

# The Food Chain

## 2019-2022 Strategy

### Meeting Complex Needs

#### **Who we are**

The Food Chain exists to meet the food and nutrition support needs of people living with HIV in London, at times of crisis.

We provide tailored services for people who need help because of poor physical or mental health, poverty, isolation or lack of nutrition knowledge and cookery skills.

#### **Our services**

- one-to-one dietetic assessment and advice
- essential groceries delivered to people's homes
- cookery and nutrition classes
- hot nutritious lunches served in our safe and welcoming kitchen in central London
- home delivered frozen meals for people who are too unwell to cook for themselves.

The Food Chain has been supporting people living with HIV in London for more than 30 years. Our small staff team of 8 supports a community of 200 active volunteers who are involved in all aspects of our work. We support around 350 families each year.

[www.foodchain.org.uk](http://www.foodchain.org.uk)

## The need in 2019

The people referred to The Food Chain for support are the most vulnerable and marginalised people living with HIV in London. They are facing a wide range of complex health and social care needs – notably housing issues, enduring poverty, depression or other mental health issues as well as managing their HIV.

In 2018 we supported 350 people living with HIV. Of these, 60% had a high viral load and 19% had a CD4 count below 200. This is a stark contrast to the overall population of HIV+ people who have an undetectable viral load and a high CD4 count. We supported 25 people who were not taking anti-retroviral medication. The average weekly household income was £69 pw

In November 2018 Public Health England published the results of the Positive Voices survey of over 4,400 positive people living in England and Wales

# Positive voices findings

- Half of people living with HIV report mental health problems
- 1 in 3 people live in poverty
- 1 in 5 need help dealing with isolation and loneliness
- 3 out of 4 have at least one other diagnosed long-term health condition
- 46% have social and welfare needs in addition to health needs
- 9% reported a specific need for meal and food services

Our services enable people to take steps towards better health and a longer life.

*“The Food Chain has given me energy, and a healthier outlook on life. I’d rate the service a million out of ten”*

*Paul, 2018*

# Our strategic aims for 2019-2022

Our services are tailored to individual needs and circumstances. They are personal, flexible and responsive. In this time period we will

## Maintain our core nutrition support services

- 🚫 HIV specialist dietetic assessment and advice
- 🚫 Essential grocery deliveries
- 🚫 Eating Together communal lunches
- 🚫 Eating Positively cookery and nutrition classes

## Develop ways of alleviating the hardship experienced by our service users

- 🚫 Signposting to other providers
- 🚫 Creating partnerships that bring other providers in to The Food Chain
- 🚫 Accessing hardship related grants, funds and items

## Raise awareness of the complex and multiple needs of people who are not living well with HIV

- 🚫 Sharing our experience and demonstrating the impact of our support services at every opportunity.

- 🚫 **Relocate to a new premises** at the end of the lease period for Acorn House

- 🚫 **Build the long-term financial sustainability of The Food Chain** by diversifying our income and providing cost effective services.

