

Oral Session 1

O4 Driving towards zero, bringing HIV testing and prevention to migrant communities across London

Poppy Vernon,
METRO Charity, UK

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Driving towards zero:
Results from an HIV testing and prevention
project with migrant communities across
London

BHIVA Spring Conference 2022

Poppy Vernon, HIV Prevention Project Lead, METRO

Who are we?

- The GMI Partnership is a collaboration between 3 London-based charities working in sexual health.



- We provide HIV POCT, sexual health advice to vulnerable groups across London through our various projects.
- Our mobile testing bus (“Ivana”) is the product of a 3-year Fast Track Cities grant (2020-2023)

Project overview

- Objective:
 - Increase HIV testing, knowledge and early diagnosis in migrant communities across London
- Methods:
 - Mobile HIV POCT testing bus pan –London
 - Areas of high migrant communities e.g., high streets, multi-cultural markets and community events
 - Provide free, rapid HIV testing, tailored prevention information, sexual health advice and signposting/referrals



Where can we be found?

South East London

-  East Street Market
-  Peckham Square
-  Brixton Market
-  Brixton station
-  General Gordon Pl
-  Catford Market
-  Deptford Market
-  Lewisham Market
-  Camberwell Green
-  Croydon high street
-  Streatham high street
-  Church carpark, Bexley
-  Food Coop @ St Georges
-  Caridon Homeless Centre
-  Evolve Support Centre
-  Migrants Organise
-  Clapham library
-  COLLINS CHEMIST
-  Tate Streatham Library

Central London

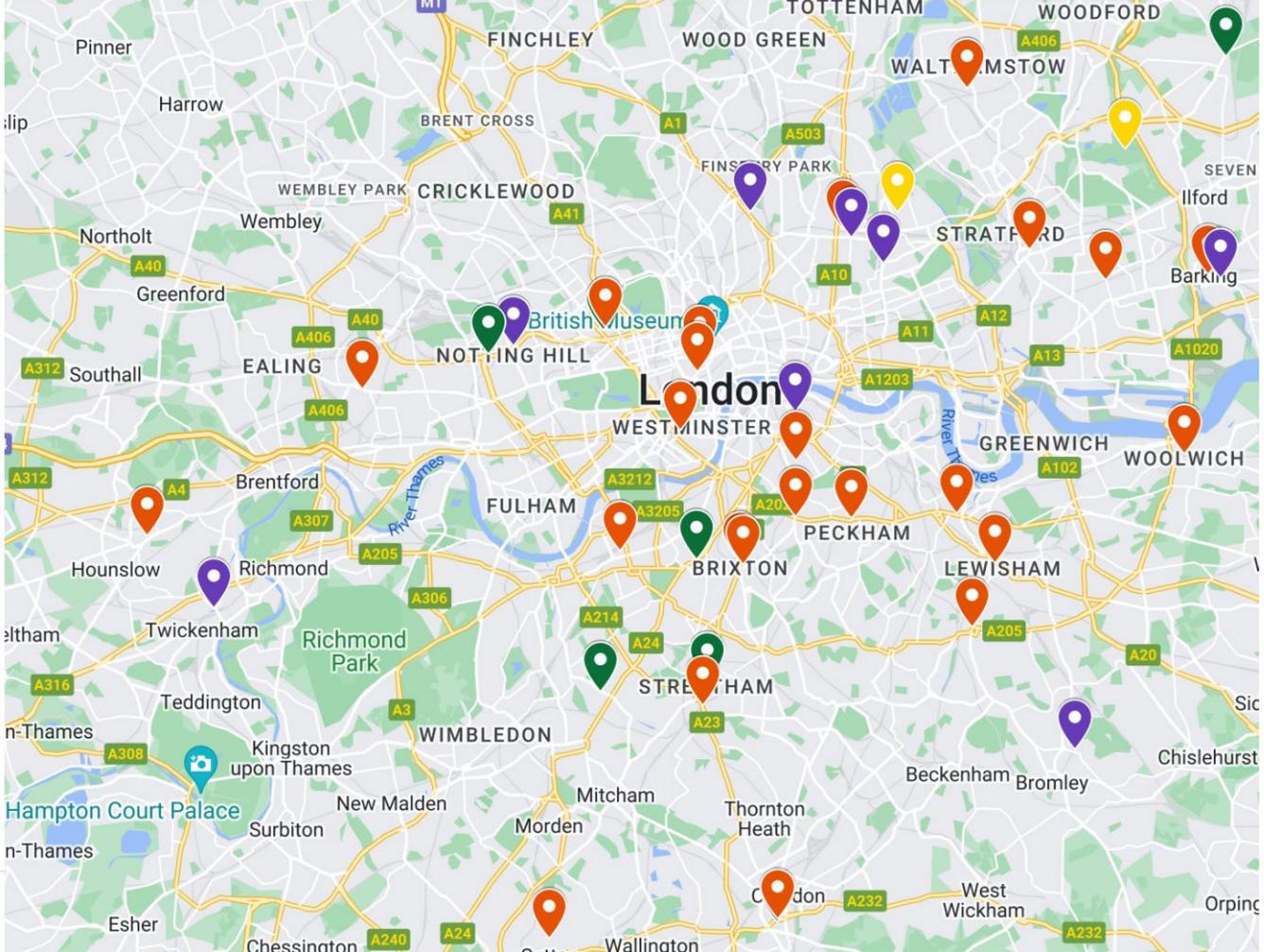
-  Church Street Market
-  Rupert street Market
-  Soho Square
-  Victoria Piazza

East and North London

-  London Metropolitan Uni
-  YMCA
-  St Mungos
-  Hackney Red Cross Centre
-  Ripple Centre
-  Fullwell Sports Centre
-  Queen's Market
-  Ridley Road Market
-  Walthamstow Town Square
-  Barking market
-  Grove Market
-  Wanstead Festival
-  Kenya in the Park
-  Akwaaba Church

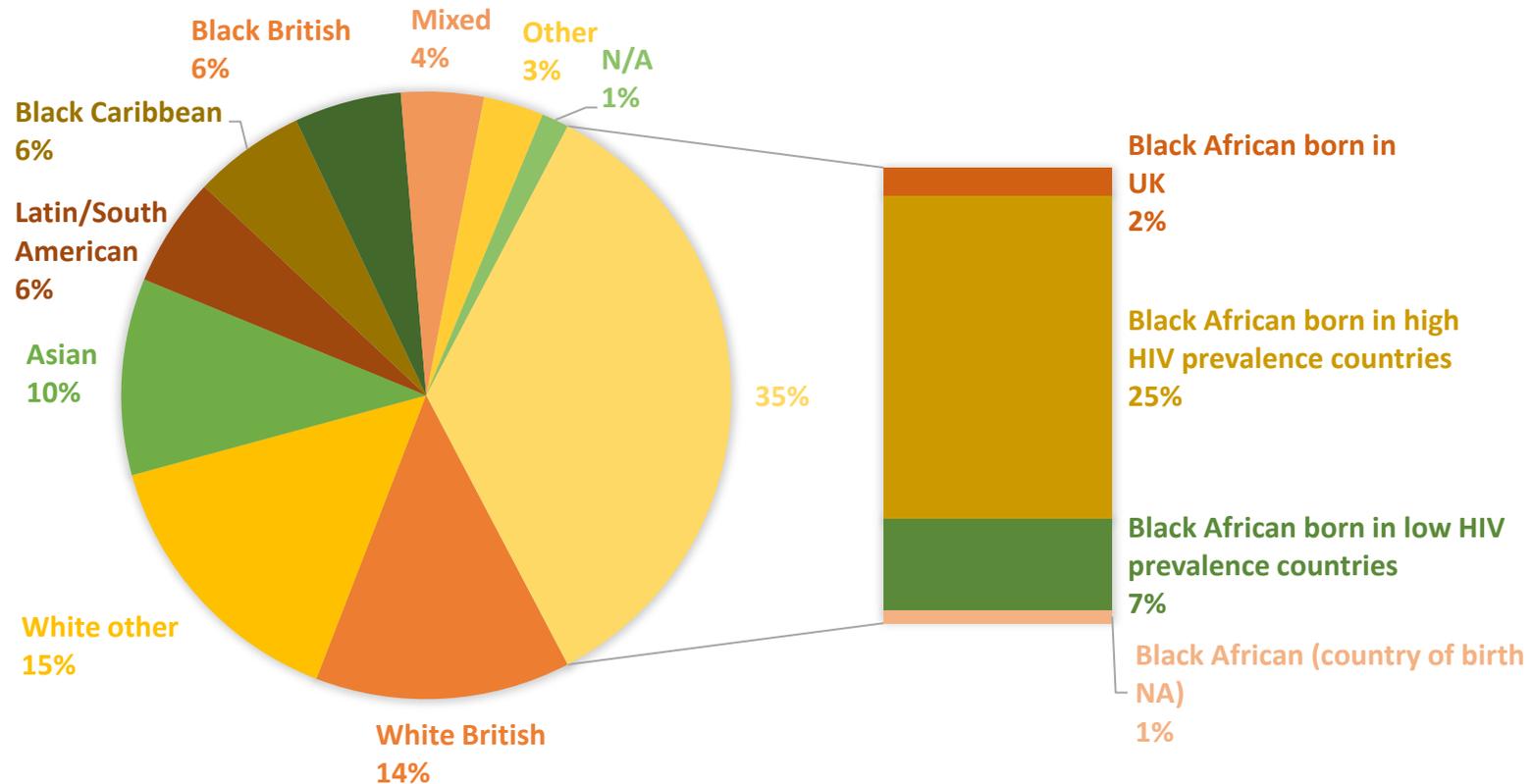
South West/ West London

-  Westway Sports Centre
-  Tooting Leisure Centre
-  Hounslow high street
-  Asda Superstore
-  Sutton high street
-  Acton Market



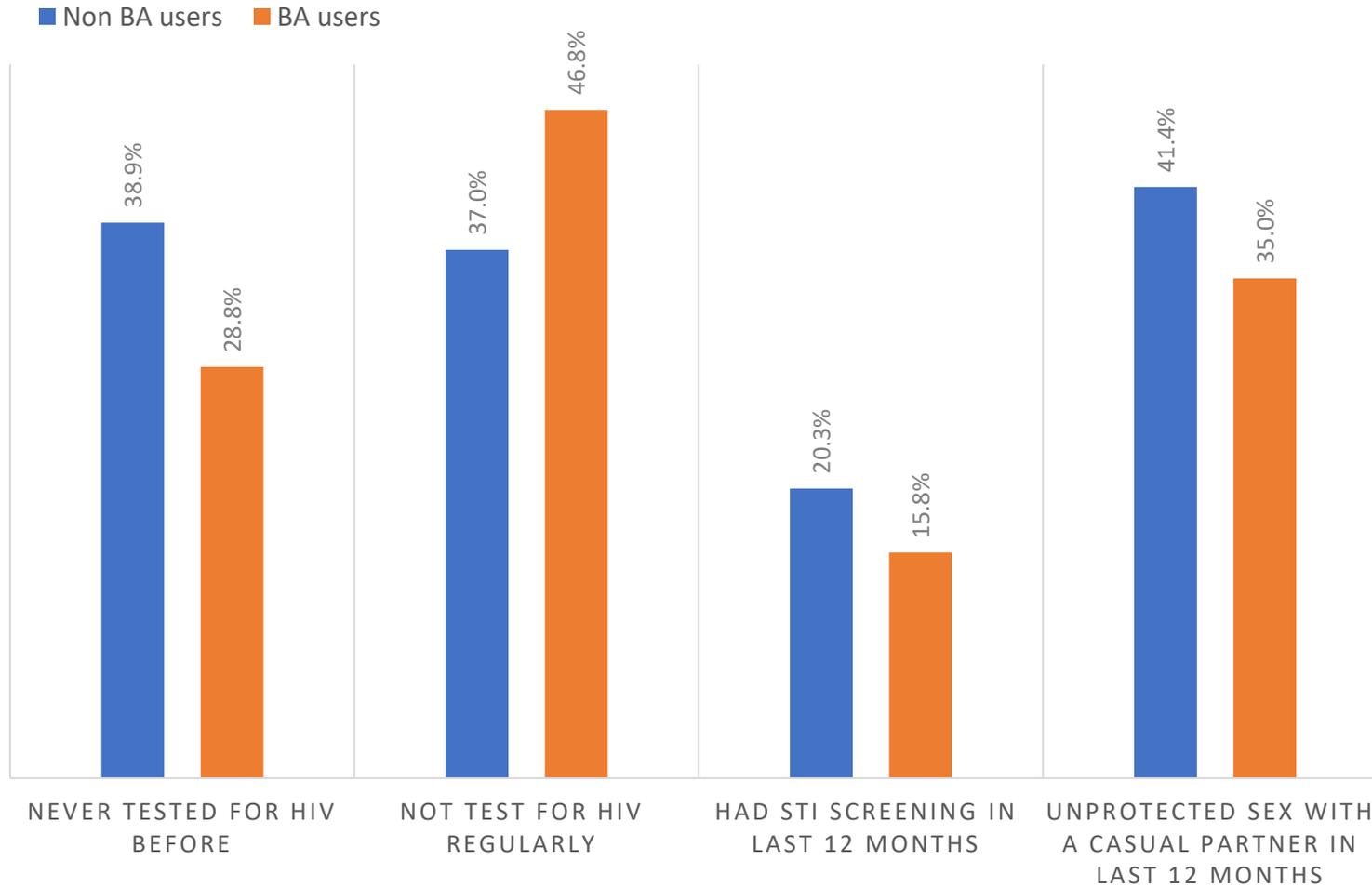
Demographics of service-users

- 1495 people were tested; age range: 17-89 (Mean 41)
- 511 (34%) were black African (BA); age range: 18-82 (Mean 42)
- Among the 511 BA service users, 465 were born overseas and 365 (71%) were from high HIV prevalence countries
- Majority reported being (62.3%) male and heterosexual (77.4%).
- Within BA service users, 55.3% reported being male and 88.6% heterosexual

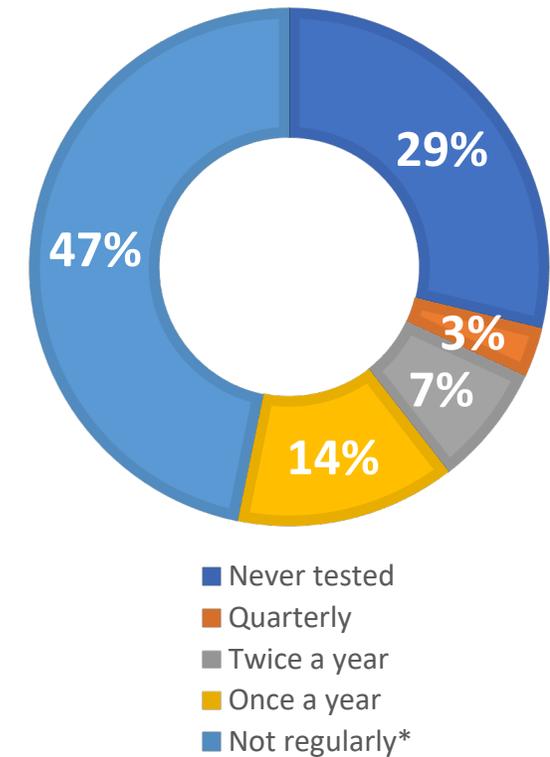


(Countries with high HIV prevalence are classified according to UNAIDS national-level HIV 2019 prevalence data)

SH behaviour of service users



BA USERS HIV TESTING FREQUENCY



*Not regularly – referring to those who only test opportunistically without any regularity.

Knowledge of service users

- 85.7% had never heard of PEP or PrEP

BA	Non BA users	BA users
Heard of PEP	16.8%	10.1%
Heard of PrEP	20.2%	12.1%
Heard of U=U*	4.4%	2.6%

** Due to data issue, only 23% of all U=U responses was transferred to the main database. This number is based on those we recovered.*

Testimonials from the community

"I am too scared to test for HIV. I'd rather not know!"
Brixton Market, London

"My son was recently diagnosed with HIV and had to move house due to neighbors being cruel, it's good that you are providing education about undetectable" East Street Market, London

"I didn't know HIV existed in the UK" East Street Market, London

"Why has your service suddenly turned up in our area? I heard that the Covid-19 vaccine is giving people HIV." Ridley Road Market, London

"How do I access PrEP? My husband travels a lot between here and Nigeria and I would like to take it when he comes home"
Croydon, London

"I've wanted to test for years and today I saw your bus and thought, it's a sign!" Soho Square, London

"I live with HIV, and I wish this service had been around ten years ago. Keep up the good work!"
Camberwell Green, London

Lessons learnt

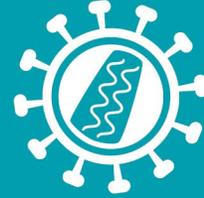
- Benefits of mobile testing unit for HIV POCT delivery:
 - Elimination of testing barriers - lack of time, incentive to test and stigma among this demographic
 - Increased autonomy and flexibility regarding service provision under COVID restrictions
 - Collaboration with other providers
 - Helping people access, understand, and connect with HIV care in a foreign healthcare system
- Significant stigma and prejudice witnessed by staff regarding HIV. People insulted at the prospect of a HIV test. It took time and patience to build trust in particular areas
- Many people reported wanting to test for years, for a particular exposure, but had not until they saw the mobile clinic
- Terminology – a lot of other migrant groups did not understand the term HIV but did recognise AIDS





Any questions?

BHIVA



British HIV Association

2022 Spring Conference

Wed 20th - Fri 22nd April
Manchester Central, Manchester

