**People First Charter: recommended terminology for research and publications related to HIV**

People living with HIV are not just hosts for a virus, vectors of infection, or trial subjects - they have awareness and agency. People living with HIV have been prominent in pushing for better medical care, treatment expansion and have been collaborators in the medical progress made. The language used to refer to people with HIV in research and publications, should reflect this.

We recognise that language is not universal, and that there are always challenges when translating words, including medical terminology. However, we believe that there are some terms that should no longer be used and others that we should consider moving away from.

This document is intentionally brief and designed as a first stop for people and organisations seeking to use People First language. More information about appropriate language is available from UNAIDS [1], NHIVNA [2] and The Salamander Trust [3]. Additional resources will be added regularly.

| Please avoid                                      | Alternatives                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AIDS patient                                     | Person with complications of advanced HIV, person with an AIDS-defining illness |
| AIDS test                                        | HIV test                                                                     |
| AIDS virus                                       | HIV virus                                                                    |
| Catch HIV                                        | Acquire HIV                                                                  |
| Compliant                                        | Taking medication as recommended, adherent, concordant                       |
| Contagious/infectious                            | Person with transmittable HIV or detectable viral load                       |
| Dirty or clean in the context of people or injecting equipment | Just don’t use! Shared needles, injecting equipment or drug paraphernalia acceptable |
| HIV-infected person, people, individual(s), populations | Person/people living with HIV |
|                                                        | HIV-positive individual(s)                                                   |
| Prostitute, prostitution                         | Sex worker, transactional sex                                                |

| Consider avoiding                                | Alternatives                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abbreviations                                   | Avoid abbreviating e.g. people who inject drugs (PWID), women living with HIV (WLWH) if possible |
| Co-infected person or people                    | Person living with HIV and <additional condition> e.g. person living with HIV and hepatitis B. Treating ‘HIV/hepatitis co-infection’ or living with HIV/HBV is acceptable, treating the ‘HIV/hepatitis co-infected’ is not |
| Detectable or viraemic patients                  | People with a detectable HIV-RNA or viral load, or people with viraemia       |
| Ending HIV, ending AIDS                         | Ending HIV transmission, ending late HIV presentation or preventable HIV-related deaths |
| HIV exposed infant                               | Infant exposed to HIV                                                        |
| HIV exposed uninfected infant                    | HIV-negative infant exposed to HIV                                           |
| Intravenous drug user/IVDU; drug addict; drug abuser | People who inject drugs; People who use drugs                              |
| Spread, infect                                   | Transmit, pass on                                                            |
| HIV deaths                                      | HIV-related mortality or HIV-related                                         |
| Mother to child transmission                     | Vertical transmission, perinatally acquired HIV                              |
| Number of infections                             | Number of HIV diagnoses, number diagnosed with HIV, number of transmissions  |
| People failing therapy; failing patients         | People experiencing treatment failure, patients for whom treatment is ineffective |
| Risk group or transmission risk                  | Mode of HIV acquisition or acquisition risk                                 |

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Poorly adherent | Experiencing or reporting difficulty in taking medication regularly; experiencing challenges with adherence
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Resistant patients | People with resistant virus
Serodiscordant | Serodifferent, partners with differing HIV status
Trial subjects | Trial participants, volunteers
Unprotected sex | Sex without a condom/condomless sex, sex without PrEP use
Zero infections | Zero transmissions, zero new cases of HIV/newly acquired HIV

There is ongoing debate about the appropriateness of ‘patients’ as opposed to ‘clients’ or ‘service users’. We advise that, currently, all are acceptable but, ideally, people accessing services should be asked about their preferred terminology. UK research in mental health services show that people prefer ‘patient’ when consulted by a psychiatrist or nurse, and ‘patient’ or ‘client’ when consulted by social workers and occupational therapists; ‘service’ user was not preferred [4].

References
1) UNAIDS Terminology Guidance 2015; accessed at [https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/2015_terminology_guidelines_en.pdf](https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/2015_terminology_guidelines_en.pdf) 18th October 2021
2) Watson S et al. The language of HIV: a guide for nurses. HIV Nursing 2019; 19(2): BP1–BP4.
3) Salamander Trust. The Power of Language. Accessed at [https://salamandertrust.net/project/the-power-of-language/](https://salamandertrust.net/project/the-power-of-language/) 18th October 2021
4) Simmons P et al. Service user, patient, client, user or survivor: Describing recipients of mental health services. The Psychiatrist 2010; 34(1): 20-23.