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Highlighting importance of testing for STIs

Sexual health services in South Tyneside and Gateshead are raising awareness of testing for sexually transmitted infections and encouraging condom use.

The services, run by South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust, are backing sexual health charity FPA's Sexual Health Week, from September 12th to 18th.

Melanie Milburn, Head of Nursing for the Trust's community health services, said: "It is not just young people who are at risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs); diagnoses among older age groups have been increasing in recent years.

"Some STIs don't have any signs or symptoms but you can still pass them on to a partner so it is important to get tested if you have taken a risk. All STI tests and treatment are completely free through the NHS at sexual health clinics such as ours. We know it can be difficult for people of any age to talk openly about using condoms or getting tested but there is no need for embarrassment; our health professionals carry out sexual health check-ups every day and they don't look at an STI test as a reflection of someone's behaviour but as a responsible health decision."

As well as sexual health testing, treatment and follow-up, the Trust's South Tyneside and Gateshead sexual health services offer all forms of contraception from the majority of clinics. Most clinics are drop-in but there are some appointments available for contraception and follow-up.

For more information: for Gateshead call (0191) 2831577; for South Tyneside call (0191) 2832525. For details of clinic venues and times, go to <http://www.stft.nhs.uk/service/sexual-health-services>

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Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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