



Raising the profile of **positive** women

November 2013, Issue 09

When Maternity Doesn't Matter: Dispersing pregnant women seeking asylum

(by Rayah Feldman, Maternity Action)

NICE guidance recommends special efforts and additional services to meet the maternity care needs of pregnant refugees and asylum seekers who are known to be at higher risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes. Problems of insecurity, underlying health conditions, the loss of family and social networks and other traumatic experiences affect such women's physical and mental health. Such problems are exacerbated for pregnant asylum seekers when they are dispersed or relocated by the Home Office during pregnancy.

[When Maternity Doesn't Matter](#) documents the impact of dispersal on the care and wellbeing of pregnant asylum seekers. Many women were moved late in pregnancy, against the advice of their clinicians, and with little regard for their welfare during the journey. In one case a woman living with HIV who had lived in the same town for ten years was moved despite appeals from HIV clinicians, midwives, and her HIV support charity. Women found themselves removed from established health care and social networks, with little assistance to re-engage with maternity services.

Maternity care was interrupted, with resulting loss of continuity of care and trust between woman and midwife. Tests and scans often needed to be repeated, and multi-agency work was disrupted. Dispersal had an extremely adverse effect on women's mental health, as they experienced increased stress and loss of social support. Many gave birth alone, and none had an interpreter present.

The report recommends that the Home Office reconsider its policy of dispersing pregnant women and develop new guidelines for asylum support taking into account NICE standards on the



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Making a difference in HIV
POSITIVELY
UK

maternity care of vulnerable women.



Kathy

"I know that there is much gender-based violence against women living with HIV because I see it and we speak of it in our "Between The Sheets" meetings."



Naomi

"The stigma of living with HIV was now shifting into regaining my confidence as I realised I could still live a normal life."



Michelle

"She had not only just discovered they had HIV. She had discovered after 33 years of marriage, the man she fell in love with at the age of 17 had been unfaithful to her, not with a woman."



Tribute to Joyce

(by Lynda Shentall)

"My wonderful friend Joyce is very ill and I wanted to pay tribute to the change that she helped bring about in the lives of many families affected by HIV in the UK. She knows that I am writing this article."



WISE-UP+

(Women Inspire, Support and Empower - Unleashing Positive Potential)

This is an exciting new project that the Sophia Forum is undertaking.

The project has been funded by the Lottery's Awards for All Programme and its aim is to reach out to a new generation of women living with HIV and to create new activists and



Blogs by Silvia Petretti

(Deputy CEO of Positively UK and Sophia Forum supporter)

[HIV Patient Information and NHS Confidentiality](#)

[Involvement of people living with HIV: are we there yet?](#)

[Positively UK Conference 2013](#)

(report by Kathleen Charters)

As women living with HIV we asked what issues we faced, what we intended to do individually, regionally, and nationally to address the issues raised.

The main issues included disclosure to partners and family and the lack of support for affected family members. Concerns about early menopause, lack of access to contraceptive guidance with consideration to being a woman living with HIV, body changes due to medication, diabetes and living with co-morbidities all bubbled fast to the surface. The issue of gender based violence, violence being experienced in many shapes and forms and the lack of support services to address this. How to date? Who to date? Have long term survivors been forgotten? And what of those who don't choose to take medication and the marginalization they may feel? What challenges will ageing bring? Getting back to work after having children.

We spoke of our responses to the issues; celebrating ourselves, giving ourselves time to nourish spirit body and soul. Asking for help. Embracing new roles. Ensuring women get onto the agenda and in the frame on research projects so we are reflected in statistics and policy making.

Read Kathleen's [full report](#).

advocates among these women.
Watch this space for more details...



easyfundraising
.org.uk

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.org.uk



Sponsor Lynda Shentall
to run 10 miles to raise money
for
the Sophia Forum

Disclaimer

*All the pieces are the writers' own stories
and do not necessarily reflect the views
of Sophia Forum.*

*For confidentiality reasons, some of the
names in this newsletter are
pseudonyms.*

Someone has been
fundraising for the Sophia
Forum.

Thank you so much if you
have been a part of this!

Please click on the two
images above for further
details about how to support
us at no extra cost to you at
all.

Stockport 10 is an
infamously tough 10 mile road
race with many steep inclines
and a killer last couple of miles.
The race is on the 8th of
December 2013.

Lynda trains off road as she has
little cartilage left on her knees
so it would be great to have
sponsorship to motivate her and
what a fantastic way to raise
much needed cash for the
Sophia Forum.

Please [show your support](#) too.

Sophia 

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For more information about women and HIV visit our [website](#).
To send feedback on this newsletter please [email](#) us.

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The Sophia Forum is the UK Chapter of the [UNAIDS Global
Coalition on Women and AIDS](#)
(www.womenandaids.net)

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Lynda Shentall for compiling the
personal stories
and to all the other contributors.

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