

Community Sexual Health Ambassador Black History Month October 2025

The Essex Sexual Health Service's **Education and Outreach Team** is building connections with diverse communities by bringing essential resources directly to them. As part of this effort, free condom boxes have been placed in barbershops and salons throughout Essex, ensuring the Black community has easy access to sexual health supplies.

A standout champion of this initiative is **Emmanuel** from **Cut and Style** in Colchester. Located on Queen Street, Emmanuel has been an enthusiastic and proactive partner, making sure his clients are not only aware of the free condoms but also feel comfortable accessing them.

To mark **Black History Month 2025**, the ESHS team is proud to recognise Emmanuel's dedication by naming him its first **Community Sexual Health Ambassador**. We sat down with him to discuss what this honour means to him and to hear his views of the importance of this work.



Emmanuel showcasing the **condom distribution box** and his **Community Sexual Health Ambassador Award**



Emmanuel and ESHS **Health Promotion Specialist, Hannah** outside **Cut and Style** shop on Queen Street

What inspired you to be involved with the ESHS health initiative?

We really want to help others best where we can. The condoms are free so we can showcase them and this helps others to look after themselves and be aware of their sexual health.

Why do you think sexual health in your community is important?

It's important in all communities worldwide. Better to protect yourself initially and we want to show awareness to the younger ones.

How do you think being in a non-clinical setting changes the dynamic of talking about sexual health and how do your clients react to the sexual health resources you promote in your business?

The clients are always happy that the condoms are available. Some people know that they are there and they come in to get them.

Why do you think the barbershop is such an effective and culturally safe place for these conversations to happen?

It is a good place because it is diverse. We are always having conversations with the clients on lots of different topics and it is a safe place for the young people to come.

Can you share any myths or misconceptions you have heard around sexual health?

People think that's HIV kills but with the treatment people can live a healthy life.

Did you learn anything new during your HIV awareness training and do you think training is important for everyone?

Definitely. I learnt that people should get tested so they know how to get treatment if they need it. I also learnt that you can't get HIV from kissing, swimming pools, toilet seats or from getting a tattoo. I always thought that you could get it from general contact which isn't correct.

Would you recommend to other businesses like yours to promote good sexual health?

Definitely. The more awareness for the young people the better for them. It's good for business – the condoms go so quick.

To enquire to become a community ambassador or to have condoms supplies in your organisation please email  provide.eshsoutreachteam@nhs.net