

**HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW AND  
SCRUTINY PANEL  
1 MAY 2024  
6.30PM – 7.45PM**



**Present Virtually:**

Councillors Cochrane, Egglestone, S Forster, Virgo, Webb and Welch

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors Collings and Harrison

**Also Present Virtually:**

Rebecca Willans, Consultant in Public Health

Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, BHFT, Service Manager for HIV & Integrated Sexual Health Service

BHFT, Service Director for Scheduled Care Community Adult Services

BHFT, Lead Nurse Sexual health service BHFT

Associate Director of Contracting and Service Development

**16. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Collings and Harrison.

**17. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**18. Information and evidence gathering session**

After introductions the Service manager for Sexual Health services from the Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust presented some slides that covered the following key points:

- Sexual health services were provided by Berkshire Healthcare Trust across East Berkshire from multiple locations including Bracknell Forest.
- Sexual health clinic locations and opening times were shared. Locations included Skimped Hill, Bracknell and Wokingham College and Braccan Walk youth hub.
- Services offered in Bracknell included emergency hormonal contraception, condoms, contraceptive pill, long-acting reversible contraception pregnancy testing, uncomplicated STI (Sexually Transmitted Infections).
- Health promotion was provided through the Safe Sex Berkshire website, eg. Educational videos, leaflets, social media.
- Transformation work to improve access was important and was achieved through patient feedback, which was used to monitor and improve services.
- Four key areas of service improvements and developments were noted and covered the following:
  - Digital – self care via digital services which included STI testing kits and direct messaging to contact a clinician.
  - Efficiency - digital pick up of medication reduced unnecessary clinical time and data was being used to look at increasing efficiency in this area.
  - Outreach – promotion of sexual health with sex workers, health inequalities asylum seekers and people with disabilities.

- Optimising Care – ensuring services were providing the best care by building a data focussed mindset and cross training staff.
- The aim once all initiatives were implemented was to better empower people to take control of their care through digital innovations to deliver the right level of care in the right places.

The Service Manager was thanked for the work the team were doing and in response to questions, the following points were noted by representatives from BHFT:

- Patients would only be referred to the tier 3 provision at Slough if their medical needs couldn't be met at Bracknell. The difference between the two tiers was explained using an example. If a patient presented with vaginal discharge but no other symptoms such as abdominal pain, they could be treated at a tier 2 setting. If they also presented with pain, were pregnant, had sores or other physical symptoms then they would be referred as a complex case. However, the staff at the tier 2 setting would provide as much care as they could, for example a course of antibiotics could be started. The staff at the tier 2 setting would also arrange the referral and the appointment at the tier 3, sometimes on the same day.
- Ongoing work with the marketing and communications team was looking into streamlining the provision of online STI kits and adding some educational videos to the website. This was on track to be delivered by 1 July 2024.
- It was confirmed that the Council aren't charged more than the contract value for those patients who are referred to Slough.
- It was noted that BHFT were working alongside the Integrated Care Board's and Primary Care on the development of the new Bracknell Health building on the site of Skimped Hill.
- In response to a suggestion that the Garden Clinic in Bracknell could provide a doctor on site it was confirmed that a change to the contract could be made by raising a variation, however, financial constraints would need to be considered. It was confirmed that a proposal and costings of what would be involved to change Bracknell to a Tier 3 provision could be provided.
- It was acknowledged that signage at the Skimped Hill site needed improvement and this was being looked at with the estates team and property services responsible for this.
- In response to a question around improvements to the advertisement of sexual health clinics it was noted that this was also covered by school newsletters and notice boards. In addition, the social media team was working on promotion of services and this was due to be in place by the end of the May 2024.
- It was noted that the Safe Sex Berkshire website was managed by the councils in Berkshire and a review of this, using user generated analysis, was underway. As part of this review the issue of the Safe Sex Berkshire website being hidden in searches was raised and work was ongoing to explore the value of the site itself and whether developing the NHS choices information was a preferred approach. The contract with the current web providers for the Safe Sex Berkshire website was due to end in March 2025 and analysis and options appraisal would be completed within the coming 6 months.
- The issue of accessible information was discussed and it was suggested that work could be done with schools to unblock certain websites that provide information around sexual health.

## 19. Panel Discussion

Members of the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny panel had further discussions around the information presented by the BHFT. In summary the following points were made:

- The importance of providing and improving information about sexual health services on school websites was noted.
- More work needed to be done to find out the views of young people regarding the sex education they received in school.
- Areas of the borough outside the town needed to be considered when reviewing sexual health services. This fed into comments that pharmacies across the borough could provide more services.
- The importance of keeping digital offerings and information up to date was discussed.
- The need to reduce stigma around sexual health was seen as an important aspect of increasing awareness and providing more information around sexual health issues and services. It was felt something as simple as providing more information leaflets in pharmacies could be a step towards this.
- It was suggested that more pharmacies across the borough could provide emergency contraception and that these services were better advertised outside the pharmacy so young people could be easily signposted to what they needed.
- It was felt that the sexual health services, in youth clubs that currently provided this, needed to be better advertised and these services should become a normal part of all youth clubs.
- There was further discussion around increasing the services provided at Skimped Hill, to reduce the number of referrals to Slough. It was felt that evidence should be gathered, to support the possibility of this, so that it could be considered by the Executive.

**CHAIR**