

Police to stop marking people with HIV as 'contagious' in intelligence database

Police Scotland to stop marking people with HIV as "contagious" in their intelligence database.

The charity HIV Scotland uncovered the practice after writing to the force who have now amended the policy, and confirmed that HIV status would be removed and no longer logged.



ACC Alan Spiers

Assistant Chief Constable Alan Speirs said: "A recent review of the Scottish Intelligence Database has resulted in Police Scotland amending its practice and policy. We no longer log HIV status as a contagious indicator and existing indicators which detailed HIV status will be removed.

“SID is an essential resource that allows police officers to carry out their role safely and effectively. We regularly review intelligence that is retained to make sure it is appropriate and complies with data laws. Further reviews will be carried out to specifically ensure compliance with this amended policy.”

HIV Scotland’s chief executive Nathan Sparling said: “Clearly this is welcome news from Police Scotland, but questions still remain.

“Will they review activity that has led to people living with HIV being targeted or discriminated against because of their HIV status? What training has been provided to officers from constable to higher ranks to ensure that any knowledge intelligence – information that is known to officers but not stored in SID – is not used to discriminate against people?

“They have identified that GDPR regulations place a greater emphasis on the retention of information, and places the burden on organisations to justify why information is being retained – so can they clarify why the information was retained in the first place, and if not will they refer themselves to the Information Commissioner’s Office?

“We hope that this action will have a positive impact and shows the public that people living with HIV are not contagious.

“The modern reality is that many people living with HIV are on treatment so effective it reduces levels of the virus to a level that is undetectable in the blood, they can’t pass it on to their sexual partners and significantly reduces the risk of transmission through other routes.”