



HIV in the UK today

This World AIDS Day 2021 marks 40 years since the first reported cases of HIV-related illnesses and deaths.¹ It also marks almost two years since the Government committed to achieving zero new HIV transmissions by 2030.²

The unprecedented progress made in treatment and care since the early 1980s, has transformed HIV from a death sentence to a manageable condition with a near normal life expectancy.³ But to live with HIV is about so much more than the virus itself. Fear, stigma and myths about HIV are still common,⁴ even within the healthcare community.⁵

Research conducted in a large London hospital found that 80% of staff were unaware that people on effective HIV treatment cannot pass on the virus,⁵ and over a third were unaware that women living with HIV could give birth to an HIV negative child.⁵

Did you know...



In 2019, an estimated **105,200** people were living with HIV in the UK⁶



Anybody can be affected by HIV, but it **disproportionally impacts** certain ethnic minority groups and gay and bisexual men⁷



If diagnosed early and started on antiretroviral treatment, a person living with HIV has a **near normal life expectancy**³



Women living with HIV can routinely **give birth to an HIV negative child**^{8,9}



People living with HIV and on effective treatment can't pass on the virus to sexual partners. This is known as: **U=U Undetectable equals Untransmittable**¹⁰

U=U

Undetectable equals Untransmittable

is a scientifically validated and guidelines supported fact¹¹⁻¹⁴ that everyone should be aware of. U=U offers the potential to reduce stigma within communities and healthcare settings, whilst improving health outcomes of people living with HIV.^{15,16}

To access healthcare professional training and information visit the [Terrence Higgins Trust Can't Pass It On campaign](#) 

This HIV campaign has been developed by Gilead Sciences with input from and endorsed by:



HIV testing is critical, so ensure it's offered

In 2019 an estimated 6,600 people living with HIV in UK were unaware of their HIV positive status.⁶

Of those who were diagnosed in 2019, 42% were diagnosed late (already immunocompromised), and a third had missed opportunities for testing.^{6,19}

- **Opt-out HIV testing is highly acceptable**, with over 99% of pregnant women having an HIV test as part of their antenatal care.⁶
- **Barriers to testing include HIV stigma and reluctance to offer testing by healthcare professionals.**²⁰ Normalisation of HIV testing by integration into routine practice and education and training of healthcare workers are recommended to address these barriers.²⁰



Four in ten people living with HIV are still **diagnosed late**, and have an eight-fold increased risk of death in the first year, compared to those diagnosed early⁶



One in five people living with HIV in the UK today have been the **victim of verbal abuse**¹⁷



One in eight people living with HIV **have never told anyone outside of their healthcare team** about their HIV status¹⁸



One in ten people living with HIV **avoid accessing healthcare when they need it** due to fear of discrimination¹⁸

Healthcare professionals play a critical role in increasing awareness, encouraging HIV testing and increasing diagnosis.

Learn more about UK HIV testing guidelines [here](#) ⁷ and about the impact of the HIV epidemic on local communities across England [here](#) ⁷

- **Anyone can access free HIV testing at sexual health services or online**
- **UK HIV testing guidelines** ⁷ recommend **all people presenting with HIV indicator conditions should be offered a HIV test** as part of standard clinical work up
- **Routine HIV testing** is recommended for all individuals who have not previously been tested who are:²⁰
 - **Accessing healthcare in areas of high HIV prevalence** (2–5 per 1000) and undergoing venepuncture
 - **Accessing healthcare in areas of extremely high HIV prevalence** (>5 per 1000), whether or not they are undergoing venepuncture for another indication

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Supporting people to age well with HIV will increasingly require your input



By 2030, a quarter of people taking HIV treatment will be **over the age of 65** and a third are expected to have **at least two comorbidities**²¹



People living with HIV may be at **greater risk of developing age-related co-morbidities at an earlier age**^{21,22}



To support people living with HIV to age well requires a **multidisciplinary, multisystem approach** across healthcare settings, with the patient at the centre

The UK is committed to achieving zero transmissions of HIV by 2030.²

We can also achieve zero HIV-related stigma and zero difference in quality of life for the >105,000 people already living with HIV.

You are an essential part of achieving these ambitions:

- Think about **testing patients for HIV** [↗](#) – anyone can be affected, anyone can access a free HIV test online
- Know it's a **manageable, long-term condition**
- Know that people on effective HIV treatment have a **zero risk** of transmitting the virus to their sexual partners, and **share this groundbreaking information with your patients** [↗](#)
- **Don't be afraid to treat age-related comorbidities in people you manage living with HIV** – help and advice is always available from your **local HIV service** [↗](#); British HIV association (BHIVA) **guidelines** [↗](#), including on the use of **vaccines** [↗](#) in people with HIV; and potential drug-drug interactions via **the University of Liverpool HIV drug interaction website** [↗](#)
- **Educate yourself and your team** – HIV has changed, we all have a part to play in getting to zero transmissions, zero HIV-related stigma, and enabling people living with HIV to live their best lives

Visit our website for more information about [Gilead](#) [↗](#)

References:

¹ World AIDS Day by National AIDS Trust. About our campaign. Available from: <https://www.worldaidsday.org/campaign/>. Last accessed: November 2021 ² Gov.uk. Health Secretary announces goal to end HIV transmissions by 2030. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/health-secretary-announces-goal-to-end-hiv-transmissions-by-2030>. Last accessed: November 2021 ³ May MT et al. Impact on life expectancy of HIV-1 positive individuals of CD4+ cell count and viral load response to antiretroviral therapy. AIDS. 2014 May 15;28(8):1193-202. doi: 10.1097/QAD.0000000000000243. ⁴ NAM AIDSmap. What is stigma? Available from: <https://www.aidsmap.com/about-hiv/what-stigma>. Last accessed: November 2021 ⁵ Shongwe M et al. Measuring healthcare HIV knowledge within our NHS Trust. British HIV Association conference, abstract O06, November 2020 ⁶ Public Health England. Trends in HIV testing, new diagnoses and people receiving HIV-related care in the United Kingdom: data to the end of December 2019. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/959330/hpr2020_hiv19.pdf. Last accessed: November 2021 ⁷ The Terrence Higgins Trust. HIV Statistics. Available from: <https://www.tht.org.uk/hiv-and-sexual-health/about-hiv/hiv-statistics>. Last accessed: November 2021 ⁸ British HIV Association (BHIVA). BHIVA guidelines for the management of HIV in pregnancy and postpartum 2018 (2020 third interim update). Available from: <https://www.bhiva.org/pregnancy-guidelines>. Last accessed: November 2021 ⁹ NAM AIDSmap. Having a baby when you are living with HIV. Available from: <https://www.aidsmap.com/about-hiv/having-baby-when-you-are-living-hiv>. Last accessed: November 2021 ¹⁰ BHIVA. BHIVA encourages universal promotion of Undetectable=Untransmittable (U=U). Available from: <https://www.bhiva.org/BHIVA-encourages-universal-promotion-of-U-U>. Last accessed: November 2021 ¹¹ BHIVA. BHIVA endorses 'Undetectable equals Untransmittable' (U=U) consensus statement. Available from: <https://www.bhiva.org/BHIVA-endorses-U-U-consensus-statement>. Last accessed: November 2021 ¹² European AIDS Clinical Society. EACS Guidelines version 11.0. October 2021. Available from: <https://www.eacsociety.org/guidelines/eacs-guidelines/>. Last accessed: November 2021 ¹³ US DHHS Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents. Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in Adults and Adolescents Living with HIV (August 16, 2021). Available from: <https://clinicalinfo.hiv.gov/en/guidelines/adult-and-adolescent-arv/whats-new-guidelines>. Last accessed: November 2021 ¹⁴ Prevention Access Campaign. Available from: <https://www.preventionaccess.org/>. Last accessed: November 2021 ¹⁵ Spinelli, F et al. 2020. Effects of the "undetectable = untransmittable" ("U=U") educational campaign on treatment outcomes and perceptions among people living with HIV in North American countries. Presented at: IDWeek 2021; September 29-October 3, 2021; Virtual. Last accessed: November 2021 ¹⁶ Okoli C, Van de Velde N, Richman B, et al. Undetectable equals untransmittable (U = U): awareness and associations with health outcomes among people living with HIV in 25 countries. Sexually Transmitted Infections 2021;97:18-26 ¹⁷ The Stigma Survey UK. HIV in the UK: Changes and Challenges; Actions and Answers: The People Living With HIV Stigma Survey UK 2015 National findings. Available from: <http://www.stigmaindexuk.org/reports/2016/NationalReport.pdf>. Last accessed: November 2021 ¹⁸ Public Health England. Positive Voices: The National Survey of People Living with HIV Findings from the 2017 survey. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/857922/PHE_positive_voices_report_2019.pdf. Last accessed: November 2021 ¹⁹ Sullivan, AK. 2019. Mortality and late diagnosis reviews – an update. Presented at: BHIVA Autumn Conference 2019. Available from: <https://www.bhiva.org/file/5d971d059b591/AnnSullivan.pdf>. Last accessed: November 2021 ²⁰ BHIVA/BASHH/BIA Adult HIV Testing guidelines 2020. Available from: <https://www.bhiva.org/HIV-testing-guidelines>. Last accessed: November 2021 ²¹ Kasale P et al. Multimorbidity in people with HIV using ART in the US: projections to 2030. Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, abstract 102, 2021. Available from: https://natop.org/2021/CROI/croi_25.htm. Last accessed: November 2021 ²² Schouten J et al. Cross-sectional comparison of the prevalence of age-associated comorbidities and their risk factors between HIV-infected and uninfected individuals: the AGEHIV cohort study. Clin Infect Dis 2014;59:1787-97