



Department for People

SERVICE SPECIFICATION FOR

**PROVISION OF EMERGENCY HORMONAL
CONTRACEPTION SERVICE
IN PHARMACIES**

01 April 2025 - 31 March 2026

SUMMARY OF SERVICE PROVISION IN PHARMACIES

Pharmacies in South Gloucestershire offering this service are required to:

1. Supply free emergency hormonal contraception to young women aged under 25 who are within 120 hours of unprotected or inadequately protected sexual intercourse, in line with local Patient Group Direction (PGD) and [Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health \(FSRH\) guidance](#).
2. Ensure patients aged 15 and under are assessed as 'Fraser competent' against the Fraser Guidelines. A patient deemed not to be competent should be urgently referred to an appropriate local sexual health clinic or GP practice.
3. Ensure that patients under the age of 18 are assessed for the potential risk of abuse or child sexual exploitation using the Bichard Checklist.
4. Ensure that, regardless of patient age, any safeguarding concerns identified are recorded, including on PharmOutcomes, and discussed with an available Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.
5. Ensure that patients who are excluded from treatment under the BNSSG PGD are directly referred, or signposted, to the most appropriate and accessible service available.
6. Ensure that, whether provided in person or remotely, all consultations (including those where a supply of EHC is not made) include patients being provided with, or directed to, information on:
 - all contraceptive methods including long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods;
 - basic sexual health advice (incl. the importance of using condoms and how to reduce the risk of STIs);
 - availability of routine contraception via a number of routes including some pharmacies, GPs and the ISHS
 - specialist sexual health services provided by the ISHS (details to follow);
 - services offered by GPs - advising women that as well as access through GPs, they can self-refer for routine LARC fitting via the ISHS website, if this is their preference.
7. Offer a free condom supply pack to every patient aged under 25 requesting emergency contraception and record on PharmOutcomes. Condom supply packs can be ordered from the ISHS. Please email: orders@sh24.org.uk
8. Offer a free chlamydia (and gonorrhoea) self-sampling test kit to patients (aged 16 to 24) requesting emergency contraception and record on PharmOutcomes. Patients under 16 should be directed to the ISHS to access testing.

The kits provided by the ISHS can detect both chlamydia and gonorrhoea and, therefore, will be referred to as "chlamydia/gonorrhoea test kits" throughout this document. Women should be informed that the kits can detect both chlamydia and gonorrhoea, is easy to do themselves, is confidential and that they do not need to be examined. Test kits can be ordered from the ISHS. Please email: orders@sh24.org.uk

9. Ensure that full details of the patient's consultation are recorded and submitted using PharmOutcomes.
10. Comply with the relevant National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This service specification sets out the requirements for the provision of emergency hormonal contraception by a pharmacy, commissioned by South Gloucestershire Council. The focus of the service is to increase the accessibility and availability of free emergency hormonal contraception for young women (*includes cisgender women, transgender men, non-binary and gender-diverse people (assigned female at birth) who have not had hysterectomy or bilateral oophorectomy*) aged under 25, thus contributing to a reduction in unplanned pregnancy.
- 1.2 The specification includes all the important elements of the service and forms part of the contract documentation.
- 1.3 This specification will apply until further notice. The views of patients, carers and providers will be considered in any review of the specification or service evaluation during that time, and their views will be welcomed at any time.
- 1.4 Further information can be obtained from the South Gloucestershire Public Health and Wellbeing Division via publichealthsouthgloucestershire@southglos.gov.uk

2 Service background

- 2.1 Community pharmacies are required to provide opportunistic sexual health advice as part of their essential services. This includes supporting Public Health campaigns, signposting patients to other contraception and sexual health services and support for self-care. It is important pharmacists emphasise that sexual health is everyone's responsibility, not just that of women. The purpose of this service specification is to build on this essential service provision.

The provision of sexual health services contributes to the following key local and national health priorities:

- Reducing the number of under 18 conceptions.
- Reducing the number of unplanned pregnancies.
- Reducing the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

- 2.2 The Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS) is currently being recommissioned and the new service will start from 1st April 2025.

The ISHS model aims to improve sexual and reproductive health by providing non-judgmental and confidential open access services with face-to-face, remote, and online provision available, and is made up of:

- A digital 'front door'- an open access digital sexual and reproductive health prevention and treatment service (accessed via a website).
- An open access community-based specialist sexual and reproductive health treatment service which will include sexual health clinics across BNSSG. The service will offer face to face and telephone appointments (booked via the digital 'front door'), as well as some walk in services

- A prevention, health promotion and community engagement service which includes outreach into the most vulnerable or high need communities across BNSSG.

These will collectively be referred to as the ISHS throughout this service specification.

Further information about the new ISHS will be communicated to pharmacies once details of the name of the service, website details and clinic locations are available to share. The new service will be provided by a partnership of providers.

- 2.3 The chlamydia screening test kits provided by the ISHS can detect both chlamydia and gonorrhoea and, therefore, will be referred to as “chlamydia/gonorrhoea test kits” throughout this document. Women should be informed that the self-sampling test kit can detect both chlamydia and gonorrhoea, is easy to do themselves, is confidential and that they do not need to be examined.
- 2.4 References to women throughout this document includes cisgender women, transgender men, non-binary and gender-diverse people (assigned female at birth) who have not had hysterectomy or bilateral oophorectomy.

3 Service priorities

- 3.1 The key priorities for the South Gloucestershire emergency hormonal contraception service are:
 - a. To increase the availability and accessibility of emergency hormonal contraception for young women aged under 25, (including those aged under 16) so as to reduce rates of unplanned pregnancy, in particular the number of under 18 conceptions.
 - b. To increase access to asymptomatic screening of chlamydia (and gonorrhoea) in young women aged under 25 by ensuring all patients attending for emergency hormonal contraception are offered access to chlamydia/gonorrhoea testing and counselled as to their risk of infection. Women aged 16 – 24 should be offered a chlamydia/gonorrhoea test kit provided by the ISHS. Patients under 16 should be directed to the ISHS to access testing via a ISHS clinic.

Providing access to opportunistic chlamydia screening is in line with the National Chlamydia Screening Programme <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ncsp-programme-overview/ncsp-programme-overview>

- c. To increase patient access to free condoms, and their knowledge of the important role that condoms play in reducing the risk of STI transmission and preventing pregnancy.

4 Service provision

- 4.1 The pharmacies in South Gloucestershire offering the emergency hormonal contraception service are required to:
 - a. Supply free emergency hormonal contraception to young women aged under 25 (incl. those under 16) who are within 120hrs of unprotected or inadequately protected sexual intercourse and who are not excluded from treatment under the BNSSG PGD. In exceptional circumstances, the Pharmacist may use their professional judgement to supply to vulnerable women over 24 years if patients are not able to access emergency contraception via other routes.

- b. Inform all individuals that insertion of a copper intrauterine device (Cu-IUD) within five days of UPSI or within five days from earliest estimated ovulation is the most effective method of emergency contraception and if the individual wishes to be referred for an emergency Cu-IUD they must still be provided with oral emergency hormonal contraception if eligible under PGD. To make referrals to the ISHS for an emergency Cu-IUD fitting, refer to the ISHS via PharmOutcomes.
- c. Ensure patients aged 15 and under are assessed as 'Fraser competent' against the Fraser Guidelines, details of which are listed in the PharmOutcomes consultation record for this service. A patient deemed not to be competent should be referred to an appropriate ISHS sexual health clinic (details to follow) or GP practice. Details of the patient and their situation should also be discussed with your designated Safeguarding Lead.
- d. Ensure that patients under the age of 18 are assessed for the potential risk of abuse or child sexual exploitation using the Bichard Checklist, details of which are listed in the PharmOutcomes consultation record for this service.
- e. Ensure that, regardless of patient age, any safeguarding concerns identified are recorded and discussed with the appropriate Safeguarding Lead and that all actions taken are in line with the service's internal safeguarding policies. In addition, any request for provision involving under 13s must be immediately reported to the South Gloucestershire Council Access and Response Team on 01454 866 000 (office hours) or 01454 615 165 (out of hours/weekends). NB: Pharmacists are still permitted to supply emergency contraception to patients under 13, provided all mandatory safeguarding procedures are followed.
- f. Ensure that patients who are excluded from treatment under the BNSSG PGD are directly referred, or signposted, to the most appropriate and accessible service available. Where a pharmacy is unable to provide emergency hormonal contraception, a supported referral to another pharmacy or GP where appropriate must be made so the patient is seen that day. Patients should also be made aware of their option to purchase appropriate emergency hormonal contraception.
- g. Ensure that, whether provided in person or remotely, all consultations (including those where a supply of EHC is not made) include patients being provided with, or directed to, information on:
 - all contraceptive methods including long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods;
 - basic sexual health advice (incl. the importance of using condoms and how to reduce the risk of STIs);
 - Availability of routine contraception via a number of routes including some pharmacies, GPs and the ISHS
 - information about specialist sexual health services provided by the ISHS (details to follow);
 - information about services offered by GPs and advise women that as well as access through GPs, they can self-refer into the ISHS for routine LARC fitting via the ISHS website (details to follow), if this is their preference.
- h. Ensure that a free condom supply pack (provided by the ISHS) is offered (and recorded on PharmOutcomes during EHC consultation) to every patient aged under 25 requesting emergency contraception, regardless of whether or not a supply is made. Where consultations are undertaken remotely and a supply is not made, patients aged 13 – 24 should be advised they can access free condoms from the ISHS website (details to follow).

- i. Ensure that all patients requesting emergency contraception are offered a free chlamydia/gonorrhoea test kit (and recorded on PharmOutcomes during EHC consultation). Women should be informed that the test kit can detect both chlamydia and gonorrhoea, is easy to do themselves, is confidential and that they do not need to be examined. Patients should be advised how to activate/register the test kit online and strongly encouraged to complete and return the test as per the instructions provided. The digital pathway for individuals aged 16-24 is as follows (patients under 16 should be directed to the ISHS to access testing via a ISHS clinic):
- Each chlamydia/gonorrhoea test kit provided by the ISHS will include a QR code and clear instructions for service users on how to activate/register online. Service users will provide basic demographic and contact details. For those without a smartphone, a URL will be provided for access via a computer.
 - Once the test kit is activated, the service user will manage their test results either online or via test message (a smart phone is not required to receive results via SMS). Partner notification will also be managed digitally.
 - Pharmacists may assist individuals that are digitally excluded or require assistance by activating the test kit on their behalf. Service users must provide a phone number for communicating results.
 - Individuals who screen positive for Chlamydia and / or gonorrhoea (using test kits from the ISHS), will be contacted by the ISHS to give them their results, arrange free treatment and initiate partner notification and be provided with any further follow up advice.
- j. Chlamydia/gonorrhoea self-sampling test kits from the ISHS should only be given to those resident in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.
- k. Ensure that full details of the patient's consultation are recorded and submitted using PharmOutcomes. The PharmOutcomes patient consultation record has been designed to guide the pharmacist through the safe supply of Levonorgestrel and Ulipristal Acetate. The Commissioners strongly recommend that, wherever possible, the consultation record is used in real time.
- l. Ensure an appropriately confidential space is available that provides a level of privacy consistent with that which is required for the provision of the Medicines Use Review service. Where this is not possible, the consultation note should reflect that the patient consented to receiving the service in a space that didn't offer the appropriate level of privacy.
- m. Ensure each patient is made aware of, or directed to read, the pharmacy's confidentiality policy / statement and, where appropriate, their chaperone policy is explained.
- n. Ensure that any posters, window stickers or logos that are developed to advertise or brand the service are prominently displayed.
- o. Order the packs of free condoms and the chlamydia/gonorrhoea self-sampling test kits from the ISHS via email: orders@sh24.org.uk and include the pharmacy name, address and number of condom packs and / or test kits required within the email.
- p. The service should be available during the pharmacy opening hours when a pharmacist is legally allowed to prescribe.

6 Accreditation

- 6.1 The mandatory requirements for the delivery of this service are set out within the BNSSG PGD available on the Community Pharmacy Avon and Wiltshire website (previously known as Community Pharmacy Avon) and on PharmOutcomes. Individual pharmacists delivering the service are required to sign the authorisation of the PGDs each time a new version is agreed. The signature sheets should be kept in the pharmacy and may be asked for during an inspection visit. They do not need to be sent to South Gloucestershire Council.
- 6.2 Pharmacists participating in this service specification must enrol on the EHC service via PharmOutcomes and complete the Declaration of Competence criteria listed within 90 days. Relevant evidence that online training has been undertaken will be required through completion of the declaration of self competence system on PharmOutcomes and be made available to South Gloucestershire Council on request. This must be completed by all pharmacists providing the service. Relevant guidance and support is provided by Community Pharmacy Avon and Wiltshire (previously known as Community Pharmacy Avon).
- 6.3 Pharmacists can initially enrol on the service via PharmOutcomes without having completed the Declaration of Competence criteria as listed on PharmOutcomes. From the day of enrolment, they will have 90 days to complete the outstanding requirements. If the Declaration of Competence are not completed within 90 days, the pharmacist will be unable to provide the service specified, or the pharmacy be paid for it, until such a time as these outstanding requirements are met.
- 6.4 Pharmacists should review the self-declaration form at least every 3 years or, earlier if the Pharmacist feels their competence levels need refreshing due to undertaking too few consultations.
- 6.5 Pharmacists / staff will be invited to attend a series of short webinars that will outline the new ISHS process for distributing the chlamydia/gonorrhoea self-sampling test kits.
- 6.6 Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset are all dedicated to tackling stigma and reshaping the public perception of HIV. A key focus is promoting the message that when HIV is virally suppressed there is no onward risk of transmission. Stigma and health inequalities remain significant barriers to people accessing testing, prevention, and care, which are critical to supporting the ambition of achieving zero new HIV infections by 2030. To support this ambition, we recommend pharmacists / pharmacy staff undertake HIV awareness training (if they haven't already), such as the following free module:
[Tackling HIV Stigma and Discrimination - elearning for healthcare](#)

7 Review and audit

- 7.1 The service specified in this document will be subject to an annual clinical governance audit and ongoing service uptake monitoring through an analysis of data available to the South Gloucestershire Council via PharmOutcomes.
- 7.2 An annual review of this agreement will be carried out by the South Gloucestershire Council, including audit and discussion with relevant pharmacy staff.
- 7.3 Any concerns will be raised with the pharmacy in a timely way by South Gloucestershire Council Public Health and Wellbeing Division.

- 7.4 The pharmacy will have responsibility for the monitoring of their service and maintaining sufficient records for this purpose. These records should be retained and kept up-to-date and made available on request for inspection by a nominated representative of South Gloucestershire Council.

8 Payment

- 8.1 A payment of £15 will be made for each emergency hormonal contraception consultation undertaken for women aged under 25 (and in exceptional circumstances vulnerable women over 24 years if patients are not able to access emergency contraception via other routes), regardless of whether the patient was eligible for actual supply of emergency hormonal contraception under relevant Patient Group Direction.

A record of activity should be maintained and held by the service provider. The Provider will need to submit activity data to PharmOutcomes for payments. Service activity will be monitored by the Public Health team and pharmacies will be paid quarterly for EHC activity.

- 8.2 The cost of the emergency hormonal contraception supplied will be reimbursed at drug tariff price.
- 8.3 A payment of £3.00 will be made for each (lab received) chlamydia/gonorrhoea self-sampling test kit offered as part of an EHC consultation appointment. The council pays for chlamydia/gonorrhoea test kits for women aged under 25 under the following conditions:
- The test kit used was a chlamydia/gonorrhoea test kit provided by the ISHS as part of an EHC consultation AND
 - The test kit was received at the laboratory for processing.

The following will not be eligible for chlamydia/gonorrhoea payment:

- i. Samples completed by patients through other venues
- ii. Samples completed by people over 24 years of age
- iii. Samples completed by males

- 8.4 Activity data regarding chlamydia and gonorrhoea self-sampling test kits will be received by the Public Health team directly from the laboratory.
- 8.5 Chlamydia and gonorrhoea self-sampling payments will be made annually in arrears and will only be made in accordance with 9.3 above. There will be one payment made annually each year for the term of the contract including any extensions, if exercised. The payment will be made after 31st March on receipt of data from the lab for the period 1st April to 31st March.