

Summer
2018

Sexual Health

Quarterly Bulletin

Issue 58

PHE North West update
STIs

Sahir House
New CEO and LGBT project launch

PHI News
Successful grant for PrEP research

News
Latest news & events

Available online [here](#)

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Foreword

Welcome to the summer edition of the North West Sexual Health Quarterly bulletin.

Dr Roberto Vivancos, Consultant Epidemiologist from PHE North West, provides figures for Sexually Transmitted Infections in England in 2017.

Hannah Madden, PHI, PhD student brings us an overview of her research 'how do you stay healthy and happy on gay dating apps' including, background, objectives and methodology.

Serena Cavanagh from Sahir House updates us on two news items and a new project launched to support people in the LGBT community who are affected by cancer.

Finally Professor Marie-Claire Van Hout from PHI provides a study outline to a recent successful grant.

We hope you enjoy the latest edition of the bulletin.

Ann Lincoln



Sexually transmitted infections in England, 2017 – Highlights

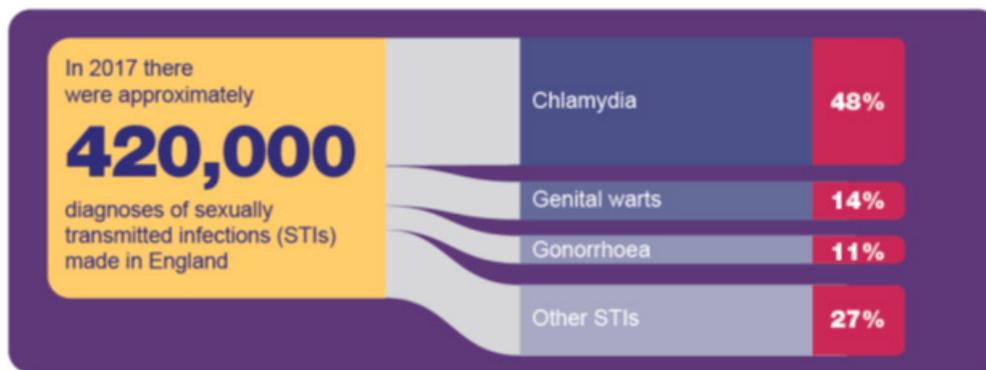


Public Health
England

By Dr Roberto Vivancos / Consultant Epidemiologist, PHE North West

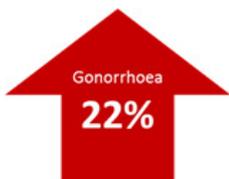
Highlights

In 2017, there were 422,147 new STI diagnoses made at sexual health services (SHSs) in England. Of these, the most commonly diagnosed STIs were chlamydia (203,116; 48% of all new STI diagnoses), first episode genital warts (59,119; 14%), gonorrhoea (44,676; 11%), and non-specific genital infections ([NSGI] 33,473; 8%).



Ups and downs

The total number of attendances at SHSs nationally increased 3% between 2016 and 2017 (from 3,227,254 to 3,323,275), continuing the increasing trend over the past five years.



Overall the largest increase in STI diagnoses between 2016 and 2017 was for gonorrhoea with a 22% increase, which is of concern because of the recent emergence of extensively drug resistant *Neisseria gonorrhoea*. Syphilis diagnoses (primary, secondary and early latent stages) also increased by 20% in the last year, which continues the increasing trend seen in recent years (148% increase in diagnosis since 2018).



In the same period, there were decreases in the number of diagnoses of NSGI (10%; from 37,028 to 33,473) and of genital warts (7%; from 63,458 to 59,119). The sustained decrease in genital warts is largely due to the substantial declines in younger women, the majority of whom would have received the quadrivalent HPV vaccine when aged 12 or 13 years.



Sexually transmitted infections in England, 2017 – Highlights (cont.)



Public Health
England

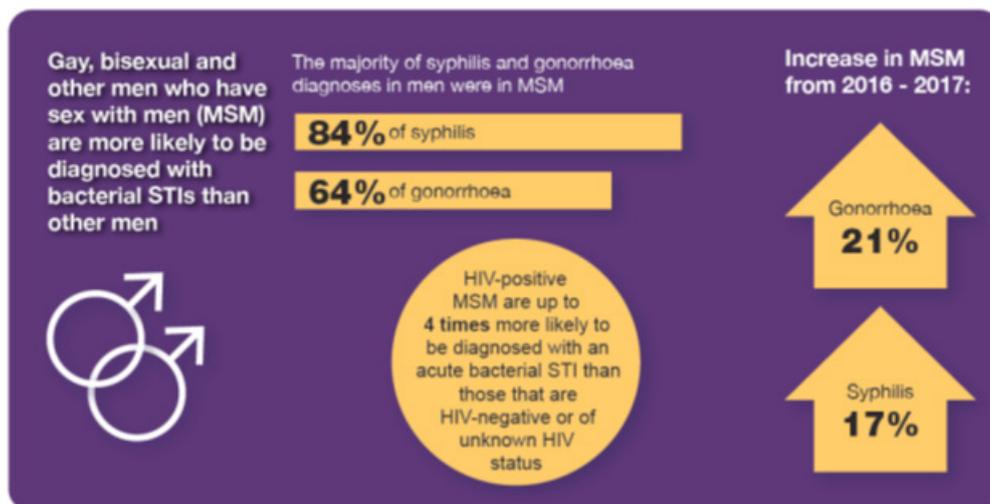
By Dr Roberto Vivancos / Consultant Epidemiologist, PHE North West

Young people

Young people are more likely to get diagnosed with an STI. Among those aged 15 to 24 years, men are twice and women six times more likely to be diagnosed with an STI than their counterparts aged 25 to 59 years. Among heterosexuals attending sexual health services, most chlamydia (63%) and gonorrhoea (52%) diagnoses were in people aged 15 to 24 years.

MSM

Of the 50,032 new STI diagnoses in MSM during 2017, gonorrhoea (43%; 21,346) and chlamydia (31%; 15,284) were the most common. Between 2016 and 2017, there were large increases in diagnoses of gonorrhoea (21%; from 17,626 to 21,346), chlamydia (17%; from 12,626 to 14,765) and syphilis (17%; from 4,789 to 5,592). These increases may be due to better detection, as well as increased risk behaviours, like condomless anal intercourse, chemsex and group sex facilitated by social network applications.



Black Minority Ethnic (BME) population

The rate of gonorrhoea and chlamydia in BME is three times that of the general population, with rates of other STIs also higher (figure 1). There are marked differences among BME groups, Black Caribbean and Black non-Caribbean/non-African people have the highest diagnosis rates of many STIs of all ethnic groups, while Black Africans have relatively lower rates.



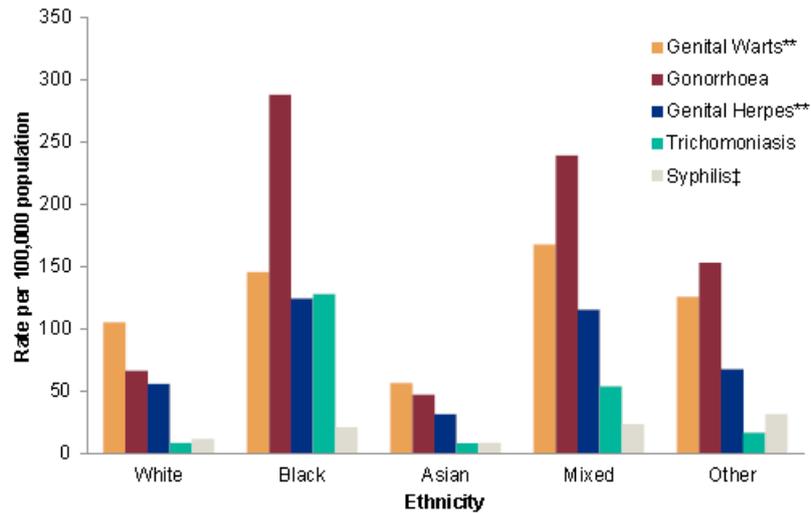
Sexually transmitted infections in England, 2017 – Highlights (cont.)



Public Health
England

By Dr Roberto Vivancos / Consultant Epidemiologist, PHE North West

Figure 1: Rates of selected sexually transmitted infection (STI) diagnoses* by ethnicity and STI, 2017, England



* Data from routine specialist and non-specialist sexual health services' returns to the GUMCAD STI Surveillance System; ** First episode; ‡ Primary, secondary and early latent.

Further Information

Further information about STIs in England can be found in the recently published 'Sexually transmitted infections (STIs): annual data tables' and in 'Sexual and Reproductive Health Profiles' (on Fingertips).

Links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis-annual-data-tables>

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/sexualhealth>



How do you stay Healthy and Happy on Gay Dating Apps?

by Hannah Madden / PhD Researcher, PHI

A new cross-cultural research project in the Public Health Institute is investigating how smartphone dating apps influence health in the UK and the USA. The study is linked with Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) and aims to understand how people use GPS-based smartphone dating apps to find same gender partners and relationships. We are interested in health-protective and risk-taking behaviour and any strategies people use to maximise benefits and reduce risk.

Background to the research:

Last year I took a deep breath and quit my job to focus on a full-time PhD. I was a researcher at PHI for twelve years, originally on the Sexual Health/HIV Surveillance Team, with a short stint based in Wirral PCT and then on the Health and Wellbeing Team. I am also an editor of this SHQB. I have always been interested in the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities and a PhD offered a great opportunity to focus on an area I was particularly passionate about.

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual people worldwide experience health inequalities; including sexual, physical and mental health inequalities [1-5]. GPS-based dating apps, such as Grindr, Tinder, Scruff etc., are commonly used by men who have sex with men (MSM [6, 7]). However very little research has looked at how such apps are used by women who have sex with women. GPS based dating apps are relatively new and existing research focuses on prevalence of use and potential negative impacts on health; some research has shown app use links with increased risk of STIs, HIV, drug use and risks to personal safety for MSM [7, 8]. However, no research has examined how apps may improve health by reducing isolation, improving wellbeing and facilitating positive and pleasurable sexual experiences.

Most research has been done in large cities in the USA and Asia [6, 9]; however, we do not know if this evidence is applicable to the UK and almost all research to date has been through surveys and quantitative methods. Interactions on apps do not exist in a vacuum; the cultural context of a user's life may influence their risk-taking and health protective behaviours. Understanding peoples' decisions around how to use these apps, and how to increase positive outcomes and reduce risk, will inform health promotion and reduce health inequalities.

I visited the Public Health Department at SCSU in New Haven in 2017. I will be staying in Connecticut for 12 weeks this autumn to collect data for the qualitative phase of the PhD and am planning to volunteer with a local LGBT health charity.

Research Objectives

1. To understand patterns and motivations for using GPS-based dating apps by people seeking same-gender connections/partners in Merseyside and Connecticut.
2. To investigate how people who use dating apps view the benefits of apps and any potential health risks.
3. To explore what, if any, strategies app users may employ to maximise positive outcomes, ensure their safety and reduce risk to health.
4. To examine any differences in behaviour between study sites in the UK and USA.





How do you stay Healthy and Happy on Gay Dating Apps?

by Hannah Madden / PhD Researcher, PHI

Methodology

The study consists of two phases. The first phase is an online survey of people (of any gender) who use dating apps to find same gender partners. This phase aims to understand patterns of use and identify any differences between genders, sexualities or countries. Most of the recruitment for this study has been through commercial Facebook Advertising. This has been very challenging given the current negative media coverage of Facebook and apparent changes to their advertising policies. The recruitment is still ongoing so have a look at the study's Facebook page here: fb.me/datingappresearch

The second phase, which will start in September, builds on the preliminary findings of the survey and will involve interviews with men who have sex with men. The interviews will focus on men's experiences of using apps and any strategies they use to maximise positive outcomes, ensure their safety and reduce risk to health. These interviews will also examine any differences between experiences in the UK and USA.

Further information

We are still looking for participants for the survey and we will be recruiting for interviews towards the end of the summer, so please do share with your networks. If you live in Merseyside (UK) or Connecticut (USA) and have used an app in the last year to look for same-gender partners or relationships, more info and the online survey can be found here: <https://ljmu.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/dating-app-research>

If you want to be kept informed of the findings please follow the Facebook page fb.me/datingappresearch or email h.c.madden@2017.ljmu.ac.uk The PhD should be completed by early 2020 but findings will hopefully be published before that.

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Sahir House have recruited a new CEO



by Serena Cavanagh / Health Promotion Lead



Tessa commented –

“I am delighted to be joining Sahir House, an incredible local charity that I have known for 20 years.

I am following in some very impressive footsteps and look forward to working collaboratively with the staff, trustees, volunteers and members of Sahir House, as well as funders, partners and stakeholders.

I am pleased to bring my previous experience as CEO of a local charity, several trustee roles and my recent experience in engagement work at Macmillan Cancer Support to this award winning and dedicated organisation.”

Sahir House is very excited to announce the successful appointment of our new Chief Executive Officer, Tessa Willow. Tessa has many years’ experience working in the voluntary sector and is no stranger to Sahir House, having provided advice and support to the organisation over many years. She has held a variety of paid, volunteer and trustee roles in local & national charities and community organisations. This includes 15 years as CEO of Volunteer Centre Liverpool; a member of the boards of NCVO and Volunteering England; engagement and inclusion roles in health and social care; service development and project management roles in mental health charities, plus many years’ experience of volunteering and campaigning with women’s organisations, LGBT+ groups and mental health services.

Sahir House has been offering HIV support, information and training across Merseyside since 1985. It offers a wide range of services to people living with or affected by HIV; HIV related training; up to date HIV information; prevention and testing; and opportunities to volunteer.

The organisation has recently improved governance, recruited new trustees, gained ISO9001 registration and won the 2017 GSK IMPACT Award, as one of the best small health charities in the UK.

Jed Pearson, Chair of the board of Trustees commented:

“The Board of trustees are looking forward to working with Tessa on the next phase of Sahir House’s development, building on our strong foundations to develop support and advice services that improve the quality of life for our clients. Tessa has substantial experience as both an executive and non-executive director in the charitable sector.”

Tessa began her role as the new CEO on Friday 11th May 2018.

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Project to support LGBT people affected by cancer in Merseyside



by Serena Cavanagh / Health Promotion Lead

A new project to improve services and support for people in the LGBT community who are affected by cancer has been launched on Merseyside.

The Macmillan LGBT Cancer Project aims to ensure that the needs of LGBT people affected by cancer in the Liverpool City Region are acknowledged and addressed in the provision of services, information and support.

A key part of the project, which is funded by Macmillan Cancer Support and hosted by Sahir House, is the Merseyside LGBT Health Survey 2018 – <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/merseysidelgbt>

The survey will help the team build a picture of the health of LGBT people, identify any gaps and tailor resources/ services to meet the specific needs of LGBT communities in Liverpool, Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.

Richard Hunt, Partnership Manager at Macmillan Cancer Support, who helped set up a similar successful scheme in Manchester, said:

“LGBT people with cancer can often face disadvantage, inequality and discrimination.”



He goes on, “That’s why we have set up the Macmillan LGBT Cancer Project, and launched the Merseyside LGBT Health Survey, to get a greater understanding of the health of LGBT people across Merseyside.”

“If you are an LGBT person affected by cancer, or have cared for someone from the LGBT community who has experienced cancer, then we want to hear from you.”

He continues, “We currently have a national picture of the challenges faced by the LGBT community when they are affected by cancer, but not a local one. We need to understand the issues and experiences of the LGBT community across Merseyside, so we can work together to tackle inequalities,

address any unmet needs, bridge gaps in service provision, and help improve outcomes for people affected by cancer.”

Clare Carter and James Huyton (pictured above) have been appointed as the new Macmillan LGBT Cancer Programme Co-ordinators at Sahir House, which has been providing HIV support, prevention, information and training across Merseyside since 1985.

Clare joins from the Terrence Higgins Trust, where she was involved in training, development and partnership work, while James joins from the LGBT Foundation and has a background in health promotion.

Over the next 12 months the pair will host various events and campaigns to engage with LGBT communities, looking at issues relating to cancer, reducing



Project to support LGBT people affected by cancer in Merseyside



by Serena Cavanagh / Health Promotion Lead

isolation, increasing awareness, information and wellbeing. They will also be engaging with professionals, and providing training and support, to help them meet the specific needs of LGBT communities.

Tessa Willow, Chief Executive of Sahir House, added: "Sahir House is excited to be working in partnership with Macmillan on this project, bringing this

organisation's extensive experience of engaging people from marginalised communities, including people from all parts of the LGBT spectrum. Sahir House is aware of the powerful affect discrimination can have on peoples' abilities to access services on an equitable basis and the health inequalities that result from such discrimination."

For further information about the project, call 0151 237 3989 or email clare.carter@sahir.org.uk or james.huyton@sahir.org.uk

For further information, please contact: Kieran Howlett, Regional Communications Officer, Macmillan Cancer Support 07980 653007 / KHowlett@macmillan.org.uk



About Macmillan Cancer Support

There are 2.5 million people living with cancer in the UK. One in two people are likely to get cancer in their lifetimes. Cancer can affect everything, including a person's body, relationships and finances.

Macmillan Cancer Support provides practical, emotional and personal support to people affected by cancer every year. The charity is there to support people during treatment, help with work and money worries, and listen when people need to talk about their feelings.

Macmillan receives no government funding and relies on generous donations from the public. People up and down the country show their support for Macmillan – from hosting or attending a World's Biggest Coffee Morning to running a marathon or giving up alcohol – so the charity can help more and more people affected by cancer every year.

Life with cancer is still your life and Macmillan is there to help you live it. If you want information or just to chat, call 0808 808 00 00 (Monday to Friday, 9am–8pm) or visit www.macmillan.org.uk

Sahir House support services are free and confidential. For more information call 0151 237 3989 or visit www.sahir.org.uk



UK AIDS Memorial Quilt



by Serena Cavanagh / Health Promotion Lead



The UK AIDS Memorial Quilt is an irreplaceable piece of social history. It tells the stories of many of those lost in the early days of the HIV AIDS epidemic in the 80's and 90's. The quilt has been in storage for many years.

Recently a number of UK charities came together to create the AIDS Memorial Quilt Conservation Partnership, to raise awareness of the quilt, its importance in our history and to restore and conserve the quilt for generations to come.

In total there are 48 twelve foot by twelve foot panels. Each panel is approximately 4m sq. Each individual panel commemorates someone who died of AIDS and has been lovingly made by their friends, lovers or family. Lives remembered include those of the writer, Bruce Chatwin; the artist/film maker, Derek Jarman; the actors, Ian Charleson and Denham Elliot; gay rights activist, Mark Ashton and the photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. In addition, emotive testimonials, photos, and personal documents that tell the story behind the panel accompany many of the quilt panels.

The quilts represent approximately 384 people from all around the UK. Each of the panels tells a story.

Sahir House plan to bring a selection of the quilt panels to Merseyside for this year's World AIDS Day.

Were you involved in making a quilt for a loved one living in or coming from the Northwest?

If you were involved or know of a panel remembering someone from this area we would love to hear from you, please get in touch with Serena either by calling 0151 237 3989 or info@sahir.uk.com <http://www.aidsquiltuk.org/>



Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in North England and the West Midlands

by Marie-Claire Van Hout / Professor of Public Health Policy & Practice

Exploring perspectives on provision and accessibility of Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in North England and the West Midlands

Public Health Institute News

Principal Investigator, Prof Marie-Claire Van Hout gives a study outline of a recent project funded by the Sexually Transmitted Infection Research Foundation.

Project Description

The United Kingdom (UK) has a concentrated HIV epidemic, with an estimated 101,200 people living with HIV in 2015. A decrease in diagnoses among men who have sex with men (MSM), the group most affected by HIV transmission, has recently been observed, and is probably due to increased frequency of testing (3 monthly) among those at greatest risk and rapid treatment for those testing positive.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is an evidence based biomedical HIV prevention strategy which involves HIV negative individuals taking antiretroviral drugs to reduce probability of infection if exposed. The UK PROUD study found PrEP reduced HIV infection risk by 86% among MSM. PrEP is available on the NHS in Wales and Scotland. In October 2017, the IMPACT trial commenced in England, with PrEP being rolled out to 10,000 eligible people who are at high risk of HIV acquisition.

The project will explore and describe MSM and health professional perspectives on PrEP using qualitative interviews in three Northern cities (Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield) and one city in the West Midlands (Birmingham) where PrEP is available through the IMPACT trial. Interviews with a purposive sample of participants (8-12 MSM and 4-8 health professionals per city) will focus on: PrEP awareness and sources of information including eligibility, compliance, drug interaction and online sourcing; impact of PrEP on HIV testing patterns, hepatitis C, sexual risk and other sexually transmitted infections; and on issues relating to accessing PrEP and optimal service provision.

The project is timely given the current IMPACT trial in England, with results informing policy, practice and professional training.



News and Events

Brook Learning and Impact Success Report 2017/18

Brook have published a new success report indicating the differences they have made to the lives of young people during 2017/18. This has been carried out in a number of ways including, high quality sexual health and wellbeing services, nationwide professional training and a dedication to young people's participation. You can read the full report here:

[Click here](#)

Public Health England (PHE) New Resources Toolkit

PHE have published a toolkit for evaluating SRH (Sexual & Reproductive Health) interventions; resources have been developed to support commissioning and delivery of sexual health, reproductive health and HIV services. The resources can be accessed here:

[Click here](#)

NHS England Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services

NHS England has set out a five-year strategy for taking forward services for victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse. It focuses on six delivery priorities and makes a commitment to provide care that is better signposted, more joined up and long lasting. The strategy can be read here:

[Click here](#)

The British HIV Association Standards of Care

The British HIV Association (BHIVA) has published a new Standard of Care for people living with HIV in the UK. The Standards document updates earlier versions from 2007 and 2013 and provides information to support high quality care and meet the need for more efficient and cost-effective services. Follow the link to access the Standards of Care:

[Click here](#)

Office of National Statistics (ONS) Quarterly conceptions rate

ONS have released their figures for the number of conceptions to women aged under 18 in England and Wales for the first quarter of 2017. For England there has been a 6.6% reduction in rates. Conception data for Q1 2017 can be found here:

[Click here](#)

Sexual Health Quarterly Bulletin

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