

WORLD AIDS DAY



**COMMUNITY
HEROES
2023**



In June 1981, our community found ourselves at the centre of a global health crisis and a pandemic of unforeseeable proportions. A pandemic that was fuelled by rampant homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, racism, classism and stigma. This lethal mix meant our community began to mourn the loss of too many. Soon, we found ourselves at a clear and historic demarcation – what life was like before and after AIDS.

We realised our silence would not protect us and we responded with courage and strength. We mobilised and created a community movement that remains unapparelled to this day. We established charities and events (similar to the RED RUN), built networks, created support groups, and started campaigns. The same hands we used to pull each other up were used to chain ourselves in protest to the doors of the powerful to demand a response.

Forty-two years on, through our community-based actions, our victory over HIV is now within our reach. U=U (undetectable equals untransmittable) is a scientific statement of fact, PrEP is now available for free on the NHS and new HIV diagnoses have fallen. We must remain vigilant; the community must continue to demand progress. We can be the generation that ends HIV.

The World AIDS Day RED RUN is built on the ethos of community – thousands of us are coming together today to stand shoulder to shoulder in a show of solidarity and to celebrate our achievements.

We know that our achievements have only been possible because of the passion and dedication of those who have been steadily working in the background and whose contributions often go unsung. We want to shine a light on the incredible work of our unsung community heroes.

Today, we honour 15 unsung heroes and thank them for all they have allowed us to achieve.

Our future is brighter because of them.

Mark Santos

Executive Director, Positive East



MEET THE 2023 COMMUNITY HEROES...

TRANSPLUS TEAM

The TransPlus team, based at 56 Dean Street, are a passionate group of clinicians working to provide affirming and supportive healthcare for trans and non-binary individuals. Despite the challenging political environment, the team have worked tirelessly to make TransPlus a much-needed good news story. Having begun as a pilot in the midst of a pandemic in an over-stretched NHS, TransPlus has managed to thrive so that it was permanently commissioned to continue in April. This is down to the dedication, drive and hard-work of the team. In the words of a service-user, "TransPlus staff are amongst the kindest, most caring, friendly people you could ever hope to meet. I feel genuinely privileged to be under their care."



56 Dean Street is an expert sexual health clinic in London that focuses on the needs of the LGBTQI+ community. They are determined to end HIV transmission in London and their teams go above and beyond to reach those most at risk. In 2020, they opened TransPlus, the first integrated gender, sexual health and HIV service commissioned by NHS England, offering diagnosis of gender dysphoria, hormone therapy, surgical referrals and more, alongside sexual health services. Following TransPlus' success during the pilot phase, the service was permanently commissioned by NHS England in April 2023.

EDWIN SSESSANGE



Mr Edwin is an inspiring HIV community hero, dedicating his life to making a difference in the lives of people affected by HIV. He is an LGBTQI activist and advocate for equal human rights. He is the founder of African Equality Foundation. Through his tireless advocacy, education and support, he has become a beacon of hope and empowerment for the LGBTQI community. His resilient spirit and unwavering commitment has enabled him to challenge stigma and discrimination associated with HIV, while providing a safe and inclusive space for those affected to share their stories and find support. He also encourages everyone to test and know their status in order to get the right support. With his empathetic nature and endless determination to create positive change, Edwin has not only saved lives but has also inspired others to do the same.



African Equality Foundation is a UK charity that works tirelessly to support and empower asylum seekers and refugees. Recognising the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI people in seeking safety and acceptance, they provide a safe haven to access holistic support and resources. An unwavering commitment to inclusivity, advocacy and empowerment has created a nurturing environment where individuals can rebuild their lives and reclaim their identity. The charity offers legal assistance, mental health support, and educational workshops, all aimed at enhancing the wellbeing and resilience of LGBTQI asylum seekers and refugees. Through this work, the charity is transforming lives and fostering a more inclusive and compassionate society.

[africanequality
foundation.org.uk](http://africanequalityfoundation.org.uk)



IGNACIO LABAYEN DE INZA

Having worked in various paid and volunteer roles since 2008 supporting men who struggle with chemsex, in 2019 Ignacio decided to offer support to people in a way that was not done before. Controlling Chemsex was founded in 2019 and is online, anonymous (where requested) and free for all clients. Ignacio works tirelessly to improve and extend the reach of support to clients in London but across the UK. Apart from the CEO role, he provides mentorship and thought leadership to people who approach him from all over the world. He has taught thousands that there is life after chemsex.

CONTROLLING CHEMSEX.

Controlling Chemsex is a charity created and run by professionals with experience providing chemsex support, some whom have struggled with chemsex in the past. They provide a new kind of chemsex intervention to reinforce the support that is available, using new technologies to facilitate access to support for everybody, in order to make things as easy as possible for people who find it difficult to access support, and respecting the fact that confidentiality is highly important for them. They understand this reality and are not here to judge, but are here to help.

controllingchemsex.com

MATT DAVIES



Matt is an elop trustee who joined October 2022. Matt quickly became embedded in the organisation and took on the co-ordination of our fundraising committee. His support has ensured that the fundraising team have reached new audiences, new volunteers, and established a new programme of events. The additional money raised enables elop to provide support for unfunded work, enabling us to provide mental health support, to those who are struggling with a new diagnosis. Going above and beyond in February 2023 Matt cycled 280 miles in the month as part of exercise4elop and raised £1,534. Thank you Matt for all that you do.



elop has 28 years' experience of providing high quality LGBT+ affirmative mental health and wellbeing services to LGBT+ communities in Greater London and South Essex. These services are provided by the community for the community. The elop ethos believes that one area of health and wellbeing, whether this be emotional, mental, psychological, physical, sexual, social, or even community, cannot be fully achieved or maintained without recognition of the opportunity for all concerns of our 'whole self' to be addressed. elop also provides LGBT+ voice, consultation, and dedicated LGBT+ education and training services to all sectors.

elop.org

THE FOOD CHAIN VOLUNTEER LEAD COOKS



Our twice-weekly Eating Together service enables isolated people living with HIV to come together as a community. And nothing builds community like sharing a meal! These meals are all cooked by volunteers, and not a single one would be served successfully without our volunteer Lead Cooks. They manage the kitchen team and oversee food safety. They support new volunteers, contribute new ideas and keep our kitchen clean, tidy and organised - and most importantly, they make sure everyone gets fed! Their kitchen skills are invaluable to us, but they contribute so much more in their enthusiasm, commitment, positivity and genuine care for the people we support. We truly couldn't do it without them.



The Food Chain exists to ensure people living with HIV in London can access the nutrition they need to get well, stay well and lead healthy, independent lives. From their own kitchen in King's Cross they offer cookery and nutrition classes and communal eating opportunities to people living with HIV in London and their dependants. The Food Chain also arrange grocery deliveries to service users. Inspired by their practical response, hundreds of volunteers deliver our services, supported by a staff team of ten.

foodchain.org.uk

CLARE WRIGHT



Clare has been an HIV family support social worker at METRO Charity since 2017.

Her commitment to advocating for the most vulnerable shines through all her work. Clare does home visits with families having issues with benefits or child protection. Her Spanish language skills enable her to support families who would otherwise not be able to access services. In one case Clare taught other professionals about U=U and that a parent's HIV was not a child protection issue – keeping the family together. Clare says: "I'm here to support the family as a whole. My aim is to empower them to be able to work independently."

MILLICENT MAGWA



Millicent found out she was living with HIV in 2002, at the height of the HIV pandemic in South Africa. Treatment was not publicly available, and stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV was high. Millicent was also pregnant,

and terrified for her and her child's future. Today, through her work as a community health worker for mothers2mothers, Millicent ensures that no one faces the same fear she did. She is a role model in her community, educating other women and their families how to live healthily and with HIV. Millicent goes door-to-door in her community providing HIV-related services and conducting broader health screenings. She assists those who are living with non-communicable diseases to manage their conditions and connects clients who need further support with clinic-based Mentor Mothers. Her work is key to ensuring that the families who need it most get the care they need from someone they trust.



Working collaboratively with our staff, volunteers, users, partners and supporters to make a difference to people's lives, we champion equality, nurture aspiration, embrace difference and challenge others to do so. We promote health and wellbeing through our transformative services to anyone experiencing issues relating to sexuality, gender, equality, diversity and identity, and use our unique insight from these transformative services and our diverse heritage to influence decision makers and to effect positive change.

metrocharity.org.uk



mothers2mothers is an African NGO that employs women living with HIV as community health workers across ten African nations. These Mentor Mothers deliver integrated health care at clinics, in communities, and virtually through e-services to ensure everyone has access to the services they need. Since 2001, they have created jobs for nearly 12,000 women living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, reaching over 15 million people with critical health services and education. They prioritise healthcare for families who need it most, delivered by the women who know them best.

m2m.org



**RED
RUN
LDN**

NOEL WATSON-DOIG



Noel is a passionate campaigner who has turned his personal experiences into direct action. Noel has tirelessly dedicated his time to changing a law that bars many people living with HIV from donating sperm and eggs. This ban does not apply to people in heterosexual relationships, therefore excluding many LGBT+ people from accessing fertility treatment. Noel's determination to change this law has seen him work behind the scenes to lobby parliamentarians and Government bodies, while supporting National AIDS Trust's work to raise awareness and influence change. Though his perseverance comes from his own personal experience, he is just as motivated to change this law for other LGBT+ people living with HIV who also dream of starting a family.



nat.org.uk

NAT is the UK's HIV rights charity. They work to stop HIV from standing in the way of health, dignity and equality, and to end new HIV transmissions. Their expertise, research and advocacy secure lasting change to the lives of people living with and at risk of HIV.

VICKY LOMAS

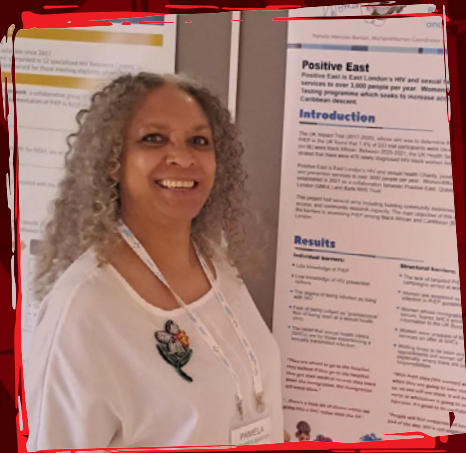


Vicky has played a vital role within Plushealth since 2018. She became chair of their steering group overseeing the transition from a small community project to registered charity during 2020, no easy task during a pandemic! As their first Chair of Trustees, Vicky developed an inclusive and collaborative team to help secure the future success of Plushealth. After leading on the appointment of her successor, she stepped down as a trustee in September. Vicky continues as one of Plushealth's peer support volunteers, with a particular interest and knowledge in women's health, menopause and living well into older age with HIV.

Plus+
health
.org.uk

plushealth.org.uk

Plushealth is the online peer support charity with a vision to promote emotional, and physical wellbeing by providing practical help and support so people living with HIV can live healthy active lives, free from stigma and prejudice. They inform, empower, support, and improve the lives of people living with HIV, their HIV negative partners, family members, close friends, and carers. The Plushealth website offers practical information and is written by people living with HIV. They provide free, UK-wide online peer support and assist those in financial distress to access this vital support regardless of local funding arrangements.



PAMELA MENZIES-BANTON

In July 2021, Pam joined Positive East to lead their new

Women4Women project which aims to increase PrEP access amongst women of Black African/Caribbean descent. The project provides invaluable insight into the barriers these women face to increase equitable access to PrEP and other HIV prevention tools. In July 2023, Pam presented her work at the prestigious AIDS Impact Conference in Stockholm. Pam has delivered numerous community trainings and talks, developed a PrEP champions initiative, and supported community researchers – reaching hundreds of women across East London and beyond. She has done a remarkable job at empowering women to take control of their sexual health and advocating for access to PrEP, thus making a tangible impact in achieving the UNAIDS goal of zero new HIV transmissions by 2030.



For 32 years, Positive East has been one of the largest community-based HIV charities in London. Support services include advice (to access benefit entitlement and housing), counselling, support groups, ReAssure (a specialist psychology service for HIV positive female refugees and asylum seekers), volunteering, workshops, peer mentoring and the Women4Women project. Positive East also provides free HIV/STI testing across East London.

positiveeast.org.uk



DAN MCILWRAITH (AKA DAISY PULLER)

Dan and his creative alter ego Daisy Puller are one of the emerging faces of HIV activism. They got their peer mentor training qualification in 2019 and have supported six people to improve their resilience since. As one of Positively UK's HIV ambassadors, they have been raising awareness and standing up to stigma, including delivering a powerful speech in parliament. Last year, they mobilised eight drag performers to throw the best fundraiser in the history of Positively UK. Daisy's social media platforms are regularly used to share stigma-smashing messages, normalising the HIV conversation across London's queer spaces.



POSITIVELY UK

Positively UK provides peer-led support, advocacy and information to everyone living with HIV to improve their knowledge, confidence and connections and effectively manage any aspect of their diagnosis, care and life with HIV. They host the National Biannual Conference for People Living with HIV, and their advocacy work aims to influence policy-makers in order to improve the healthcare system and services for people living with HIV.

positivelyuk.org



ROBIN COLLARD

“Working for Spectra’s Trans Health Advocacy Service has been a truly rewarding and challenging experience. My time in the service has brought me in community with wonderful and uniquely dedicated trans people who advocate for the rights of bodily autonomy and well-

being for our community. It gives me hope in a time when access to lifesaving gender healthcare is being denied and taken away, to be among peers who make a difference every day in big and small ways to trans people’s lives. Small teams can make a big difference, I have personally been lucky enough to witness that, which is in no small part due to witnessing a small minority of trans people continue to fight for their own equality in health and social settings.”



Spectra’s services are designed and delivered to service users by staff and volunteers who are from your community. This means that when using Spectra services, you have the confidence knowing that our staff, Board, managers and volunteers are made up of people just like you. With a focus on sexual health and emotional wellbeing, we recognise that a person’s sense of identity, well-being, culture, knowledge and confidence impacts strongly on the choices they make in life. This could be around isolation, attitudes to protecting yourself, relationships, resilience, stigma or substance use.

spectra-london.org.uk

IDRIS MWENDWA



Idris Mwendwa is a young advocate living with HIV. He works as a Programme Coordinator for HIV and AIDS People’s Alliance of Kenya, a community-based organisation in Mombasa.

Having contracted HIV at seventeen, Idris began his activism journey to advocate for issues affecting the HIV, LGBT+ and sex worker communities. Idris works tirelessly to advance the rights of marginalised communities in a dangerous climate of anti-homosexuality in Kenya. In 2017, Idris spoke on the Youth Stop AIDS Speaker Tour where he shared his powerful story and mobilised thousands to take action. Idris also spoke at the 2022 UK parliamentary reception to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. Idris was a member of STOPAIDS’ key stakeholder advisory group and fed into the development of STOPAIDS’ anti-oppression framework which underpins STOPAIDS’ 2022 organisational strategy.

STOPAIDS.

STOPAIDS is a UK-based membership network working to mobilise civil society on global health issues. With a focus on the HIV and AIDS response, they work across interconnected health rights and equity issues.

stopaids.org.uk



JOHN JAQUISS

John goes far and beyond when it comes to volunteering for Terrence Higgins Trust's Positive Voices project. As well as being a committed volunteer, John is a passionate supporter of the aims and missions of Terrence Higgins

Trust, breaking down stigma and discrimination wherever he goes. John is an amazing mentor for new volunteers, taking them in under his wing and supporting them on their first talk. He says he just wants to make a difference for future generations, which he's doing every day. Last year, John completed our 10km Ribbon Walk in Brighton and recently completed the 2030 Challenge to raise £100 by cycling 100 miles. He, of course, raised over £300! Not only is John an HIV activist he's a wonderful person to know and would do anything for anyone. He really does not know the impact he has on everyone – he's a pure inspiration.

DEBBIE PHILLIPS

Debbie Phillips has been a member of the Wandsworth Oasis family for over seven years and is one of our longer serving volunteers. Debs is a dedicated, loyal and extremely hard-working individual, she not only volunteers in our shop but is also a regular supporter at our events. Always willing to help, Debs has built long term friendships as well as being a key part of Wandsworth Oasis being able to deliver to our charitable aims of supporting people living with HIV and fighting the stigma still associated with HIV today.



Since 1982 the Terrence Higgins Trust have been supporting people impacted by HIV and poor sexual health. Today, their vital advice line, THT Direct, is a one-stop shop for many. They also support people living with HIV with a hardship fund, counselling, work support, and peer-to-peer support to come to terms with their diagnosis, and campaign for change. Together with all of us, they seek to end new cases of HIV by 2030, support people living with HIV and impacted by poor sexual health.

tht.org.uk



Wandsworth Oasis is a growing chain of charity shops dedicated to raising funds for HIV support, prevention and awareness projects across London, in addition to fighting HIV stigma. Unlike most charity shops, Wandsworth Oasis operates more like a trust or foundation who, after operational costs and reserves, distributes its profits via an annual grant programme to other charities who work directly with people affected by HIV. Many of these projects rely on the support of Wandsworth Oasis to deliver their much needed expertise to their services users and clients.

wandsworthoasis.org.uk

ABOUT THE WORLD AIDS DAY RED RUN

The last weekend in November is now a date firmly fixed in the diary for the HIV community and its allies. This is the day of the annual World AIDS Day RED RUN – where we as a mobilised community ‘take action and lace up’ in support of HIV services across the country. This is more than just a run. It’s an opportunity to celebrate the strength and diversity of our community. A day where we can stand together in solidarity for the journey yet to be travelled. An opportunity to collectively and publicly challenge HIV stigma. A platform through which HIV charities raise much needed funds to deliver their essential services supporting people across the South East.

The RED RUN has grown so much since its origins in 2009. Starting with just 50 people, running 5k through Richmond Park, has now grown to be one of the UK’s largest community based HIV events. Throughout the years, the RED RUN has welcomed the likes of the late Dame Barbara Windsor, Mayor Sadiq Khan and Sir Ian McKellen to open the event and since 2009, has raised over £850,000 for HIV support services.

We have mourned the loss of too many to HIV and AIDS, however the shadow of fear and hopelessness that HIV and AIDS once cast across our communities, is now starting to fall behind us. We are in an era of tangible progress. Ground has been broken. U=U, undetectable = untransmittable is fact, meaning that if you’re HIV positive and have an undetectable viral load, it is biologically impossible to pass the virus on sexually. We now have an HIV prevention pill - PrEP.

However, we’re not done yet and as long as HIV support and prevention services are needed, the World AIDS Day RED RUN will remain.

We hope you will continue the journey with us.
Take Action. Lace Up.

WORLD AIDS DAY

**RED
RUN
LDN**

**25 NOVEMBER 2023
VICTORIA PARK**

WORLD AIDS DAY RED RUN PROUDLY SPONSORED BY

PLATINUM

GOLD



SILVER



Jefferies



MSD



Royal Bank
of Canada

HOSTED BY

