

8 March 2019

Dear Colleagues and Stakeholders

London Councils is writing in response to last week's open letter concerning the expansion of the PrEP IMPACT Trial in London.

We are disappointed that national partners have not taken up our offer, or agreed a way forward to ensure the funding for PrEP is sustainable.

London boroughs are proud of their work to tackle HIV. The borough-funded London HIV Prevention Programme has been central to achieving historic improvements in the rate of new diagnosis. Figures released in September 2018 confirmed HIV rates are declining, with a substantial decrease over the past two years.

- 1,675 people were diagnosed with HIV in London in 2017 compared to 2,090 in 2016. This represents a fall of 21 per cent in 2016-17 in London, compared to the UK-wide decrease of 17 per cent.
- The number of new diagnoses in 2015 was 2729, meaning London has seen a decrease of 38% between 2015 and 2017.

London's work on testing and prevention has been key to this success. PrEP has been a core element of our combination prevention strategy.

As a signatory to the UN-backed Fast Track Cities Initiative, London has already met the 90:90:90 targets, and has surpassed 95:95:95 for all three measures.

But London boroughs are not complacent.

We are committed to the PrEP trial. Well over half of the trial places released so far have been through London clinics. We are committed to making the further expansion of the trial a success, but the responsible thing to do is to ensure it is delivered in a way which is sustainable, ensures continuity and does not destabilise other critical sexual health services. London commissioners are working with clinicians and the PrEP trial team to achieve this. We have already committed to taking on additional trial places as part of the expansion, as well as agreeing to take more places through the new online service operating across the capital.

Boroughs remain committed and hopeful of finding a way forward. We want to continue taking a leading role in tackling HIV and urge national partners to take up the opportunity of working together to deliver the successful expansion of PrEP in the capital.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Puddifoot".

Cllr. Ray Puddifoot
London Councils' Executive Member for Health & Care and Leader of the London Borough of Hillingdon