

## 5.3.04 Sexual Health

### Introduction: why is this important?

Sexual health influences all aspects of a person's health and wellbeing. It requires a person to have specific knowledge regarding their relationships and their health and the consequences of their sexual choices. It also requires a person to have skills and confidence to apply this knowledge.

While sexual relationships are essentially private matters, good sexual health is important to individuals and to society. Inequalities in health exist within sexual health as with other aspects of health and 'Most At Risk Populations' (MARPs) can experience some of the worst outcomes including death as a potential result of late diagnosis of HIV.

Poor sexual health outcomes are also closely associated with deprivation and so improving the sexual health of these populations can contribute to improvements in overall health outcomes for the most deprived areas of the District. A sexually healthy population can be a productive population able to make good choices about their own health and relationships supporting a positive approach to the other lifestyle choices.

Sexual health services are a complex and highly confidential area of healthcare, requiring services such as contraceptive advice and sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment and include managing chronic and complex conditions such as HIV.

### What do the facts and figures tell us?

- Overall 2,785 new sexually transmitted infections (STIs) were diagnosed in residents of Bradford, a rate of 529.1 per 100,000 population (compared to 797.2 per 100,000 population in England)
- 52% of diagnoses of new STIs in Bradford were in young people aged 15-24 years (compared to 46% in England). This includes those tested in genitourinary medicine clinics (GUM) only
- In Bradford, an estimated 6.3% of women and 6.8% of men presenting with a new STI at a GUM clinic during the five year period from 2010 to 2014 were re-infected with a new STI within twelve months
- Among GUM patients from Bradford who were eligible to be tested for HIV, 41.7% were tested (compared to 68.9% in England)
- In Bradford, between 2012 and 2014, 48.1% of HIV diagnoses were made at a late stage of infection compared to 42.2% in England
- In 2014 the rate of women with long acting reversible contraception (LARC) prescribed in primary care was 39.0 per 1,000 women for Bradford, 40.0 per 1,000 for Yorkshire and Humber and 32.3 per 1,000 women in England
- In 2014 the rate of LARCs prescribed in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 years was 15.5 for Bradford, 28.4 for Yorkshire and Humber and 31.5 for England

### What strategies, policies and best practice have been developed locally and nationally?

- Bradford District Sexual Health Needs Assessment 2012 (due to be updated during 2016)
- Making it work, A guide to whole system commissioning for sexual, reproductive health and HIV (Public Health England, March 2015)
- Sexual Health Commissioning in local government: building strong relationships, meeting local needs. (LGA & MedFash, June 2015)
- HIV for non-HIV specialists Diagnosing the undiagnosed, 2nd Edition (MedFash, 2015)
- HIV new diagnoses, Treatment and Care in the UK (Public Health England, October 2015)
- Health Promotion for Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV Strategic Action Plan 2016-2019 (Public Health England, December 2015)
- Commissioning HIV Testing Services in England (National Aids Trust, October 2014)

- The Challenge of Diversity BME LGB&T Health and Wellbeing Needs Assessment (Equity Partnership, November 2015)
- A Framework for Sexual Health Improvement in England (Department of Health, March 2013)
- Commissioning Sexual Health Services and Interventions. Best practice guidance for local authorities (Department of Health, March 2013)
- A Health and Social Care Needs Assessment of Young Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in Bradford District (Equity partnership, August 2013)

### What challenges have been identified in a local context?

- Commissioning and mobilising the Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health (ISRH) service. A new provider has been commissioned with a different delivery model which includes sub-contracting with Level 2 GP providers
- Low rates of STI testing, including HIV, in service may be giving false impression that we have low rates of STIs in our population and also contributing the high incidence of late diagnosis of HIV
- Low rates of take up of LARC in young people and BME communities which would provide improved contraception cover for the population

### What do our stakeholders tell us?

Mobilisation of a new ISRH service continues to present challenges to stakeholders as the model of delivery has changed. With fewer locations, but open longer hours, it is envisaged that access will still be improved however as with all service improvements information takes time to be understood and behaviours take time to change.

The Bradford District Sexual Health Network meets quarterly to bring together representatives from Bradford Metropolitan District Council, the 3 Clinical Commissioning Group's, NHS England, Public Health England, and various Providers, along with the views of service users and carers representatives, including Healthwatch, to help develop services locally thus enabling the population of Bradford District to achieve and maintain good sexual and reproductive health.

### Recommendations: What do we need to do? How do we ensure this remains a priority?

The commissioning of sexual and reproductive health services for the population is a mandatory requirement of all Local Authorities. Increasing early diagnosis HIV and Chlamydia screening for 15-24 year olds are Public Health Outcomes Framework measures which contribute to the protection of the health of the population. Both are also measures of health inequalities with young people, men who have sex with men and BME populations.

### References

Department of Health (2013) A Framework for Sexual Health Improvement in England. London, Department of Health

Public Health England (2014) Bradford Local Authority HIV, sexual and reproductive health epidemiology report (LASER). London, Public Health England

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (2015) Bradford District Sexual Health Network: Terms of Reference

Public Health England (2012) The Public Health Outcomes Framework for England, 2013-2016. London, Public Health England