

## Sexual Health Services Newsletter June 2026

This e-newsletter is dedicated to providing you with information about Sexual Health Services in County Durham.

We have included links throughout to make it easy for you to access further information.

The Sexual Health Team provide innovative services, delivered by a committed, highly skilled workforce to achieve standards of excellence in sexual health. Our team includes health advisors, doctors, sexual health nurses and support staff who are friendly, non-judgmental and will be happy to advise on any matters related to sexual health. Our services are free, confidential and open to people of all ages (including under 16s).

We offer both appointments and walk-in clinics. There is no need to book an appointment at a walk-in clinic but you may be waiting some time.



### Where Can You Go?

#### Our clinics are located in:

- |                   |                 |            |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Bishop Auckland   | Durham          | Shildon    |
| Chester le Street | Easington       | Spennymoor |
| Consett           | Newton Aycliffe | Stanley    |
| Crook             | Peterlee        |            |



#### For appointments, more information and clinic times call:



**0191 372 8700**

Choose option 1 for contraception  
Choose option 2 for sexual health

For up to date sexual health  
information visit:

[www.cddft.nhs.uk/services/sexual-health](http://www.cddft.nhs.uk/services/sexual-health)



Sexual Health County Durham



@CountyDurhamSH



@LGBTCoDurham



[www.cddft.nhs.uk](http://www.cddft.nhs.uk)

## Services available in your local Sexual Health and Contraception Clinics

- Advice on a range of contraception services including emergency contraception:
  - [Coils \(IUS / IUD\)](#)
  - [Injectable contraception](#)
  - [Diaphragm](#)
  - [Patches](#)
  - [Implants](#)
  - [Pills](#)
- No symptom screening
- [Free home testing \(no symptoms\) with www.sh24.org.uk](http://www.sh24.org.uk)
- Sexual health advice
- Symptomatic screening available at specific clinics
- Treatments
- [Free condoms and C-Card services](#)
- [Smears](#)
- [HIV testing](#)
- [PEP – medication that can help prevent people developing HIV before being exposed](#)
- [PrEP – medication that can help prevent HIV before being exposed](#)
- DoxyPEP – medication that can help prevent people developing syphilis if they have been exposed  
(Please note: specific criteria must be met for these types of medication)
- Vaccination services available at specific clinics
- Appointments are not always necessary
- [For advice on Termination of Pregnancy Services please call 01388 455 333](#)
- [Help for people that have been sexually assaulted](#)

## Let's get people talking—Let's talk about the Elephant in the Room

It's time to stop avoiding the awkward stuff!

STI rates in our region are among the highest in the UK and more young people, aged 15–24, are being diagnosed with chlamydia and gonorrhoea.

But a new campaign is hoping to change that and get people talking. Elephant in the Room encourages young people to talk openly about sex, condoms, getting tested and accessing confidential sexual health services - no judgement. Just facts, support and better health.

The campaign's key messages include:

- If you're having sex, protect yourself with condoms & regular testing
- Many STIs don't show any symptoms, so people may have an infection without knowing, meaning it can be passed on without realising and still cause serious long-term health problems
- Testing is confidential and simple.
- You're not alone – support is available (and they've seen it all before!)

We'd love your help to spread the word. The more people we reach, the more we can support better sexual health across the region. Find out more at: [www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk](http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk)

The campaign toolkit is packed with ready-to-use content for websites, social media and other channels, which is easy to share and easy to use. [Download the digital campaign toolkit here](#)



## C Card



C Card is a condom distribution scheme that provides young people from 13-24 years old with a C Card which entitles them to free condoms.

The C Card is a plastic card the same size as a credit card. You can pick up free condoms from over 200 outlets throughout County Durham once you have completed some straightforward registration details. The scheme also gives young people access to sexual health information, advice and support.

For further information on C Card please visit

[www.cddft.nhs.uk/services/sexual-health](http://www.cddft.nhs.uk/services/sexual-health)

Anyone wishing to set up a new C Card outlet in Co Durham must attend a C Card training session facilitated by the Sexual Health Team.

If you are interested in setting up an outlet please email us at

[cdda-tr.C-Cardenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:cdda-tr.C-Cardenquiries@nhs.net)



## Gonorrhoea & Mpox Vaccines are now available

Gonorrhoea and Mpox (previously known as monkeypox) vaccines are now available through our service.

### Gonorrhoea Vaccine

Gonorrhoea is a common bacterial sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the UK. Symptoms can include pain when passing urine and abnormal discharge, although some people may have no symptoms. Antibiotics usually treat gonorrhoea effectively, but concerns about antibiotic resistance are increasing. Previous infection does not protect against future infection.

The UK vaccine (Bexsero) can reduce the risk of gonorrhoea by around 30–40% after 2 doses, given at least 28 days apart. The vaccine is generally well tolerated.

The vaccine is offered during routine clinic appointments to people at higher risk of gonorrhoea, including:

- People with a current bacterial STI
- People with multiple sexual partners
- People involved in sex work

### Mpox Vaccine

Mpox is a viral infection spread through close physical contact, including skin-to-skin contact, respiratory droplets, and contaminated bedding or clothing. Symptoms can include a blister-like rash, fever, headache, and general flu-like symptoms.

The UK vaccine (Imvanex) reduces the risk of Mpox infection by around 80% after 2 doses, given at least 28 days apart. People who already received 2 doses during the 2022 outbreak do not need another course. The vaccine is offered during routine clinic appointments to people at higher risk of Mpox, including:

- Gay, bisexual & other men who have sex with men
- People who have group sex
- Close contacts of someone diagnosed with Mpox
- People who attend sex-on-premises venues

Suitable patients can receive both vaccines during the same appointment.

If you would like more information, please contact our service. We are happy to discuss any questions by telephone or during a face-to-face appointment.

Click the links for more information [NHS MenB vaccine for gonorrhoea](#) & [NHS Mpox vaccine](#)

# Emergency Contraception

Emergency contraception can stop you getting pregnant after unprotected sex. You need to use emergency contraception within 3 to 5 days of having unprotected sex and the sooner you use emergency contraception, the more effective it usually is.

There are 2 types of emergency contraception:

- [an IUD \(intrauterine device\) also called a copper coil](#)
- [the emergency contraceptive pill \(also called the morning after pill\)](#)

The IUD is the most effective type of emergency contraception.

Emergency contraception is free from NHS sexual health clinics, GP surgeries and most pharmacies.

Use this link to find [emergency contraception near you](#)



## Online Services

### Free Testing



If you are 16 years or over and live in County Durham or Darlington you can order a free testing kit for Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, Syphilis & HIV by visiting the link below:

[www.sh24.org.uk](http://www.sh24.org.uk)

The STI tests are delivered by post in a plain, letterbox friendly envelope with the results being sent by text.

**SH:24**

### Free Condoms

The free online condom service is available to any Co Durham or Darlington resident aged 16 or over via the [Sexual Health website](#).



The service offers a choice of condoms & the orders are posted out in discreet packaging to the clients home address.

For more condom info watch the videos below:



## Service User Feedback

We continually assess our services by collecting feedback from our service users via a text message sent out following their appointment.

In 2025 there were 1521 completed feedback surveys from both adults and young people overall rating the service 4.8 out of 5 stars.

Very well organised clinic  
with lovely nurses to make  
you feel at ease

Fantastic, very caring  
& professional

The staff were  
extremely friendly  
& reassuring

Thanks for  
providing a  
fabulous service