## 1 HIV/AIDS + Testing

## Graphic Communication: A UK HIV/AIDS Design Archive www.hivgraphiccommunication.com

The design of visual communication about HIV testing in the UK has evolved dramatically since the late '80s, reflecting changes in both availability of treatment options and the social and cultural contexts of HIV/AIDS.

The last decade has seen increased speed and ease of testing

with clinics and testing services referencing the visual language

sampling kits, the accompanying advertisements also evolved to be more like those selling a product or service than the text heavy, uncertainty-laden approaches of twenty years ago.

of club flyers. As the promotion of testing as a form of HIV prevention became standard, and organisations piloted home

2013

2012

2010

2011

2004

2001

2008

**YOU'RE STILL NEGATIVE?** WITHOUT KNOWING

2003: The Chief Medical Officer's Report suggested that gay and bisexual men should be offered an HIV test every year (although it did not state who should do the offering). Whatever your lifestyle,

2008: New guidelines from

the British HIV Association

advocated the widespread

all new GP registrants and

general medical admissions

should be offered an HIV test.

take control of your sexual health.

Many clinics offer same day testing. Support is available before and after your test.

o find out more about testing and where to get one

s it worth taking the test?

est result could bring. But it's also important to bear in mind

t last, treatments for HIV are getting better. It's now real ect that taking anti-HIV drugs can delay the onset of AIDS and

i-infection drugs can prevent problems like pneumonia. More an

many of us are still asking. We know all ti

HIV testing is free and confidential

BIGUP GW A

services and recommended that

in areas of high HIV prevalence.

expansion of HIV testing

By the early 2000s, adverts were listing more positive reasons for testing and the colour palettes also became brighter and more upbeat.

FINDING OUT YOU HAVE HIV CAN ADD YEARS TO YOUR LIFE 1997

1995

relaxed attitude to anonymity

A marked increase in communications about testing began in 1995; these tried to address the complexity of the issues involved as the breakthrough in treatment options emerged. This could sometimes result in very wordy executions. By attempting to anticipate all potential questions, ads and leaflets were often very text-heavy. But gradually the use of photographs or illustrations of people became more widespread in an attempt to humanise the issue and reflect a more

was pretty nervous when I went for the test

Advocacy organisations emphasised the issue of 'rights' in relation to HIV testing through bold on the ambiguity of the term 'testing'. The THT Advice Centre, in supporting HIV positive people dealing with discrimination and stigma, also created advertising to raise awareness around issues of consent in testing.

immunity type and colour. The provocative language played Say Yes To The Test

If you're a sexually active gay man you should have an HIV test at least once a year. Here's why...



2001: The National Strategy for HIV and Sexual Health recommended universal offers of HIV tests in GUM clinics and the UK began to move from opt-in testing policies (where clients had to request a test and make it through gatekeepers to get one) to opt-out policies (testing as a routine part of general STI screening).

A 1995 London Lighthouse fundraising insert backfired by attempting to play on fears and prejudices. The inside of the leaflet revealed that the 'test' was of

the audience's engagement with AIDS as a cause (echoing Vito Russo's 1988

claim that "AIDS is a test of who we are

as a people"). The critical reaction was

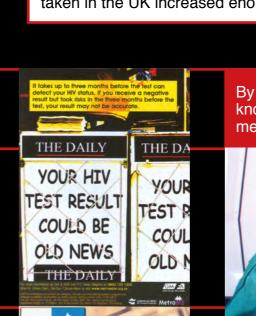
primarily because of the association of

an HIV positive diagnosis with failure.

REASONS TO BE TESTED

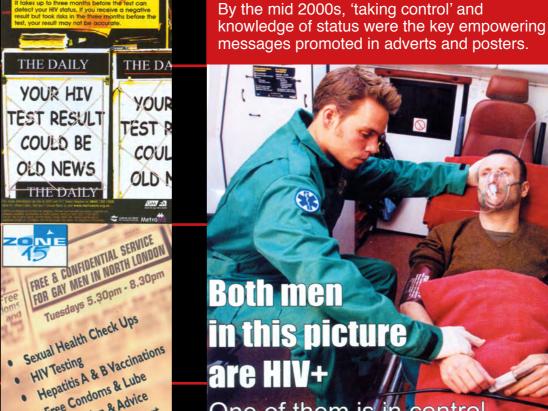
2008: The 'Swiss Statement' was released by a group of HIV physicians in Switzerland – the belief that people with HIV who were on combination therapy with undetectable viral load and who had no other STI, were not sexually infectious during vaginal intercourse. This added an extra urgency to swifter diagnoses, and HIV treatment has increasingly been seen as a means to prevent new infections. A consensus quickly developed that this was probably the case for anal intercourse also.

As a consequence of these changes in testing policy and practice, the number of HIV tests offered and taken in the UK increased enormously.



an hiv test?





are HIV+ One of them is in control He chose to get tested and know his HIV status. Knowing your status means that you can take control of your health and lifestyle. For more information go to www.metromate.org.uk/testing

> Crusard GM FA Gay Men Fighting AIDS Try this HIV test...



TEST

Testing as Prevention



IN THE KNOW

the

Normalisation of Testing

HIV Testing (29)

1996: World AIDS Conference, Vancouver. Data demonstrated the efficacy of combination therapy a cocktail of drugs that work on different parts of HIV's replication cycle and suppress the virus but not expel it altogether. This completely changed the balance of costs and benefits of an HIV diagnosis, but it took some years for these implications to change testing policy and services.



HIV TESTING!

When Texaco made HIV tests compulsory for job applicants, Act Up responded with agitprop style cartoons. They portrayed Texaco as an evil petrol pump brandishing a large syringe, surrounded by bats or holding a test tube of blood. The message was about discrimination, but the visual language deliberately tapped into a primal fear of needles. The sinister, vampiric 'mad scientist' figure equated testing with dangerous experimentation. The overall communication was strongly anti-testing, not just anti-Texaco.

Testing and Uncertainty

TERRENCE HIGGINS TRUST **AIDS** HTLV III

The HIV-antibody test was first publicly available in the UK towards the end of 1984. It quickly became widely accessible and was free, voluntary and confidential. However, it was not 'promoted'. There was little change in testing policies over the following 12 years.

this is not a Healthcare

Antibodies produced as a result of infection with the wo germs [mycobacteria and yeasts] that infect 90% Refuse and Resist COMINUUM 172 Foundling Court Tel: +44 (0)171 713 Final: continue dire

 Free Condoms & Lube Information & Advice

· Counselling & Support

SSUES The Terrence Higgins Trust 🤡

The use of the question mark as an illustrative typographic feature prevailed throughout the '80s and '90s as a way of visually emphasising both choice and uncertainty. The weight of the question mark was sometimes heavier than the rest of the type in order to emphasise the importance of this decision; or it appeared as a shadowy presence, representing the then unknowable consequences of diagnosis.

tells you all about the test and

you might want to think about before you decide whether to