the food chain

annual review
2025/2026

The Food Chain exists to ensure people living with HIV in London can access the nutrition they need to get well, stay well and lead healthy, independent lives

why we're needed

HIV disproportionately affects those facing pre-existing socioeconomic disadvantages and higher rates of systemic poverty

People living with HIV face a higher risk of developing other health problems

Medication efficacy can be compromised by poor or insufficient nutritional intake

Structural discrimination and societal exclusion create health inequalities

Food insecurity is symptomatic of broader socioeconomic disparities

what we do

Send deliveries of nutritious groceries direct to people's homes free of charge

Provide expert dietetic advice on a range of health conditions to support building a healthy immune system

Ensure people have enough food - and the right food - to enable them to take their medication effectively

Tailor our interventions to the practical, cultural and health needs of each individual, without means testing

Work with any person who needs our services regardless of background, identity or status

"In challenging times The Food Chain, and its dedicated staff, continues to provide a vital service for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. I am prouder than ever to be involved with such a profoundly important charity."

Patron of The Food Chain

Jay Rayner

Journalist, writer and broadcaster



our values

We believe that everyone has the right to access our support and to feel safe in our spaces regardless of their social or immigration status

Our spaces are safe and welcoming for those marginalised by society, including but not limited to those from migrant, trans/non-binary and refugee communities

We will not tolerate behaviour or language that in any way compromises the safety of our spaces or the people who are accessing them

We support agency and will work against patronising, condescending language or behaviour

We are not allied with any sect, religious denomination, political party or government institution

We believe in tackling HIV stigma with a person-centred approach

We believe it is our duty to actively listen to and champion voices in our community who are marginalised by society

We will act with empathy, compassion, integrity and transparency



1988

Our first meal was delivered on Christmas Day. Volunteers got together to cook and deliver food to those who were housebound and very ill with HIV/AIDS



1991

The Food Chain officially registers as a charity. The same year, we open our third kitchen in London. Every new kitchen attracts its own new set of local volunteers



1999

To complement the now weekly meal delivery service, we start sending grocery deliveries to people’s homes, enabling more comprehensive and ongoing food support



2011

We hire our first HIV Specialist Community Dietitian, acquiring our unique dietetic focus, to give individual advice and tailor food deliveries to medical needs. We also serve our first Eating Together lunch, bringing isolated individuals together over a hot meal twice every week



2021

We standardise our provision of formula milk for new babies, ensuring comprehensive infant nutrition is available to all birthing parents living with HIV who choose to formula feed. By the end of the year, the service is delivered nationwide through our partnership with Chiva



2026

After years of funding pressures, we manage to prevent closure. Our survival is supported by friends in the sector, particularly the Terrence Higgins Trust. Becoming their subsidiary secures the future of our vital services and champions joint working to effectively serve our community

referral

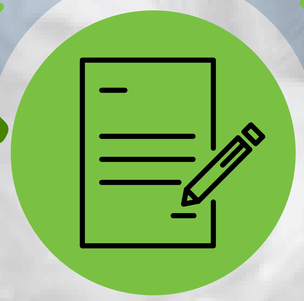
Any health or social care professional who identifies a person living with HIV is in crisis - of any kind - can refer to us. Two thirds of our referrals come directly from the NHS. Referrals can be made once every year if the need is ongoing

service provision

Service Users are offered one or more of our charitable services:
Grocery Deliveries
Eating Together
Formula Milk

evaluation

We gather qualitative and quantitative feedback on our services to measure our impact, assess our value and look for improvements











assessment

Assessment and advice from a HIV Specialist Dietitian. A personalised nutrition plan is developed together, supported by culturally tailored resources and factsheets

onward referral

We refer onward to specialist services to support with broader socioeconomic issues such as welfare benefits, housing, legal advice, drug & alcohol services and family support

service user journey



eating together

Our volunteer-cooked twice-weekly communal lunch service brings isolated people together in a safe, welcoming, stigma-free space that creates community and builds knowledge and capacity

grocery deliveries



Up to 5 monthly baskets of home-delivered groceries tailored to taste, cultural preference, storage/cooking facilities and household need. Food is chosen that meets health needs, manages symptoms and ensures maximum efficacy of medications

formula milk



Provided for mothers/birthing parents living with HIV who choose to formula feed their baby until they are 12 months old. Accompanied by expert advice on feeding practicalities, milk intolerances and weaning

dietetic assessment



Our HCPC Registered HIV Specialist Dietitians provide one-to-one Dietetic Assessments, implementing therapeutic dietary interventions to enable and facilitate healthy life choices. They provide an essential link between nutrition and good health outcomes in HIV, along with a range of conditions and co-morbidities from malnutrition and cancer through to obesity and diabetes

our services

Volunteers

121 individual volunteers donated 5,034 hours

Staff

Nine staff (3 full time) deliver our services

Service Users

428 individuals were referred to our services, 68% from the NHS

Board of Trustees

Six trustees guide our strategy and maintain our focus

our team

Medical Advisory Board

Six experts in the clinical field of HIV consult and advise on our dietetic practice

Patrons

Eight patrons act as ambassadors for our work

Dietetic Assessments

264

Formula milk deliveries

497

Grocery deliveries

663

Hot lunches served

1,634

our work

HIV health

21% living with HIV 25+ years
61% living with HIV 6-24 years
18% living with HIV 5 years or less

54% with a CD4 of 500 or less
18.5% with a detectable viral load

our community

5% aged 30 and under
42% aged 31-50
44% aged 51-65
9% aged 65+
+ 133 babies

life stage

12% refugee/asylum seeker
9% no recourse to public funds

<u>weekly income</u>
mean: £145
median: £100
lowest UK poverty line ~£296 per week

economic indicators

key populations

demographics identified in the 2025 HIV Action Plan

32% Black African heterosexual women
16% White GBMSM
16% Ethnic minority GBMSM
10% Ethnic minority heterosexual adults
9% Black African heterosexual men
4% Trans history

*%s are of the 244 individuals for whom we hold this data

After Groceries...

96% said they felt better





52% said it helped them take or adhere to their medication



90% met the health outcomes they set at assessment



90% scored the grocery service 5/5

our impact

After Eating Together...



97% felt they understood how they can better manage their own health

92% felt less lonely





97% felt more confident in asking for what they need from support and health services

97% learned something new about living with HIV





84% taught someone else something about living with HIV

our partners

funders

Fast Track Cities London
National Lottery
Hobson Charitable Trust
George Michael Fund, managed by The Talent Fund
Clothworkers Foundation
Evan Cornish Foundation

charities

Positive East
Terrence Higgins Trust
African Advocacy Foundation
Chiva
Living Well CIC
City Harvest
Felix Project

community

The Garden Cinema
Konditor & Cook
Duke of Wellington
Kings Arms
Admiral Duncan
Comptons of Soho
The Actor's Church Covent Garden

corporate

ViiV Healthcare & GSK
Gilead Sciences
Ocado
Paramount Pictures
Bain & Co
Credit Agricole
Citibank

institutions

London Metropolitan University
University College London
King's College London
British Dietetic Association
British HIV Association
British Association for Sexual Health & HIV

our finances

income
£420,136

individual donations, events & legacies 40%

charitable trusts & grants 35%

partnership work 22%

corporate & catering 3%

expenditure
£447,347

out of every £1 of income
91p was spent on
charitable activities

FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

our voices

"The support from Food Chain helped me so much. Before receiving this support I was only eating one meal a day and I felt like taking my own life. I am so grateful for the support and can't thank you all enough."

"I really valued the referrals to other services which I was able to get."

"Each time I come here, it feels like I won the lottery!"

"Having enough food to eat stopped the side effects I was experiencing from my medication."

"I felt like celebrating – I have never had that much food in the house!"

"Receiving the groceries from the Food Chain made me feel valued."

"Thank you for rescuing me and my family."

"You've been easy to speak to, you've helped me think, I've been able to make changes."

"We felt like brothers and sisters at Eating Together."

"It's not just food, you have given me life."

"The grocery service made me feel less anxious about having enough food to eat. I was able to enjoy proper meals and have food security and choice for a while."

"The support from the Food Chain has helped me through a difficult time financially. I have been able to feed myself and my son."

"Your advice and food deliveries have changed the way I think about my diet."

"Coming to Eating Together was a game changer for me. It was the first time I could be around people with a shared identity and not suffer discrimination as I have done in the past. I made friends from coming along and have socialised with them outside of the session."

"Now when I'm shopping I bear in mind the advice the Dietitian gave me when choosing foods. I check the packages to try and select the healthier option."

"I have started to buy more fresh food. Anything that is about to go out of date, I chop up and freeze. I've stopped eating processed foods, started eating breakfast and have actually lost a bit of weight."

"I meet wonderful people who are people that I can be friends with and have a bond with. Everyone at the session was so genuine – staff and volunteers were so down to earth – everyone is so great."

"It has given me my confidence back and it feels as though someone is listening to you."



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join the food chain
help us to feed the fight against HIV

www.foodchain.org.uk

Registered charity number 1003014

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