

# Skyline Newsletter

June 2020

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## Working with our partners

Working together with our partners, supporting each other, and developing long term relationships allows us to achieve far much more than we could achieve alone. The relationships we build with our partners make it possible for us to reach many people including those who are most marginalised.

**PAFRAS** (Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) are supporting us with condom distribution. They are incorporating the condoms into the donation packs for their service users. Enfield Centre and RETAS Leeds (Refugee Education and Training Advice Service) are helping us publicise our free condom postal service on their social media platforms.

We continue to work collaboratively with Leeds Sexual Health. We can make urgent referrals for HIV testing to them if required.

## A New Era

### Adapting our essential service provision

We thought it would be useful to keep all our partners and stakeholders updated about our sexual health service. Like everyone else, we have had to close the office due to coronavirus and we are currently all working from home.

During this challenging time, we recognise the essential need to ensure that everyone in our communities continues to stay safe, look after their health and follow all current government guidelines.

We encourage people to be proactive as well as respond to any potential exposures or risks to their general, as well as sexual health.

### Working from home

Working from home has changed the way we work. We are currently unable to offer face to face support or

facilitate any group sessions. We have also had to stop offering rapid HIV testing.

Initially working from home was a challenge; we had to adapt to the current environment quickly to continue to promote sexual health whilst ensuring that everyone stays safe.



Zoom, Microsoft Teams and social media have enabled us to maintain contact with others and to keep everyone informed about our service.

### Services currently available

Most of our existing services are still operating, but in slightly different ways. For example, we are still offering advice and information to individuals on HIV and sexual health.

These sessions can take place online, via WhatsApp or phone.

To ensure that African communities in Leeds are supported to protect themselves from HIV, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unplanned pregnancies, we are providing free condoms by post. The condoms are discreetly packaged and posted to people at home if requested via the email address:

[freecondoms@thebha.org.uk](mailto:freecondoms@thebha.org.uk)

## How you can work with us to keep our communities healthy

### Free condoms by post

If you are working with African communities, asylum seekers or anyone living in deprivation, we can offer them free condoms via our condom postal service. Your clients can contact us directly via email or phone.

We can also post boxes of

condoms out to be included in any resource packs you distribute to your clients. Please call or email us to discuss any other ideas you may have in helping us to provide this service. It will help keep people protected from HIV, STI's and unplanned pregnancy.

We can provide information leaflets about this service so you can distribute them to your clients. We also have information about HIV and sexual health which we can share, please feel free to contact us if you would like to order some.

## WE'RE ON THE WEB!

Twitter – @BHALeedsSkyline

Facebook.com/bhaLeedsSkyline

Instagram - @bhaleedsskyline

**BHALeedsSkyline**

for equality in health and social care

### Free condoms service

email: [freecondoms@thebha.org.uk](mailto:freecondoms@thebha.org.uk)

or call 07388 689 768.

### HIV Support Service

phone - 07770 549 554

### Training sessions

We can offer virtual training sessions on HIV for your staff and volunteers which are tailored to your organisation's needs. Get in touch for further information or an informal chat about your specific needs.

### Social Media Service Promotion

We wish to promote our services and recognise that social media is key.

We would be extremely grateful if our partners and stakeholders would follow us and repost our updates on their own social media platforms to help get essential health messages out. We will be happy to reciprocate!



### 1-2-1 Information and Advice Sessions

We are continuing to provide information and advice about HIV, so people know the facts and are empowered to make good choices about their sexual health.

### Virtual Group Sessions

We are also eager to offer group sessions tailored to different audiences. Are you running an online teaching session with BAME communities, and would like us to deliver a session on sexual health and HIV for your participants? Please call or email us on [nyambe@thebha.org.uk](mailto:nyambe@thebha.org.uk) or 07388 689 768.

### Thinking Outside the Box

During this time of change and uncertainty, we are having to find new ways of working together. At Skyline, we are open to any ideas you may have or propose to reach people who need our services. We are happy to adapt our service and work collaboratively with others. Please contact us to discuss how we can creatively work together to keep our communities healthy.

## Our HIV Support Service

At Skyline we aim to provide a holistic HIV service encompassing both a prevention element and a support element.

BHA Leeds Skyline's Support Service is still available for advice and support for people living with HIV and those working with HIV-positive people.

The organisation works with anyone living with or affected by HIV in Leeds, providing emotional support, advice and information, 1-2-1's and group support.

At the current time, they are still taking new referrals – if you know of anyone who needs support themselves or is concerned about someone else, get in touch on the numbers below. They are happy to speak to anyone who may need advice.

The following services are available:

- 1-2-1 support from a Support Worker via the phone or video calling.
- Peer support via the phone or video calling.
- PACT – weekly group Zoom chat social for gay, bisexual and trans men.
- Well-being Group Social – weekly Zoom chat, sewing together. Materials can be sent out in the post so everyone has project to complete.
- Empower – Twice monthly Zoom chat for women who are living with HIV.

If you would like to access any of these services call: 07770 549 554 between 9-5 Monday to Friday.



### Current health note to be aware of for our BAME communities

The information we have learned so far indicates that BAME communities are disproportionately affected by Covid-19. They are at greater risk of infection and generally have a poorer prognosis. The reason for this is yet unknown, but we are told this is being taken seriously and investigated fully.

It is now more important than ever for all of us to be even more vigilant with our health.

BHA Leeds Skyline want to work with you to help those most affected by this pandemic. We can help people by signposting them to sexual health services, ensuring they are aware of how to keep safe and creating a network of agencies in Leeds which work together to get people the best outcomes possible.

Thank you for your support.