



# Healthy Campus Presentation



[sexualwellbeing.ie](http://sexualwellbeing.ie)

Sláinte Ghnéis &  
Clár um Thoirchis Ghéarchéime

**Sexual Health &  
Crisis Pregnancy Programme**

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8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.



# About the Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP)

- The Health Service Executive (HSE) Sexual Health & Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP) is one of the Health & Wellbeing national policy priority programmes.
- The SHCPP was responsible for implementing the first National Sexual Health Strategy 2015–2020 and will play a central role in the implementation of the updated strategy.



# National Sexual Health Strategy

The aims of the original strategy were to improve sexual health and wellbeing and to reduce negative sexual health outcomes.

It set out three major areas of work to be delivered to address its aims:

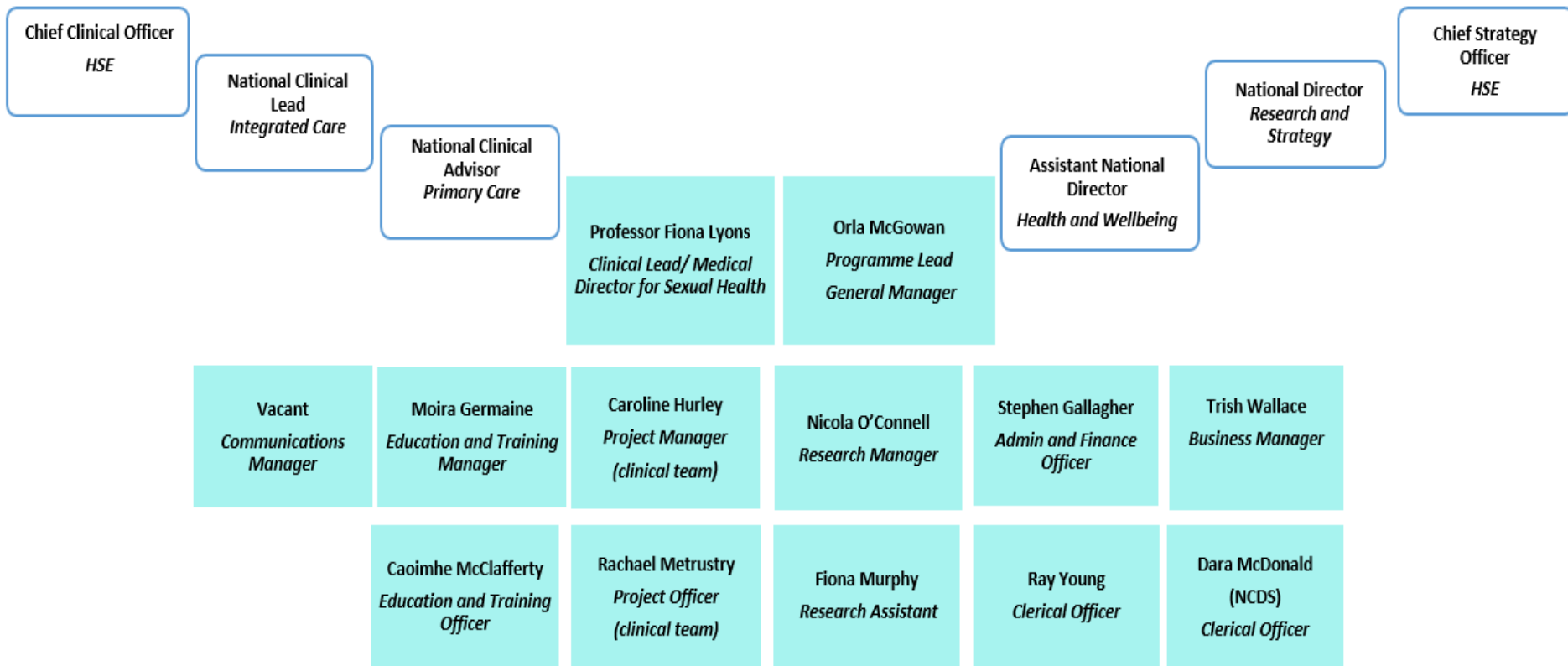
1. Promotion, education and prevention
2. Sexual health services
3. Health intelligence

The updated strategy (due 2024) is likely to incorporate but extend on these areas of work





# Overview of the SHCPP structure





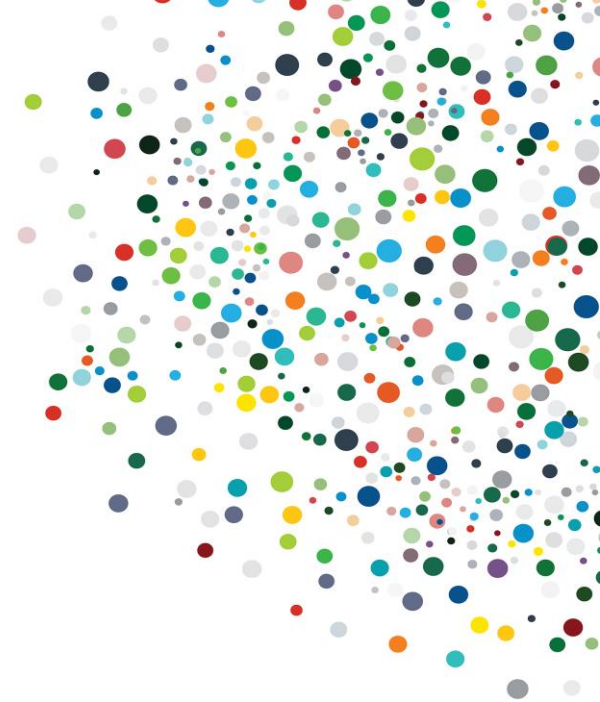
# Research Programme



# General Population Survey

(INISH - Irish National Survey of Sexual Health)

- This survey will allow us to measure knowledge, attitudes and behaviours relating to sexual health in Ireland, and the information will help design improved services and inform future planning.
- The research team at University of Galway are presently preparing for the pilot phase of the survey, which will begin data collection in Qtr 4 2024. Final report due April 2028



**Scoping Study to Inform a Survey of Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviours on Sexual Health and Wellbeing and Crisis Pregnancy among the General Population in Ireland**



Seirbhís Stáinte  
Níos Fearr  
á Forbairt

Building a  
Better Health  
Service



## Other research projects 2024

### EMIS 2023/2024

This survey follows EMIS 2017 and collects information from gay, bisexual, and other MSM living in EU countries. Data will be available in Qtr 3 2024.



### ESRI/SHCPP - Sexual health reports based on the Growing up in Ireland (GUI) data

Following the Talking About Sex and Sexual Behaviour of Young Adults in Ireland report (2020), three follow-on reports have been commissioned on pornography use; sexual initiation; and sexual health behaviours and health literacy. The first will be published in Qtr 1 2024





# STI Epidemiology Update





# Increased STI notifications in Ireland: Trends to the end of 2023

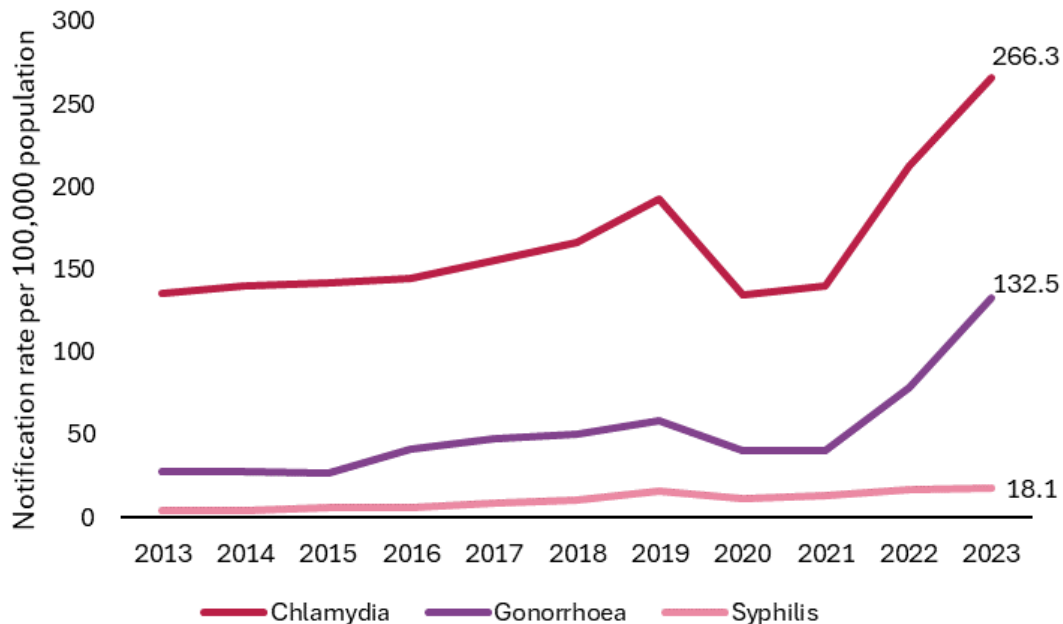


Figure 1. Notification rate per 100,000 population of confirmed cases of chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis, Ireland, 2013–2023





# Chlamydia and gonorrhoea trends

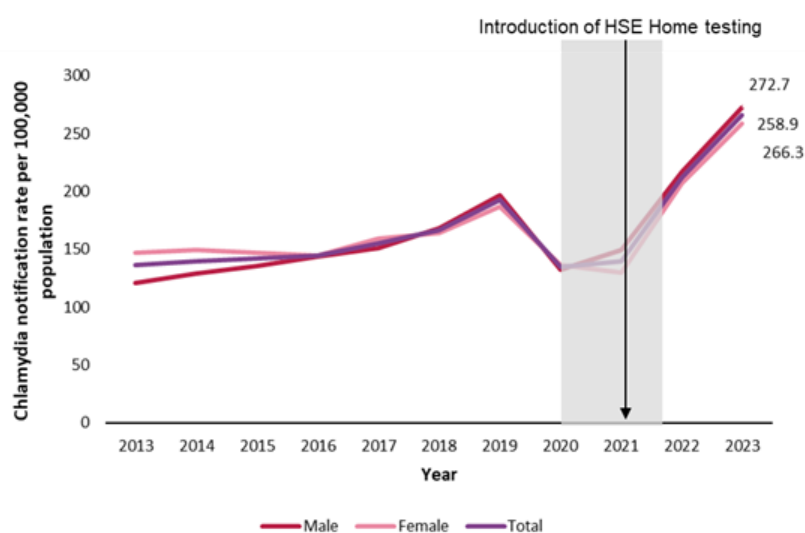


Figure 2a. Chlamydia notification rate by gender, 2013 to 2023

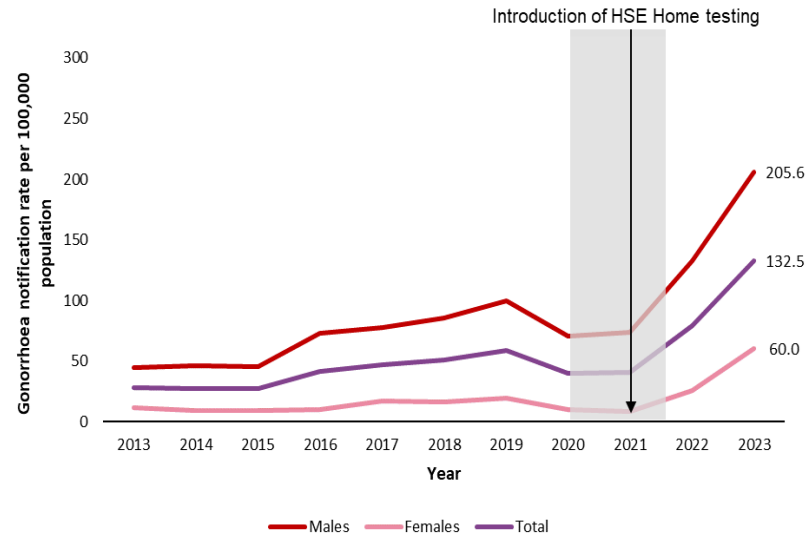


Figure 2b. Gonorrhoea notification rate by gender, 2013 to 2023





# STIs in young people (15-24 years)

- 38% increase in the STI notification rate between 2022 and 2023
- Accounted for 45% of all STIs notified in 2023
  - Females
    - 15-19 year olds: chlamydia increased by 53%; gonorrhoea increased by 175%
    - 20-24 year olds: chlamydia increased by 22%; gonorrhoea increased by 143%
  - Males
    - 15-19 year olds: chlamydia increased by 63%; gonorrhoea increased by 65%
    - 20-24 year olds: chlamydia increased by 33%; gonorrhoea increased by 57%
- European trends: An steep increase in gonorrhoea cases in women aged 20 to 24 years has been reported across 15 EU/EEA countries (including Ireland)  
(<https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2024.29.10.2400113>)



# Response to STI increases

- Sexual Wellbeing campaign
  - Promotes condom use and STI testing
  - Increased targeting to the 17-24 age group
- Free condoms
  - [www.sexualwellbeing.ie/freecondoms](http://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/freecondoms)
- Information on STI prevention and STI testing
  - [www.sexualwellbeing.ie](http://www.sexualwellbeing.ie)
- Information for gbMSM
  - [www.man2man.ie](http://www.man2man.ie)



# National Condom Distribution Service Update



# HSE National Condom Distribution Service

- Established in 2015, provides free condoms and lubricant sachets to services and organisations working with individuals who may be at risk of unplanned pregnancy, HIV or STIs
- Condom and lubricant available in clinical services, 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions and community venues
- **In 2023, 1,318,239 condoms and 688,381 lubricant sachets were ordered**
- Between 2022 and 2023:
  - 30% increase in the number of condoms ordered
  - 11% increase in the number of lubricant sachets ordered



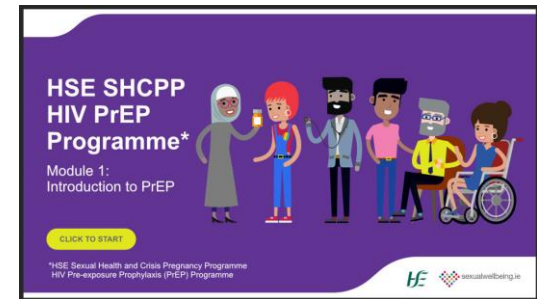
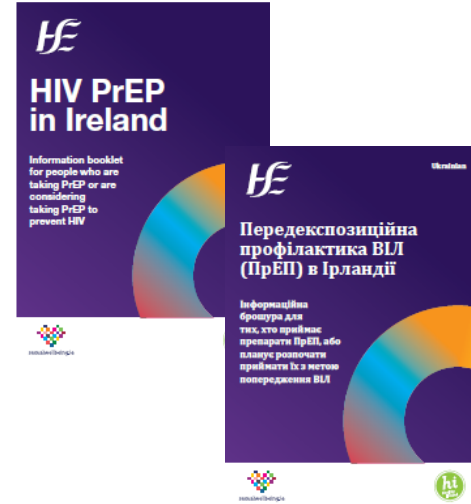


# Clinical Update



# National PrEP programme

- National HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) programme, established in 2019, to prevent sexual acquisition of HIV
- National PrEP standards and guidance available on [www.sexualwellbeing.ie/preproviders](http://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/preproviders)
- Patient information available in English, Irish, Ukrainian, Polish, French, Spanish and Portuguese
- Currently 13 public PrEP services and 17 approved GP/private PrEP providers
- PrEP e-learning module being developed to improve number of PrEP providers in public and private services.







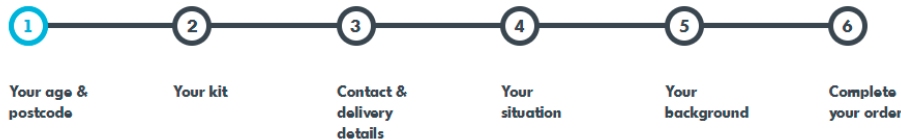
# Establishing a free home STI testing service

- A pilot conducted in 2021, found that a home STI testing service was feasible, impactful, and acceptable to service users and providers (SHCPP 2022).<sup>1</sup>
- The national service was launched in October 2022 in collaboration with online provider SH:24
- Service is available to people aged 17 and older living in the Republic of Ireland
- Service users are tested for chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and HIV, with some users offered hepatitis B and C testing as required
- Service is integrated with public STI clinics as a referral pathway for reactive results





# User journey



User visits  
[www.sh24.ie](http://www.sh24.ie)

- Complete demographic, triage and safeguarding questions. Users are recommended STI test kit based on their sex and sexual history

STI test kit  
posted to user  
address

- User completes sample collection at home

User posts  
samples back  
to lab

- Prepaid return envelope provided

Results sent to  
user by SMS\*

- Referred for confirmation testing or treatment as required, clinical support provided
- Those with reactive \*HIV/hepatitis are called by clinical team





## 2023 top line metrics

- Number of STI test kits ordered: 108,562
- Number of STI test kits returned: 75,387 (69.4%)
- Reactive results: 7,929 (10.5%)
  - 5,325 chlamydia
  - 1,604 gonorrhoea
  - 1000 reactive bloods (syphilis/HIV/hepatitis B and C)
- Results turnaround: 98.7% received test results within 72 hours of samples reaching lab

**108,562**

STI test kits ordered

**75,387 (69%)**

STI test kits returned

**7,929 (10.5%)**

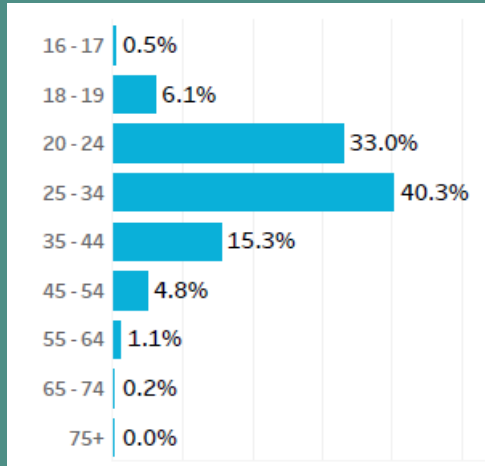
reactive results





# Who is using the service?

## Age



## Gender identity

- 59% female (incl. trans female)
- 39% male (incl. trans male)
- 1% prefer not to say
- 0.8% non-binary
- 0.2% other

## Ethnicity

- 78.6% Irish
- 9.3% Other white background
- 3.7% Latin American
- 2.5% African



# Service user information

Reaching new users, key population groups and individuals who may not attend a face-to-face service

- 47% reported they never had an STI test before
- 25% reported condomless sex in last 5 days

## Safeguarding

- 1,249 adults (1.4%) reported having experienced a sexual assault
- 459 orders from 17 year olds. 139 (30%) users raised safeguarding flags
  - depression, pressured, bribed/paid for sex, partner age, drink/drugs
- Followed up by SH:24 safeguarding team.

## Acceptability

- 5,722 users submitted feedback, 5,225 (91%) rating the service 5/5





# 2023/24 Service developments and initiatives

- Online management of chlamydia
  - Piloted September 2023 – February 2024
  - Approx. 1400 CT positive received digital prescription
  - Service to resume on a permanent basis in May 2024
- Plan for inclusion of a condom and lubricant order option in 2024
- In collaboration with Public Health in ROI and NI, conducted a gonorrhoea (GC) oropharyngeal sampling pilot in those  $\leq 25$  years, as part of work to understand current GC rates in young people. Results are being currently being analysed.
- Working to establish community pathways to improve access to home testing for specific population groups, such as those in migrant, homeless or addiction settings.





# Sexual Wellbeing Campaign



[sexualwellbeing.ie](http://sexualwellbeing.ie)



## Priority Audience – 17 to 24 year olds

- The Sexual Wellbeing campaign is designed to promote positive sexual wellbeing in an inclusive, non-judgemental and empowering tone.
- The campaign aims to engage with 17 to 30 year olds to encourage condom use to reduce STI incidence and prevent unplanned pregnancies. Within this group 17 to 24 year olds are a priority audience for key messages.
- It aims to ensure [www.sexualwellbeing.ie](http://www.sexualwellbeing.ie) and Sexual Wellbeing social media platforms are the go-to, trusted sources for all adults in Ireland seeking information on sexual health and wellbeing.







# Campaign Activity



# Website and Search

Apart from going to a GP/doctor, Google is the most common source of information about sexual health for Irish young people (omnibus survey of 515 adults aged 18-30 in 2023).

A priority for the campaign is to ensure that the website is appearing in the top results for common sexual health terms.

Our web priorities:

- Optimising web content for search engine optimisation
- Identifying competitive search terms that benefit from pay per click advertising
- Preparing for growth of AI in search.





# Social Media

Sexual Wellbeing social content is designed to meet a youth audience's behaviour and expectations on social platforms.

Our social campaign focuses on youth platforms such as TikTok and Snapchat first, with Instagram also proving effective for message deliver, and to a lesser extent Facebook.





## Out of home advertising (OOH) and roadshow

Sexual Wellbeing OOH advertising is targeted in locations where the 17 to 30 year old audience spends their time, with a slightly higher weighting on locations where 17 to 24 year olds are based (including third level campuses).

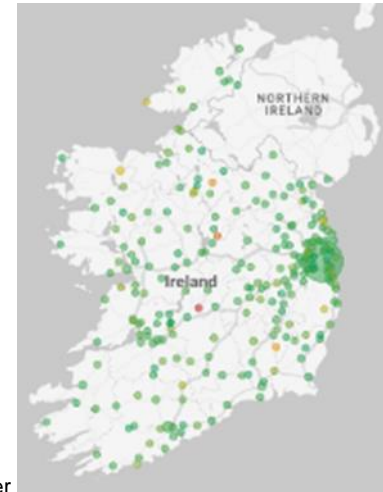
Other locations for OOH include busy social or nightlife locations, gym chains, pub and club washrooms.





# Wider media: TV/BVOD, Precision display and VOD

- TV spots offer huge reach for audience, and help build wider campaign awareness as well as increasing traffic to the site.
- Precision digital advertising is signal based targeting enables the right personalised creative message to reach the right audience depending on their circumstances.
- 33 videos across Youtube, Twitch and streaming services with different messages around STIs, condom use, consent etc. played across VOD in 2023.



Clicks cluster around University and urban settings.

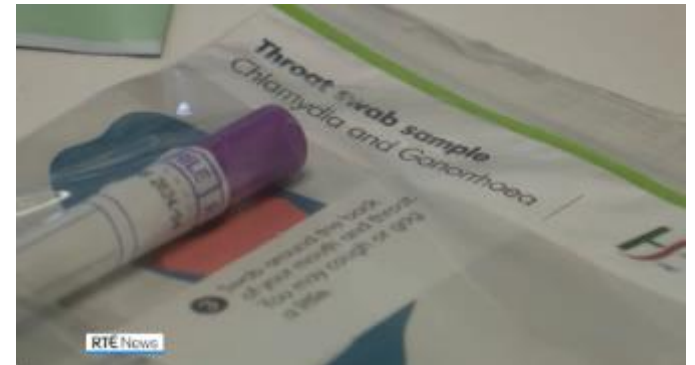
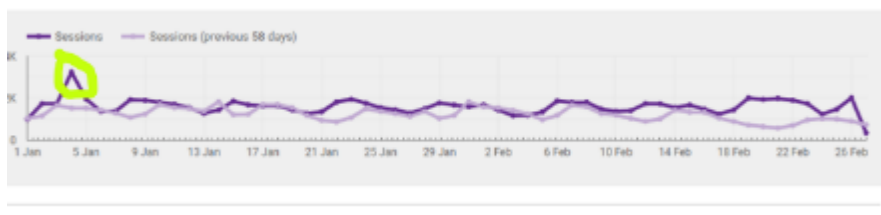
We also see clusters along commuter routes.



## Media coverage

Media coverage has helped with driving awareness and traffic to the website.

We see a large spike in web traffic when there is media coverage promoting a campaign message (e.g. free STI testing was covered by national media in early January).





# Campaign Measurement

**466k**

Tracked visits to the SexualWellbeing.ie website in 2023

**49%**

Percentage of 18 to 24 year olds who are aware of Sexual Wellbeing website\*

**57%**

Percentage of 18 to 24 year olds who had seen Sexual Wellbeing social media messages

**37.5 million**

Video views across all Sexual Wellbeing social content in 2023

**10K per month**

Surpassing quota of 10k home STI test kits per month



## Next steps - research

- **Quantitative market** research to track campaign awareness and key message awareness year on year with our audience.
- In **qualitative research**, to learn more about attitudes and behaviours towards campaign priority areas - condom use, prescription and emergency contraception, testing for STIs, sexual consent, open communication about these topics with sexual partners and with healthcare providers.
- Planning to pause all new creative content until research is complete, while continuing Search and Social campaign where demand for information and advice is high.





## Contacts

- Muireann Kirby, HSE Programmes and Campaigns, [muireann.kirby@hse.ie](mailto:muireann.kirby@hse.ie)
- Róisín Guiry, HSE Programmes and Campaigns, [roisin.guiry@hse.ie](mailto:roisin.guiry@hse.ie)



# Funding




# Funding of Sexual Health NGOs

- HIV Ireland, Dublin
- Gay Health Network
- GOSSH, Galway
- Sexual Health Centre, Cork
- Youth Health Service, Cork
- AIDS West, Limerick



# My Options service

- My Options helpline provides information on how to access abortion services. Staff also provide listening support to anyone experiencing an unplanned pregnancy.
- My Options posters and leaflets are available to download or to order directly from [HealthPromotion.ie](https://www.healthpromotion.ie)
- **The leaflets are available in several languages.**




**My Options**  
Abortion  
Information  
and Listening  
Support

The My Options helpline provides information on how to access abortion services. Not all GPs provide abortion care. The helpline can provide contact details of GPs and family planning clinics that do. Staff can also provide listening support to anyone experiencing an unplanned pregnancy.

Freephone **1800 828 010**  
Webchat available at [myoptions.ie](https://myoptions.ie)

If you have had an abortion and need medical advice, you can speak to a nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.





# Review of Unplanned Pregnancy Support Services

- 10 services nationwide provide face to face unplanned pregnancy and post abortion counselling. A review of these services has been completed and will inform future developments.
- For a list of services visit
- <https://www2.hse.ie/services/unplanned-pregnancy/support-services/find-a-face-to-face-service/>



# Education and Training

Moira Germaine, Education & Training Manager ([moira.germaine2@hse.ie](mailto:moira.germaine2@hse.ie))

Caoimhe Mc Clafferty, Education & Training Office ([caoimhem.mcclafferty@hse.ie](mailto:caoimhem.mcclafferty@hse.ie))



# Foundation Programme in Sexual Health Promotion (FPSHP) 6 day training

**Aim** : to enhance participants' capacity to incorporate sexual health promotion into their work through developing their comfort levels, confidence, knowledge and skills in relation to sexual health.

**Learning outcomes** -participants will:

- have an increased understanding of their values and attitudes with regard to sex and how this might impact on their work;
- be aware that people are sexual beings through their life course and have needs with regard to sexual health, whatever their age or level of sexual activity;
- have increased knowledge around sexual health issues;
- have an increased understanding of sexual health in an Irish context



# Foundation Programme in Sexual Health Promotion

## Topics

- An introduction to sexual health promotion
- Sexual rights and inequalities
- Sexual health promotion within the Irish context
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- A life course approach to sexual health
- Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Intimacy and sexual pleasure
- Consent and the law
- Physical sexual health
- The role of policy when working in sexual health promotion
- Raising the issue of sexual health with clients

<https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/for-professionals/training/sexual-health-promotion/>





# Working safely and effectively in sexual health promotion

## Considerations for policy development

**Aim:** To develop participants' knowledge of the importance of policy and how to develop same, in order to work safely and effectively in sexual health promotion.

**Sexual health promotion** encompasses a range of topics within the broad area of sexuality wellbeing. This includes but is not limited to relationships, sexual activity, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.

**Learning outcomes-** with regards to sexual health promotion, participants will have :

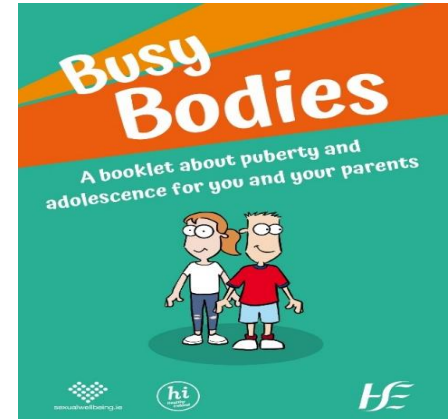
- increased awareness of the rationale and benefits for policy/guidelines development;
- identified the proactive and reactive aspects of their work, and related policy implications;
- an awareness of relevant legislation in relation to sexual health promotion;
- an understanding of the process required in planning to develop policy/guidelines



# Resources for HE staff and students in a parent/carer capacity

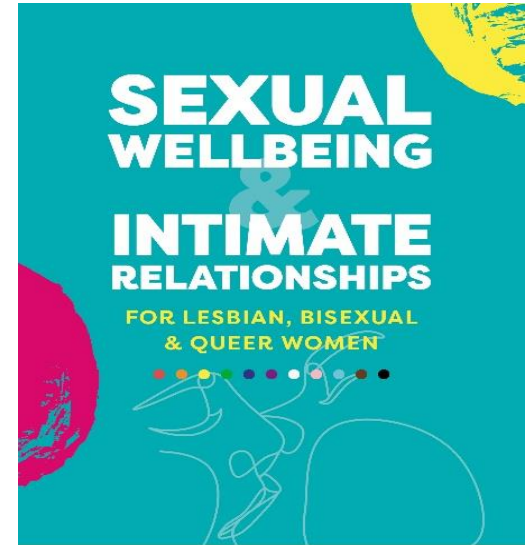
A series of booklets for parents under the branding  
*'Making the 'Big Talk' many small talks'*

Busy Bodies – a booklet  
about puberty and  
adolescence for children  
and parents



# Resource for Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women

- *Sexual Wellbeing & Intimate Relationships for Lesbian, Bisexual & Queer Women* resource:
  - Developed by Sexual Health Centre Cork, LINC and the HSE SHCPP
  - Available to download at [sexualwellbeing.ie/for professionals/](https://sexualwellbeing.ie/for-professionals/)





Questions?