



December 2025

Welcome to our quarterly Essex Sexual Health Newsletter!

Whether you are a professional working with young people, a parent or carer, or part of a local organisation, our newsletter will keep you connected with everything happening in sexual health across Essex.

A quick overview of what you can find in this newsletter edition:

- New sexual health resources
- Updates from the Essex Sexual Health Service Outreach and Education team
- A reminder of the RSHE recognition award available to schools
- Upcoming professionals training
- Our latest blog posts
- and lots more...

New eC-Card training video for venues

The e-C Card gives young people in Essex access to up to 10 free condoms and 2 sachets of lube every 7 days. We have now created a video explaining the process of becoming an eC-Card venue which can be found by [clicking here](#).

Pleasure video and lesson plan

Pleasure is a topic we often hear that young people want to learn about, however teaching staff can find it quite difficult to cover. We have now created a video around the topic of pleasure which can be found online by clicking [here](#), and can be used in collaboration with our pleasure lesson plan which is available online - [please click here](#).

New campaign: Are You Ready?

We have recently launched our new “Are You Ready?” campaign, to help young people think about if they feel ready for your first sexual encounter. It is designed to help them consider some of the steps they can take in advance to support their emotional and physical wellbeing if choosing to become intimate with a partner. This can be found on our [website](#).



New HIV awareness poster for clinical staff

We have recently released a new HIV awareness poster for clinical staff settings, if you work in a clinical setting and would like a copy for your staffroom, you can print a copy [here](#).

Community Sexual Health Ambassador: Black History Month



The Essex Sexual Health Service’s Education and Outreach Team are 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.

Read more about the initiative and our first community sexual health ambassador [here](#).

If you are interested in becoming community condom distribution location, email us at provide.eshsoutreachteam@nhs.net

Health Promotion Specialist, Hannah receives Lawrence Walker Award



African Families in the UK (AFiUK's) has announced that Hannah Gizatullin, Health Promotion Specialist from the Essex Sexual Health Service Education and Outreach Team, has been named one of the recipients of the 2025 Lawrence Walker Award at this year's Health is Wealth community celebration in Clacton-on-Sea.

Hannah was nominated by AFiUK's Clacton Community Ambassador, Victoria Oyekunle, for her sustained support to the Clacton Afro-Caribbean Drop-In group.

Through regular training sessions, she has helped increase understanding of sexual health and wellbeing, reduce stigma and build confidence among both young people and adults, ensuring community members have the knowledge needed to make informed choices.

If you would like to discuss arranging community workshops with our Outreach & Education Team, email us at provide.eshsoutreachtteam@nhs.net

Clinic update: DoxyPEP

DoxyPEP, a prevention method for chlamydia and syphilis is now available in all our clinics, to book in for a consultation call 0300 003 1212 or request an appointment via our online portal the [PHR](#).

Umbrella Project

Don't forget that we have our Umbrella Project which supports commercial sex workers who live or work in Essex, find out more information [here](#).

Upcoming free professionals training

Our Outreach and Education Team are offering a number of free online multi-agency trainings [click here to book](#).

- Friday 16 January 2026, 10am - Delivering Relationship and Sexual Health Education
- Thursday 29 January 2026, 10am - LGBT+ Inclusivity and Sexual Health
- Monday 9 February 2026, 10am - PrEPared for PrEP
- Friday 27 February 2026, 10am - Sex, Consent & Confidentiality

We can also provide inhouse training (minimum of 8 staff required), take a look at our professionals brochure [here](#).

World AIDS Day: what we got up to



World AIDS Day takes place every December 1st, symbolised through a red ribbon, it is a way to remember everyone that has been lost to HIV, a promise to support those living with HIV, standing up to HIV stigma and to highlight the target to end new cases of HIV by 2030.

We have 99% treatment coverage among people living with diagnosed HIV in Essex (1,373 – HIV Lens). Our Outreach and Education team continue to work on increasing awareness and were very busy around World AIDS Day this month:

- Colchester City Church hosted the Essex Sexual Health Service and led a moving service on the theme of Stigma and HIV. There was worship, prayers and a sermon with lunch afterwards. Our team were there to welcome people and offer red ribbons. After the lunch we delivered a short presentation about World AIDS Day and the



hope that we have despite the stigma associated with HIV. A participant of a community group read a poem he had written about the importance of HIV awareness which was followed by a time of questions for the Essex Sexual Health Service team.

- Our Outreach and Education team and HIV Support Service joined Colchester Pride at the Patch Cafe in Colchester for World Aid's Day. It was a fantastic evening of performances and times of remembrance with a one-minute silence by candlelight. The Essex Sexual Health Service team spoke about HIV awareness and education but also community and supporting each other.
- The Outreach and Education team also held health promotion stands during World AIDS Day at the Harvey Centre Harlow and the Essex Drug and Alcohol Partnership Conference.

RSHE recognition award

The Essex Sexual Health Service RSHE recognition awards scheme works with an aim to increase educational staff's confidence to deliver RSHE related topics. The scheme supports educational establishments to have best practise working towards a whole school approach to RSHE learning, ensuring to incorporate the voice of their pupils, and engaging with parents and carers to support further learning at home. To recognise educational establishments participation to the programme and their commitment to RSHE, Essex Sexual Health Service will then award the educational establishment with a Bronze, Silver or Gold Certificate, demonstrating their commitment to RSHE. You can find out more via our [website](#) or our [video explaining the award system](#).

New blog posts

- [Sex After Trauma: How to Reclaim Intimacy on Your Terms](#)

- [Can You Catch an STI From a Towel, Toilet Seat or Hot Tub?](#)
- [I Tested Positive, But My Partner Didn't. How Does That Work?](#)
- [Can contraception affect my mental health?](#)

Please [click here](#) to view all of our blogs.

Sexual health fun fact - did you know?

September is the most common birth month in the UK, with the highest number of births occurring towards the end of the month. This is likely due to conceptions happening around the winter holidays, roughly nine months earlier.

Wishing you a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

The Essex Sexual Health Service Team wish you all a joyful, safe and healthy holiday over the festive period.

We hope you have found our first newsletter useful. Don't miss our next issue which will be issued in March 2026, where we will be sharing details of a new parenthood package lesson plan and reflecting on National HIV Testing Week taking place from Monday 9 to Sunday 15 February 2026.
