

People urged to practise safer sex as gonorrhoea cases in England rise by 26%

A new report by Public Health England (PHE) shows the number of annual gonorrhoea diagnoses rose 26% between 2018 and 2019 (from 56,232 to 70,936). The data outlined in the [Sexually transmitted infections and screening for chlamydia in England 2019](#) report has prompted health officials to warn of the need to practise safe sex, including correct condom use.

This rise contributed to an overall increase of 5% in new sexually transmitted infection (STI) diagnoses in 2019 (from 447,522 in 2018 to 468,342).

Between 2018 and 2019, increases in gonorrhoea were reported in:

- gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) from 26,864 to 33,853 (26% increase)
- heterosexual women from 14,167 to 17,826 (26% increase)
- heterosexual men from 13,036 to 15,253 (17% increase)

The rise in diagnoses of gonorrhoea is explained in part by an increase in testing, using more accurate diagnostic tests and more comprehensive data on STI diagnoses.

Dr Hamish Mohammed, National Lead for Sexually Transmitted Infection Surveillance at Public Health England, said:

“The considerable rise of gonorrhoea cases in England, as well as the continued rise of other STIs, is concerning. It is important to emphasise that STIs can pose serious consequences to health – both your own and that of current and future sexual partners.

“We have seen that gonorrhoea has become more resistant to antibiotics and expect to see further cases of antibiotic-resistant gonorrhoea in the future, which will be challenging for healthcare professionals to manage.

“The consistent and correct use of condoms with new and casual sexual partners is the best defence against all STIs. If you have had sex without a condom with a new or casual partner, you should get tested.”

Cases of syphilis have increased by 10% from 2018 with 7,982 cases being reported in 2019.

With 229,411 cases diagnosed in 2019, chlamydia increased by 5% since 2018 and remains the most commonly diagnosed STI.

In 2019, more than 1.3 million chlamydia tests were carried out in England among young people aged 15 to 24 years as part of the National Chlamydia

Screening Programme (NCSP); the NCSP provides opportunistic screening to sexually active young people aged 15 to 24 years to increase the detection of chlamydia infections. Anyone under 25 who is sexually active is advised to get tested for chlamydia on change of sexual partner or annually.

Across all STIs, the highest rates of diagnoses continue to be seen in 15- to 24-year-olds, MSM and some 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, and in some MSM there is evidence of increased transmission of STIs due to 'chemsex'.

The number of consultations at sexual health services (SHSs), in clinic settings and online, increased by 7% between 2018 and 2019 (from 3,613,447 to 3,852,121).

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.

Those at risk of STIs can still access services through sexual health clinics during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many clinics offer online testing, which means people can order tests using clinic websites, take them in the privacy of their own home and send kits off to a laboratory for testing, and receive results via text, phone call or post.

Bolton and Trafford to remain under existing restrictions

Following a significant change in the level of infection rates over the last few days, a decision has been taken that Bolton and Trafford will now remain under existing restrictions.

This decision has been made in collaboration with local leaders after reviewing the latest data. We continually monitor outbreaks across the country, and have seen infection rates increase more than 3 times in Bolton in under a week, and double in Trafford since the last review.

We have always been clear we will take swift and decisive action where needed to contain outbreaks. We can bring the rates down if we continue to work together and I urge everyone to continue to play their part by following the rules – get tested if you have symptoms, self-isolate and practise social distancing.

Public Health England, the Joint Biosecurity Centre and NHS Test and Trace are constantly monitoring the levels of infection and other data on prevalence of the virus across the country. As has always been the case, these measures are kept under constant review.

We continue to work closely with councils, local MPs and scientific experts to keep all restrictions under constant consideration.

Restrictions in Trafford and Bolton will remain, meaning residents cannot meet people outside their bubbles either indoors in homes or in gardens.

The latest data for Bolton shows the weekly incidence rate is now at 66.6 cases per 100,000 people on 30 August. This compares to 18.9 per 100,000 people between 17 August and 23 August. This data is subject to revision and may be revised up in future releases.

Latest data for Trafford shows weekly incidence at 36.8 cases per 100,000 people on 30 August. This compares to 17.8 per 100,000 people between 17 Aug and 23 August. This data is subject to revision and may be revised up in future releases.

Everyone must continue to play their part by following local rules, and self-isolating and requesting a free test as soon as they get any symptoms.

The lifting of restrictions in Burnley, Hyndburn, Stockport and parts of Calderdale, Kirklees and Bradford will go ahead from midday today (2 September).

[PM call with Prime Minister Abe: 2 September 2020](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with Prime Minister Abe of Japan today.



The Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Abe of Japan this morning.

Following Prime Minister Abe's recent announcement that he will be stepping down, the Prime Minister thanked him for his many years of service to global politics. He noted the achievements of his tenure and the legacy of stability he will leave.

The two leaders reflected on the increasing strength of the UK-Japan relationship in recent years, across defence, trade and the cultural links between our two peoples. The Prime Minister emphasised the importance of democratic nations, including the UK and Japan, working together in support of our common values.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Abe welcomed the progress that UK and Japanese negotiators have made towards a bilateral Free Trade Agreement. The Prime Minister reiterated how important the agreement would be for providing certainty and continuity for Japanese and British companies and consumers.

The Prime Minister wished Prime Minister Abe good health and all the best for the future, and looked forward to working with his successor once they are chosen.

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[New framework contractors appointed to help stop mine water pollution](#)

As part of our programme of work to protect and enhance the environment, the Coal Authority is pleased to welcome new contractors onto our latest 4-year framework to help design and build mine water treatment schemes throughout Britain.

The new framework, with a forecast value of up to £72 million, covers all major civil engineering works needed so that treatment sites can be made ready for the construction of new schemes.

The treatment schemes themselves consist of components such as reed beds, pumping equipment, settlement lagoons and cascade steps.

Elements such as mechanical, electrical and minor works can also be called off the framework for work to refurbish our existing portfolio of more than 82 mine water treatment schemes.

Carl Banton, operations director at the Coal Authority, said:

We're committed to making a better future for people and the environment in mining areas and a key part of our environmental protection activities is treating water from historical mines to prevent pollution.

This crucial work, funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, already sees us treat 122 billion litres of water every year to improve our rivers and protect aquifers and ground waters. We'll now see that figure increase when more new mine water treatment schemes are built.

The procurement process was extremely competitive, with us receiving interest from 60 organisations. We've appointed 9 suppliers from those that applied and we're delighted to start working with the organisations that have successfully made it on to the framework.

This programme of work ultimately helps us to further protect and enhance the natural environment for our future generations and makes a positive contribution to the government's 25 year environment plan.

The length of the mine water treatment scheme design and build framework is 4 years and covers the Coal Authority's work in England, Scotland and Wales.

For more information about supplying goods and services to the Coal Authority, email our procurement team at procurement@coal.gov.uk.

Why we need to treat mine water from historical mines

When a coal mine closes, the pumps that were used to keep water out of the mine while the mineral was extracted are switched off and removed.

Over time the water levels recover within the mine and pick up naturally occurring minerals from the rocks, such as iron. This can coat river beds, stopping plant growth, causing wildlife to move on as they no longer have food.

This video explains how we typically treat the coal mine water:

[How we treat coal mine water](#)

Flood testing in Oxford hailed as a success

Press release

Training exercise sees Environment Agency and its partners assemble temporary flood defences in the city.



Officers assemble temporary flood barriers at South Hinksey

The Environment Agency and its partners put up temporary flood barriers today at two Oxford locations in a training exercise to prepare for potential flooding.

As part of Exercise Oxford Flood 20, the Environment Agency deployed temporary flood barriers at South Hinksey. At the same time Oxford Direct Services erected Oxford City Council's barriers at Bullstake Close. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services also took part in the exercise to test pumps that would be used to take water away from Botley Road.

Temporary flood barriers are portable one metre high metal frames that can be put up as needed to help protect people and properties. The exercise was an opportunity to test the Oxford emergency plans.

Mark Hill Operations Manager, Environment Agency, for Oxford, said:

It's really important that we regularly test our emergency response arrangements. We need to ensure that we're prepared and that our staff are fully trained.

This exercise demonstrates how we and our partners are working together to protect Oxford from flooding now and in the future. We know how devastating floods can be for anyone living or working in the Oxford area. So it is vital that we have these temporary barriers ready in case of flooding ahead of the construction of the Oxford flood alleviation scheme.

The Oxford flood alleviation scheme is a major partnership project being developed by the Environment Agency, to reduce flood risk to homes, businesses and transport links in Oxford and the surrounding area.

Cllr Yvonne Constance, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford flood alleviation scheme sponsor/partner, said:

There is a very strong partnership that works closely together to protect communities and businesses in Oxford from flooding.

While the permanent flood alleviation scheme is top priority and much work is being done to deliver it, we also have plans in place to protect properties and keep roads open in specific locations that we can activate if there is a threat of flooding. These plans have been effective in the past and I am sure that local people will be reassured to see them being rehearsed to ensure everything is in order should we need to enact them.

The scheme will help protect this world renowned city from the devastating effects of flooding, benefiting local people and everyone that works in and visits Oxford for many decades to come. It is designed to provide a long term solution to manage flood risk in Oxford, taking climate change projections into account.

Further information on the scheme can be found [online](#).

Notes to editors

- Photographs of the event are available on request.
- The Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum lead on incident response.
- Although temporary barriers reduce the impact of flooding when in place, the Environment Agency cannot guarantee that they will always be used and be effective in all situations. The Environment Agency strongly advise that residents still take action to increase preparedness and reduce the impact of flooding to their property.
- Oxford has a long history of flooding. A number of significant floods in past decades have caused property damage to homes and businesses and closed the railway and major roads, bringing the city to a standstill. Properties have been flooded in 7 years since 2000. Climate change is expected to cause more frequent and more severe floods.
- The Oxford flood alleviation scheme is a major partnership project being developed by the Environment Agency to reduce flood risk to homes, businesses, and transport links in Oxford and the surrounding area.
- The scheme is designed to reduce flood risk from a major flood of a scale not seen in Oxford since 1947. This means the scheme is designed to cope with floods far bigger in size than any of the floods Oxford has experienced in recent decades.
- The scheme will cost around £150m and will be one of the biggest flood schemes in the country.

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