

PRESS RELEASE – 1st November, 2017



Star support for free condom scheme for young people

One of the young stars of the critically acclaimed film 'I, Daniel Blake' is backing a free condom scheme for young people which is being piloted in Gateshead.

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 can pick them up after filling in a short form at one of 18 sites across the borough and they do not have to make an appointment.

Kema Sikazwe, also known as Kema Kay, who lives in Newcastle, played one of the main characters in director Ken Loach's film, 'I, Daniel Blake', which is set in the North East. It won a BAFTA and the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or.

Kema said: "Having schemes like this encourages safe behaviour. Many young people may not have the money to purchase condoms so the condom scheme is fantastic because it is free and, also, it is available at so many venues in Gateshead."

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, the aim is to provide them with more choice when it comes to improving their sexual health.

The trust hopes to extend the free condom 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.

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.

Photo caption: I Daniel Blake star Kema Sikazwe, who is backing South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's sexual health service's free condom scheme for young people, with sexual health outreach lead Dan Dobson

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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

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