

Commissioning intentions

Integrated sexual and reproductive health services for Devon and Torbay

Background and purpose

This document outlines Devon and Torbay Local Authorities' commissioning intentions in respect of sexual and reproductive health services. The purpose is to gather views from potential suppliers about the feasibility and suitability of the approach outlined. Devon and Torbay Local Authorities will carefully consider - but also keep confidential - all feedback provided in finalising the specification.

Local context

Between 2022 and 2024 a series of 10 consultation and engagement exercises have been completed across Devon and Torbay, seeking the views, insights, and experiences of the population. These have included a public consultation, behavioural insight reports by commissioned providers, focus groups with vulnerable groups and targeted surveys.

We have also engaged with the market through a prior information notice and a wider market warming event. In addition, we have engaged with other local authorities, local and national strategic partners to gain an understanding of the market and potential models.

Key themes from these listening and engagement exercises with residents have been:

Theme	Detail
KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH	High level of deficits about sexual and reproductive health, strong awareness of medical treatments for infections, (but not always accurate, or from a reliable source), disproportionate risk perceptions, lacking opportunities and motivations to improve knowledge accurately.
KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF SERVICES	Seeking assurances of confidentiality, ensuring inclusive attitude of staff.
INCLUSIVITY	Trans inclusivity, better for people with disabilities, importance of developing trust.
PATIENT CHOICES	Wanting and needing a range of options which are easily accessible, highly advertised and delivered in a different way to improve access to services (i.e., online and face to face).

WORKFORCE	A strong response asking for expertise in sexual and reproductive health clinics. Concerns about lack of knowledge in some general practice settings. Women particularly seeking experienced fitters for contraception. Value of professionals able to have holistic conversations and incorporate all elements of sexual and reproductive health, i.e., healthy relationships.
GETTING APPOINTMENTS	Challenge reported widely. Particularly impacting adults with disabilities. Range of access is required to meet needs, including online no-appointment access, booking in advance to walk in clinics.
LOCATION AND TRAVEL	Location more important than establishment. Local means local – hence preference for GP surgeries and pharmacies by many, seeking time saving solutions.
OPENING HOURS	Need to be more flexible – including evenings and weekends – 4-8pm strong preference.
ADVICE AND GUIDANCE	Particularly regarding contraceptive advice, citing little to no time often available with general practice professionals.

Further to this, health needs assessments for Devon and Torbay have been completed and are in the public domain. These documents, alongside other national sources of data outline the sexual and reproductive health of Devon and Torbay resident populations.

Devon - [Sexual-and-Reproductive-Health-Health-Needs-Assessment-2023.docx \(live.com\)](#)

Torbay - [Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs Assessment - Torbay Council](#)

Proposed vision and model

The Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health Service (the service) will provide Devon and Torbay residents with open access to confidential, non-judgemental services including sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and blood borne viruses (BBV) testing (including HIV), treatment and management; HIV prevention including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP); the full range of contraceptive provision; health promotion and prevention including relevant vaccination, psychosexual counselling and workforce training. Access to face-to-face, digital, remote, and online services is required to meet the needs of different population groups to reduce inequalities in both access and health outcomes.

Devon County Council and Torbay Council require a system leader to manage and develop the sexual & reproductive health system across the two local authority areas.

The system leader will forge critical partnerships with a range of clinical, voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations, commissioning organisations, and our local population to truly improve sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing of people, pathways and outcomes across Devon and Torbay.

Our vision is for a system that enables, empowers, and supports people to have healthy, worry-free sex and:

- Provides **high quality, innovative, cost effective** sexual and reproductive health services that people can access in the right way at the right time for them, with a mix of digital, remote, and face-to-face options.
- Contributes to improved sexual and reproductive health outcomes and seeks to **reduce health inequalities**.
- Has a **strong focus on sexual and reproductive health promotion and prevention** of sexual and reproductive ill health.
- Promotes **self-management** through the utilisation of digital technologies.
- Provides **leadership** to the wider health and care system, advocating for those with higher needs and those who are traditionally excluded.
- Understands and is **responsive** to the changing needs of the population.
- Values and develops its **whole system workforce**.
- Is committed to **ongoing quality improvement** using evidence-based methodologies (for example, Systems Thinking) to improve service and population outcomes; and
- Is delivered as **efficiently as possible to maximise the value** of the investment in the service.

The model will ensure that residents have access to the most appropriate level of service to meet their immediate needs (including self-managed care, level 1 and 2 services in primary care and community settings) and will support residents to manage their sexual and reproductive health, within the minimum number of service appointments and interventions.

The system leader will provide an integrated approach to the delivery of all sexual and reproductive health services across the Devon and Torbay authority areas via a digital single point of access.

The service will operate a digital single point of access where resident needs can be assessed, triaged, and addressed at first contact. This model will be supported by remote and online provision using digital technologies including telephone and online consultations, where clinically appropriate.

The **future service model** proposes:

- **Engagement, prevention, and self-management as the predominant methods to meet sexual and reproductive health needs.** Services within this element could include condom distribution, advice and guidance, PrEP, community HIV testing, behavioural change interventions (such as impactful campaigns) and user-dependent methods of contraception.
- **Level two services will maximise people and place-based community assets and alternative workforces in each locality.** These will look different across different areas of Devon and Torbay and should be informed by local intelligence. These will be shaped in our localities through systems leadership and network management approaches. They will maximise other local touch points, workforces, partnerships, systems, and pathways to

deliver services in setting which are accessible and close to people. Examples of services within this section might include long-acting reversible contraception in general practice, emergency contraception and chlamydia screening in pharmacies.

- **Level three services** are for residents whose needs cannot be met through engagement, prevention and self-management services, level two services or in other community settings and may need to travel to a specialised service.

By creating broader digital and community offers throughout the model, it is intended to make user journeys and access to early interventions easier. This is intended to facilitate efficient access to specialist services when needed.

Proposed scope of specification

The scope of the specification is proposed to be contained within **a single lot across Devon and Torbay local authority areas**. This is a change to the current approach, where services are currently commissioned separately by the local authority as distinct specifications and contracts.

The implication is that the **provider could form partnerships and / or sub-contract elements of the offer or directly deliver all the required services** within the available budget and drive system pathways which directly address the findings of the public engagement and health needs assessments, improving the health outcomes of the public.

This is intended to enable a suitable provider to create an efficient, effective, collaborative, user-focussed sexual and reproductive health system. This will be enacted by providing a long-term contract and the available budget within which to manage all community and specialist services across Devon and Torbay and for providers to take a whole systems approach¹.

Service elements in scope of the proposed new specification are:

1. Sexual Health Promotion and Prevention.
2. Online STI testing, treatment, partner notification and contraception (where clinically appropriate).
3. Specialist Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health Service (L1-3)².
4. Psychosexual Counselling.
5. Level 3³ Enhanced Sexual and Reproductive Health Services through community settings (this will include, but is not limited to, general practice and community pharmacy).
6. Overall sexual and reproductive health system leadership, network management and training.

It is possible that other services may be brought in scope of this in future, depending on system readiness, strategic resonance, and provider performance.

[What are the elements of a whole system approach to community-centred public health? A qualitative study with public health leaders in England's local authority areas | BMJ Open](#)

² [Level 3 Genitourinary Medicine Service \(datadictionary.nhs.uk\)](#)

³ [Level 1 Sexual Health Service \(datadictionary.nhs.uk\)](#), [Level 2 Sexual Health Service \(datadictionary.nhs.uk\)](#)

Activity levels

This is an outline of current levels of activity from 2019/20 to 2022/23. This indicates some level of current activity delivery within Devon and Torbay. This should be read in conjunction with the latest data sources, including:

Devon County Council approximate population size: 825,000

Torbay Council approximate population size: 138,000

LASER reports:

[Sexual and Reproductive Health Profiles - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)

[Sexual and Reproductive Health Profiles - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)

[Sexual and reproductive health profiles:](#)

[Sexual and Reproductive Health Profiles - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)

Local Health Needs Assessments:

[Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs Assessment - Torbay Council](#)

[Needs Assessments - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#)

[Sexual Health - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#) Dashboard

	Devon Activity Over Financial Years				
Specialist Services:	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
GU first appointments	21,380	12,322	14,700	15,441	17,863
GU follow up appointments	7,103	5,066	6,912	7,423	6,379
Contraception	21,139	14,488	16,897	15,946	17,037
NCSP Chlamydia Screens*	8,965	3,628	14,379	14,560	12,154
PrEP initiated & continuation	N/A	209**	831	871	1,196
Primary Care:					
EHC issued in pharmacies	2,256	1,244	2,542	1,956	2,015
SDI in GP Practices (total procedures)	4,084	3,271	3,967	3,817	2,372
IUD / IUS in GP Practices (total procedures - contraceptive reasons only***)	3,748	2,855	3,658	3,766	2,560
Prevention	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
IUD / IUS total in GP Practices (Both cont & non cont reasons****)	4620	3474	4668	4773	3451

	Torbay Activity Over Financial Years				
Specialist Services:	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
GU first appointments	4,118	2,384	2,701	3,161	3,344
GU follow up appointments	1,338	604	938	976	845
Contraception	4,817	4,177	5,174	5,167	4,848
NCSP Chlamydia Screens*	1,181	2,476	2,474	2,630	2,398
PrEP initiated & continuation	NA	68**	193	232	243
Primary Care:					
EHC issued in pharmacies	625	428	324	565	571
SDI in GP Practices (total procedures)	259	201	180	146	129
IUD / IUS in GP Practices (total procedures - contraceptive reasons only***)	272	380	223	211	163
Prevention	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
IUD / IUS total in GP Practices (Both cont & non cont reasons****)	395	465	275	269	213

*This also includes chlamydia screens provided in primary care

**Note 20/21 is only six months activity as service commenced October 2020

***Includes activity for fits, manage and removals for contraceptive reasons ONLY

**** Includes activity for fits, manage and removals for both contraceptive and non-contraceptive reasons. Devon County Council, Non-contraceptive provision funding sits within the ICB.

Budget

Our ambition is work with the provider to have clear transparency on the budget across the six areas of scope and to see shifts in resources so that areas of scope such as prevention and digital are funded to increasing proportions.

The total reported spend on sexual health across prescribed and non-prescribed services by Devon County Council in the last two years has been:

2022/23 £6,944,000

2021/22 £6,895,000

Devon County Council's ambition is to award a 10-year contract (potentially on a 7+3 basis) with a total value of £50M attached.

In Torbay, the total reported spend on sexual health across prescribed and non-prescribed services by Torbay Council in the last two years has been:

2022/23 £1,435,800

2021/22 £1,387,000

Torbay's ambition is to award a 10-year contract (potentially on a 7+3 basis) with a total value of £14.4M.

Proposal

Devon County Council and Torbay Council are seeking a system leader to manage and develop the sexual & reproductive health system across the two local authority areas, forging critical partnerships with other trusts and organisations, charitable sector organisations and our local population, to truly improve patient care, pathways, and outcomes county-wide (excluding Plymouth).

This is reflected in a proposed single specification which includes all sexual and reproductive services local authorities have key responsibilities for and outlined within the scope section of this paper. The single service specification will be based on the new national service specification for integrated sexual and reproductive health services⁴ with local adaptations.

Key Service Outcomes

In line with the new national service specification for integrated sexual and reproductive health services, the proposed new service will support delivery against the 5 main sexual health Public Health Outcomes Framework measures:

- Reduce under 18 conceptions.
- Improve chlamydia detection rate.
- Reduce new STIs diagnosis (excluding chlamydia in the under 25s)
- Increase prescribing of LARC excluding injections (females aged 15 to 44)
- Reduce the number and proportion of people presenting with HIV at a late stage of infection.

Expectations of delivery of each service element

1. Sexual Health Promotion and Prevention

Sexual Health Promotion and Prevention with the service will aim to improve the sexual and reproductive health of Devon and Torbay residents and reduce health inequalities for those at greatest risk of poor health outcomes through the delivery of a range of accessible, appropriate, and evidence-based programmes including universal and targeted prevention services.

This way of working will support the specialist L3 service to:

- Provide effective system leadership to prioritise prevention.
- Use actionable insight to prioritise prevention.
- Reduce inequalities in sexual and reproduction health.
- Improve sexual and reproductive health literacy of young people and people from marginalised groups in Devon and Torbay.
- Provide services which empower people to improve their sexual wellbeing and access sexual and reproductive health services appropriately.
- Ensure that the wider workforce has the skills, knowledge, and competencies to deliver sexual health interventions to improve population health.

⁴ [Integrated sexual health service specification \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

This element will include:

Universal Prevention

a) Prevention and Promoting Self-managed Care

This will include provision of:

- Effective advice, information, guidance, and support to enable residents to have safer and worry-free sex.
- To provide condoms to all residents upon request.
- To provide STI and HIV self-sampling kits and supporting accessing and using these.

b) Online and Digital Prevention

This will be linked to the online and digital services strand of the specification.

Prevention examples include:

- Accessible advice, guidance, and sources of information, accessing local and specialist services information.
- Efficiently supporting residents to manage their sexual and reproductive health needs online.

c) Training and Workforce Development for Non-clinical and Allied Professionals

This provision will include:

- Developing, delivering, and evaluating an evidence-based training and workforce development programme (the Programme) for professionals in Devon and Torbay with the specific intention and requirement to maintain and build sexual health capacity across the wider system.
- Ensuring that trainers are:
 - a) fully conversant with current wider sexual and reproductive health issues and trends and cultural awareness and understanding of local marginalised and vulnerable groups accessing sexual and reproductive health services.
 - b) positively inclusive in terms of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity or national origin, culture, age, religion or belief, HIV status, pregnancy, and maternity, economic or social class and/or other life-experiences.
- Undertaking regular training needs assessments with the wider health and social care workforce to understand training and development needs.

d) Communications, Campaigns and Marketing

This provision will include:

- Effectively marketing the service to residents, professionals and to wider system partners via the use of innovative and appropriate media and marketing techniques tailored to

specific audiences.

- Delivering flexible and targeted campaigns according to population need. This will include universal (always on) and targeted.
- Have a dedicated and expert communications, public relations, and social marketing lead with expertise in social media and behavioural science.

Targeted Prevention

e) Community Based Interventions, Brief Interventions and Behavioural Change

Examples include:

- An outreach and Netreach plan detailing a clear way to engage and work with target population online and in person.
- Providing STI testing, including HIV testing and contraception, in appropriate community settings (e.g., sex on premises, public sex environments, asylum seeker hotels/premises) with rapid referral links to community or specialist sexual health services.
- Undertaking other appropriate brief sexual and reproductive interventions and signpost to local public health programmes where appropriate (e.g., StopForLife in Devon and Your Health Torbay in Torbay), also utilising local MECC structures and programmes.
- Promoting and delivering behavioural change for individuals at higher risk of poor sexual and reproductive health through both digital and face to face delivery. This could include one to one or group work methods of delivery.
- Co-develop interventions and resources to reduce the harms of chemsex, provide time limited support for people with chemsex issues, set up peer support groups for local people, provide access to safer injecting and substance use packs available from sexual health services.

2. Online STI testing, treatment, partner notification and contraception

The provider will be expected to implement a robust sexual and reproductive health digital offer, ensuring patient confidentiality, to increase access to information, treatment and support, improve patient experience and strengthen the impact of services.

This element of the service will include a portal for patient self-assessment with adequate information about different contraceptive methods, emergency contraception, pregnancy options, different STIs, HIV testing, non STI causes of discharge to encourage self-care and triage to appropriate services.

Features of the online service will include (where appropriate, as clinically indicated):

- Developing a full STI self-sampling e-service for STIs, including HIV.
- Remote chlamydia screening.
- Remote prescribing and dispensing of contraception (including EHC).
- STI treatment.
- PrEP.
- Digital self-triage.
- Online booking.
- Remote consultations.
- Partner notification.
- Condoms for all 13+ age groups.

- Netreach (engaging with individuals through online forums and delivering sexual health brief interventions).

3. Specialist Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health Service (L1-3)

Service Objectives:

Overarching Objectives:

- Ensure that services are acceptable and accessible to people disproportionately affected by unplanned pregnancy and sexual ill health based on up-to-date sexual health needs assessment which identifies the needs of vulnerable or at-risk groups.
- Ensure that digital sexual and reproductive health services are effective, efficient, designed with users and are fully accessible to provide a simple streamlined service, supported by real time data and management information.
- Engage local prevention groups and non-governmental organisations to facilitate collaboration with service development, co-production, health promotion and outbreak management.
- Ensure service users' views inform service evaluation, development and continuous improvement to ensure services remain responsive to the needs of local populations.
- Proactively assess and respond to the public health needs of the local population and ensure robust links and pathways are in place to wider public health issues.
- Rapid and easy access to services for the prevention (including vaccination and HIV PrEP), detection and management (treatment and partner notification) of STIs and blood born viruses to reduce prevalence and transmission, including for people living with HIV.
- Ensure robust information governance systems are in place and the service is compliant in timely reporting to all mandatory local and national datasets.
- Support and champion evidence-based practice in sexual health (this should include participation in audit and service evaluations and may include research).
- Promote service and key sexual health messages to the local population, via the use of innovative and appropriate media and marketing techniques tailored to specific audiences.
- Understand the wider determinants around both sexual health and unplanned pregnancy.
- Prompt referral and signposting of service users to services such as HIV treatment and care services, the sexual assault referral centre, drug and alcohol services and other services relevant to their individual needs.

STI Service Objectives:

- Provide opportunities for people who choose to manage their own sexual health either independently or with appropriate support.
- Provision of chlamydia screening, treatment, and partner notification as part of the NCSP (national chlamydia screening programme).
- Provision of STI testing, treatment, and partner notification.
- All diagnostic samples should be processed by laboratories in a timely fashion in order that results can be conveyed and acted upon quickly.
- Increase the uptake of HIV testing.
- Provide HIV prep for eligible populations (in line with current [BHIVA and BASHH guidelines](#) on the use of HIV PrEP).
- Monitor HIV late diagnosis and partner notification, undertaking root cause analysis for these cases where possible.

- Rapid referral to HIV treatment and care services following diagnosis, to ensure timely initiation of treatment.
- Management of complex STIs including gonorrhoea, syphilis, mycoplasma genitalium (MGEN), recurrent genital infection with an STI.

Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Service Objectives:

- Provide sexual health information, including information about safer sex practices, contraceptive methods, and access to free condoms (and other barrier methods) and advice to develop increased knowledge, especially in higher need communities, working in collaboration with the wider system partners.
- Access for all age groups to a complete range and choice of contraception including LARC, emergency contraception, condoms, and support to reduce the risk of unplanned pregnancy.
- Access to free pregnancy tests and appropriate onward referral to abortion services or maternity care.
- Promote access and reduce waiting times to abortion services and maternity care through the provision of information on client self-referral (where available).

4. Psychosexual Counselling

The psychosexual counselling element of this specification will support Devon and Torbay residents to have healthy worry-free sex through the provision of psychological self-managed support, evidence-based interventions, and counselling.

There are two elements of this part of the service:

1. Supporting **prevention and early interventions** in relation to psychosexual dysfunction.
2. Provision of short/medium term **counselling** for residents who are experiencing sexual dysfunction.

The provider will contribute to wider systems outcomes by:

- Promoting healthy conversations about sexual dysfunction amongst professional networks.
- Dissemination of relevant accurate information about sexual dysfunction.
- Delivering education and awareness of key themes which may support prevention (reduced or abstaining from smoking, alcohol, and substance use) and early interventions (healthy relationships, weight management) in relation to psychosexual dysfunction.
- Delivering a co-ordinated service of assessment, advice, and counselling for residents with problems of sexual dysfunction.
- By providing an evidence-based service by a suitably qualified and accredited psychosexual therapist.
- Capturing key themes which can be shared as appropriate to strengthen prevention and intervention strategies and plans.

5. Level Two Enhanced Sexual and Reproductive Health Services through community settings

An aim of this provision is to maximise the locality-based offers to residents of Devon and Torbay. This aim will support regular, timely and localised access to LARC methods of contraception, including emergency contraception.

This part of the service will also incorporate what has previously been delivered by general practices and community pharmacies in Torbay and Devon.

The service delivery is intended to respond to the NHS Devon and Devon and Torbay Public Health shared aim of supporting delivery of LARC in at least one site per Primary Care Network. It is also intended to complement emerging NHS England commissioned Pharmacy First services, who have an increasing role in provision of community based sexual and reproductive health services.

- Provide access to methods of LARC (Sub Dermal Implants and Intra Uterine) in a timely and accessible way to Devon and Torbay residents.
- Ensure that local clinical pathways are understood and used to maximise patient satisfaction and system efficiency, in line with the ambitions of the Women's Health strategy.
- Provide early access to Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EHC) combined with an opportunistic Chlamydia screening kit for young people aged 13- to 24-year-olds.
- Opportunistically signpost young people aged 16-24 (not presenting for EHC) to counter-top Chlamydia screening kits.
- Where appropriate, to refer young people into mainstream contraceptive services and to ensure that pathways for post-coital IUD fitting for emergency contraception are known to those young people who request EHC.
- Promote condom use and safer sexual activity and refer clients who may have been at risk of other sexually transmitted infections to a specialist sexual health service.

6. System leadership, network management and training objectives

System leadership is critical to bring together services and partners to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes and reduce health inequalities for the population of Devon and Torbay.

The provider will:

- Develop and manage the whole Devon and Torbay system and up to four locality place-based clinical and community networks to engage local prevention groups and organisations and primary care networks to prioritise prevention and facilitate collaboration with service development, health promotion and outbreak management. All parts of the Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health Service will work together using local data and insight to improve population outcomes and reduce health inequalities.
- Provide high quality professional education for practitioners working in sexual and reproductive health, including clinical and allied professional's through:
- the full range of FSRH accredited training programmes for medical and nursing staff, required to deliver the commissioned activities and build capacity in primary care (LARC provision) and across the system (including specialist postgraduate training programmes).
 - the full range of BASHH accredited training programmes for medical and nursing staff, required to deliver the commissioned activities and build capacity in primary care across system (including specialist postgraduate training programmes);
 - the support of undergraduate, postgraduate and specialist training in line with the GMC and NMC curriculum.
 - the development specialist trainers for contraceptive IUD and Implant insertion and removal and enable suitably qualified and experienced nurses to develop

competencies as nurse trainers.

- training to community pharmacy staff to support the supply and administration of sexual and reproductive health services in pharmacy locations.
- Prioritise and develop the local sexual and reproductive health workforce ensuring staff have access to the full range of training programmes to develop the optimal delivery of the Devon and Torbay service model.
- Co-ordinate and support the delivery of sexual and reproductive health care across a locality through expert clinical advice, clinical governance, and clinical networks.
- Provide specialist expert advice to other service providers and organisations, and training of nursing and medical sexual and reproductive health experts.
- Support the **Sexual Health Promotion and Prevention element of the service** to develop and deliver a training programme to the wider workforce including the voluntary and community sector.

Seeking feedback

Devon County Council and Torbay Council are seeking feedback on the approach outlined and welcome the markets' views on.

- A. Operational feasibility of **a single lot and scope (1-6) of the service elements**.
- B. The reasonableness of **budget** ambitions within the context of the vision, scope which meets population need and demand.
- C. **Ambitions for change** over a 10-year contract to realise optimal service model delivery and shift towards prevention and self-management and budget demarcation options local authorities should consider (across scope 1-6) to rebalance spend over time.

Next steps

Please respond through this link [Commissioning Intentions Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Devon and Torbay Feedback Form](#) **by 12pm Monday 20th May 2024**

Information will be treated confidentially and sensitively.