

# MPOX The Leeds System Response

## Background

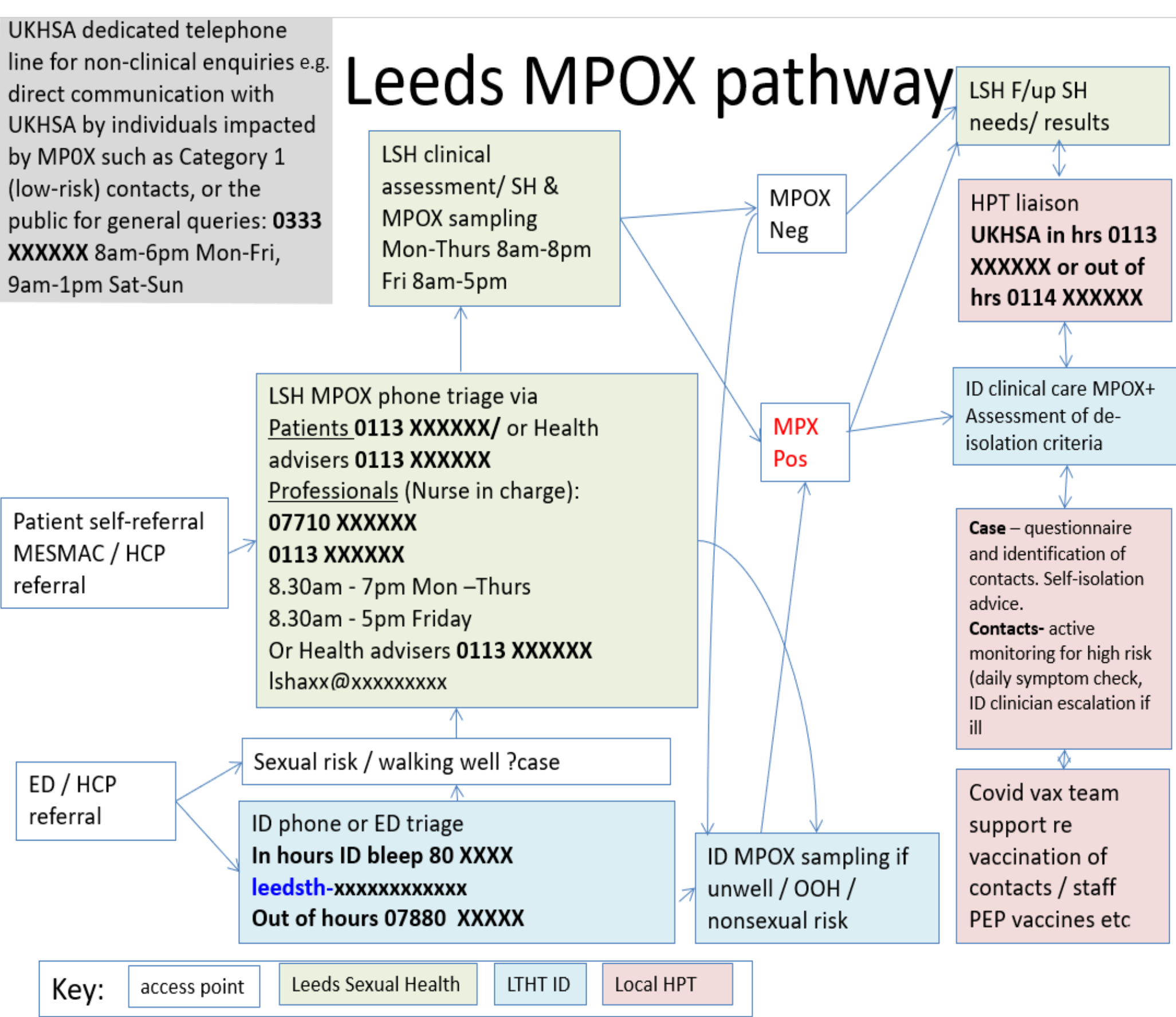
MPOX is a zoonotic infection, caused by the MPOX virus, that occurs mostly in West and Central Africa. Cases of MPOX infection were confirmed in England from the 6th May 2022. The outbreak was mainly in gay, bisexual, and men who have sex with men without documented history of travel to endemic countries.

## Challenges

- Sexual health services were already facing significant pressures in relation to capacity and demand.
- To ensure effective timely diagnosis, treatment and vaccination, a seven day a week service was required.
- Rapid training was needed for staff to vaccinate (intra dermal) and to ensure effective wearing of high consequence associated infection Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).
- Demand for vaccine outstripping vaccine stock.

## Rapidly mobilised, multi-agency response to the virus in the city

- Prior to any confirmed cases in Leeds, The Leeds Sexual Health Service (LCH) alongside the infectious diseases unit (LTHT) initiated twice weekly system readiness meetings.
- Community Infection Prevention Control (LCH) offered daily support to The Leeds Sexual Health Service with room decontamination and PPE.
- Pathways were established and remain in place. The Leeds Sexual Health Service phone triaged all suspected cases and consulted face to face if necessary.
- Guidance produced and circulated for primary care and sex on premises venues.
- The Leeds Sexual Health Service had expertise in undertaking highly sensitive contact tracing.
- Vaccine clinic established with nurses from across the system and additional funding from Leeds Public Health.
- Successful delivery of vaccine despite supply chain complexities.



## Abbreviations

LCH Leeds Community Health Trust; LTHT Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust; UKHSA United Kingdom Health Security Agency; ED Emergency Department; MESMAC Third sector organisation leading on sexual health and prevention; GBMSM Gay, bisexual, men who have sex with men; HPT Health Protection team UKHSA; ID Infectious Diseases; OOH Out of Hours; HCP Healthcare Practitioner; SH Sexual Health; PEP Post exposure Prophylaxis.

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## Strategies used to overcome barriers and challenges to sensitive communication

MESMAC and The Leeds Sexual Health Service disseminated MPOX information directly to men who have sex with men (approved by UKHSA), via outreach in sex on premises venues, organised events, face to face and groupwork activities, cruising for sex areas and social media. This complemented the work initiated by national charities who were offering webinars and facebook live sessions.

## Successes

- Existing sexual health system partnerships have been further bolstered by the new partnerships established in response to the MPOX outbreak.
- Ambition to keep discussing key sexual health issues and surveillance at a strategic level.
- Great third sector partnerships: assertive outreach to events and establishments used by GBMSM.
- Use of national campaigns and wallpaper with targeted local messaging.
- Joint clinics with The Leeds Sexual Health Service and MESMAC for high risk GBMSM.

Acknowledgements: With thanks to our colleagues and partners who supported this approach: Leeds Sexual Health Service, Leeds Community Healthcare IPC team, MESMAC and Leeds Infectious Diseases Unit.