

# [News story: AIDSfree appeal: Government joins campaign to fight HIV and AIDS](#)

It wasn't all that long ago that an HIV diagnosis would be spoken about in hushed tones.

But we've been on quite the journey since the "Don't Die of Ignorance" public health campaign, which for those who don't remember was tinged with an ominous tone, while warning of the risk of AIDS.

The campaign might have raised awareness, but it was symptomatic of an age when understanding was limited, treatments scarce and outlooks bleak. We now live in more hopeful times, where, thanks to medical and cultural advances, an HIV diagnosis is no longer a death sentence but a manageable long term condition.

This was illustrated poignantly last week with the release of figures showing that the UK has now become one of just a handful of countries to meet the [United Nations' HIV/AIDS 90-90-90 targets](#). That means more than 90 per cent of people with HIV have been diagnosed, 90 per cent of those with a diagnosis are treated and 90 per cent of those treated have their symptoms successfully managed.

This achievement is testament to the hard work of our amazing health and care professionals. We are very proud of our parliamentary colleague, [Lloyd Russell-Moyle, the Labour MP for Brighton Kemptown](#), who last week shared his diagnosis with the world. That he felt he could is progress; that it took huge courage to do so it shows that progress is not enough.

The Global Fund / Sam Wolson

Globally, though, the battle is far from over, especially in poorer countries where stigma, lack of awareness and a scarcity of lifesaving medicines persists. AIDS is still the biggest killer of women of reproductive age around the world, and every week about 7,000 young women are infected with HIV.

That is why, through [UK Aid Match](#), the government is joining forces with the [Elton John AIDS Foundation](#) and [The Independent](#) to double every pound the public generously donates to their [AIDSfree appeal](#).

The Global Fund / John Rae

[UK Aid Match](#) means that every time the British public reach into their pockets and donate to a UK Aid Match charity, their generosity goes twice as far. In this case, it will directly change – and indeed save – the lives of people living with HIV in Nairobi and Maputo.

In London and the UK, we have demonstrated what is possible if the right services and support are in place. We passionately believe we can create an AIDS-free future for the world. Three decades on from the first major public awareness campaigns, that's the scale of ambition we should have.

But it means making sure the anti-stigma message is heard just as loud in other major cities, and backed with the resources and expertise to give people the treatment they need to stay well.

This campaign, backed by the generosity of the public, will help us to make this a reality.

Money raised from public donations through the [AIDSfree appeal](#) will be used to support the [Elton John AIDS Foundation](#) projects in six key cities around the world (London, Nairobi, Atlanta, Kiev, Delhi and Maputo). Through [UK Aid Match](#), the UK government will double public donations up to £2m to be spent across projects in Maputo and Nairobi.