HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST STIs

Dear colleague,

Next month PHE will be launching a third burst of the sexual health campaign, “Protect Against STIs. Use a condom”. The focus of this activity will be readiness for sex, as we know that sex isn’t always planned and the best option is to be prepared by routinely carrying condoms.

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

The previous campaign burst was a great success, equalling or exceeded a number of targets, including campaign awareness, intent to use a condom and reported condom use within our target audience of 16-24 year olds. Building on this success, the upcoming activity will encourage young people to carry condoms as a matter of course, making them ready for whatever happens. The next phase is a 11-week campaign and will launch on 18th October 2018. This will include social media activity on Instagram and Snapchat, music streaming messaging on Spotify, PR activity with Sam Thompson (Made in Chelsea) and other influential supporters, as well as out of home activity across sixth form colleges and campuses.

Young people aged 16-24, where risky sexual behaviours are more common and STI prevalence is high, are the core target demographic for the campaign. There will be a further focus on the 16 to 19-year-old population, as the campaign attempts to connect with inexperienced young people before their sexual health behaviours develop.

Over half of all STI diagnoses are amongst young people aged 16-24 years. Between 2012 and 2016 this group saw a 16% increase in gonorrhoea diagnoses and a 66% increase in infectious syphilis diagnoses.

Testing and underage pregnancy will not feature prominently in the headline campaign messaging, but will be covered in the supporting information. Although not a primary objective, it is anticipated that wider condom use will have the additional benefit of reducing underage pregnancy.

INSIGHT

Extensive research, spanning strategy development through to creative testing, was conducted with young people. Resulting insights have helped shape and inform the campaign:

- The risks of catching an STI aren’t perceived as worrying enough to inform behaviour.
- Young people think condoms reduce sensation and indicate inexperience or a lack of trust.
- Superficial vetting processes, like attractiveness, inform decisions over condom use.
- There are clear knowledge gaps for this audience, but they want to learn.
- NHS brand is powerful in STI information provision.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

There are several ways in which you can use the campaign resources to help young people in your area to be more prepared and use a condom.

1. Display the materials provided
2. Consider where young people in your area congregate and target messaging in these locations:
   a. Schools and colleges.
   b. Leisure centres that run classes/course for young people – including football, tennis, swimming lessons etc.
   c. Near locations that run your C-Card service (or condom distribution scheme).
   d. Pubs, bars and other social locations frequented by young adults, especially the 16-17 year olds who will not be drinking yet.
3. Consider what the barriers are for a young person in getting hold of condoms and help them be prepared:
   a. Signpost to the NHS’s free condom finder - https://www.nhs.uk/protect-against-stis-use-a-condom/home
   b. Use your pharmacy networks to display materials making it clear that condoms can be purchased from them
c. Consider displaying materials in wash rooms where there are condom vending machines.
4. We know that social media is one of the most effective ways of connecting with our target audience. If you’re considering using Facebook, Twitter or other popular channels, please use the handles and hashtags provided in the social media toolkit.

WHAT MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOU TO USE

There are a range of materials available to order or download from the Campaign Resource Centre.
Some of these assets can be localised to best suit your requirements and can be used throughout the year to promote the ‘being prepared’ message to young people.
The range of materials include:

Digital and social assets including:

You can pre-order the printed materials by completing the order form available at
https://partnerships.wufoo.eu/forms/zes43360z5x8cl/

If you would like to discuss these or any other aspect of the campaign, please contact Partnerships@phe.gov.uk