



## **BASHH clinical standards for the management of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)**

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

#### **Introduction**

The British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) has commissioned the Medical Foundation for AIDS & Sexual Health (MedFASH) to manage the development of new clinical standards for the management of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Recent NHS policy, as well as ongoing implementation of the *National strategy for sexual health and HIV* (Department of Health, 2001), has led to the commissioning of sexual health services in a wide range of settings. A number of existing documents provide relevant guidance, but there is no single set of agreed clinical standards to govern the operation of all services offering STI management.

BASHH wishes to promote consistency of care and is therefore undertaking this project, in partnership with the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) and other key professional organisations, to define clinical standards relevant to the management of STIs in all settings.

#### **Development of standards**

The standards will mostly bring together and contextualise relevant existing guidance, including standards, competencies and clinical guidelines. They will also address any relevant issues contained within the recent review of the national strategy for sexual health and HIV (*Progress and priorities*, MedFASH/IAG, 2008) as well as the proposals contained in Lord Darzi's final report of the NHS Next Stage Review (*High quality care for all*, Department of Health, 2008).

The scope of the standards will be limited to the management of STIs (rather than broader sexual healthcare) but will include key principles of STI service provision such as open access, equity of care, confidentiality, managing patient information, clinical governance and working within a clinical network. It is envisaged the standards will recommend what needs to be included in a typical service level agreement (SLA) for various types of STI service, regardless of location.

#### **Partnership, consultation and endorsement**

The project will be managed for BASHH by MedFASH, and the published standards will be jointly branded. The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) will be a key partner, actively involved through membership of the Project Working Group. A wider group of stakeholders, including key professional bodies, will be represented on the Project Advisory Group to provide expert advice on content and context.

The draft standards will be circulated for consultation to ensure they are appropriate and acceptable to their intended users, notably services providing STI testing and treatment (in a range of settings) and sexual health commissioners. Following final revisions and approval by BASHH of the clinical standards, the RCP and the other key stakeholders will be asked to provide their formal endorsement, which will be shown on the published document, and to assist with dissemination.

#### **Timing**

The project will commence in February 2009, with consultation planned for June and completion by December 2009.

*Ruth Lowbury*  
Executive Director, MedFASH

*Dr I H Ahmed-Jushuf*  
President, BASHH