



The Association of Directors of Public Health Response to NHS England's decision on commissioning and provision of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention

Public Health implications of NHS England's actions on HIV treatment as prevention.

NHS England announced on 21 March 2016¹ that it will not be funding Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) drugs for those at greatest risk of contracting HIV. It gave as its rationale a reading of the Public Health Regulations (2013) which says local authorities are responsible for HIV prevention. The Local Government Association (LGA), London Councils and the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) dispute this reading by NHS England of their responsibilities and powers.

Stakeholders, including ADPH, National Aids Trust (NAT), LGA, London Councils, British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH), British HIV Association (BHIVA), the Terence Higgins Trust amongst others, made strong representations to NHS England highlighting the concern that NHS England in making this decision is restricting access to a proven and cost-effective intervention to prevent HIV infection.

NHS England's Specialised Services Commissioning Committee was tasked to reconsider NHS England's decision on 31st May 2016², but have accepted the position that NHS England does not have the legal powers to commission PrEP.

The onus of the provision of PrEP, NHS England suggests, therefore falls to local authorities who are already facing a range of difficult questions on service provision having undergone significant reduction in both local authority and public health funding.

The Association of Directors of Public Health strongly supports a national programme for PrEP as part of an evidence based strategy to reduce HIV transmission. We have consistently highlighted [our views on PrEP](#) and we maintain our position that NHS England, as the responsible commissioner for antiretroviral drugs, should be implementing this on a national basis.

Commissioning guidance has always been clear that the responsibility for anti-retroviral drugs, which includes PrEP, rests with NHS England and transferring this responsibility to local authorities presents Directors of Public Health with a new and unfunded burden.

The Committee's decision is therefore immensely disappointing. It demonstrates a missed opportunity to implement a "radical upgrade in prevention" that NHS England has previously called for by failing to implement a consistent and comprehensive prevention effort that could benefit an estimated 8,000 people in England.

ENDS

Association of Directors of Public Health

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Further information

The Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) is a Company Limited by guarantee with charity status registered in England and Wales and is the representative body for Directors of Public Health (DsPH) in the UK. The Association

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2016/03/prep/>

² <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2016/05/prep-provision/>



is hosted by the UK Health Forum.

It seeks to improve and protect the health of the population through collating and presenting the views of DsPH; advising on public health policy and legislation at a local, regional, national and international level; facilitating a support network for DsPH; and providing opportunities for DsPH to develop professional practice.

The Association has a rich heritage, its origins dating back more than 150 years. It is a collaborative organisation working in partnership with others to maximise the voice for public health.

www.adph.org.uk