

The Ribbons



Birmingham

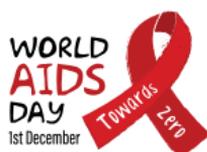
Remembrance – Celebration – Education

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A Celebration of Grassroots Success in the Second City

Welcome to a celebration of the Birmingham AIDs & HIV memorial

This event marks the culmination of two years of grassroots work and fundraising.

On December 1st, we will unveil a six-metre-tall, five-tonne steel art installation in the heart of Birmingham city centre. It will act as a memorial to all those lost to HIV/AIDS, a reminder of how far we've come – and offer a focal point for all the work there is still to do.

The memorial will be known as "The Ribbons" and is, as far as we know, the largest and most significant monument related to HIV/AIDS anywhere in the UK. This work has been entirely community-led and offers a vision of what we can achieve together moving forwards.

We look forward to telling you more.



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Artist, Activist & Founder of
the Birmingham AIDS and HIV
Memorial
Saving Lives Ambassador
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Remembrance – Celebration - Education

The Birmingham AIDS & HIV Memorial is of huge symbolic significance to the communities affected by the virus. The importance of remembering those lost, and emphasising the advances of today's medicine, cannot be underestimated.

It will also take an active role today. There are five key messages the Ribbons can help us communicate to all:

- HIV testing saves lives: we must increase uptake of testing and reach those populations that can be difficult to engage.
- We must achieve the UNAIDS 95–95–95 targets: 95% of those living with HIV diagnosed, 95% of those diagnosed on effective treatment, 95% on treatment with undetectable levels of virus in their blood – all by 2030.
- We need to shout from the roof tops that Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U): this means that a person living with HIV on effective treatment cannot pass the virus on to their sexual partners.
- With today's medicine, people living with HIV can enjoy a normal life expectancy if they are on effective treatment.
- We must educate the general population to eliminate stigma and its negative impact on health outcomes.

All this will take strategic co-working across regions, communities and groups. The Ribbons offers a centre of gravity for our efforts. It is an example of what can be achieved – and why it matters.

The Future: Testing, Testing, Testing

Saving Lives was established in 2011 with a simple aim: to educate, raise awareness and reduce stigma in order to increase testing.

Today in 2022, we are still not finding cases of HIV as quickly – and as early – as we should. Late diagnosis is associated with significantly poorer health outcomes, higher mortality and greater financial and economic costs.

Undiagnosed HIV is located disproportionately among marginalised communities and ethnic minorities, where the effects of stigma can be at their strongest. Stigma dissuades people from testing; to fight the virus we must also fight prejudice.

Saving Lives exists to inspire all of us to communicate better about HIV – and to take testing into the community where it can make the biggest difference. We must focus not just on HIV but on all blood borne viruses – especially Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C – in order to maximise the health benefits of broader testing strategies.

"Testing saves lives." This is just as true for Hepatitis C and B as it is for HIV – and that's why we continue to champion testing for all viruses, not just one.

With Birmingham and others now joining the international Fast Track Cities network, the Birmingham AIDS & HIV Memorial arrives at a critical time for the city – and the country as a whole. Let's come together – from the grassroots up and from government down – to fight stigma and engage every community where HIV is spreading. Together, we can reach zero new HIV infections by 2030.

