

# NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

## Guideline scope

### Sexually transmitted infections: condom distribution schemes

#### *Topic*

This guideline focusses on condom distribution schemes to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This includes all schemes that provide or distribute free or cost-price condoms, femidoms and dental dams, with or without lubricant. It also includes schemes that distribute condoms together with additional information or support.

During the review of NICE's guideline on [preventing sexually transmitted infections and under-18 conceptions](#), condom distribution was identified as an area where NICE guidance is needed. This guideline will supplement 'Preventing sexually transmitted infections and under-18 conceptions', as set out in the [update decision](#). It will also be used to help develop NICE quality standards on reducing sexually transmitted infections and on sexual health across the life course (publication dates to be confirmed).

#### *Who the guideline is for*

- Those who commission condom distribution schemes, such as local authorities, NHS and the voluntary sectors.
- Those who provide condom distribution schemes, such as local authorities, NHS, and the voluntary sectors.

This guidance may also be relevant for:

- Those at risk of an STI.
- Voluntary organisations and advocacy groups with an interest in STI prevention.
- Condom manufacturers.

1 NICE guidelines cover health and care in England. Decisions on how they  
2 apply in other UK countries are made by ministers in the [Welsh Government](#),  
3 [Scottish Government](#) and [Northern Ireland Executive](#).

#### 4 ***Equality considerations***

5 NICE has carried out [an equality impact assessment](#) during scoping. The  
6 assessment:

- 7 • lists equality issues identified, and how they have been addressed
- 8 • explains why any groups are excluded from the scope, if this was done.

### 9 **1 What the guideline is about**

#### 10 **1.1 Who is the focus?**

##### 11 **Groups that will be covered**

- 12 • All groups at risk of an STI but with a focus on those at greatest risk, such  
13 as:
  - 14 – young people aged under 25
  - 15 – men who have sex with men
  - 16 – commercial sex workers.

#### 17 **1.2 Settings**

##### 18 **Settings that will be covered**

- 19 • Settings where condoms can be provided or distributed, including:  
20 pharmacies, sexual health centres, schools, online services and public  
21 places where people meet to have sex (for example, clubs).

##### 22 **Settings that will not be covered**

- 23 • Prisons are excluded because the use of condoms in this setting will be  
24 covered by NICE's guideline on the [physical health of people in prisons](#),  
25 which is due to publish in November 2016.

### 1 **1.3 Activities, services or aspects of care**

#### 2 **Key areas that will be covered**

- 3 • Multi-component schemes that distribute free condoms together with  
4 information or other support, such as the C-Card scheme for young people  
5 (for details see [C-Card condom distribution schemes](#) Public Health  
6 England), or peer educators distributing free condoms and advice to men  
7 who have sex with men.
- 8 • Single-component schemes that provide or distribute free condoms. This  
9 could include online services for specific groups or areas of the country,  
10 and distribution schemes in public places where people meet to have sex  
11 (for example, clubs).
- 12 • Outlets or schemes providing cheap condoms for high risk groups, such as  
13 community schemes that provide cost-price condoms to sex workers, or  
14 online services that offer cost-price condoms.

### 15 **1.4 Economic aspects**

16 Economic analysis will be considered from the local authority and public  
17 sector perspective. The economic analysis will be prioritised on the basis of  
18 how important economic evidence is to making recommendations and the  
19 availability of data to populate the model. An economic plan will be developed  
20 for any economic analysis undertaken.

### 21 **1.5 Key issues and questions**

22 While writing this scope, we have identified the following key issues, and key  
23 questions related to them:

- 24 1 What are the most effective and cost-effective ways of providing  
25 condoms among different populations to reduce STIs?
  - 26 – What features of the schemes work for different populations?
  - 27 – Which settings are most effective for different populations?
  - 28 – What access arrangements make a successful scheme for different  
29 populations?

1 2 What are the most effective and cost-effective ways of promoting  
2 condom distribution schemes for different populations?

### 3 **1.6 Main outcomes**

4 The main outcomes that will be considered when searching for and assessing  
5 the evidence are:

#### 6 **Primary outcome**

7 1 STI incidence.

#### 8 **Secondary outcomes**

9 1 Condom use or intention to use condoms.

10 2 Unprotected sex.

11 3 Unintended or harmful effects.

12 4 Awareness of condom distribution schemes.

13 5 Service user experiences and outcomes.

14 6 Knowledge of how to use condoms correctly and negotiate use.

15 7 Health-related quality of life.

16 8 Costs, savings and cost effectiveness.

## 17 **2 Links with other NICE guidance, NICE quality 18 standards and NICE Pathways**

### 19 **2.1 NICE guidance**

#### 20 **NICE guidance about the experience of people using NHS services**

21 NICE has produced the following guidance on the experience of people using  
22 the NHS. This guideline will not include additional recommendations on this  
23 topic unless there are specific issues related to sexual health:

- 24 • [Patient experience in adult NHS services](#) (2012) NICE guideline CG138

#### 25 **NICE guidance that is closely related to this guideline**

26 NICE has published the following guidance that is closely related to this  
27 guideline:

- 1 • [Preventing sexually transmitted infections and under-18 conceptions](#) (2007)  
2 NICE guideline PH3

3 NICE is currently developing the following guidance that is closely related to  
4 this guideline:

- 5 • [Increasing the uptake of HIV testing among people at higher risk of  
6 exposure](#) NICE guideline. Publication expected September 2016.

## 7 **2.2 NICE Pathways**

8 When this guideline is published, the recommendations will be added to [NICE  
9 Pathways](#). NICE Pathways bring together all related NICE guidance and  
10 associated products on a topic in an interactive topic-based flow chart.

11 The guideline will overlap with the existing NICE guideline on preventing  
12 sexually transmitted infections and under-18 conceptions. The current NICE  
13 pathway on [preventing sexually transmitted infections and under-18  
14 conceptions](#) will integrate the recommendations from both guidelines, showing  
15 clearly how they fit together.

## 16 **3 Context**

### 17 **3.1 Key facts and figures**

18 There were approximately 446,253 new diagnoses of STIs in England in 2013  
19 ([Table 1: STI diagnoses and rates in England by gender, 2004 to 2013](#) Public  
20 Health England). Most diagnoses are among heterosexuals aged under 25  
21 and men who have sex with men ([Sexually transmitted infections and  
22 chlamydia screening in England: 2013](#) Public Health England).

23 In England in 2013, 6000 people were diagnosed with HIV ([National HIV  
24 surveillance data tables](#) Public Health England). Over half diagnoses were  
25 among men who have sex with men (3250). Sexual contact is the main route  
26 of HIV infection (96% of diagnoses in 2013).

27 Condoms can protect people against many STIs transmitted through genital  
28 fluids. This includes HIV, chlamydia and gonorrhoea ([Condom fact sheet in](#)

1 [brief](#) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Used correctly, condoms  
2 can also help prevent many unintended pregnancies. However, condoms do  
3 not offer 100% contraception. Condoms also offer far less protection against  
4 STIs transmitted via skin-to-skin contact, such as genital herpes and warts.

5 In the UK in 2011, the cost of treating STIs (excluding HIV) was estimated at  
6 £620 million ([Unprotected Nation full report](#) FPA).

7 Cost is a major barrier to condom use, particularly for poorer people ([Barriers](#)  
8 [to condom use](#) Sakar 2008). Social norms and religious and cultural beliefs  
9 can also prevent people from using them.

### 10 **3.2 Current practice**

11 Condom distribution schemes can vary. Some provide free or cost-price  
12 condoms. Others comprise multi-component interventions that combine  
13 condom distribution with additional information or support.

14 Schemes are often aimed at specific subgroups at greatest risk of an STI,  
15 such as young people, men who have sex with men, and sex workers. By  
16 focussing the schemes on those at greatest risk the schemes should reduce  
17 STIs while also reducing health inequalities for some groups.

18 The C-Card scheme is probably the most widespread condom distribution  
19 scheme across the UK ('C-Card condom distribution schemes'). It offers  
20 young people free condoms and lubricant. Workers also assess the young  
21 person's safety and competence to consent, and can also provide advice.

22 Local authorities commission C-Card schemes and define who is eligible. But  
23 schemes typically focus on those aged 13 to 24.

### 24 **3.3 Policy and commissioning**

25 This guideline will help local authorities and the NHS to continue to reduce the  
26 rate of STIs. This is a key objective in [A framework for sexual health](#)  
27 [improvement in England](#) (Department of Health).

1 From April 2013, local authorities took on responsibility for commissioning and  
2 delivering all community and pharmacy contraceptive services. [Making it](#)  
3 [work: a guide to whole system commissioning for sexual health, reproductive](#)  
4 [health and HIV](#) (Public Health England) provides information on approaches  
5 to commissioning sexual health services.

6 NHS England commissions contraception schemes provided as an additional  
7 service under the GP contract. It also commissions sexual health services in  
8 prisons.

## 9 **4 Further information**

This is the draft scope for consultation with registered stakeholders. The  
consultation dates are 3 June to 1 July 2015.

The guideline is expected to be published in January 2017.

You can follow progress of the [guideline](#).

Our website has information about how [NICE guidelines](#) are developed.

10