

Equality Impact Assessment

What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and why does the County Council do them?

The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED) is an obligation within the [Equality Act 2010](#) (“the Act”), which asks public authorities, like Hampshire County Council, to give ‘due regard’ to equality considerations, in particular to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This includes assessing the impact of policies and practices on individuals and communities with a protected characteristic, as defined in the Act and some other specific groups. The County Council uses EIAs to ensure it has paid ‘due regard’ to equalities considerations when there are changes to a service or policy, a new project or certain decisions.

EIA author	Position & Department	Contact
Joanne Hartley	Public Health Principal Adults' Health and Care	joanne.hartley2@hants.gov.uk

Title:	Young People's Sexual Health Service in Community Pharmacy Pilot
Related EIAs:	None
EIA for Savings Programme:	No
Service affected	Young people aged under 25 years living in Hampshire Local Authority area, particularly those living in areas where engagement with specialist sexual health services has reduced. Participating community pharmacies, commissioned sexual health services and partner organisations will also be affected.
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	The proposed pilot will test the feasibility, accessibility and acceptability of providing a sexual health offer for young people through selected community pharmacies. The service will provide free condoms, C-Card initiation (a condom card scheme - registering young people and distributing condoms), Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs) self-sampling kits, brief sexual health advice and signposting to local services. Pilot locations will initially focus on Rushmoor, Hart, New Forest and Gosport, areas identified as having experienced significant reductions in young people's access to specialist sexual health services. The pilot supports Public Health priorities relating to prevention of sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancy, reducing health inequalities, improving

	access and supporting earlier diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections.
New/changed service/policy/project	This is a new pilot project designed to complement existing sexual health services by offering accessible community-based provision through pharmacies. Findings from the pilot phase will inform future commissioning decisions and potential wider implementation across Hampshire subject to evaluation of improved access, experience and outcomes. Please note that any future commissioning will be subject to Public Health Grant allocation and strategic priorities. The pilot will commence in Q3 2026/27 and run until Q4 2026/27. A marketing and communications campaign will support the pilot by raising awareness of the service through targeted promotion in participating localities, helping to maximise uptake and ensure eligible young people are aware of the support available through community pharmacies.

Engagement
Development of the pilot has been informed by intelligence from both the commissioned sexual health service which identified reductions in young people's attendance at specialist sexual health services and reductions in STI testing activity and the Public Health Intelligence team who have analysed Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)/Chlamydia positivity, testing and detection rates and under 18 conception rates alongside demographic information about where young populations are concentrated. The pilot includes a strong commitment to engagement and co-production with young people. Proposed engagement activity includes: • Focus groups with young people aged under 25 years old. • College-based engagement activity. • Surveys and insight gathering. • Testing of communications and marketing materials. • Engagement with young people who may face barriers to accessing services, including those not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Local Pharmaceutical Committee, community pharmacies, sexual health services, colleges, youth organisations and wider partners will be involved in pilot development and implementation. The engagement process will seek to understand barriers to access, confidentiality concerns, preferred service locations, opening times, communication methods and the acceptability of pharmacy-based sexual health services. A marketing and communications campaign will use this insight and behavioural science to support the pilot by raising awareness of the service through targeted promotion in participating localities, helping to maximise uptake and ensure eligible young people are aware of the support available through community pharmacies.

Age

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The pilot has been specifically designed to improve access to sexual health prevention and testing services for young people aged under 25 years, who have been identified as a priority population due to higher rates of sexually transmitted infections and declining engagement with existing services. Young people are the specific target group for the service. Community pharmacy provision may improve accessibility through extended opening hours, convenient locations and reduced barriers to engagement. Providing services through community pharmacies offers additional access routes that may be more convenient, less stigmatising and easier to access than specialist clinics. The pilot is expected to improve access to condoms, Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) testing and sexual health advice, helping support earlier diagnosis and treatment and reducing adverse sexual health outcomes among younger age groups. The service will be co-produced with young people to ensure it is acceptable and responsive to their needs. Communications and service design will be tailored to younger populations and informed by behavioural insights.
Mitigation	

Disability

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Community pharmacies often provide accessible locations within local communities and may be easier to reach than specialist sexual health clinics. This may benefit young people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or mental health conditions who may experience additional barriers when accessing healthcare services. People with physical disabilities, may benefit from more locally available services and reduced travel requirements. The pilot may also improve access to confidential support and information for young people who find traditional service settings difficult to access. Participating pharmacies will be selected based on accessibility criteria and ability to provide confidential consultation spaces. Information materials will be produced in accessible formats where required and staff will be supported through appropriate training.
Mitigation	

Gender Reassignment

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Young transgender people can experience barriers to accessing sexual health services, including concerns regarding confidentiality, stigma and discrimination. The pilot aims to provide non-judgemental, accessible and inclusive sexual health support through community pharmacy settings. Increasing the number of access points may improve service utilisation amongst transgender young people and support earlier engagement with prevention and testing services. Training and service specifications will reinforce inclusive practice, confidentiality and respectful communication for all service users.
Mitigation	

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The pilot supports prevention of unintended pregnancy through increased access to condoms, safer sex advice and signposting to contraceptive services. Improved access to sexual health information and support may contribute to reductions in unplanned pregnancy amongst young people and increase awareness of available reproductive health services. Clear referral pathways will be established to contraception and maternity services where appropriate. Placing this service in community pharmacy may make it more accessible to pregnant people than services in traditional settings where longer journeys may be required in some areas.
Mitigation	

Race

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Some ethnic minority groups may experience barriers to accessing sexual health services due to cultural, linguistic or practical factors.

	The pilot aims to increase local access to services through community settings and will seek insight from diverse groups of young people to ensure services are culturally appropriate and accessible. Engagement activity will seek representation from diverse communities. Information materials and communications will be designed to be inclusive and culturally sensitive.
Mitigation	

Religion or Belief

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Religious beliefs may influence attitudes towards sexual health, contraception and STI testing. Community pharmacy provision increases service choice and provides an additional access route for young people who wish to access sexual health support discreetly. The pilot does not disadvantage any religious group and aims to provide equitable access to information and services. Staff training will emphasise respectful and non-judgemental delivery of services regardless of religious or belief background.
Mitigation	

Sex

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The pilot is expected to have a positive impact on people of all sexes by increasing access to sexual health prevention, testing and early intervention services. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) self-sampling kits are differentiated for men, women and transgender people, providing a confidential, convenient and accessible route to testing through community pharmacies. Evidence indicates that younger men, are less likely to access traditional sexual health services and are often underrepresented in routine testing and prevention interventions. Locating services within community pharmacies may reduce barriers associated with stigma, inconvenience and service awareness, thereby improving engagement among this group. While the service is designed to benefit all sexes equally, it is anticipated that pharmacy-based provision may attract a higher proportion of young men than specialist sexual health services, resulting in a particular positive impact for this population. The pilot will ensure that information, advice and promotional materials are inclusive and accessible to people of all sexes. A supporting communications and marketing campaign will use targeted and differentiated approaches, informed by local intelligence and

	service user insight, to maximise engagement across different groups and address any identified barriers to access. Monitoring and evaluation will include analysis of service uptake, testing activity and outcomes by sex. This data will be used to identify any disparities in access, experience or outcomes and to inform ongoing service development, ensuring that the pilot remains equitable and responsive to the needs of all users.
Mitigation	

Sexual Orientation

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Young people from LGBTQ+ communities can experience poorer sexual health outcomes and barriers to accessing services due to stigma, discrimination and concerns regarding confidentiality. The pilot provides additional opportunities for accessible and stigma-free sexual health support and self-sampling, which may improve engagement amongst LGBTQ+ young people. Inclusive communications, staff training and monitoring arrangements will support equitable access for LGBTQ+ populations.
Mitigation	

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	The pilot is available regardless of marital or civil partnership status. No differential impacts have been identified.
Mitigation	

Poverty

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Young people living in more deprived communities often experience poorer health outcomes and face additional barriers to accessing healthcare. The provision of free condoms, free Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) self-sampling kits and convenient local access points may reduce financial and transport barriers. The pilot aims to target areas where access to specialist services has reduced and where health inequalities may be emerging.

	Site selection will consider deprivation, accessibility and proximity to educational settings and public transport routes.
Mitigation	

Rurality

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Current sexual health services are primarily delivered through specialist clinics, which are generally located in larger urban centres. For residents of rural areas, including parts of the New Forest, travel distance and transport availability can present barriers to access. Delivering sexual health services through community pharmacies will increase the number of local access points and provide a more convenient and accessible option for rural residents, helping to reduce geographical inequalities in access. The pilot is expected to have a positive impact in the New Forest, where distance and travel can be barriers to accessing specialist sexual health services. Community pharmacies offer a more local, convenient and confidential access point, helping to improve access for young people in rural communities. The pharmacy mapping exercise will consider rural access issues and may identify multiple locations where required.
Mitigation	

Geographical Impact:Gosport, Hart, New Forest, Rushmoor

Equality Statement

Additional information:

This Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the proposed Young People's Sexual Health Pharmacy Pilot.

Young people aged under 25 continue to be a priority population for sexual health services due to higher rates of sexually transmitted infections and the importance of timely access to sexual health advice, testing and services.

Evidence suggests that engagement with specialist sexual health services and STI testing activity among young people has reduced in some areas of Hampshire. Trends in Sexually Transmitted infections (STIs) amongst our resident population aged under 20 years, and under 25 years, show a reduction in new consultations for testing since Q1 2020.

- All local authority districts experienced a reduction in **unique under-18 patients** accessing sexual health services. The largest percentage reductions in under-18 appointments were observed in: **Rushmoor, Hart, New Forest and Gosport.**
- The **STI testing rate** for people of all ages has **fallen** across Hampshire since 2019. STI testing rates have returned to the levels seen pre-pandemic nationally, but this has not been the case locally.

- The rate of **new consultations which include STI testing has fallen** across Hampshire amongst the younger population (aged under 20 / under 25) since 2023. This pattern is seen across all districts of Hampshire with the largest falls among the under 20s observed in Hart and Rushmoor since 2024.
- **STI testing positivity is decreasing** across Hampshire.
- The **diagnosis rate of new STIs (excluding chlamydia)** has also **decreased** since 2019. The rate of new STI diagnoses (excluding chlamydia) in the population under 20 has fallen since 2023 in all Hampshire districts except Havant.
- **Chlamydia detection rates remain below the goal rate since 2020**. Nearly all Hampshire districts have experienced a decrease in the rate of new diagnoses of chlamydia in the under 20s and under 25s.
- **Under 18 conceptions have fallen** in recent years but there remains ongoing need and geographic concentrations.

The pilot has been specifically designed to improve access to prevention, testing and early intervention services through convenient and accessible community pharmacy settings in identified pilot locations.

The pilot is expected to have predominantly positive impacts across several protected characteristic groups and communities experiencing disadvantage, particularly young people, people experiencing poverty and those facing barriers to accessing existing services.

Data relating to age, sex, geography and other relevant characteristics will be collected and monitored throughout the pilot to assess reach, equity and outcomes. Findings may inform future commissioning decisions and any subsequent wider implementation.

Ongoing engagement with young people, community pharmacies and partners will ensure equality, inclusion and accessibility remain central to service development and delivery.

This assessment indicates that the proposed pilot is expected to advance equality of opportunity by improving access to sexual health prevention and testing services for young people, particularly in areas experiencing declining service utilisation. The pilot is anticipated to support the reduction of health inequalities and improve equitable access to sexual health services across participating communities.

A marketing and communications campaign will support the pilot by raising awareness of the service through targeted promotion in participating localities, helping to maximise uptake and ensure eligible young people are aware of the support available through community pharmacies.

Furthermore, results from this will be made available to Local Authority commissioners in order to inform equalities considerations for future service provision.

Overview Statement:

A summary assessment to show that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been paid, which is undertaken when a full EIA is not needed:

EIA reference number: 01224

Date of production of EIA for publication: 13/10/2026