SSHA
SOCIETY OF SEXUAL HEALTH ADVISERS
Individual and Public Health

NEWSLETTER

SOCIETY OF SEXUAL HEALTH ADVISERS - AUTUMN 2026

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Dear all, welcome to our Autumn Newsletter!

We had lots of positive comments about our new-look Spring edition and hope you find this one just as interesting and thought-provoking.

We have some great articles from Sexual Health Advisers across the country in this issue, looking at Partner Notification, Motivational Interviewing and Psychosexual counselling – read on to see them.

Sending resilience and fortitude as always, Ceri

Read my full update on SSHA.info | Email Me

"Do check out the articles below then take a look at our new and updated website SSHA.info"

CONFERENCE 2026

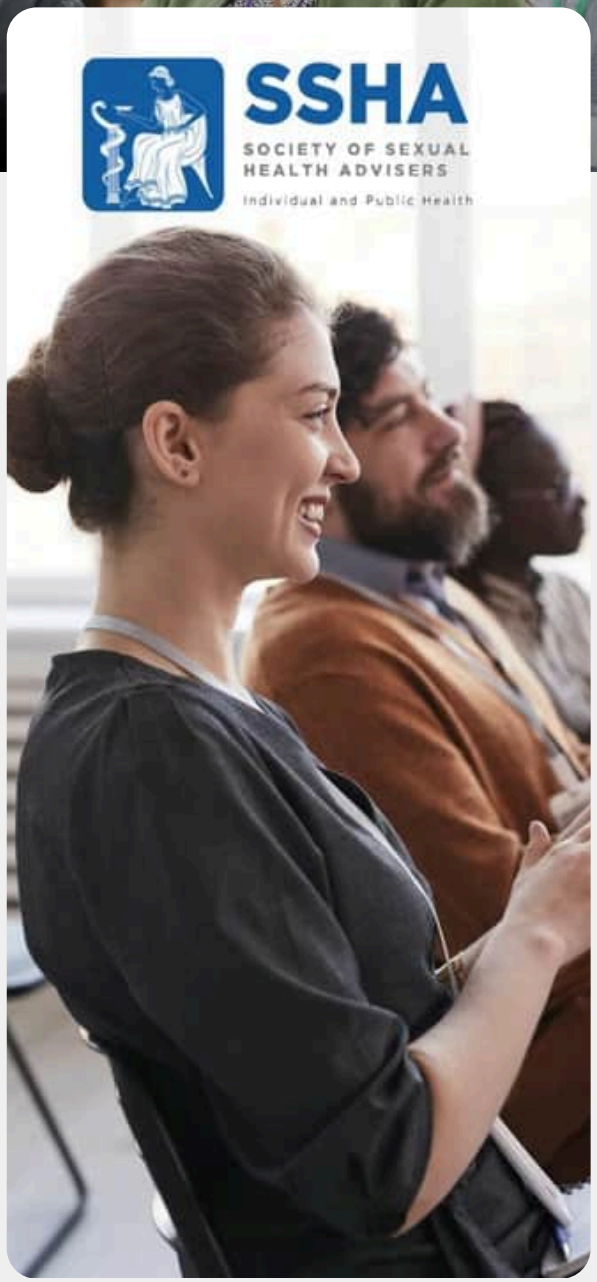
SAVE THE DATE!

Exciting News About The SSHA 2026 Conference!

On Friday November 6th SSHA will be joining up with **BASHH** and **SHAN** (Sexual Health Advisers and Nurses Special Interest Group) for a one-day online conference aimed at SHAs, sexual health nurses and related staff.

Topics likely to include:

- Motivational interviewing
- Syphilis
- Complex Partner Notification
- Injectable PrEP
- Vicarious trauma
- Guideline updates and more



[Visit the SSHA Conference 2026 page](#) for full details and how to book your place >>

Sexual Health Advising and Psychosexual Therapy

Zoch Nwaosu, Senior Sexual Health Adviser, John Hunter Clinic, London

Working as a Sexual Health Adviser in a GUM/HIV service has shown me that sexual wellbeing is about far more than preventing and treating sexually transmitted infections or providing contraception.

While these remain core parts of the role, I regularly meet people whose sexual concerns are shaped by their relationships, emotions, past experiences and sense of self.

It is this broader perspective that sparked my interest in psychosexual therapy and the difference it can make for people experiencing sexual difficulties.

[Read the full article on SSHA.info >>]

Public Health tools we can't afford to lose: Partner Notification and Motivational Interviewing

Joseph Deering, Sexual Health Adviser and
Nurse Manager Oldham Sexual Health Service

In Sexual Health Advising, so much of our work is supporting people through a sexually transmitted infection (STI) diagnosis and helping them reduce their risk of acquiring another.

Over time, I've realised that the most meaningful change doesn't come from tests or treatments - the real impact often comes from the conversations we have.

Partner notification (PN) and motivational interviewing (MI) are two of the most powerful tools I use in sexual health advising. They're not flashy or a modern innovation discovered in the last 10 years, and they don't always get the attention they deserve, but day after day I see how these skilled conversations protect individuals and often quietly deliver some of the most effective public health outcomes in the NHS.

Before I write about why PN and MI matter so much today, I think it's important to acknowledge where this work began – because its history has fascinated me, and it shows just how far we've come.

Read the full article on SSHA.info >>

Motivational Interviewing and Partner Notification: Reflections from BHIVA/BASHH 2026

Hu Clarke, Sexual Health Adviser
Psychosexual Therapist
Homerton Sexual Health

The landscape of HIV care and partner notification (PN) continues to evolve, but at its core, it remains a profoundly human endeavour.

At the recent BHIVA/BASHH 2026 Conference, a session titled ***"If Not Us, Then Who?" - Motivational Interviewing and Partner Notification***, resonated deeply with over 1,250 attendees, sparking meaningful conversations about the role of empathy, skill, and trust in sexual health practice.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is often perceived as an additional skill for Health Advisers, yet it is actually an intrinsic part of their daily work.

Open-ended questions, reflective listening, affirmations, and eliciting change talk are routine tools that advisers use to navigate the complexities of PN and HIV care, even if these techniques aren't always formally recognised as MI.

The session illuminated the compassionate and nuanced ways advisers help patients face stigma, uncertainty, and difficult decisions, striking a delicate balance between supporting individual autonomy and addressing broader public health needs.

MI, ultimately, is woven into the fabric of ethical and effective care.

Read the full article on SSHA.info >>

Inaugural National SHA Online Meeting 29/7/26

On Wednesday 29th August, we had the inaugural National on line meeting of SHAs.

We advertised the meeting through SSHA and BASHH although membership of either was not necessary.

This was set up by Jara Phattey (Sexual Health Adviser rep to BASHH Board) and Ceri Evans (President of SSHA) as we had never attempted to have a national gathering apart from our SSHA yearly conferences. We had an amazing turnout - 60 SHAs attended from all over the UK – it was wonderful to have a gathering of "our people"!

The main agenda item was a presentation by Jara, who presented a ***Briefing Paper: Scoping Exercise on Sexual Health Advising Models in UK Services.***

The scoping exercise will examine the range of Sexual Health Adviser (SHA) workforce models currently in use across UK integrated sexual health services, with the aim of informing future workforce development, service design, and commissioning requirements.

This will take place over the next 12 months.

Read the full article on SSHA.info >>

Exploring the Future of Sexual Health Advising: A National Scoping Exercise

Jara Phattey: Lead Sexual Health Advisor/ Team Manager: Whittall Street GUM Clinic, Birmingham

Sexual Health Advisers (SHAs) are at the heart of modern sexual health services, providing vital support to patients, communities, and multidisciplinary teams. Yet across the UK, the way these roles are structured, utilised, and commissioned varies significantly.

A proposed national scoping exercise aims to change that by building a clearer picture of current workforce models and identifying opportunities to strengthen the profession for the future.

Why Sexual Health Advisers Matter

SHAs play a critical role in delivering safe, effective, and patient-centred sexual health care. Their work extends far beyond partner notification and contact tracing, encompassing HIV prevention and support, safeguarding, psychosocial assessment, behavioural interventions, complex case management, and service navigation.

As sexual health services continue to evolve, the contribution of SHAs has become increasingly important. Growing rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), expanding prevention programmes such as PrEP and DoxyPEP, and increasing safeguarding responsibilities all require skilled professionals who can support individuals through often complex care pathways.

Read the full article on SSHA.info >>

BASHH Formal statement of support for the role of the Sexual Health Adviser

SSHA is thrilled that The British Association of Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) has made a formal statement of support for the role of the Sexual Health Adviser.

We are very appreciative of the support that SSHA has from BASHH and the very close relationship that SSHA and BASHH have within Sexual Health and HIV services.

BASHH highlights the critical role of Sexual Health Advisers in modern sexual health services:

“The British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) recognises and values the vital contribution of Sexual Health Advisers (SHAs) as an integral part of the multidisciplinary sexual health workforce across the United Kingdom.

Sexual Health Advisers are highly skilled professionals who play a pivotal role in protecting individual and public health. Their expertise spans partner notification (contact tracing), safeguarding, HIV prevention and support, health promotion, behavioural interventions, psychosocial assessment, outbreak management, and the delivery of person-centred care for individuals affected by sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV, including pregnant (often vulnerable) people affected by infections like Syphilis.”

Read the full article on SSHA.info >>