



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Maggie Throup MP  
Minister for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care  
Department of Health and Social Care  
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries Unit  
39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

Our Ref: SO36289

26 July 2022

Dear Maggie,

**Re: Monkeypox prevention and treatment**

Following the designation of Monkeypox as a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organisation, it is imperative that the UK has a well coordinated strategy for prevention and treatment. I am therefore writing to urge for action to extend the vaccine roll-out beyond central London, and to ensure that accurate information and guidance on Monkeypox is readily available from trusted sources.

The last two years have emphasised to us all just how vital vaccines are in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. I was therefore pleased to hear the announcement by UKHSA last week that they had procured additional vaccine doses, and that there will be 18 clinics across London administering the vaccine.

However, only 5 clinics have been named publicly in the media and on the NHS website and there is a lack of further information available. Additionally, last weekend pop-up clinics were overwhelmed by demand, which left some people waiting over 4 hours for a jab outside Guy's Hospital, and some were denied the vaccine altogether due to limited capacity. Others reportedly travelled hundreds of miles across the country to London due to a lack of vaccine availability in their home towns.

This is not good enough. Images of queues outside such clinics will only deter, rather than encourage, at-risk eligible males who would benefit from the vaccine. The Government has stated that work to identify, book in and vaccinate patients is underway at every clinic. Yet this is not being felt in reality, and I have heard from constituents that the vaccine is still extremely limited, if not impossible, to obtain. There urgently needs to be more done to ensure that eligible recipients from the at-risk population - all men who have sex with men (MSM) – are being contacted, and that vaccine clinics are able to cope with demand. I also urge the Department to publish a clear list of clinics that will be administering the vaccine, and to extend this provision outside of central London.

In addition to the vaccine roll-out, I also have wider concerns around the effectiveness of the Government's public information campaign to date, and around the treatment available to those who contract the disease. Constituents have told me that guidance on symptoms, prevention strategies and treatment is severely lacking, and that it has been largely left to activists and key figures within the MSM community to urge others to take precautions and to raise awareness of the disease.

I therefore urge the Government to ensure local sexual health services have the support they need to handle the Monkeypox outbreak, and to ensure the guidance on spotting the symptoms of Monkeypox and on the precautionary measures individuals can take is clear and widely communicated.

It is also important to remember that around 98% of confirmed Monkeypox cases are found in the already marginalised group of gay, bisexual and queer men. Therefore, the Government must also be sure to tackle the stigma around Monkeypox, which can drastically hinder prevention and cause mental health problems for those who contract the disease.

Contact tracing, accurate information from trusted sources, vaccines, treatment and support are key to stopping the spread of the Monkeypox outbreak, and we cannot afford to fall short on any of these aspects. I urge you to act on the points I have raised in this letter, and I look forward to hearing the steps you will be taking in response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Olney".

**Sarah Olney**  
Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for Richmond Park