

Press release: People urged to practise safer sex after rise in STIs in England

A new report by Public Health England (PHE) shows numbers of new STI diagnoses in 2018 increased by 5% in comparison to 2017 (from 424,724 to 447,694). The number of consultations at sexual health services, both in clinic settings and online, increased by 7% between 2017 and 2018 (from 3,337,677 to 3,561,548). The rise in STIs is likely to be due to people not using condoms correctly and consistently with new and casual partners, and an increase in testing improving detection of the most common STIs.

Dr Gwenda Hughes, Head of STI Surveillance at PHE, said:

The rise in sexually transmitted infections is concerning. STIs can pose serious consequences to health – both your own and that of current and future sexual partners. No matter what age you are, or what type of relationship you are in, it's important to look after your sexual health. If you have sex with a new or casual partner, make sure you use condoms and get regularly tested.

Importantly, in 2018, gonorrhoea diagnoses rose by 26% from 2017 (from 44,812 to 56,259). Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (herein known as MSM) are at higher risk and over-represented, with almost half of cases diagnosed in this group. This trend is concerning given the emergence of extensively-drug resistant gonorrhoea. PHE actively monitors and investigates the spread of antibiotic resistance in gonorrhoea and potential treatment failures to help reduce the spread of resistance.

Cases of syphilis also increased and have more than doubled over the past decade (from 2,847 in 2009 to 7,541 in 2018). PHE has worked with stakeholders to develop a [syphilis action plan](#) to tackle this rise, which is most notable amongst MSM, who accounted for 75% of cases in 2018. The main aims of this action plan include increasing testing frequency of high-risk MSM; improving partner notification; and maintaining high rates of antenatal screening.

Chlamydia remained the most commonly diagnosed STI, accounting for almost half of new STI diagnoses (218,095). Chlamydia most commonly affects 15 to 24 year olds, who account for 60% (131,269) of new diagnoses – an increase of 2% since 2017. This is in line with the National Chlamydia Screening programme's aim to increase detection and reduce prevalence of chlamydia by proactively offering screening to young people.

The report highlights that the HPV vaccination programme has led to a marked decline in genital warts diagnosis, which are caused by some strains of HPV

that the vaccine protects against. The rate of genital warts diagnoses among girls aged 15 to 17 years, most of whom would have been offered the quadrivalent HPV vaccine aged 12 to 13 years old, was 92% lower in 2018 compared to 2014. A decline of 82% was seen in same aged heterosexual boys over this time period, which suggests substantial herd protection.

Across all STIs, the highest rates of diagnoses continue to be seen in 15 to 24 year olds, MSM, and black minority ethnic groups. This is likely due, in part, to higher rates of partner change and/or more concurrent sexual partnerships without consistent condom use. Among a minority of MSM, chemsex may facilitate these risk behaviours. The rates of STIs are far lower in older age groups but are increasing, with the largest proportional increase in gonorrhoea and chlamydia seen in people over 65.

Often, individuals with STIs may not realise they have one because these infections are often symptomless. This means people can easily contract an STI or pass one on without knowing it and should take up the offer of STI screening, regardless of whether they show symptoms if they have had sex with a new or casual partner without using a condom.

Those at risk of STIs can access services through sexual health clinics. Many clinics offer online testing, which means people can order tests using clinics' websites, take them in the privacy of their own home, send kits off to a laboratory for testing and receive results either via text, phone call or post. PHE recommends regular HIV and STI testing for those with new or casual partners. Local STI services can be found online via [NHS.UK](https://www.nhs.uk).

Important statistics

In 2018, there were 447,694 diagnoses of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) made at sexual health services in England, a 5% increase since 2017. Of these, the most commonly diagnosed STIs were chlamydia (218,095; 49% of all new STI diagnoses), first episode genital warts (57,318; 13%), gonorrhoea (56,259; 13%), and genital herpes (33,867; 8%).

The number of consultations at sexual health services, both in clinic settings and online, increased by 7% between 2017 and 2018 (from 3,337,677 to 3,561,548).

The total number of sexual health screens (tests for chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and HIV) increased over this time period (22%; from 1,603,744 in 2014 to 1,955,108 in 2018).

The increase in the total number of new STIs was due to a large increase in gonorrhoea (26%; from 44,812 to 56,259) and more moderate increases in chlamydia (6%; from 205,365 to 218,095), syphilis (primary, secondary and early latent stages: 5%; from 7,149 to 7,541), and first episode genital herpes (3%; from 32,828 to 33,867) diagnoses. There were 7,541 diagnoses of syphilis reported in 2018, a 5% increase since 2017.

Between 2017 and 2018 increases in STIs were reported in heterosexual women (2%; from 138,398 to 141,440), heterosexual men (1%; from 134,160 to

134,897), women who have sex with women (WSW: 16%; from 571 to 661), and MSM (17%; from 55,357 to 64,831).

In people over 65, gonorrhoea increased by 42% (from 236 to 336) and chlamydia increased by 24% (from 416 to 517); however, the population diagnosis rates of these STIs remain far lower than those of people under the age of 35 years.

There were 193 diagnoses of first episode genital warts in 15 to 17 year old girls in 2018, a 56% decrease relative to 2017, and 100 diagnoses of first episode genital warts in same aged heterosexual boys, a 46% decrease relative to 2017.

Through the National Chlamydia Screening Programme, 1,304,113 chlamydia tests were carried out among young people aged 15 to 24 years, a 1% decline since 2017 and a 22% decline since 2014. Due to an increase in the proportion testing positive, this resulted in 131,269 chlamydia diagnoses in this age group, an increase of 2% since 2017.

Syphilis action plan

'Addressing the increase in syphilis in England: [PHE Action Plan](#)' has been published today, Tuesday 4 June 2019. There is a need to strengthen public health measures to reduce transmission of syphilis. National clinical guidelines recommend frequent testing in high-risk MSM, but surveillance data suggests this is not uniformly carried out. There are also concerns about poor knowledge and awareness of syphilis among MSM.

A wide range of measures to control transmission already exists, but the continued increase in cases suggests that these are either not being applied consistently or that new, additional measures should be considered.

The actions specified in the plan are aimed at clinicians, public health specialists, specialty societies and commissioners of specialist sexual health services and focus on the main affected populations.

A successful response to the current increase in syphilis incidence is dependent upon action that optimises 4 prevention pillars fundamental to syphilis control and prevention:

1. Increase testing frequency of high-risk MSM and testing of syphilis cases after treatment
2. Deliver partner notification to BASHH standard
3. Maintain high antenatal screening coverage and vigilance for syphilis throughout antenatal care
4. Sustain targeted health promotion.

Background

Read the [full report and breakdown of data](#).

STIs can be successfully prevented by:

- using male or female condoms every time you have vaginal and anal sex
- using a condom to cover the penis if you have oral sex
- not sharing sex toys, or washing them and covering them with a new condom before anyone else uses them

Find out more about the signs and symptoms of [STIs on NHS.UK](#).

An increasing proportion of tests are provided through eSexual Health Services (eSHSs) which enable access to testing for those who are unable or who prefer not to attend a clinic in person. For example, 14% of chlamydia diagnoses among 15 to 24 year olds in 2018 were made through eSHSs and this number is expected to grow in subsequent years.

To support sexual health services and work to reduce STI transmission in communities PHE:

- developed a syphilis action plan to address the increase in cases
- launched a sexual health campaign called [Protect Against STIs](#), which targets 16 to 24 year olds to promote condom usage as they experience the highest STI diagnosis rates
- provide local authorities with data on local service activity – including clinical attendance, testing rates, and epidemiology (whether STIs are increasing or decreasing at a low level) – and an epidemiology report at the end of each year providing key information for commissioners
- respond to outbreaks, incidents and epidemics to help reduce the spread of infections as part of our public health function
- provide advice and support the development of national guidelines, for example through the advisory group for the [NICE guideline for STI control](#)

[Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on the 30th anniversary of Tiananmen Square](#)

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt statement on the 30th anniversary of the tragic events in and around Tiananmen Square.



Today we mark 30 years since the tragic events of 4 June 1989, remembering those who lost their lives protesting peacefully in and around Tiananmen Square.

Over the past 30 years, China has ratified a number of UN instruments relating to human rights. However, people in China are still unable to exercise their right to protest peacefully in China.

We continue to urge the Chinese Government to respect citizens' freedom of association, assembly, expression and other fundamental rights and freedoms, as enshrined in China's constitution and in international law.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@Jeremy_Hunt](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
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Press release: Eid al-Fitr 2019: PM Theresa May's message

Prime Minister Theresa May's message on Eid al-Fitr.



I want to send my very best wishes to Muslims at home and around the world celebrating the festival of Eid al-Fitr.

For more than three million British Muslims, the joyous occasion of Eid, spent with family and loved ones, marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Over the last month, many British Muslims have shared the holy practices of Ramadan with neighbours of all faiths and none – from doing charity work in the local community to preparing meals for the elderly or coming together to break the fast at the end of the day.

During Ramadan, as at many other times of the year, I see the very best of the values which unite us all: of tolerance, of respect, and of selflessness.

Sadly, there are those who only seek to sow division and to spread fear and hatred in our communities. This year we have seen despicable acts of terrorism targeted against Muslims both abroad and on UK soil, on innocent people attending their place of worship or going about their daily lives.

There can be no place in our societies for the vile ideology that incites hatred and fear, and I stand with Muslims here in the UK and around the world against those who seek to destroy our values.

So as we come together in celebration this Eid – to share meals and gifts with families, friends and colleagues – let us remain steadfast in the values we share.

A happy and peaceful celebration to you all.

Eid Mubarak.

[Press release: PM hosts business leaders to celebrate and strengthen economic ties during US State Visit](#)

Theresa May will welcome the depth and future potential of transatlantic ties today as she and President Trump co-host a business roundtable on the second day of his State Visit to the UK.

The Prime Minister will tell business leaders that by working together to seize opportunities and tackle shared challenges we will create more jobs, drive more growth, and ensure our economic partnership continues to grow even stronger in the years ahead.

The event at St James' Palace will bring together ten leading companies – five from the UK and five from the United States – to discuss the strength of our economic links and the sectors where expanding our cooperation further could benefit both sides.

CEOs and senior representatives from BAE Systems, GlaxoSmithKline, National Grid, Barclays, Reckitt Benckiser, JP Morgan, Lockheed Martin, Goldman Sachs International, Bechtel and Splunk are expected to attend.

The businesses at the roundtable demonstrate the breadth of UK-US business links and represent a variety of sectors, from life sciences and defence to financial services and consumer products. They underscore the breadth of UK-US business ties and will discuss a number of areas where further collaboration can lead to greater investment and job creation in the future.

Discussions are expected to focus in particular on research, development and innovation, investment in infrastructure, and the scope for closer partnership in regulation and financial services.

Addressing the UK-US economic relationship the Prime Minister is expected to say:

It is a great partnership, but one I believe we can make greater still.

With a bilateral free trade agreement, with broader economic co-operation, and by continuing to work together to underpin, shape and influence the global economy and its rules and institutions – keeping markets free, fair and open, and keeping our industries competitive.

There are opportunities to seize, and there are challenges we need

to work together to tackle. Today, let us look at how we do both.

Through dialogue like this we can ensure that our economic partnership not only endures but continues to grow stronger for many years to come – making our businesses more competitive, and creating jobs, opportunity and prosperity for all our people.

The United States is already the UK's largest single trading partner in the world and trade between our countries – worth £190 billion last year – has grown by more than 70% over the last decade. We are also the largest investors in each other's economies – with mutual investments valued at as much as \$1 trillion.

Our businesses are creating jobs and opportunities on both sides of the Atlantic. The British companies at today's roundtable collectively employ around 176,000 people in the UK and United States. And in total, British companies employ a million people across the United States with a million more working for American companies in the UK.

Emma Walmsley, Chief Executive Officer at GSK, said:

The US is one of the most important sources of healthcare innovation in the world. Life sciences is also a strategic strength for the UK and there is a great opportunity for us to partner further to retain and accelerate both countries' global leadership in this sector, generating better outcomes for patients and economic growth on both sides of the Atlantic.

Sir Roger Carr, Chairman of BAE Systems said:

Our relationship with the United States of America is long-standing and operates to our mutual benefit on the firm foundation of trust, transparency and true partnership.

The roundtable is also due to be attended by The Duke of York, Chancellor Philip Hammond, International Trade Secretary Liam Fox, Her Majesty's Ambassador Sir Kim Darroch, US Ambassador to the UK Woody Johnson, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, US Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin and Ivanka Trump.

Rakesh Kapoor, Chief Executive Officer of Reckitt Benckiser:

The U.S and UK are two of RB's top three markets. Our commitment to the U.S was underlined in 2017 when we made the largest investment in our history with the acquisition of the U.S-based company, Mead Johnson Nutrition for nearly \$18 billion. We have ear-marked a further combined \$200 million of investment in both countries, with

our intention to create two state of the art health laboratories in Zeeland, Michigan and Hull, which will result in new, high quality science jobs. The close relationship between the UK and the U.S was an important factor behind these investment decisions.

The business leaders expected at today's roundtable are:

UK:

- BAE Systems – Sir Roger Carr, Chairman. Defence, security and aerospace company BAE systems employs around 64,000 people in both the US and the UK, with US business accounting for more than 40% of sales.
- GSK – Emma Walmsley, CEO. GSK is the UK's leading vaccine, pharmaceuticals and consumer healthcare company, employing around 17,000 people in the UK and 15,000 across the US.
- National Grid – John Pettigrew, CEO. National Grid employs over 16,000 people in the US and over 5,000 in the UK. They supply energy for more than 20 million people in the northeastern United States.
- Reckitt Benckiser – Rakesh Kapoor, CEO. Reckitt Benckiser employs over 40,000 people worldwide, including 4,000 in the UK and 4,000 in the US. 20 million of its health and hygiene products are sold daily around the world.
- Barclays – Jes Staley, CEO. British multinational consumer and wholesale bank Barclays employs around 40,000 people in the UK and 11,000 in the US.

US:

- Lockheed Martin – Marillyn Hewson, Chairman, President and CEO. Global security and aerospace company Lockheed Martin employs over 100,000 people worldwide, including around 2,000 in the UK – which is their largest presence outside of the US.
- JP Morgan Chase – Viswas Raghavan, CEO. American multinational investment bank and financial services company JP Morgan is the largest bank in the US. It has offices in London, Bournemouth, Glasgow and Edinburgh – with London serving as headquarters for the EMEA region. The Bournemouth campus is the largest private sector employer in Dorset.
- Goldman Sachs International – Richard Gnodde, CEO. Goldman Sachs is a global investment banking, securities and investment management firm headquartered in New York with offices in all major financial centres around the world. The company employs around 6,000 people in the UK and approximately 36,000 worldwide.
- Bechtel – Stu Jones, President – Regions and Corporate Affairs. Bechtel is the premiere US engineering, procurement, construction, and project management firm in the United States. London is home to its Global Infrastructure HQ, supporting major projects worldwide, including the largest civil works project in the world today – the Riyadh Metro Program. The firm employs approximately 30,000 staff worldwide and has employed more than 10,000 UK citizens over the past decade.
- Splunk – Richard Timperlake, Head of Europe, Middle East and Africa. Software company Splunk has customers in 110 countries and employs over

4,700 people worldwide. Splunk has two offices in the UK, recently expanding its office in Reading and announcing a move to a larger office in Paddington in late 2019.

[News story: Business Secretary chairs British Steel Support Group and visits company in the steel supply chain](#)

Business Secretary Greg Clark chaired the meeting, which brought together representatives from British Steel, the government, local MPs, trade bodies, trade unions, as well as local leaders and the Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The group reaffirmed its commitment to British Steel, and its ongoing efforts to leave no stone unturned to support the Official Receiver in finding a suitable buyer.

At the meeting, it was also agreed that there would be a sub-group formed of suppliers and customers, led by Stephen Phipson, Chief Executive of Make UK, which will focus on companies in British Steel's customer and supply chain.

Members of the group praised the commitment of British Steel's workforce who continue to reach record levels of steel production, despite the challenging time that workers currently face.

Following the meeting the Business Secretary, accompanied by Stephen Phipson, Chief Executive of Make UK and Gareth Stace, Director at UK Steel, visited Bridon-Bekaert in Doncaster, a major customer of British Steel to discuss the role British Steel plays as a key supplier. The wire rope producer demonstrated how it takes steel rods produced at British Steel's Scunthorpe site, which the Business Secretary saw being produced on his recent visit to the site's Rod Mill, and turns them into specialist wire ropes, used the world over.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Having worked with British Steel, and visited and met with management and staff at Scunthorpe, Skinningrove and on Teesside, I wanted to convene the British Steel Support Group to harness the passion and experience of everyone in the group to help secure the future of steelmaking at these sites.

Our first priority is to continue to support the Official Receiver through the sale process as he aims to find a suitable buyer for the company, and to safeguard jobs. We have agreed to meet on a

regular basis as part of that endeavour.

We also send our thanks and appreciation to British Steel's highly skilled and talented workforce who, despite facing an understandably worrying time, have continued to lead the company to record levels of steel production – testament to their commitment and hard work.

The world will always need steel and British Steel is amongst the best in the world; this was clearly demonstrated in my visit to Bridon Bekaert, where British Steel is used to manufacture the highest quality product which is then exported across the world.

Our support group brings together representatives from the company and wider industry, trade unions and local leaders, and each and every one of us is steadfast in our commitment to seeing steel production continue well into the future.

Members of the British Steel Support Group are:

- Greg Clark MP – Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- Lord Christopher Haskins – Chair, Humber Local Enterprise Partnership
- Anna Turley MP – Labour MP for Redcar
- Simon Clarke MP – Conservative MP for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland
- Nic Dakin MP – Labour MP for Scunthorpe
- Andrew Percy MP – Conservative MP for Brigg and Goole
- Ben Houchen – Metro Mayor for the Tees Valley
- Gerald Reichmann – Chief Executive at British Steel
- Gareth Stace – Director-General at UK Steel
- Stephen Phipson – Chief Executive at Make UK
- Roy Rickhuss – General Secretary, Community Union
- Paul McBean – Community Union representative
- Martin Foster – Unite the Union representative
- Paul Booth OBE – Chairman, Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership
- Cllr Rob Waltham MBE – Leader, North Lincolnshire Council
- Simon Green – Deputy Chief Executive at North Lincolnshire Council