WORLD AIDS DAY

RED RUN LDN

21 NOVEMBER 2026
VICTORIA PARK

Community Heroes 2026

In June 1981, our community found itself at the epicentre of a global health crisis that would grow into a pandemic of unimaginable proportions. It was a pandemic compounded by rampant homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, racism, classism, and stigma.

We soon realised that silence would not protect us. Instead, we responded with extraordinary courage, resilience, and determination. We mobilised, organised, and built a community movement unlike any other, one whose legacy continues to inspire today.

We established charities, organised events such as the World AIDS Day RED RUN, built networks of support, created safe spaces, and launched powerful campaigns. The same hands that lifted each other up in times of need were also used to chain ourselves to the doors of those in power, demanding action, accountability, and change.

More than four decades later, the end of HIV is finally within our sight. Thanks to community-led action and advocacy, we have made remarkable progress. U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable) is an established scientific fact and PrEP is available free of charge through the NHS.





We're not done yet.

We must remain vigilant, continue to challenge complacency, and always demand for progress. We can be the generation that brings HIV to an end.

The World AIDS Day RED RUN is built on the very spirit that has carried us this far: community. Today, thousands of people have come together to stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity, honouring our shared journey and celebrating how far we have come.

These achievements have only been possible because of the countless individuals whose passion, commitment, and hard work have often taken place behind the scenes. Their contributions may not always be recognised, but their impact is immeasurable. Today, we shine a light on these remarkable individuals and celebrate the invaluable role they have played in our progress.

Today, we honour 12 unsung heroes and thank them for all they have helped us achieve. Our future is brighter because of them.

Mark Santos

Executive Director
Positive East


Meet the
heroes

Irene Elizabeth Brigstowe



Irene Elizabeth is a voice coach, public speaking tutor, voice-over artist, interpreter, peer mentor, filmmaker and community advocate. Irene holds a degree in broadcast journalism and film, and worked in the media industry for 35 years. She has worked for PBS, Thirteen WNET and broadcasters across Africa as a news pundit and filmmaker on women's rights and girls' education.

Her documentaries have been showcased at Unesco and Unicef conferences. Since 2017, she has been a public speaker and peer mentor at HIV charity Brigstowe. Irene is a community advocate, focused on Brigstowe's Common Ambition Bristol (CAB) project which promotes HIV prevention and treatment in Black African and Caribbean communities.

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brigstowe.org.uk

For 30 years, Brigstowe has been a lifeline for people living with HIV in Bristol and surrounding areas, especially those facing barriers: refugees, asylum seekers, LGBTQ+ communities, as well as people with no safe place to share their HIV status. Our vision is a world in which people living with HIV live long and healthy lives – free from poverty, stigma, prejudice and discrimination. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for people living with HIV through direct support and advocacy. We provide support services, facilitate peer support and HIV Awareness Training, and organise various social events such as Bristol's World AIDS Day vigil and celebration. Our co-production project Common Ambition Bristol (CAB) works to increase HIV testing and reduce stigma in African and Caribbean heritage communities.



James Mead

The Eddystone Trust

James Mead has dedicated much of his career to improving the lives of people affected by chemsex and challenging the stigma that often prevents people from seeking support. Through his compassionate, person-centred approach, he has helped shape the understanding of chemsex within healthcare and community settings, promoting greater awareness, empathy and inclusion.

James has designed and led innovative programmes supporting people who want to change their chemsex behaviours, creating safer spaces for reflection, connection and positive change. His work continues to challenge shame, reduce isolation and promote dignity, ensuring people can access the support they need without fear of judgement.

THE EDDYSTONE TRUST
HIV and Sexual Health Services

The Eddystone Trust exists to make sexual wellbeing everyone's business. We work across communities, workplaces and health settings to challenge stigma, reduce shame and create environments where people can access information, support and services without fear of judgement. We believe that sexual wellbeing is a fundamental part of overall health and that everyone deserves the knowledge, confidence and support to make informed choices. Through education, community engagement, workforce development and specialist support services, we work to break down barriers, encourage open conversations and create lasting change that improves health, wellbeing and quality of life.

eddystone.org.uk

The Food Chain Volunteers

The Food Chain



This year, The Food Chain experienced financial crisis. Although the charity has been saved from closure, our "Eating Together" service ended on 1 July. Eating Together was a volunteer-run meal service, providing hot meals to our community twice a week. Volunteers cooked, served, made teas and coffees, and ensured our guests felt welcomed and safe. In the first 6 months of 2026 alone, our volunteers donated 1,944 hours.

Together we are a family, and we know that family will hold strong. We would like to celebrate the crucial and integral work of our volunteers. They are our proudest legacy.

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the food chain
feeding the fight against HIV

foodchain.org.uk

The Food Chain is the UK's only HIV specialist nutrition charity. Since 1988 we have been feeding the fight against HIV. We exist to ensure that people living with HIV can access the nutrition they need to get well, stay well and lead healthy, independent lives and we give them the tools to do so. We support an average of 500 people every year through home delivered groceries, expert nutrition advice and formula milk for new babies.



Geoff Coleman

Mildmay

Geoff Coleman became Mildmay's Chief Executive in 2018, bringing decades of NHS and charity leadership. Within two years he was steering Mildmay through Covid-19, keeping its doors open and patients cared for. Since then he has built a strong team, safeguarded its clinical excellence and revitalised its Uganda partnership.

He leads from the ward floor as much as the office, and every November he laces up for the RED RUN. He would be the last to acknowledge all he does to keep this historic HIV hospital alive, which, after eight years at the helm, is why he deserves this recognition.

Mildmay Hospital has served east London since the 1870s. In 1988 it became an AIDS hospice, caring for people (most of them young gay men) at the height of the epidemic, and drawing repeated visits from Diana, Princess of Wales.

Today Mildmay is an independent charitable hospital delivering specialist care to NHS patients, including rehabilitation for people with HIV-associated brain impairment. Its multidisciplinary team helps patients rebuild their independence and, wherever possible, return home. Through its partner Mildmay Uganda, it also funds HIV and community health programmes in Uganda, supported entirely by charitable giving.

NHS
Mildmay Hospital

mildmay.org

Andrew Wheatcroft

National AIDS Trust



Andrew uses his platform as a skincare and wellness influencer to bring HIV information to audiences who may not otherwise access it. Diagnosed in 2015, Andrew has shared that he "assumed it was unlikely to happen to me," highlighting the importance of testing.

Now undetectable, Andrew said when completing the London Marathon that he was the healthiest he'd ever been, demonstrating U=U and the power of modern HIV treatment. He has raised over £37,000 for National AIDS Trust, personally matching £5,000 in marathon donations, organising raffles and selling items on Vinted. His dedication and generosity make him a hero.

NATIONAL AIDS TRUST
Securing rights
Stopping HIV

National AIDS Trust works to stop HIV standing in the way of health, dignity and equality. We fight for the rights of people living with, at risk of or affected by HIV, tackling discrimination and challenging unjust laws and policies. We provide free, confidential legal advice and support to people experiencing HIV-related discrimination.

Our campaigning has ensured PrEP is free on the NHS and HIV is recognised as a disability, providing legal protection from diagnosis and much more. We continue fighting for the human rights of everyone living with and affected by HIV, making the UK a fairer society.

nat.org.uk



Mike Montrose Francis

Plushealth

Mike joined Plushealth in April 2024 as a peer mentor and leads our peer led services at Chelsea & Westminster NHS Foundation Trust and Fast-Track Cities funded re-engagement in care pilot across Northwest London. Mike takes a very flexible, person centred and trauma informed approach to supporting people living with HIV and often goes above and beyond to support our most vulnerable peer participants.

Before joining Plushealth Mike had a long career as a senior social worker and held a variety of roles within Local Authority Children's Services. Through continued professional development Mike remains a registered Social Worker and brings a wealth of knowledge of social care which compliments his current role.

Plus+ health .org.uk

plushealth.org.uk

Plushealth is a peer led charity with a vision is 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.

We inform, empower, support, and improve the lives of people living with HIV, their HIV negative partners, family members, close friends, and carers. Our website offers practical information and is written by people living with HIV. We provide UK wide, FREE online peer support and where needed assist those in financial distress to access this vital support regardless of local funding arrangements.

Ricky Krokos

Positive East



Ricky has been a passionate member of Positive East and the Prevention and Testing team for nearly 10 years.

In that time, he has had an amazing and positive impact on the East London community. Ricky is excellent at engaging people and has focused a lot of his work and energy on working with vulnerable people, particularly working with homeless services,
temporary accommodation and drug & alcohol support services.

Ricky is committed to helping the community and always goes above and beyond to support people in both their sexual health needs, but also in any other way he can, connecting to services, getting people the help they need to improve their overall wellbeing and building strong relationships across the East London community.

PositiveEast

positiveeast.org.uk

Positive East has been at the forefront of HIV service and care for over 30 years; supporting people from the point of HIV diagnosis to longer term care. Guided by the mission - to improve the quality of life of individuals and communities affected by HIV – Positive East has developed a holistic range of health and wellbeing programmes from counselling, peer support and benefit advice to HIV testing and HIV prevention outreach. Based in Stepney Green, East London, over 3,000 people access Positive East's services annually.



David Wyatt

Positively UK

David was working for the British government financing overseas projects when he was diagnosed back in 2001. He took early retirement a couple of years later and started providing peer support at Positive East and Positively UK, including work at the Royal London Hospital. His support for Positively UK's welfare service improved the lives of many. He retired again at the age of 75. Since then, David has volunteered to run PUK's Mixed Social group. Its aim is to provide support for all positive people whether gay or straight; female, male, or non-binary; younger or older.

David says, "Many areas of support are for only certain groups of positive people. I think it is important we can all share our experiences. There are more similarities between us than differences". The group visits Kew Gardens, British Museum, Tower of London and Kent Palace amongst others. The group receives no funding from anyone and relies upon free support from venues and volunteers helping. "At a time of limited funds being made available to HIV+ people", says David, "I believe we should seek to help each other where we can".

POSITIVELY UK

Positively UK are people living with HIV who help people living with HIV. Next year will mark 40 years since Positively UK began providing peer support. Since then, the charity has played an instrumental part in shaping HIV support in the UK, including developing the National Standards of Peer Support in HIV, and hosting the National Conference of People Living with HIV. Its peer caseworkers support people from Derbyshire in the north to Kent in the south and from Norfolk in the east to Wales in the west. The charity also provides specialist groups for women, straight people, migrants, over-50s and LGBTQ+ people, as well as mixed outings and housing and welfare advice.

positivelyuk.org

Banana Wild

Stonewall Housing



Banana is a passionate advocate for joy and community. As a Stonewall Housing Ambassador, they share their personal story through campaigns that raise awareness of LGBTQ+ homelessness and inspire others to seek support and advocate for change. Banana also champions Stonewall Housing's fundraising efforts, helping the charity support more people than ever before.

Alongside this, they run their own creative workshop business focused on building healthy relationships in all areas of life. Banana says, "I have had my own life struggles, addiction, homelessness, over-bleached hair for years, I believe now it's my gift to share that pain and shine light on the shame. If my pain helps just one person it was worth it."

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stonewall housing

Stonewall Housing is the UK's leading LGBTQ+ homelessness charity for people of all ages. We provide free and confidential housing advice, advocacy and support, including specialist expertise in mental health, substance use, domestic abuse and supported accommodation.

We see first hand how housing insecurity can increase vulnerability to HIV and create barriers to accessing vital health services. Without safe and stable housing, staying on top of treatment becomes far harder. A stable home changes everything and helps people maintain their medication routine and feel more in control of their health and future. We have supported more than 40,000 LGBTQ+ people across the UK, helping people find safety, stability and a place to call home.

stonewallhousing.org



Yvette Rapheal

STOPAIDS

Yvette is co-founder of 'Advocacy for Prevention of HIV and AIDS' (APHA) in South Africa and a leader in the country's HIV prevention movement for young women. With first-hand experience of what it means to live with HIV in a region with high stigma and reduced access to healthcare, she has spent two decades on the front line advocating for prevention education and better services for people living with HIV.

Through APHA, she works to support civil society, communities, and health care workers to ensure that all interventions put the needs and rights of affected communities first.

STOP AIDS.

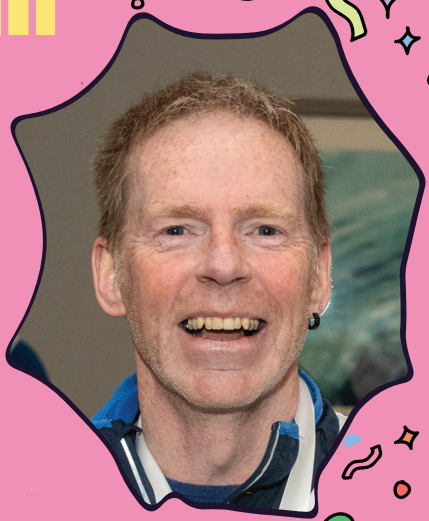
STOPAIDS is a membership network with a thirty-five year history of engagement on international development and HIV and AIDS. Our vision is for a world without AIDS, where all people can realise their right to good health and wellbeing.

Our strength is in our membership and partnership and STOPAIDS convenes and unites UK civil society voices and positively shapes UK leadership in the global response to HIV and other health rights and equity issues. STOPAIDS also engages at the global level through global civil society coalitions and platforms, and directly influences key global processes and multilateral partnerships.

stopaids.org.uk

Andrew Buchan

Sussex Beacon



Andrew Buchan has been an incredible supporter of The Sussex Beacon for many years. Combining his passion for running with his dedication to our work, Andrew was instrumental in creating Team Beacon for the Brighton Half Marathon.

Team Beacon has since raised a phenomenal £750,000+, with Andrew always there to fundraise, inspire and cheer every runner across the finish line.

His commitment to people living with HIV has never wavered. Remarkably, Andrew has run the equivalent distance to the International Space Station and back, every mile in support of The Sussex Beacon.

The Sussex Beacon opened in Brighton in 1994, founded by local LGBTQ+ activists and allies, who recognised an urgent need during the AIDS pandemic. Over thirty years later, we're still here, because we're still needed. We support people with HIV to improve their health and well-being through inpatient care and community programmes.

Our new strategy signals a new chapter for The Sussex Beacon with the re-opening of our Clinical Services Unit next year. We want to provide person-centred support, palliative care and end-of-life care for people living with HIV and the LGBTQ+ community that is safe, inclusive and affirming.

the sussex beacon

sussexbeacon.org.uk



Allan Batck

Terrence Higgins Trust

For 16 years, Allan has used his HIV diagnosis to inspire hope, challenge stigma, and support others. Living in Cheshire, he is a devoted husband, father, and full-time carer to his two autistic children, while also championing the rights of people living with HIV.

By sharing his story through public speaking and national television appearances, Allan has helped break down misconceptions, particularly within heterosexual communities. His compassion, courage, and determination have encouraged others to live openly and without fear. Allan's tireless commitment to tackling discrimination and bringing people together makes him a truly deserving Community Hero.

Terrence Higgins Trust

tht.org.uk

Since 1982, we've been supporting people affected by HIV and poor sexual health. Today, our vital advice service, THT Direct, provides trusted information and support for thousands of people across the UK. We also help people living with HIV through hardship grants, counselling, employment support, and peer support to help them navigate life after a diagnosis. Alongside this, we campaign for change and work towards a future free from HIV stigma. Together, we can end new cases of HIV in the UK by 2030, support people living with HIV, and improve sexual health for everyone.



Thank you to all our heroes.
Our future is brighter because of you.

About the World AIDS Day RED RUN

Since 2009, East London's HIV charity Positive East has organised the World AIDS Day RED RUN. The RED RUN has grown from a small gathering of 50 people to one of the UK's largest annual HIV community events, attended by thousands each year and becoming a pivotal event in the journey towards a world where everyone living with HIV can thrive.

Last year, the RED RUN raised £223,000 for 30 HIV charities — from local and grassroots organisations to charities with a national reach. Since its inception, the RED RUN has raised over £1.5 million for HIV support and prevention projects across the UK.

The RED RUN focuses on community, not competition. It is a celebration, an acknowledgement of our community resilience, and a reminder of the work still to be done. It's an opportunity for us to stand shoulder to shoulder as a strong and unified community. It's an act of solidarity against HIV stigma, a gathering of remembrance for all those whose fight against HIV ended too soon, and a call to action to ensure equity and equality for all.

We're not done yet!

It has now been over 40 years since the first recorded cases of HIV/AIDS were confirmed, and this year's RED RUN takes place against the backdrop of a momentous time in the world of HIV. PrEP is now available on the NHS, and U=U is a scientific statement of fact: if you are HIV positive, adhering to your medication, and have an undetectable HIV viral load, it is biologically impossible to pass the virus on to your sexual partners.

However, amid this good news, the challenge remains that not everyone and not all communities are benefiting. HIV stigma is still a reality, and there are far too many people who are undiagnosed or diagnosed late.

Now is certainly not the time for us to stand down.

Take Action. Lace Up.

SUPPORTING ESSENTIAL HIV CHARITIES ACROSS THE UK

AHF + African Equality Foundation + Breakout Youth
Brigstowe + The Brunswick Centre + CHIVA
The Eddystone Trust + elop + The Food Chain + LGBT HERO
Mildmay + National AIDS Trust + National HIV Story Trust
Not A Phase + NAZ + Plushealth + Positive East + Positively UK
Prepster + Redbridge Rainbow + Royal Free Charity + Queerwell
Sophia Forum + Spectra + Stonewall Housing + STOPAIDS
Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline + The Sussex Beacon + Tackle Africa
Terrence Higgins Trust + UK AIDS Memorial Quilt + Waverley Care

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FAST-TRACK CITIES LONDON

MSD

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QRC