



Scrutiny Report

Sexual Health and Wellbeing

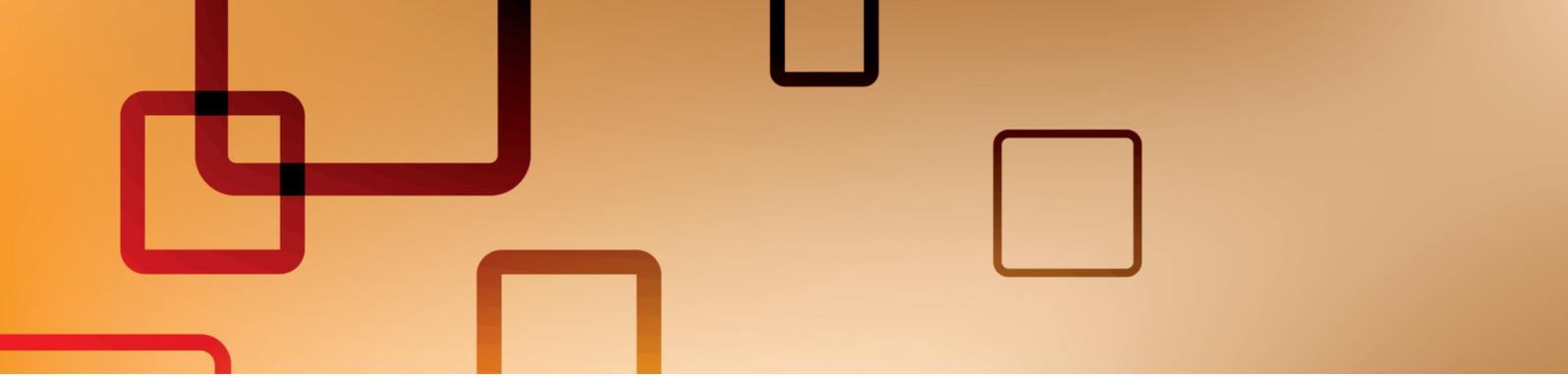
Report of the Health Scrutiny Panel
North Lincolnshire Council
June 2017





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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Councillor Holly Mumby-Croft
Chairman, Health Scrutiny Panel

Sexual health is a key public health concern. Good sexual health services offer support, help people avoid sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies and allow consenting people to have rewarding relationships with their partners. As such, the Health Scrutiny Panel were keen to ensure that local services were accessible, appropriate, joined-up, and providing the best

possible value-for-money. There are a number of agencies and organisations involved in the provision of sexual health services, from the specialist service, to GPs, colleges and many others. We wanted to understand how they worked together to support and safeguard our residents.

Thankfully, we found an encouraging picture in North Lincolnshire with excellent performances in many key areas. We found the healthcare professionals and officers we interviewed to be caring and dedicated. Teenage pregnancy rates in North Lincolnshire are the lowest on record, and our chlamydia detection rates are among the best in the U.K. The efforts of many individuals have led to this positive outcome, and on behalf of the panel, I would like to thank them all.

The panel has agreed a relatively limited number of recommendations. However, I would wish to see action taken on these as soon as possible, to ensure that residents continue to be well served, and that taxpayers' money is well spent.

As Chairman, I would like to thank all of the agencies and individuals who the panel met with to discuss the planned and ongoing work, and I would also like to thank my colleagues on the panel for their considered input.

BACKGROUND

Sexual and reproductive health and HIV services make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of individuals and the communities that we serve. North Lincolnshire Council and its partners wish to ensure effective service arrangements are in place to ensure the sexual health needs of local people and communities are met. Such an approach has a number of benefits, including:

- Promoting the rights of people to have mutually respectful and healthy sexual relationships free from discrimination, abuse, violence or coercion,
- Ensuring the rights of all to education and guidance, to ensure that they are fully informed about sexuality and keeping themselves safe and healthy, avoiding sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and/or unplanned pregnancy,
- Accepting that abstinence or delayed sexual activity is a legitimate choice for any person,
- Reinforcing the values of respect for the self and others,
- Accepting the diversity of beliefs, values and moralities of our population in a non-judgemental manner.

Promoting sexual health and wellbeing is not solely delivered by our specialist sexual health providers. A range of other partners help to ensure holistic support, including schools and colleges, parents, GPs and pharmacies, secondary care, Wellbeing Hubs and the local authority. Engagement and 'buy-in' from these partners is comprehensive and effective, and thanks to these considerable efforts we have a population with high levels of sexual health literacy and low population risk.

Throughout this review, the scrutiny panel consistently found good evidence of a well-performing and outward-looking specialist service, with appropriate links and patient pathways into many of the above partners. The panel is therefore encouraged by the commissioning and effective contract monitoring arrangements put in place by North Lincolnshire Council. Services are modern, accessible, non-judgemental, and increasingly holistic. In addition, the council has commissioned other services for high-risk groups in order to minimise the risk of passing on STIs to others.

FINDINGS

Commissioning

The Health and Social Care Act (2012) included provision to transfer the commissioning responsibility for sexual and reproductive healthcare in England from local NHS organisations to local authorities. This coincided with the transfer of wider public health responsibilities, and was intended to provide a more holistic approach to sexual health and wellbeing. A smaller number of responsibilities, such as acute and chronic gynaecology services remain with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS England commission a number of specialised services. A summary of commissioning responsibilities is below.

The Local Authority commission:

- Comprehensive sexual health services, including:
 - Many aspects of contraception,
 - STI testing and treatment, screening and partner notification,
 - Sexual health aspects of psychosexual counselling,
 - Sexual health specialist services,
 - Social care services, including support for teenage parents, HIV social care, etc.

The Clinical Commissioning Group commission:

- Sterilisation,
- Abortion services,
- Contraception primarily for gynaecological purposes,
- Some HIV testing, and
- Non-sexual health elements of psychosexual health services.

NHS England commission:

- HIV treatment,
- Some contraception and STI testing and treatment provided in general practice,
- Cervical and antenatal screening, and HPV immunisation,
- Some HIV testing,
- Sexual Health elements of healthcare in secure and detained settings,
- Sexual Assault Referral Centres, and
- Specialist foetal medicine services.

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The above powers came into force in April 2013 and in North Lincolnshire a co-ordinated commissioning exercise was completed, including input from a range of appropriate partners. The contract for an open access, Integrated Sexual Health Service, combining contraception and sexual health services and Genito-Urinary Medicine, was subsequently awarded to Virgin Care. North Lincolnshire Council has a legal duty to commission HIV prevention, sexual health promotion, an open access service for STIs, and contraception for all age groups. This includes free testing and treatment for STIs, notification of sexual partners where required, free provision of contraception, as well as the provision of information, advice and support on a range of issues, such as STIs, contraception, relationships and unplanned pregnancy. The service operates on a 'hub and spoke' model, with a central base in the Ironstone Centre in Scunthorpe, with additional sites in Ashby, Barton and Brigg. In addition, the service provides outreach sessions at a number of educational and support facilities throughout North Lincolnshire, and operates a 'Virtual Hub' providing advice, information, support, and the ability to book appointments on-line 24/7.

The Population of North Lincolnshire

The picture around sexual health and wellbeing is positive. There is a relatively stable population of young people within North Lincolnshire, and risk factors, deprivation, and the incidence and prevalence of STIs are below average. In addition, compared to national averages we have fewer young people excluded from school, in contact with the youth justice system, or engaging in risk-taking behaviour. These factors reduce the risk of unplanned pregnancy or acquiring an STI.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Profile

The following table summarise some key statistics on the sexual and reproductive health of the population of North Lincolnshire, compared to national and regional performance. These are colour coded using the 'traffic light' system, where red is worse than the benchmark, amber the same, and green is performing better than the benchmark. Some of these key measures are discussed in the following sections.

FINDINGS

Table 1 – Sexual and Reproductive Health

Indicator	North Lincolnshire	Yorkshire & Humber	England
Syphilis Diagnostic Rate/100,000 people (lower number is better)	1.2	3.6	9.3
Gonorrhoea Diagnostic Rate/100,000 people (lower number is better)	50.2	45.0	70.7
Chlamydia Detection Rate/100,000 people (higher number is better)	3393	2031	1887
Chlamydia – proportion aged 15-24 screened (higher number is better)	28.1	21.2	22.5
New HIV diagnosis rate/100,000 people aged 15+ (lower number is better)	5.0	5.5	12.1
HIV diagnosis prevalence rate/100,000 people aged 15-59 (lower number is better)	0.69	1.32	2.26

FINDINGS

Safeguarding

There are clear and comprehensive safeguarding arrangements in place at the provider, with thorough and appropriate professional oversight by commissioners at North Lincolnshire Council. The scrutiny panel observed these at first hand when they visited the Ironstone site, and was assured that there are assessment processes and referral pathways in place for issues such as suspected child sexual exploitation (CSE), domestic abuse, Stop Smoking services, suspected trafficking, FGM, etc. Safeguarding supervision is undertaken by the provider on a quarterly basis, and mandatory training compliance consistently performs at 100%. Again, North Lincolnshire Council monitors this as part of their contract

assurance processes. There is a robust process in place to receive Patient Safety Alerts, and take any actions as appropriate. The provider also actively engages with wider healthy lifestyle issues, including weight management, promoting physical activity, and addressing substance misuse. The provider has adopted the 'Making Every Contact Count' approach. This utilises the day-to-day contact that services have with local people, to support them in making healthy choices about their behaviours and lifestyle.

Activity in North Lincolnshire

Since the service began operating in 2013/14, there have been year-on-year increases in the number of people accessing the service

Figure 1 – People Accessing Services by Age - 2013/14 to 2015/16

Age Range	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Under 18	2,402	3,578	3,175
18-24	3,357	3,944	4,493
25-49	3,052	3,945	4,353
50+	301	371	359

The number of females accessing services continues to rise, primarily related to the contraceptive and sexual health services, whereas the number of males using services has recently fallen back from a peak in 2014/15.

FINDINGS

Figure 2 – People Accessing Services by Gender - 2013/14 to 2015/16

Sex	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Male	1,593	1,967,	1,799
% increase year on year		19.01%	-9.34%
Female	3,567	4,391	4,659
% increase year on year		18.77%	5.75%
Total	5,160	6,358	6,458

The service also deals with a relatively small population of men who have sex with men (MSM), which remains static. As previously, all appropriate services, assessments and referral pathways are in place to support this group. In addition, North Lincolnshire Council do commission some specialist outreach and support provision in this area, in order to reduce risk factors.

Engagement and Accessibility

The specialist provider operates on a ‘hub and spoke’ model, with a central base in Scunthorpe and clinics in Barton and Brigg. In addition, a number of outreach activities are undertaken, often in partnership with the school nursing providers. For example, providers have worked with the Youth Council and others in the past, and utilised the Health Bus to visit our more rural areas. Feedback from service users is obtained through the national Friends and Family Test.

The school nursing team provides an offer to work with each school in North Lincolnshire to develop a comprehensive Health Plan, including how and where to access information and support, and ensuring students know how they can stay safe and well. Take up of these Health Plans is at almost 100% of secondary schools. Whilst sessions in schools are primarily ‘drop-in’ focussed, other options are being explored and implemented, including ‘corridor workshops’ for those who prefer not to have direct contact with a nurse.

Services have endeavoured to be as accessible as possible, with the innovative use of apps, a 24/5 phonenumber, and an online ‘virtual hub’ presence where people can access information and book appointments at any time. The school nursing team have also ensured that services are available throughout holidays and in a range of appropriate settings.

FINDINGS

The panel is assured that services are commissioned and provided based on robust evidence gathered at a national level, and also local evidence such as the Adolescent Lifestyle Survey, which informs local work. For example, evidence from the survey that young people are increasingly delaying sexual activity is being used in schools to normalise this and prevent people from engaging in sexual activity before they are ready. Throughout, appropriate pathways are in place to enable referrals, opportunistic administration of HPV vaccinations, etc.

Public Health Outcome Framework

Like all local authorities, North Lincolnshire Council is measured against a series of indicators as part of the Public Health Outcomes Framework tool. This dataset indicates how well a number of public health measures are being implemented and how they are performing. There are three local outcomes related to sexual health and wellbeing – chlamydia detection rates, teenage conceptions and late HIV diagnosis. North Lincolnshire performs well in all three.

Chlamydia Detection Rates

North Lincolnshire performs particularly well for chlamydia detection rates. The highest performing areas typically score above 2,300

detections per 100,000 young people, where it becomes theoretically possible to effectively eliminate the STI. The latest figures (2015) show that in North Lincolnshire this rate was 3,393, which contributes to North Lincolnshire Council performing within the top ten in the country. The number of those under the age of 25 who have been screened for chlamydia comfortably exceeds national and regional averages.

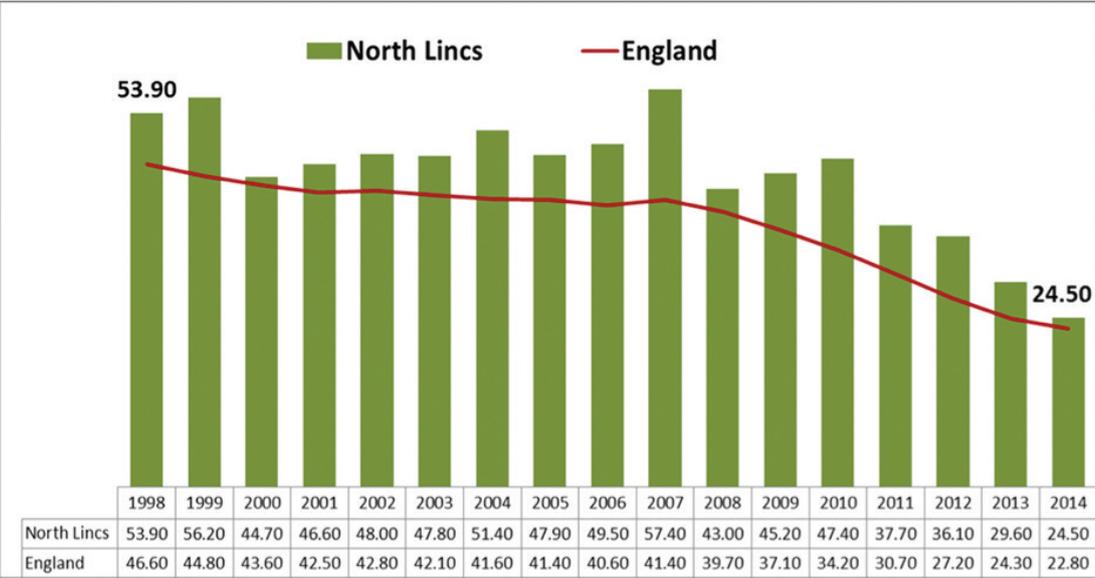
Building upon this impressive performance is a comprehensive action plan to increasingly focus on males and high risk groups, and target messages via social media. Young people can utilise postal kits to prevent having to access primary or specialist care, where there may be an issue around stigma. There is a full outreach programme, including during school holidays, via pharmacies, colleges, freshers' events, etc.

Teenage Conceptions

The number of females under the age of 18 who conceive a child has more than halved since a high in 2007 of 57.4 conceptions per 1,000 to 24.5 per 1,000 in 2014. It is likely that this downwards annual trend will continue when 2015 data is published in spring 2017, with historic lows reported in the most recent quarterly published statistics.

FINDINGS

Figure 3 – Teenage conceptions in England and North Lincolnshire 1998-2014

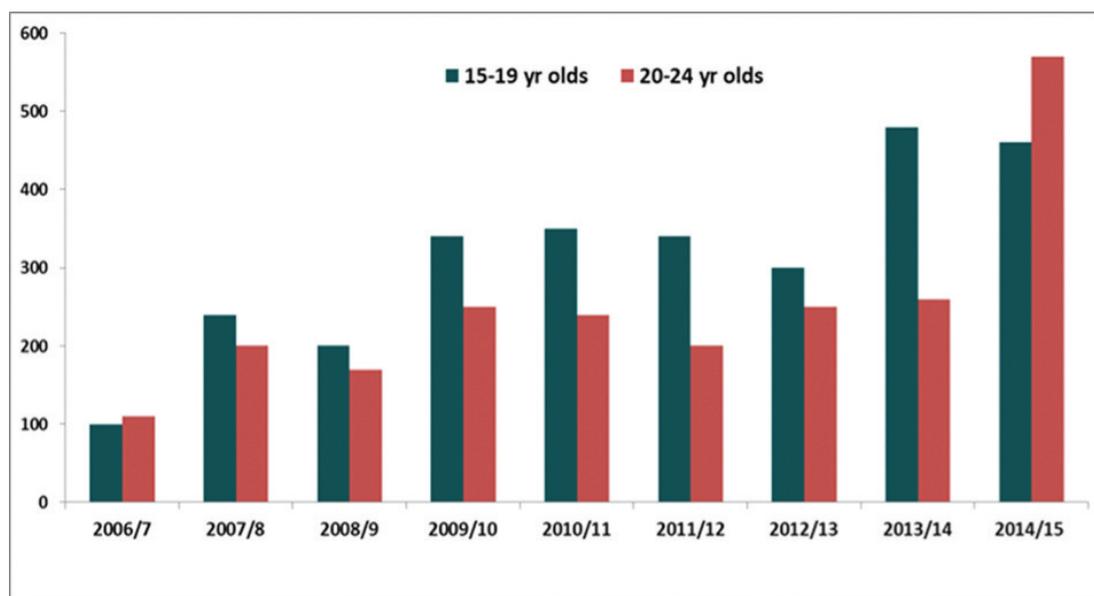


Tackling teenage conceptions has been a priority area of work for North Lincolnshire Council, local NHS organisations, specialist providers, and other stakeholders for many years. A great deal of work has been completed locally to increase economic prosperity and raise educational performance

and aspiration, and also to improve access to contraception, including long-acting reversible contraception (LARC). This increase in LARC uptake has been a key public health success in recent years and has assisted greatly in reducing teenage conceptions.

FINDINGS

Figure 4 – uptake of LARC in women under 25



In recent months, the provider has also significantly reduced the number of females who have requested removal of the LARC device within a year of fitting. Counselling is provided to those who are considering removal, giving appropriate guidance on expectations, managing side-effects, etc.

HIV

HIV has a low rate of prevalence in North Lincolnshire, and as per Department of Health advice, there is subsequently no routine screening programme offered. As set out in Table 1 (Sexual and Reproductive Health Profile), there are fewer cases of new

diagnosis of HIV for those in North Lincolnshire than most other areas of the region, and performance on HIV is better than, or broadly in line with, national averages. All patients in specialist services are offered HIV screening. In line with expectations, certain high-risk groups such as MSM do have a higher rate of infection, and the council and others commission services to reduce this level of risk, through education, contraception, regular testing, etc. Risk handling is also a key component of staff training at the provider.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

Throughout this review, the panel have been hugely impressed by the dedication and passion shown by all professionals involved in the planning, commissioning and delivery of sexual health and wellbeing services across North Lincolnshire. This commitment is also accompanied by clear evidence of services that are having a positive effect on local people's health and wellbeing. Teenage pregnancy is at a historic low, with the latest figures showing that the number of under 18 conceptions is lower than the national and regional rates, and North Lincolnshire Council is performing as one of the best local authorities in the country for chlamydia detection rates.

The panel is convinced that these positive results stem from a genuine move from the outdated 'see and treat' model that was prevalent across the country a decade ago, to a more joined-up, inclusive model, where care and support is delivered holistically, with clear pathways and joint working the norm. The panel believes that many other services could learn from this model.

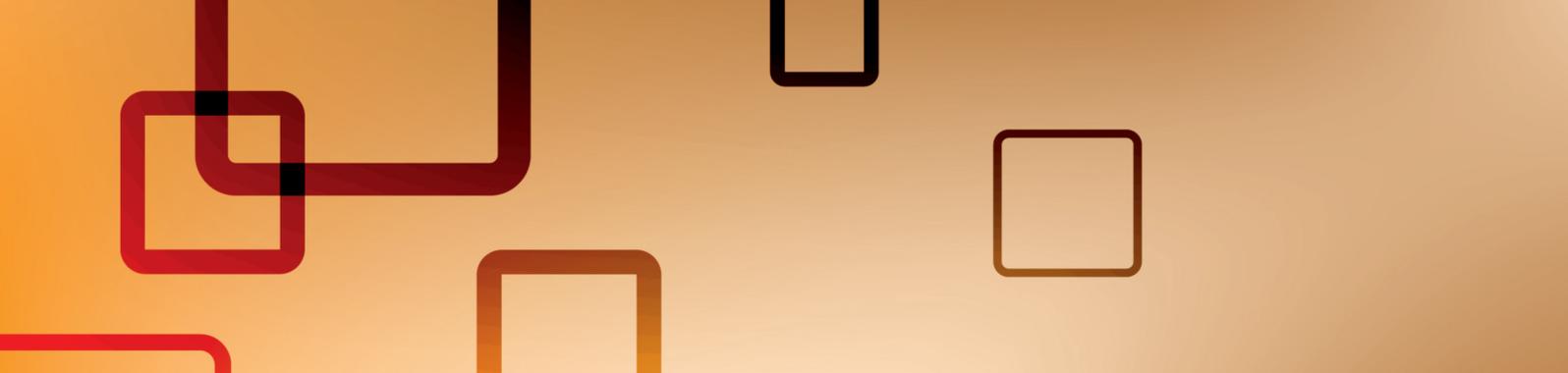
Whilst local performance is undoubtedly positive, it would also be wrong to specifically focus on our specialist providers. The panel believes that the providers would be the first to confirm that their work is built on the foundation of the efforts of many, many individuals working across society to raise aspiration and levels of achievement, and to help support our most vulnerable residents. This combined effort can be seen in the successes outlined throughout this report.

The panel set out a limited number of recommendations below.

Recommendation 1 – (a) That the panel welcomes the outstanding local performance on chlamydia screening, as set out on table 1, (b) that local commissioners and providers remain open to approaches from others who wish to improve their own performance and learning around delivering effective and comprehensive chlamydia screening, and (c) that providers work to the published Public Health England National Guidance and Action Plan to sustain excellent and positive activity in respect of detection rates within North Lincolnshire.

Recommendation 2 – That all council and school staff, and all of those working with children and young people across North Lincolnshire, be congratulated for their excellent work in reducing teenage pregnancy.

Recommendation 3 – That clear, outcome-focussed requirements for outreach and engagement be given appropriate weight in any forthcoming retendering exercise. The panel consider that the use of challenging targets and associated contract monitoring arrangements are likely to be useful tools to achieve this.



Recommendation 4 – That the council’s Integrated Commissioning Team increasingly utilise the ‘Outcome Based Accountability’ methodology when commissioning sexual health and wellbeing services, to ensure outcomes are clearly specified, and that relevant performance measures are agreed and monitored.

Recommendation 5 – That, in the future, the specialist provider undertake annual patient surveys and planned and ad hoc feedback sessions to inform their work, regularly sharing findings with the Health Scrutiny Panel.

Recommendation 6 – That North Lincolnshire Council and local commissioners continue to seek collaboration and new commissioning arrangements over larger geographical footprints, where this would meet local need.

