

## **Find&Treat and SHOC collaboration -**

**A partnership approach to  
preventing HIV/STIs for women  
selling sex in the NCL area**

**Sive O'Regan & Tanya Edwards**

**Inclusion Health CNS -Find and Treat, UCH (NHS), Health  
Promotion Specialist, Central and North West London Trust  
(NHS)**

# Sexual Health On Call (SHOC)

- SHOC has been operating in Haringey since 1996 and has been providing night outreach in the area since inception.
- The primary aim of SHOC is to provide sexual health services and broader social support to street-based sex workers, particularly for women with multiple and complex needs who face social and financial disadvantage.
- Women engaging in transactional sex in this area may face several barriers to attending general clinics and the ability to screen on outreach is vital to ensure that they are offered accessible sexual health care.
- SHOC is a well-known name and service to women in the NCL area and has a well-established positive reputation and proven track record in supporting positive health outcomes.

# Find and Treat (UCLH)

- Pan-London service
- 2 mobile health vans
- Clinician and Peer led (Hep C Trust, Groundswell, NAZ)
- Multi-disciplinary inclusion health team
  - Tuberculosis, vaccinations (COVID, Influenza, pneumococcal)
  - BBV testing – Hep C, Hep B, HIV and syphilis
  - STI screening for chlamydia and gonorrhoea
  - Cardiovascular, LTBI testing
- Inclusion health populations:
  - PWID
  - PEH
  - Asylum seekers
  - Sex workers
  - Victims of modern slavery
  - Other ethnic minority groups including Roma, Gypsy and traveller communities
  - Prison population



|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Diagnosis</b>               | <p>Rapid state-of-the-art diagnostics via GeneXpert Cepheid for:</p> <p><b>Blood borne viruses (BBV): HIV, Hepatitis B/C, syphilis</b> (fingerprick, 10 minute to result)</p> <p><b>Other STIs: gonorrhoea, chlamydia</b> (self swab, 90 minute to result)</p> <p><b>TB:</b> symptom screen, CXR and sputum sample</p> |
| <b>Treatment</b>               | <p>On site treatment for chlamydia and gonorrhoea (+/- syphilis)</p> <p>Onward referral (with support to navigate services) for other infections</p> <p>Referral for HIV PrEP</p>  |
| <b>Harm minimisation</b>       | <p>Needle and syringe packs</p> <p>Rapid referral to drug services</p>   |
| <b>Other Support</b>           | <p>Hot drinks, food, packs containing essentials (sanitary products &amp; toiletries)</p> <p>Vulnerability assessments</p>   |
| <b>Rapid referral pathways</b> | <p>Emergency accommodation</p> <p>Drug services</p> <p>Contraception (LARC and other)</p> <p>Independent sexual violence advocates</p> <p>Other NHS services including maternity and safeguarding (via UCLH partnership)</p> <p>Other social care needs</p> <p>Keyworking (via Salvation army)</p>                     |

# Find and Treat – across all teams

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Across Find&Treat services for all inclusion health groups, financial year 2022-2023: |  |
| <b>STIs</b>   | <b>Chlamydia:</b> 118 tests, 8 positive (6.8%)<br><b>Gonorrhoea:</b> 118 tests, 12 positive (10.2%)  |
| <b>BBVs</b>   | <b>HIV:</b> 1,847 tests, 36 positive (1.9%)<br><b>Hepatitis B:</b> 1,841 tests, HBsAg positive (1.1%)<br><b>Hepatitis C:</b> 1,883 tests, HCV Ab positive 427 (22.7%), HCV RNA:HCV Ab positive 26.2%<br><b>Syphilis:</b> 1,847 tests, 37 positive (2%) |
| <b>Return to care</b>   | 837 lost to follow up patients identified<br>→666 (78%) contacted<br>→582/666 (87%) reengaged<br>→183/582 (31%) required treatment   |
| Plus vaccination & TB services (screening, diagnosis, treatment, outbreak response)   |  |

## **SHOC & Find and Treat partnership**

- In 2020 Find and Treat collaborated with SHOC to co-facilitate the night outreach service providing sexual health care for people selling sex in the North Central London (NCL) area.
- The model provides a vital opportunity to reach a high risk and underserved population, address health inequalities in both healthcare access and uptake, and to realise the NHS ambition to make every contact count in the context of proportionate universalism and the NHS England Inclusion Health framework.

- The partnership between Find and Treat and SHOC operates based on a model that brings together both service's specific expertise,
- Find and Treat offers rapid diagnostics and treatment for blood borne viruses (BBV), HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI)
- SHOC operates via outreaching to well-known areas for street-based sex working. SHOC provides material aid, emotional and practical support, and signpost to the Find and Treat van for testing, treatment and further health assessment.



# Results

- Since the beginning of the joint work between SHOC and Find and Treat, the outreach van has had 119 encounters with outreach sex workers and have done 69 STI tests. From this testing there have been:
  - Chlamydia (CT) mono-infection = 4 (5.8%)
  - Gonorrhoea (NG) mono-infection = 4 (5.8%)
  - CT/NG infection = 12 (17.4%)
  - Trichomonas = 3 (4.3%)
  - Syphilis = 20 (29%)
  - HIV = 1

This equates to roughly 56.5% of the tested group having one or more sexually transmitted infections.



- From May 2023 to May 2024 SHOC had 353 contacts with sex workers during street outreach.
- This includes people who were seen and signposted to the Find and Treat Van but who may not have attended the van for testing.
- 31 contacts attended the Level 3 sexual health clinical service in Archway following sign posting during street outreach from either SHOC team or Find and Treat clinicians.
- 4 of these women were supported to access terminations of pregnancies.

# Other outcomes

- The partnership supports women holistically, with multiple social determinants of health:
  - Drug and alcohol use
  - Homelessness
  - Support with family and domestic violence
  - Trafficking and modern-day slavery.
- Working relationship with the police fostered to address issues with over policing of women engaging in transactional sex.
- Ensures movement away from heavy handed policing with a larger concentration on the broader social issues:
  - perpetration of violence against sex workers
  - selling of drugs
  - gang violence

# Conclusion

- The collaboration aims to remove barriers to accessing traditional sexual healthcare for women who experience multiple marginalisation's
- The services not only address sexual health needs but also aims to tackle other health and social inequalities experienced by these women.
- Established a trusted service for vulnerable cohort and contributed to HIV/STI transmission prevention.
- The results show collaboration has identified and treated incidences of HIV/STIs in this cohort and provided linkage to other health and social care needs.

# Challenges

- Ongoing changes to policing and political landscapes regarding criminalisation of sex work
- Lack of continuity in positive policing initiatives
- Geographical limitations of secondary and tertiary sexual health services
- Consistent under funding.