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Celebrating 20 years of Positively Women

The HIV charity, Positively Women, has launched a special edition of its magazine to mark the organisation's 20th anniversary. The commemorative edition features the stories of 24 women diagnosed over the last 20 years. The different stories illustrate the changing attitudes and treatment of women living with HIV over the last two decades.

For further information contact Lucy Osman on 020 7713 0444 or email losman@positivelywomen.org.uk.

Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and HIV

Strong links between alcohol, drugs and risky sexual behaviour are providing fuel for a "sexual health crisis" in Britain. Sexual health among the

young has deteriorated seriously in the last 12 years, and media coverage of celebrities' hard-partying lifestyles may make the problem worse, are key findings of the Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health. "Young people, from their early teens, are defining a lifestyle that involves alcohol, drugs and sex", said the group's Chair, Baroness Joyce Gould.

The report found that Britain had the highest rate of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and teenage pregnancy in Europe. There has been a "disturbing" increase in STIs – over the last 12 years, chlamydia and HIV are up 300% and syphilis 2000%. The study found a "strong correlation" between STIs, sex and drug use and added that alcohol "can increase the risk of having unprotected sex". The report also highlighted the impact that advertising and celebrities can have from a young age, citing the

"publicity and coverage of sex, drugs and excessive drinking by 'celebrities' and 'pop idols' and by characters in 'soaps', making it an acceptable lifestyle". The report's authors recommended a more collaborative and less "puritanical" official approach to the issues and said condoms should be more accessible to young people and sex education mandatory in schools. Factors including young people having parents who were ambitious for them plus a confidante as well as achievement at school were all helpful.

Source: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Healthandsocialcaretopics/Sexualhealth/Sexualhealthgeneralinformation/DH_4079794

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