

World AIDS Day

2011



Remembering 30 Years of HIV & AIDS

Before 1981



Although the 'known' history of HIV and AIDS in the Western world is now 30 Years old, it has a hidden history...

Long before the Western world became aware of the disease it had been ravaging Sub Saharan Africa.

Forensic epidemiology (looking back at preserved samples) has found earlier known infections of HIV (the Human Immunodeficiency Virus), including a 1959 sample from a man in Kinshasa. There is also a study which suggests that the virus probably evolved far earlier.

Evidence suggests that the virus crossed from the chimpanzee (which has its own Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV) that attacks its immune system) to the human population in Africa between 1884 and 1924. This has variously been explained by habitat loss caused through deforestation; mutation of SIV with a pox virus from widespread Smallpox immunisation; and mutation of SIV with the influenza virus during an outbreak.

The vast majority of those infected in Africa have been from the heterosexual population, many millions of whom have died.

During the 1970's African doctors saw a rise in opportunistic infections and wasting. Western scientists and doctors remained ignorant of the growing epidemic. It is thought that HIV entered Haiti around 1966 and the United States around 1970.

Further research by the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) shows that HIV appears to have caused deaths in the USA from the late 1970's; as from 1979 to 1981 rare cancers and other conditions that later became known as 'AIDS defining illnesses' were being reported by doctors in New York and Los Angeles.

In Western epidemiology the majority of cases were among 'men who have sex with men' rather than heterosexuals – however the Western world is now seeing an increased and continued rise in heterosexual infection.

1981



The American CDC announced in their weekly bulletin that a new condition was affecting otherwise healthy gay men in clusters, and then injecting drug users; resulting in cancers associated with compromised immunity.

Initially this was called GRID (Gay Related Immune Deficiency) and as it had an unknown cause led to much fear, denial, panic and discrimination.

These USA cases appeared to have shown themselves from 1980 to 1981. At the same time the first cases started to show in the UK in gay men with a history of travel to the USA.

CDC
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

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MMWR
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WEEKLY REPORT

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Pneumocystis Pneumonia — Los Angeles

In the period October 1980–May 1981, 5 young men, all active homosexual, were treated for biopsy-confirmed *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia at 3 different hospitals in Los Angeles, California. Two of the patients died. All 5 patients had laboratory-confirmed previous or current cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection and candidal infection. Case reports of these patients follow.

Case 1: A previously healthy 33-year-old man developed *P. carinii* pneumonia in March 1981 after a 2-month history of fever associated with weight loss. The serum complement

1982



Reports of the disease began coming in from several European countries and were observed to be growing throughout Africa.

Although in the USA most infected were homosexual, it became apparent that as worldwide cases were also heterosexual, the term “GRID” was not representative.

Although its cause was not yet known the condition became known as AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.)

AIDS started to be reported among haemophiliacs and Haitians in the USA.

African Health Organisations and doctors began to recognise that the disease they had named “Slim” was in fact AIDS.

Terrence Higgins died aged 37 at St Thomas' Hospital, London. He was among one of the first persons to die from AIDS in the UK. After his death a group of his friends banded together to start what grew into the Terrence Higgins Trust.

Reported AIDS cases in the UK reached 7, and numbered over 1,000 in the USA.

1983



Two separate research groups led by Robert Gallo (USA, CDC & National Cancer Institute) and Luc Montagnier (France, Institut Pasteur) independently researched the possibility that AIDS was caused by a retrovirus.

European health authorities began to recognise greater numbers of heterosexually acquired cases of AIDS, confirming that AIDS was not a 'gay related condition'.

AIDS was reported among non-drug using women and children.

Experts became more confident that the cause of AIDS was infectious.

TV news and documentaries in many countries started to report AIDS and its impact.

Montagnier and his collaborators at the Institut Pasteur declared that a novel retrovirus may have been infecting AIDS patients. They published their findings in the journal 'Science'. The French team named their virus lymphadenopathy-associated virus, or LAV.

The UK Blood Transfusion Service introduced a total ban on persons donating blood who were considered at risk of having AIDS.

The UK press started to refer to AIDS as "The Gay Plague" with stories sensationalising the condition but giving no information as to cause or risks.

Terrence Higgins Trust was constituted as an organisation, later becoming a charity and limited company.

Reported AIDS cases reached 17 in the UK. There were 2,868 cases in the USA, of whom 1000 had died.

1984



Gallo and his collaborators from the CDC & National Cancer Institute published a series of papers in the scientific journal 'Science'. These demonstrated research that a retrovirus they had isolated, called the Human T-Lymphotropic Virus (Type 3) or HTLV-III, was related to the leukaemia viruses of Gallo's earlier work, and that this was the cause of AIDS.

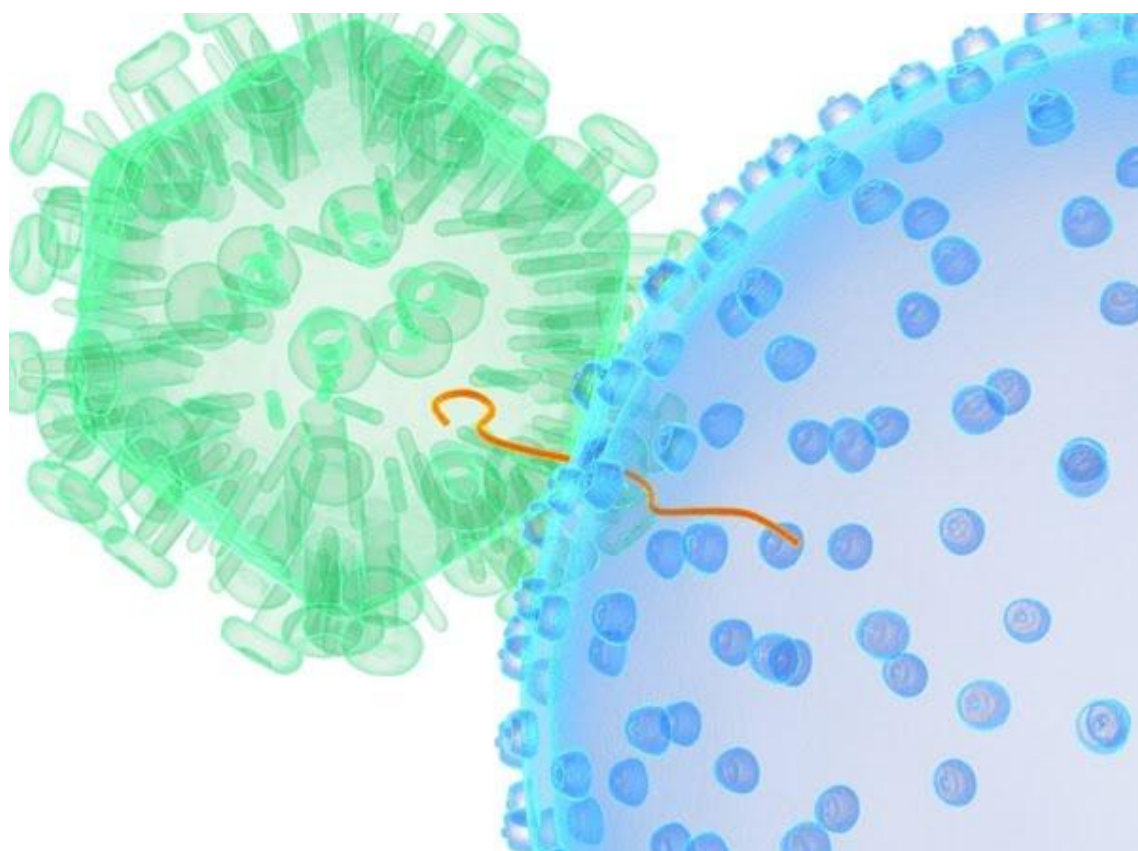
Western scientists became aware that AIDS was widespread in parts of Africa.

The fear of AIDS and the lack of knowledge around its route of infection led to the introduction of full barrier nursing for patients with AIDS and bans on patients with AIDS gaining general access to dental services.

The world's first needle exchange program was set up in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Terrence Higgins Trust registered as a charity.

Reported UK AIDS cases reached 108, with 46 deaths.



1985



AIDS was found in China, and was therefore been seen in all regions of the world.

The first antibody tests for the virus (then still referred to as HTLV III – and often wrongly referred to as an “AIDS test”) were introduced.

An antibody test was licensed for screening blood supplies.

Whilst the cause of AIDS was now known to be a virus, uncertainties continued to cause much fear and panic. For example, in the USA people related to someone with AIDS were often ‘blacklisted’ from social events.

Paramedics were forbidden from giving the ‘kiss of life’ to anyone without full barrier protection.

Clinical guidelines concerning the treatment of those infected with HIV and/or AIDS were issued.

Actor Rock Hudson died of AIDS aged 59, becoming the first high profile celebrity to be reported as having died from the disease.

The US NAMES (AIDS Memorial Quilt) project was started. This was in the form of a giant multi-panelled quilt with each panel reflecting a life lost to AIDS. This was displayed each October in Washington DC.

Body Positive London – an AIDS self-help group – was founded.

The UK Government made significant funding available to fight AIDS.

The UK Minister for Health enacted powers to keep people with AIDS in hospital against their will as some health professionals proposed (wrongly) that it could be passed by social contact.

Reported UK AIDS cases reached 275, and 20,303 worldwide.

1986



The two research teams (Gallo and Montagnier) disputed who had discovered the virus first. As it was known both as LAC and HTLV-III the term 'Human Immunodeficiency Virus' or 'HIV' was created to avoid confusion.

Scientists confirmed that HIV is the cause of AIDS.

The UK Department of Health launched the "Don't Aid AIDS" publicity campaign. This was a low-key campaign aimed at health professionals.

The AIDS charity AVERT was founded. They released a joint campaign with the National Union of Students which denounced the way that the media had been covering AIDS. Particularly dismayed at the way that people with AIDS had been represented, the campaign gave examples of discriminatory terms that had been used in UK newspapers such as: 'The Gay Killer Bug', 'The Frightening Scourge of Our Times', 'Monster in Our Midst', 'The March of The Gay Plague' and 'Acquired Immoral Deficiency Syndrome'.

A group of friends started to make plans for the London Lighthouse, a care centre for people with AIDS, after the death of a friend led them to feel the inadequacy of available medical care. However, their plans sometimes faced a hostile public reaction.

The Royal College of Nursing ruled that nurses who refused to care for people with AIDS could be found guilty of unprofessional conduct and be disciplined. In Wales, nurses threatened to take legal action against Mid-Glamorgan Health Authority if it did not agree to inform them when they were treating patients with AIDS.

More than 38,000 cases of AIDS had been reported from 85 countries.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) launched its Global AIDS strategy.

1987



The UK launched its infamous “Iceberg” and “Tombstone” campaigns - both very hard hitting and controversial campaigns, which many felt led to a culture of fear and increased stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. Many said that as a result this led to a reduction in uptake of testing for HIV. Similar campaigns were launched in many countries such as the USA and Australia, which also resulted in many people expressing negative views on HIV testing.

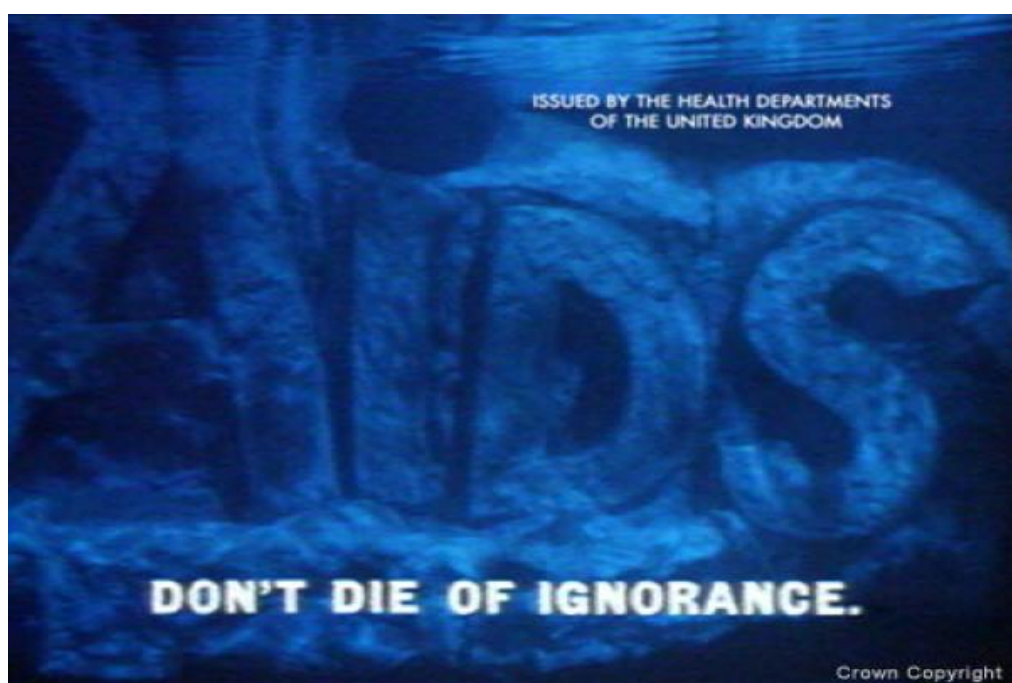
The USA (under President Reagan) enacted laws that prohibited anyone with HIV from entering the country.

Princess Diana opened the UK’s first dedicated AIDS ward at the ‘Landmark AIDS Centre’ in Middlesex. The first time HIV and AIDS were portrayed in high profile as conditions not only requiring treatment, but also support, understanding and empathy.

The UK National AIDS Trust was created as a Non Governmental Organisation.

In March the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) licensed AZT (zidovudine) as an anti-HIV treatment. AZT had originally been designed in the 1960s as an anti-cancer drug, but it had proved ineffective for this indication so had never been approved. Its use for HIV treatment received much controversy with anecdotal reports that it made patients worse and resulted in faster progression to AIDS.

Reported UK AIDS cases reached 1,170; and 71,751 worldwide



Sources include CDC and UNAIDS Web Archives, AVERT Web Resource.

1988



A world summit on AIDS was held in London, resulting in the London Declaration on AIDS Prevention.

The American government conducted a national AIDS education campaign.

AZT was licensed for named-patient use in the UK.

The Local Government Act was enacted which included the infamous Section 28. The bill prevented any education about homosexuality, so that the promotion of sex education and awareness of HIV and safer sex to school children were also prevented.

HRH Princess Margaret opened The London Lighthouse as the first AIDS hospice charity in the UK.

The first “World AIDS Day” was held after being proposed and promoted by the World Health Organization.

1989



Protests about the USA ban on people with HIV from entering the country continued. The ban became particularly controversial as the USA was hosting the annual symposium on HIV organised by the International AIDS Society.

AZT was formally licensed as a treatment for HIV in the UK.

ddI (dideoxyinosine) became the second drug available for the treatment of HIV and was released for clinical trials.



ddI (dideoxyinosine)

1990



United Kingdom TV screened “The AIDS Catch”, a programme which questioned proof that HIV caused AIDS. This ideology was promoted in part by many “AIDS denialist” movements.

UK and USA government health bodies held conferences which questioned the need to prepare for HIV becoming a global disease which would affect the heterosexual population. This was contrary to existing statistics in Africa and delayed a full response to the pandemic.

The UK Department of Health instructed that all blood products were to be screened for HIV; offering compensation totalling £42 million to haemophiliacs and others affected by HIV through infected blood used in transfusions before screening came into place.

Around 8 million people were living with HIV worldwide, according to estimates made later.

Artist Keith Haring died aged 43 of AIDS related illness.

1991



The UK TV series East Enders character Mark Fowler was portrayed being diagnosed with HIV after his TV girlfriend had tested positive. This led to the largest peak in requests for HIV testing in UK history.

ddC (dideoxycytidine) became the third drug available for the treatment of HIV.

The International AIDS conference was moved from its proposed venue in Boston, USA to Amsterdam in the Netherlands in protest at the USA's continuing ban on HIV positive travellers entering the country.

Princess Diana became Patron of the National AIDS Trust.

Singer Freddie Mercury died aged 45 – one day after publicly acknowledging he had AIDS.

A Department of Health report showed through anonymous testing that 20% of those attending Sexual Health Clinics in London are HIV positive (with many unaware of their condition). Outside London this was 4%.

The Red Ribbon, created by the New York Visual AIDS Artists Caucus was recognised as a symbol of solidarity, hope and remembrance.

1992



The UK banned the sale of 'home-test HIV antibody kits' and required both pre and post test counselling as part of the testing procedure.

The World Health Organization formally set HIV prevention as its primary mission.

In the USA, AZT and ddC were licensed as the first dual combination therapy for the treatment of HIV.

In the UK, tabloid newspapers furthered the "AIDS denialist" story, inferring that AIDS was not caused by HIV but was a 'lifestyle judgement'. This was contrary to all scientific evidence.

Author Isaac Asimov died due to AIDS related complications aged 72.

1993



In the UK 116 new cases of AIDS were reported, bringing the total to 7,045. 1 in 6 were reported as having been contracted through heterosexual partners.

The results of the “Concorde” trial of immediate versus deferred AZT mono therapy were published, showing that neither strategy offered sustained benefit.

The World Health Organization redefined the definition of AIDS to be more accurate, removing ‘AIDS related complex or ARC’ as a condition and creating the term HIV+ (HIV positive) as a medical definition.

The UK Coalition of People Living with HIV was launched, along with its newsletter ‘Positive Nation’.

The UK 1993 Education Act made sex education a statutory requirement in schools, with HIV and AIDS as part of the teaching curriculum. It also permitted parents to make a choice to opt their children out of sex education.

Holly Johnson of pop band “Frankie Goes to Hollywood” and TV comedian and DJ Kenny Everett both publicly disclosed their HIV status.

1994



AZT was shown to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Infant HIV infections began to fall in developed countries due to the use of AZT during pregnancy and labour and in the new-born baby.

Film-maker & artist Derek Jarman died aged 52 of AIDS related illness.

1995



The Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) was established. UNAIDS is the United Nations' programme for tackling HIV and AIDS as a global problem. Working closely with the World Health Organization its goal is to drive a long-term strategic response to tackle the world AIDS epidemic.

After the presentation of the results of the MRC Delta Trial (showing 2 drugs were better than 1) at the European AIDS Clinical Society Conference in Copenhagen, the use of dual-drug treatment using a combination of AZT and ddI or ddC increased rapidly in the UK. Results showed huge improvements over the use of mono therapy.

Saquinavir, the first of a new class of anti-HIV drugs called Protease Inhibitors (PI), was licensed in the USA.

Comedian Kenny Everett died of AIDS related illness, aged 50.

AIDS cases in the UK numbered 11,872 with over 70% dead. 25,689 people were living with HIV.



Saquinavir

1996



Protease Inhibitors and the concept of triple therapy first made the news at two big conferences during this seminal year (CROI in Washington DC in February and the World AIDS Conference in Vancouver in July).

In the UK, dual therapy was now the norm, but with the availability of saquinavir, indinavir and zidovudine triple combination therapy began to be introduced. Success rates showed huge improvements over previous treatment regimens. This becomes known as HAART (Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy). In developed countries, many people begin taking the new treatment.

The last public display of the AIDS memorial Quilt for the NAMES project was held in The Mall, Washington DC, USA.

Annual global spending on AIDS in low and middle-income countries was \$300 million.



1997



Medical professionals started to notice a major reduction in the death rate of people with HIV and reducing numbers of AIDS diagnoses due to HAART. AIDS deaths began to decline in developed countries.

Brazil became the first developing country to begin providing free combination treatment. In other developing countries, only a tiny minority were able to access treatment for HIV.

Another new class of anti-HIV drugs was licensed. Nevirapine became the first Non-Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor (NNRTI).

Around 22 million people were living with HIV worldwide, according to estimates made later.

UK deaths from AIDS fell from 1,715 in 1995 to 737 in 1997.



Nevirapine

1998



Due to the reduction in AIDS related deaths following the introduction of HAART, the London Lighthouse closed its in-patient service and changed from being a hospice undertaking palliative care to a centre helping people to live with the disease.

Efavirenz, a second NNRTI was licensed.



Efavirenz

1999



The UK Health Protection Agency published figures showing that HIV infections acquired through heterosexual contact exceeded those through homosexual contact for the first time. This was despite statistics for men who have sex with men (MSM) rising for the first time after many years of steady reduction.

The UK government started to offer routine HIV testing to ALL pregnant women, together with counselling and treatment support.

The Terrence Higgins Trust merged with several other local organisations in London, Oxford, Coventry and Leeds to become a National Umbrella HIV Organisation.

2000



Scotland repealed 'Section 28' and started teaching safer sex and HIV awareness in schools.

London Lighthouse and Terrence Higgins Trust (THT) charities merged.

UK medical professionals raised concern over increasing levels of HIV drug resistance in HIV+ individuals. It was found that 1 in 4 new diagnoses had HIV strains which were already partly resistant to one or more drugs.

UK highest annual HIV diagnoses 3,500.

2001



The first prosecution for “reckless transmission of HIV” was brought in Scotland. This started a shift in society where those affected by HIV were considered to be responsible for disclosure of HIV infection and responsible for the safe sex of both partners.

At a United Nations UNAIDS Special Session, world leaders set long-term targets on HIV/AIDS, including the aim to have 3 million people in low and middle income countries on HAART by the year 2005.

2002



The Global Fund was established to boost the response to AIDS, TB and malaria.

HIV was reported as the leading cause of death in 15-59 year olds.

Botswana began Africa's first national AIDS treatment programme.

UK health professionals expressed concern that HIV cases had not fallen significantly, having reached 2,942 in the previous 12 months, and 2,345 the year before. In the period 1996 to 2000 the number of HIV diagnoses doubled despite testing and improved availability of treatment.

Sexual health was made a government priority after having been in decline.

2003



AIDS drugs started to become more affordable for developing countries.

The first HIV vaccine candidate to undergo a major trial was found to be ineffective.

England repealed 'Section 28' and started teaching safer sex and HIV awareness in schools.

The first prosecution for "reckless transmission of HIV" was brought in England.

The UK National AIDS Trust promoted its "Are You Prejudiced?" campaign to challenge the growing stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV.

The Department of Health announced that HIV transmission among intravenous (IV) drug users had almost completely ceased due to needle exchange programmes throughout the UK and Europe.

The Department of Health estimated that the UK had 49,500 cases of HIV, of which 31% were undiagnosed.

5 million globally were newly infected by HIV.

2004



America fully launched a major five year strategic initiative called PEPFAR (Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) to combat AIDS worldwide.

After much hesitancy, South Africa began to provide free antiretroviral treatment.

Fast 'One Hour' HIV testing was launched in London.

The UK Government removed the right to free HIV treatment for all (whether in the UK legally or not) resulting in the withdrawal of free non-emergency NHS treatment for asylum seekers & illegal immigrants. The Government justified this as preventing 'health tourism' but it was fought by many health professionals and Amnesty International.

2005



English MP and Cabinet Member, Chris Smith, made his HIV status public.

A Department of Health report showed that despite making sexual health a priority, UK sexual health was its worst ever with 70% more sexual infections in 2005 than in 1997.

The UK Disability Discrimination Act (later replaced by the Equality Act) gave legal protection from discrimination for all disabled people; for the first time including legal protection to those with an HIV positive diagnosis.

2006



28% of people in developing countries who needed treatment for HIV were receiving it.

Annual global spending on AIDS in low and middle-income countries was \$8.9 billion. It was estimated that \$14.9 billion would be needed for a truly effective response.

A Department of Health report showed that despite claiming that HIV infections among IV drug users had been eliminated in 2003, new diagnoses were now the highest since 1992. The report showed that 1 in 62 IV drug users had become infected with HIV. The report blamed this increase on the previous closure of many needle exchange schemes.

The Department of Health estimated that the UK had 73,000 cases of HIV, 33% of whom were unaware of their status.

2007



Around 33 million people were living with HIV, according to revised estimates.

Another major HIV vaccine trial was halted after preliminary results showed no benefit.

The UK Coalition of People Living with HIV closed due to problems fundraising, partly citing the “declining fear of HIV in society.”

2008



During a global financial crisis, HIV care and treatment funding decreased throughout the UK. HIV was now considered a 'manageable chronic condition'. Statutory funding reduced, and many centres of care, social support and community groups were threatened with closure.

Body Positive London closed its doors.

The London Lighthouse building was closed as a THT centre, reflecting reduced funding of services for people supporting them to live with HIV.

America renewed its PEPFAR plan for a further five years.

2009



President Obama announced the removal of the travel ban that prevented people with HIV from entering the US.

4 million people in developing and transitional countries were receiving treatment for HIV; 9.5 million were still in immediate need of treatment.

World Health Organization stated that HIV was a leading global health challenge.

2010



The United States, South Korea, China and Namibia lifted their travel bans for people living with HIV.

The CAPRISA 004 microbicide trial was hailed a success after results showed the gel reduced the risk of HIV infection by 40%.

Results from the iPrEx trial showed a reduction in HIV acquisition among men who have sex with men taking PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis).

UNAIDS estimated that in 2010, some 700,000 AIDS-related deaths were averted by actions such as improved access to medical treatment.

World Health Organization estimated 5.2 million people were receiving HIV treatment.

2011



According to UNAIDS estimates, there are now 33.3 million people living with HIV, including 2.5 million children. During 2009 some 2.6 million people became newly infected with the virus and an estimated 1.8 million people died from AIDS.

The vast majority of people with HIV and AIDS live in lower and middle-income countries, but HIV today continues to be a threat to men, women and children on all continents around the world.

Just ahead of this year's World AIDS Day the United Nations announced that global rates of HIV infection and AIDS-related death have both fallen dramatically. According to the widely reported figures from the United Nations UNAIDS division, both have fallen by 21% since their peaks at the turn of the millennium. Measures such as improved medical treatment were estimated to have prevented 700,000 AIDS-related deaths in 2010 alone.

The report investigated the rates of new HIV infections, people living with HIV worldwide and AIDS-related deaths, to see how far we are currently from the UNAIDS ambitious vision: zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

The report also outlined strategies of what still needs to be done to prevent new infections and to support the 34 million currently living with HIV. These include greater investment in drug availabilities and treatment; greater development assistance for the poorest and worst affected countries; and continued investment in researching and developing a preventative vaccine.

However, as numbers continue to rise in the UK, it is estimated that by 2012 there will be 100,000 people living with HIV in this country. Brighton & Hove remains one of the areas with the highest HIV prevalence.

Times are more hopeful for some, but the struggle continues for many...