heart attack, and died in Barnet hospital on 10th March 2011. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends, and all at The Crescent, of which he was a member and supporter for a number of years. We all send our condolences to his family during this difficult time.



SERVICES @ THE CRESCENT

Fantastic news! Crescent staff have completed training for fingerpick rapid testing, so that the majority of the staff can now administer the test. This means that we will be able to test people Monday—Thursday instead of just on a Wednesday. We are also considering offering evening and Saturday appointments, so that those with other commitments during the working week will also be able to access the service. The testing is completely free, and a result is given within 60 seconds. Appointments can be made by ringing 01727 842532, or people can drop in between 10am and 4pm. We are also currently setting up an



online booking service, which should hopefully be up and running soon.





Do you ever find yourself getting **frustrated** by **cuts** in Government spending? Maybe you have significant **concerns** about **discrimination** and **stigma** at work? Perhaps you're worried that your **local** services may suffer because **funding** for **HIV** social care is no longer ring-fenced?

If the answer to any of these questions is **YES**, then you should consider joining **NAT's HIV Activists Network!**

What is the HIV Activists Network?

- ▶ The HIV Activists Network has been established in order to **give people living with HIV a greater voice** on the topics that matter to them.
- ▶ Some people may shy away from the term 'activist', thinking that they need to be loud, visible, and knowledgeable on complex subjects. But with NAT's HIV Activists Network, you don't need to be any of these things. All you need to take part is a desire to bring about **change** in areas such as health, rights and benefits.
- ▶ Taking part in this network can involve anything from letter writing to face-to-face interactions, and NAT is here to guide you on how you can get **active**.

What is the HIV Activists Network aiming to achieve?

- ▶ To **empower** people living with HIV to take direct **action** on the **issues** that affect their lives, rights and well being
- ▶ To **encourage** those who feel **passionate** about this cause and **provide** them with tools to help them **speak out**
- ▶ To make the **voice** of people living with HIV **heard** amongst the people who have the **power** to make **decisions** and bring about **change**

Why should I get involved?

This is an opportunity for you to have your say on the matters you feel strongly about

- ▶ **Stigma and discrimination**
- ▶ **Funding for effective HIV prevention, treatment and support**
- ▶ **Poverty**
- ▶ **HIV education and awareness**
- ▶ **Immigration**
- ▶ **Confidentiality of HIV data**

Do I have to disclose my HIV status to get involved?

- ▶ NAT will ensure there are always activities you can get involved in even if you do not wish to disclose your HIV status
- ▶ Actions such as signing a petition, writing a letter to your local MP or school, will not require you to reveal your HIV status





NAT will support members of the network by having eight to ten policy 'asks' that they can take action on at any one time. Current 'asks' include:

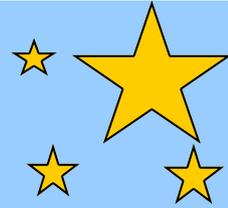
- ▶ Sign NAT's Agenda for Action
- ▶ Write to your MP about Benefits cuts
- ▶ Sign NAT's petition
- ▶ Talk to your local faith leaders
- ▶ Talk to your local gay businesses
- ▶ Write to your PCT about HIV prevention
- ▶ Write to your PCT about HIV testing
- ▶ Contact your local schools
- ▶ Write to your local councillor about Social Care services
- ▶ Contact to your Trade Union

If you are interested in joining the **HIV Activists Network** or just want to find out more, contact NAT on HIVactivist@nat.org.uk / 020 7814 6767.



IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ANY LOCAL HIV SERVICES AND WISH TO FOLLOW ANY OF THE SUGGESTIONS ABOVE, YOU CAN CONTACT THE CRESCENT FOR THE DETAILS OF YOUR LOCAL MPS.





The Crescent Calendar April—June 2011

- 2nd April—Ladies Lunch at The Crescent. 12-3pm
- 14th April—Gay Men's Support Group with Nigel at The Crescent Office, 5:30pm—7:30pm
- 16th April—The Fountain Group (support for HIV positive mothers) with Fran at Watford Women's Centre 1pm—3pm. Featuring guest speaker Tracey Burke from Watford Women's Centre.
- 17th April—Sunday Lunch at The Crescent 1:30pm—4:30pm
- 7th May— The Fountain Group (support for HIV positive mothers) with Fran at Watford Women's Centre 1pm—3pm. Featuring guest speaker Angeline Namiba from Positively UK
- 12th May—Gay Men's Support Group with Nigel at The Crescent Office, 5:30—7:30pm
- 14th May—Spring Basket, 2:30-4:30pm at the Church Hall at Homewood Road URC Church, St Albans, AL14BH
- 22nd May—Sunday Lunch at The Crescent 1:30pm—4:30pm
- 4th June—Ladies Lunch - at The Crescent 12—3pm
- 9th June—Gay Men's Support Group with Nigel at The Crescent Office, 5:30—7:30pm
- 26th June—Sunday Lunch at The Crescent 1:30pm—4:30pm

Service User and Stakeholder Consultation events

- 24th March—Service User consultation, 6-8pm, at Herts Aid, Ware
- 29th March—Service User consultation, 6-8pm, at Life Development Centre, 121 St Peter's Street, St Albans AL1 3EL
- 7th April—Service User consultation and Stakeholder consultation, 6-8pm, at Life Development Centre, 121 St Peter's Street, St Albans AL1 3EL
- 9th April—Service User and Stakeholder consultation, 2:30-4:30pm, at The Crescent, St Albans

If you are interested in attending any of these events or for further updates please speak to a member of the Crescent staff on 01727 842532

NEWS FROM BUCKS

The Crescent Office in Buckinghamshire celebrated World AIDS Day with a lunch on the 1st of December, attended by members and volunteers. A Christmas lunch was also held to celebrate the festive season. Plans are currently being made for a spring walk to enjoy the fresh air and views in Wendover woods.

Fran and Nigel attended a networking meeting with other organisations in order to establish new contacts and ways of working together. Work continues with Oasis, a drug and alcohol charity in High Wycombe.

