

Tuesday, 2nd March, 2021 (02/03/21)



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

### **Press Release on the passing of Motion on HIV Testing**

TCDSU are delighted to pass a motion for the provision of free, rapid HIV testing kits. With the establishment of this endowment fund and short term provision of tests, we hope that Trinity Students' will have better access to safe, non-judgemental HIV screening without financial burden.

With the passing of this motion, it's important to recognise that currently, Ireland experiences HIV transmission rates that are almost double that of the European average and we are also currently experiencing higher transmission rates than those seen during the height of the AIDs epidemic in Ireland. 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.

We hope that this motion will be a step in the right direction towards the provision of free, rapid HIV testing for all who need it alongside the eventual end to HIV transmission. We also 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.

We'd like to commend current SU President, Eoin Hand on his commitment to this issue. He has worked tirelessly to establish ties with HIV Ireland and work towards the provision of these testing kits for Trinity Students. Working closely with HIV Ireland, we have established effective lines of disclosure to ensure that those who do receive a positive result have easy access to an effective support network. As part of the sign up process, and with consent, a student's information will be securely shared with both services to ensure that support is available to those who need it.

The President's work follows a 2019/20 motion to lobby to end the Irish MSM blood ban passed by the LGBT+ Rights Officer at the time.

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Finally, we'd also like to acknowledge all those who have helped us get to this point. TCDSU and its members stand on the shoulders of a generation of Irish LGBT+ people that was ravaged by the HIV epidemic and the long shadow cast on LGBT+ communities around the world. We are incredibly grateful for their activism and we are sorry for their loss. It's crucial that we memorialise their hard work and recognise the barriers faced historically by LGBT+ people in Ireland but also worldwide.

Thank you to Adam Shanley from HIV Ireland for his time and expertise in getting this project up and running.

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

On Behalf of TCDSU President, Eoin Hand

and TCDSU  
Megan O'Connor, Education Officer  
Leah Keogh, Welfare and Equality Officer  
Hugh McInerney, Ents Officer