



**WORKING**



**LIFE** FINDING JOBS, WORKING  
AND CAREER PLANNING:

A GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WITH HIV IN THEIR TEENS AND EARLY ADULthood

[NCB.org.uk/LifeLinks](http://NCB.org.uk/LifeLinks)





So you're thinking about work and careers and you have HIV? Great. Young adults with HIV are taking all sorts of exciting directions in life. Maybe you're exploring possible careers, or perhaps you already have a job.

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This leaflet is a starting point to answering those questions, and will direct you to support and further information.

# WHAT JOBS CAN I DO?

There are thousands of job options, and almost any of these are open to you. Like anybody else, the biggest challenge for you will be getting the qualifications, skills and experience you need.

However, sometimes people with certain health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or HIV are prevented from doing particular jobs. There are a small number of jobs that are currently not open to people with HIV:

- jobs which **routinely** involve close exposure to the insides of people's bodies, for example surgery, dentistry and, in some hospitals, midwifery – however, people who are restricted from doing these kinds of invasive procedures can still work in most healthcare roles
- pilot, in most cases
- army, navy or air force.

Some of these restrictions, particularly the healthcare ones, may well change in the future. You can find the most up-to-date information at [LifewithHIV.org.uk](http://LifewithHIV.org.uk).



# DO EMPLOYERS NEED TO KNOW THAT I HAVE HIV?

In most cases, no. You won't **have** to tell them, but you may **choose** to.

There are two really important things to know. The law says that:

- employers must keep your personal information confidential
- employers cannot discriminate against you because of your HIV status.

The Equality Act 2010 protects everybody from discrimination due to things like age, race, sex or disability. HIV is legally recognised as a disability, which gives you the same legal protection as anybody else with a disability. To be protected, your employer needs to know you have a disability, but not necessarily that you have HIV.



## I'M APPLYING FOR A JOB...

It is illegal for an employer or recruitment agency to ask you about your health **before** offering you a job. You might be asked to fill out a questionnaire to help them make sure they're treating people from all different groups fairly. These can include questions on age, ethnicity, sexuality, religion and disability. You can choose whether or not to answer.

If you apply to work in a healthcare role, you'll be offered an HIV test. If you say no, or tell the employer you have HIV, this can't count against you unless you're applying for a job which involves close exposure to the insides of people's bodies. However, you are currently considered to have a duty to declare your diagnosis so that they can consider how HIV may affect your role. If you're unsure, ask your clinic team or call **THT Direct** on 0808 802 1221.

## I'VE BEEN OFFERED A JOB...

You may be asked about your health **after** you've been offered a job. Information you give is confidential and goes to an occupational health assessor (not your boss). This person looks at whether employees need any special help to do their roles.

**MyHIV.org.uk** explains more, and gives you ideas for how to answer questions.



## I'VE GOT A JOB, AND I'M NOT SURE WHETHER TO TELL MY BOSS ABOUT MY HIV...

Your employer usually won't need to know that you have HIV. Many people with HIV have chosen to tell employers and found them very understanding and supportive, so it can be good to tell them.

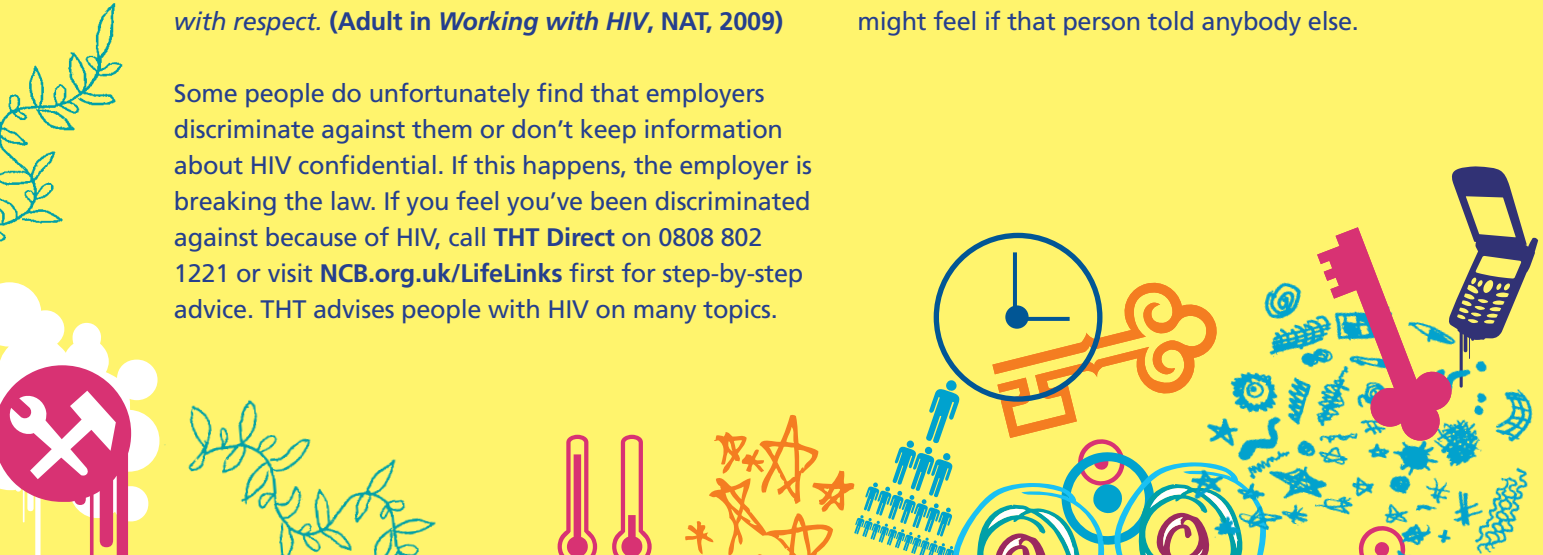
*In the end people were quiet about it and they didn't go talking to other people about it and it was treated with respect. (Adult in Working with HIV, NAT, 2009)*

Some people do unfortunately find that employers discriminate against them or don't keep information about HIV confidential. If this happens, the employer is breaking the law. If you feel you've been discriminated against because of HIV, call **THT Direct** on 0808 802 1221 or visit [NCB.org.uk/LifeLinks](http://NCB.org.uk/LifeLinks) first for step-by-step advice. THT advises people with HIV on many topics.

## IS IT A GOOD IDEA TO TELL ANYBODY ELSE AT WORK?

You might want to talk about any concerns relating to HIV and your work with somebody who knows your workplace. Maybe someone you meet at work will become a good friend.

Talking to a trusted friend at work about HIV can be very helpful. Still, it's worth thinking about how you might feel if that person told anybody else.





## HOW DO I DEAL WITH ANY APPOINTMENTS, MEDICATION OR ILLNESS THAT AFFECT MY WORK?

Whilst HIV may not affect your day-to-day work at all, at times some people with HIV find:

- they need to take medication at work
- they feel unwell or stressed at work or need some time off sick
- they have hospital appointments during work hours.

**MyHIV.org.uk** has lots of advice about how to deal with all these things.

*When I first started medication, I had to apologise in the meetings saying that I may need to run for the toilet ... but that's eased up now quite a lot.*

*I'm used to the medication I'm taking, so I find that I actually take less time off sick than people who are actually not HIV positive. So for me at the moment it doesn't really have an impact on my work and even with my hospital appointments, I find that it doesn't really have an impact on my work. (Two adults in Working with HIV, NAT, 2009)*





# IF I CAN'T GET A JOB, OR WORK FULL-TIME, BECAUSE OF MY HEALTH OR PERSONAL SITUATION, CAN I GET BENEFITS?

Welfare benefits are payments from the government that help people who may need financial support for various reasons. You can find lots of information about benefits on [TheSite.org](http://TheSite.org), in the Money section. You may find the pages on claiming health benefits and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) particularly helpful.

If you want to study, you may be able to get financial support. Speak to your school, college, or a training provider. To learn about finance for university students, go to [Push.co.uk](http://Push.co.uk).





# CAN I WORK ABROAD?

Absolutely! People with HIV can live and work in most countries. There are restrictions on working in, moving to, or entering some countries if you have HIV, such as Russia, Singapore and Bangladesh. Lots of countries have no restrictions. See [namlife.org](http://namlife.org) for details.

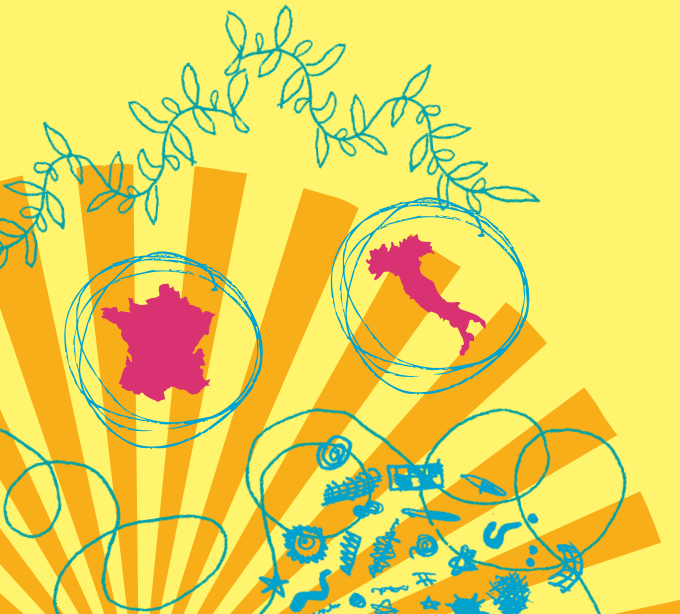
Some popular destinations which you can certainly travel to but are currently unlikely to be able to move to to live more permanently are:

- Australia
- Canada
- New Zealand.

Since 2010 people with HIV can openly travel to and apply to stay in the USA.

Availability of HIV treatment varies from country to country. Insurance allows people to access and pay for treatment abroad. Countries also have different laws affecting whether you'd have to tell any sexual partners about your HIV.

Remember, going to live in a country is very different from going on holiday there – there are fewer restrictions for tourists.



# SO, WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?

- You can find jobs through job search websites, recruitment agencies, newspapers, directly from employers or your local Jobcentre Plus.
- Visit **Direct.gov.uk** to learn about getting work and applying for benefits. You can find your local Jobcentre Plus here too.
- If you're thinking more long-term, visit **NationalCareersService.direct.gov.uk**. You can contact an adviser by phone, email, text or instant message. You can also get tips on CVs, job applications and interviews.
- If you'd like to go to uni, check out **Prospects.ac.uk** for graduate career options and learn more about university at **Push.co.uk**.
- If uni's not for you, take a look at **NotGoingToUni.co.uk**. If you want to learn on the job, find out about apprenticeships and search vacancies at **Apprenticeships.org.uk**.
- Volunteering can help you meet new people, develop skills, and enhance your CV. If you use an HIV support service, you could ask about volunteering there, or visit **Do-it.org** or **Vinspired.com** to search for opportunities.



## WHERE CAN I GET HELP?



- **THT Direct** – call 0808 802 1221 (free from landlines and most mobiles, open 10am-10pm weekdays and noon-6pm weekends) for help relating to HIV or visit [MyHIV.org.uk](http://MyHIV.org.uk), which includes forums for people aged 16+.
- **namlife.org** – information for, and stories from, people with HIV on money, travel and work
- **LifewithHIV.org.uk** – learn more about your rights and find local support services.

### HIV information, advice and networking for young people

- **CHIVA.org.uk** (Children's HIV Association) – includes secure site for young people with HIV aged 24 and under, with social networking.
- **Pozitude.co.uk** – includes forum and Your Stories.
- **Bodyandsoulcharity.org** – includes young people's radio podcasts and comic book and audio stories.

### Other information for young people on work and careers

- **TheSite.org** – information on all topics for young people.
- **Adviceguide.org.uk** – employment law and rights.

# LIFELINKS

LifeLinks is a web directory to help you find information and support on all aspects of becoming an adult, as well as HIV. It contains links and helpline numbers as well as step-by-step advice for certain situations.

Visit [NCB.org.uk/LifeLinks](http://NCB.org.uk/LifeLinks) or scan this QR code with a phone app and it will take you straight there... Remember to save the link!

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