London HIV Food Charity at Risk of Closure

Friday 5 July, 2019

Press Release - Embargo until 12 noon 5th July 2019

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London food charity at risk of closure

For more than 30 years The Food Chain has helped people living with HIV in London at times of crisis in their lives. Our work makes a life-saving difference to families across London every year.

The Food Chain depends entirely on charitable income. The funding available for HIV support services is shrinking and the charity is now facing a financial crisis. Services may be cut and the charity may close by the end of the year.

On Friday 5th July The Food Chain launches a fundraising campaign calling on all friends, allies, supporters and members of the public to 'Save The Food Chain' Click here to see the Go fund Me Page.

We need to raise £40,000 immediately and £100,000 within 9 months

Today there are still people living with HIV in London who struggle to live healthy lives, despite modern medication. They are in physical or mental health crisis, on low or no income and have no food.

Journalist, writer and broadcaster Jay Rayner is a proud Patron of The Food Chain. At the launch of the fundraising campaign he called on everyone to help in any way they can.

'The Food Chain isn't merely an important charity. For many people it has literally been a life saver. After 30 years on the frontline of HIV care and support it simply can not be allowed to go under. Too many people depend upon it.'

CEO of The Food Chain, Siobhán Lanigan says

"*At a time when London has signed up as a Fast Track City with a stated aim to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of those living with HIV in London, the closure of The Food Chain would be a devastating blow for the people in most need. There is nowhere else they can go to get emergency food and nutrition support. We are calling on everyone who cares about the plight of people who are hungry and in need to help us save The Food Chain"*

In the words of the people supported by the charity

"The Food Chain is a life saver, when you really need it, they are there. It's not just food. You come here and you get kindness, support. Everything."

"*The hospital referred me here. I was scared that I was going to die. They kept telling me that I was going to be okay and supported me. When I finished service, I became a volunteer. The Food Chain is the place to come. It makes me so happy. "*

For more information about this press release, please contact **Siobhán Lanigan on 0207 843 1800 or siobhan.lanigan@foodchain.org.uk**

Notes to Editors

The Food Chain is a registered charity that has been providing food and nutrition support for people living with HIV in London since Christmas Day 1988.

Services are specialist dietetic advice, emergency grocery deliveries, nutritious lunches twice a week and nutrition and cookery classes to help people build up skills and confidence to cook at home. 200 volunteers give their time and skills for free to provide support services for 500 people each year, supported by a small paid staff team.

The Food Chain is the only charity in the UK that provides HIV specialist dietetic support and food

services.

http://www.foodchain.org.uk/

The Fast Track Cities initiative is an international collaboration of which London is a part. Focused on translating global goals, objectives, and targets into local implementation plans, the FTCI is meant to build upon, strengthen, and leverage existing HIV-specific and -related programs and resources

http://www.fast-trackcities.org/cities/london

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

https://changingperceptions.co.uk/our-stories

Key findings are

- 3 out of 4 people living with HIV have at least one other diagnosed long-term health condition
- 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
- 46% of those surveyed had social and welfare needs in addition to healthcare needs
- 9% of those surveyed reported a specific need for meal or food services

The report notes that ***"HIV support services, often provided by charities are a lifeline to many people with HIV. They provide specialist support and advice and connect people living with HIV to share experience and build resilience"***

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