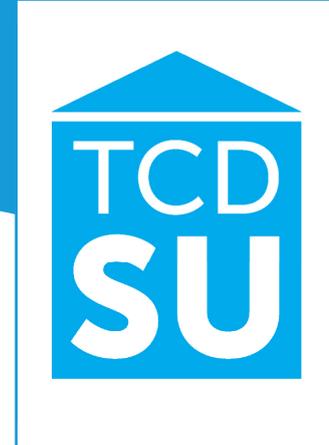


Thursday, 13th May, 2021 (13/05/21)



**Trinity College Dublin Students' Union**  
**House 6,**  
**Trinity College Dublin,**  
**Dublin 2.**

### **Tomorrow TCDSU Launches HIV Testing Kit Service.**

Tomorrow, Friday 14th May 2021 at 12pm, TCDSU launches our free, rapid HIV testing kit service. You can apply via the portal on [tcdsu.org](https://tcdsu.org).

With the short term provision of 500 BioSURE Rapid HIV testing kits, we hope that Trinity Students will have better access to safe non-judgemental HIV screening without financial burden. Kits are available to all students on the Island of Ireland. If you are not a Trinity student and are seeking a HIV Test, head to [mpower.hivireland.ie](https://mpower.hivireland.ie) to find out more and book a test.

Due to the expected high volume of orders, and to ensure everyone has a fair and equitable chance to access a kit, we will monitor orders weekly with a max capacity of 100 kits a week. If you think you have recently been exposed to HIV and are not currently on effective treatment, seek an emergency appointment at St. James's GUIDE clinic where you will be able to avail of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP). The rapid tests provided by TCDSU may not be able to detect recent exposures. For emergency cases where a kit may be needed as soon as possible, you can contact the Welfare & Equality Officer Leah at [welfare@tcdsu.org](mailto:welfare@tcdsu.org) who will handle exceptional circumstances.

As part of the application form, there are a set of questions attached that will inform a joint report between TCDSU, HIV Ireland and the MPOWER project on HIV within the college community. While optional, we highly encourage you to fill it out if you feel comfortable. We endeavour to ensure that all applicant information is anonymised where possible.

Two weeks after applying, each applicant will receive a follow up questionnaire on the overall experience, and quality of the process. This is an optional survey, but these responses will further inform the aforementioned collaborative report.

Each kit has almost everything you need to complete a self HIV test. You will need to provide a timer, as each test takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Because of the possibility that a positive result from a single HIV test is a false positive, the result is described as 'reactive' rather than 'positive'. If you get a reactive result, it is possible that you have acquired HIV, but this needs to be confirmed at a clinic.

We hope that the provision of and demand for these testing kits amongst our students will act as a clear case study into the need for effective, accessible testing and we hope to maintain our close ties with HIV Ireland so that these kits can help to inform their policies going forward.

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The chronic underfunding of key services such as HIV Ireland and the closure of the Gay Men's Health Service (GMHS) during the COVID-19 Pandemic have only served to highlight the barriers faced by those seeking testing and diagnosis. During the current pandemic, it has become increasingly difficult to access effective screening services. Access to free PrEP (Pre Exposure Prophylaxis) in Ireland is limited to a few specialty clinics including the aforementioned GMHS. While free to groups identified as vulnerable to HIV transmission, the reduced access to these clinics has heightened the barrier to accessing PrEP. We are hoping to see these services restored and expanded in the near future in order to ensure that all who need it can get it.

**Kind Regards,**  
**Philly Holmes, Communications and Marketing Officer TCDSU**

On Behalf of TCDSU

Eoin Hand, President  
Megan O'Connor, Education Officer  
Leah Keogh, Welfare and Equality Officer  
Hugh McInerney, Ents Officer