

<b>Committee(s):</b> Health and Wellbeing Board – for information	<b>Date(s):</b> 14/06/2019
<b>Subject:</b> Progress update on London's sexual health e-service	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Sue Milner, Director of Public Health	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Adrian Kelly, Lead Commissioner, Sexual Health London	

### Summary

The Health and Wellbeing Board of the City of London Corporation is asked to consider the progress that has been made in the provision of a “self-sampling” sexual health service for Londoners. This report provides information on:

- Mobilisation
- Activity trends
- Service user characteristics
- Clinical outcomes, including safeguarding.
- Service user feedback
- Service development and continuous improvement

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The London Sexual Health Programme (LSHP) is a partnership of 31 London authorities working with the NHS to make sure that access to sexual health services is improved at a time when public health funding has been reduced.
2. Residents of 28 London authorities, who do not have symptoms of an STI, can order easy-to-use self-sampling kits through the [Sexual Health London](#) e-service. These are posted to their home or they can be collected from a participating clinic. Once they have taken their samples, they pop it back in the post to a laboratory in Sheffield operated by Preventx.
3. People with uncomplicated chlamydia infection are offered an online assessment for treatment by post which can also be collected from a Lloyds pharmacy. People who require confirmatory testing and treatment are supported to do so by

a team of health advisers based at Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust.

4. The e-service has provided additional capacity to the London's sexual health system, making it more convenient than ever for people in the capital to get tested regularly and monitor their sexual health and wellbeing.

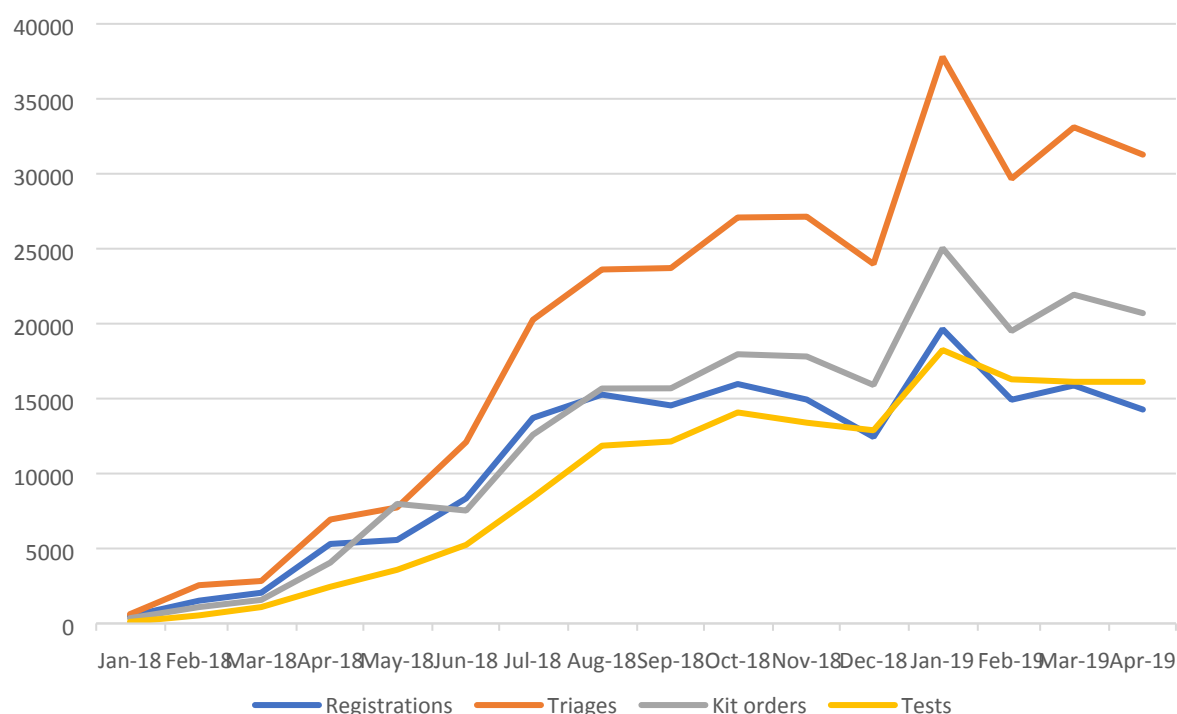
## **Mobilisation**

5. The e-service was launched on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the Homerton Hospital in Hackney. It was then extended to the remaining 12 NHS Trusts that provide open-access sexual health services commissioned by the authorities which the wider sexual health programme supports.
6. Mobilisation concluded in June when direct access to the [www.shl.uk](http://www.shl.uk) portal was switched on and "smart" kits, which could be collected from participating clinics, became available.
7. In December 2018, Barking and Dagenham became the 28<sup>th</sup> authority to commission the service for its residents.

## **Activity**

8. To date, 186k Londoners have registered with the e-service and they have completed 335k triages. This resulted in 222k test kits being issued, of which 167k have been returned, for testing, to the laboratory in Sheffield.
9. Mobilisation saw sustained growth in these measures (Fig. 1) as access increased through the activation of all NHS trusts and then the opening of direct access to the public facing web portal. A period of more incremental growth followed through the autumn and ended with an anticipated fall in demand at the end of the calendar year. Reduced activity in December was more than compensated for in January when 38k unique triages were completed and 25k test kits were issued.

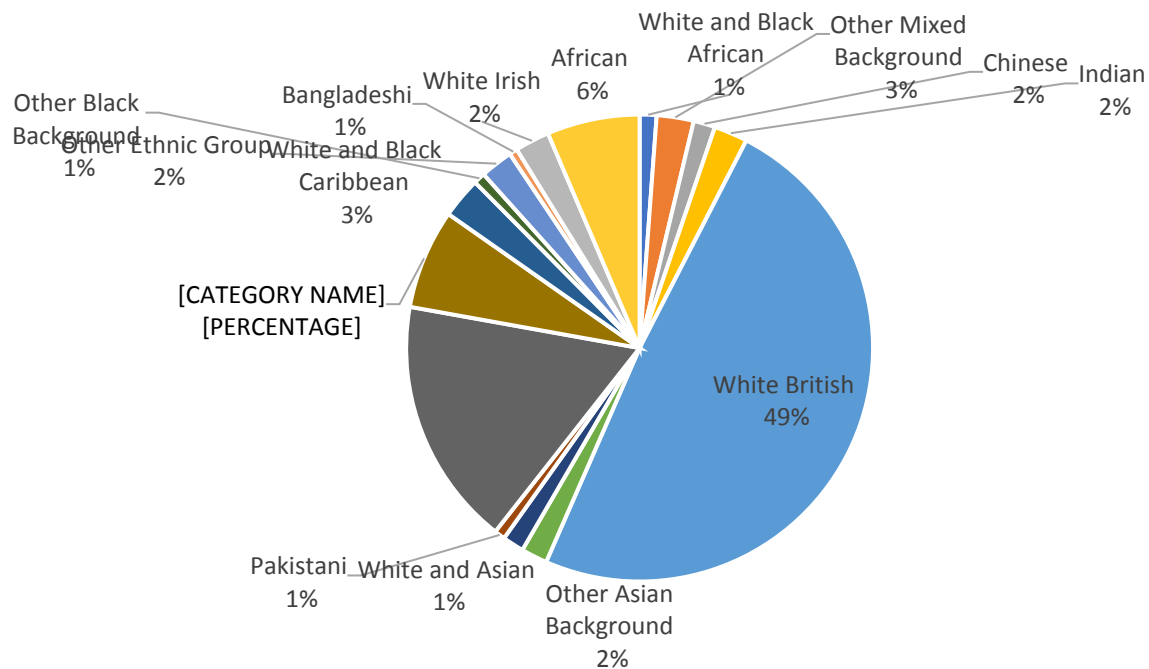
**Fig. 1 Monthly volumes of user registrations, triage completions, kit orders and returned samples (January 18 to April 19)**



## Service user profile

10. Slightly more women (59%) have registered with the service than men (41%).
- 11 While the percentage of users identifying as Trans\* or non-binary is very small (0.2%), they account for over 300 registered users. This is a marked improvement, which has been observed since changes to our gender identity categories was developed in discussion with Trans\* community activists.
- 12 Most users identify as straight (83.5%) compared with 10% who identify as gay and 6.5% who identify as bisexual.
- 13 Over a quarter (28.5%) of users were young people aged 16-25 years.
- 14 The ethnic diversity of users is broadly reflective of clinic users.

**Fig 2. Ethnic profile of registered service users**



## Clinical outcomes and safeguarding

15. 222k completed tests have resulted in 7k cases of chlamydia being diagnosed, 2.5k of which were treated remotely e.g. posted to home.
16. The positivity rate for chlamydia tests, provided to young people aged 16-24 years, was appreciably higher at 6.2% than it was for the over 25s at 3.5%.
17. The clinical team have managed 6k reactive test results for conditions that required confirmatory testing and/or treatment in a physical clinic e.g. Gonorrhoea, Syphilis and HIV.
18. The clinical team has also supported 2k people who triggered a safeguarding flag: half were aged under 18 and half were aged over 18.

## Service user feedback

19. Over 98% of service users say they are happy, or very happy, with the e-service, and the same proportion would recommend it to friends or family (a response rate of 85% to 150k survey questions).
20. Service users' comments on social media are routinely monitored, this provides qualitative feedback and evidence on peer to peer recommendation.

### Comments on social media:

*“There’s literally no reason to not be having check-ups if you’re sexually active. You can get kits delivered to your door ([shl.uk](https://shl.uk) for London folk), test from home and drop it in a postbox as you go about your day. Doesn’t require any effort at all.”*

*“[shl.uk](https://shl.uk) – a useful website for you busybodies”*

*“In #London UK just log onto [shl.uk](https://shl.uk) fill in a basic qnair and BOOM!  
FREE FAST SEX KIT straight to your door.*

*Takes 10 mins, post it back freepost & results within dayz”*

*“The Sexual Health London home testing kits are so good,  
though I feel guilty cos I know it’s just another slice of infrastructure  
that the rest of the country is deprived of. I hope I’m wrong”*

### Service development and continuous improvement

21. The service user portal was overhauled in April 2019, leveraging improvements to the service user experience which included:

- Smoother transitions across the triage questions,
- A “[clinic finder](#)” function,
- Additional questions to help identify child sexual exploitation,
- Enhanced security options such as 2 factor authentication,
- The ability to share test results with others e.g. General Practice.

22. Service improvement developments that are currently in train, include:

- Providing participants on the PrEP (HIV) impact trial with the option to use [shl.uk](https://shl.uk) for their routine STI tests,
- Widening access to the chlamydia treatment pathway,
- Enabling alternative providers to issue test kits e.g. Brook Young People’s services, substance misuse services and community pharmacies
- Working with the authorities to complete a Health Equity Audit,
- Micro-targeting underrepresented groups e.g. ethnic minority gay and bisexual men, by working with community-based organisations.

23. The related authorities are also exploring the potential for:

- Tracking users who needed treatment or further tests back into the clinics,
- Activating the remaining named authorities (Croydon and Sutton),
- Providing online access to basic contraception.

### Financial implications

24. The sexual health e-service for London is jointly funded by partner authorities at no risk to the City of London.

## Corporate and strategic implications

25. The sexual health e-service for London supports the following City of London Corporation Corporate and Department of Communities and Children's objectives:

- **Corporate Plan:** Contributing to a flourishing society, through supporting the outcome: People enjoy good health and wellbeing; and
- **Department of Communities and Children's Services:** People of all ages enjoy good health and wellbeing, through supporting the outcome: residents and workers live healthier lives.

## Conclusion

26. In conclusion, the London Sexual Health e-service has successfully mobilised and is both testing and treating populations who might not otherwise have access to sexual health services. Service users are overwhelmingly positive in their feedback to the service, and the service continues to make improvements as it matures. By agreeing to facilitate the hosting of this contract, the City of London Corporation has added significant value to the sexual health landscape in London.

## Appendices

None

## Adrian Kelly

Commissioning Lead, Sexual Health London

T: 020 7332 3720

E: [adrian.kelly@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:adrian.kelly@cityoflondon.gov.uk)