



Healthwatch Southwark (HWS) Youth
How Southwark pharmacies support young people
with their sexual health

September 2016

What is Healthwatch Southwark Youth (HWS Youth)?

Healthwatch is an independent organisation that listens to local people's views about health and social care services.

It exists to make health and social care better for local people by designing local services around their needs and experiences.

Through partnership with HeadStart, through the



Challenge Charity, we have worked with young volunteers over the summer - we've called this HWS Youth - where young volunteers carry out activities to inform Healthwatch Southwark's work.

Background

Sexual health is one of Healthwatch Southwark's priority areas. This means they are interested in hearing from people about their awareness, understanding and attitudes around sexual health and their experiences of sexual health services.

Pharmacies can provide sexual health advice and support for young people (under 25s) such as:

- ✓ free emergency contraception
- ✓ free condoms
- ✓ free chlamydia testing kits
- ✓ free chlamydia treatment

We know that cuts are being made to sexual health services, which means that some clinics are being closed, patients without any symptoms will be given home testing kits (SH:24), and GP and pharmacy sexual health services will be promoted.

What we did

6 Healthwatch Southwark Youth volunteers developed a questionnaire based on what sexual health services they knew local pharmacies provided to young people.

They were interested in finding out:

- ✓ what training pharmacists receive to work with young people
- ✓ what information they offer people about their sexual health services
- ✓ what is kept confidential when a young person is seeking sexual health advice and support

16 Healthwatch Southwark Youth volunteers visited 17 pharmacies in July and August 2016. All volunteers received training from the Healthwatch Southwark staff team. We also contacted the Community Pharmacy team to inform local pharmacists that some young HWS volunteers would be visiting their services.

Our findings

Training

Of the 17 pharmacies visited, 12 said that staff are trained to work with young people. Five pharmacies said no

or implied that they hadn't received particular training for young people because they work with all ages. One pharmacy told us: *"We don't work with young people a lot. Mainly just give emergency contraception. We call the pharmacy managers if we need advice."*

We received mixed feedback when we asked if staff at the pharmacies were well-trained or even specialists at giving sexual health advice. Some told us that the pharmacy managers and some of the public facing staff are trained. One pharmacy told us that they aren't specialists and can refer people elsewhere if they need to. One said - *"If we can, we do. If not, refer."*

We asked pharmacies what they would do if they were worried about a young person or thought they were vulnerable. We received mixed responses. Seven of the 17 pharmacies mentioned safeguarding processes or social services. Four pharmacies said that the young person would be referred to speak to the pharmacist/ manager/ superintendent. Three pharmacies said they would talk to the young person in the consultation room in private. The other three pharmacies said they would phone a helpline, refer the young person to a GP, and report to young offenders.

Information

NHS Choices told us that the 17 pharmacies which HWS Youth visited offer sexual health services to under 25s.

However, when the volunteers asked what sexual health services the pharmacies offer young people, six pharmacies said they did not offer any:

- No longer free testing but will start up in the future.
- Not directly. Not registered for the morning after pill.
- Refer to King's College for sexual health services.
- Used to offer morning after pill on the NHS. We don't promote it.
- None. We want to. Not enough funding.
- Don't do any.

However, the other pharmacies did offer services, though not always the full range:

- Give them advice and give them the pill. Refer to a local nurse.
- Used to give free condoms and chlamydia testing. Now it is just the morning after pill.
- Morning after pill - emergency contraception.
- Free condoms and morning after pill.
- Chlamydia testing and morning after pill.
- Chlamydia kits, free condoms and any advice on sexual health. Free 16+ emergency contraception. Not actively promoted.
- Free contraception, morning after pill. Difficult to promote.
- Morning after pill. Some leaflets.
- Chlamydia testing, condoms, emergency contraception.
- Contraception services - including emergency contraception. Promote through leaflets.
- Contraception and STI testing.

11 pharmacies said they had information about sexual health for people to take away. Three said they didn't. Those that didn't said they would refer people to NHS Choices and local sexual health clinics such as King's College Hospital.

We asked pharmacies how often they get enquiries about sexual health from young people. Answers varied, with some saying daily; one said this was because they give out free condoms and testing kits. Others said it isn't that frequent, and some mentioned that they no longer provide emergency contraception on the NHS and that *"young people don't know pharmacies give sexual health advice"*.

Confidentiality

All the pharmacies said they have a private area to discuss sexual health.

Six pharmacies said they would require parental consent if a young person under the age of 16 came to use their services. One said that ID is required and another said they would *"be reluctant to see them on their own"*.

10 pharmacies said they would not require parental consent if a young person under the age of 16 came to use their services. However some comments were made:

- Depends on how serious their situation is.
- They require a parent. No sale to under 16s.
- Under 13s need to come with parents. Ask them if they want parents involved.

- Pharmacy has the right to refuse though.

Benefits and challenges

We asked each pharmacy what benefits they felt they could offer young people, and what their challenges were in supporting young people.

The benefits pharmacies mentioned were the sexual health services they offer. One mentioned the *"ease of access"* to free condoms and that they talk to people no matter their age. One pharmacy which doesn't provide free condoms said that *"young people in the local area need it."*

The challenges pharmacies mentioned were funding, training and allocating time to talk to people when the pharmacy is really busy. One said that they didn't promote their services. And two pharmacies mentioned the barriers to young people - one being that if a person has had multiple sex partners and they do not know the date of unprotected sex, the pharmacy does not give them the pill. The other mentioned that they do not give free contraception or emergency contraception. One pharmacy said that *"leaflets are not enough"* and another said *"tend to take for granted and not taken seriously."*

Our recommendations

1. All pharmacy staff should receive recent training on how to talk to and support young people.

2. All pharmacy staff should know what to do if they are worried about a young person and feel they are vulnerable.
3. Pharmacies should check that NHS Choices has correct information about which sexual health services they provide.
4. Pharmacies should better promote what sexual health services they provide to young people, for example through simple signs on the window or a cross-pharmacy leaflet to be distributed in community venues and sexual health clinics.
5. Pharmacies should have sexual health information on display for people to take away, and offer information that is accessible for young people.
6. All pharmacy staff should know the protocol for when under 16s come to the pharmacy for sexual health services.
7. Pharmacies should give more information about emergency contraception and STI testing.
8. All pharmacy staff should offer and utilise their private consultation rooms (if they have one) to support confidentiality.

Response from Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Local Pharmaceutical Committee

The recommendations made by Healthwatch Southwark relate to inadequate training put in place by commissioners, which we feel needs to be implemented as soon as possible. In order to meet these recommendations, Southwark Public Health commissioners should support and provide resources to roll out the 'Healthy Living Pharmacy' initiative across Southwark. The training provided to pharmacies would then include all the recommendations made in this report and it would enable transformation of pharmacy services.

This report has demonstrated how pharmacy has been affected by reconfiguration of the sexual health service.

Whilst we welcome this report, we will like to add our own recommendations which are as follows:

1. Commissioners of sexual health across Southwark will meet their targets of improvement in sexual health across the borough by adequately supporting community pharmacy with appropriate resources and long term investment.
2. Resources and investments should not be concentrated on the online SH24 at the expense of face to face consultation within the

pharmacy. Emergency Hormonal Contraception service is an example of how community pharmacy has helped reduce sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.

3. There needs to be continuous engagement over the year with pharmacies via the pharmacy federation and local pharmaceutical committee.
4. The sexual health service as currently provided cannot meet the demand of young people. This means a review of the service with proper remuneration is required.
5. Currently there is no clinical sexual health lead for community pharmacy which makes communication very difficult for the various stakeholders. This will need to change very quickly to deal with current sexual health services issues experienced by pharmacies.
6. Training for new providers does not exist, therefore difficult to replace accredited providers who had left the pharmacy.
7. The sexual health contraception service was only commissioned via 4 pharmacies with only 2 providing the service now. Commissioner will need to review this aspect of the service to ensure more pharmacies can provide this service.
8. The report clearly shows that young people value services

through pharmacies and would like an enhanced offering.

9. Young people use the pharmacy for other services such as prescription collection, healthy lifestyle advice such as smoking cessation, medicines use review and new medicines service. This is possible because of the easy access and long opening hours the pharmacy offers.
10. Commissioners will need to use all available resources to promote this service to stakeholders thereby engaging various youth organisations/schools.
11. We welcome the views of young people and believe their role is important in ensuring the sexual health service in pharmacy is protected.
12. Healthwatch needs to put these views and recommendations across to Southwark commissioners, ensuring a high quality service is adequately funded and promoted through community pharmacy.

Appendix 1: List of pharmacies visited

Bermondsey

Harfleur Chemist: 107 Tower Bridge Road, London, SE1 4TW

Elephant and Borough

Boots Pharmacy: 333 Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre, London, SE1 6TB

Superdrug Pharmacy: 333 Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre, London, SE1 6TB

Classic Pharmacy: 55 St George's Road, Elephant and Castle, London, SE1 6ER

Qrystal Pharmacy: 7 Newington Causeway, London, SE1 6ED

Walworth

Superdrug Pharmacy: 371-375 Walworth Road, Walworth, London, SE17 2AL

Boots the Chemists: 289 Walworth Road, London, SE17 2TG

Ridgway Pharmacy: 251-253 Walworth Road, Walworth, London, SE17 1RL

Taplow Pharmacy: Unit 5, Ground Floor, Thurlow Street, Walworth, London, SE17 2UQ

Camberwell

ABC Pharmacy: 13 Camberwell Church Street, Camberwell, London, SE5 8TR

Superdrug Pharmacy: Unit 4, Butterfly Walk, Camberwell, London, SE5 8RW

V E Lettsom Chemists: 84 Vestry Road, Camberwell, London, SE5 8PQ

Nunhead and Peckham

Kristal Pharmacy: 127 Evelina Road, Nunhead, London, SE15 3HB

Ropharm Chemists: 169 Rye Lane, Peckham, London, SE15 4TL

Morrisons Instore Pharmacy: Aylesham Centre, Rye Lane, London, SE15 5EW

Dulwich

Lloyds pharmacy: 43-45 North Cross Road, East Dulwich, London, SE22 9ET

Vale Chemists: 104 Grove Vale, East Dulwich, London, SE22 8DR