

The magazine for Terrence Higgins Trust's valued supporters

# trustliving

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HIGGINS  
TRUST



**Inside...**

Chelsea Flower Show, HIV Manifesto,  
and your impact.

October 2024

## Our Chelsea Flower Show 'Bridge to 2030 Garden' takes visitors on journey of HIV

“Our beautiful garden is the complete antithesis of where we were in the 1980s when HIV was a scary, fearful and dark proposition.”

**Matthew Childs, garden designer of Bridge to 2030.**



In May, hundreds of supporters came out to see Terrence Higgins Trust's Bridge to 2030 Garden at the prestigious RHS Chelsea Flower Show. The garden, designed by Matthew Childs, took visitors on a journey from the fear and hopelessness of the 1980s to today where you can live a long, healthy life with HIV.

The centrepiece of the garden was its monolith slate stepping stone, which created a bridge with the rise and fall of water, representing a bridge to the 2030 vision of no new HIV cases. The stepping stone reclaimed the tombstone, which featured prominently in a 1980s public advert that declared 'AIDS' to be "a deadly disease" for which "there is no known cure".

We were pleased to open the garden on 20 May with a touching performance by Joyful Noise, a community choir for



Our patron Beverly Knight and Joyful Noise

people living with HIV. Gardening enthusiasts and sexual health leaders were joined by co-founder Rupert Whitaker, patron Beverly Knight and drag queen Vicki Vivacious. The BBC also featured our Bridge to 2030 Garden prominently in their coverage of the event.

The garden was made possible thanks to funding from Project Giving Back, the unique grant-making charity that funds gardens for good causes at RHS Chelsea.

## A Day in the Life of...

### Barbara National Advice Supervisor



“I've been working for Terrence Higgins Trust since 1999, so for a long time! My working day starts at 9am, when I log on to check our referral system. People contact us about all kinds of things, they can have questions about housing, immigration, community care and so much more. You never know what type of enquiries you are going to get, which makes the job really interesting. Our service covers the whole of the UK, so we speak to all different types of people.”

I recently helped an international student, who had been studying in the UK for a few years when he fell ill and was diagnosed with HIV. His student visa was expiring, and he was looking for advice. I armed him with the information he needed to get his visa extended and found him affordable legal advice.

A key case that stands out to me was a lady living with HIV who had recently had a stroke and couldn't work. She was worried about being able to feed her children. She had been rejected for benefits, so I helped her lodge an appeal. I went to court with her and provided the judge with the additional

case information they requested. She won her case and was provided with the support that she needed. She was so relieved.

I love helping people. I wish I could help them even more. I like being able to inform them of their rights, who they should speak to, giving them the information they need to improve their lives. I do the best I can in the time that I have to try and help them as much as possible.

There are challenges in my job too. It can be difficult to deal with people who are having mental health issues, and I've also had abuse from people contacting us. Some of them have apologised and explained that they are going through a very stressful time in their lives, which I understand.

My day finishes around 5pm. Sometimes it is difficult to switch off, especially if I have had an emotional case to deal with that day. I rely on my faith to help me get through tough times. I know that I need to help myself to be able to help others.”



## Tom's Thames Bridges Trek

On Saturday 25 September, Tom Fernandez took part in the Thames Bridges Trek, walking 25km from Putney Bridge to the City while crossing sixteen of London's historic bridges.

“I'm a long term supporter of Terrence Higgins Trust and have seen the impact of their work at The Royal Free, where I work as a nurse practitioner. I like a challenge, especially for a good cause, and I'm not afraid to ask anyone and everyone to contribute.”

So far, Tom has raised nearly £10,000 for our work.

Find out about how you can raise funds for Terrence Higgins Trust at [tth.org.uk](http://tth.org.uk)

## Get involved!



Fancy a new challenge while raising money for Terrence Higgins Trust? Sign up for one of our [challenge events](#) today!

We'll be there to support you from the moment you register until you cross that finish line.

Use the QR code for more information and to register today.



SCAN ME

### RED RUN

- Help us mark World AIDS Day 2024 by taking on a 5K or 10K in London's Victoria Park.
- Saturday 23 November 2024.
- Raise as much as you can.

### London Landmarks Half Marathon

- Take in the city's most famous landmarks on this iconic route through London.
- Sunday 6 April 2025.
- Minimum sponsorship £350.

### Brighton and Hove 10k

- Race from coast to city while raising money for Terrence Higgins Trust.
- Sunday 6 April 2025.
- Raise £250.

## Your Impact

Thanks to our supporters, we have been able to:

Answer **12,951** calls to our confidential free helpline **THT Direct**

THT DIRECT > 0808 802 1221



Talk to over **21,100** people about HIV through **278** Positive Voices sessions in a record-breaking year for our **Positive Voices** speakers programme

Support **1,799** members of our online support group, **My Community Forum**

**My Community**



Provide **238** people with **2,488** hours of counselling

Provide **263** people living with HIV with financial support through our **Hardship Fund**



## Phil's story



“ I was diagnosed with HIV eight years ago. Although I knew about HIV, at the time I didn't care enough about myself to protect myself. At that time, HIV medication was readily available and HIV was no longer a death sentence. I think because of this, I was less vigilant and took risks, having unprotected sex with multiple people. When I tested positive, I wasn't surprised. I began treatment and was undetectable within a month.

When 'It's A Sin' was released, I felt very grateful to be alive and to have had a very different experience compared to the stories depicted in the series. I felt that I wanted to do more, to help others, and to give back. I contacted Terrence Higgins Trust who offered me a place in the London Marathon 2021.

Doing the marathon soon after 'It's A Sin' helped to deflect the real reason why I was supporting an HIV charity. At this stage, I was still relatively secretive about my status, only telling my parents, close friends and partners.

This all changed when I gained an online stalker. The man, who would later be imprisoned for five and a half years, harassed and terrorised me for months. In the final straw before he was imprisoned, my stalker found out that I was living with HIV and posted this in several videos, 'outing' me publicly.

When The Guardian newspaper interviewed me in relation to my stalking, I was asked whether I wanted to leave my HIV status out of the article. This left me feeling uncomfortable that I would be adding to the shame and stigma by not being honest. I decided to be open about living with HIV. I felt proud of myself, but I also felt very vulnerable and exposed.

This is when I reached out to Terrence Higgins Trust and was invited to join their Positive Voices programme. It has given me the strength and confidence to own my status and to talk openly about it. I think it honestly saved my life. I am no longer scared of people knowing, and have finally begun to fully accept and own that I am living with HIV.

Terrence Higgins Trust have helped me with so much; encouraging me on my fitness journey through their running events, helping me financially through the Hardship Fund, and their training to become a Positive Voices speaker. At times I have felt suicidal and defeated but Terrence Higgins Trust reminded me how much I have to live for and how much I have to offer. I now also feel part of something, part of a movement, with a joint aim to end transmissions of HIV in the UK by 2030 and to continue “



## Our 2024 Election Manifesto

In the run up to the UK election in July, Terrence Higgins Trust and 19 other HIV and sexual health organisations published The HIV and Sexual Health Manifesto. The manifesto called for the new government to make HIV and sexual health a priority, and outlined how we can reach zero cases of HIV in the UK by 2030. We asked MPs and Ministers to ensure:

- Testing in more A&Es, GPs and all year round by post
- Making PrEP available online
- Support for people living with HIV
- Justice for the infected blood community
- A new HIV Action Plan
- A Sexual Health Strategy.

## Public Health Minister Andrew Gwynne meets with Terrence Higgins Trust

Following the election of the UK's new government, we were pleased to be the first external organisation to meet new Public Health Minister Andrew Gwynne. Our Chief Executive Richard Angell presented the Minister with a framed print of Curtis Holder's portrait of Terry Higgins, which now hangs in his office. The Minister reiterated his commitment to a new HIV Action Plan and we discussed the importance of other aspects of the manifesto, such as expanding opt-out HIV testing in A&Es and improving access to care for people living with HIV.



## MP's drop-in event is a success

Thanks to your support, we were able to host a drop-in event in Parliament for new and returning MPs. We spoke to 45 MPs from across England, Wales and Scotland about the historic opportunity they have to help end new HIV cases across the UK.



# LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY

Help us be here until  
the last person living  
with HIV needs us.

By leaving a gift  
in your will, you can  
have a lasting impact  
on the lives of people  
living with HIV.

For more  
information email  
**[legacies@tht.org.uk](mailto:legacies@tht.org.uk)**



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