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**June 2026**

## **Welcome to our quarterly Essex Sexual Health Newsletter!**

Our team have been out and about at various events, here's the highlights of what we have been up to.

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 live RSHE sessions for educational settings
- New sexual health resources available
- Warnings around "self-swab rape kits"
- Upcoming events and training
- Our latest blog posts

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## **Exciting news for Educational Settings!**

We are planning to release a new, innovative way to deliver Relationships and Sexual Health Education



(RSHE) direct to young people across Essex based educational establishments in September.

The Live Broadcasting Facility will allow multiple education establishments to access a live session on key RSHE subjects and submit any questions they may have to be answered live. You can watch an example clip [here](#).

If you are an education establishment, we would really appreciate if you could complete this [survey](#), to support us to tailor this offer to best meet your needs.

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### **New Professionals Training Package - Have Your Say**

We are looking to develop another professionals' training package in the future around having conversations around sexual health with service users. This will aim to increase confidence in professionals approaching and having these conversations with their service users. We have produced a survey to find out what are the barriers/worries people are facing so we can then use this to help shape the training. The survey can be completed [here](#).

### **Becoming an eC-Card Venue**

Just a little reminder that you can become an eC-Card venue, providing free condoms to those under 24 years old, by watching our video and filling in the application form [here](#).

If you would like to become an eC-Card assessor, being able to provide condoms to those aged 13 to 15, our next training session is on Tuesday 6 October 2026 - [click here](#) to book your free place.

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### **New Menstrual Cycle Video**

After a lot of feedback from young people explaining they would like more information about how the menstrual cycle works, we have created and released a new video explaining the menstrual cycle process, take a look [here](#).



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### First Home-Educated Event Hosted by Essex Sexual Health Service



A big thank you to those who attended our very first home-educated event hosted by our Outreach and Education team in North Essex. Taking place at Stanway Lakelands Centre, Colchester, the team had a variety of activities available to take part in, covering topics such as consent, healthy relationships and sexual health.

**Our next home-educated event will be taking place in South Essex, at The MegaCentre, Rayleigh on Tuesday 30 June 2026.**

**This is a drop in event, with no booking required.**

Bring the family along for a fun, friendly, and informative drop-in event at Rayleigh Mega Centre from 9:30am to 2:30pm. Come and go whenever suits you!

We will have:

- Free activities and advice for young people, parents, and carers
- Free fidget toys and resources to take home
- Local organisations sharing support and services available in S
- Free darts and shuffleboard games

Whether you want to learn more, ask questions, or simply enjoy the activities, everyone is welcome, we'd love to see you there! To view our poster, [click here](#).

## Essex Sexual Health Service Network Event at High Street Clinic, Colchester



We are pleased to be hosting the next Essex Sexual Health Network Event on Tuesday 7 July from 12pm to 3pm at High Street Clinic, Colchester.

This free event is an opportunity for professionals, partner organisations, and community groups to connect, share insights, and strengthen collaboration across Essex to improve sexual health outcomes.

The event will include:

- Networking opportunities with local partners and professionals
- Updates on Essex Sexual Health services
- HIV awareness and educational content
- Open discussion and shared learning

Please register your free place via [Eventbrite](#).

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### **Warnings Around use of “Self-Swab Rape Kits”**

Concerns are increasing about the promotion of “self-swab rape kits”, provided by a company called Enough, which have been marketed to universities and other targeted groups. Rape Crisis England and Wales and safeguarding bodies have warned that these unregulated kits risk misleading survivors and may delay access to accredited forensic and support services.

The Advertising Standards Authority has now ruled that Enough’s claims, including that DNA collected through its kits is admissible in court and its use of unverified rape statistics, were misleading and unsubstantiated. The adverts must be withdrawn.

This follows reports of the same company issuing legal threats to women who raised concerns. Partner organisations are encouraged to signpost survivors to recognised sexual health and forensic pathways, ensuring they receive safe, evidence-based care.

Within Essex, the local Sexual Assault Referral Centre is Oakwood Place, Brentwood, who can provide a variety of support including forensic examinations, for more information, visit their [website](#).

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### **SEND RSHE Survey**

Following the Essex County Council’s RSHE survey that was completed by young people throughout Essex, the Outreach and Education Team have been working on ensuring that our SEND learners are able to also be heard with an adapted version of the RSHE survey being offered by our team with a supporting PowerPoint to guide the learners through the survey. If you would like to arrange for your SEND learners to get involved in this survey, please get in touch by emailing [provide.eshsoutreachteam@nhs.net](mailto:provide.eshsoutreachteam@nhs.net)

### **Umbrella Project**

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

### **Sexual Health Overview Leaflet Available in Multiple Languages**

Our sexual health service offer leaflet is available in the following languages: Arabic, Kurdish (Kurmanji) and (Sorani), Tigrinya, Pashto, Farci (Persian). You can download copies [here](#).

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## Where to Find the Essex Sexual Health Service Outreach Team

The Essex Sexual Health Service Outreach and Education Team have a busy few months ahead!

You can find us at the following events:

- Essex Sexual Health Service Home-Educated Event, MegaCentre, Rayleigh - Tuesday 30 June 2026
  - Boy's and Men's Event Colchester - Saturday 11 July 2026
  - St. Osyth Summer Festival - Saturday 18 July 2026
  - Jamaican Independence Day - Saturday 1 August 2026
  - Colchester Pride - Saturday 15 August 2026
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## Upcoming Free Online Training

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

- Wednesday 1 July 2026 - [RSHE & Essex Sexual Health Updates: What You Need to Know for 2026/27](#)
- Wednesday 26 August 2026 - [Introduction to Chemsex](#)
- Tuesday 1 September 2026 - [Delivering Relationships and Sexual Health Education](#)
- Friday 25 September 2026 - [STIs, contraception & local sexual health services](#)
- Monday 5 October 2026 - [Exploring the Impacts of Sexist Language](#)
- Tuesday 6 October 2026 - [eC-Card training](#)

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

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## RSHE Recognition Award

Our RSHE recognition awards scheme works with an aim to increase educational staff's confidence to deliver RSHE related topics, to support educational establishments to have best practise relating to RSHE 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](#).

From September, those that have achieved Bronze award status will be given exclusive access to Essex Sexual Health Service RSHE portal, giving them access to PowerPoint presentations, lesson plans and free resources. Even more reason for your educational setting to work towards a Bronze application today!

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## New Blog Posts

Check out some of our latest blog posts:

- [What Does Ongoing Consent Actually Look Like?](#)
- [Can You Use Lube With Condoms or Contraceptive Devices?](#)
- [What Is Queer Safer Sex?](#)
- [Let's Talk About Solo Sex](#)
- [Do You Have to Tell Your GP About an STI?](#)
- [Does My Contraception Mess With My Period... Or Am I Just Imagining It?](#)

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

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## Sexual Health Fun Fact

Public health agencies often report a seasonal increase in STI diagnoses, like chlamydia, gonorrhoea, and syphilis, over the summer period, primarily driven by more group events, travel, and casual holiday encounters. Remember it's easy to order an postal STI test kit through the Essex Sexual Health Service website.

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