Tit for Tat

When I was in England, a stranger asked me for a spare fag. You can imagine what happened. To save you the embarrassment of transatlantic miscommunication, here's a handy list of things you'll need to know. Consider it a bon voyage gift from POZ.

November 1, 1997 By Kevin O'Leary

Health

UK versus US

Population: 58,489,975 / 267,862,035

Total AIDS cases: 13,720 / 581,429

Government pays for need exchange. / We all pay for Shalala infections.

IV-drug-related HIV cases: 10% of total / 25% of total

AIDS among 30-39: 41% / 45%

Among children below 13: 2% / 1%

Philosophy: "I'm no bloody guinea pig." / "Early intervention's the way to go, man."

Sex

UK versus US

Mates / Trojans

HIV prevention: A clear and present danger / wink, wink, nudge, nudge

Amsterdam / Reno

Age of consent: Straight: 16; Gay: 16 / Straight: 18; Gay: N.A.

Half of a foot = 6 inches / 8 inches

Language

UK versus US

"shagging" / "screwing"

"rent" / "hustler"

"punters" / "johns"

“Ministers of Parliament” / “sugar daddies”

Society

UK versus US

Princess Diana / Elizabeth Taylor

Terrence Higgins Trust / Gay Men’s Health Crisis

Elton John / David Geffen

Austin Powers / Andrew Sullivan

“You’re looking AIDSy” / “You’re looking great!”

“He just testedpositive—must claim great benefits.” / “He just tested positive

—must be a bottom.”

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.