



26th November 2007

In response to the Health Protection Agency's latest report on sexual health, Dr Simon Barton, President, **British Association For Sexual Health & HIV (BASHH)** commented:

"The continuing increase in the number of HIV cases and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is a clear indication of the urgent need for the Government to continue to improve access to genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics, increase screening for asymptomatic infection, as well as develop local targeted specialist programs to reach patient groups identified as higher risk and hard to reach.

"BASHH has consistently stressed that improving sexual health services and tackling waiting times is an essential part of disease prevention as failure to treat infections promptly – or at all in some cases – means that untreated patients who remain sexually active, can further increase the transmission of STIs.

"As this report highlights, resources must be found by Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to support this national problem as STIs do not understand "catchment" areas. The inconsistent delivery of Choosing Health money to frontline services continues to frustrate clinicians as they strive to meet targets – it is essential that Payment by results and tariffs properly fund GUM clinics. These clinics often serve as the first port of call for many people with concerns, symptoms or signs of STIs and HIV and we need to make sure people can get seen in the service of their choice.

- Ends -

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