

World Aids Day 2024: Making a world where HIV is history

[Blog](#), [Health](#), [HIV](#)

Although it seems a long way off, HIV activists believe that consigning HIV and AIDS to history is an achievable goal. This World AIDS Day, we explore how that goal might become a reality.

World AIDS Day is an opportunity to reflect on the progress made in the fight against HIV, honour those we've lost, and recommit to creating a world where HIV is no longer a source of stigma, discrimination, or inequality.

As Paul Wickson, a queer activist from the UK, shares in his powerful statement:

"I lived through the HIV and AIDS crisis of the 80s and 90s. I lost friends to the disease, like so many millions of others... I want to see a world where HIV is history."

HIV activism, like Paul's, has brought us closer to that vision, but much work remains. Today, with advances like [Undetectable = Untransmittable \(U=U\)](#) and [PrEP](#), people living with HIV can lead healthy, fulfilling lives. Yet, stigma and barriers to accessing testing and treatment persist, disproportionately affecting LGBTI communities, particularly men who have sex with men and trans people.

The importance of knowing your status

The 2023 FRA LGBTIQ III Survey introduced critical data on HIV testing, shedding light on disparities across sexual orientation, gender identity, and countries. Testing is a key step in ensuring early diagnosis and accessing treatment, yet the numbers reveal stark inequities:

- 47% of cis gay men had an HIV test in the past year, with peaks of 57% in Belgium.
- Among trans women, 43% reported testing, with rates as high as 57% in Cyprus.
- However, only 25% of gay trans men had tested in the last year, dropping to a concerning 2% in Hungary.

These figures show the urgent need for inclusive public health strategies and targeted funding programmes that dismantle barriers and encourage people across all LGBTI groups to access prevention, testing and treatment.

Breaking stigma, saving lives

Stigma and misinformation remain among the most significant challenges in addressing HIV. They discourage testing, silence conversations, and perpetuate discrimination. Yet, as Paul reminds us, activism rooted in personal experiences has the power to transform the narrative:

"I became a queer activist in large part because of my HIV status... I want to see a world ideally where HIV is history. We aren't there yet, but I have confidence... that is an achievable goal."

This World AIDS Day, let's commit to empowering our communities with information, normalising discussions

about HIV, and advocating for accessible, inclusive healthcare. Testing is not just a personal choice—it's a collective step toward dismantling stigma and saving lives.

Take action

- Be informed: [Know your status](#) and encourage others to do the same.
- Be vocal: [Challenge stigma and misinformation around HIV](#).
- Be engaged: Support LGBTI organisations advocating for HIV prevention and care.

Together, we can build a future where HIV is no longer a source of inequality but a chapter in history.