



This case study is intended as an example of impactful and innovative scientific work from across UKHSA and its academic partners. It demonstrates improvement of health outcomes and reducing health inequalities, strengthening of the health protection system and supporting wider societal and economic prosperity and/or generating evidence, insight and scientific knowledge that guide action.

[Health Protection Research Units \(HPRUs\)](#), funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), are research partnerships between a university and UKHSA, tasked with delivering high-quality collaborative research. HPRUs support UKHSA in its objective to protect the health of the public.

Title: Informing the national rollout of the gonorrhoea vaccination programme in the United Kingdom

Case Study Author(s): NIHR HPRU: Blood Borne and Sexually Transmitted Infections at University College London

Date: 2026

Summary

Why did you do this work?

Gonorrhoea is a growing public health threat in the United Kingdom (UK), with rising diagnoses and increasing antimicrobial resistance. Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) are disproportionately affected, and in 2023 the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation recommended a targeted vaccination programme using the 4CMenB vaccine. However, there was limited evidence on how acceptable this intervention would be and what factors might influence uptake, particularly ahead of a national rollout.

What happened as a result?

The BEACON study generated timely qualitative evidence from GBMSM and healthcare professionals, identifying key enablers and barriers to successful implementation. The research demonstrated high acceptability of vaccination but highlighted that uptake would depend heavily on ease of access, clear communication, service capacity and equitable eligibility criteria.

Crucially, findings were rapidly translated into practice. The work was presented through written and verbal updates at the UKHSA multi-agency, four nations mpox and gonorrhoea vaccine programme board, directly informing national planning ahead of rollout in August 2025.

What impact has it made?

This research has had direct, demonstrable influence on the design and delivery of the national gonorrhoea vaccination programme. Specifically, it informed:

- vaccine supply planning, highlighting the importance of consistent availability to avoid disruption to services
- clinical guidance and workforce training, ensuring healthcare professionals are equipped to deliver the programme effectively
- professional engagement and communication strategies, including clear messaging on vaccine effectiveness, eligibility and access
- patient information materials, tailored to improve understanding and manage expectations around partial protection

By shaping programme implementation in real time, the study has supported more effective, equitable rollout of a novel sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention intervention. This contributes to improved population health outcomes through reduced transmission, supports antimicrobial resistance mitigation and strengthens the UK's capacity to deliver innovative vaccination programmes within sexual health services.

Next Steps

The next phase will focus on evaluating the real-world implementation and impact of the gonorrhoea vaccination programme. This includes assessing uptake across different populations, identifying any emerging inequities in access, and evaluating the effectiveness of communication strategies and service delivery models.

Further research will explore how the barriers identified in the BEACON study, such as service capacity, appointment availability and eligibility criteria, have influenced actual vaccine uptake following rollout. This will support iterative refinement of programme delivery, including potential expansion of community-based and outreach vaccination approaches.

In parallel, there is an opportunity to strengthen policy impact by feeding findings into updates to national clinical guidance and informing future vaccination strategies targeting STIs. Continued engagement with UKHSA and other stakeholders will ensure that evaluation findings are translated into ongoing programme improvements.

In the medium term (2–5 years), this work is expected to contribute to improved prevention of gonorrhoea, reduced burden on sexual health services and mitigation of antimicrobial resistance. It may also serve as a model for the implementation of future STI vaccines and targeted public health interventions.

Further Information

NIHR HPRU: Blood Borne and Sexually Transmitted Infections at University College London: [website](#)

National rollout of 4CMenB vaccination in sexual health services (August 2025):
[press release](#)

Government begins rollout of world-first gonorrhoea vaccine: [British Association for Sexual Health and HIV website](#)