

# A Picture of Health

In focus this month: **LGBT**

Picture of Health is produced by Tameside's Population Health Team. We're here to research and understand the big health matters that affect our borough. Our goal is to find ways to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the people living here, to give them happier, healthier and longer lives. But enough about us. You are the most important person in your health, so read on to see what you can do for yourself and your family to stay fit and well.

**1** February marks LGBT History month, but this year we'll be making history of our own, with the first ever Tameside Pride. Pride parades are outdoor events celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender culture and pride. Although the event itself won't be till July 6th preparations for the fiesta are already underway. The first fundraising event takes place soon and will be one of the many ways organisers are looking for people to join the fun, get involved and show their support. For more information and details on upcoming events find Tameside Pride 2019 on Facebook.



**2** LGBTQ people are less likely to be active than the rest of the population, but why? For many people sport and physical activity is a world where gender stereotypes are in full swing, and homophobia is rife, meaning that getting active can be uncomfortable or even frightening. For those who do want to get active it can often be alone, without the fun and camaraderie that being on a team has to offer. It's not right, and it's not fair. We want to work to make sport and physical activity a place where LGBT people feel welcome, and to do that we need to work together. If you identify as LGBTQ we want to hear from you. Go to the Big Conversation and answer a short survey to have your say.



**3** In a survey 1 in 4 LGBT people indicated that they were not out with any medical professional, and 1 in 5 delayed accessing help because of it. Being LGBT means there are additional and specific health concerns to be conscious of, so it's really important to be open about your identity and lifestyle with your GP if you are to get the best healthcare. GPs, Optometrists, Pharmacists and Dentists in Tameside are being encouraged to sign up to 'Pride in Practice', an accreditation awarded to practices that demonstrate a commitment to empathy, understanding, and meeting the needs of LGBT patients. If you would like to share your experience of being an LGBT person accessing primary care, whether it was a positive or negative experience, click the link.



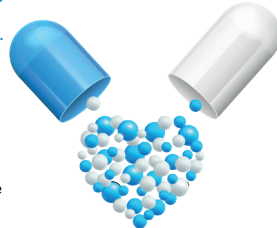
**4** Many young LGBT people feel scared, unsure, depressed, or worried about coming out. They may face bullying in school, or even at home if family members struggle to accept their identity. Tameside LGBT Youth Group is a group for young LGBT people to meet each other, make friends, talk about things important to them, and have fun. Services offered include Peer Support, guidance on questioning gender or sexuality, tips for how to come out, advice on what to do if you're feeling stressed/depressed, trans specific information, how to keep safe online and much more.



**5** Nowadays HIV is a treatable, long-term condition. The 'HIV Has Changed' campaign aims to encourage people to get tested regularly in order to diagnose the virus as early as possible. With the right treatment it can be kept at an undetectable and un-transmittable level. There are several ways you can find your HIV status, it doesn't have to include a trip to a GP or clinic. Click the link to obtain a free home test.



**6** HIV has changed. We know so much more about it these days, and researchers continue to find more ways to stop the virus in its tracks. The NHS is currently trialling 'Pre Exposure Prophylaxis', known as Prep. This drug works to prevent HIV taking hold when an HIV negative person is exposed to the virus. Prep isn't freely available as a routine service yet, so it's important to remember that a condom is still the best first line of defence against HIV and STIs. Want to know more about prep? Click the link.



**7** Parents of LGBT children often need to support their child through physical, mental and emotional health issues they themselves have never experienced. They may also have worries and questions of their own on learning that their child wishes to live their life differently to their existing expectations. Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbian and Gay UK (Pflag) offer help and advice to ensure friends and family understand what they can do to positively support each other at what can be a confusing time.



**8** According to a survey by Stonewall, Lesbian and Bisexual women are more likely to drink excess alcohol than heterosexual women. With that comes a number of health concerns, ranging from weight gain and weight related problems such as Type 2 Diabetes, to increased blood pressure and the risk of developing heart disease and stroke. In addition there are the safety aspects of a night on the town to think about, as alcohol lowers inhibitions and makes it more likely that you'll take risks. Girls on Pop is a guide to safer drinking for Lesbian and Bisexual women, including some interesting suggestions for nights out without the booze.



**9** LGBT people are more likely to experience mental health problems than the wider population. Experience of bullying, rejection, stigma and discrimination may lead to low self-esteem, depression, anxiety and feelings of isolation. Mind offer mental health support for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer or questioning (LGBTQ). The LGBT Foundation also provides a talking therapies service to the LGBT communities of the North West, including access to LGBT affirmative therapy, counselling with an LGBT specialist therapist and FREE sessions to individuals and couples. Click the logo to find out more from each organisation.



**10** Many of the issues in later life are similar whether you're heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, but some matters may need special consideration. Older people, in particular those who have lived through times when hiding their identity was a way to feel safe, may feel a pressure to return to the closet when faced with entering a health or social care service. A new resource guide called 'Safe to be me', is available for anyone working or volunteering in health and social care settings to understand and meet the needs of older LGBT people. It includes practical advice on helping older LGBT people feel safe and accepted for who they are.



**11** A proportion of those living with dementia hail from the LGBT community. Experience of the disease is hugely influenced by the life experience of the individual. People with dementia who are also LGBT may need to have additional needs met, and considerations made of the times they grew up in. For those who are 65 years plus, the landscape has changed. An LGBT person living with dementia may find the changes confusing, and may feel unsafe if they forget how far things have come. This guide will help anyone who is caring for an LGBT person with dementia.



**12** Trans and non-Binary people who retain some physical components of the sex they were born to may still be at risk of certain cancers. For example of breast tissue, and of the cervix in the case of trans men, and of the prostate in the case of trans women. For this reason it's really important to attend regular screening tests to detect problems early. Depending on your gender identity, and how you are registered with your GP, you may or may not be called for screenings automatically. This leaflet explains when you can expect to be called, and when you may need to ask.

