



Inspire Youth Zone Condom Distribution Scheme

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of these guidelines is to inform, advise and direct scheme members to the relevant information and procedures in relation to the condom distribution scheme.

The Condom Distribution Scheme is for young people aged 13 to 24, offering access to free condoms in a wide range of places which are acceptable to them. For anyone under the age of 16 details are taken and entered onto a database.

AIM OF INSPIRE YOUTH ZONES CONDOM DISTRIBUTION SCHEME

The overall aim of the Condom Distribution Scheme (CDS) is to contribute to the reduction of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, and the number of unintended conceptions with guidance taken from the “Teenage Pregnancy Strategy: Beyond 2010” ⁽¹⁾ and the document: “A Framework for Sexual Health Improvement in England” (2013) ⁽²⁾ .

The scheme aims to complement existing provision of free condoms through mainstream services, by targeting community based settings and organisations working with target groups thus:

- Increasing the range and types of settings providing free condoms and sexual health advice.
- Improving access to safer sex and prevention advice for target groups.
- Increasing access to free condoms for target groups through outlets that are acceptable and accessible to them.
- Enabling more professionals, in a variety of settings to feel confident in offering information about safer sex (including correct condom use) and sexual health issues.
- Improving referral onto local sexual health and contraceptive services.
- Reducing the risk of transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Reducing the incidence of unintended teenage pregnancy and parenthood.
- Establishing a condom distribution scheme across the borough in a range of accessible places.
- Supporting young people in identifying whether they are ready or not to have sex through training and support of key professionals, identified within the

scheme, to give sexual health information, distribute condoms to young people and refer young people when required to local sexual health services.

The Condom Distribution Scheme is not about promoting sex to young people but is about acknowledging the fact that young people, some under the age of 16, do have sex and therefore have a real need for accurate sexual health information and services, such as condoms in a safe and confidential environment. It should not be seen in isolation; it is one strand of a wider sexual health promotion and HIV prevention programme delivered within the borough.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- Organisations will be sensitive to the needs of all service users, irrespective of their diversity.
- Young people do not need to be sexually active to join the scheme.
- The scheme will be responsive to the changing needs of service users and keep up to date with new sexual health developments.

Organisations will work towards meeting the Department of Health's 'You're Welcome' quality criteria for young people friendly health services ⁽³⁾. These criteria cover the following topic areas:

1. Accessibility
2. Publicity
3. Confidentiality and consent
4. Environment
5. Staff training, skills, attitudes and values
6. Joined-up working
7. Young people's involvement in monitoring and evaluation of patient experience
8. Health issues for young people
9. Sexual and reproductive health services
10. Specialist child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and facilities that offer specialist services

WHO ARE WE TARGETING?

Health education and safer sex materials should be available to the whole population; however, evidence shows that health promotion is most effective when targeted at those most in need. Some groups need targeted sexual health information and STI

(including HIV) prevention, because they are at higher risk and particularly vulnerable or have particular access requirements. The National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV ⁽⁴⁾ highlights the clear relationship between sexual ill health, poverty and social exclusion. Sexual ill health is not equally distributed amongst the population; the highest burden is borne by women, men who have sex with men (MSM), teenagers, young adults and BME groups, as well as an unequal impact of HIV on MSM and on certain minority ethnic groups. There is a strong link between social deprivation and STIs, terminations and teenage conceptions. Additionally, some groups are less likely to access sexual health services and information due to social exclusion, poverty or fear of prejudice.

Consequently, the national A Framework for Sexual Health Improvement in England (2013) has identified certain groups for targeted prevention work, such as:

- Young people (especially those in or leaving care)
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- Gay and bisexual men
- Injecting drug users
- Adults living with HIV
- Sex workers
- People with learning disabilities
- Homeless people

The above groups are considered vulnerable and may have difficulties in accessing services locally.

The Condom Distribution Scheme is primarily targeted at young people aged 13 to 24; provision is made, however, for anyone over the age of 24 identified as vulnerable and in need of regular access to condoms.

RATIONALE – WHY FREE, EASILY ACCESSIBLE CONDOMS?

Sexual behaviour may be influenced by a number of personal and structural 'determinants of risk' (or modifying factors), including: self-esteem; skills in using condoms; skills to negotiate safer sex (e.g. to say 'no' to sex without condoms); knowledge about the risks of different sexual behaviours; availability of resources such as condoms or sexual health services; the opinions of peers and social pressures; attitudes (and prejudices) of society.

The Condom Distribution Scheme therefore targets some of these personal and structural determinants of risk on the basis that:

- Condoms provide positive and ‘material’ support for safer sex messages and sex education.
- Educators and professionals are able to issue condoms along with information relating to safer sex.
- Condoms are more likely to be used if readily available.
- Condoms are more likely to be used if people are familiar with them.
- Specific groups may be less likely to use traditional outlets for condoms for a variety of reasons.
- Condom use is normalised, detracting from some of the negative imagery associated with them.
- Financial priorities or means – condoms are costly and not always prioritised within people’s budgets.
- Awareness of and referral to sexual health and contraceptive services is improved.
- The scheme also trains more people, in a variety of settings with the skills and confidence to talk to people about safer sex.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 ⁽⁵⁾ provides the legal framework for the Condom Distribution Scheme, and a clear understanding of the law concerning consent and its implications for Child Protection is required of all organisations participating in the scheme.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Organisations need to adhere Lancashire Safeguarding policies (see <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/health-and-care/social-care/safeguarding-children/> for more information and Lancashire’s own Safeguarding Children’s Board guidance <http://www.lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk/>) relating to sexually active children.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality standards and assurance of the 'Inspire Youth Zone's Condom Distribution Scheme' training programme will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Public Health training programme review process. Additionally, evaluation of the training programme will be undertaken and will assess equity and effectiveness along with programme uptake.

KEY CONTACT

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POLICY REVIEW

A full policy review is scheduled to take place in May 2023 and every two years thereafter by the Sexual health Lead for Inspire Youth Zone, who is responsible for the Scheme's development.

Feedback from people accessing condoms through the scheme will also form an essential review mechanism.

Date of next Review: May 2023