



MY HEALTH, MY CHOICE, MY CHILD, MY LIFE

## Developing a National Network of Mentor Mothers to support women living with HIV through pregnancy

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**Aim:** to train **40** women living with HIV as Mentor Mothers, across 8 UK regions in collaboration with HIV specific third-sector organisations

## Methods

- innovative two-day training package facilitated by two experienced trainers, one a Mentor Mother herself
- Coaching on clinical and psychosocial aspects of pregnancy and HIV, together with creative writing workshops
- Training sites: Bournemouth, Brighton, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leicester, Leeds, London/Essex, Manchester



- Between April and October 2016, we trained **46 women** living with HIV to be Mentor Mothers
- The median age of women completing training was 40.5 years (range 22– 67); 40% were of Black African ethnicity
- All rated the different training components as either **good or excellent**
- **Nearly 90%** reported improvements in knowledge about HIV and pregnancy and confidence in action planning had improved
- The **creative writing component** was rated highly
- Stories were collated into a booklet to share with participants, host organisations and healthcare professionals



- **Challenges:** recruitment and retention; concerns about confidentiality; host organisation funding cuts
- **Solutions:** targeted advertising; pro-active follow-up of participants; childcare costs; social media campaign
- **Successes:** exceeded target; peer-led evaluation; extra (invited) workshops for healthcare providers; creative writing component

It is very important that women get this type of training and get together more [...] the majority of women are still in the dark about these issues.

Creative writing workshop brought a lot of memories [and is] something that can help others. This is something powerful. Without creative writing it is left hidden, forgotten, or never valued.  
*It is like a hidden treasure.*