

PrEP Health Promotion Campaign guidance

With Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) now routinely available via local authority-commissioned sexual health services, many organisations – including Local Authorities, Sexual Health Services, and community-based organisations – will be looking to promote awareness of PrEP, amongst other HIV prevention methods, as part of public health campaigns.

On the basis of advice from the MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) regarding prescription-only medications, as well as learning from recent health promotion campaigns in the sector, this notice intends to provide some general advice and guidance in the production of future HIV prevention campaigns including PrEP.

PrEP as a treatment method

The MHRA Blue Guide (2019) has advised that health promotion campaigns of POMs (prescription only medicines) should be *'be aimed at promoting effective prevention of disease rather than aiming to promote the specific medicinal products that may be used to make that happen.'*

Organisations may wish to use language or imagery that describes the medicinal form, dosing regimen and disease preventing attributes of the medication, such as:

- *'PrEP is a pill which can prevent HIV'**
- *'PrEP is a form of medicine which prevents HIV'*
- *'Some people take PrEP every day'*
- *An image of a pill, bottle of medication or medication blister pack**
- *'PrEP is a preventative treatment for those who are HIV negative'*
- *'PrEP protects against HIV'*
- *'PrEP can prevent HIV'*

*This wording and imagery could be used in an awareness-raising public health campaign but would not be recommended as part of an advertisement or when promoting a particular medication/brand.

Generating awareness vs generating demand

The MHRA Blue Guide (2019) states *'disease awareness campaigns are concerned with providing information, promoting awareness or educating the public about health, diseases and their management....'* Crucially, campaigns *'should not be of such a nature that an individual would be encouraged to approach a prescriber to request a particular medicinal option.'*

As such, the MHRA advises that the purpose of the campaign should be to encourage an individual to find out more information.

For example, it would be better for copy to state:

- *'to find out more about PrEP, contact your sexual health service'*
- *'more for information on PrEP, follow this link'*
- *'the following clinics offer PrEP in your area: A, B, C, X, Y, Z'*

Rather than:

- *'contact X clinic to get PrEP'*
- *'contact your local sexual health service to get your PrEP prescription'*
- *'get PrEP now'*

It should be clear that any individuals would require a medical consultation and that this may or may not lead to the provision of a prescription.

Information and resources

- Media companies will have policies on advertising (Instagram, Facebook etc.) which will detail their particular requirements.
- The Advertising Standards Agency operates a Bespoke Copy Advice service for advertisers, agencies, media owners and media service providers who want to review their prospective non-broadcast ads against the CAP Code. More information can be found at www.ASA.org.uk
- Guidance on the legislative framework governing advertising control is available in the MHRA Blue Guide, *Advertising and Promotion of Medicines in the UK*, available from the MHRA website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blue-guide-advertising-andpromoting-medicines>.