

Sexual and reproductive health support for vulnerable individuals and communities during COVID-19

As your service supports some of our more vulnerable individuals and communities, we wanted to let you know that **sexual and reproductive health services are open**. They have reduced their face to face appointments to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection but **they will be able to triage and consult by phone and, where needed, see urgent, priority or vulnerable clients in person**.

Sexual Health Hertfordshire can often provide support without seeing anyone face-to-face. There are currently no walk-in services but anyone who needs sexual health advice should phone **0300 008 5522** between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm Monday to Friday. Please be aware there may be a delay in answering the phone, but the service user will be given the opportunity to speak to a doctor or nurse who will discuss the options with them over the telephone.

General practice and community pharmacies remain open to provide contraception and support, including emergency contraception, using triage and telephone consultation with face to face appointments when necessary. **As with all services Phone First.**

Online Services

Online services available to Hertfordshire residents are:

- **Contraceptive pill:** age 18 years or older, order on-line through the **SH:24** contraceptive service. Discreet delivery to your home.
- **Emergency contraception:** age 16 years or older, order free and confidential emergency contraception on-line from **SH:24**. Discreet delivery to your home.
- **Testing for STIs with no symptoms:** order a free test through the **SH:24** home testing service. Discreet delivery to your home. Please note that low-risk individuals will be sent tests for Chlamydia / Gonorrhoea but not HIV / Syphilis as these are less likely to be necessary.
- **HIV/Syphilis Testing:** order online from **Free Testing HIV**
- **If you have symptoms** contact Sexual Health Hertfordshire on 0300 008 5522 as soon as possible.

If anyone is under 18 or unable to use online services please call 0300 008 5522

Details on other local services are here: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/sexualhealth

The screenshot shows the 'Sexual health' page with a list of services: Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), Contraception, HIV, Sexual assault, Termination of pregnancy, and Campaigns. A yellow COVID-19 notice states: 'The sexual health services listed on this page have been reduced and will only be able to see priority patients. Please contact the service before attending for information.' Below the notice is an interactive map of Hertfordshire.

The screenshot shows the SH:24 online service interface. It lists services such as Specialist Sexual Health Centre, Contraception (Implant), Contraception (IUD e.g. coil), Free Chlamydia testing (under 25 years), and Free condoms (under 25 years). A map of Hertfordshire is displayed on the right, showing the locations of various services.



Information for the public on what to do about contraception, emergency contraception, abortion, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and sexual assault during COVID-19 is on [Sexwise](#). This includes links to other organisations providing information and support.

Young People can still ask questions on sex and relationships via the Sexual Health texting service **on 07860 057 369**. They can also visit [YC Hertfordshire](#) to receive guidance and support on a range of issues, including health and wellbeing.

Current guidance in the UK, ask us to keep our distance from other people as much as possible. This means that meeting people you don't live with for sex are discouraged as it can increase the risk of picking up or passing on COVID-19. If you are working with adult service users who continue to meet others for sex, [Prepster](#) have produced some harm reduction advice to reduce the risk of Covid-19.

Making Every Contact Count (MECC)

To help ensure any sexual or reproductive health needs are identified, we recommend practitioners in your service proactively offer support to service users following the **Making Every Contact Count (MECC)** approach of **Ask, Assist, Act**.

Ask: "Do you need any help with contraception, emergency contraception, pregnancy support or sexually transmitted infections?"

Assist: "You can find more information on [Sexwise](#) and these are the local sexual health services or GP you can make contact with"

Act: Using the interactive map find the [nearest relevant sexual health service](#) or the service users GP, and help them make an appointment. As some service users may not have access to a private phone for a telephone consultation, if you are able to make one available safely, this would be very helpful.

Other help and advice

As you are aware, COVID-19 and the lockdown has caused additional economic hardship and stress for many. Please refer people in need to [Herts Help](#) Tel: **0300 123 4044**

