

**STI programme briefing : in November 2005, CHAPS will launch a new programme of work aiming to reduce the length of time between infections and diagnosis of five common sexually transmitted diseases affecting gay men in the UK: gonorrhoea, chlamydia, NSU, syphilis and herpes / CHAPS, Terrence Higgins Trust.**

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## STI programme briefing

In November 2005, CHAPS will launch a new programme of work aiming to reduce the length of time between infection and diagnosis of five common sexually transmitted infections affecting gay men in the UK: gonorrhoea, chlamydia, NSU, syphilis and herpes.

### Background to campaign

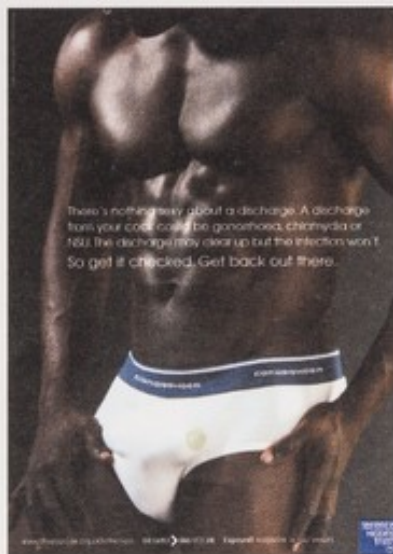
The campaign helps men to recognise common symptoms of sexually transmitted infections so that they can seek treatment as early as possible. Although the campaign relies on visual cues, it also makes it clear that symptoms may not always accompany infection.

Many of these infections can be asymptomatic and when symptoms do occur they may be overlooked or dismissed as something less serious – especially when some symptoms appear for a finite length of time (as in, for example, syphilis). The net result of this is that men may carry an infection for some time, increasing any damage the infection may cause to them and potentially passing the infection on to subsequent sexual partners.

### Press advertising

Symptoms – rather than the infections themselves – will be the initial focus of the programme as these provide for gay men a more tangible indicator of the presence of infection. The press advertising indexes the most common symptoms which, if they present themselves, need further attention at a sexual health clinic. Each symptom will be the focus of an individual execution: rash, ulcers/sores and discharge. There will also be one execution encouraging men to be screened if they experience any of the symptoms.

The campaign mimics the language and visual style of high-end product advertising (particularly underwear) but humorously subverts their glamour through the placement of visible STI symptoms.



The mass media component of this programme will appear in the national gay press from November 2005 to January 2006 and will signpost to THT Direct, the latest edition of **Exposed!** magazine and to the CHAPS online STI microsite ([www.chapsonline.org.uk/infections](http://www.chapsonline.org.uk/infections)), which will contain more detailed information on STI transmission, symptoms, prevention and treatment.

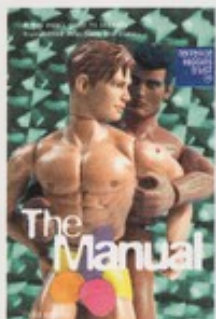
#### Exposed!

There will also be another edition of the highly successful magazine-format resource **Exposed!** which will be available from gay venues and online from CHAPSONline as a PDF download. This latest edition continues the underwear theme to present the messages of the programme in a digestible, pictorial and sexy way. The information contained in **Exposed!** will also expand on and add to the messages of the mass media programme.

**Exposed!**'s magazine-format means it is ideal to be left with other gay magazines in venues but can also be used as a conversation starter between detached workers and gay men.

#### Direct resources

A range of back-up resources will be available to aid detached work and programme recognition.



#### A4 and A3 posters

The press advertisements are also available as A4 and A3 sized posters. These can be ideal for use in gay venues where wall space can be tight or used as leaflet rack inserts where possible. As with the mass media, these come as a set of four with one poster each highlighting the symptoms for syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia/NSU and herpes with a fourth poster alerting men to the possibility of asymptomatic infection.

#### Condom packs

A range of condom packs using photography from the mass and ambient media are also available to those responsible for condom and lube distribution in their area. The campaign slogan and web URL are visible on the front and the messages are on the inside of the pack, along with standard directions of condom use, tips to prevent condom failure and basic information about PEP.

#### Underwear mints

These novelty sweets can be a fun and reliable conversation starter between detached workers and men on the scene. Designed to look like luxury boxed underwear in miniature, they can provide a way into a discussion about STIs and the campaign in general.

The boxes themselves contain some limited information on STIs and the message of the campaign, therefore it is not advisable they be made available to men in bulk (ie on bars, in reception areas, etc) but rather used in conjunction with a face-to-face intervention.

### [www.chapsonline.org.uk/infections](http://www.chapsonline.org.uk/infections)

CHAPSONline's STI microsite is an online guide to sexually transmitted infections for gay men and will include basic information on symptoms, transmission, prevention, diagnosis and treatment. It will address some common misconceptions about infections and clinics such as hoping an infection may spontaneously clear the body or what to expect at a sexual health clinic.

Other resources which you may find useful:

#### **Sector Summary Reports**

Three Sector Summary Reports are available which are especially relevant to the STI programme. Reports on syphilis, gonorrhoea/chlamydia/NGU/NSU and a new report on herpes are aimed at meeting the basic information needs of health promoters working with gay men. Information includes basic biology, transmission, prevention, diagnosis and treatment information for each and how they can facilitate HIV transmission.

#### **Cruising guides**

Four cruising guides are also available, designed to give gay men basic knowledge about STIs in detached settings and, measuring approximately 55mm x 85mm, are also ideal for insertion into condom packs.

Pertinent to the STI programme is the existing gonorrhoea cruising guide as well as the new guides to NSU/chlamydia, syphilis and herpes.

#### **The Manual**

**The Manual** is the handbook on sexually transmitted infections and sexual health clinics for gay men. This redesigned edition has been updated with information on LGV, PEP, an expanded contact list and includes a subject index as well as all the easy-to-understand facts on STIs and clinics.

Sector Summary Reports, cruising guides and **The Manual** are all available to order at [www.tht.org.uk/publications](http://www.tht.org.uk/publications)

For more information about delivering effective health promotion to men who have sex with men, get a copy of **The Field Guide** (the companion to **Making It Count**) from James Glavin at Terrence Higgins Trust, email [james.glavin@tht.org.uk](mailto:james.glavin@tht.org.uk)

For more information on the STI programme or to order any of the above mentioned programme resources, contact Campbell Parker-White, Programme Development Officer, Terrence Higgins Trust, email [campbell.parker-white@tht.org.uk](mailto:campbell.parker-white@tht.org.uk)

To view this and previous CHAPS programmes online, visit [www.chapsonline.org.uk](http://www.chapsonline.org.uk)



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