

[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.

[Places of Worship scheme provides](#)

record levels of funding

Forty nine places of worship in England and Wales will benefit from £1.6 million of Home Office funding for security to protect against hate crime attacks – with British mosques being the biggest beneficiaries.

Also announced today (Sunday 15 March), the one-year anniversary of the Christchurch terror attack, is the launch of a new consultation for faith groups to feedback on what more can be done to protect faith groups from attacks.

Minister for Countering Extremism Baroness Williams said:

No one should be fearful about practicing their faith. Whether it is a church, a mosque, gurdwara or temple, any place of worship should be a space of reflection and safety.

The Places of Worship scheme provides that physical security. However, we can always do more, which is why we want to hear from worshipers about how we can better protect them from these terrible attacks.

The Places of Worship Protective Security Funding scheme provides funding for measures such as CCTV, fencing, gates, alarms and lighting, to places of worship and associated faith community centres that are vulnerable to hate crime.

Twenty-seven mosques, thirteen churches, five gurdwaras and four Hindu temples have received funding this year, the largest amount of funding in a single year since the scheme was set up in 2016.

Next year's scheme will double again, with £3.2 million earmarked for 2020/21.

In a new simplified system for applicants, a central contractor will install better physical security, such as locks, lighting and CCTV. All applications were assessed, and funding was provided to those who were most vulnerable to hate crime attacks.

In 2018/19 police in England and Wales recorded 103,379 hate crime offences, an increase of 10% on the previous year. This is largely due to improvements in the police recording and more victims feeling able to come forward and report these crimes.

The consultation being launched by the Home Office this month will ask faith groups what else should be done to help them feel safe and confident while practicing their religion. The consultation, which will last for eight weeks, will enable all faith groups to share their experiences of hate crime, and provide valuable insight for the Government in keeping pace with the evolving

threat.

The consultation recognises that different religious groups have different needs, and that some members of congregations, such as women or the elderly may feel more vulnerable than other groups. The results of the consultation will then be analysed and considered as part of future steps on how the government can protect religious groups.

The Jewish Community receive a separate fund – the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant – which is administered by CST.

FCO statement on Spain travel advice

FCO spokesperson:

“Due to Spain declaring a State of Emergency on 14 March, which imposes significant restrictions on movement throughout the country in response to the coronavirus outbreak, we are now advising against all but essential travel to Spain.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

- We advise against all but essential travel to the whole of mainland Spain, the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands. British nationals with upcoming journeys planned should check with their airlines and tour operators.
 - We advise those in Spain to stay in contact with their airlines and tour operators and to follow the instructions of local authorities.
 - Airports remain open, and flights continue to operate albeit at reduced levels. British nationals should contact their airlines for the most up-to-date information.
 - Public services and transport are operating at reduced levels.
 - Public gatherings are banned, most shops, many businesses and all schools and universities are closed, and residents have been instructed to remain at home as much as possible.
 - There are limited, specific exceptions to the requirement to remain at home, in particular in order to buy food or other essential items, to return home to the primary residence, to go to work if unable to work from home and to carry out caring or similar duties.
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Next stage of expanded coronavirus (COVID-19) public information campaign launches

People are being urged to stay at home for seven days if they develop a high temperature or new continuous cough as part of an expanded public awareness campaign in the fight against COVID-19, Health Secretary Matt Hancock has announced today (Sunday 15 March).

For the first time, members of the public will see advice in TV adverts featuring Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty and voiced by actor Mark Strong as part of the government's drive to ensure everyone knows the best way to limit and delay the spread of the COVID-19.

Building on the current campaign, which reinforces the importance of washing your hands more often, the next phase reflects the [government's shift into the 'delay' phase of its action plan](#) to limit the spread of the virus. A key part of this is asking people to self-isolate for seven days if they develop a high temperature or a new continuous cough – however mild.

As well as on TV, people will see and hear the campaign advice in newspapers and magazines, on drive-time radio, online and through social media and on billboards and large digital displays, including at bus stops.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Coronavirus is the biggest public health crisis we have faced in a generation. It continues to spread both in the UK and around the world and we need to accept that sadly, many more of us will become infected.

The government and the NHS are working 24/7 to fight this virus. We must all work together and play our own part in protecting ourselves and each other, as well as our NHS, from this disease. This expanded campaign will focus on ensuring the public knows exactly what they should be doing to keep themselves and others safe.

Washing hands regularly for 20 seconds or more remains the single most important thing an individual can do, but we now also need to ask anyone with a high temperature or new continuous cough – however mild – to isolate yourself and stay at home for seven days. You should continue to follow our online clinical advice and not go to A&E or your GP if you develop mild symptoms.

Combating this virus will require a national effort – we all have a role to play to slow its spread and protect the elderly and the vulnerable.

Dr Yvonne Doyle, Public Health England's Medical Director said:

We know that novel coronavirus affects the most vulnerable the most and so it is absolutely vital that we do everything we can to protect them. This new guidance sets out what we can all do to help save the lives of those most at risk.

This week, the UK's Chief Medical Officers raised the risk to the public from moderate to high. The campaign offers clear, practical advice so the public can play their part in preventing and slowing the spread of the virus.

As per the current advice, the most important thing individuals can do to protect themselves remains washing their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Make sure you cough or sneeze into a tissue, put it in a bin and wash your hands.

The next phase of the awareness campaign also reiterates the importance of seeking help online by visiting [NHS.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) to check your symptoms and follow the medical advice, rather than visiting your GP. It also urges people with any symptoms to avoid contact with older and more vulnerable people. Where possible, we are urging people to visit the [111 website](#) rather than calling, too, to ensure the phone service is readily available to those who need it.

Last week, the Prime Minister published a 'battle plan' for tackling the disease in the UK, which sets out plans for a range of scenarios. This week, the Prime Minister confirmed [the UK has moved into the second stage of this plan](#), the 'delay' phase.

NHS, Public Health England and Local Authority Public Health teams up and down the country are working tirelessly to support everyone in need of advice, testing or treatment.

Since January, public health teams and world leading scientists have been working round the clock on the COVID-19 response, and government has been working with partners across the country to provide tailored advice to the public, travellers coming into the country and those most at risk from COVID-19.

[PM call with President Trump: 14 March 2020](#)

The Prime Minister spoke to President Trump this evening.

They discussed the coronavirus pandemic and the action being taken to stop

the spread of the virus. The Prime Minister set out the science-led approach the UK is taking.

Ahead of a call with G7 leaders on the outbreak the Prime Minister and the President agreed on the importance of international coordination to accelerate progress on the development of a vaccine and to prevent economic disruption for our citizens.

The leaders also paid tribute to the Coalition soldiers who lost their lives in the deplorable attack on the Taji military base last week, including British servicewoman Lance Corporal Brodie Gillon, and committed to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in Iraq to help the country resist the malign activity of terrorists.