Sexual Health
Quarterly Bulletin
Issue 56

Cumbria & Lancashire
New Update

PHE North West
Increase in diagnosis of gonorrhoea in the NW

Sahir House
World AIDS Day & HIV Testing Campaign

News
Latest News & Events

Available online here
Foreword

Welcome to the winter edition of the North West Sexual Health Quarterly Bulletin. In this issue Janet Duckworth, Public Health Practitioner talks about the relaunch of Horizon’s M2M Clinic in Blackpool, HIV Testing Week 2017 and how Renaissance at Drugline are using funding they have secured from the Big Lottery.

Dr Roberto Vivancos, Consultant Epidemiologist, PHE North West looks at the increase in diagnoses of gonorrhoea infection.

Andrea Duncan, Deputy Branch Head, Department of Health updates us on Commissioning and a new Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Trial.

Serena Cavanagh, Health Promotion Lead at Sahir House talks about their 2017 World AIDS Day events.

While Chris Hicks, Policy & Campaigns Officer from the National AIDS Trust (NAT) gives us an overview of recent events that The English HIV & Sexual Health Commissioners Group have been involved in.

Wishing you all a very Happy New Year!

Ann Lincoln.
Blackpool Community M2M Clinic

In partnership with Sexual Health Services Blackpool, Horizon has relaunched an M2M Clinic. The M2M clinic offers asymptomatic sexual health screening for men who have sex with men. Originally offered monthly on a Wednesday, the clinic was provided by the Blackpool Specialist Sexual Health team; however, attendance was low and a collaborative decision was made to skill up key workers to facilitate a community based clinic at Horizon, 102 Dickson Road. Staff in the Horizon team have now been assessed and signed off in all relevant competencies by the Specialist Sexual Health service. They will deliver the clinic on Tuesday evenings between 5.30pm and 8pm. This is a drop-in clinic however Horizon also offers the option to make an appointment if clients would prefer.

Digital adverts have been designed and are being shown on screens in busy LGB&T venues. Promotional packs have been produced and sent out to all Blackpool GP surgeries to promote the clinic as well as advertising on gay ‘hook up’ applications. Posters are also displayed in male only saunas and ‘sex on premises’ venues in the town, as well as LGB&T Night Time Economy venues.

HIV Testing Week 2017 in Blackpool

During HIV Testing Week, Horizon in partnership with Blackpool Sexual health services, offered a significant increase in community testing in Blackpool with testing taking place in local gyms, saunas, LGB&T venues and Blackpool Teaching Hospital.

Events were promoted both locally and nationally using the HIV Prevention England Website, as well as local social media sites and through an extensive organisational database.

The Horizon Sexual Health Outreach Team offered late night outreach sessions in order to maximise impact and raise awareness within the community. Specific Horizon safer-sex packs were produced to focus on the promotion of HIV Testing Week and are available in LGB&T Venues and Saunas, as well as being disseminated through PSE Outreach.

The Specialist Sexual Health service carried out almost four times the number of HIV tests than the previous year, following a push on advertising by the communications team at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Trust.

The Big Sexy Bus

Renaissance at Drugline, facilitators of sexual health services within Horizon have secured funding from the Big Lottery to refurbish a bus with the intention of offering a mobile harm reduction and testing suite to be taken out into the community.

The Big Sexy Bus will be a community service offered to residents of Blackpool and Lancashire, offering all the services provided at the base in Blackpool, out in prominent areas of the community and at key events. The bus will be used to provide STI and Blood Borne Virus testing, (this includes Hep C and HIV) to distribute safer sex packs, provide an onboard advice and information facility and a private space for one to one sessions where required. Sexual health and substance misuse services are what the charity specialises in working with people affected by sexual violence, people living with and affected by HIV and individuals and families where drug and alcohol addiction is an issue.

Although the funding has been procured for the initial refurbishment of the bus, funds are still needed to launch the project. An application has been submitted to the AVIVA Community fund and voting is now open to secure monies to staff and facilitate the bus project for 1 year.
Increase in diagnoses of gonorrhoea in the North West

by Dr Roberto Vivancos / Consultant Epidemiologist, PHE North West

Gonorrhoea infection in the North West of England

Diagnoses of gonorrhoea infection in the North West have increased in recent years. In the last five years the number of diagnoses reported annually to the GUMCAD STI Surveillance System (GUMCAD) has risen by 14% from 3,156 to 3,584 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of diagnoses of gonorrhoea in North West residents: 2012-2016

Since 2012, the growth in diagnoses of gonorrhoea has been primarily driven by increases in diagnoses in men who have sex with men (MSM); between 2012 and 2016 this increase has been around 43% (Table 1), from 1,145 to 1,635 new diagnoses per year.

Table 1: Change in diagnoses of gonorrhoea in North West residents: 2012-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnoses</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>% change 2012-2016</th>
<th>% change 2015-2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSM</td>
<td>1,635</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,584</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the increase in diagnoses of gonorrhoea infection has been mainly in MSM, despite a moderate reduction in numbers of gonorrhoea diagnoses in male and female heterosexuals in 2013 and 2015, in the last year these have also seen increases (Figure 1 and Table 2).

Table 2: Number of diagnoses of gonorrhoea in North West residents, by sexual orientation: 2012-2016.

Year | Total | MSM | Male | Female
----|-------|-----|------|------
| 2012 | 3,156 | 1,145 | 945 | 1,021 |
| 2013 | 3,025 | 1,154 | 861 | 981  |
| 2014 | 3,172 | 1,469 | 844 | 816  |
| 2015 | 3,170 | 1,475 | 843 | 812  |
| 2016 | 3,584 | 1,635 | 935 | 961  |

These increases are of concern because over the last ten years, after a period of year-on-year increase in diagnosis of gonorrhoea, we had seen some encouraging levelling and even reductions in some areas, which we reported in 2013 and 2014. The increased drug resistance in gonorrhoea infections is also of rising public health concern, though at the moment this is not a significant problem in the North West of England.
Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Trial

A pioneering implementation trial led by PHE and NHS England, to provide HIV prevention drugs (PrEP) to people at high risk of HIV infection is now underway. PrEP will be provided through an initial three year trial to an estimated 10,000 people, in what will be the largest single study of its type in the world.

This major new intervention will assess the full additional potential of PrEP, by gathering clinical evidence on optimal targeting, uptake and implementation on a large scale. As lessons are learned from the trial, this will inform follow-on routine commissioning subsequent to the three year trial.

Update on Commissioning

In August 2013 Department of Health (DH) published guidance Sexual Health Services: Key Principles for Cross Charging, to assist service commissioners and providers to develop fair payments systems. Since then the commissioning landscape has changed and become more complex as set out in Sexual Health, Reproductive Health and HIV: A Review of Commissioning published by Public Health England (PHE) in September 2017. A refresh and update of this guidance is therefore underway and will be published in the first half of 2018.

In parallel PHE are updating both the integrated sexual health service specification (published by DH in 2013) and work continues to finalise the update of the abortion service specification. DH are developing high level commissioning guidance to accompany the abortion service specification.
The English HIV and Sexual Health Commissioning Group (EHSHCG) have published their annual review for 2016-17. The review provides information about the group, the activities that they have been working on lately, and the planned areas of work for the coming year. You can access the annual review [here](#). The group continue to organise three meetings a year, which are open to any sexual health commissioner. The last meeting in September featured presentations on Relationships and Sex Education, Sexual Assault Services, an update from HIV Prevention England and PHE’s Evaluation Framework. The next meeting is on 22nd January 2018. You can register your attendance [here](#).

The group also run a forum where commissioners can discuss the latest issues and share good practice. The forum has been redeveloped this year to make it more intuitive, with topics that align more closely with current issues and trends in sexual health. If you are a commissioner of sexual health services for either a local authority, CCG or NHS England and would like to join the forum you can sign up [here](#).
World AIDS Day & HIV Testing Campaigns
by Serena Cavanagh / Health Promotion Lead

Over the past 3 decades award winning charity Sahir House have been providing care, support and practical assistance to people living with HIV, their partners, carers and dependants. They also help by improving public education in connection with the effects of HIV in the Merseyside area.

Sahir House coordinate the Merseyside World AIDS Day planning group. The group aims to raise the profile of World AIDS Day and National HIV Testing Week, by bringing together local professionals and supporters to work to provide a range of HIV related health promotion events and activities to challenge HIV stigma, reduce HIV discrimination and increase the uptake of HIV testing.

What did we achieve? A full report will be available in the New Year; however, here are some highlights.

**#HIVChampions**
We carried out a very successful twitter campaign #HIVChampions, asking people to champion HIV testing by publically disclosing their HIV status. We had local journalists, people living with HIV, local GPs, nurses, Merseyside Police sergeants, college tutors and even the Bishop of Liverpool took a HIV test. Bishop Paul Bayes took the quick finger-prick test to raise awareness of HIV and to encourage more people to take part in regular HIV testing.

**Celebration of Life**
A music legend, a rising country star, a vocal ensemble and ‘queer disco’ collective all united for a two-day fundraising extravaganza for World AIDS Day, as well as to celebrate the lives and ongoing legacies of people living with HIV. Irish singer/songwriter Brian Kennedy, supported by country/blues newcomer Daisy Gill, performed at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall Music Room. Brian was joined on the evening by critically acclaimed vocalists Sense of Sound who sang a collection of songs together.

Each World AIDS Day Sahir House hold a vigil. This year St Bride’s Church hosted the event. The vigil reminds us of the journey the HIV community has travelled, from memorial quilts in memory of those lost to HIV, to current medication which is massively reducing onward transmission.

Finally - One Night Stand! A one-off World AIDS Day event at District in the Baltic Triangle courtesy of Sonic Yootha, who said “We welcome anybody as long as you’re respectful. Let’s dance, celebrate life and honour those souls we have lost.” And they sure did!

This year’s World AIDS Day campaign certainly did end as a Celebration of Life!

If you would like to know more about the work of Sahir House or be involved in the planning for World AIDS Day 2018 please contact Serena Cavanagh at Sahir House.

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A Public Policy Exchange Symposium

Student Sexual Health & Well Being: Working in Partnership to Improve Sexual Health Services for those attending University or FE - this seminar is taking place in Central London on Thursday 8th March 2018. Further details can be found here.

South West Sexual Health Newsletter Autumn 2017

The latest newsletter from the South West Sexual Health Board includes updates; events & resources and information & research. The newsletter can be read here.

FPA - Sexwise

The Family Planning Association (FPA) has recently launched Sexwise, a new online resource to help the public make informed decisions about their sexual health. Visit the site via the link here.

Annual Conference 2018 BASHH & BHIVA

The Fourth Joint Conference of the British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) with the British HIV Association (BHIVA) will take place between 17th - 20th April 2018 at Edinburgh International Conference Centre. For full details click here.


This report from NHS Digital provides annual statistics on activity taking place at dedicated sexual and reproductive health services. During 2016/17 there has been a 7% decrease in the number of contacts with SRH services. The full publication and data tables can be accessed here.

The Association for Young People’s Health (AYPH): Key Data 2017

The AYPH have recently released Key Data on Young People 2017. It is a comprehensive data review focusing on the health of 10-24 year olds in the UK and looking at a range of issues including sexual health & identity and inequalities in health outcomes. The complete publication can be found here.

Joint FSRH & BASHH Conference 19 January 2018

The 13th Annual conference of the societies, The Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH) and (BASHH) will take place in London on 19th January 2018. For details of the full programme and how to book please click here.