



SSHA
SOCIETY OF SEXUAL
HEALTH ADVISERS
Individual and Public Health

NEWSLETTER

SOCIETY OF SEXUAL HEALTH ADVISERS - SPRING 2026

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Dear all, welcome to our Spring Newsletter!

We hope you like the new and improved style layout. We are also updating and streamlining the [SSHA website](#) to make it more useful and usable. Huge thanks to Kevin from Blue Light who is leading us through all these changes.

Sending resilience and fortitude as always, Ceri

[Read my full update on SSHA.info](#) | [Email Me](#)

Plenty of exciting things happening for Sexual Health Advisers currently and in the near future:

- **2026 Conference** with BASHH/SHAN on Friday 6th November - save the date!
- Working with BASHH/STIF to develop Core Competencies aimed at new SHAs.
- Strengthening links with RCN and National HIV Nurses, offering training/teaching around Partner Notification, Motivational Interviewing and Vicarious Trauma.



"DO LET US KNOW OF ANY EXCITING PROJECTS, SERVICES OR VENTURES IN YOUR CLINICS SO WE CAN FEATURE THEM IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER."



CONFERENCE 2025 A HUGE SUCCESS!

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The SSHA October 2025 Virtual Conference was a huge success with more than 70 people from across the 4 Nations joining us to hear speakers discuss:

- Online Misogyny
- Doxypap and Sexual Assault
- HIV Prep for women
- The Experiences of British South Asian Young Gay, Bi, and Queer Men

We had some incredible feedback (see the speech bubbles opposite).

Thank you to our amazing speakers and all the wonderful Sexual Health Advisers and other Sexual Health Staff who attended.

Read further in this Newsletter for articles by some of our 2025 speakers and details of the 2026 SSHA/BASHH Conference.

**“ABSOLUTELY
BRILLIANT DAY,
DISCUSSING ALL
RELEVANT TOPICS.
THANK YOU FOR
ORGANISING!”**

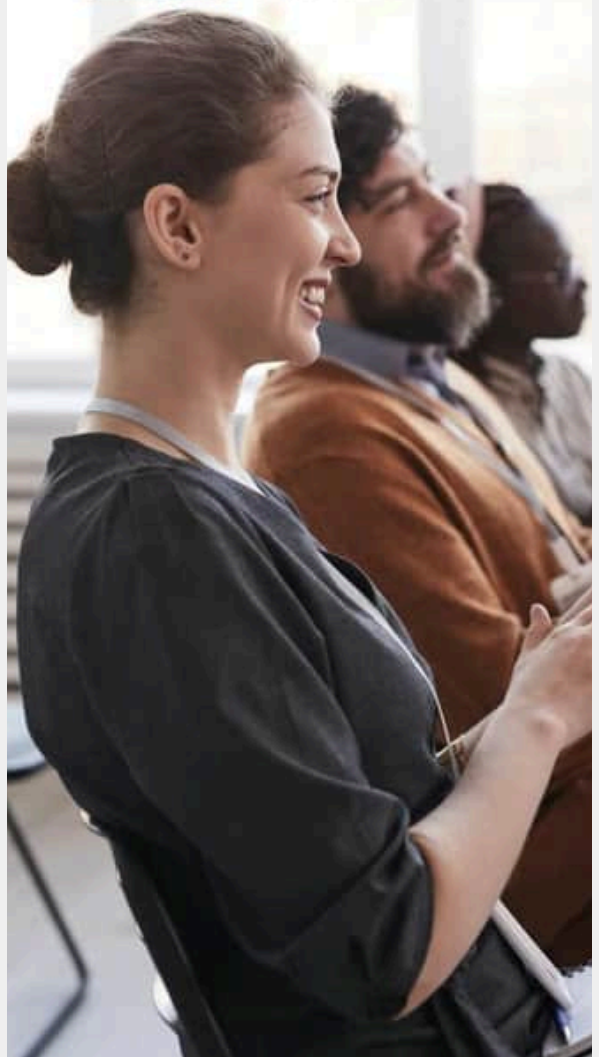
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CONFERENCE 2026



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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 >>

CONSIDERING DOXYPEP FOLLOWING SEXUAL ASSAULT

Hasan Mirza: PrEP & Sexual Health Pharmacist, Royal London Hospital



Sexual assault remains a global concern. In the UK, around one in four women and one in eighteen men experience rape or sexual assault after the age of 16. Yet fewer than one in six report it to the police.

It is difficult to determine STI rates linked to sexual assault due to difficulty in determining time of acquisition and variable follow-up attendance rates.

Antibiotic prophylaxis after sexual assault is handled differently around the world:

- UK guidance (BASHH) recommends case-by-case decisions rather than routine antibiotics.
- US guidelines suggest offering antibiotics (ceftriaxone, doxycycline and metronidazole) to all survivors seen within seven days.
- WHO does not recommend routine use due to limited evidence.



[Read the full article online >>](#)



FROM SCREEN TO SERVICE

Award-winning, BASHH-endorsed, co-produced films to strengthen Partner Notification and STI Testing

Dr Melvina Woode Owusu, on behalf of the LUSTRUM2 team and our co-producers

STI diagnoses remain high across the UK and Partner notification (PN) remains essential for preventing reinfection and reducing onward transmission.

Findings from the LUSTRUM trial of Accelerated Partner Therapy highlighted that only half of notified sex partners returned samples for testing.

Many partners need clearer support at the moment of notification so three short films were developed to encourage sex partners of people with bacterial STIs to take up a full sexual health screen.

One film was made with and for Diverse Young People which normalises the experience of receiving a notification of exposure to an STI, and uses familiar settings/scenarios reflecting the range of reactions co-producers described. A second was made with and for Young People of Black Caribbean Heritage.

Co-producers in this group emphasised:

- The emotional impact of exposure
- The need to support young people in reconciling negative emotions
- The importance of emphasising that “testing prevents passing STIs back and forth”
- And a culturally specific approach that felt authentic to their experiences.

[Read the full story and watch the films >>](#)



GAY, BI AND QUEER SOUTH ASIAN MEN AND SEXUAL HEALTHCARE

Dr Manish Sen is currently a teaching assistant at the University of Manchester, and has taught on a range of courses, including foundational topics in sociology, race and ethnicity in the UK, and gender and sexuality.

The NHS plays a crucial role in the overall health and well-being of service users and patients.

Despite ongoing underfunding of the NHS, STI testing and other sexual health services provided by NHS staff are proven to be effective and continue to alleviate or mitigate mental health concerns faced by sexual minorities.

The mental health concerns of gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are linked to sexual health outcomes, and these have been well documented within academia.

At a public level, the discourses around gay, bisexual and lesbian identification have changed over time across legislative levels and at social levels, with an overall decrease in stigma and increase in social acceptability.

However, the mental health concerns of sexually minoritised people are compounded, for example, by 'race'/ethnicity, ability, income.

[Read the full article on the SSHA website >>](#)





SO...WHAT DO SEXUAL HEALTH ADVISERS ACTUALLY DO?

A role that most people have never heard of and few really understand...

If you work in sexual health, you have probably heard the usual comments about Sexual Health Advisers...

Some are curious, some are confused, and some are... well, a little off the mark! For example — “*don’t they make people cry?*”, “*or stop people crying?*”

Sexual Health Advisers and the wider MDT rely on each other. Each brings skills the other does not. Together, they create something stronger, safer, and more supportive for patients.

Because sexual health isn’t only about treating infections. It’s about people. Their lives, their health, their worries, their safety, their relationships, their choices. And Sexual Health Advisers are right there in the middle of all of it — quietly but powerfully making a difference.

Use us, don’t lose us!

Read the full article discussing the vital role of the SHA — and why we’re indispensable!

“AREN’T SEXUAL HEALTH ADVISERS KIND OF AN ENDANGERED SPECIES?”

“THEY ARE THE ONES WHO TELL PARTNERS THEY’VE GOT AN STI — RIGHT?”

“THEY SORT OUT THE UPSET / DRUNK / ANGRY PEOPLE SO WE CAN GET ON WITH THE JOB.”