



Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
 Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
 39 Victoria Street
 London SW1H 0EU

8th July 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing as HIV charities, community groups, health professionals and activists to share our profound concern at the decision to roll back on your commitment on HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and cut this years budget for PrEP by £5 million.

Last week it was announced that the budget provided to local authorities for the implementation of PrEP would be reduced from £16 million to £11 million.

PrEP is a highly effective HIV prevention method that is key if we are to tackle HIV in England. Clinical studies and the current PrEP Impact Trial have proved beyond doubt its effectiveness. You yourself have reinforced this, stating “evidence showing it almost completely eradicates the chances of getting HIV”.

Finally, in March you committed to implementing routinely commissioned PrEP. Yet this significant cut to the budget will now impact on the delivery of equitable access to PrEP, affecting the ability to further reach, include and ensure equitable access for all communities. This funding cut comes at a time when sexual health services – who are essential for PrEP provision - are already overburdened and underfunded and facing a surge in demand as we come out of lockdown. While the roll out was

delayed by a quarter due to COVID-19 pressures, £5 million not only constitutes a disproportionate cut of almost a third, it incorrectly assumes demand for PrEP will fall in proportion.

In January 2019 we applauded you when you committed England to ending new HIV transmissions by 2030. And in March of this year we supported you when you said that “While it is encouraging to see HIV transmissions continue to fall across the U.K., I am determined to do more, and end HIV transmission. [PrEP roll out] will benefit tens of thousands of people’s lives, and drive us towards our ambition of zero HIV transmissions in this decade”.

Yet, three months on, the budget for PrEP has been cut, jeopardising the ability to fully roll-out PrEP and hampering efforts to fulfil your own commitment to ending HIV by 2030.

Downgrading investment in perhaps the most powerful tool we have to realise this ambition makes little sense. We request an urgent meeting with you to discuss PrEP and your decision to cut funding for this important HIV prevention intervention.

Yours sincerely

Ian Green, Chief Executive, Terrence Higgins Trust

Will Nutland & Marc-Thompson, Co-Directors, PrEPster / The Love Tank

Deborah Gold, Chief Executive, National AIDS Trust

Deryck Brown, Chair, One Voice Network

Dr John McSorley, President, British Association for Sexual Health and HIV

Matthew Hodson, Executive Director, NAM aidsmap

Mark Santos, Director, Positive East

Sophie Strachan, Director, Sophia Forum

Denis Onyango, Programmes Director, Africa Advocacy Foundation

Alex Sparrowhawk, Chair, UK-CAB

Dr Catherine Dodds, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy, University of Bristol

Rami Ghali, Chief Executive Officer, Brigstowe

Patriic Gayle, Trustee, Gay Men's Health Collective

Dr Asha Kasliwal, President, Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH)

Simon Collins, HIV I-Base

Tessa Willow, Chief Executive, Sahir House

Parminder Sekhon, Interim CEO, Naz Project London

Lizzie Jordan, CEO & Founder, Think2Speak

Priscilla Nkwenti, Chief Executive, BHA for Equality

Karen Skipper, CEO, Spectra

Tom Doyle, Chief Executive, Yorkshire MESMAC Group of Services

Colin Armstead & Neal Sharpe, Joint Interim Executive Directors, George House Trust

Alastair Hudson, East Midlands Sexual Health

Ben Collins & Nia Dunbar, ReShape/International HIV Partnerships (IHP)

Chris Woolls, Director, River House Trust

Andrew Evans, Deputy CEO, METRO Charity

Siobhán Lanigan, Chief Executive, The Food Chain