

Press release: £600,000 funding of 12 projects by PHE to help prevent HIV

Public Health England (PHE) has announced the projects which have been awarded funding from the HIV Prevention Innovation Fund for 2017 to 2018. The projects have been chosen from across England to receive total funding of £600,000 from the Department of Health through PHE.

PHE received over 70 submissions from different organisations for funding for local HIV prevention initiatives. Projects that provided innovation were welcome, especially those that:

- acknowledge and address the wider determinants of high risk behaviour
- promote the prompt diagnosis of both HIV and other STIs, especially among men who have sex with men (MSM)
- address stigma associated with HIV
- integrate HIV prevention into health promotion and service delivery in other health areas
- support increased knowledge, awareness and understanding including of pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV, especially in currently underserved populations

HIV remains a public health concern despite major advances in treatment and reductions in diagnosis. In 2015, an estimated 101,000 people in the UK had HIV with 13,500 unaware and at risk of unknowingly passing on the virus to others. The risk of infection is higher in certain groups of the population; such as gay and bisexual men and Black African communities. However, targeted and innovative local initiatives that reach out to these and other groups can help reduce the risk of people contracting or passing on HIV.

Two examples of local initiatives receiving funding from PHE are the Sex Talk project run by National Prison Radio which will create information designed for prisoners to address issues of stigma around HIV and the Sholay Love project run by [NAZ](#) which aims to raise awareness of HIV and STIs and encourage testing amongst south Asian gay men in London, Bradford and Leeds.

Commenting on the innovation fund and the winning projects, Public Health Minister Steve Brine said:

Now in its third year, the HIV Prevention Fund continues to foster local innovation projects which aim to tackle HIV in more targeted and impactful ways, especially for those most at risk. The 12 projects announced today will boost local action and spread best practice to further reduce rates of HIV across the whole country.

Professor John Newton, Director of Health Improvement, PHE said:

The HIV Innovation Fund continues to foster new approaches to HIV prevention. The 12 projects receiving funding have been chosen as they offer new and exciting ways to address key issues in HIV prevention, working particularly with groups at high risk. These projects will help share innovation and best practice around the country, helping other areas to replicate progress in London on lowering rates of HIV.

More information

The 12 HIV Innovation Fund projects are:

- Digital anti-stigma campaign (developing digital content, videos and social marketing targeting higher risk communities) – Martin Fisher Foundation, Brighton and Hove
- I Am Because We Are (Challenging HIV issues and stigma within Black African communities) – BHA For Equality, Greater Manchester
- Improving uptake and safe use of PrEP in underserved populations (creating online assessment tools for PrEP and facilitating safe usage) – Terence Higgins Trust, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire
- MAP Tyne and Wear (capturing local knowledge about male sex workers to inform and shape other sexual health services) – Gateshead, Sunderland and North Tyneside
- “MIND” The Gap (developing a HIV and sexual health training programme for mental health service staff) – Herts Aid, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire
- PrEP (raising awareness of PrEP amongst MSM, BME and trans communities) – Spectra, South West London
- Prepping for PrEP (improving awareness of PrEP amongst at risk African communities by engaging key community members) – Positive East, East London and Hertfordshire
- PROMOTE (creating digital outreach and support services for male sex workers and their clients) – Bristol Drugs Project, Bristol
- Reducing Barriers to Testing (facilitating self-testing within Black African communities – Terence Higgins Trust, Wolverhampton
- Sex Talk on National Prison Radio (creating information for prisoners to address issues of stigma around HIV) – Prison Radio Association, England, Wales and Scotland
- Sholay Love (raising awareness of HIV and STIs and encouraging testing amongst south Asian gay men) – NAZ, London, Bradford, Leeds
- The Morning After Project (providing education and harm reduction in chemsex via a dedicated project worker) – Summit House Support, Dudley

Background

PHE Innovation Fund:

The National HIV Prevention Innovation Fund is funded by the allocation from the Department of Health to PHE for HIV prevention and sexual health

promotion. This is the third year of the innovation fund in which PHE have awarded funding to a total of 32 projects (7 in 2015 to 2016, 13 in 2016 to 2017 and 12 in 2017 to 2018). Projects submitting HIV prevention proposals to the HIV Innovation Fund must have local authority endorsement in order to be eligible for the fund. The innovation fund is advertised at the [HIV Prevention England website](#) where application details are available.

HIV in the UK, 2016 PHE report:

The [HIV in the UK 2016 report](#), estimated 101,200 people were living with HIV in the UK in 2015. Of those, 13,500 or 13% were unaware of their infection and at risk of passing on the virus to others. The majority, 69% were men and 31% were women. The HIV prevalence in the UK is estimated to be 1.6 per 1,000 population, or 0.16%. HIV incidence among gay, bisexual and other MSM remains high. HIV incidence (the number of new infections) among gay, bisexual and other MSM, hereafter referred to as gay or bisexual men, remains consistently high; in England an estimated 2,800 gay or bisexual men acquired HIV in 2015 with the vast majority acquiring the virus within the UK. Overall in 2015, 47,000 gay or bisexual men were estimated to be living with HIV, of whom 5,800 or 12% remained undiagnosed. (Updated estimates of the number of people living with HIV will be published by PHE on 15 November 2017).

HIV: Surveillance, data and management:

The HIV in the UK Health Protection Report and [annual HIV data tables](#) comprise the number of HIV diagnoses, late HIV diagnoses and numbers accessing HIV care. Data can be interrogated and analysed at Local Authority level via an [online tool](#) allowing a range of outputs to be generated. The [December 2016 edition of Health Matters](#), PHE's resource for local authorities and health professionals focuses on increasing HIV testing.

HIV testing:

It is easy to get tested for HIV. Testing is freely available through GP surgeries, local hospitals and sexual health clinics as well as on self-sampling and self-testing (see [NHS Choices](#) for further information). As well as getting tested, using a condom with new or casual partners protects against HIV and other STIs.

Public Health England (PHE)

[Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-leading science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health, and are a distinct organisation with operational autonomy to advise and support government, local authorities and the NHS in a professionally independent manner. Follow us on Twitter: [@PHE_uk](#) and Facebook: [www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland](#).