

# SSHA TOGETHER



**SSHA**  
SOCIETY OF SEXUAL  
HEALTH ADVISERS  
Individual and Public Health

## SSHA CONFERENCE 2022

Dear Colleagues,

The anticipation is over and the next SSHA conference 2022 is approaching. We are thrilled to announce that this will be an “in-person” conference for the first time in 3 years and hope to see as many of you as possible. We are also offering online access via Zoom, for those people who are unable to travel.

### **Society of Sexual Health Advisers (SSHA) One Day Conference**

**Saturday 24th September 2022**

**10:00-16:00**

**Unite Offices—Bristol**

**For this year only**—We are offering a subsidised fee for those who can attend in person, to encourage people to fully engage in the conference and enjoy face to face networking.

Cost:

SSHA members : £40 in person or £50 virtual

Non-SSHA members : £50 in person or virtual

Book your place via this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/society-of-sexual-health-advisers-ssha-one-day-conference-24-09-22-tickets-370303366337>

Further information will be sent to you as we develop the programme and will be posted on the SSHA website [www.ssha.info](http://www.ssha.info)

Themes include Trans issues/Chems/Safeguarding/Partner notification/Vicarious trauma/Sexual dysfunction

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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Monkeypox outbreak
- Change of career and becoming a sexual health adviser

## CERI'S CORNER



Dear SSHA Members,

I hope you are all well and are looking forward to some sun and relaxation over the summer.

We hope you enjoy our latest newsletter and we encourage you to get in touch with us with any interesting projects that you may be involved with and we can feature you in a future edition.

Of course, the biggest news in the last month has been the spread on Monkeypox Virus (MPV). Some of you may not have seen any cases yet, and some of you may be overwhelmed. It's difficult to know how encompassing this is going to be, but we do know that already it is presenting a big challenge to Sexual Health Clinics. Contact Tracing is an important part of managing MPV as we know that currently the burden of infection seems to be with Gay/bisexual/men who have sex with men and is passed through skin to skin contact.

We have ensured that SSHA, along with BASHH is as centrally involved as possible in offering our expert advice on how to manage contact tracing in a sensitive and empathic way - as we know, if you cannot engage positively with the client/patient in that initial PN interview, then you are unlikely to gain good cooperation and information.

Please remember that SSHA is YOUR professional organisation – along with our union, Unite, we are here to help and support you. For example, recently we have supported some SHAs who were at risk of losing their job title and job description. With the support of SSHA and Unite, we have been able to ensure that they retain their hugely important SHA name and defined role within their service and were also able to help them to update their JD to reflect the complex work they do as part of the MDT.

We know that there are many excellent and effective combined SHA/Nurse teams in clinics across the UK, but we also know that it is very important that we protect and support Sexual Health Advisers as a stand alone profession.

We are currently reviewing the SSHA Competency Framework for Sexual Health Advisers and hoping to make it a “stepping stone” to SHAs completing the STIF/BASHH SHA Competency (for which you need to have been working as an SHA for at least 12 months). We have had feedback from members that an “initial” training framework was needed for people who were being employed as SHAs without any previous SHAS experience, and we are hoping we can provide this with the updated SSHA Competency Framework.

You should have all received an email about the forthcoming SSHA Annual Conference on 24/9/22 in Bristol. We are hugely excited about our first Hybrid conference, but hope as many as possible of you will try and attend in person – we have really missed that face to face networking opportunity over the past 3 years! Do please share the details with all your colleagues and networks in and out of the NHS – everyone is welcome!

Do keep in touch with us at SSHA – you can email me at [ceri.evans4@nhs.net](mailto:ceri.evans4@nhs.net) with any concerns or questions or information that you would like to share with other members.

Sending resilience and fortitude as always,

Ceri

SSHA President

## WANT TO BECOME A SSHA REGIONAL REP??



**WANTED:** We are looking for some new SSHA regional representatives in E Midlands, West Midlands and Wales for the OPC - if you are interested in becoming part of the team of people who supports our members. Full support is given by the OPC and it's a great way of participating in SSHA.

Contact [ceri.evans4@nhs.net](mailto:ceri.evans4@nhs.net)

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*“Please remember that SSHA is YOUR professional organisation”*

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## YOUR POINT OF VIEW

I am a 'SEXUAL Health Adviser'

It's all in the name.

I think because our name is a bit confusing and maybe particularly to patients when we speak to people its easy to introduce ourselves as a 'Health Adviser' or even nurse.

I've noticed there are more and more 'Health Advisors' knocking around—doing good works but in social care or the voluntary sector. They don't work in the role we recognise in GUM/ISH as Sexual Health Advisors.

Ceri Evans recently corrected me on me calling myself a 'Health Adviser' and it got me thinking, I've realised I'm sort of dumbing down my role and have been more proudly reclaiming the name and therefore my profession. You may be more enlightened than me and be doing this already but if not I recommend you reclaim your professional name.

AND in the UK we have already been Sexual Health Advisers so please also reclaim the E

Dorinda Thirlby

SEXUAL Health Adviser

## A NEW CAREER.....

Joining a new team can be daunting. Especially if you're a lone Sexual Health Advisor.

I joined a Sexual Health department as a trainee Sexual Health Adviser in November 2021. The team have all been very welcoming and supportive towards me, as I develop my skills and familiarise myself with the services systems and ways of working. When I started this role, I was the only Sexual Health Advisor on the team, which was slightly daunting but also very exciting as it enabled me to have a lot of input into setting up new processes and making adjustment which I felt could be beneficial for the running on the service.

I feel that my knowledge and skills have grown vastly since beginning this role, and I really enjoy the huge variety in the patient demographics that the service sees. Regular discussions have been had regarding growing the Sexual Health Advising aspect of the service, with current members of the team being trained and utilised to support this. Having the support of my SSHA rep has been invaluable. I recommend that anyone starting out in Sexual Health Advising use this resource.

I really look forward to continuing my growth in my Sexual Health Advisor role and seeing how these new ideas and plans role out within this service.

Roanna Warren

Sexual Health Adviser

Chester

## STUDY DAY

We have had many requests for further Motivational Interviewing and Partner Notification study days. We recognise this has been difficult over the last few years but we are ready to offer some sessions in November 2022.

If you would like to express interest in attending or require more information, please contact your

Please keep a look out for email notifications for dates!



### What Is Motivational Interviewing (MI)?

Motivational Interviewing is a way of working that helps sexual health practitioners 'come alongside' and elicit an individual's own reasons for change.

Assisting the practitioner to engage and reflect healthier sexual health choices and behaviour change.

The aim of the study days is to enable staff with sexual health and HIV services (Sexual Health Advisers, Nurses, Doctors) to help patients within their service change behaviour using a Motivational Interviewing approach.

## UTILISING THE SEXUAL HEALTH ADVISER ROLE DURING MONEYPox VIRUS OUTBREAK



As the monkeypox virus outbreak in the UK was emerging, here at the Cheshire

West & Chester Integrated Sexual Health Service several measures were introduced in response to this evolving epidemic.

Walk-in activity was suspended, monkeypox virus information including symptoms was placed on the clinic doors and a return to telephone triage was introduced with a specific monkeypox virus assessment template to be completed. The administration team completed initial triage using the template asking screening questions for any new symptoms of a rash, fever and/or lymphadenopathy. If patients responded 'yes' to any of these questions, then further 'risk' based questions were asked on GBMSM, recent contact with a confirmed monkeypox virus case in the last 21 days or travel outside of the UK to a monkeypox endemic area in the last 21 days.

Patients who answered 'yes' to any symptom screening questions and then 'yes' to any 'risk' based questions were then added to the Sexual Health Advisor telephone call back list for the same day. One to one history taking training was delivered to the Sexual Health Advisor with a specific

document created for them to use outlining the key points to be covered in relation to monkeypox. In addition to the standard sexual history template, a detailed history on duration of symptom onset, prodromal symptoms, systemic illness, travel history, household contacts, pets and occupation were covered.

Once the Sexual Health Advisor completed this, each case was discussed with a senior clinician and a joint decision made as to whether the patient would need to attend for review using standard precautions or according to the UKHSA infection and prevention control measures with PPE.

Utilising the Sexual Health Advisor for this role in completing clinical triage allowed continued capacity for the service to meet the sexual health needs for the local population whilst responding to the monkeypox virus outbreak. This is an example of where the Sexual Health Advisor role is unique in its' versatility, adapting and responding to the service needs whilst demonstrating how integral their role is within a sexual health service.

**Dr Hardeep Kang - GUM & HIV Consultant**

**HCRG Care Group – Integrated Sexual Health Service Cheshire West & Chester**

## YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

### **Ceri Evans**

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## Society of Sexual Health Advisers

### Who are we??

### How to Join

The Society of Sexual Health Advisers are a professional section within the Unite in Health sector. The Organising Professional Committee (OPC) leads on developments.

SSHA believe in the advocacy, protection and continual development of the sexual health advising role as profession in its own right. Members include qualified nurses, social workers and others working in the field of sexual health.

SSHA has developed professional resources which include guidelines on partner notification and sexual health advising clinical competencies.

SSHA actively encourage members' work, research, networking.

#### Becoming Part of the SSHA Family

If you or an SHA in your team would like to become SSHA member please go to [join.unitehealthunion.org/join](https://join.unitehealthunion.org/join). Once in the form choose from the roles 'sexual health adviser/sexual health nurse' and you will be automatically allocated to a SSHA branch – we'd love to have you as part of the SSHA team! Please contact your local SSHA Rep at [www.ssha.info](http://www.ssha.info) if you have any questions.



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