

HOT TOPICS – DECEMBER 2023

WORLD AIDS DAY

World AIDS Day is marked on 1st December!



What are HIV and AIDS?

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is an infection that attacks the body's immune system. Acquired ImmunoDeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is the

most advanced stage of the disease [Source: [HIV and AIDS \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int)]

Let's take a look at some key facts regarding HIV, which are provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO):

- HIV remains a major global public health issue, having claimed 40.4 million [32.9–51.3 million] lives so far with ongoing transmission in all countries globally; with some countries reporting increasing trends in new infections when previously on the decline.
- There were an estimated 39.0 million [33.1–45.7 million] people living with HIV at the end of 2022, two thirds of whom (25.6 million) are in the WHO African Region.
- In 2022, 630 000 [480 000–880 000] people died from HIV-related causes and 1.3 million [1.0–1.7 million] people acquired HIV.
- There is no cure for HIV infection. However, with access to effective HIV prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care, including for opportunistic infections, HIV infection has become a manageable chronic health condition, enabling people living with HIV to lead long and healthy lives.
- WHO, the Global Fund and UNAIDS all have global HIV strategies that are aligned with the [SDG](#) [Sustainable Development Goal] target 3.3 of ending the HIV epidemic by 2030.
- By 2025, 95% of all people living with HIV (PLHIV) should have a diagnosis, 95% of those should be taking lifesaving antiretroviral treatment (ART) and 95% of PLHIV on treatment should achieve a suppressed viral load for the benefit of the person's health and for reducing onward HIV transmission. In 2022, these percentages were 86(%) [73->98%], 89(%) [75->98%] and 93(%) [79->98%], respectively.
- When considering all people living with HIV, 86% [73->98%] knew their status, 76% [65–89%] were receiving antiretroviral therapy and 71% [60–83%] had suppressed viral loads. [Source: [HIV and AIDS \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int)]

Below is an overview of HIV and AIDS:

- HIV targets the body's white blood cells, weakening the immune system. This makes it easier to get sick with diseases like tuberculosis, infections and some cancers.
- HIV is spread from the body fluids of an infected person, including blood, breast milk, semen and vaginal fluids. It is not spread by kisses, hugs or sharing food. It can also spread from a mother to her baby.
- HIV can be treated and prevented with antiretroviral therapy (ART). Untreated HIV can progress to AIDS, often after many years.

To learn more about the signs & symptoms, transmission, risk factors, diagnosis and prevention of HIV and AIDS, you can access the WHO fact sheet [here](#).

How common is HIV in the UK?



The most recent UK-wide estimate is that 106,890 people are living with HIV in the UK in 2019. The more recent estimate for England (not the whole UK) is that there were 95,900 people living with HIV in England in 2021. Of these, around 4,400 are undiagnosed and do not know they are HIV positive. 2,692 people were diagnosed with

HIV in England in 2021, 218 in Scotland and 60 in Wales. [Source: [HIV statistics](#) | [Terrence Higgins Trust \(tht.org.uk\)](https://www.tht.org.uk)]

In November 2020, the Police Federation published an article on their web page titled '[Busting the myths around HIV](#)', which addressed some of the stigmas associated with HIV and provided some reassurance to colleagues. Ahead of the discussion with your PDC, consider some of the stereotype opinions and beliefs that may discriminate against those who have AIDS. Be mindful of the [protected characteristics](#) of the Equality Act 2010 and British Values [Democracy, Rule of Law, Respect & Tolerance, Individual Liberty].



If you've been affected or are concerned by anything in this Hot Topic, you may discuss this with your PDC, HEI staff or your line manager in the first instance. Further support is available through the Terrence Higgins Trust on 0808 802 1221 or email at info@tht.org.uk. You may also access [NHS111 online](#) or [Samaritans](#) on 116 123 (visit their web site for other ways to get in touch)