

Our service model for specialist sexual health services

Everyone in East Sussex should have easy access to specialist sexual health services that meet their needs. Do you think our updated service model will help achieve that aim?

Tell us what you think

We want to know what you think about our service model and whether it will allow everyone to get the support they need. We particularly want to hear from everyone who has used the service or will do in future. We are also keen to hear from people who would struggle to access phone and online services.

How you can take part

You can fill in the survey online or on paper, but you can also send us a letter or email – whatever works for you. **The consultation closes on 22 July.**

- Complete the online survey at: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/sexualhealth
- Email us your survey or feedback: public.health@eastsussex.gov.uk
- Post us your survey or feedback: Just write Freepost, East Sussex County Council, Public Health on your envelope (you don't need a stamp)

If you need to contact us email is better at the moment, as many of us are still working at home, but you can call us if you need to on 01273 336 036.

**If you need this information in another format or language,
or you need help to take part, please contact us.**

What will happen next

What you tell us will help us finalise the specification that providers will use to bid for the contract. Your feedback will be included in a consultation report and inform the Equality Impact Analysis action plan. All of these documents will be considered by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care & Health in September 2021.

Background

East Sussex Public Health is responsible for commissioning specialist sexual health services, including testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and genital conditions, and some contraception. This complements the services provided by GPs, allowing people with complex needs to access specialist support.

The current contract comes to an end next year. We will publish the specification that providers will use to bid for the new contract in October. Before we do that, we want to make sure that our plans, which are informed by national guidance and local insight, are inclusive and accessible.

The impact of COVID-19

In order to keep people safe during the pandemic we have already had to change the service model. As a result, people mainly access the service over the telephone or online, and receive many physical items through the post or by collection.

Where people need face-to-face support this has still been on offer through the two main clinics in Hastings and Eastbourne, although all appointments now have to be booked in advance. The smaller clinics have been closed as they couldn't be operated safely.

Prior to the pandemic we were looking at introducing similar changes when the new contract started. So COVID-19 has basically sped up those changes. In case of future lockdowns or restrictions, we also need to ensure that access to the service remains safe and it isn't dependent on face-to-face appointments.

We are now looking to make the changes introduced during the pandemic permanent. It's important people have their say on the model before we do that.

The updated service model

Our [sexual health website](#) will act as the digital 'front door'. People will be expected to use it to carry out simple requests, such as non-complex STI and HIV testing, and condoms.

People who struggle to use the website or who aren't online will be able to access the same services through a telephone consultation via a freephone number.

Anyone identified through the online or phone consultation as having complex needs when they first access the service will be offered a telephone assessment and, if

needed, a face-to-face appointment. Booked appointments will take place as usual at the hubs in Hastings and Eastbourne.

We also want to make sure that people who are less likely to use the service can still benefit from specialist sexual health support. To do this we plan to directly support teams working with homelessness services, substance misuse treatment services, asylum support and youth services to develop their own sexual health signposting, self-help, and testing directly with their clients. This will allow sexual health to be considered as part of a wider health offer.

What would change

We have retained the appointment system for the hub clinics in Eastbourne and Hastings, rather than going back to a drop-in approach. Some evening appointments will be retained, but the Saturday morning clinics would not be reinstated.

The part-time clinics that stopped operating during the pandemic will not reopen. These were provided at: Hailsham Health Centre (3 hours a week); Uckfield Minor Injuries Unit (4 hours); Bexhill Health Centre (2 hours); and Arthur Blackman Clinic (3 hours). Some of these services were already only offering a limited service and were not well used.

For those who do not have a GP or are unable to see them, or those who have complex contraception needs requiring a face-to-face appointment, the service will assess them and provide the first prescription. After that people will be referred back to their GP for repeat prescriptions. We will keep offering the online condom service to all ages rather than limit it to under 25s as previously.

We intend to maintain the online provision of emergency hormonal contraception and the availability of HIV post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PreP).

How this would affect people

Making the service online and telephone-based in the first instance should increase access to the service for those who are unable or unwilling to use face-to-face services. For example, it will increase access for people who don't live near a clinic, and allow those who commute, work, have caring responsibilities, or mobility issues to use the service when it suits them.

At the same time, we know there would be people who aren't online or who would struggle to access services this way; for example, those who don't have a smart phone or tablet and those who don't have internet access at home. For others, the barrier would be the lack of a fixed address where contraception or testing kits can be delivered.

By offering telephone access and keeping limited face-to-face appointments we think we can make sure that everyone has easy access to specialist sexual health services.

Why we are consulting

The way the service has been adapted and run during the pandemic is similar to some of the changes we were already planning. We are pleased to say that on the whole the new ways of working have proved more efficient and accessible.

It's important though to check that the new service specifications and ways of working are robust and inclusive in the long term. We also want to understand how people will be affected if some of the clinics don't reopen and others move to an appointment only system.

Specialist sexual health services questionnaire

This questionnaire is anonymous and we don't ask you to provide any personal information, although there is an optional 'about you' section at the end. Please ensure that any comments don't include any names or personal details of you or anyone else. You can find our privacy notice about how the data will be stored and processed by East Sussex County Council on our website (www.eastsussex.gov.uk/privacy/consultation-hub/).

Q1) Are you completing the survey as: (Please tick all that apply)

- Someone who has used specialist contraception services
- Some who has used sexually transmitted infection testing services
- Someone who works in sexual health services
- A General Practitioner (GP)
- An organisation providing sexual health services
- Other (please provide details below)

If you ticked 'other' please provide details in the box below:

Q2) How much do you agree or disagree that our updated service model will provide easy access to sexual health services in East Sussex?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to provide your comments:

Q3) How would you, or your organisation, be affected by our plans?

What you tell us will help us carry out an equality impact analysis. So please do let us know if the new model would make your life easier or harder and explain why.

Q4) Do you have any other suggestions or comments about our plans?

Thank you for sharing your feedback. If you would like to, please fill in the optional about you section on the next pages. Send your completed survey to: Freepost, East Sussex County Council, Public Health

About you questions

You don't have to answer the questions in this section, but it will help us to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally if you do. Your information will only be used and reported anonymously to support the consultation, engagement or feedback activity you are taking part in. We will keep your individual information for a period of up to five years and we won't keep it any longer than is necessary. Please get in touch with the named contact for this activity if you would like more information. Full privacy notice: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/privacy/about-you-survey/

Q1) Are you?

- Male Female Prefer not to say

Q2) Do you identify as a transgender or trans person?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

Q3) Which of these age groups do you belong to?

- under 18 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54
 55-59 60-64 65+ Prefer not to say

Q4) What is your postcode?

- Tick here if you prefer not to say

Q5) To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong?

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White British | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British Indian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British Pakistani |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Gypsy/Roma | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish Traveller | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British other* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White other* | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British Caribbean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White and Black Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British African |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White and Black African | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British other* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White and Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Arab |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed other* | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other ethnic group* | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

*If your ethnic group was not specified in the list please describe your ethnic group.

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q6) Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

Q6b) If you answered yes to Q6, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you. You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these apply to you please select other and give brief details of the impairment you have.

- Physical impairment Sensory impairment (hearing and sight)
 Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy
 Mental health condition Learning disability
 Prefer not to say Other*

*If other, please specify:

Q7) Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

Q7a) If you answered yes to Q7, which one?

- Christian Hindu Muslim Buddhist
 Jewish Sikh Any other religion (please specify)

Q8) Are you?

- Bi/Bisexual Gay woman/Lesbian Gay Man
 Heterosexual/Straight Other Prefer not to say

Q9) Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant in the last year?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

Q10) Are you married or in a civil partnership?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

Thank you for providing this information.