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Widening access to HIV testing through a national home-testing offer: the success of HIV Scotland's community-led approach

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Widening access to HIV testing through a national home- testing offer: the success of HIV Scotland's community-led approach.

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CEO of HIV Scotland

Conflict of Interest

In relation to this presentation I declare that I have no conflict of interest



Context: Accessing HIV testing

- HIV testing is a prerequisite to accessing HIV care and prevention services
- Disparity in testing between demographics
- Stigma, discrimination, challenges at facilities like wait times, not knowing benefits of HIV testing
- Widespread disruption to the delivery of services to patients who need them most, including HIV testing capacity and delivery re COVID-19
- New innovative methods to expand access to HIV testing required to achieve relevant UNAIDS goals

HIV Scotland's HIV self-testing: HIVTest.Scot

- HIV Scotland successfully advocated for a national offer to be funded by Scottish Government.
- HIV Scotland provides free postal tests available to everyone living in Scotland.

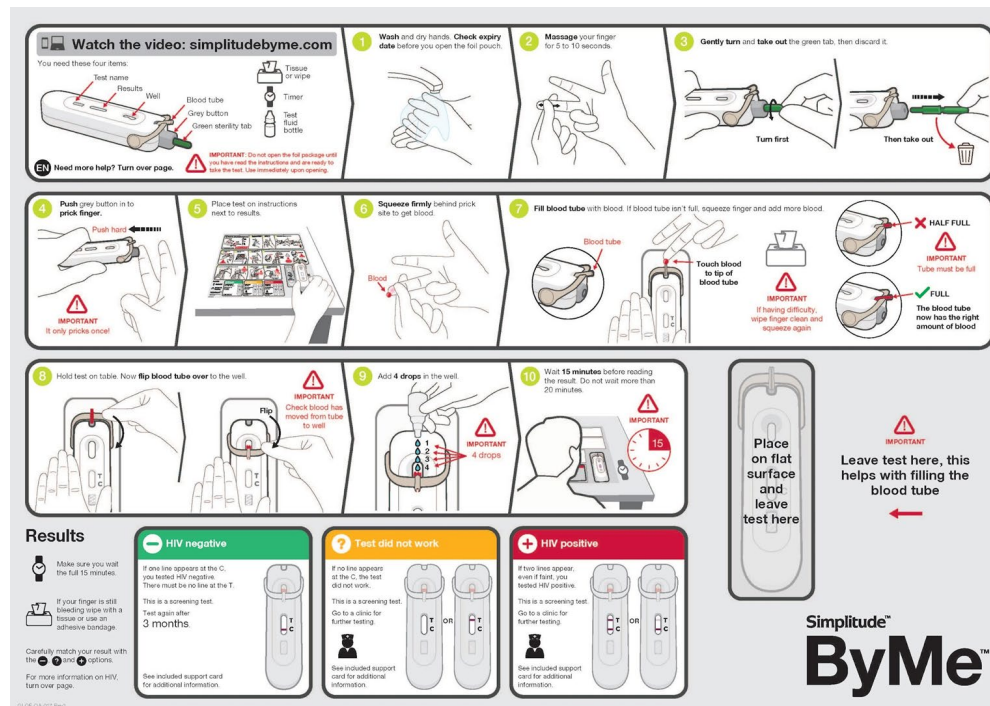
HIVST allows an individual to:

- **Collect their own blood specimen**
- **Conduct an HIV test in a private setting;**
- **And independently interpret results**

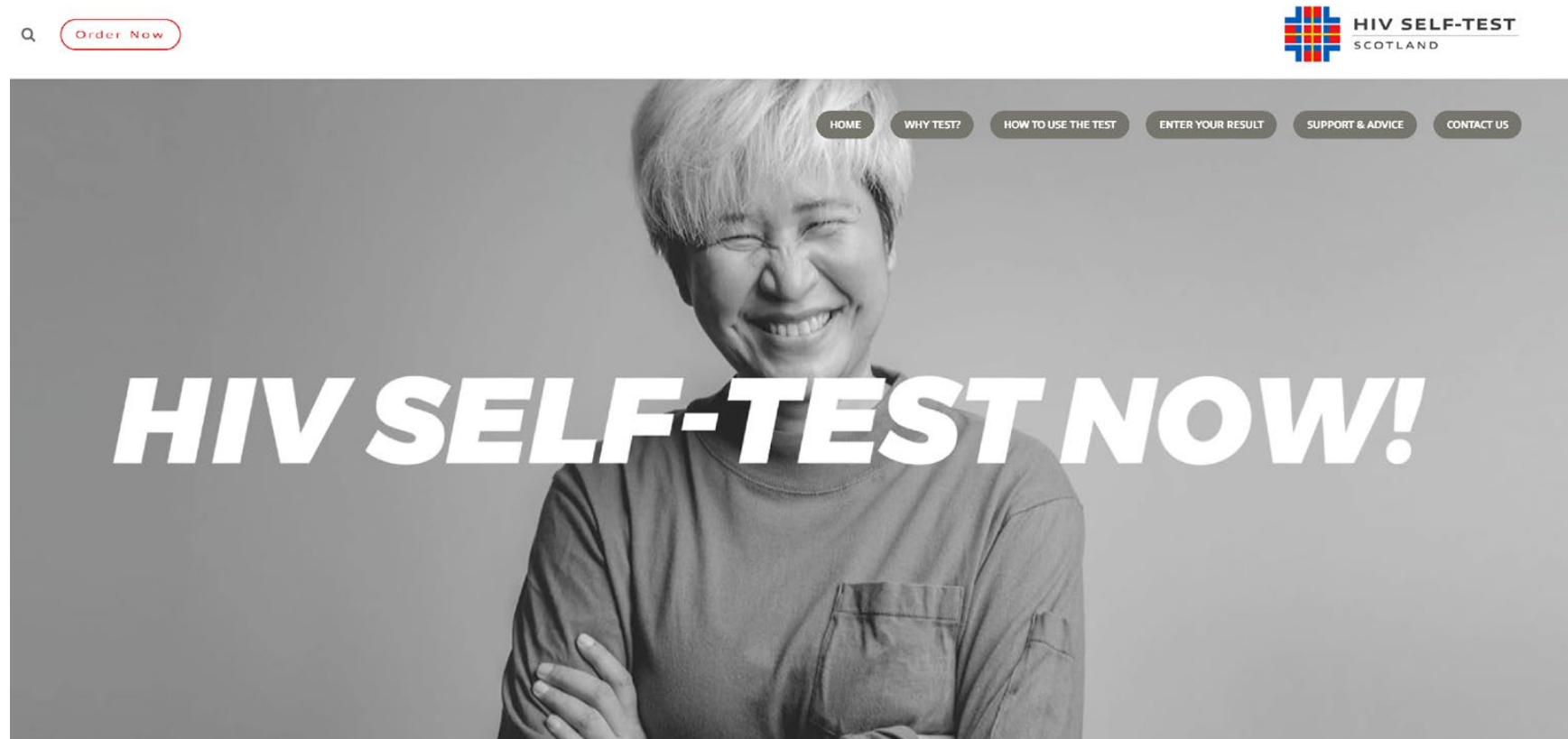


Testing innovation: HIV self-testing (HIVST)

- We use the Simplitude ByMe test which is simple to use and gives results in under 15 minutes.

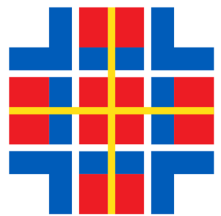


Orders are made through a dedicated website: hivtest.scot



Users of the service are encouraged to submit their results to ensure they are provided with the right level of support, including signposting to other services.

The service provides support information to users on its website, by email, SMS and by phone.



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Total Orders

Since launching in June 2020

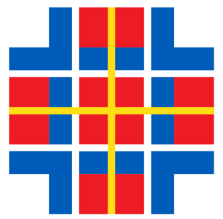
As of **29 June 2022**

15,487

...orders have been placed with the service.

www.nhivna.org





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Positive Results

Since launching in 2020...

23

...have tested provisionally positive*

Data June 2021 – May 2022

- **We asked users of the service to describe their **sexual orientation****

- **41% (n= 3037) Gay men**
- **33% (n = 2475) heterosexual/straight men and women**
- **13% (n = 991) bisexual men and women**
- **8% (n = 564) did not report sexual orientation**
- **4% (n = 293) preferred not to report sexual orientation**
- **<1% (n = 87) other sexual orientation**
- **<1% (n = 48) gay women**



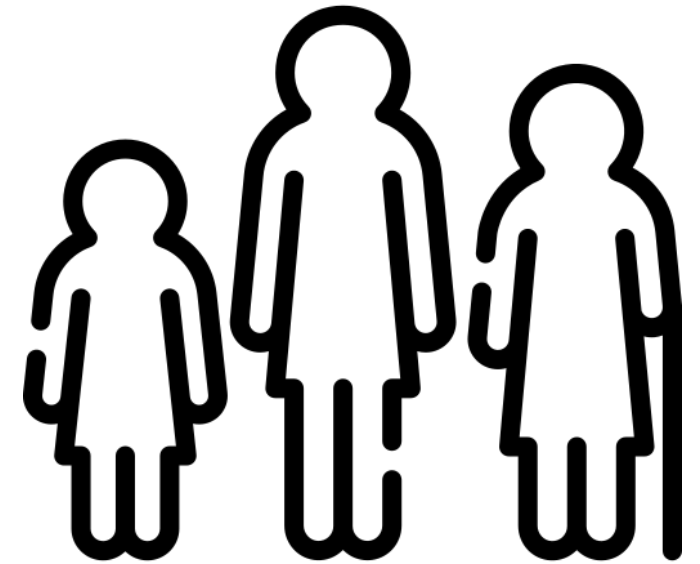
Data June 2021 – May 2022

- We asked users of the service to describe their **gender**
 - 62% (n = 4629) male
 - 27% (n = 2007) female
 - 2% (n = 139) non-binary
 - 2% (n = 56) trans identifying
 - 2% (n = 71) preferred not to say their gender
 - <1% (n = 6) reported an other gender

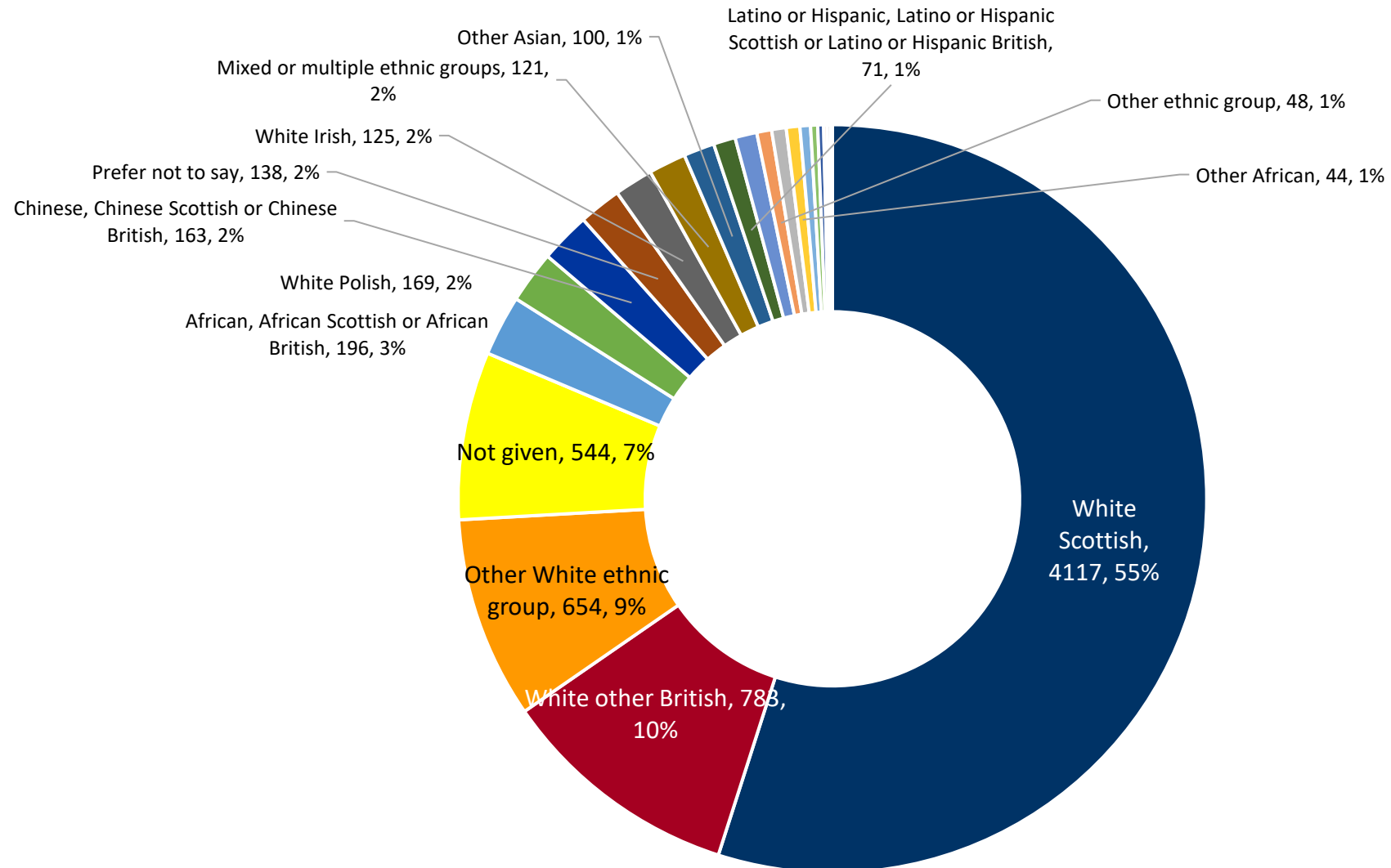


- **We asked users of the service to describe their **age**.**

- **25–34 (n=2845, 38%)**
- **30% (n = 2215) were 18 – 24**
- **18% (n = 1319) were 35 - 44**
- **6% (n = 413) were 45 – 54**
- **6% (n = 450) did not report their age**
- **2% (n = 163) were 55 – 64**
- **1% (n = 69) were 16 – 17**
- **<1 % (n = 21) were 65+**



White Scottish accounts for the majority of 'Ethnicity'.





User Feedback

“Having moved here from the London area, I'd say the Scots service is miles better.”

“It was very easy to understand and perform in home, very private and highly informative. I would totally recommend it.”

“It's pretty slick from start to finish! Really clever!”

“Most importantly - all of the communication (email and texts) surrounding the service were incredibly reassuring; supportive; and well toned (not that easy in text!) It very much felt like there was a community of folk there, had the test been positive. I think you're running a great service. Well done!”

“A fantastic service, will use again.”

“Taking the test at home and not having to make appointments or travel is very convenient.”

“I found the service to be excellent. The testing kit arrived in a discreet package, it was very simple to use and the instructions were clear.”

“Simple, efficient, private, discreet, convenient and as a women, gender inclusive!”



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User Feedback

“thank you for providing this service at a time when I can't even access normal STI testing in the NHS where I am based. It was great to be able to order one for free very easily from your service. I'd never taken an HIV test before so am pleased to now know my status.”

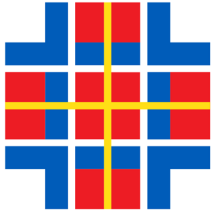
“Was able to know my HIV status while all local sexual health services were reduced and effectively unavailable to me for over a year due to the pandemic.”

“This was great and I hope to see it continue. Knowing your status is really important so whatever can be done to break down barriers and stigma is fantastic.”

“The quick service at a time where it harder to access a GUM drop in service.”

“Find having to wait on the results from the NHS can be a bit stressful as it can take a few days for the results to come up, where as here you know your results after 15 min.”





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Conclusion and next steps



www.nhivna.org





HIVST has been documented to be an acceptable, feasible, and useful tool to supplement place-based testing

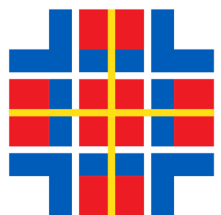
By providing a national offer, increase in engagement with one's SHBBV testing needs has been seen across Scotland

The role of the Third Sector in supporting testing outside of the clinic continues to be acceptable and new innovations in testing are culturally relevant

Looking ahead

We are conducting primary research exploring the Sexual Health service Access, Resilience, and Expertise (**SHARE**) of those living in Scotland reflecting on the last 12 months of the (relative easing of) the COVID-19 pandemic

Assessing public attitudes toward Monkeypox among Scottish pride event attendees (Arran, Grampian, Edinburgh and Glasgow).



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Thank you for your attention

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