

**Testimonies of people who use
drugs, sex workers, and
LGBTQIA+ community members
collected by Ritshidze in 2023**

Eastern Cape testimonies

Testimony 1

Anonymous

March 2023

Butterworth, Amathole

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ community members, bad staff attitudes and privacy violations

At Adelaide Gateway Clinic, the older nurses are not welcoming and they are rude and inconsiderate. The younger nurses are much better. I got to the clinic after being physically assaulted. I had bruises and a blue eye. I shared with the nurse that a former intimate partner did this to me. I could see from her facial expression that she was shocked. That as a man, I am here reporting an assault by another man. She asked me what she should write in my file, should she refer to me as she or he. She asked who is the female in the relationship. Instead of attending to me, she just wanted to know about my personal life. I needed help to treat my wound, but instead the staff were asking me personal questions which were demeaning and unkind. I had to wait for a long time to get medical attention. They were not patient with me. I was not in the right frame of mind to be treated that way. A friend who is more flamboyant went to the clinic, so they could tell that they were gay. The staff discriminated against him and screened him for piles without him reporting any symptoms for that. During my consultation, the nurse went out to chat with the other staff and I could hear their conversation. Then the nurse came in, it looked like she just wanted to hear what I was saying. The first nurse narrated everything I had just shared.

Testimony 2

Anonymous

September 2023

Mdantsane, Buffalo City Metro

This testimony pertains to ill treatment by healthcare workers

I use Philani Clinic and will talk about staff attitudes. I had pimples in my anus and I met a nurse who was questioning me about how this happened. I explained to her that I am a gay man, and the pimple came after having sex with my partner. She was so shocked, asking if it is true that there are men who sleep with other men. I told her that I will not answer that as

she is old and should know these things, she should just attend to me. She ended up assisting me but her attitude was horrible.

Testimony 3

Anonymous

March 2023

East London, Buffalo City Metro

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards sex workers, bad staff attitudes, privacy violations, and challenges with getting a transfer letter

I use Gompo Clinic. I lost my clinic card but knew my return date for my ARVs. A female nurse in the consultation room called me a defaulter, shouting at me while the door was open. Some of the patients and clinical staff were moving around and they could hear what was going on. She also chased me away and said "I don't have time for defaulters, there are serious people that seek my help". As she said this she was standing up and telling me to sit outside while she helped serious people first and I was going to be last. I was so sad. I felt humiliated and disrespected because I made every effort to visit the clinic early so that I could return to work to provide food at home. Due to the continued discrimination at the clinic, I tried to get a transfer letter so I could have a fresh start at another clinic. A nurse who knew that I was a sex worker disclosed to the other nurses what my job was, and they refused to give me the transfer letter. I reported to the facility manager and he said he would speak to the staff but the abuse continues.

Testimony 4

Anonymous

July 2023

East London, Buffalo City Metro

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards people who use drugs, denial of services, and lack of harm reduction services

I overdosed and was rushed to the Gompo Clinic. I was not aware of much as it was my cousin that rushed me there. The nurses did not attend to me. They shouted at us that they

do not attend to “amapara”. They said it is not their fault that I overdosed. They were rude and used vulgar language in front of other patients. I eventually recovered on my own. No service or support was provided. I will never go back there again.

Testimony 5

Anonymous

August 2023

East London, Buffalo City Metro

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards sex workers, long waiting times, and challenges with ART continuity

I am a sex worker and don't have time to go to the clinic. The time spent at the clinic delays me from doing my work. I usually disengage and don't go to collect my ARVs from the clinic. The name of my facility is Central Clinic in Mdantsane. I can't follow up with my viral load results because I am always at work. I disengaged from care three months ago. The mobile clinic never comes here and they know where we are. My only challenge is not being offered services from where I work.

Testimony 6

Anonymous

August 2023

East London, Buffalo City Metro

This testimony pertains to lack of harm reduction services, and challenges with transfer Letters

I have not taken my treatment in a few months because the facility requires a transfer letter. They tried contacting my previous facility but they couldn't speak to anyone there. I suggested that they test and reinstate me as a new patient, but they said that would be difficult. I gave up and stopped trying. If I could I would go back to my old clinic but I had to leave because I was retrenched. No-one supplies us with needles. We get them and condoms from dumping sites. It's very rare that we could get them at the clinic.

Testimony 7

Anonymous

August 2023

East London, Buffalo City Metro

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards sex workers, long waiting times, lack of pick-up point options, and ART continuity challenges

I am a sex worker and have been doing this work for 30 years. I am on ARVs but we disengage from care as sex workers because we can't spend the whole day queuing. It would be convenient to get there, collect our treatment, and leave or have a mobile (clinic) sent to deliver our treatment. At the clinic you sent from pillar to post, people refer to us as sex workers. It is not a nice experience because we are human and have children. I disengaged from care in 2021. I used to steal other people's pills. I was avoiding having to spend the day at the clinic and leave at 4pm. None of us here like waiting because we have to be working. If a mobile clinic were to be sent to us, we wouldn't mind getting viral load tests and other things done.

Testimony 8

Anonymous

August 2023

East London, Buffalo City Metro

This testimony pertains to lack of PrEP services

I am a sex worker and got tested for HIV at Pefferville Clinic. I was not attended to on my first visit. On the second visit they told me they don't have PrEP. I wanted to protect myself because other clients don't want to use condoms. I wasn't assisted on two occasions, so I went to Braelyn Clinic and that's where I got help and I am now safe. I heard about how PrEP can prevent infection from people in my area and on the radio. They ask people who have come to collect ARVs to queue separately from others.

Testimony 9

Anonymous

August 2023

East London, Buffalo City Metro

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards people who use drugs, denial of services, and lack of harm reduction services

I am a person who uses drugs, and I overdosed once. I was taken to Gompo A Clinic and they said that I had brought this on myself and that there was nothing they could do for me. I am still using drugs. No form of help was offered to me although I was honest with them they just scolded me. I don't get anything from the clinic as a person who uses drugs, not even needles.

Testimony 10

Anonymous

September 2023

Mdantsane, Buffalo City Metro

This testimony pertains to lack of key population specific services

I go to NU 1 Clinic and they don't have any condoms or lubricants. This is a major problem for me as my piles frequently come out because you end up using lubricants that are not suitable for anal sex. We plead to the department to provide lubricants and condoms at our facilities.

Testimony 11

Anonymous

August 2023

East London, Buffalo City Metro

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ community members, bad staff attitudes, privacy violations, challenges with transfer letters, lack of specific services for members of key populations

I went to East London Central Clinic to confirm my HIV status, as I was tested previously without my consent. A nurse attended to me. I was expecting to be tested and placed on medication. She said she does not deal with blood tests, and referred me to another nurse. I had to explain my story all over again. Then I was referred to a third nurse who asked me about my sexuality, and then tested me. There were a lot of questions and remarks like “how did I get the virus? How will I live my life moving forward? What was I expecting? Do I know that most gay people die of AIDS? What was I expecting being gay? And look at me contracting the virus and spreading it as ungodly as I am?”. I wanted to get up and leave. But I needed to confirm my status and start treatment. What was shocking, aside from all the tormenting questions, is that I did not receive any treatment that day.

There was a time when I moved to the Northern Cape and I stopped treatment for about 8 months because they would not give me treatment because I did not have a transfer letter. When I called East London Central Clinic, they refused to send the transfer letter via email, as they do not know who they are speaking to over the phone. When I returned, I had to explain why I stopped treatment and why it took me so long to return to get my treatment. I don't think they treat gay and trans people well at the facility. With my experience and the other comments they make generally by the corridors, you would hear nurses discussing patients' issues that should be confidential. You may not know the name of the patient but sometimes when a patient leaves the consultation room and they start talking, you know exactly who they are talking about. That just tells me that that could be me when I am not there.

There are no specific services for members of key populations (KPs) at the clinic. When they do not even give out information about ART and PrEP, I don't think that they would give any information about specific services to KPs. They are unfriendly and have a bad attitude so I doubt they would give information to us. Condoms are on display, lubricants are not. We are afraid to ask for them as it is a very hostile and unfriendly environment. I tend to use Engage Men's Health for STI screening and treatment as the services there are better. I would not go to the clinic again, for I fear how they would treat me.

Testimony 12

Anonymous

March 2023

Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay

This testimony pertains to ill treatment by healthcare workers, unfriendly services towards sex workers and LGBTQIA+ community members, and privacy violations

I was initiated on ART at Tshangana Clinic but changed to Rape Crisis because they deal with sex workers. I had to return home to attend initiation school. I was running out of medication. When I returned to Tshangana Clinic. The nurse shouted at me for “defaulting”. She said that I am too young not to be responsible for my life, even after showing her the card from Rape Crisis. The nurse said “you people living with HIV are running up and down making our lives miserable, and now we have to run around for you and for your own lives that you don't care about”. While I was in the consultation room, the cleaner was there cleaning the room and never went out. This made me very uncomfortable. After experiencing hostility and discrimination about living with HIV when trying to access ARVs, I also had STI symptoms but decided not to continue with the consultation because the nurse wasn't welcoming. As she gave me back my card she said “maybe now you have attended initiation school, you will stop being gay and be a man”. I had to go to another clinic to get help. No lubricant is available, only condoms. I cannot continue with my ART at the clinic as they discriminate and since there are no lubes, even some of my needs at this health facility are not met.

Testimony 13

Anonymous

March 2023

Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards people who use drugs and bad staff Attitudes

The staff at Kwazakhele Clinic are always rude towards people who use drugs at this facility, especially the non-clinical staff. They behave like they are nurses. In April, I went to the clinic for family planning around 8am. They started working around 8:30am. I was told to come back at around 2pm, without any explanation, so I left. I came back around 1pm and the nurse told me it is late and I must come to the clinic early. I tried to explain to them that I was told to come back by another nurse, but they refused to help me. I have never returned to the clinic again. I now use the mobile clinic.

Testimony 14

Anonymous

March 2023

Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ community members, bad staff attitude, lack of lubricants

I went to Kwazakhele Clinic to get condoms and lubricants. Inside one of the staff called me “peto”, a derogatory term used for gay people, and other patients were laughing. There were only condoms in the dispenser and when I asked for lubricants, they said they hardly have any. They wanted to know about my sex life. I now buy my lubricants and will never go to that clinic again.

Testimony 15

Anonymous

August 2023

Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards sex workers, bad staff attitudes, privacy violations, and lack of availability of lubricants and contraceptives

I use Kwazakhele Clinic. When you go there to test for HIV, there will be two nurses and a lay counsellor there. I was questioned about why I was testing, and had to tell them I am a sex worker and I had a condom burst when I was with a client. I told them I needed to get PEP and STI treatment. They give us condoms, but there are no lubricants. They say they are out of stock. I went to the clinic to get an implant, but they said the nurse that is able to install the implant is not available, so I had to continue working with the risk of getting pregnant.

Testimony 16

Anonymous

May 2023

Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards sex workers, bad staff attitudes, lack of access to post violence services, and denial of services

I was raped and went to Nciphizweni Clinic to get help. I explained to them that the men broke into my place of work and gang raped me. The staff know that I am a sex worker and said I deserved to be raped, as I was corrupting their children in the community because of my behaviour, because those children now think sex work is a good thing. I did not get any services or even a J88 form so I could open a case at the police station.

Testimony 17

Anonymous

July 2023

Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ community members and lack of gender affirming care

I am a trans woman and I went to Gqebera CHC to ask if I could get hormones there. I was not taken seriously. They laughed at me, calling me “moffie” and addressed me with the wrong pronoun.

Testimony 18

Anonymous

July 2023

Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards sex workers

I was not taken seriously at Gqebera Clinic. Eventually I stopped taking my ARVs until this peer educator from Rape Crisis mobile clinic that serves sex workers spoke to me and helped me get my medication from their mobile clinic.

Testimony 19

Anonymous

July 2023

Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards people who use drugs, and denial of Services

I was sick but I never even got to set foot inside Central Clinic because I use drugs. I ended up not getting any services and had to buy myself Panado. I was chased away by the security guard, who told me the clinic is not a place for “addicts” and that I should go get cleaned up first.

Testimony 20

Anonymous

June 2023

Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards sex workers, bad staff attitude, privacy violations, and challenges with transfer letters

I came to Port Elizabeth for work from Cape Town where I was initiated on ART. I was happy as my base was close to the clinic, so I could access my medication there. Unfortunately, I was refused ARVs because I did not have a transfer letter at Central Clinic and I did not have the contact number of the clinic in Cape Town. I was off my pills for a while until a friend started sharing her medication with me. That was until an organisation that works with sex workers assisted me. I travelled for a week and came back to the brothel where I work to find some of my colleagues talking about my status. One of the peer educators from the Rape Crisis mobile clinic who sometimes collects my ARVs for me told them what medication I take at the mobile clinic. I was very sad and disappointed because she disclosed my status to people I work with.

I went to the clinic last month and only got condoms, there was no lubricant available. They also don't allow us to enter the facility to pick up condoms on your own. You will tell the security guard who will go and get them for you as the gate is always closed. Many times I

have gone to the clinic to get lubricants, but they will say they are not available. This sometimes happens with condoms as well.

Testimony 21

Anonymous

September 2023

Mthatha, OR Tambo

This testimony pertains to long waiting times and ill treatment of an LGBTQIA+ communityMember

I am a gay man and noticed that I had a discharge, and it turned out to be an infection. As men we are afraid of going to the clinic, but I went there though I was hesitant. The pain was severe so I went to Mthatha Gateway Clinic. I heard that you have to arrive very early, so I got there around 6am. But the queue was already very long as seen in the posters, even the elderly was in the same queue. I had to ask the people in the queue if it has been separated based on what you are there for, but they said it is the same queue. We had to wait for a very long time. The queue is full of people with chronic illnesses. I was in distress as my penis was burning, because of the infection and urine. I went to the security to ask where I can get some help. I did not like the treatment from the security because he was calling me names like “stabane”. He then told me to just go to the Men’s Corner. While trying to look for this, I saw a nurse who then turned me back to join the queue. I asked what services are being offered at the Men’s Corner. I was told it is for men who would be more comfortable with speaking to a male nurse. But they turned me back. I panicked and because of the pain, I called my brother who took me to the pharmacy where I received treatment. I then met the same security guard in a social setting where he abused me again, saying that I would get sick because I am gay. All I want to know is if there is not any training given to nurses and security guards in the facilities about how to speak to people?

Testimony 22

Anonymous

September 2023

Mthatha, OR Tambo

This testimony pertains to denial of HIV prevention, STI treatment, and contraceptives

I use Ngangelizwe CHC and I am sex worker. I grew up in that area and they know what I use the condoms for. I went there to ask for a box of condoms, but they told me that since I work, I should go buy my own. Also, I use Depo as my preferred contraceptive but they always say it is not available, telling you that you should take another option. But that does not work for me as you still get your period, and during my menstrual period I have to stop working. I eventually had to relocate to Tsolo Clinic where I get condoms and my preferred contraceptives. There was a time I also went to Ngangelizwe for an infection and was asked to bring my partner if I wanted help. They did not assist me. I ended up going to Tsolo Clinic where my friend is and got help.

Testimony 23

Anonymous

September 2023

Mthatha, OR Tambo

This testimony pertains to privacy violations and discrimination of an LGBTQIA+ community Member

I use Stanford Clinic. In 2020 I went to the clinic for a normal check-up and was told to go to the Men's Corner. I did not feel comfortable with what they are saying because I am gay. When I got there, I met a male nurse who asked why I was there. I explained to him. He called another person into the consultation room, asking them to explain why I was there. The other one responded saying that I was probably sick because I sleep with other men. I returned the following week because I was still feeling unwell. I arrived around 6am. I noticed that people were passing their clinic cards from behind and we were left there. I eventually called a friend who assisted me.

Testimony 24

Anonymous

March 2023

Mthatha, OR Tambo

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards trans people, lack of gender affirming care, bad staff attitudes, and privacy violations

I am a trans man and use Civic Centre Clinic. The staff are very ignorant and have no respect for trans people and our private lives. How I live my life does not affect anybody else. They pick on you for no reason. Another problem we face is going to the toilets. The cleaners shout at you when you use the female toilets, so I just hold it until I get home. The toilets are still marked by gender and none are gender neutral. I went to the clinic because I had an infection. When I went in for a consultation, the nurse went to a group which was outside doing an awareness talk about safe sex, and without my consent the nurse made an example about me. She disclosed in front of everyone that I came there for STI treatment because I had unprotected sex with a man. She never asked me about my sexuality. She saw me and just assumed everything about me. I left the facility. I have done HIV testing at the clinic before, although they do counselling, they have never offered me PrEP at the facility.

Testimony 25

Anonymous

March 2023

Mapuzi, OR Tambo

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards members of key populations, bad staff attitude, long waiting times, and lack of access to lubricants

I did not get the service that I required at Mapuzi Clinic. The staff attitude was really bad. It is always an overall hostile environment. We are in the rural area, so if you need urgent care you have to go to Mthatha, which means you have to use transport money. Yet we have a clinic in the community. But I would rather travel to Mthatha than go to this clinic because of the staff attitude. It is quiet, but they will make you wait. The staff take extended lunch breaks. I no longer go there, even when I get a rash. The only thing they want to do is HIV testing. They want to get their statistics up, so they push HIV testing instead of providing friendly services. You are not able to access lubricants, because they are not displayed like condoms. When you enquire, they shout at you.

Testimony 26

Anonymous

July 2023

Mthatha, OR Tambo

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards people who use drugs, bad staff attitudes, and privacy violations

I went to Stanford Terrace CHC to seek help with my drug use. I was told to buy a clinic card, luckily I had some money on me. I approached one of the nurses who directly told me to go away, because no-one would help me. This was after going through the trouble of buying a clinic card. I felt so trapped mentally and emotionally. I then went to Civic Centre Clinic. The service was good, until I met the person who was supposed to give me medication. They told me it is useless for me to get medication, because I will go back to drugs. After I tried these places, I lost all hope, and just went back to using drugs.

Testimony 27

Anonymous

August 2023

Mthatha, OR Tambo

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards trans people, and lack of gender affirming services

I stay in Libode, at Elangeni and use Malusi Clinic. When testing I was asked by staff how could I contract HIV as a trans man, which made me uncomfortable. I'm not comfortable using female or male toilets, given I am a trans man. I feel it would be better and more comfortable if the clinic had LGBTQ restrooms. Having queer friendly toilets would be a great service. I'm being disrespected and stripped of dignity with insults, such as not being a man, and the mispronunciation of my pronouns at the facility. I don't think I'd ever go back to Malusi Clinic. There is no privacy and confidentiality. They also don't know how to talk to patients. Their habit of calling me derogatory names like "nongayindoda" doesn't sit well with me. In Xhosa "nongayindoda" is used as an insult for women who look like men. That's why I don't want to use Malusi Clinic.

Free State testimonies

Testimony 28

Anonymous

August 2023

Bothaville, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ communities

I use K Maile Clinic. As gay people we are extremely disrespected at the facility. There was an incident when I went to the facility because I had the flu. I was assisted well and didn't have any problems. On my way out I decided to take condoms, and I bumped into a woman that knows me. She laughed at me when I collected two packages of condoms. I asked why she was laughing, and she replied that I collect condoms so that I can play with men. That was the last day I ever went to the facility, because I felt so embarrassed.

Testimony 29

Anonymous

August 2023

Bronville, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ community members, denial of services, and lack of availability of lubricants

I use Bronville Clinic. I visited the facility sometime in June to collect lubricants. I had to ask the nurse, because there were no lubricants visible. The nurse asked what lubricants are? I asked how they could not know what lubricants are, while you are a professional nurse? She called the pharmacist to come and assist. She then got back to me that they don't have those things that are associated with gay people. She asked why I couldn't go buy them at Clicks or any other pharmacy. I went home without any lubricants. Another incident was when I went to the facility when I was sick. The same nurse decided to assist a patient that was behind me, and chose to skip me. When I asked why this is happening she replied that this is not my home, and she will not be instructed by me on how to do her job. I left the facility and decided to go to a private doctor.

Testimony 30

Anonymous

August 2023

Bronville, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ community members

I took a child to Bronville Clinic and decided to ask if they had finger cots. The nurse asked me what those are. I explained to her what they are and how they are used. She laughed and called the other nurses. They kept questioning me about why I had decided to stop dating boys, and I explained that I am bisexual. I was so embarrassed and hurt as to how they could gang up on me and ask such irrelevant questions. That was the last time I went to the facility.

Testimony 31

Anonymous

August 2023

Bronville, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ community members, and lack of gender affirming services

I am a trans woman and I use Bronville Clinic. I once had an encounter at the facility when I accompanied someone there. I had to use the restroom at the facility. The toilets are designed in a different way at Bronville Clinic. There is only one main door and as you proceed it splits into two. I used the female toilet as a trans woman. While I was in the toilet, the cleaner came in, and I suspected she is still new at the facility because everyone at the facility knows me. She rudely said to me that I should leave the toilet and asked if I didn't see the sign for the male toilet. I tried to explain to her that I am a trans woman, and I am in the right toilet. The woman was rude. She said that I am dramatic, because the other gay people that use the facility understand themselves and I do not. I explained to her that I am not gay, I am a trans woman. We took the matter to the Operational Manager hoping he would have a better understanding. Unfortunately he didn't understand either. I left the facility feeling embarrassed because I was made to feel that I do not understand who I am. I would appreciate it if Ritshidze and other organisations could provide training to staff members on

how to treat key populations, because it goes as far as misgendering us. I would also prefer that the files at the facility have sticky notes so that we can write the names we prefer. I would like to be called by the name I feel comfortable with. Even when you remind them to call you about your preferred name, they would make fun of your ID name as how can a beautiful woman have a male name. My last request is that the national health department considers the LGBTQI+ community when hiring more staff, so that we are made more comfortable. Yes I understand that some nurses are trained to handle LGBTQI+ or key populations, but if a person is homophobic to a point that they are not willing to accept who we are, it becomes a problem. If the LGBTQI+ staff are available we will be more comfortable, because they would understand us better, because we are not comfortable and free to consult at the facility. For instance if I have an STI, I will have to explain to a homophobic nurse where the STI is, and how I got it.

Testimony 32

Anonymous

August 2023

Bothaville, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ community members, lack of availability of lubricants, and lack of gender affirming care

I use Kgotsong Clinic. My issue with Kgotsong Clinic is the staff attitude. The staff members are very rude. They have mood swings where you don't even know how to approach them. Their facial expression is not welcoming to an extent that when you want to access the facility you first start by thinking how you are going to explain your situation to someone who is already annoyed. I think to some extent we need more information as LGBTQI+ people, because the majority of people in Bothaville do not know that they should be accessing lubricants and hormone therapy. Yes we see condoms, but we are afraid to access them because they give you a very uncomfortable look when you try to take them.

Testimony 33

Anonymous

August 2023

Thabong, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to denial of services by a healthcare worker and unprofessional behaviour by a healthcare worker

I use Tshepong Clinic. I once decided to take a test at the facility. I became the laughing stock that day. The nurse that was attending to me asked me to go and wait outside the consultation room. While I was waiting I didn't realise that she went to get other staff members. She then shared with her colleagues that I came to test for HIV, but I act like a man, so I should be a man. This meant to her that during the day I am a lesbian but later at night I must be dating men, which is why I must want an HIV test. One of the other staff members pulled the nurse to the side to stop her from what she was doing. This turned into a huge scene that led to the OPM being called. I left the facility without being assisted. I never went back again because I feel that we are not welcomed at the facility. They do not want to understand who we are. For example, you'd explain that I am not a man but a woman who loves other women. Another incident happened in 2020. I went to the facility and found out that I was pregnant. The nurse gave me an incorrect return date. I went into labour before the date I was given, and had to go to Bongani Hospital. I was asked which medication I was taking and I presented the container of the medication. They came to realise I was given the wrong medication at Tshepong Clinic. I can't remember what happened, but I was told I had a seizure. When I woke up I had already delivered my baby. At the hospital, the nurses gathered together and said I must not wear trousers anymore. I must wear a dress, because I am clearly no longer a lesbian because I have a child.

Testimony 34

Anonymous

July 2023

Welkom, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to long waiting times, and staff being unfriendly to sex workers

I am a sex worker, using Bophelong Clinic. The services are not good. It takes a long time to get help. You get there at 7am and finish when they close. If you complain, there is no-one to attend to your complaint. The attitude of the staff is very bad. The nurses sit in their offices drinking tea, and going around without helping. If you complain they say they are busy. They take a very long lunch, and when they return, they rush to finish.

They do not treat sex workers well. Sometimes when you come for your pills, if you share with them that you are a sex worker when they do counselling, they will start laughing and making fun of you. I told them that I am a sex worker so that they can understand me, so that I can be free to share whatever is wrong with me, but they use that information against me. I wish they can just do their work and respect us, so that we can respect them in return. Sometimes there are no condoms at the facility. When you ask them for them, they laugh, asking what you want the condoms for. They would say “you guys love sex too much”. I never get my birth control pills there because when you go there for that, you would have to join the normal queue and end up staying there for the whole day. So, I always get mine elsewhere. When you share your symptoms about the STI that you have, they judge you because you are a sex worker. They would go to another room to gossip about what you have shared. You go to the clinic to get help and be well, but you end up going home with a sore heart.

Testimony 35

Anonymous

July 2023

Bloemfontein, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to LGBTQIA+ communities, a lack of gender affirming care, infrastructural issues, and lack of availability of lubricants

When I go to the clinic I usually wait outside until I am called. This is because I am not comfortable with how the receptionist looks at me inside. I go in when it is my turn, and stand outside again to wait for my medication. Most of the time the people in the clinic call me by my birth name, or brother, or he. Even when I correct them, they still continue to do the same thing. They even mock me in front of other people and say “look at this one that wants to be addressed with a female pronoun when he is a man”. I gave up because clearly people do not want to learn, they do not want to change. The vitals room is always overcrowded. There

is no privacy at all. You never find lubricants in the clinics here. You can only access MAX condoms which are not the best quality. I will always have to go to NGOs like Rainbow Seed to get lubricant.

Testimony 36

Anonymous

July 2023

Welkom, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to trans people, a lack of availability of lubricants, a lack of gender affirming care, and short ARV refill length

I started collecting PrEP at Bophelong Clinic. They took my blood samples to ensure I was still HIV negative. However, now I still get a month's supply and have to go to the facility every month to get it and do a blood test again. There are never lubricants at the facility, you only find external condoms, not even internal condoms. The internal condoms used to be supplied by NGOs but not anymore. Trans people are discriminated against at the clinic, they call you by the wrong name and you cannot access hormones. If you need contraception, they ask you to bring evidence of menstruation.

Testimony 37

Anonymous

June 2023

Welkom, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to staff unfriendly to LGBTQIA+ communities

As a gay man, I haven't experienced a lot of challenges. I had to go to the clinic. When I got there, I had to retest as I could not just request ARVs. After they tested me, they found my test to be reactive, and they also conducted a battery of other tests as well. The treatment entailed getting an injection which is administered twice. The nurse who was giving me my injection was rude. While she was giving me the injection she told me that she did not send me to have unprotected sex. It made the experience of going to the clinic off putting and I don't want to use the clinic anymore.

Testimony 38

Anonymous

June 2023

Welkom, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to lack of availability of lubricants

I am 38 years old and gay. I went to the clinic to ask for lubricant. They said it was out of stock for a month. I went back and they still didn't have any and advised me to go buy it from the pharmacy. I resorted to using Vaseline.

Testimony 39

Anonymous

June 2023

Welkom, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to challenges with ART continuity, and lack of treatment literacy information

I use Bophelong Clinic. I am a transgender woman living with HIV, and I collect my treatment from CCMDD without any challenges. There are no long queues, and I don't have any problems collecting my HIV treatment there. The only challenge is that they don't explain the procedure for when our CCMDD scripts expire, so we go back to collecting at the clinic. There are no problems with collecting at CCMDD because it doesn't waste time, it's fast. Another challenge is that they take viral load blood samples annually, but never inform us when the results get back or explain them to us. I know and understand my HIV treatment. I am on TLD. They don't explain anything so you must educate yourself to understand your treatment. I'm happy with the services that I get from Bophelong Clinic, they are very professional and do not discriminate against the queer community.

Testimony 40

Anonymous

June 2023

Welkom, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to staff unfriendly towards LGBTQIA+ communities

I am gay. I use Bophelong Clinic. I once had haemorrhoids and did not experience any problems with the staff members. They treated me well, they were nice, and they did not criticise or stigmatise me but my gay friend went there with the same problem of haemorrhoids and was treated badly. He asked me what to take for the pain. I told him what I was given and advised him to go to a pharmacy. They should stop stigmatising and discriminating against the LGBTQIA+ community because we are also human and need help. I think most are afraid to go to the clinic because they get laughed at and referred to as men. I think the reason they treat me better is because I am a TAC member. I think most queer people don't know their rights and how to react when they get to the clinics.

Testimony 41

Anonymous

June 2023

Bloemfontein, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to lack of confidentiality/privacy, clinic cleanliness, lack of gender affirming care

I live in Mmamahabane. I take ARVs. The nurses offer us services but they disclose our statuses. They make a mockery of our statuses and gender expression. They also ask silly questions when we take condoms. Condoms are always available. The toilets are very dirty. You arrive to queue at 5am or 6am just to collect treatment, not even drawing blood. We arrive early around 5am or 6am and still come back late. They don't allow someone to collect treatment on your behalf, regardless of how far away you are. I still collect my ARVs from Bloemfontein because when I go to Mmamahabane Clinic, they require a transfer letter or I will be initiated as a treatment-naive patient. I use R280 to fetch my HIV treatment from Mmamahabane to Bloemfontein. I'm currently unemployed and depend on my clients as a traditional healer.

Testimony 42

Anonymous

June 2023

Welkom, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to staff unfriendly to people who use drugs, and denial of services

The name of my clinic is Tshepong but I reside in Allanridge. I was using drugs. I couldn't get the treatment I needed because I was on opioids. When I got to the clinic, they would tell me that they couldn't help someone like me because I could steal from them. I stopped using (drugs) when I was diagnosed with TB and that was when they started helping me. I felt discriminated against and judged. They'd say I was alone when I started using drugs and should seek an end to it alone. I had to be patient with them so that they could help me and they eventually did.

Testimony 43

Anonymous

June 2023

Welkom, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to staff unfriendly to people who use drugs, and lack of harm reduction services

I reside in Nyakallong, Allanridge. I was using drugs and wanted help so that I could stop. I went to the clinic as Thusanong Hospital had informed me that they could not help me. They told me to stop using them the same way as I started them, alone. I was using heroin, popularly known as nyaope. I was told to rehabilitate myself. I was sick and in pain, wishing that they could give me painkillers, but they didn't give me anything. I got advice from people. I went to a private doctor who gave me a prescription for methadone. The methadone did not help because it was finished within a week, so I continued to use drugs.

Testimony 44

Anonymous

June 2023

Welkom, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to infrastructural challenges, lack of services for LGBTQIA+ communities, lack of availability of lubricants

I don't like Hope Clinic because it is small and overstaffed which makes it uncomfortable to consult freely. There is a lack of communication and not enough posters relating to gay men. There's also a lack of services. I've been unable to access lubricant from the clinic this year. At times you have to request it, and they'll ask you questions but not give them to you, and the cleaner will help you. I see PrEP on TV, but they have never offered it and there are a lot of young people here. I believe they think my sexuality is taboo. I would appreciate the opportunity to access PrEP as a gay man and for everyone who needs it to be able to get it.

Testimony 45

Anonymous

June 2023

Welkom, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to lack of confidentiality/privacy, lack of availability of condoms/lubricants

I use Hope Clinic and sometimes Mmamahabane Clinic because Hope Clinic usually has stockouts. I am on HIV treatment. One of the challenges I have with Hope Clinic is that the cleaners or Love Life staff check my file at the pharmacy. Hope Clinic also has a shortage of condoms and lubricants. I took lubricant and was told that I should ask for permission from the manager and not do as I please. I took enough for myself and was requested to minimise the number I had taken because there was a shortage. I felt that was wrong.

Testimony 46

Anonymous

June 2023

Welkom, Lejweleputswa

This testimony pertains to the lack of youth friendly services, shortages/stockouts of medicines/contraceptives, lack of availability of condoms/lubricants

I use Rheeders Park Clinic and we do not get proper services as the youth. We struggle to access PrEP and are not taught about HIV prevention. Sometimes they tell us that they don't have injectable and oral contraceptives or condoms. The service is not satisfactory because there is always a shortage of something when we get to the clinic. I hear people talk about lubricants but I have never seen them and I don't know what they are used for.

Testimony 47

Anonymous

August 2023

Petsana, Thabo Mofutsanyana

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly towards people who use drugs

I use Petsana Clinic. I am a recovering drug user. I used to take crystal meth. I am now pregnant. What I dislike about the facility is that I arrive very early in the morning, at around 6am, but I will only get assisted at 10am. I also did not like the treatment I got from the cleaner. I do not have a problem with the nurse, she does her job. I dislike how the cleaner calls out my name and refers to me as a "druggie". She tells the other patients at the facility that I use drugs, and asks how I got pregnant as a person who dates other women. May I please get assistance with that. It has gotten to the situation where I get angry by just seeing her.

Testimony 48

Anonymous

July 2023

Petsana, Thabo Mofutsanyana

This testimony pertains to long waiting times, and staff being unfriendly towards LGBTQIA+ community members

I am a gay man, using Petsana Clinic. If you go to the clinic and you know someone that works there, then you would get a better and quicker service. But if you do not have a connection, you will get treated badly, especially by the receptionist, and you will be made to wait.

Testimony 49

Anonymous

July 2023

Phuthaditjhaba, Thabo Mofutsanyana

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to LGBTQIA+ communities, a lack of confidentiality/privacy, a lack of HIV prevention services

There is discomfort here and there at the facility. I am sure they are aware that I am gay. The staff attitude is not the same as for everyone else if you are gay or perceived as a member of the LGBTQI community. You get treated badly. It is older people that work at the clinic, from the administrative staff to the clinical staff. It is not a pleasant experience. It is always very hostile. When you try to raise your concerns about the horrible service you have received, they tell you to sit down and wait along with other patients. I escalated by calling the Office of the MEC and she called me back to say people like me think we are special.

It is always an unpleasant experience to go to the facility, and unfortunately, there are no alternatives. It is the only clinic in the area. I got to understand why other members of key populations prefer to go to more remote facilities, because of the poor attitude they get from this clinic. This clinic is practically next to where I live, and it is sad that I am considering going to a facility very far away to access basic healthcare.

During the COVID-19 lockdown patients were made to stand outside, and one of their staff would come outside and shout to people to queue according to their chronic condition, she would say: “people that are here to collect their ARVs, stand here”. They were openly disclosing people’s medical conditions. There is a person who works there and goes to the same church as me. I am not really sure about being assisted by him. I am very uncomfortable. It will be unsettling to allow him to consult me, as I do not trust them.

It is not all prevention services that you are able to access at the clinic. You only find external condoms. I do not feel comfortable with the fact that you have to ask for internal condoms and lube. And my take is, why are they not made a priority or put in accessible places. And in such a hostile environment, it is very difficult to enquire about lube or internal condoms. The staff are not friendly, most especially when you tell them that you need STI screening and you need to give information about your sexual experience, that is where the hostility really manifests. Luckily, I am very familiar with my rights, so I would always demand the help that I need. I have just grown a thick skin against their judgemental attitude.

Testimony 50

Anonymous

July 2023

Phuthaditjhaba, Thabo Mofutsanyana

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to members of key populations

I collect my ART from the clinic. The service has been ok. Recently a nurse was drawing blood and said:: “I wonder what else we would find if we tested your blood further”. This has been making me uncomfortable at the facility, because they might know I am a sex worker or someone who uses drugs. And I know how badly they treat other KPs.

Testimony 51

Anonymous

July 2023

Phuthaditjhaba, Thabo Mofutsanyana

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to trans people, and lack of gender affirming care

I am a trans woman, using Matshidiso Mabaso CHC. The staff call you by the wrong name on purpose. They never use my correct pronouns. Even when you tell them, they say you are a man and we will address you as that. I went to the clinic to enquire about hormones, and the nurse told me I am a man, I do not need hormones. It is like they have not been sensitised. They have no idea of who trans people are or what type of services we need.

Testimony 52

Anonymous

July 2023

Phuthaditjhaba, Thabo Mofutsanyana

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to people who use drugs, and ill treatment of healthcare workers

I am a person who uses drugs. When I go to Phuthaditjhaba Clinic to get my treatment (ARVs) I am degraded and always attended to last. It has been months since I stopped taking my treatment because of what they put me through at the clinic. I wish the nurses can change their attitude towards us.

Testimony 53

Anonymous

July 2023

Phuthaditjhaba, Thabo Mofutsanyana

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to people who use drugs, ill treatment of healthcare workers, and denial of services

I am a person using drugs using Matsikane Clinic. I was told to “clean up and take a bath before coming to the clinic”. When I told the security guard that I live on the streets, he told me that it was my fault since I use drugs. I am never going to that clinic again. They treat us like animals.

Testimony 54

Anonymous

July 2023

Phuthaditjhaba, Thabo Mofutsanyana

This testimony pertains to lack of confidentiality/privacy, and staff being unfriendly to LGBTQIA+ communities

I am a trans man using Intabazwe Clinic. The main challenge at the clinic is that people living with HIV are made to queue separately. Everyone knows that the people who queue there came to get their ARVs. When you get to the clinic, you need to take your vitals. Everybody enters that room even while this is going on, both the clinical and non-clinical staff. There are CWPs, the ones who wear orange, they are always in the consultation room beside the nurse. They help with getting files but they remain in the room after that. There is no privacy, I am not always free to share what is wrong with me.

We LGBTQI+ people do not get everything we need in the clinic, like condoms and lubricants. We have been complaining about this and they are doing nothing about it. Whenever you go to the clinic, they would ask you “how did you get infected if you say you are a lesbian, how did you get HIV or an STI when you only have sex with women?”.

Testimony 55

Anonymous

July 2023

Phuthaditjhaba, Thabo Mofutsanyana

This testimony pertains to the lack of gender affirming care

I went to Bluegumbosch Clinic because I wanted to start my HRT. They referred me to a hospital. When I got there, I was told that I was not put on any list. I went back again and was able to book an appointment. I have been waiting as the appointment keeps getting postponed since last year. I wonder if they will ever be able to help me.

Testimony 56

Anonymous

June 2023

Phuthaditjhaba, Thabo Mofutsanyana

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to people who use drugs, long waiting times, ill treatment by clinic staff, and challenges with ART continuity

I am 28 years old and I use Phuthaditjhaba Clinic. They treat people who use drugs differently. I go to the clinic at times and don't get my treatment package. And when I don't go they put the blame on me because I use drugs. They treat me badly if I miss an appointment date, but they treat me well when they know they are at fault. When there are no tablets, they give me a return date for the following day and I go get my tablets. I go to the clinic on a monthly basis to collect a 1 month refill. I go for viral load testing annually. I always go in January. They only explain or give you the results when you request them. I used to get rehabilitation assistance at Manapo Hospital. I was transferred to Bloemfontein but stopped going. I moved to Gauteng and stayed there for about 10 months and missed my Bloemfontein appointment date. I want to return but don't know how to get back into the system.

Testimony 57

Anonymous

June 2023

Harrismith, Thabo Mofutsanyana

This testimony pertains to staff unfriendly to LGBTQIA+ communities, concerns with clinic cleanliness, infrastructural challenges

I am from Harrismith and usually go to Intabazwe Clinic. They provide me with PrEP. They also provide condoms and lubricant and they remind me to come to collect my tablets after three months. At times they ask why we sleep with boys and say that is not what God intended. It is shocking because they are there to provide the services that I need. It went as far as the nurse referring to me as “stabane”. She did not treat me right and I was scared to go to the clinic. They always have PrEP, lubricants, and condoms. They are in a public space and you can take them freely and they don't ask questions. It's dirty and stuffy, there is a water outage so toilets are dirty, and the grounds are not well kept. The clinic is supposed to be a clean place, but the municipality is not doing anything about this.

Gauteng testimonies

Testimony 58

Anonymous

November 2023

Katlehong, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for people who use drugs, and a lack of harm reduction services

I use Palmridge Clinic and I am in recovery. I used to use drugs. I used to inject drugs, and there was a time I had an injury from injecting myself incorrectly so I went to the clinic. As I arrived at the clinic, the security guard was very friendly. I explained my problem to him and he walked me to the facility so I could explain to the nurse. The positive attitude that I received from the security was different from what I received from the nurse inside the facility. At first, the nurse seemed concerned about my situation but eventually started judging me. The nurse started calling me names, that as young as I am, I cannot do anything better than use drugs. I was very hurt as I understood that everyone needs to be treated the same at the clinic.

Testimony 59

Anonymous

November 2023

Daveyton, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for people who use drugs, and a lack of harm reduction services

I am from Daveyton and I am a person who uses drugs. I once injected myself incorrectly and the needle broke. I rushed to the clinic and instead of getting assisted, the nurses judged me and abused me. I relocated to KwaZulu-Natal and was able to go to rehab. Now that I have stopped using drugs, I do not go to any clinic.

Testimony 60

Anonymous

November 2023

Daveyton, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to discrimination and unfriendly services towards sex workers

I use Daveyton Clinic and went because I had an STI. They asked me many questions about my symptoms and how I got it. I had to explain myself and indicated that I am a sex worker. The nurse was very shocked, she removed her glasses to look at me properly. Then she told me that I am young and good looking and shouldn't be doing this job. As the nurse was saying those things to me, I asked if she was going to assist me or would continue to judge me. She said I should be ashamed. I apologised and pleaded that she assist me. She said she was going for lunch and called another nurse to attend to me. I had to explain myself again to the second nurse. Because I also have my own pride, I did not explain to the second nurse and since then I have stopped going to the clinic.

Testimony 61

Anonymous

November 2023

Tembisa, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to discrimination and unfriendly services towards trans people, and lack of gender affirming care

I went to the clinic when I was not feeling well because I had a rash on my face but the experience was bad, especially as a trans woman. What made the situation worse was when I asked about lubricants. I was told to go buy them and also buy calamine lotion as nothing is free. I transferred to Daveyton East Clinic and the treatment is better and I am treated equally like other patients.

Testimony 62

Anonymous

November 2023

Katlehong, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to discrimination and unfriendly services towards sex workers, and lack of post violence services

I am a sex worker. I do not have a specific spot where I work. There was a day when I was picked up by two clients who raped me. I went to Palmridge Clinic where the nurses told me I deserve what happened to me since I am a sex worker. I was hurt and felt disrespected as the clinic is supposed to be a safe space. Sex workers are human beings and the government must legalise sex work so we are safe.

Testimony 63

Anonymous

March 2023

Kingsway, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, and ill treatment of sex workers

The staff know that I am a sex worker and they don't treat me well. Every time I go there they will ask me if I have stopped "prostitution". They want me to stop because they say I will sleep with their kids. I do not like what they say to me. I have to lie so that they can help me. If they know I haven't given up sex work, they can refuse to serve me. There is a sister from the clinic who is my neighbour who knows I am a sex worker and she told the other staff members. There was an incident where she accused me of wanting to sleep with her husband. Since then the staff there has been treating me very badly.

Testimony 64

Anonymous

March 2023

Brakpan, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for people who use drugs and a lack of harm reduction services

I went to Tsakane Clinic. I am not someone who would normally go to the clinic, it was just because I needed new needles and methadone. But I have heard from other guys that use drugs about the way they are treated at the clinic. And with my own experience, I will never go back there. There was no confidentiality. There were about 6 or 7 other patients there and she was talking so loudly and they could hear what I was talking about. They could see that this guy is using drugs. I would never return to that clinic again. To be honest, I didn't know what PrEP was until recently when I heard people speaking about it. They have never offered me PrEP when I go to the clinic to test for HIV.

Testimony 65

Anonymous

October 2023

Germiston, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to sex workers, and a lack of privacy/confidentiality

Sometimes when I go to Rondebult Clinic, they ask me in the waiting area if I am back for the regular STI tests, in front of other patients. People from my community now know that I am a sex worker and it is because of the nurses there. I remember one time I just came to check my vitals and as I was leaving one nurse shouted and said "don't forget to take condoms 'lapho', we don't want you coming back with an infection" and I had enough condoms at the time. I felt violated. What I would like them to improve on is their level of privacy. They need to respect Sex workers and treat us like every other person.

Testimony 66

Anonymous

March 2023

Brakpan, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to sex workers, a lack of privacy/confidentiality, and denial of services

I went to Kingsway Municipal Clinic. The nurse tested me and it came back positive. I cried and asked her to help me with the medication. She said "why do you bother us? Why should the government waste money treating people like you rather than giving the medication to the patients who deserve it?" I felt so humiliated and hated myself. I was crying and begged the nurse to help me and she told me to stop "prostitution" because I will kill people's children with AIDS. She said I disgusted her. I humbled myself and apologised for being a sex worker to her. Last month I went to the clinic and asked for lubricant because I saw them. The nurse said "why do I have to give you lubricants to use for prostitution, these lubricants are not for prostitutes". I would like the clinic to give us lubes and condoms as some of the staff keep them and give them to their friends. They must also be sensitised to treat us well and stop recording us when we are at the clinic as they always record you while you are telling them what you came there for.

Testimony 67

Anonymous

April 2023

Germiston, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to sex workers and lack of privacy/confidentiality

The first time I went to Rondebult Clinic, before they knew what I do, the service was relatively poor but it was cool. But as soon as they found out that I am a sex worker, things got worse. There is nothing I could do, when I get there, they would make snide comments about why I am there. Everyone knew, my privacy was not respected enough. The cleaning staff and security guards were fine but the nurses are the ones with the main problem, they are the ones who are unfriendly and rude. There is a nurse there that once enlisted my

services, so when I went there, she was like “so I must be sick as well”. Her colleagues asked her why she would say that, then she told them that I am a sex worker and that she had used my services before. So, from that day, their attitude changed towards me.

Testimony 68

Anonymous

October 2023

Brakpan, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to sex workers, a lack of privacy/confidentiality, a lack of availability of condoms/lubricants, a lack of psychosocial support, and a lack of treatment literacy information

I am a sex worker using Rondebult Clinic. They don't allow me to take two packets of condoms. They say I am finishing the condoms and that other people still need to get them. They never have lubricants. There should not be a limit to the number of condoms a person can take. They need to introduce lubes and educate people about it. When you go there for HIV testing, there is not really any pre-counselling, just a few questions. I think they only counsel those with a positive result because when the test is negative, they just tell you that it is one line so you are fine. They do not offer you any additional prevention like PrEP. I had two STIs in a space of three months and every time I went there they kept on saying “that's the only reward you'll get as uMahosha”. I didn't feel respected enough but I couldn't raise my concerns because I desperately needed their help. If I go there for STI screening, I avoid the nurse that has a problem with me. I had an infection. she said “this one did not want to take off his trousers to be examined”. And I told her that I can take off my trousers but there were other nurses there. She was rude because I demanded that I be checked by only one person. Nurses should know more and should be advising us on other preventative methods to protect us from HIV. They do not tell us about things like that, because we come to test for HIV for a reason, and we are scared. They should give us proper counselling and recommendations. The nurses should not take lunch break all at once, leaving us there is not productive. They should alternate their lunch break so that patients are not left alone for so long.

Testimony 69

Anonymous

September 2023

Benoni, Ekurhuleni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for people who use drugs and lack of harm reduction services

I am a person who uses drugs. I had applied for rehabilitation. I went to the clinic to get my medical form filled. I wasn't expecting to be asked "what do I want at the clinic?". Even the security staff asked me what I was there for. I've heard that methadone is a schedule 6 medication. I learned about methadone at rehab, not the clinic.

Testimony 70

Anonymous

September 2023

Diepkloof, Johannesburg

This testimony pertains to denial of services and lack of availability of lubricants

I use Lillian Ngoyi Clinic. We really struggle to get lubricants at the clinic. They generally say they don't have any or that there is a stockout. They refer us to Chiawelo CHC and that involves transport fare, which is a lot of money. It would be great to have lubricants nearby. Condoms are available, it is lubricant that is scarce. We need someone who can help us because as the LGBTI, we are in Lillian Ngoyi, yet we are hardly a priority. They tell us to go use the men's clinic at Chiawelo, yet we have a clinic nearby. They can also improve their services. I heard there is Anova but they haven't done anything for us. They offer PrEP and that is about it.

Testimony 71

Anonymous

March 2023

Meadowlands, Johannesburg

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to people who use drugs, ill treatment by healthcare workers, and a lack of privacy/confidentiality

I am a person who uses drugs, using Sinqobile Clinic and living with HIV. I sometimes forget to fetch my ARVs from the clinic. In January when I went there to ask for my medication, the nurse treated me very badly. She said “you think we are working for you here, you want to fetch your pills at your own time and act like everything is fine because you are our boss”. She told me to go and wait outside. I disengaged from care because of the embarrassment at the clinic because I missed my appointment. I was accused of smoking the pills and my status was disclosed in the waiting area. I am scared to go back there and cannot report to anyone because they would not take me seriously.

Testimony 72

Anonymous

March 2023

Meadowlands, Johannesburg

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to people who use drugs, ill treatment by healthcare workers, and denial of services

I use Sinqobile Clinic. I admit that I was wrong to have missed my appointment for my medication, but it does not justify how I was treated. The nurse gave me the pills in front of everyone and said “we are really tired of you, who knows maybe you are smoking these pills. Why can't you just die because you've already killed yourself with drugs. You don't even bathe and don't like yourself”. I was offended as everyone was staring at me, some were blocking their noses while others were taking pictures.

Testimony 73

Anonymous

November 2023

Diepkloof, Johannesburg

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, discrimination of a person who uses drugs, a lack of psychosocial support, and a lack of harm reduction services

I am one of the people taking medication and my concern is that I am now referred to as “nyaope”. They look at me like I am a failure. I might not be educated but I am not a failure. When they see me doing recycling on the road, they think I am mentally disturbed. I come from a family where I have problems. We are asking that as a community, you should also think of us. I found nyaope in this world and fell into it due to peer pressure. I am now seen as an animal by everyone. I wouldn't just take ARVs for the fun of it. I am currently heartbroken because healthcare workers do not meet people who use drugs halfway, but people that use alcohol for example would be treated well. There are several chronic illnesses that I have like high blood pressure but I have to continue to hustle. When I go to the facility I am not provided with any support on how to adhere to my treatment.

Testimony 74

Anonymous

November 2023

Diepkloof, Johannesburg

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities and ill treatment by healthcare workers

I am a gay man. I had an STI & went to the clinic. When I got there the nurse told me that I brought this upon myself because of having anal sex. That was the last time I ever went to the clinic.

Testimony 75

Thando

November 2023

Diepkloof, Johannesburg

This testimony pertains to the denial of post violence services

My name is Thando and I am a trans woman. I stopped going to the facility. I was raped and decided to go to the facility after two days and I never got the help I was expecting or deserved. I asked for PEP as the rape was unprotected. I asked if there was a doctor but they said there was none. The nurse was more interested in the story but not about my physical and mental health. I was only given antibiotics and no PEP. I had to go to a private doctor.

Testimony 76

Ernest

November 2023

Diepkloof, Johannesburg

This testimony pertains to refusal of services because of no identity document

My name is Ernest. I was at a Ritshidze meeting four years ago and I am back with the same issue that I had back then. I was refused treatment because I don't have an ID. I am currently using Engage Men's Health for my medication and they sometimes deliver late. Whenever I attend the facility they send me back home. May the Minister of Health and those present in the room please assist me to get my medication at the facility.

Testimony 77

Anonymous

March 2023

Zola, Johannesburg

This testimony pertains to drug dependency support

They helped me to quit drugs. Now I am in recovery. They had counsellors there. They gave us some pills that we take daily to help us with the cravings and withdrawals. Sometimes if I don't have money to attend the classes, they insult me, saying I have gone back to drugs. They don't believe whatever I tell them because they don't believe that I am trying to quit drugs.

Testimony 78

Anonymous

April 2023

Vereeniging, Sedibeng

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to trans people, a lack of privacy/confidentiality, and a lack of gender affirming care

At the moment, I am not on my HRT. I have been on it at the Palm Springs Clinic for one year but they have been denying me access at the clinic saying I need to provide a referral letter that tells them the doses. I provided a letter from Wits RHI that states that this patient is a trans woman and waiting to change her gender marker. They still refused. There were people that were sitting there listening to what we were discussing.

There are no lubricants there. If you ask them, they say it is out of stock. But I saw a woman who complained about vaginal dryness and they gave her lube but they only give it to heterosexual people and not same-gender loving people. They treat us like we are not the same as the other patients.

To be honest, I am uncomfortable asking for any other services because they still use the "blue cards", we all know what that means. While I was sitting in the waiting area, they were discussing a patient that came in that he is one of the patients with the "blue card" who came

the previous day and didn't receive his ART so they will be dealing with that the whole day as a lot did not get their medication. Hearing that, I knew I cannot trust the staff. When I went (to the clinic), the nurse was saying "so you are the trans person, my colleague told me about you". I was so embarrassed as what I came there for had nothing to do with my gender identity.

Testimony 79

Anonymous

April 2023

Sebokeng, Sedibeng

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to sex workers, a lack of privacy/confidentiality, denial of services, and a lack of availability of lubricants

I am a sex worker using Empilisweni Clinic. Most of the time when I get there, they call me names. They offend me and this does not make me feel comfortable. Even the nurses do the same thing. If I want to get tested for HIV, they would discuss this among each other saying why am I wasting the tests when I am a sex worker. I wish there can be something done there so that we can be getting the same treatment as other people. I go there to get condoms, HIV testing. There are more things I would like to do there but I am afraid. Like testing for STIs. I cannot speak to them because they would discuss me and probably not help me. I just keep to myself and do not want to be ridiculed by them as they would embarrass and shame you. I am on the 3-month plan. I usually get it, but when I go there, they would ask why I am preventing and not using a condom when I know I am a sex worker and sleep with different men.

Sometimes it will be me and one nurse, then she will call the other nurses and they will start discussing me. Or if I am in the waiting line and one of them sees me, they would start talking and making fun of me. I am not comfortable at all. Sometimes I feel like if I discuss what is wrong with me, they will just discuss me and not attend to me. And it is not all the time that I get the services that I went there for. Sometimes I get tired of waiting and the terrible attitude and just leave. But I cannot change the clinic as I am new in the area. I wish they can change their attitude and be friendlier with sex workers so we can be free and comfortable with them.

They did offer me PrEP before but to get PrEP is so difficult. They like talking too much, they will say a lot of things that will make you feel uncomfortable as a sex worker. So, I just abandon it and leave. They should let us take as many condoms as we like, because when you are taking them, they will say “why are you taking so much, what will the others use?” Lube is not always available, they will tell you it is out of stock.

I would like them to change their attitude, they must treat us well as human beings. The way they are treating us is bad, they would make you join the end of the line even if you came first. If I go to the clinic and ask for pills, they should stop calling us names but treat me respectfully. They are there to help us and not judge us.

Testimony 80

Anonymous

November 2023

Mamelodi, Tshwane

This testimony pertains to denial of PrEP services

I attend Stanza 2 Clinic in Mamelodi and I went there for PrEP. I did not get the assistance, they did not want to listen to my reasons for wanting PrEP. They just shouted at me so I ended up leaving without PrEP. I have decided not to go back to the clinic for PrEP.

Testimony 81

Anonymous

November 2023

Soshanguve, Tshwane

This testimony pertains to discrimination towards LGBTQIA+ communities

I went to Maria Rantho Clinic with my partner because we had a condom burst. The nurses were making fun of us, calling each other that this is the first time they are seeing a gay couple. They said they don't know how to help us. Instead of assisting us, they were gossiping in the corridors and I confronted them. I requested to see the facility manager as I

felt our rights were violated, as an activist working for Access Chapter 2, I could not keep quiet.

Testimony 82

Anonymous

November 2023

Temba, Tshwane

This testimony pertains to discrimination towards LGBTQIA+ communities

I went to Temba Clinic because I had an STI. The nurses automatically assumed I was heterosexual, but once I disclosed that I got the STI from a same sex partner things changed. They discriminated against me and this made me stop going to that clinic.

Testimony 83

Anonymous

November 2023

Mabopane, Tshwane

This testimony pertains to discrimination towards LGBTQIA+ communities, lack of privacy/confidentiality, and ill treatment from a healthcare worker

I have been living with HIV for almost 20 years, a cancer survivor, and pulmonary TB. I have noticed that as members of the LGBTQIA+ we are not treated well in the facility and are discriminated against. I used to collect my ARVs at Sidilega Clinic. There is no confidentiality and you are disrespected by the staff. I once went to the facility and was consulted in the same room with another patient. This was uncomfortable, as much as I am openly living with HIV, I still did not want to be attended to in front of another patient. Instead of fighting with them, I went to a support group. I was shocked when I got to the clinic because I had blisters on my genitals. As someone who has been on treatment for a long time, I am familiar with most infections. I consulted with a doctor, but she was busy on her phone. I waited while she continued to chat on her phone without paying attention to me. Finally, she asked why I was there and I explained my symptoms. I expected her to take me to the private room for examination but the question she asked me was whether I used condoms as she felt it was

an STI. She did not ask any further questions or carry out an examination, she said it was an STI. I told her it cannot be as I am not sexually active. She just prescribed antibiotics. I was shocked that I was prescribed medication without any examination. I now avoid being consulted by the same doctor whenever I go to the clinic. I felt I was treated in that manner because I was distracting her from what she was doing on her phone. I believe this clinic is the best but that doctor needs to be removed.

Testimony 84

Anonymous

October 2023

Pretoria, Tshwane

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to LGBTQIA+ communities

The services at Aurum POP INN are exceptional. I remember the point where I was unemployed and I knew that I wouldn't be able to go and collect my medication and draw blood. They came and waited at my gate with the mobile clinic and everything was done there. So, I never had to stress about stopping treatment. The interaction with the people that work there is amazing. If they see that you miss your appointment, you're going to get a call to check up on you and ask if you need your medication to be delivered. Unlike the public facility where you would be blamed and abused. I feel like we need to have intense sensitisation training in our public clinics, where people will be told how to interact with queer people. Because we are also human. We have the right to be everywhere, like everybody in South Africa. So that they know we exist and we are here.

Testimony 85

Anonymous

April 2023

Mamelodi, Tshwane

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to LGBTQIA+ communities

I am a gay man, using Mamelodi West Clinic. I know someone who no longer goes for their ART because of how they were treated because of their sexuality. There is some form of

partiality, they treat you nicer if they know you but others are treated badly. I think the thing that is needed here, with the HIV department, the staff needs to be sensitised on LGBTQI sexual health. Most healthcare workers there are able to identify PLHIV who are LGBTQI and not able to fully attend to them and recommend the adequate services to them. Many of the LGBTQI people in this community are from disadvantaged backgrounds. They cannot travel to the organisations like OUT to access HIV treatment, and they are too embarrassed and scared to go to the public clinic closer to them so they disengage from care.

Testimony 86

Anonymous

October 2023

Pretoria, Tshwane

This testimony pertains to staff being unfriendly to trans people, a lack of privacy/confidentiality, a lack of availability of condoms/lubricants, and a lack of gender affirming care

I am a trans woman, using Access Chapter 2 and Aurum POP INN Clinics. I stopped using public health facilities due to unfriendly services. I collect my HRT at Aurum and went to the clinic to get assistance with injecting. But they refused to help me and told me to go inject myself. That they do not want to deal with whatever complications could happen. Staff at the clinic I used to go to would call each other into consultations to come and see. They ask “are you a guy but you look like a girl, what is your gender identity”. So that is why I moved, so that I do not have to face such issues. Sometimes the people in charge are very rude to us trans people. When you go there, they do not treat you well. You cannot use the bathroom of your choice, they say that they are not comfortable with you in the female bathroom. I am always so frustrated every time I go there. Sometimes I get condoms but lubricants are never there. Even with the condoms, they would give you like 2 or 3. I recently started my HRT and I take pills not injections. I go there every month because I just started so they take bloods to check that everything is fine. The public clinics need more sensitisation when it comes to members of key populations, especially for those who fall under more than one category of KP. They need more education. Most trans people are leaving public facilities because they do not get the services they want, get misgendered, and not addressed by their preferred name.

Testimony 87

Anonymous

September 2023

Pretoria, Tshwane

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment by healthcare workers towards people who use drugs, and a lack of harm reduction services

The nurse stood up, saying she would help me last because I use drugs, she would start by helping her people. I told her I was there to ask for help to complete the forms that I needed. They told me to come back the following day because they were working with children. The problem with our local clinics is that they don't know how to treat people well. I no longer go to the clinic. They would never give you new needles at the clinic, they'll tell you that needles are meant for their patients, not drug users. Clinics should treat people equally, regardless of whether they are using drugs or having other illnesses. They vowed to serve the community.

Testimony 88

Anonymous

September 2023

Pretoria, Tshwane

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment by healthcare workers towards people who use drugs

I was using nyaope and went to the clinic to ask for help. They asked questions like "why are you like this?". That hurt me to the point where I no longer want to go to a clinic because they ill treated me. I am even scared to go to the clinic. I would rather die than go to the clinic or hospital.

KwaZulu-Natal testimonies

Testimony 89

Anonymous

April 2023

Durban, eThekweni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards people who use drugs, lack of harm reduction services, and lack of post-violence services

I live in a shelter here in Durban. I was attacked by a mob and my right leg was broken. People called the ambulance but they never came, so my friends rushed me to King Edward Hospital. They made me wait from the early hours of the morning until late afternoon with no one attending to me. They said they don't deal with 'paras'. Even when you tell the nurses that you are in a harm reduction programme, it does not change their attitude towards you. I explained that I am on methadone and ARVs, but that did not make them attend to me. They said I should have gone to Addington Hospital where they attend to 'drug users'. After waiting for hours to get help to treat the injury, I pleaded with the nurses to give me a drip as I had lost a lot of blood but they refused. I also asked that they contact the harm reduction centre where I get my medication so it can be delivered there. They said they are not the ones who asked me to be smoking, I should get my family members to bring the medication. They only gave me painkillers. They did not provide any care for me. I was told to go get a J88 form from the police station and bring it back. I was stigmatised by healthcare workers who should be caring for every patient and not discriminate because of who I am.

Testimony 90

Anonymous

April 2023

Durban, eThekweni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards people who use drugs, and denial of services

I tried to use Addington Hospital. I had pneumonia but they did not attend to me. They just let me sit on the bench without attending to me because I use drugs. I begged them to contact Belhaven (Harm Reduction Centre) to confirm that I am on methadone but they ignored me. I was forced to just leave without receiving any treatment. The staff should

change their attitude towards people who use drugs. They always criticise us that we are not bathing and dirty. Maybe they should give us soap to bathe with and provide porridge so that we can eat something when they give us medication.

Testimony 91

Anonymous

April 2023

Umlazi, eThekwini

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards LGBTQIA+ communities, and a lack of privacy/confidentiality

The attitude of the staff at Umlazi N Clinic is very bad towards queer people. Even the cleaners shout at you. I was told to come back the next day for my medication as they were out of stock. I missed work to return there and the doctor was full of attitude. Only the counsellor was friendly. I collect my ARVs at the clinic. There is never privacy. Sometimes there are like three people in the consultation room and everyone can hear what you are discussing. This makes me uncomfortable as I cannot share what is wrong with me in the presence of others.

Testimony 92

Anonymous

August 2023

Ndwedwe, eThekwini

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards people who use drugs, and lack of harm reduction services

I decided to stop using drugs but my family could not afford rehab and the clinic did not give us any information. I got very sick with stomach cramps and was vomiting. I lost a lot of weight and could not walk on my own. My sisters took me to Ndwedwe CHC but once we told the nurse about my drug use, her attitude changed and she said we should have gone to a rehab because they were not trained on how to attend to drug users. She gave me glucose and allergex. I pleaded for a drip but she refused. My sisters then took me to Qadi

Clinic and we never mentioned anything about smoking drugs. They treated me well, started a drip, and gave me an injection. I was admitted for the night. I was discharged the following day and given pills for the cramps. If I had told them I use drugs, I would have been stigmatised. I heard about a place called Step Up which provides services for PWUDs and gives methadone for free. We registered and I still take methadone there. I wish we had these centres in our township.

Testimony 93

Anonymous

August 2023

Durban, eThekweni

This testimony pertains to a lack of harm reduction services

I don't get services anywhere at the moment. I always try Belhaven (Harm Reduction Centre) if I need assistance, but they refer me to another clinic. I tried to register to take methadone there too, but they put me on a waiting list saying there is a shortage of funds to take new patients.

Testimony 94

Anonymous

November 2023

Hammarisdale, eThekweni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards trans people, lack of gender affirming care, lack of access to condoms/lubricants

I am from Hammarisdale. I used to use Mpumalanga Clinic. I had sex and was bleeding for like six days. I had to use something to stop the bleeding. I was not happy with the toilet in the clinic as they are not gender-neutral. It was uncomfortable to go into the ones that are there. I had to sit there with the blood. When I got into the consultation room and explained what was wrong, the nurse said she didn't know what was wrong with me, so I left without getting any assistance. I would like to plead with the department to educate their staff so that when we go to the facility, our lifestyle is not judged, but they should give us the service we

are there for. Also, we plead that we are not told that we have money so we must go buy lubricants and condoms.

Testimony 95

Anonymous

November 2023

Durban, eThekweni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards a sex worker, and denial of services

I am anonymous and a sex worker. I was raped and was taken to Addington Hospital. The nurses started calling each other saying that I asked for this to happen to me. I sat there waiting for help, but nothing happened. I asked the security guard if anyone would attend to me but he responded saying that no-one sent me to be a sex worker and be on the streets.

Testimony 96

Anonymous

November 2023

Umlazi, eThekweni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards sex workers, and denial of services

I use Umlazi U21 Clinic. The problem was that my period was abnormal. When I went to the clinic they told me that the bleeding was normal. They said it must be my ancestors since I had cultural beads on. They forced me to do a pregnancy test, however it came back negative. They asked me to come back with a relative. I wanted to find out whether that would stop the bleeding? I explained that the first day of my menstrual cycle is very painful and I am weak and unable to stand. I pleaded that they give me a transfer letter as I feared I might have cancer. They refused saying this is because of the lifestyle that I am living.

Testimony 97

Anonymous

November 2023

Umlazi, eThekwini

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of LGBTQIA communities, and challenges with ART continuity

I use Umlazi Q Clinic and collect my medication there. I missed my appointment date and the nurse told me to wait since I did not come on my date. They started calling me names. They said that it is natural for gay people, because of the life that we live, to miss our appointment dates. That I must wait. I left without getting assisted. I was embarrassed as other patients were laughing at me. I had to borrow medication from my friend for a week until I was able to return to the clinic where I found a different nurse who attended to me.

Testimony 98

Hlengiwe

November 2023

KwaMashu, eThekwini

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of sex workers, and lack of privacy/confidentiality

I am Hlengiwe using Poly Clinic in KwaMashu. Everytime I pray, I always include that I do not fall sick and have to go to the clinic. Because when I go to the clinic, I am made a laughing stock and my status is disclosed in front of other people. We plead to the government that when we go to the clinic we are able to get the services we require and not be laughed at and your privacy violated. When we go to the facility, other patients are being treated by one nurse but when I get there, there is more than one nurse. They would question me about my lifestyle. I got sick in February and went to the clinic, and they asked if my partner uses condoms when they know I am a sex worker. They question me instead of assisting me. I had to educate them about sex work. I told them to read on the risks of the job and focus on attending to me. I wonder how other sex workers handle this because I am able to stand up for myself.

Testimony 99

Anonymous

November 2023

Durban, eThekweni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment towards people who use drugs

I would like to thank Ritshidze as they not only monitor facilities, but invite us to these spaces where we are able to share our experiences. I am a person who uses drugs and collect methadone at Belhaven Harm Reduction Centre. This is a medication that I cannot skip for a day as I would suffer withdrawal. The problem in the clinic is that the person who gives out files is very short tempered and we get punished and not given medication. I am starting a two week punishment soon. I am pleading that we get assisted. This is not just for me but for other guys as well.

Testimony 100

Teddy

November 2023

Durban, eThekweni

This testimony pertains to lack of gender affirming care

My name is Teddy. I was diagnosed with HIV and the nurse that was counselling me did something wrong to me. I didn't know that the files were being differentiated with colours based on gender. She gave me a blue card. It was later that I realised why this was done. Blue cards are for men and pink cards for women. She can see that I am a trans woman. She should have given me a pink card as it is clear that I am a woman. She discriminated against me because I am trans. This is very wrong and would like it to be addressed.

Testimony 101

Anonymous

November 2023

Durban, eThekweni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards sex workers, challenges with PEP and STI service access, and denial of services

I work at Newrand in Durban. I am a sex worker. One day while I was with my client the condom burst and I rushed to the clinic at Addington Hospital. I found a nurse in the consultation room. I explained my issue. She responded by saying, so what seems to be the problem because I sleep with a lot of men. I told her that I did not want to be infected with sexually transmitted infections and I knew that I am HIV negative. The nurse called another nurse in to make fun of me. They went on to ask why I must rush for PEP because I sleep with a lot of men. I felt very bad, and I left the facility without being helped. I did not have the number for TB HIV Care. In the clinic at Addington Hospital sex workers are not valued. They make fun of us.

Testimony 102

Anonymous

November 2023

Durban, eThekweni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards sex workers, challenges with PEP and STI service access, lack of availability of condoms/lubricants, and denial of services

I am a sex worker and as sex workers, we are not taken seriously wherever we go. At first, I was scared to go to the facility, because I had an STI. When I arrived at the facility the nurses shouted at me as to why it took me so long to come to the facility. They shouted at me as to why I was so negligent, why didn't I use a condom to protect myself? I told them that I had been cautious and was using a condom, instead of helping me they started mocking me, making fun of me, and calling me all sorts of names. This happened at RK Khan Hospital. I ended up being assisted by TB HIV Care. When you report that you had a condom burst and request medication, they say go to the pharmacy and buy it. We would be happy to get condoms and lubricants at the facility. The staff should stop abusing sex workers. If we come to the facility for STIs or any other sickness in our bodies. We are never taken seriously.

Testimony 103

Anonymous

November 2023

Umlazi, eThekwini

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of people who use drugs, lack of access to harm reduction services, and denial of services

I'm 37 years old and from Hammarsdale but now I stay in eThekwini at K Block. I am a person who uses drugs. I arrived in eThekwini before lockdown in 2020 and continued staying here until I found a shelter. I got tested and found out that I'm HIV positive. I used Denis Hurley because it's the place I know in eThekwini. I didn't go to the clinic because they chase away people like us. That's why I went to Denis Hurley. I experienced a problem three months ago with a lady working there, and I'm afraid to say her name. She's a staff member. She was rude to me each time I went there for my pills. I ended up not taking my pills and asking my friends to share theirs. I wish they could help with pills and methadone in local areas and not just eThekwini.

Testimony 104

Anonymous

November 2023

Berea, King Cetshwayo

This testimony pertains unfriendly services, ill treatment of people who uses drugs, challenges with ART continuity, and denial of services

When I came to King Dinuzulu Clinic on 13 July. I was very sick. I know that I use drugs but that doesn't mean that they have to mistreat me. There was a woman there who swore at me and said: "get out you para you're wasting seats for the patients who really need help." So please if there is somebody who can do something to solve this problem or change the person who is the leader in the clinic or the staff, please. Living with HIV is hard and we need our pills. There was a time when I had to fetch the pills and they said I can't have them until I take my blood test, so I defaulted. Imagine me not taking my pills that long until I wait

for my results to come back. What was I to do in the meantime, how can you not give me my pills when I'm on HIV treatment? I stopped treatment for almost two months. When I take the pills they make me vomit, they turn into poison in my system. We all have rights to healthcare and I think we should be treated in the same way. Please do something.

Testimony 105

Anonymous

November 2023

Nseleni, King Cetshwayo

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment towards people who use drugs

I am a person who used to use drugs and have been clean for two years. I had an encounter when I was trying to get assistance at the clinic. The nurse knew that I used to use drugs and she judged me. She told the other staff to keep their things safe because I might steal them. She told everyone about it. This made me feel very uncomfortable and I have decided not to go to the clinic again.

Testimony 106

Anonymous

September 2023

Mtubatuba, King Cetshwayo

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards LGBTQIA+ communities, and lack of post violence services

I stopped going to KwaMsane Clinic because of the bad treatment that I received. After a sexual assault, I went there to report what happened and I never received any medical assistance. The nurses laughed at me saying "how can you say a man raped you when you are also a man, don't joke around". So, I went home with getting any services for sexual violence like HIV testing or PEP. I found out months later that I was living with HIV, this might have been prevented if I was assisted during the incident that I reported at the clinic.

Testimony 107

Anonymous

August 2023

Port Shepstone, Ugu

This testimony pertains to a lack of privacy/confidentiality and contraceptive stockouts

I am a sex worker using Mbunde Clinic. Besides the long waiting period, there are not many challenges. However, I think that is because they do not know that I am a sex worker. I see how other sex workers get treated. I go there for my ART and contraceptives. I have also gone there for TB and STI screening but I never got the results. There was a time when the injection was not available and they offered me something else, but I preferred the injection as it stops me from menstruating and time was running out. There are times where more than one nurse is in the consultation room. Though there is a curtain that separates you from the other consultation rooms, you can hear everything that is being discussed there, and they can also hear what you are discussing as well. Sometimes, the nurse in the other room would pop in to share what the patient she just dealt with spoke about and I just have to wait and listen to everything. No one apologises for disrupting the consultation, you just continue. When you go there for your injection, you get to the consultation room and they give you the container to go pee in. Then you have to use the toilets that are outside the facility and then when you get back there is someone else in the consultation room and the nurse just puts the stick into the urine and you wait there while she continues with the other patient. When the test is done, she writes a note on your card that you can go get the injection if the test is negative. So, if I am pregnant, then the other patient would know.

Testimony 108

Anonymous

August 2023

Port Shepstone, Ugu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of LGBTQIA+ communities, a lack of privacy/confidentiality, a lack of availability of lubricants, a lack of post-violence services, a

lack of mental health services or psychosocial support, lack of quality post HIV test counselling

I am a trans woman, using Marburg Clinic. The overall experience is fine but regarding my sexuality/gender, it is not fine because I believe there is a lot of stigma. It is a clinic that has a wide range of nurses from different races, and due to religious reasons, some nurses don't take it well if you need services that consider your sexuality/gender or need you to disclose your sexuality/gender.

The one that seems to irritate me the most is the interruption of consultation. If you are discussing something, the nurses do not respect privacy. While you are sitting there consulting, they would just go on chatting to another nurse or someone would come in and they start having a full-on conversation like I am not there. Then I need to wait for the chat to finish. It just seems very rude. On one occasion, I went for an STI medication. I am aware of some of the symptoms of some STIs so once I experience them, I know I need to go to the clinic. I explained what was happening. The nurse told me to lie down to give me an injection. While preparing herself to inject me, another nurse comes in. I was lying on my stomach with my pants pulled down and I was in a painful situation and had to patiently wait for the nurse to leave. She did not care and there was no apology. She just went on, knowing that you need the service. It was very embarrassing.

HIV counselling done at the clinic is not comprehensive. It is like a tick box "session", they don't go deep into it. Everything is rushed. They just want to do it because it is a requirement. For someone to know their status has changed, they need much better support. I blamed myself for getting HIV for a long time because I did not receive quality post-counselling or even any counselling after. They do not provide any services for the LGBTQI community aside from STI screening and treatment. You would see condoms, but there are never any lubricants. I was seeing a private psychologist after a sexual assault but stopped due to financial reasons. But there is no mental health support at the clinic. I still struggle and need support, but this is not available. I do not need to go all the way to a hospital far away when there is a clinic next to me. I should be able to get health services in my community clinic. As of now I am being transferred to Boboyi Clinic. I would rather take a taxi and spend money to get better services than remain here where the services are not always good.

Testimony 109

Anonymous

August 2023

Pennington, Ugu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards sex workers, a lack of privacy/confidentiality, and a lack of availability of lubricants

I am a sex worker, using Pennington Municipal Clinic. The challenges that I face at the clinic is having to wait for a long time to get services, as they know I am a sex worker and are always busy. I explained to them, but they sometimes make me wait the whole day. Since they changed the sister in charge, things have gotten worse. It would be good for the staff attitude to change as well as the privacy as this makes me feel uncomfortable. Imagine going to the clinic and other patients now know my medical history or that I am a sex worker. I feel discriminated against and stigmatised.

There is no privacy because sometimes when I am still in the consultation room, another nurse would come to interrupt us. Or when I ask the nurse what a particular symptom means, without asking for permission if I am comfortable to call someone else to assist, she just calls another nurse. That makes me feel so uncomfortable. I hardly get lubricants as they are always out of stock but the condoms are outside so you can just take how many you want.

They will always gossip about me among each other. When you have a condom burst with a client and you go there, they gossip and complain that we sex workers do not like to use condoms and are always coming to access STI treatment often. I then have to explain that in the profession, things like this happen often.

Testimony 110

Anonymous

September 2023

Mtubatuba, Ugu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities, a lack of specific services for LGBTQIA+ communities, and ART continuity challenges

I'm a non-binary person using KwaMsane Clinic. The attitude of the staff towards LGBTQI individuals is very bad. They behave like they are seeing something that they are not used to. When the nurse was drawing blood, she was rushing and I still have the scar. It was like she just wanted to get away from me. It would be nice if there are LGBTQI people that work in the clinic or a separate section where they can use. The staff need to be taught about us, and there should be more awareness around the facility so that patients and staff are aware of us.

When I first started my ART, I had medical aid but when my financial situation changed, I moved to the clinic. The staff were unfriendly, from the receptionist, the way they looked at me was very uncomfortable based on how I was dressed. You could sense their discomfort as to whether I am male or female. To re-initiate treatment, they demanded a transfer letter which I did not have. But I was eventually taken to draw blood, but nothing was explained to me and no medication was issued. They said they would call me back but they never did. I had to make other plans to get my medication. There are no specific services for LGBTQI people, you do not get offered any services that can help you.

Testimony 111

Anonymous

September 2023

Mtubatuba, Ugu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities and lack of availability of lubricants

I am a gay man and I use Cinci Clinic. I went for HIV testing but did not tell them my sexual history because it is a clinic in my community and everyone knows each other and I feared the judgement or that other people would know my story. The result came back positive and I was initiated onto ART. I get 3 months refill when I go there.

There are always condoms but you only see lubricants there sometimes. They will ask why are you coming to get lubricants, what is it for? Who are you going to use it with? It would be good if the staff are more sensitised about LGBTQI people because some complain that they get treated badly and called names. Some have stopped going to the clinic because they are

scared. It would be good for the staff to be friendlier and also if they can hire LGBT people. It is very difficult to share your medical challenges with the older nurses, or talk about your sexual health. This is a real problem, we need people that would understand us and listen to us without any judgement.

Testimony 112

Anonymous

August 2023

Port Shepstone, Ugu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards people who use drugs, and denial of services

I use Mbunde Clinic. A lot of people who use drugs are suffering because of the way they are being treated in clinics and communities. They recently formed a forum that chases and beats PWUDs here in Port Shepstone. They accuse them of stealing and other crimes. One guy even died last week from the way they beat him and he did not get help at the clinic. Even if you arrive early and join the queue, you would get skipped and the nurses would attend to people who came after you. Sometimes we leave without getting the service we went there for. They treat me okay because most of the staff do not know I use drugs. But I speak with the other guys when I see one that is sick or has a wound that looks bad. They would say they are scared as they get chased away, telling them that they are dirty and smelling. So, if you are clean or showered, they would attend to you but if you are dirty then you are chased away. It would be nice to have a shelter or container for people who use drugs so that they don't need to go inside the main facility so they don't get chased away or called names.

Testimony 113

Anonymous

August 2023

Port Shepstone, Ugu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards trans people, and a lack of gender affirming care

When I started at the clinic a lot of them knew me, but the new staff did not know about me. They tend to have a questioning facial expression when I express myself, but I always take the opportunity to educate them about the trans community. On one instance, I went to the reception and they wanted to take the pink card. They have blue cards for male and pink cards for females. I cannot take the blue card because some of the information is for biological males and the pink one also does not cover me. I told them I prefer the white card, but they refused because they needed to make a file and we had to argue about my refusal about the pink card. I try to not be angry in such instances but to use it as an opportunity to educate them.

There are not a lot of trans people in the community so I believe they should know us by now, as much as we do not go to the clinic often. But when you go there, you need to re-unpack and explain about your dead name and preferred pronouns. So, you know you would not be addressed by the correct name and pronouns. When you arrive, the person would not even look up to greet or acknowledge you, they would just say the next lady should come through. And when I asked her to look at me so we could understand each other, she said "so, I should leave writing and look at you, which is more important". It is attitudes like that which you get at the clinic.

The problem is there by the gate and the reception, the staff in the consultation room are a bit better. Maybe because they receive some sensitisation training but they are the second point of contact. The security and receptionists are the first ones that I meet and should be sensitised too. They claim security companies are outsourced and cannot be included in sensitisation trainings. Yet your bag is being opened by a male security guard when you are coming in or going out, and they make demeaning remarks towards me sometimes.

Most of the consulting nurses no longer say "where is your man", but would say "where is your partner". But the security and the people by the reception, there is still a long way to go. On the register for the clinic, they would insist on entering you in the female space even when there is a section that says key population so that the statistics for our community can show that there are key populations that are in the clinic. So, they don't need to justify the need for key population specific services. It is empty in most clinics, you can go around and check. It seems the trans community is ignored, other members of the LGBTQI community get advocated for but we are ignored. There are organisations that promote the rights of others but no one does for us. In the clinic, they see us trans people as a clown, when a trans woman walks into the clinic, they would all be laughing. They do not take us seriously.

They do not ask all the normal questions or do any examinations. It is like our sexuality is going to jump on them like we are contagious. If I, who is a known activist in the community, still face all these challenges, I wonder how bad the rest of the LGBTQI members in the community get treated. Especially those that are in the rural and semi-rural clinics where they have staff that are older and are stuck in their ways. There was a time a nurse told me that if you still sit down to urinate then you are female in my eyes, only males stand up to urinate. You are at my place so you have to follow how I do my thing. There are a lot of stereotypes by the older nurses.

There are privacy issues, you would sit like this and the nurse would say she is going to get something. Then another person would pop in to ask you where the sister is, you tell them she has gone to fetch something. Then another person, and another person. Then it clicks that they are coming to see who is in the room. Immediately after you share something personal, this happens. Healthcare is a basic right, the clinics should be gender friendly whereby you know that if I go into the clinic as a trans person I would go in with a smile and come back with a smile.

When I approached one of the enrolled nurses about hormones, I didn't go straight to the point, I showed them pictures of trans men and they did not know what they were so I had to explain to them what a trans man and trans woman is. When I asked about hormones, they just started laughing, saying "so you want to become a man". I collect my hormones from a doctor in Pietermaritzburg but I go to the clinic for them to inject me. They usually do not want to help but I always go to the nurses that I have some relationship with because I do not want to inject myself at home.

Testimony 114

Anonymous

August 2023

Scottburgh, Ugu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards people who use drugs, lack of harm reduction services, and challenges with STI services

When it comes to their services at Philani Clinic, it is not always good because sometimes the staff change. Some of the staff know I used to use drugs. My family members told them.

It would be good to be able to access methadone at the clinic as it does work. If they can also have a schedule or time when they attend to people who use drugs so they can get attended to without judgement. Sometimes the guys get cramps while in the queue, or have a wound that needs immediate attention, but they have to spend the whole day at the facility as it is overcrowded. There are no counsellors who are well trained on how to deal with people who use drugs, they are judgemental towards us.

I noticed some symptoms of an STI after having unprotected sex. They told me the girl I slept with was “not clean”. I was scolded for not using a condom but was eventually given the treatment.

Testimony 115

Anonymous

August 2023

Pietermaritzburg, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment towards people who use drugs

I am a person who uses drugs and use East Boom Street Clinic. The security search you when you enter and leave the facility, but they don't search the other patients. It is like you are going to steal inside the facility.

Testimony 116

Anonymous

August 2023

Richmond, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment towards people who use drugs

I am a person who uses drugs. I went to Richmond Clinic and had a quarrel with the security guard because I refused to let him search me, given he was not searching the other patients. They called me names, so I left without getting the services.

Testimony 117

Anonymous

August 2023

Mooi River, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to lack of harm reduction services

We get needles from the Inkunzi Isematholeni Foundation Mobile Clinic but it is never enough. They give you 15 needles every Tuesday and I use up to 6 daily, so I have to reuse them. Also if you don't have up to 15 to exchange, you do not get new ones. So, a lot of us still share needles or buy them from grannies with diabetes.

Testimony 118

Anonymous

August 2023

Mooi River, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards people who use drugs, and a lack of harm reduction services

Mooi River Clinic is the worst. They treat us very badly there. Thankfully we get some services at the Inkunzi Isematholeni Foundation Mobile Clinic but they never give us enough needles so we end up sharing and using old ones, and we get sores and wounds from using blunt needles.

Testimony 119

Anonymous

September 2023

PMB, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to a lack of privacy/confidentiality

I take my PrEP at Aurum. The services are good but there are a few challenges. I don't like the way some of the staff handle things. They insist on giving you feedback on the phone

without considering the environment that one might be in, instead of asking me to come in. That makes me very uncomfortable.

Testimony 120

Anonymous

November 2023

Pietermaritzburg, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards sex workers, challenges with STI services, and challenges with ART continuity

I am sex worker living with HIV and use East Boom Street Clinic. There are a lot of problems that we face as sex workers using this clinic. I was transferred there. I had a problem due to my living arrangements, that sometimes my ARVs were stolen. Then when you go to the clinic, they shout at you. Also when you go for STI screening and treatment, you are degraded and called a “prostitute” and they tell you to use a condom as they cannot continue to treat your STIs. When things like this happen, I would disengage from care and only return when I am calm. And then you are made to wait and attended to last. When they ask questions about my treatment adherence, and I explain that sometimes I go to bed hungry and am not able to take my medication, they do not understand. As someone who also suffers from depression, you cannot get help at this clinic. I moved to a mobile clinic where they try their best.

Testimony 121

Anonymous

November 2023

Pietermaritzburg, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment towards a member of a key population

I use East Boom Street Clinic and in October I went to the clinic to get checked as I was having an irregular period. This is where I was diagnosed with HIV and also found out I was pregnant. They took blood and asked me to come back. I missed the appointment date and

when I arrived back they said the results or samples had been lost and still scolded me for missing the appointment.

Testimony 122

Anonymous

November 2023

Imbali, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of trans people, lack of privacy/confidentiality, and lack of gender affirming care

I use Imbalenhle Clinic. My story can be summarised as being misgendered at the clinic. As a trans person I take hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and this can have complications. When I get to the clinic, they give you either a card for male or female. I expect to be serviced as a woman and not man, even if my biological sex is male. They use the wrong pronouns. They are violating my privacy by disclosing my gender identity and putting my life at risk. When I got to the doctor, as I was there for the side effects of the HRT, I expected the doctor to maintain my privacy and confidentiality, but she violated this. On this day, it got to a point where the security knew about my story. They were all present and made me strip so they could confirm that I am indeed a biological male and trans.

Testimony 123

Anonymous

November 2023

Pietermaritzburg, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of people who use drugs, challenges with ART continuity, and denial of services

I use East Boom Street Clinic and I use drugs. I missed my appointment date by one day and the nurse scolded me, shouted at me, and called me derogatory names about using drugs in front of other patients. The nurse denied me my ARVs that day and asked that I go and sober up before coming to take my medication. I was open with her that I had taken some drugs that day.

Testimony 124

Anonymous

November 2023

Pietermaritzburg, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards people who use drugs, challenges with ART continuity, and denial of services

When I was initiated on ARVs I was using drugs. The nurses would always tell us that they are not the ones who told us to be addicted to drugs and so refuse to give us HIV treatment. I wondered what type of people can access services at the clinic. Some of us were discriminated against because we are unable to bathe or dress well. They do not know the circumstances that pushed us to being homeless or using drugs. This is not their concern. They should just give us the services that we require. I stopped my HIV treatment and only returned when I was extremely sick and assisted by the Inkunzi Isematholeni Foundation Mobile Clinic that attends to the homeless and people who use drugs. I would appreciate that the clinic attends to us without discrimination.

Testimony 125

Anonymous

November 2023

Pietermaritzburg, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards people who use drugs, challenges with ART continuity, and denial of services

I am a person who uses drugs and also living with HIV. I was told that ARVs give life and I can attest to this. At the clinic they refer to us as “para”, which are not the names on our IDs but we have to accept this so that we get assisted. I had stopped collecting ARVs because of the treatment I am receiving at the facility. We all know that when you are homeless, you do not have access to ablution facilities and cannot always be clean when you visit the facility. When I was turned away from the clinic, I chose to leave peacefully. As a member of TAC I know my rights, but knowing my circumstances I chose to leave the facility. Because I am addicted to ‘whoonga’ I am treated badly. I went the following day to Mpophomeni Clinic, where I was once a member of the clinic committee, and was dressed differently. The next

day the staff that had treated me badly were not there, which made me sad as I hoped they would see that I could clean up. One thing that hurts me is that some of the people who use drugs like me have to steal ARVs or collect from a garbage bin from others who throw their pills away. I currently have two month's worth of medication that I found in the garbage. Now that there are representatives of the Department of Health here, they should please help so that PWUDs can access services and not die due to not having access to services. Finally, I would like to ask that PWUDs be allowed to enter the facility. We are also members of the community and should be allowed to enter the facility.

Testimony 126

Anonymous

September 2023

PMB, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards LGBTQIA+ communities, lack of privacy/confidentiality, and challenges with access to lubricants

I am a gay man, using Durban University of Technology Clinic. There is a nurse that is known for being a "no-nonsense" and strict woman. I was warned by the patient that came out that if you don't explain properly, she will shout at you. She will shout saying "you see you have made me do the wrong thing". I was scared when I went into the consultation room. The services are fine but there is always a doctor and nurse in the consultation room. You have to explain what is wrong to both of them. It doesn't help that they are both old which makes it even more uncomfortable to fully disclose why you are there. That was the first time I saw such a thing. They have lubricants and condoms, but they put them right by the reception so it is difficult to take them, as you would get the look when you try to take it.

Testimony 127

Anonymous

November 2023

Pietermaritzburg, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of sex workers and trans people, challenges with ART continuity, lack of privacy/confidentiality, and denial of healthcare services

I am a trans woman and living with HIV. I collect my treatment at North Dale Clinic. I missed my appointment and realised two days later. I went to the clinic the following day. I arrived, placed my card, and waited. I queued then a nurse came out holding my file that was pink in colour. At the facility, they colour code files for people living with HIV. A pink file means you're HIV positive. The nurse came out and said, "magosha why are you late". I cried. While I was crying, she continued stigmatising me saying that I sleep around and this is not my clinic. Other people were called in except me. I asked why I was not called by the nurse, she said that it was because I am a sex worker. I stayed and waited until they closed the facility without even getting medication. I ended up not getting access to ART. I went to a mobile clinic and they reinitiated me. I don't want to go back to a public health facility because of this issue. I never reported the incident to anyone. I just went to the mobile clinic and started afresh. At the mobile clinic, they call you and bring your treatment if you've missed your appointment. I didn't get lubricant at the facility, only condoms and sometimes they were out of stock. I'd like to see changes at public facilities of them having services for us trans people.

Testimony 128

Anonymous

November 2023

Pietermaritzburg, uMgungundlovu

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of people who use drugs, lack of privacy/confidentiality, and challenges with ART continuity

I am a person who used drugs. I was unable to manage time effectively to go to the clinic due to my drug dependence, but I always adhered to my treatment. What makes me uncomfortable about our clinic is how we are treated compared to other patients. I was at the clinic and explained my condition as a person who uses drugs. I also tried to explain that I was given the wrong treatment which is why I came to the clinic. I didn't receive respectful service. I was addressed with no privacy. I didn't like the way I was treated. This caused me to consider changing clinics. If there is a problem, I prefer being called aside and the

discussion be private so I can also explain myself better. This led to me choosing to stop using drugs given I could die and not be helped due to my appearance. Even now I'm not keen on going to the clinic because I know that I will be shouted at. Especially because I disengaged from treatment for this long. I use other people's medication.

Testimony 129

Anonymous

August 2023

Estcourt, uThukela

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards people who use drugs, unavailability of ambulances, and denial of services

I don't get treated on time because I am smoking. They attend to other people first and me last. If I miss my date they shout at me and call me names, but they don't do that to other people. They said I was coughing and told me to stand outside. They have no time for us. They call us names like "paras", especially the security. If one of us is sick and you call the ambulance, they will tell you they cannot come to the rank. There are three guys that died on the streets last year because we could not get them to the hospital or clinic on time because the ambulance refused to come.

I was very sick and my brother gave me money to go to Estcourt Hospital. They attended to me very late and there was no transport to go back. The nurse told me to speak to the security to show me where I could sleep. He left me outside in the cold and only around 11pm did he give me a mattress with no blanket to sleep on.

We took a friend to Corner Street Clinic last week and the security did not even let us in. He told us to wait outside, we said you can see that she is very sick and cannot even stand. He did not care about that.

Testimony 130

Anonymous

August 2023

Estcourt, uThukela

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards people who use drugs, challenges with ART continuity, and denial of services

The services at the hospital and clinics are bad. It just depends on who you meet, whether they are nice or not. Even at the police station, if someone abuses us, they don't attend to our case. They say you are a "para and sell your body so we would not attend to your case". I don't go to the facility unless it is an emergency because of the way they treat us. You must also bring your ID before they can attend to you and most of us have lost our IDs because we live on the street. I am afraid to go back to the clinic because of the staff attitude. They insult me by asking why I am on chronic medication and still continue to smoke? It is not just me, a lot of the guys have stopped taking their ARVs and TB medication. They insist that people who use drugs bring your ID.

Testimony 131

Anonymous

August 2023

Ladysmith, uThukela

This testimony pertains to lack of access to contraceptives

I am using Walton Clinic. They give us general services but we don't get contraceptives. They say we cannot fall pregnant while smoking nyaope.

Mpumalanga testimonies

Testimony 132

Anonymous

June 2023

Nelspruit, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment towards sex workers

Last year I visited Madras Clinic for treatment of a yeast infection and was told I have an STI. I was being attended to by one nurse, and another one came in saying we sex workers are having affairs with their partners. This resulted in an argument between us. I was asked to calm down and I just left without getting assisted.

Testimony 133

Anonymous

June 2023

Nelspruit, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards sex workers, lack of privacy/confidentiality, lack of availability of condoms/lubricants, and poor clinic conditions

I visited Madras Clinic to request condoms and lubricants and asked the nurse. She asked why I needed them and I responded that I wanted to use them. She indicated that condoms are kept outside the facility and they do not have lubricants at all. I went to go look for the condoms but did not find them so I returned to the same nurse. She asked again why I was looking for condoms and if I was a sex worker. I said yes. She was rude and this was in front of other patients. We ask that the Department of Health intervene so the attitude of the staff towards us can improve. I would also like to raise the bad condition of the toilets in the facility, it is in a state where you can also get an infection from using it.

Testimony 134

Anonymous

June 2023

Mkhuhlu, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ communities

I use Cottondale Clinic. I went there last month as I had a vaginal yeast infection. I waited more than three hours to be attended to. One of the nurses came to tell us that we had to wait so long because they were busy with chronic patients. I was then attended to by a male nurse. When I asked him what could have caused me to get this infection and how I could prevent it, he said it could not be a yeast infection as a woman can't contract this from another woman. He said he is used to attending to heterosexual couples and not lesbians. They gave me a medication that did not work, and since I remembered the judgement from my last visit, I decided to go to Clicks to buy medication instead.

Testimony 135

Anonymous

June 2023

Nkomazi, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards a member of the LGBTQIA+ community and lack of access to lubricants

I am from Nkomazi and I use Block B Clinic. I went there for an HIV test and the nurse asked me what would happen if the test came back positive. I responded by saying that I would be fine and start medication. I then asked her about lubricants and she asked what I would use lubricants for. I explained how I used it and she further enquired about how I engage in sexual intercourse. The problem I have is that we go to the facility to be assisted and not interrogated and judged.

Testimony 136

Anonymous

June 2023

Daantjie, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a gay man, and denial of STI services

I use Sibuyile Clinic. I had unprotected sex with someone and after a few days I started having symptoms of STI, so I visited the clinic. There is a nurse there to whom I explained my symptoms and asked that she check me. She replied that since I am aware of what is bothering me, why couldn't I cure myself. I informed her that the symptoms matched what Google said about STI. The nurse told me that it was not them who sent me to go sleep with other men so she was not going to assist me. I went to Aurum Institute where I was assisted by a male nurse who took me to the consulting room and gave me a pamphlet to read. He explained to me the possible infections and gave me an injection and pills as well. From that day, I did not go to Sibuyile Clinic anymore, I would rather go to Aurum.

Testimony 137

Anonymous

June 2023

Barberton, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to challenges of accessing PrEP by a gay man

I usually go to M'Africa Clinic in Barberton. There is a woman called Cindy who is not a nurse but a staff of Right to Care who used to advise us on the prevention of infection. She told me to come for testing but I told her that I was not sexually active. She advised me that once I decide to start having sex, I should come to her so I can start PrEP. When I visited her, she tested me and the test came back negative, but PrEP was not available at the clinic. The sister has a relationship with the staff from Aurum, so she requested support from them for us to get PrEP. Eventually, Cindy left M'Africa Clinic. When we went there, we were asked why we are always looking for Cindy and we explained that she always assisted us with accessing PrEP. Another sister promised to assist us as well. She told us to visit the facility, and after testing us, she would give us the PrEP over the fence so others would not see it. Another time we went there, we were asked why we were there so we lied that we were collecting ARVs as we were scared that they would find out that a nurse was giving us PrEP.

Testimony 138

Anonymous

June 2023

Kanyamazane-A, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a lesbian, and denial of services

I was using Kanyamazane Clinic, but I stopped in 2021. I was working at the stadium and contracted Covid-19. My supervisor told me to go to the clinic immediately. I left and went to the clinic. I was attended to by a male nurse, to whom I explained my symptoms and how difficult it was for me to breathe. He asked me if a car can move without its engine, to which I said no. He said there was nothing wrong with me and I was just lazy and did not want to work. I suspected that because I was in my uniform he thought that I was trying to skip work. I told him that I was sent here from work. He then told me that I am only here to take their girlfriends and do not take their work seriously.

I went home to my ex-girlfriend who was visiting. We went to the facility together and she mentioned that she had the same symptoms as me and they attended to her but when it was my turn, I was refused treatment by the same nurse. I highlighted that the woman he just attended to is not ill but you paid attention to her but not to me who is sick. I used the medication prescribed to my ex-girlfriend. I returned to work and ended up giving Covid-19 to my colleague and supervisor. I decided to go back to the facility. I found the male nurse and the sister in charge and also the security guard. I could not get any attention from them. They chased me away from the clinic. We humbly appeal to the department for this clinic to be LGBTQI friendly.

I stay with my sister's child who is living with HIV and since he has been transferred to Kanyamazane Clinic from Rob Ferrerai, we have not gotten any assistance. Only in December were we able to get help from a nurse from the mother to child section. When we went there, there were three sisters there who ignored us for a long time. Instead of attending to us, they were inquiring about how I have sex.

Testimony 139

Anonymous

May 2023

Kabokweni, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment towards a sex worker, lack of privacy/confidentiality, and challenges with ART continuity

I am a sex worker who stopped using Kabokweni Clinic. Whenever I go to the clinic, they would always ask “why do I do my job, why do I sell my body, isn't there any other job I can do besides selling my body?” I have even decided not to go to the clinic anymore because of the treatment that I get there. Anytime I went to the clinic, I always come back heartbroken because of the way I am treated there. Questions like, "didn't you go to school?". I am living with HIV and I am no longer going there because of the treatment that I get. I went to another clinic, they took bloods and explained that my CD4 count was very low, I could not tell them why I had stopped taking my medication.

The first time that I went to the clinic, I was very sick and not sure what was wrong with me. So, my grandmother that went with me told them that I am a sex worker, that is how they knew. Even in my file, it is written there, so every nurse when I go there will always ask about it. They would say why did I choose this job because I am young. I used to go to the clinic for contraceptives, but since the horrible treatment started, I just go to the chemist to buy the pills. They must not tell us what we are doing for a living is wrong. We have a right to do what we want. They should not judge and undermine sex work. They are working and we are working too. They should not write what my work is on my file so that they are not disclosing my personal information to everyone.

Testimony 140

Anonymous

May 2023

Kwalugedlane, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a trans man, and lack of gender affirming care

I use Mangweni Clinic. The things that I went through at the clinic are so bad. I am a trans man and the nurses are the ones you should be able to open up to. They would say tell us about yourself. I tell them that I identify as a trans man and my pronouns are he/him. But they will still misgender me and call me 'sisi' which makes me uncomfortable. They make it sound like I have a problem. I am not comfortable with the nurses because they are rude. They would ask why I decided to be like this. It is who I am and cannot change who I am. I am uncomfortable at the clinic because the nurses are rude. They would ask why I want to change myself from how I was created, like I have a problem. This is who I am and cannot change. I would rather go to another clinic very far away rather than Mangweni Clinic. The last time I went there, the first nurse asked me if I am a woman and I told her that I am transitioning, and I am experiencing some symptoms. She screamed "why are you trying to change yourself? God created you as a woman". She did not even check me or give me any medication to let me feel better but was just judging me.

Testimony 141

Anonymous

May 2023

Tonga, Ehlانzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a gay man, lack of privacy/confidentiality

I am a gay man using Block B Clinic. They ask irrelevant questions just to mock me. I don't understand why they do this. They should be showing support and providing care, and teaching our parents about LGBTQ people. Instead they are the ones who do not take us seriously. If you go there for help, you end up regretting and asking yourself why you came here as they are against my sexuality. I don't think there is confidentiality there. Sometimes they would share someone's file and explain what sickness the person is suffering from and they laugh about it, in such a way that you wonder why they are behaving in this way. So, I know when I leave, they will also talk about me and laugh too. Sometimes, you meet a nurse who talks to you about what you would do if the result is negative or positive. Another day, you might meet a rude nurse that will tell you that if you get HIV, you will die, and blame you for not using a condom to protect yourself. They also force and threaten you with PrEP without educating me properly about it. I am forced to take it even though I am not comfortable with taking PrEP.

Testimony 142

Anonymous

May 2023

Tonga, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a gay man, and lack of availability of lubricants

There are a lot of problems. They do not treat us well. It is like the nurses are unaware of LGBTQI individuals. They are against the way we are. They make jokes about us. When we are asking for lubricant, they want to know why you want them and how you use them, and with whom you are using them. When I tell them I use the lubricant with my male partner, they want to know how the sexual intercourse takes place, and if I enjoy myself. I am not comfortable with that, because these nurses are the ones who are supposed to be supporting us.

There are no companies or NGOs that will provide us with lubricants. We have to depend on the clinic. There is this group of people working there, Right to Care, you go there when you want services like HIV tests and STI treatment. It is only when these people are there that you get any good services, not from the clinic itself. With condoms and lubricants, you have to ask them for it, and they would only give you five each. They will tell you to come back when you have finished using the five. There should be classes for the nurses to learn more about LGBTQ people so that they can know how to treat us better and also teach the community members so they also can understand us better.

Testimony 143

Anonymous

May 2023

Nelspruit, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a person who uses drugs, lack of harm reduction services, and denial of services

I am a person who uses drugs, using Nelspruit CHC. They never treat me very well at the CHC. I went there around January and hoped they would help me. They did not treat me

well. They chased me away, telling me that I am dirty, and that I would steal from other patients. I told them I needed help to stop using drugs but they just chased me away. I was very sick and had some blisters on my skin, but they chased me away. I would talk to the security guard to ask to speak to the Facility Manager but they would not let me in. They chase me away and embarrass me in front of other patients. The clinic is supposed to be a safe space. Lately, whenever I am sick, I don't go to the clinic. I depend on the women who sell things in town, who I usually help pack their goods. They are the ones who give me painkillers when I am sick. And when they don't have it, I just suffer the pain as I am scared to go to that clinic.

Testimony 144

Anonymous

May 2023

Nelspruit, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment to a person who uses drugs, and lack of harm reduction services

There at Nelspruit CHC, it is not just me who has suffered there. One of my friends told me they chased him away and I thought he was just exaggerating and he was scared and didn't want to go to the clinic. But when I went there, the treatment was very horrible. They did not offer me any services. I went to the clinic in April because I got burnt and blisters had developed on my legs. I arrived early around 8am. The nurses were rude. They asked why I waited so long to come to the clinic to treat the burn, saying that I must have been smoking and forgotten to come. I was too shocked to answer all their many questions and kept quiet. I watched as everyone skipped me in the queue because they kept chasing me out of the consultation rooms saying I'll be the last one they attend to. I only got assisted at 4pm when all the other patients were gone. Still, the nurse in the consultation room shouted at me about how useless people who use drugs are and not taking care of ourselves and expecting them to do it for us.

Testimony 145

Anonymous

May 2023

Nelspruit, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to lack of harm reduction services

I stopped using Masoyi Clinic because of the bad services. I wanted to quit using drugs but there were no drug dependency services. They could not refer me anywhere. I had to go around myself looking for organisations that can help with rehabilitation.

Testimony 146

Anonymous

May 2023

Nelspruit, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment to a person who uses drugs, lack of harm reduction services, and denial of services

I went to Nelspruit Clinic to ask for bandages and antibiotics because of my leg. I had a 'missed shot'. I begged them to help me as it was bleeding but they chased me away, saying that I caused this to myself. They called the security guard saying that I was making noise. They said they did not ask me to become a drug addict. The leg is still not healed and I am in pain all the time. These facilities don't care about us drug users. They are rude and refuse us services. Maybe if they can change staff or include people who understand us in their staff it would be better. Then many of us could get any help going there.

Testimony 147

Anonymous

May 2023

Kabokweni, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a person who uses drugs, lack of harm reduction services, and denial of services

I had a gunshot wound around February and went to Msogwaba Clinic. However when I got there, I was chased out by the nurses saying that I'm a "nyaope boy", and that they should've shot me dead. They said that I do crime and then come to them for their assistance when I'm hurt, and that I should go back to where I got shot and not to the facility. They said I don't deserve to live and are tired of people like me. I couldn't stay there long because of the pain I was in. I decided to go to Rob Ferreira Hospital where I was assisted even without a referral letter.

They never give us needles or tell us where to get them. There is an organisation that brings us needles. Even for those who want methadone, they don't get any information when they go to the facility.

Testimony 148

Anonymous

May 2023

Nelspruit, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment to a person who uses drugs, and lack of harm reduction services

I went to Nelspruit CHC. Some of the staff undermined me, but at least they helped me get back on ART. They referred me to Rob Ferreira to draw blood, but I only still get three weeks' supply and not three months' supply like everyone else. They did not explain why. I wish I could use a better clinic where they can help me. I told them I want to stop using drugs. They said why did I come to the clinic and not to a rehab. I don't know where I can go around Nelspruit to get help to stop smoking.

Testimony 149

Anonymous

May 2023

Nelspruit, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, lack of privacy/confidentiality, and lack of PrEP and STI services

They never offer me PrEP. If the test comes out negative, they just tell you the results and you leave. The clinic staff are judgmental. I went there once for STI treatment and they didn't do any tests or physical examination, they just gave me medication. They asked me how I got the STI and who I had sex with. I couldn't disclose my work because they were already judgmental and there were two nurses in the room. I did not feel comfortable telling them what was wrong with my private parts.

Testimony 150

Anonymous

May 2023

Nsikazi, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to ill treatment of a person who uses drugs and denial of ARVs

I started ART in 2019 but have been on and off treatment because of drug use and living on the streets. I had lost a lot of weight and was getting sicker so I went to the clinic, but the nurses denied me my ARVs, saying I would smoke the pills and not take them. I pleaded with them and swore that I am serious with my health, but they called the security guard to chase me away. I was humiliated and didn't understand why the nurses that are supposed to protect me are the ones denying me access to HIV treatment. So, I was off my meds for three months. I would never go back to Sibuyile Clinic because I almost died. I stay on the streets and they do not help you.

Testimony 151

Anonymous

May 2023

Hazyview, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services to a member of the LGBTQIA+ community

I use Shatale Clinic since it is the closest clinic around here. Last year I went for a consultation as I had an infection. It was not my first time having it, so I already had an idea of what the problem could be when I went to the clinic. I tried to explain my situation to the nurse who was helping me. When she found out that I am gay, instead of being helped, I was given a lecture on how wrong my lifestyle is and why I shouldn't do what I am doing. Since I needed help, I ignored it, as I was there to be assisted. I was asked about my sexual activities. I said that I was single and not in a relationship, there's no way I could have STI. They gave me one pill and said it is going to clear the STI. I used it but it didn't work. I decided to go to Clicks and explained what was wrong. They gave me a cream to use and everything was sorted. I had to make a plan to get money so that I can get to Clicks for the medication to treat the problem. For those who are not comfortable disclosing that they are gay, it wouldn't be nice to visit the clinic and not get helped and only be told how to live your life, or that as a lesbian you need to find a man. I can say the clinic staff should change their mind set. Patients come to the clinic not to be judged but to be assisted. Being sensitised about key populations is important. Staff from the clinic don't understand it. If you are able to help them just do your job and stop judging, because it doesn't help.

Testimony 152

Excellent Tsilo

May 2023

Nelspruit, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and access challenges for PrEP and STI services

I am Excellent Tsilo. I live in Nelspruit Pienaar in Dankie. I use Eziweni Clinic and I am an MSM. I get all my services at Eziweni Clinic, but most of the time I go there for PrEP treatment. I started taking PrEP in early 2021. I came across information about PrEP on social media and I realised I am also at high risk so I went to consult at Eziweni Clinic. When I first went there, I was asked why I was there. I told them I was there for an HIV test. They asked questions like "why do I want to test" of which it is already obvious as to why you get tested. I got tested and I asked for PrEP. Again they asked why I wanted PrEP. I said I wanted PrEP to protect myself from HIV. They continued saying silly things and also mentioning derogatory names I don't want to say. I didn't pay any attention to what they were saying, I just wanted to get the pills. They gave them to me even though they said so many

hurtful words, I had to accept it. What they did lowered my dignity as if I were a nobody. You lose interest and if someone asks me where they can get PrEP, it won't be easy to refer that person to go to Eziweni. When I have to go for my refill and other things, I think about the nurses and how they will be saying silly things and asking irrelevant questions. It is not easy. At the end of the day I have to go for my health. So yes I go for the refill every month, after every 28 days I go for my refill. It happened twice that they said they do not have PrEP in stock. I was given a date and I was told it was not delivered yet. I had thought of buying treatment but I gave the clinic another week before opting to buy PrEP. I think PrEP pills are expensive, so the following week I went there and it was available. Buying it would affect me financially. The reason I go to the clinic is because I can't afford to get it elsewhere.

I went in December for an STI infection. I met a nurse, I greeted her and she asked why I was there. I told her I have an STI. She then asked why I have an STI. I said I'm on PrEP but it does not protect me from STIs. She shouted saying things like I am selfish, I don't take care of myself, and this hurt me a lot. I wanted help and allowed her to say whatever she wanted to me. Then she referred me for an injection. I got the injection and I had to get another treatment. When I got to the dispensary I was told they do not have the pills. I had to go buy them at the pharmacy.

It seems public clinic staff disrespect key populations. Before giving us services we get humiliated, and they lack proper knowledge. So I think that has to improve, for example at the clinic between a general patient and a key population, they serve general patients first, even if I was there first. When it comes to me I will be asked all sorts of unnecessary questions before getting the services. They first humiliate us, make us a joke here, a laughing stock in front of everyone. Usually in their consulting room, you find that there are two of them, and they call other people in to mock you. And obviously, the people queuing outside hear what is said as they are shouting and people will be looking at you funny. I know someone who went for PrEP as well and they did to him what they did to me. They gave them the first time, and on the next visit they said they must stop making bad decisions, this is why they are in need of treatment. From there they stopped visiting the clinic. Even today, they are not using that clinic because of the treatment they got from there. They are not accessing services there anymore. They prefer to go to the clinic far from here due to the way they are treated there.

Testimony 153

Anonymous

May 2023

Nelspruit, Ehlanzeni

This testimony pertains to lack of availability of condoms/lubricants

Northstar Mobile Clinic helps us a lot. They do HIV testing and ask us questions on how PrEP is treating us. They provide condoms and lubricants unlike at Nelspruit CHC where they don't give us enough condoms, sometimes they say they don't have any. I've never seen lubricants or condoms around the facility. I have to ask for them in the consulting room and I would get maybe five loose condoms or less.

Testimony 154

Anonymous

June 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to lack of PrEP literacy information and unfriendly services

I attended M.N. Cindi Clinic. I went there to get PrEP. The nurses said to me, "you are having sex already but you are so young". I felt judged but since I was there already, I did not complain so I could get the PrEP I needed. Prior to being given PrEP, I was told to test. There was no counselling, they just explained that the test would show 1 line if negative and 2 lines if positive. They only gave me one bottle for one month. I had side effects. I had to research on the internet to realise that those were side effects. They never told me this at the clinic. I never went back to the clinic. I was lucky to meet with people from Anova who gave me more information, and have been collecting my PrEP from there.

Testimony 155

Anonymous

June 2023

Embalenhle, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment of a gay man

I attend Paulina Morapedi Clinic. I went there because of an infection. The nurse said to me “you never come to the clinic for good things, you always come with a problem because you are always sleeping with different men”. I decided to leave without getting help. Since then I never went back. I do not know my status or what is happening to me.

Testimony 156

Anonymous

June 2023

Bethal, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment of a gay man

I use Sead Clinic in Bethal. I am a person living with HIV. I explained to them that the regimen I was on is giving me problems. I went again to explain this problem. There were three nurses there. They made fun of me saying “this gay has started again”. They gave me the same treatment and I went home. On my following appointment, I found a different nurse who assisted me and said the regimen is not good for my kidneys and it was changed. I am happy that I am well, but I wish the nurses at the clinic can be educated about the LGBTQI community because the way I was treated, it appears that they had a problem with my lifestyle.

Testimony 157

Anonymous

June 2023

Fernie, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to denial of PrEP and lack of availability of lubricants

I am from Fernie. I went to Fernie 2 Clinic and could not access my PrEP. They told me they cannot give me it because my ID document was torn. I explained that I knew my ID number but they still refused. Another problem is that there are never enough lubricants there. Anova does bring them, but they are never enough so we always have a shortage of lubricants.

Testimony 158

Anonymous

June 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to lack of privacy/confidentiality

I went to M.N. Cindi Clinic because of an STI. I met other patients in the consulting room. It looked like they were trying to save time so they put me in a room with other patients. As an MSM, I was not comfortable to explain and show the nurse what was wrong with me. So, I left without getting any help. This happened two years back and I have never gone back. I now use a private doctor which costs me R400 or I use Anova Health.

Testimony 159

Anonymous

June 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment towards a gay man

I use M.N. Cindi Clinic and went there to get my test results. When I arrived, the nurse that was attending to me greeted me as 'sister'. She later asked if I was a woman and I told her that I am a gay man. Then she wanted to know what type of a gay I am. I had to explain myself. She called another nurse in to come and listen to what I was saying. They were laughing. I felt discriminated against and was made a laughing stock. I disengaged from care for over three months until I was referred to Anova where I now take my treatment.

Testimony 160

Anonymous

June 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment of a gay man

I was home in Fernie for a funeral and I noticed I had an STI. I went to Fernie 2 Clinic. I went into the consultation room where there was a nurse. I explained my symptoms to her. The nurse started telling me the implication of having anal sex, which I was fine with. But then she went on, so it became uncomfortable. During the consultation, I asked her to examine me, but she refused. She handed the medication to me without explaining how to use it. When I returned to Ermelo, I went to a private doctor who did a thorough examination and gave me medication. My request to the Department of Health is to sensitise the nurses in Gert Sibande about the LGBTQI community. We are not asking for special treatment but for them to be informed about us and the kind of illnesses we might present with and how they should approach us.

Testimony 161

Anonymous

June 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and lack of gender affirming care

I stopped using M.N. Cindi Clinic as a trans person. I always had to explain myself to them, from the administrators to the security, and also the nurses. After explaining, they would make comments and ask uncomfortable questions. Also, I am not getting my hormone replacement therapy there. We end up buying them from the black market or you need to get a doctor's prescription to get it from the pharmacy.

Testimony 162

Anonymous

June 2023

Standerton, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to lack of gender affirming services

I am from Standerton and use M.S. Msimango Clinic. I asked about hormones and they opened a file for me, but they take so long to attend to patients. I was directed to a nurse

whom I explained that I wanted to start hormones but she was clueless. I had to educate her about who a transgender person is and what hormones are for. After which she confirmed that they have hormones but they cannot provide it as they do not know how. I was very disappointed with that. I buy the medication now which is very expensive.

Testimony 163

Anonymous

June 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to ill treatment of a trans person and lack of gender affirming services

I used Ermelo Town Clinic, and went there to get hormones and explained to the nurse what I was there for. She said they do not have hormones and asked me why I want to change myself because I am a handsome boy. She kept on talking. I was upset and I left and never returned.

Testimony 164

Anonymous

June 2023

Standerton, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a trans woman, and lack of gender affirming services

I am a trans woman from Standerton. I went to M.S. Msimango Clinic because I was sick. They opened a file and joined the queue to see the doctor. The doctor was friendly when I was still in the queue. This changed when I entered the consultation room and he saw my file with my name and gender. He was shocked and became very unfriendly. He rushed through the consultation. It felt like he did not want to be in the same room with me. He did not do any examination, he just gave me medication and told me to leave.

I went there recently because I had the flu. The nurses were at least a bit friendly but the administrators were taking my ID around making fun of me that I have a name meant for a man but I look like a woman. I had to explain that I am trans. It is uncomfortable going to the clinic because you are required to show your ID and I have not changed my gender marker yet. So, I tend to use Seed of Hope Clinic instead of MS Msimango Clinic.

Testimony 165

Anonymous

June 2023

Trichardt, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a gay man, and challenges with getting ARVs due to a transfer letter issue

I am on ARVs and relocated from Embalenhle to Trichardt recently. I went to the clinic with my transfer letter to open a file. The problem is that they could not print the letter and it was sent via email. I arrived at Trichardt Clinic with the transfer letter on my phone and the nurse appeared shocked. The nurse said to me that I have a beard, but your voice sounds like a woman. I knew that I would not be comfortable here as I was being discriminated against already. The nurse did not give me any more attention and told me to wait for the sister in charge. I was sitting next to the reception. I could hear the nurse speaking to the others saying that I was acting like I was too educated and could not bring the hardcopy of the letter. Saying that if I am educated, why am I not going to the pharmacy to buy the medication? I was there from 6am until around 4pm. I was not assisted on that day.

I printed the referral letter and took it back the next day. I met another nurse to whom I explained my story who told me to wait. I explained to her that I had taken my last pill that morning, and asked if she would assist me. She told me to wait. So, from 6 April to 9 May I stopped treatment until I was able to go to Paulina Morapedi Clinic in Embalenhle where I eventually got my medication.

We hope the department can hire members of the LGBTQI community in the facility as they would understand us better. The nurses do not understand us and discriminate against us. This upsets me as it seems I would not be able to get my ARVs at Trichardt Clinic and have to go to Paulina Morapedi when I don't even have transport money. This is hurting me most

as I got HIV through rape and I am trying to adhere to my treatment but I get discriminated against at the clinic.

Testimony 166

Anonymous

June 2023

Standerton, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a trans person, and lack of gender affirming care

I am a trans woman from Standerton. I once went to Standerton Hospital for hormones. I was treated well and was booked to go to Steve Biko Hospital in Pretoria. I got referred to a social worker for counselling as a requirement to start HRT. I did not receive the counselling I wanted, instead, I was discriminated against. She told me that trans people are not in South Africa, they are in America as they are rich. She told me to return to school and make money so I can go be a trans person there. I was even compared to Somizi, they asked why he is not transitioning when he is wealthy. I asked her if she knew what LGBTQI means, so I had to educate her on the difference between gay and transgender.

My request is for the DoH to assist us by providing hormones so that we can start to transition to the gender we identify as. This is upsetting as we suffer from gender dysphoria. And also, for the staff not to judge us and ask why we want to change our gender. There is an organisation called Seed of Hope. We ask them to come and sensitise the staff at the clinics. We request your support.

Testimony 167

Anonymous

May 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a trans woman, lack of gender affirming care, lack of privacy/confidentiality, and lack of availability of lubricants

I am a trans woman who stopped using Emthonjeni Clinic. Sometimes you can't tell them all you have come there for. You just want the experience to be over so you can just leave. You focus on what is most urgent and leave without getting help for the rest. The experience in the clinic and how we are treated, even by security guards, is not good. They are not knowledgeable about the LGBTQI community. They would ask silly questions like are you a boy or a girl?

I think the calling of other nurses into the consultation room is what I have experienced. You would be sitting in the consultation room, the nurse would go out and come in with another nurse, five minutes later, another nurse would walk in. So, you can just tell that they are talking about you. They come into the room to see who is there and what you are telling them. I started my hormones not long ago, so I have started to develop breasts. So they would tell their colleagues that there is a guy in the consultation room who has boobs. So, you see them coming in to pick random items but it is to check who is in the office.

The last time I went to the Emthonjeni Clinic, I had an STI. I had to explain how I got it while I am a male and the symptoms are in my anal area. That was embarrassing. I was never offered PrEP. It was the NGO where I receive my HRT from that offered me PrEP and I started taking it from there. There should be more education on LGBTQI people and our needs. They should treat us just like everyone else. It would be nice for them to have condoms with lubricants, they only keep the MAX condoms.

Testimony 168

Anonymous

May 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a trans person, and lack of gender affirming care

I am a trans woman who uses M.N. Cindi Clinic. They make jokes about how you look and how you dress. It is silly but very disrespectful and condescending and makes one uncomfortable. Sometimes when you go to those places and you have your ID, they would say "is this you?". They would always use this to raise those questions. It is very uncomfortable. They ask the questions in a very disrespectful and aggressive manner. Like

do you have sex with boys? How do you both have sex? Who is the man in the sexual encounter? They are more concerned about those details and not about me coming to have an HIV test.

Testimony 169

Anonymous

May 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for trans people

I am from a very small town so not everyone is fully aware of the NGO that I am using. The staff there are trying to recruit more people. But most trans people still use public clinics and are still getting treated badly every time.

Testimony 170

Anonymous

May 2023

Standerton, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment to a trans woman, lack of gender affirming care, and lack of information on PrEP

I am a trans woman using Lillian Mambakazi Clinic. They were using my English name which I told them I do not like, rather than calling me by my traditional name. The English name is not gender neutral. Even after correcting them, they continued using that name. The staff at the reception are also very disrespectful. There was an instance where I was being attended to and another patient came. The staff told them to wait because they were busy attending to this “boy”. I had my hair braided, was wearing makeup, and wearing a dress but she still referred to me as a boy. I don’t like to go to places where I would need to use my ID like the clinic or police station because they would judge you if you don’t look like the person in the ID.

None of their staff members makes trans people feel safe at the facility. It is like they are not educated about us so they don’t know how to treat us. In some clinics or hospitals there is a

member of the LGBTQI community that advocates for us and ensures we get whatever services that we want but there is no-one in Lilian Mambakazi Clinic. Feminine looking gay men and trans women are the most vulnerable at the clinic. We are the ones treated really badly, especially when it comes to how we look and what our ID book says. They should ask politely if they are unsure about something, as a lot of trans people have not changed their gender markers on their ID.

I have done HIV testing at the clinic and they do offer counselling. I know about PrEP, but it was not the clinic that told me about PrEP.

Testimony 171

Anonymous

May 2023

Standerton, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, lack of gender affirming care, and lack of availability of lubricants

They do not offer any services to trans people. It is hard to get hormones here. When you talk about them, they do not even know what hormones are or have any information on where one can get them. Sometimes you can get condoms and lubricants. They put the condoms out, but you have to ask for lubricants and then they ask you questions like why do you want them and if you are gay. I am not comfortable going to the clinic for STI testing and treatment. I would rather go to the mobile clinics from Anova when they come where I won't be judged for having an STI. I would like for them to offer us hormones or be able to refer us to where we can get them, as it is very hard to get hormones here. I want them to educate the staff about the LGBTQI community so that they would judge us less when they attend to us.

Testimony 172

Anonymous

May 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services, ill treatment of a sex worker, challenges with ART continuity, and denial of ARVs without a transfer letter

I live in Ermelo and I am a sex worker. I have a challenge with the TB HIV Care and Ermelo Clinic. I am taking HIV treatment. Last year in November, TB HIV Care came and gave me a one month refill only. They were closing in December and would resume work in January. When they had to resume in January, they did not. I then went to Ermelo Clinic as I ran out of treatment. When I got there, they requested a transfer letter from TB HIV Care. I told them that I cannot get it because I last saw them in November last year. I am here because I ran out of treatment. They said they cannot help me without the letter. I asked for at least a one month refill for the time being while I wait for TB HIV Care. They said they can't help me. They didn't give me anything. I ask my friends for treatment. The person who helps me most is my boyfriend because he's also living with HIV. When he gets a three month refill, he gives me a one month supply of his treatment. But now it's become a problem because they switched his treatment. I don't know if they are working on me or not. I haven't had a viral load test done or anything. I'm just taking his treatment. The clinic is taking advantage of me because of my line of work as a sex worker. It disturbed me since I couldn't get assistance because of the work I do. It really hurts. If it happens that I get STIs, I'd rather spend money at the doctor than become a laughing stock at the clinic. It's either I go to the doctor's office or the pharmacy. I'd be happy if they could treat sex workers like everybody else at the clinic and stop treating us like we are not human. We are also human. We are trying to earn a living. If they can provide equal treatment to all patients I would be happy.

Testimony 173

Anonymous

May 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to denial of services to a sex worker

I reside in Ermelo. I went to Ermelo Clinic to get medical attention as my C-section wound was painful due to the cold weather. It was around 11:45am. I was turned away when I arrived and was told that I was late and that I should come back the following day early. I was hurt by the news and in pain. I never went back to the clinic because the same day I went to the private doctor because I was in pain and needed medication.

I normally use the mobile clinic for STIs and other health wellness services. The mobile clinic comes to us. Even last week between Wednesday or Thursday it was here. As a sex worker, I prefer using the mobile clinic to using Ermelo Clinic. The clinic denies us access to healthcare services. Due to the nature of my work, condoms break and at the mobile clinic they are able to give us treatment.

Testimony 174

Anonymous

May 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment of a sex worker

I am a sex worker and went to the clinic to ask for the morning after pill after a condom burst. The nurses shouted at me and I was not treated well when collecting my treatment. They would ask me what I came back for again. That's when I stopped going to the clinic to collect my treatment. I take ARV treatment at Mesiya Clinic. I will never know how they will treat me because I no longer go there. I last went to the clinic in February. I ask for treatment from my friends. I don't know their regimens, I just take the pills because I was treated badly at the clinic.

Testimony 175

Anonymous

May 2023

Ermelo, Gert Sibande

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services and ill treatment of a lesbian woman

I reside in Velebank and use Shatale Clinic. At the beginning of 2022 I went to the clinic because I had a yeast infection. Upon arrival at the clinic, I explained all the symptoms and that this was a yeast infection. I was given antibiotics. After finishing the course of antibiotics, the infection became worse. I returned to the clinic and was given different antibiotics from the previous ones. I kept on going to the clinic because there was no change. I was given

injectable treatment and antibiotics. I decided to do a Pap smear. The Pap smear results revealed that I had a candida infection. After discovering the actual cause of the infection, I was again given antibiotics. They asked me to come with my partner. After finding out that I date women, they started asking questions. They asked why I was dating a woman because I know men and have experienced them'. They said it might be that I chose a woman after meeting a man that couldn't properly satisfy me. They suggested that I give men another try, so that I can stop dating women. I did not take that personally because I wanted to get cured. I decided to stop going to the clinic and went to a private doctor. They should stop judging us and understand that sexuality is not a choice. They should at least refer people to the hospital if they don't have the medicine to treat certain diseases. A yeast infection is painful, no-one could be comfortable to have it.

North West testimonies

Testimony 176

Anonymous

July 2023

Rustenburg, Bojanala

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ communities

I am a gay person using Boitekong Clinic. I still collect my ARVs from the clinic. Last year, they offered to decant me to Clicks but I refused because I am unemployed and would struggle to go to Clicks to collect my medication, as I cannot afford the transport money. So, they put me in the club at the clinic and I don't queue when I go there. The way I see it, some of the LGBTQI+ community members do not feel comfortable at the facility, they would prefer to be attended to by someone who is also part of the LGBTQI+ community. If one of us is in the clinic, more people would feel more comfortable coming there. Our community clinics don't have queer staff members which makes it an unsafe space for us. It would be good if there is an LGBTQI+ healthcare worker who would be accommodating and respectful of the community, and who would not judge anyone. As some of the nurses or staff members are still surprised when they meet a trans person. They still ask them whether they are male or female, so LGBTQI+ people are not comfortable at the facility. My wish is that just the way they do awareness campaigns for GBV, they should raise awareness about LGBTQI matters to let community members know about us. As members of the LGBTQI+ not only get victimised in the facilities but also in their communities.

Testimony 177

Anonymous

July 2023

Rustenburg, Bojanala

This testimony pertains to lack of availability of lubricants

I am a gay man using Karlien Park Clinic. You normally do not find lubricants at the clinic but you will find condoms. They will tell you that lubes are out of stock.

Testimony 178

Anonymous

June 2023

Rustenburg, Bojanala

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities and a lack of privacy/confidentiality

I am a trans woman using Tlhabane CHC. The problem is when you get there as a trans person, they do not have someone who is part of the LGBTQI+ community that you can be comfortable with. Their problem is that they do not know how to talk to us (trans people), they are unsure if we should be addressed as men or women. They say things like “You look like a girl but your ID says male”, that is one of our general issues. They misgender me and never want to call me by my preferred name.

When I went to the clinic, the sister that was attending to me was like “ausi” or “abuti” what are you here for?” And when she goes back to the room, that’s when you become their topic, that there is a gay guy that looks like a woman and they make you feel uncomfortable because you can see that everyone just wants to see the gay person that looks like a woman. So when I have to go to the clinic, I always have doubts because they always make me feel uncomfortable.

There is no privacy at all. I was taking blood, there were like 3 or 4 nurses in the room. It was uncomfortable to have so many people present because I felt they would all be curious to see the test results. They would want to find out what is wrong with this trans person. Even when you are consulting, a nurse can just barge in to ask for something. It is just uncomfortable. The other time I was there, my testicles were sore but I could not mention that because there were a lot of people in the consulting room. It was only when I got to the doctor that I was able to tell him about the symptoms and he prescribed medication for it.

Testimony 179

Anonymous

June 2023

Rustenburg, Bojanala

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities, ill treatment by healthcare workers, a lack of availability of lubricants, and a lack of information on PrEP

I am a trans woman using Boitekong CHC. The experience is always bad. Recently, I was referred to as a man by the receptionist even when I was wearing a dress and had make-up on. And everyone was laughing, it was like he just wanted to make fun of me.

When I go to the clinic with my friends for an HIV test, I hear the things that the staff say. They say it right in front of you. They would say “we would not be surprised if you guys test positive for HIV because we know all gays love to sleep with different men”. And when the test comes back negative, we get told that we must take care of ourselves because it is only a matter of time before we get HIV. They don’t tell you about PrEP at the clinic, but only from places like LifeLine. After we tested negative for HIV, a nurse came with 6 packets of condoms each and said I hope you use this forever. We were surprised, why would she be giving us such a number, she said I know how you guys are. She said the government doesn’t provide them with lubricants so they don’t have it.

Testimony 180

Anonymous

June 2023

Rustenburg, Bojanala

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities and challenges with transfer letters

I am a gay man. I went to Marikana Clinic to test for HIV and the test came back positive. I was judged by the nurses saying things like "vele HIV ke ya di Gay", meaning HIV is for gays. I tried to get a transfer so I could get my ARVs in another clinic but I was denied with that letter. Now I am always stressed when it is time to go to the clinic again for a check-up.

Testimony 181

Anonymous

June 2023

Rustenburg, Bojanala

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities and a lack of gender affirming care

I went to the clinic to ask for hormones as it was out of stock where I usually got them from. The nurse was shocked. She did not know what hormones were but she asked me to come to see the doctor the next day. The doctor was unable to help me but tried to check with another doctor from JST Hospital, but that one too did not know about hormones. It seems most healthcare practitioners in government facilities do not know much about trans or the LGBTQIA community as a whole. If I go to a trans clinic, I will feel comfortable, even if the person is cisgender. I would know that they have more knowledge about me as a trans person.

I have done an HIV test there before, but because the staff are from my area, she did not talk at all. It was a quiet moment. She just showed me the results, they did not offer me PrEP. It would be good if they had LGBTQIA+ staff members in the clinic, as we can feel more comfortable. It is not like we are trying to separate ourselves but we need someone that understands us and our bodies and healthcare needs.

Testimony 182

Anonymous

May 2023

Mogadishu, Dr Kenneth Kaunda

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities and a lack of specific services for LGBTQIA+ communities

Gay people have a lot of challenges at the clinic. We are demoralised and I have friends who no longer go to the clinic. If you enter Segametsi Mogaetsho Clinic, the staff at the reception will be gossiping and laughing at you. You are asking yourself why are they laughing at you?

This affects my self-esteem. They have services for adolescents and young people and counselling for those who want to test for HIV, but there are no services for gay people.

Testimony 183

Anonymous

May 2023

Jouberton, Dr Kenneth Kaunda

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for people who use drugs and a lack of harm reduction services

I was using crystal meth. There are no friendly services or counselling at the clinic, even the youth centre is non-existent. Most of the people who use drugs share needles without knowing each other's HIV statuses. Our local facility is Tsholofelo Clinic. Some clinic staff members sell needles and ARVs.

Testimony 184

Anonymous

July 2023

Jouberton, DR Kenneth Kaunda

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for trans people and lack of gender affirming care

I am a trans woman, using Jouberton Clinic. There are a lot of challenges. Sometimes they would not ask me how I identify, they would just scream my surname and ask "are you a man or a woman?" They do not respect your pronouns or use the name that you prefer. I try not to use the toilets at the clinics because of the experience I had. They told me that I am not a woman, I am a man so I must use the male toilet. Since then, I go to my friend's place around the clinic to use the toilet. I think the staff needs more education. I am not comfortable with the way they address me. They refer to me as "he" when I am "she". And because you need assistance, you just keep quiet and do not want to speak. You just take the abuse so you can be helped.

They also shout that people who are living with HIV should come to this or that queue. That makes me very uncomfortable because I have not disclosed my status to my family yet, and some people know me at the clinic so they now know my status. Sometimes you would go there and you would not receive your medication because there is a shortage.

I asked the nurse if she knew about hormone replacement, and she replied: "You think you are better, for that, you must go to a private hospital". I was just asking where I can get hormones from. She said this is a public clinic, they don't offer such. I just cut the conversation and left. She was rude and did not provide any information. It would be good to have friendly services, there must always be treatment available for us, and they should ask what one prefers to be called, not just assume that if you look like this you should be addressed that way.

Testimony 185

Anonymous

July 2023

Kanana, Dr Kenneth Kaunda

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services towards members of key populations and long waiting times

I collect my HIV treatment from Kanana Clinic. I arrive at the facility early in the morning and I will be attended to around 3pm, whereas patients who find me in the queue will get assisted. I asked myself if it is because I am a key population, and that's why this is happening. The other issue I have is that the nurse calls you in to consult and soon after another nurse walks into the consultation room. Then they both go out and start having their long chat and forget about patients and when the nurse comes back to the consultation room, she will start from scratch with the consultation and this takes time.

Testimony 186

Anonymous

July 2023

Leeudoringstad, Dr Kenneth Kaunda

This testimony pertains to lack of PrEP information and unfriendly services towards key populations

They do not educate patients about PrEP at the facility that I use. My plea is that there should be workshops in Leeudoringstad to educate nurses on how to treat key populations at the facility because my friends complain that they are not treated properly and sometimes not identified correctly.

Testimony 187

Anonymous

July 2023

Khuma, Dr Kenneth Kaunda

This testimony pertains to challenges with counselling and psychosocial support, a lack of treatment literacy information, and unfriendly services to key populations

I used to attend Aurum Institute in 2011 and I got referred to Khuma Clinic for my ART. I decided to use Aurum Institute instead of Khuma Clinic because I was afraid of being stigmatised as I am known in the area. I had a friend who went for an HIV test last month and my wish is that the counsellors be trained thoroughly because they like shortcuts, they do not counsel patients properly and nurses must learn how to treat other KPs. My friend came to me crying and I had to counsel her since the facility did not do a good job. Imagine walking out of the consultation room crying. She is fine now and ready to start her treatment.

Testimony 188

Anonymous

July 2023

Alabama, Dr Kenneth Kaunda

This testimony pertains to lack of privacy/confidentiality and unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ communities

I tested positive in 2021 when I accompanied a friend to the clinic. One of the nurses asked if I wanted to take a test and I replied that I did. The nurse asked what my reaction would be

if the result came out positive. I told her that since I was feeling fine, I didn't think I had HIV. She took the test and then told me I had tested positive for HIV. The nurse counselled me and initiated me on ART. I started taking my medication and returned to the facility on the date they said I should return. When I got there I found a different nurse who was very rude. The consultation room door was left open and the queue ended right by the consultation room where I was being consulted. I asked to close the door for my privacy and she refused. The patients from the queue asked what was happening between me and the nurse and I explained. The patients laughed, and as they were laughing the nurse said to me that I was insisting that the door must be closed but I failed to close my legs for men. That was the last time I visited the facility and I haven't been taking my medication since January.

Testimony 189

Anonymous

July 2023

Orkney, Dr Kenneth Kaunda

This testimony pertains to lack of privacy/confidentiality, infrastructural challenges, lack of treatment literacy information, lack of availability of condoms/lubricants, and lack of information on PrEP

Last year, I was using Grace Mokgomo CHC. My problem was that the consultation room and counselling room were merged. I took a test and the nurses accidentally swapped my file with the other patient's file. She wrote my results on the other patient's file and the patient saw my result. I have raised this issue because I was not comfortable with the other patient seeing my results and they have resolved the issue and separated the consultation room and the counselling room. The other issue I have with Grace Mokgomo CHC is that the emergency room is too small while other rooms are not utilised. My concern is what will happen if there are two critical patients, will they be treated in the same emergency room? We do not get lubricants and condoms. They are never on the display where everyone can access them. My plea is that counsellors should get more training on PrEP because they never educate people about PrEP, they only run tests. I work with KPs and my concern is what will happen to the next generation if they do not get educated about KPs.

Testimony 190

Anonymous

July 2023

Jouberton, Dr Kenneth Kaunda

This testimony pertains to lack of availability of lubricants

My issue with the facility is that there are no lubricants. There are condoms but I have to travel to Tshepong in Gateway to collect lubricants. My plea is that the facility must have adequate lubricants.

Testimony 191

Anonymous

May 2023

Orkney, Dr Kenneth Kaunda

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities, a lack of privacy/confidentiality, and a lack of availability of lubricants

I am a gay man using Grace Mokhomo CHC. The experience is not good. LGBTQI+ people require privacy and that is not the case. They disclose people's HIV status. The last time I went there, while I was taking my vitals, they talked about some other guy and just left his file where I could see. You always have to ask for condoms and lubricants, and most of the time they will tell you that it is out of stock.

Testimony 192

Anonymous

May 2023

Wolmaransstad, Dr Kenneth Kaunda

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities, a lack of privacy/confidentiality, and a lack of availability of lubricants

I am an MSM and also use drugs. I am taking my ARVs at Tsweleng CHC 2. When you are there, they will shout your name and tell you to come take your HIV pills. I am scared to go to the clinic. I sometimes stop taking my treatment when it finishes as I don't want to go to the clinic for them to humiliate me. There are condoms at the clinic but they only let you take two packets, you can never take as much as you want and I have never seen lube.

Testimony 193

Anonymous

July 2023

Taung, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompoti

This testimony pertains to denial of services, long waiting times, and unfriendly services towards LGBTQIA+ communities

I visited Gateway Clinic in Tau. I had a problem with my bladder. The queue was long. I got to the consultation room and I explained my problem. The first question she asked was am I a boy or a girl? I replied that I was a girl and she further asked me why I was dressed like a boy. I replied to her that it is my body and I dress however I want. The nurse said to me since I am claiming to be a boy with my dress code, why can't I take the pain like a man and I replied to her that I never claimed to be a man and also that my gender doesn't represent my sexuality. The nurse said that I was rude and she was not willing to help someone as rude as me. I told her she would assist me whether she liked it or not. The nurse left the consultation room and I remained. When she came back she called the next patient and I decided to leave the facility without being assisted. I came back the next day with my mother and I was assisted by another nurse. I explained to him what happened yesterday and he said to me that nurses in this facility mistreat KPs. He assisted me well.

Testimony 194

Anonymous

June 2023

Mafikeng, Ngaka Modiri Molema

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities and a lack of availability of condoms/lubricants

The services at the clinic are not that bad but the staff are quick to judge you which makes me feel uncomfortable. I cannot tell the nurses about personal things, I just ask general questions. It is only when I get to the doctor that I can disclose what is wrong with me. You don't get lube at the clinic. You will get condoms sometimes. You can only get lube at Trans Out.

Testimony 195

Anonymous

June 2023

Mafikeng, Ngaka Modiri Molema

This testimony pertains to unfriendly services for LGBTQIA+ communities

I once visited Motlhabeng Clinic where I usually go because I had a pimple on my buttocks and thought it was anal warts. I was judged and asked if I don't use lubricants during intercourse.

END