



PRESS RELEASE – 21 August 2017

New free condom scheme for young people in Gateshead

A free condom scheme for young people will be piloted in a wide range of locations in Gateshead from 1 September.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's sexual health service has worked with partners in the community, including GP practices, pharmacies and Gateshead College, to offer free condom 'grab packs' for 16 to 25-year-olds. They will be able to pick them up after filling in a short form at one of 18 sites across the borough. They will not have to make an appointment.

Melanie Milburn, the trust's Head of Nursing for Community Services, said: "Using condoms can help to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections, including chlamydia and gonorrhoea, and prevent unwanted pregnancy. However, cost can be a major factor in condom use for young people on low or no income and those in the 16 to 25 age group traditionally do not go to sexual health clinics. By giving them easy access to condoms at familiar venues in their local area, our aim is to provide them with more choice when it comes to improving their sexual health."

Following on from the 12-week pilot, the trust hopes to extend the scheme in Gateshead and introduce it in South Tyneside, where it also provides sexual health services.

No appointment is needed for many of the trust's clinics in Gateshead and South Tyneside, some of which are specifically for under-25s. All forms of contraception are available from the majority of clinics. Main clinics at Trinity Square Health Centre, Gateshead, and Stanhope Parade Health Centre, South Shields, also offer screening/testing for sexually transmitted infections.

To make an appointment or find out more about the sexual health service in Gateshead ring 0191 2831577/1575 and for South Tyneside ring 0191 4028191.

There is also useful information on the trust's website

www.stft.nhs.uk/service/sexual-health-services

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust provides a range of community health services across South Tyneside, Sunderland and Gateshead, with about 1,500 staff supporting people in their own homes, and from various community venues, to stay healthy and well.

Ends

Photo caption: Left to right, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's sexual health service education outreach lead Dan Dobson, outreach administrator Joanne Dodds and sexual health advisor Stephen Minto launching the new free condom pilot scheme

Notes to editors

- Condoms can protect against many sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV, chlamydia and gonorrhoea
- In 2015, there were approximately 435,000 new diagnoses of STIs in England
- In the UK in 2011, the cost of treating STIs (excluding HIV) was estimated at £620 million

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

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