

[HIV drug PrEP to be available across England](#)

Local authorities will receive £16 million in 2020 to 2021 to deliver the preventative HIV treatment PrEP.

The funding from the Department of Health and Social Care will ensure anyone who is at a high risk of contracting HIV will receive PrEP from their local sexual health clinic to reduce their risk of getting the virus.

When taken daily, PrEP is highly effective at preventing HIV transmission from sex or injection drug use. Studies have shown that PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99% when taken daily.

PrEP is currently available in England through the 3-year [PrEP impact trial](#), which has recruited over 20,000 participants.

The new £16 million funding will also enable people on the trial to continue to use PrEP when the trial ends.

An estimated 103,800 people were living with HIV in the UK in 2018, with 7,500 of those unaware of their infection.

Figures show that HIV transmissions in gay and bisexual men have fallen by 71.4% since 2014.

In January 2019 the government committed to [reaching zero HIV transmissions by 2030](#). This depends on continuing prevention efforts such as making PrEP available to everyone who needs it.

HIV testing in a wide range of settings, increased condom use and the availability of antiretroviral therapy (ART) have all contributed to the drop in transmissions.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I remember when HIV was a death sentence – and still today, it has a devastating impact on so many lives across the country.

While it is encouraging to see HIV transmissions continue to fall across the UK, I am determined to do more, and end HIV transmission.

So we are rolling out PrEP and making it available across the country – with evidence showing it almost completely eradicates the chances of getting HIV. This will benefit tens of thousands of people's lives, and drive us towards our ambition of zero HIV transmissions in this decade.

Health Minister Jo Churchill said:

Getting tested for HIV has never been easier, and with powerful preventative measures such as PrEP available we are well on our way to achieving eliminating transmissions in England for good.

HIV transmissions are down, but it is very important that we continue to protect those still at risk of contracting HIV.

Rolling out PrEP will help prevent further transmissions. This is a crucial part of our work to tackle the condition and the stigma around it by making vital treatment more accessible and making national awareness better.

Professor Noel Gill, Head of STIs and HIV at Public Health England, said:

The combination of condom use, expanded HIV testing, prompt treatment and PrEP is working in the UK, leading to steep declines in HIV transmission, especially in gay men.

The goal of eliminating HIV transmission by 2030 depends on making PrEP readily available to all at higher risk of acquiring HIV.

When taken consistently, PrEP is highly effective at protecting against HIV.

Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board, said:

PrEP is a game-changer in preventing new HIV infections and a vital weapon in our prevention armoury. We are pleased the Government has heard councils' call and provided this much-needed funding, ahead of the roll-out of this potentially life-saving drug.

Over recent years, we have seen an encouraging decline in the number of people diagnosed with HIV. This fall was achieved thanks to the hard work and commitment of local government sexual health commissioners, providers and the activists.

The full roll-out of PrEP can help us achieve our shared ambition of eliminating HIV in this country by the end of the decade.

Ian Green, Chief Executive at Terrence Higgins Trust, said:

This is a historic day in the context of the HIV epidemic. It's a real moment to stop and celebrate a hard-fought victory for PrEP access in England. Today comes at the end of years of fighting,

campaigning and lobbying to ensure proper access to this game-changer for HIV prevention. We know PrEP is highly effective at stopping HIV and now it can be properly utilised to make good on the Government's commitment to ending HIV transmissions by 2030.

There is still also a lot of work to do to ensure PrEP isn't just seen as something for gay and bisexual men and that its clear benefits reach other groups affected by HIV, including women, trans people and BAME communities. As the country's leading HIV and sexual health charity, we're fully committed to playing our role to ensure no-one is left behind when it comes to PrEP – because we're not making real progress if it's not felt by everyone.

Deborah Gold, Chief Executive of National AIDS Trust, said:

We're delighted PrEP will finally be freely available to everyone who needs it in England. This is a milestone moment in a five-year battle National AIDS Trust, and others, has undertaken – including our 2016 court action against NHS England for failing to consider PrEP and HIV prevention as part of its obligations.

Routine commissioning of PrEP brings us one step closer to our goal of ending new HIV transmissions by 2030 but many more lie ahead. We look forward to working with partners across healthcare and in the community to ensure underserved groups such as women and trans people are able to access this pioneering medication. Only when we reach every single person who needs PrEP can we harness its full potential.

NHS England will cover the costs of the drug and local authorities will be supported with £16 million funding to deliver services. PrEP is highly effective in preventing transmission of HIV.

As well as the provision of PrEP, HIV testing in a wide range of settings, increased condom use and the early starting of antiretroviral therapy in those living with HIV have all contributed to the drop in transmissions.

By the end of October 2020 access to PrEP through the PrEP Impact Trial is set to conclude and so the rollout will make the service available by routine commissioning for the people who need it most.