

## Key messages for World AIDS Day

- ⓧ HIV and AIDS are not the same thing: HIV is the virus and AIDS is the advanced illness.
  - ⓧ HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system, and cannot be passed on through hugging, kissing, spitting, coughing, or sharing household items.
  - ⓧ The term AIDS carries with it a large amount of stigma from the era before the mid-90s when effective medication for HIV became available. In the UK, people working in the HIV field now prefer the terms advanced or late-stage HIV.
  - ⓧ Although there is no cure for HIV, medical treatment known as antiretroviral therapy (ART) can help people living with HIV to remain fit and healthy, and prevent them from developing advanced HIV.
  - ⓧ People with HIV who are successfully on treatment are said to have an undetectable viral load, meaning that the level of virus in their blood is so low it cannot be detected by tests.
  - ⓧ With effective medication, people living with HIV can't pass the virus on and can live as long as anyone else. Earlier this year, long-acting injectable treatment for HIV was introduced, meaning an injection only every two months rather than daily pills to take.
  - ⓧ PrEP stands for pre-exposure prophylaxis and is a pill that can stop the person taking it from getting HIV. Similar to long-acting injectable treatment, long-acting injectable PrEP is also in development.
  - ⓧ HIV stigma can make life extremely difficult for people living with the virus.
  - ⓧ You can support World AIDS Day:
    - ⓧ by wearing a red ribbon and remembering those people we've lost;
    - ⓧ by celebrating how far we've come in our understanding of HIV and how to prevent and treat it;
    - ⓧ by keeping yourself and others informed about HIV;
    - ⓧ by campaigning for better access to information, prevention, treatment and support, here in the UK and globally;
    - ⓧ and by treating people living with HIV with compassion and respect.
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## Surprising stats for World AIDS Day

- ⓧ There are more than **105,000 people** living with HIV in the UK and **around 37.7 million** globally – similar to the population of Canada or Poland.
  - Source: [National AIDS Trust](#)
- ⓧ As people can live longer, healthier lives with HIV, we have seen the number of people with an HIV diagnosis who are aged 50 and over increase in recent years: more than **two in five people** accessing HIV care in 2019 were aged 50 or over (**41,855 – 42.4%**).
  - Source: [National AIDS Trust](#)
- ⓧ Having an undetectable viral load means there's **zero risk** of passing on HIV to your sexual partners – in other words, you can't pass it on. U=U [Undetectable equals Untransmittable] is **100% effective**.
  - Source: [PARTNER study](#) and [Terrence Higgins Trust](#)
- ⓧ **More than 97% of people** diagnosed with HIV in the UK are undetectable.
  - Source: [UK Health Security Agency](#)
- ⓧ **1 in 8 people** with HIV said they'd not shared their status with anyone other than healthcare professionals.
- ⓧ **1 in 5 people** living with HIV said they needed help with loneliness and isolation in the past year.
  - Source: [Changing Perceptions](#)
- ⓧ **Two-thirds of people** who want to get on PrEP face challenges accessing it for the first time.
- ⓧ **Almost a quarter of people** on PrEP struggle to get a repeat prescription.
  - Source: [NAT and colleagues: Not PrePared report](#)

## Some useful signposts

We rightly concentrate on preventing people getting HIV and encouraging them to get tested, but far too often we forget about supporting people after an HIV diagnosis. So, here are some excellent sources of peer support – the opportunity to speak to someone else living with the virus and to build a network of friends. If you know someone who's feeling isolated following an HIV diagnosis, please point them to one of these brilliant charities:

- ✂ Body and Soul (Islington): [bodyandsoulcharity.org](http://bodyandsoulcharity.org)
- ✂ The Crescent (St Albans): [www.thecrescent.org.uk](http://www.thecrescent.org.uk)
- ✂ Living Well (Ladbroke Grove): [www.livingwellcic.com](http://www.livingwellcic.com)
- ✂ Metro (South East London): [metrocharity.org.uk](http://metrocharity.org.uk)
- ✂ NAZ (Hammersmith): [www.naz.org.uk](http://www.naz.org.uk)
- ✂ Plushealth (online): [www.plushealth.org.uk](http://www.plushealth.org.uk)
- ✂ Positive East (Bethnal Green): [www.positiveeast.org.uk](http://www.positiveeast.org.uk)
- ✂ Positively UK (Islington): [positivelyuk.org](http://positivelyuk.org)
- ✂ River House Trust (Hammersmith): [riverhouseuk.org](http://riverhouseuk.org)
- ✂ Terrence Higgins Trust (Central London): [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)

