



# LEEDS BECKETT STUDENTS' UNION

making students' lives better

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## MAKE PrEP AVAILABLE ON THE NHS FOR FREE

### Union Notes

1. There are now around 110,000 people living with HIV in the UK.
2. That both men who sleep with men and black African communities are disproportionately affected by HIV.
3. That two European studies of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), PROUD1 and IPERGAY2, reported their results in February 2015. Both studies showed that PrEP was a highly effective method of HIV prevention, reducing new infections by 86%.
4. That cost-effectiveness studies show that PrEP will be affordable if it is provided to people with a significant risk of acquiring HIV. People living with HIV need to take costly lifelong treatment. PrEP consists of fewer drugs and people only need to take it during periods when they are at risk of HIV.
5. That on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016, NHS England announced that it would not commission PrEP and that local authorities are responsible for commissioning HIV prevention services. This followed 18 months of hard work that demonstrated the need, efficacy and cost-effectiveness of PrEP from a NHS working group comprising experts from across the HIV sector.
6. That many health charities have described NHS England's decision as "shameful" and "failing those at risk".
7. That NHS England has committed to working with local authorities, Public Health England, the Department of Health and other stakeholders and will make available up to £2m over the next two years to run a number of early test sites to answer any remaining questions around how PrEP could be commissioned in the most cost effective and integrated way.
8. That these test sites will only provide protection to an additional 500 men at high risk of HIV infection.
9. That on 19<sup>th</sup> April the NHS agreed to meet in May to consider putting PrEP back into the NHS decision-making process following the threat of legal action from the National AIDS Trust.

### Union Believes

1. That rates of new HIV infections (6,151 in 2014) are too high and the NHS urgently needs to make PrEP available on the NHS.
2. That making local authorities responsible for commissioning HIV results in inconsistent and unequal services across the country.
3. That local authorities are already facing unprecedented levels of cuts without having to consider commissioning new treatments.
4. That condom use has prevented tens of thousands of HIV infections, but levels of condom use are not high enough to bring HIV under control. PrEP could prevent new infections among some of those at greatest risk of acquiring HIV.

5. That condom use will remain a core strategy in HIV prevention. PrEP gives people who already find it difficult to consistently use condoms an additional way to protect their health.
6. PrEP can also be effective for heterosexual people. For example, a study in east Africa found that PrEP reduced infections within couples in which one partner is HIV positive by 75%.
7. PrEP allows someone to protect their own health, even if their partner refuses to use a condom. As it is taken before sex, it does not rely on decision-making at the time of sex.
8. That as well as preventing HIV infection, PrEP has additional benefits including reducing stress and anxiety about HIV transmission. It can enhance pleasure and intimacy, and limit sexual dysfunction.

#### **Union Resolves**

1. To actively campaign for earlier access to PrEP including lobbying NHS England to speed up its evaluation process and make PrEP available as soon as possible and to agree interim arrangements now to provide PrEP to those at the highest risk of acquiring HIV.
2. To lobby our local authority by May 2016 to make an expression of interest for one of the early implementer test sites to be located in Leeds.
3. To actively campaign for PrEP to be available to all people, free of charge, who are at high risk of acquiring HIV, whatever their gender or sexuality.
4. To actively campaign for PrEP to be made available to trans people.