F. Sexual Health Service

The National Strategy for Sexual Health & HIV (2005) is a strategy that addresses sexual health and HIV services in the UK. Sexual health affects physical and psychological wellbeing, and is fundamental to some of the most important and lasting relationships. The Isle of Wight Primary Care Trust Sexual Health Joint Commissioning Strategy aims to develop services in primary care and the community, to improve access and general sexual health on the Island, alongside sexual health targets. The Integrated IW Sexual Health Service aims to enable people to have prompt and convenient access to consistent, equitable and high quality sexual healthcare. The service is designed to provide and deliver a comprehensive local service to meet the range of sexual health needs, involving primary care, specialist services and other relevant settings within and outside the NHS.

Chlamydia Screening

The Chlamydia Screening Programme offers Chlamydia testing to under-25 year olds throughout the whole Island. Access to a Chlamydia test is now simpler and easier, with lots of different venues offering the test, which is as simple as peeing in a pot. For more details contact Sarah Stringer on 01983 814285.

Condom Distribution Scheme

The Isle of Wight Condom Distribution Scheme is now up and running. This means that you can get free condoms if you are under 25 from lots of different organisations. All you have to do is visit one of our designated sites and sign up to the scheme. Signing up is simple and straightforward; you just need to fill in a form and go through how to put on a condom and where to go for help if your condom splits. No names or addresses are asked for. For more details contact Sarah Stringer on 01983 814285.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

From a sexual health promotion perspective we have the twin difficulties of being a rural community - with all the isolation and social conservatism that this implies - with the added special circumstances arising from being an island. There is a tradition here of extreme caution and discretion, particularly when it comes to discussing or disclosing anything about your personal life. This is doubly true when it comes to issues around sexuality. Many people conduct their social life off the Island in order to preserve their anonymity and consequently the Island’s gay social scene is disproportionately small and limited in scope, comprising of various ‘gay evenings’ held on a monthly basis and social groups that meet in private.

Jim Edwards is the Island’s NHS Outreach worker. His remit seeks to support gay/bisexual men (or MSMs as they are sometimes called), lesbian/bisexual women and transgendered/transvestite people, promoting awareness of LGBT issues and challenging homophobia wherever it appears.
Contraception

There is a wide range of information on different methods of contraception advice on www.wish-net.co.uk

Sexually Transmitted Infections

For further information please go to the Department of Health website or www.wish-net.co.uk

Pharmacies

Pharmacies on the Isle of Wight are continually looking for improvements in the way patients are cared for in our communities. New innovative services are being developed and introduced through pharmacies to enhance the care provided to our patients. Community pharmacy actively promotes sexual health awareness and safe sex and working closely with our colleagues in Sexual Health Promotion and at the hospital, several pharmacy-based services have recently been developed. These services, along with many others (www.hampshirelpc.org.uk) are now on offer to patients on the Island, thereby improving accessibility and availability due to the extended opening hours of pharmacies in the evenings and at weekends. Pharmacies also offer the Condom Distribution Scheme, Chlamydia Screening and Emergency Contraception.

HIV/AIDS

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that can be contracted through unprotected sex (vaginal, anal and occasionally oral), blood to blood transmission, sharing of drug injecting paraphernalia and mother to baby transmission. HIV has been around for at least 25 years and the test has been available since 1985. HIV attacks the immune system; a person can look and feel well for many years and may not know they are infected. However, over a period of time, HIV will damage the immune system and when this happens one may become susceptible to illnesses that a healthy immune system would be able to fight off.

Sexual Health Innovative Education for Learning Disabilities (SHIELD)

The SHIELD programme was created and developed after consultation with people who have learning disabilities, staff, carers/parents to:

- Provide relevant current information
- Facilitate and increase staff confidence and competence in dealing with situations at work relating to sexuality
- Give clear guidance and protocol on how to respond in specific situations
- Provide people with learning disabilities with consistent information and messages.

Contact details: Sarah Stringer, telephone 01983 814285
Sarah.Stringer@iow.nhs.uk
www.wish-net.co.uk www.ruthe1.co.uk