

### Our service

This service is run by women for women mainly in Brighton and Hove. We complement the contraception services offered by GPs, but provide a specialist alternative for those who want to be able to discuss intimate issues away from a GP surgery.

Our service is offered to all ages, from adolescence upwards, and includes youth drop in clinics, appointments for contraception, fertility awareness, menopausal advice and support, pregnancy testing, and cervical smears.

We are able to offer walk-in chlamydia screening for young people up to the age of 25. We can also offer help with complex problems such as pre and post abortion counselling, as well as counselling for women who have experienced past rape and sexual abuse.

The Morley Street Family Planning Clinic in Brighton is our main base, but additional sessions are offered elsewhere in the city including Hove Polyclinic, Peacehaven Clinic, The Young People's Centre in Brighton (YPC) and the Youth Advice Centre in Hove (YAC). We've just started a further two new sessions each week in City College and BHASVIC.

Our staff includes doctors and nurses with specialist family planning training, specialist counsellors, a health promotion specialist and a sexual health outreach worker mainly working with teenagers in East Brighton.

The service operates Monday to Saturday over a flexible range of hours including four evenings each week. Many of our staff work part-time to suit these needs. Appointments and drop in sessions are available. Some people come straight to us for help, and some are referred by other professionals. The service is advertised in the telephone directory and on the health promotion web site SWISH ([www.brightonsexualhealth.org.uk](http://www.brightonsexualhealth.org.uk)).

Training is an important part of the work we do, and some staff also have an additional teaching qualification. We train students on family planning courses, run professional updates for practice nurses and GPs and contribute to a post graduate course for nurses, midwives and health visitors.

### Our philosophy

We offer an open door service and see people when they need us. Sometimes women's services are not seen as important, but even a few minutes give us the space to help, support and advise someone and to look at their needs. Our patient satisfaction surveys give us a way of evaluating the service and we ask people to fill in a questionnaire at the beginning, middle and end of counselling to support our evaluation process.

Our staff tend to stay with us and they appreciate the autonomy they have, as well as the good level of support they receive both from the department and from the Trust as an employer. Links with other professionals include the child protection team, voluntary organisations and the psychology department. We also have good links with the wider network of similar clinics elsewhere.

### Our targets and future plans

We are developing a service level agreement with Brighton and Hove City Primary Care Trust. Historically the service has been under-funded, but this will need to change to make sure we can continue to provide a comprehensive service which meets the needs of local people.

Longer term planning would be a benefit as we often have to rely on short term funding for pilot projects. New funding is now available to provide services at City College and BHASVIC in Brighton.

We have just been given funding to offer limited home visits because there are clients who can't or don't feel able to come to a clinic, but will accept a service at home.

We would also like to develop work with people with learning disabilities and take on more gynaecology such as early pregnancy scans and minor procedures. We have been given funding for a scanner which will allow us to remove implants which are difficult to remove, check for lost IUDs and do pregnancy assessments.

We are committed to developing our staff and would like to send at least one more nurse on the extended nurse prescribing course as well as training more of our clinicians to fit contraceptive implants and intra-uterine devices.

There is a commitment to develop further training and research if funding becomes available and we would also like to develop links with medical students who have a special interest in this field.

While we are good at putting in bids for new services, research is more complex and it would help to have support with bidding for research money. More practical support is needed with long-term fund-raising, finance, human resources management and IT.

In the long term we are committed to remaining within an NHS organisation because we benefit hugely from the contact with colleagues in other areas. An ideal option for the future would be working within a community foundation trust. This is not an acute hospital service, so an acute trust would not be an appropriate home for us.