BASHH welcomes new HPA Action Plan to address likely rise in untreatable gonorrhoea diagnosis

The British Association of Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) welcomes the release of the HPA’s new gonorrhoea Action Plan, ‘GRASP’ (Gonococcal Resistance to Antimicrobials Surveillance Programme), which offers much needed impetus in tackling the serious and growing challenge of gonorrhoea resistance in the UK.

England’s Chief Medical Officer recently described the threat presented by antibiotic-resistant diseases as ‘apocalyptic’, with 25% more cases diagnosed in 2011 than in 2010 and an estimated 80% of gonorrhoea now resistant to frontline antibiotics. Gonorrhoea is the second most prevalent bacterial sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the UK.

The GRASP Action Plan, which has been developed in collaboration with BASHH and other sexual health stakeholders, emphasises the need to closely monitor the increasing threat from gonorrhoea, and it includes important guidance on ensuring that data collection is robust, as well as giving advice on best practice in treatment and management.

Dr Janet Wilson, President of BASHH, said:

“Gonorrhoea has become one of the most serious sexual health challenges we face because most drug resistance develops due to gonorrhoea in the throat, which is more difficult to treat with conventional antibiotics. We need to do more to increase screening and tackle unsafe sexual practices which lead to repeat infections and growing rates of drug resistant gonorrhoea among men-who-have-sex-with-men.

We are pleased to have worked with the HPA to produce this Action Plan, which is an important development in the fight against gonorrhoea. It reinforces the need for high quality education programmes and easily accessible expert sexual health services.”
Notes to Editors:
The British Association for Sexual Health and HIV is the lead professional representative body for those managing STIs and HIV in the UK. It seeks to innovate and deliver excellent tailored education and training to healthcare professionals, trainers and trainees in the UK, and to determine, monitor and maintain standards of governance in the provision of sexual health and HIV care.  http://www.bashh.org/

The GRASP Action Plan will be on the HPA website from tomorrow morning (Wednesday 27th February), accessible via: http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Gonorrhoea/AntimicrobialResistance/