



sexual health? CENTRE  .com
annual report 2017

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Introduction

The Sexual Health Centre is a Not for Profit, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) that was established in July 1987 as Cork Aids Alliance. The vision of the organisation is for a society where:

- people are able to understand, acknowledge and express their sexuality
- people are able to understand, acknowledge and respect the sexuality of others
- fewer people experience STIs and crisis pregnancies

In achieving this, the mission defines the Sexual Health Centre as “an innovative and creative organisation that facilitates people’s need for clear and unambiguous information and support regarding their sexual health, while advocating for positive social change”. Our values include Equality, Dignity and Respect, Accountability, Quality, Inclusion and Transparency.

The work of the Sexual Health Centre focuses on the fundamental human rights of everyone to positive sexual rights, experiences and health. The organisation is committed to delivering an excellent service to clients while offering value for money to funders. The Sexual Health Centre has responded to community sexual health through various innovative initiatives for the past 30 years and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Chairperson's Letter



I am delighted to introduce the 2017 Annual Report on behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, clients and stakeholders of the Sexual Health Centre. The past year brought an era of change for the Sexual Health Centre. In August, the CEO Deirdre Seery took retirement after 27 years of leading the Sexual Health Centre. Deirdre continuously evolved and innovated to ensure the centre effectively responded to the needs of the Cork community. The centre is grateful for her guidance and

leadership and we wish her all the best into the future.

Following Deirdre's retirement, the centre welcomed Martin Davoren to the role of Executive Director at the Sexual Health Centre in September. Martin comes to the centre from University College Cork where he has published various articles, managed teams and lead grants focusing on the areas of sexual health, alcohol and drug misuse.

Under the leadership of both, the Sexual Health Centre has had a productive year as it navigated through a period of challenges and emerging opportunities. Regrettably, a funding cut forced conclusion of the education programme in schools. In parallel, an increase in clients accessing each of our services was observed. The organisation continues to partner with statutory and non-statutory agencies to support the sexual health needs of an evolving Ireland.

The ongoing work of the Sexual Health Centre would not be possible without the staff, volunteers and board of the organisation. I would like to commend the team in responding to the challenges of 2017 and maximising the opportunities available to respond to Ireland's growing need for effective, equitable, non-judgemental sexual health services.

Executive Director's foreword



I am pleased to welcome you all to my first Annual Report as Executive Director of the Sexual Health Centre. Shortly after celebrating the centre's 30th anniversary, Deirdre Seery our CEO for the past 27 years retired. This was coupled with the unfortunate ending of our schools programme in December 2017.

These significant milestones have resulted in the organisation taking the space to reflect on the past 30 years and focus on our role in supporting societies sexual health needs in the future.

Despite these changes and challenges, the Sexual Health Centre reports a productive year. The organisation continues to form new partnerships while sustaining our existing collaborations. This has led us to partnering with a range of statutory and non-statutory organisations so that we can better support a broad spectrum of society including but not limited to young people, people living with a disability, the LGBTQ+ community, sex workers, people living or accessing addiction services, vulnerable adults and migrants. This work would not be possible without the support, help and encouragement of those who helped fund the organisation. As numbers accessing our services increase, their support is vital in providing information, advice and intervention into the future.

None of this work, partnership, collaboration and service delivery would be possible without the commitment, hard work and belief of the Sexual Health Centre staff and volunteers. Their work positively impacts on Irish society on a daily basis and contributes to a more accepting Ireland.

The Sexual Health Centre finds itself at an exciting junction focused on supporting the implementation the National Sexual Health Strategy (2015-2020), maintaining current service delivery while focusing on future growth, expansion and partnership. We will continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of Irish society and look forward to an Ireland which celebrates the fundamental human rights of everyone to experience positive sexual rights, experiences and health.

Report on Activities

The organisation has undergone a period of transition with the former CEO Deirdre Seery taking retirement in August 2017 before welcoming the new Executive Director, Dr. Martin Davoren into post in September. Martin comes to the organisation from University College Cork where he has published various articles, managed teams and lead grants focusing on the areas of sexual health, alcohol and drug misuse. He lead the Health Promoting University initiative, managed Irelands largest population health and health services research network (SPHeRE) alongside representing the university in various community initiatives.

The Sexual Health Centre hit a milestone this year in achieving its 30th year in operation and celebrated in style by winning a GSK Health Impact Award. The awards recognise and reward Ireland's "unsung healthcare heroes who make a real difference to health and wellbeing in their communities". Under the guidance of both Deirdre and Martin in 2017, the centre built on existing services while developing new and innovative ways to meet the demands of stakeholder and clients. This was reflected perfectly by the Sexual Health Centre being the first sexual health organisation in Ireland to win the award. The promo video can be watched on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NusRU9H4-DE>



Martin Davoren along with the other winners on the night

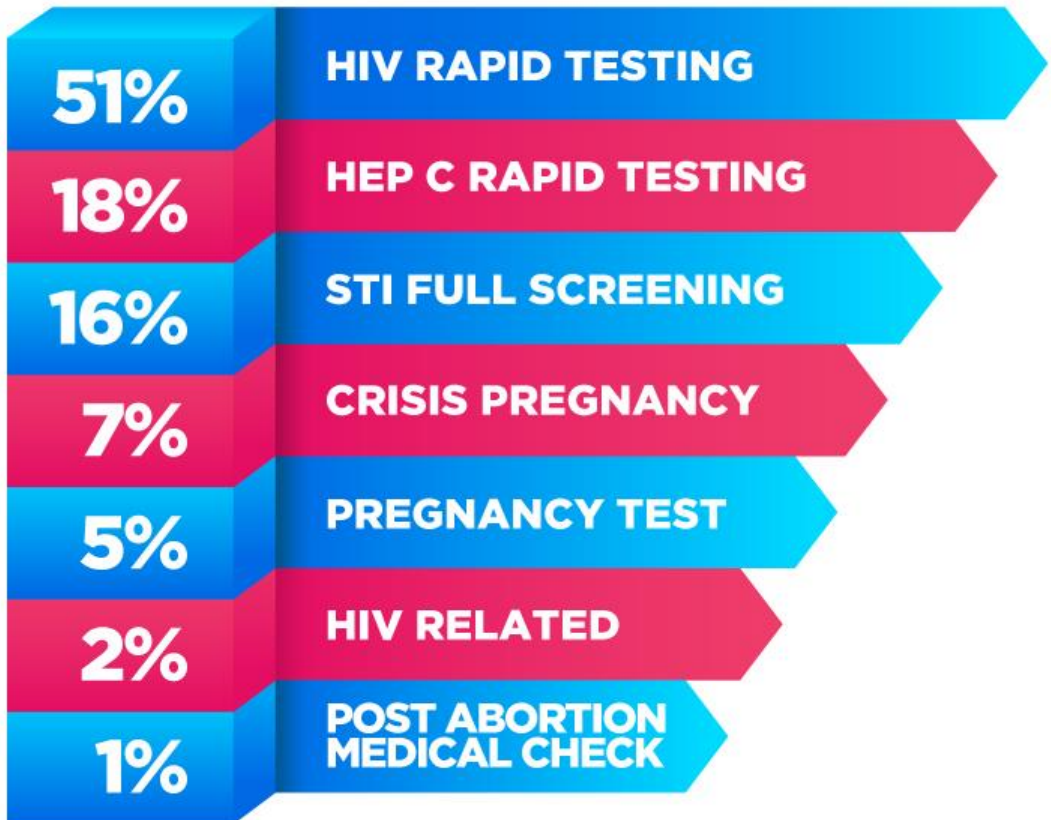
Members of the Board of Directors, Deirdre, Martin and Catherine (Centre Manager) attended the GSK awards ceremony held in the Royal College of Physicians in Dublin. The winners receive a promotional video and photo gallery along with €10,000 in unrestricted funding.

Services

The Sexual Health Centre offers a range of services to meet the needs of both existing clients and the wider community in Cork. These services include

- A telephone helpline service for individuals seeking information or advice regarding a concern or query;
- A drop-in service for individuals seeking information or advice regarding a concern or query;
- Condom demonstrations and condom distribution;
- Sexual Health Promotion workshops and support for groups most disconnected from society including but not limited to sex workers, young people in non-formal education settings, people with an intellectual or physical disability, people in addiction services, migrants;
- Professional training;
- Personal support sessions;
- Counselling and support for people experiencing a crisis pregnancy, people presenting with sexual issues and also people living with HIV (PLWHIV) and their significant others;
- Post abortion medical check-ups;
- A Rapid HIV testing service in partnership with Know Now;
- A support group for people living with HIV (PLWHIV);
- An out of hours STI clinic;
- Pregnancy testing.

Nature of client visit to The Sexual Health Centre (incl. testing)

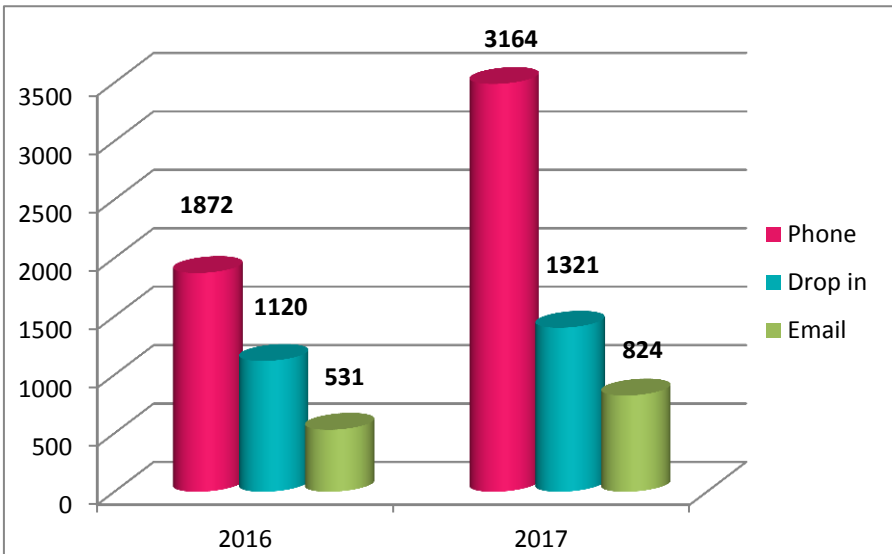


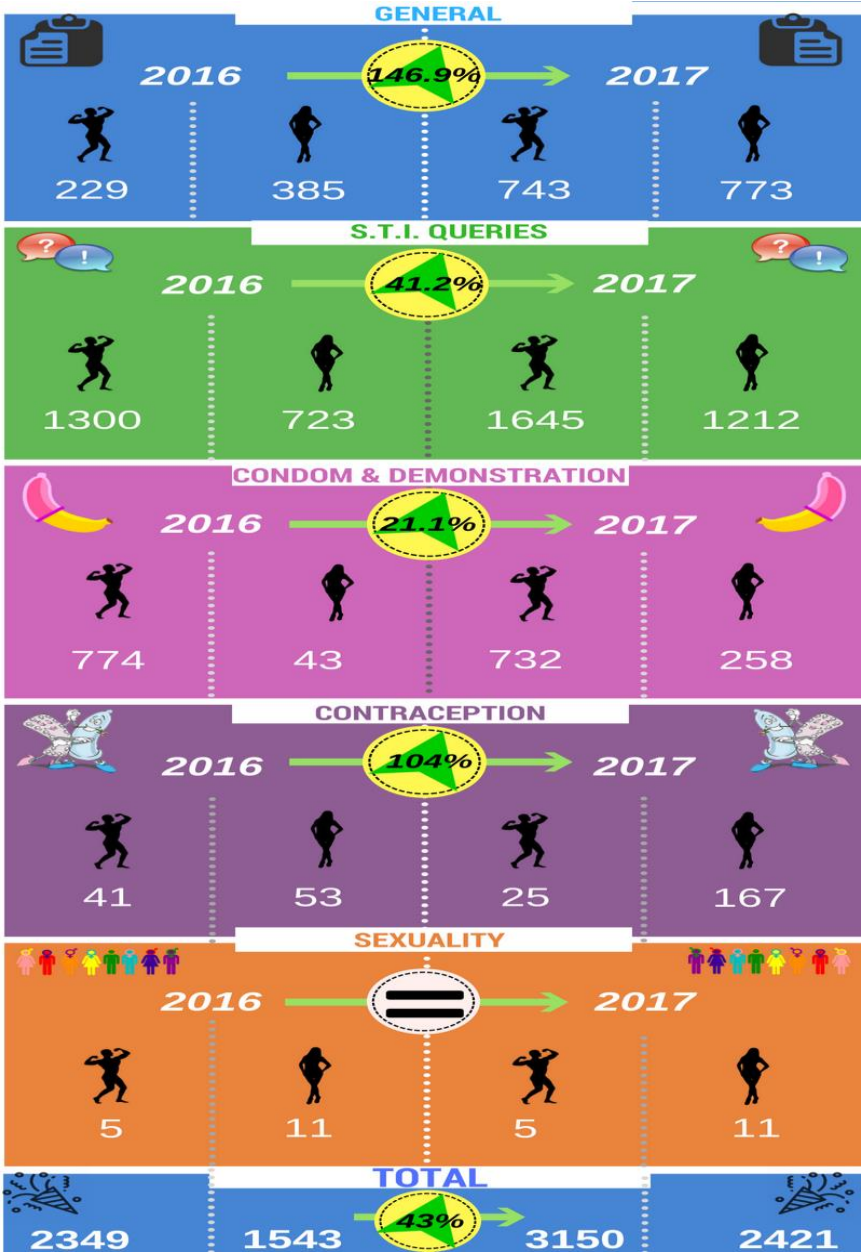
Telephone Helpline/Information Sessions

Our telephone helpline and drop in services operate during working hours at the Sexual Health Centre. Clients ring and visit with a broad range of queries from STI testing to contraception requests and general sexual health or gender identity queries. Training for the helpline is carried out by the Services Manager. In 2017 we had an increase in queries from the public of 1,786. The total number of people accessing our service via helpline and drop-in totalled to 5,309 last year.

Any person that contacts the centre can avail of a personal support session, information leaflets, condom demonstrations, free condoms and lubricant from a trained member of staff. Signposting is used where suitable and referrals made where appropriate.

Channels of communication for information





Condom Distribution

In 2017, a total of 20,868 free condoms were distributed from the Sexual Health Centre. Just over 5,000 of these were given as part of our condom demonstrations to young people within the centre, schools and outreach. We also supply condoms and lubricant to sexworkers, men who have sex with men (MSM), participants of our outreach programmes, at health promotion stands, during various testing initiatives and across all the third level institutions in cork city for World Aids Day.

Resources & Information

The Sexual Health Centre stocks resources and information leaflets in the areas of sexual health including information on chemsex, PrEP and PEP along with information on mental health and drugs/alcohol services. Our own publication, Sexual Times, which was updated and relaunched in 2015, continues to be requested widely by schools and other youth programmes



Health Promotion

Our health promotion team delivered workshops in a variety of settings during 2017 including schools, in outreach and within the disability sector.

Our schools worker delivered sexual health information to 4781 students through 169 workshops in schools throughout cork city and county. The school workshops were devised to complement the RSE programme being delivered by teachers.

Due to a funding cut to our schools work in 2017, the organisation had to cease this work. The management and staff were very sorry to say goodbye to Emma Coughlan, our schools worker. Emma was instrumental in the advancement of our education work through the last number of years. Emma's work resulted in

fantastic word of mouth amongst teachers and increased interest in our schools workshops. Emma deserves great thanks for the advice and guidance she gave to many students during her time in the Sexual Health Centre and we would like to take this opportunity to wish her all the best in the future.

Our outreach worker focuses on groups who, for many reasons, can feel disconnected from society and would not have access to sexual health information. Our outreach worker delivered 180 workshops and had 910 contacts in 2017. Many of these participants can have multiple complex issues so workshops are required to be extremely flexible and use various classroom assessment techniques such as the muddiest point etc. Literacy is a noted barrier for some people meaning the outreach worker must be mindful of all learning levels. As a result of these engaging workshops, three students involved with Comhairle na nÓg, Joe, Niamh and Aine received a “highly recommended” award on their BT Young Scientists project entitled *“An investigation into the difficulties faced by Irish youth due to a lack of sexual education in schools”*.

Our disability trainer has delivered tailor made programmes for people living with an intellectual and/or physical disability. In 2017 these workshops ran over a number of weeks, usually 6 weeks, to encourage trust and active participation from individuals. Staff working within these organisation often express that they do not feel they have the appropriate skills to deal with, what they would describe as, “sensitive issues” or “inappropriate sexualised behaviour” and are relieved to have an outside experienced facilitator to deliver sexual health workshops to their participants. Our worker also has previous experience of working within the disability sector.

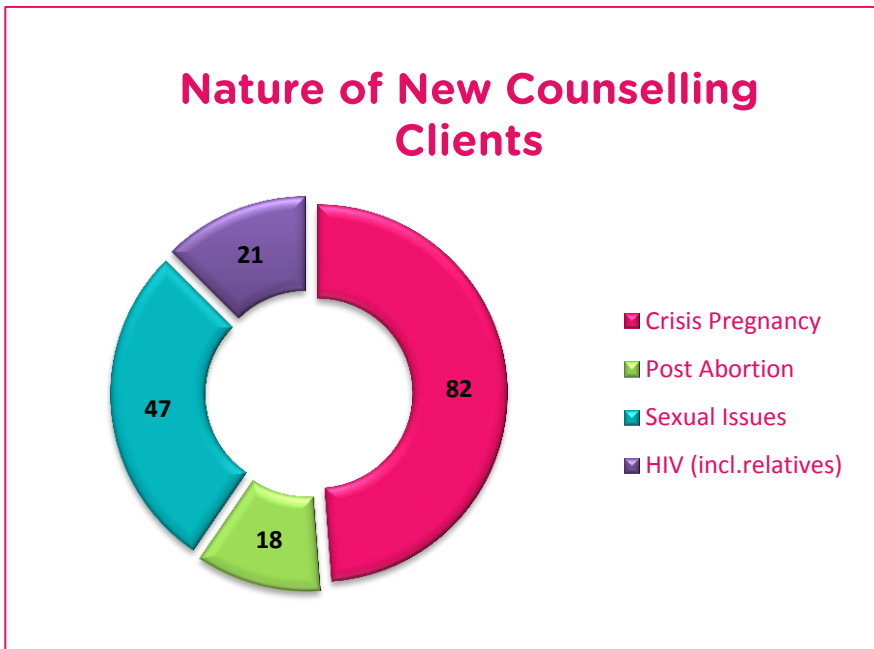


Along with sexual health programmes, the centre was also invited to have information stands present at many events throughout Cork. We provided health promotion stands

and information at venues including but not limited to colleges, pharmacies, conferences and various large multi nationals that actively promote sexual health within their health and wellbeing initiatives.

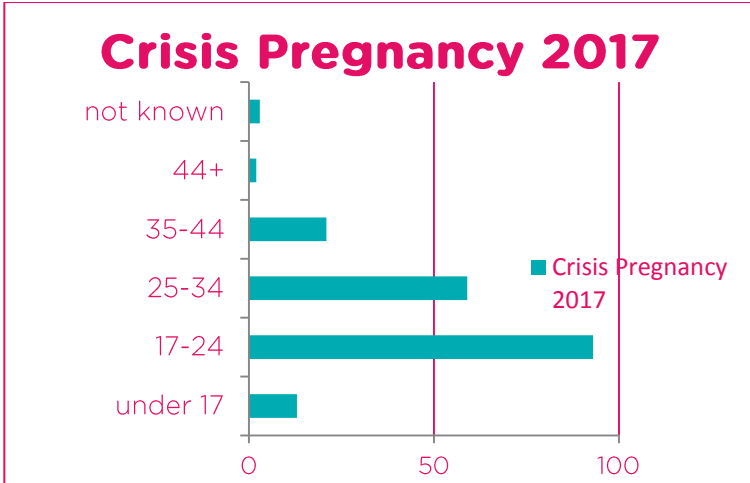
Counselling

The team of counsellors at the Sexual Health Centre cover a broad area of sexual health with sessions for clients presenting with a crisis pregnancy, a new HIV diagnosis or long term clients who are dealing with HIV related issues and also clients presenting with sexual health related issues. Counselling is also available for partners, family members and/or significant others.



HIV & Sexual Health Services: The Sexual Health Centre facilitated 506 counselling sessions with clients in relation to this area of work. The counsellors met with a total of 99 clients and welcomed 68 new HIV/SI clients in 2017. Clients can engage in one-to-one counselling, peer support and can also access a support group which runs every fortnight. Despite the medical and testing advances, PLWHIV still experience stigma and discrimination on a daily basis. For many of our clients the Sexual Health Centre is often the only service that they will engage with or perhaps the only place where they will report feeling comfortable disclosing their status which can be crucial in a situation where a client can feel isolated from society due to stigma.

Crisis Pregnancy Services: The counsellors and staff of the centre operated a non-judgemental, non-directive, all options service to 204 clients within the remit of crisis pregnancy services, 195 of these clients were new to our centre. These services range from pregnancy testing, 3 options counselling, post abortion counselling and post abortion medical check-ups with a qualified GP. The National Sexual Health Strategy states that the definition of a crisis pregnancy is 'understood to include the experiences of women for whom a planned pregnancy develops into a crisis over time' and we have found this to be the case for many of our clients. Out of the 195 new clients that presented, 48% were in the 17-24 age range. Overall, there were 282 appointments delivered to crisis pregnancy clients in 2017.



Support Services Christmas Campaign: The Sexual Health Centre recognised that people can often put themselves at a higher risk from an unplanned pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infection during the Christmas period. To raise awareness of this and highlight accessibility of services, the organisation runs a Christmas campaign every year which includes posters, postcards and condoms distributed throughout cork city. All literature displayed the slogan *“What else will you share this Christmas?”*

YEAR IN NUMBERS **2017**



22,000+
CONDOMS

Distributed free of charge

3,988

**HELPLINE
QUERIES**

1,321

Drop-in Queries

910

**OUTREACH
CONTACTS**

770
Counselling
Sessions

169

**SCHOOL
WORKSHOPS**

STI
RELATED
ENQUIRIES

2,857

3,069 FACEBOOK
PAGE LIKES

388

**TWITTER
FOLLOWERS**

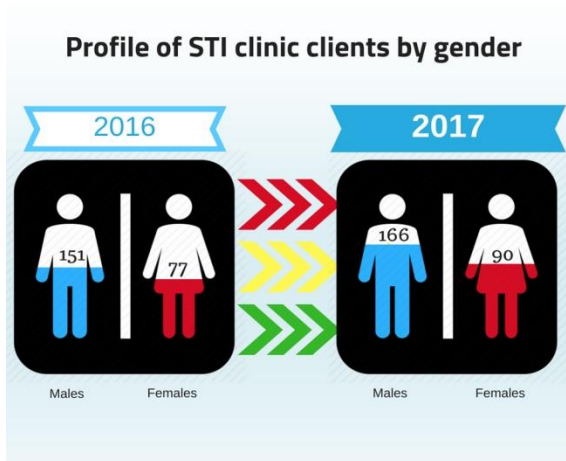
20+
Volunteers



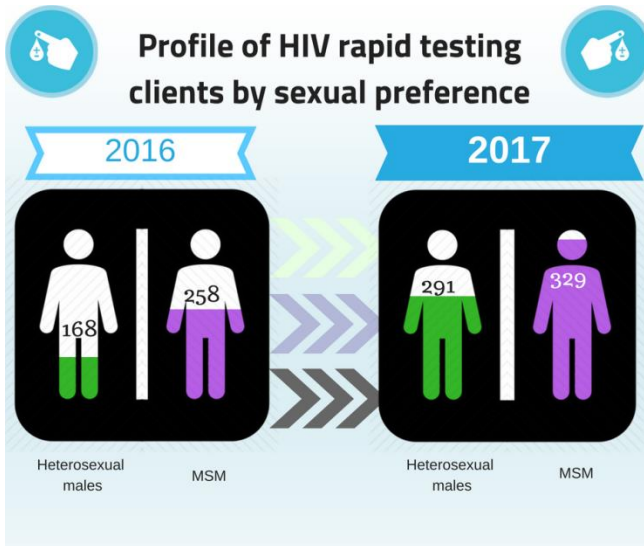
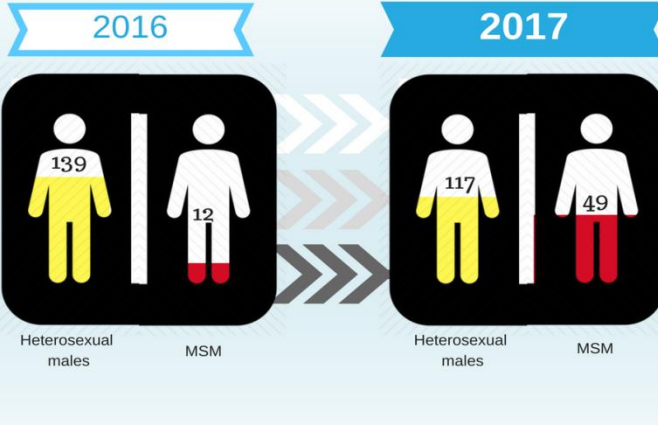
STI Screening Service

There is national and regional epidemiological evidence of increased STIs amongst the general population as well as amongst specific categories of populations. The centre is always striving to answer the needs of clients and given the fact that the telephone requests to the centre for STI screenings increase year on year, the Sexual Health Centre has been running an out of hours asymptomatic STI Clinic one night a week since 2016. The centre received 1676 requests for an appointment during 2017 and the clinic ran at full capacity seeing 256 clients. All queries in relation to symptomatic screenings are referred to the GUM clinic at the South Infirmity Victoria University Hospital in Cork city. The Sexual Health Centre would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge both Professor Horgan and her team in SIVUH Cork for their continued support and help with referrals to the GUM clinic and also Dr Arthur Jackson and team at Infectious Diseases in Cork University Hospital.

The Sexual Health Centre would also like to thank Dr. Brenda Moran who had been overseeing the clinic since December of 2016. Brenda left the Sexual Health Centre in 2017 due to other work commitments.



Profile of male STI clinic clients by sexual preference



Partnerships

Sexual Health Centre & the School of Public Health, University College Cork

The Executive Director received an Adjunct Lecturer post in the School of Public Health, University College Cork. Martin's role within the school focuses on supervising Master of Public Health research projects in the area of sexual health as well as continuing his role in the development of a sexual health promotion policy for university students.

STI Clinic at the Student Health Centre

The Services Manager of the Sexual Health Centre, Phil, is placed in the Student Health Centre of UCC on Fridays mornings since 2016 for their STI Clinic. Phil meets with each student who attends the clinic and holds a brief intervention session. It is sometimes necessary outside of the College Campus.

Bystander Intervention

The Sexual Health Centre was asked to attend the Bystander Intervention training for facilitators in November of 2017 in UCC. The Sexual Health Centre will now be involved in the rollout of this programme to UCC students commencing in April 2018.

Sexual Health Centre & SWAI

Our organisation understands the many challenges that sex workers face, from the law, stigma and judgement. We believe sex workers deserve to have the same access to sexual health care as anyone else. This year we teamed up with Dearbhla Ryan - community and campaigns worker and Kate McGrew - SWAI director to promote the health and safety of sex workers in Ireland. Since our partnership we have engaged with other organisations in Cork to advise on how they could deliver services that are inclusive to sex workers. We hold regular meetings where sex workers are invited to our centre where they are provided with a safe space to discuss any issues and to avail of Rapid HIV

testing. These meetings are co-facilitated by our outreach worker and a member of the SWAI team.

Sexual Health Centre & Cork LGBT Interagency Group

The Sexual Health Centre is a member of the Cork LGBT Interagency Group. Each year this group organises Cork LGBT Awareness Week. The objective of this group is to facilitate a city where “The gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities will be enabled to fully participate in the social, cultural and economic life of Cork City.” The Inter-Agency committee is currently advocating that Cork City Council becomes a member of the Rainbow Cities Network.

Sexual Health Centre staff supporting Pride

The Cork Pride Parade is a celebration of the diversity of the LGBT community. Staff of the centre march in the parade as well as handing out condoms and fliers promoting our HIV testing service.



Sexual Health Centre & Arbour House/Simon Community Initiative

In 2017 we partnered with Cork Simon and Arbour House, a local addiction service, to conduct HIV and Hep C testing over a number of weeks in the summer of 2017. The aim of this initiative was to test as many of the clients accessing Simon and Arbour House in one concentrated period. The collaboration worked extremely well and monthly testing in the Simon Community is ongoing with staff also providing advisory personal support sessions to each person receiving a test. The Sexual Health Centre is looking forward to working with both agencies again in 2018.

Sexual Health Centre & the City Centre Co-ordinating Group

The Sexual Health Centre operates a Community Employment Scheme and the Executive Director is Secretary of the Board. The scheme is run in conjunction

with Threshold, Cork Deaf Association and St Finn Barr's Cathedral. The centre is extremely thankful to all our CE participants for their continuing engagement in the work of the centre.

Sexual Health Centre & Youth Health Service

The Sexual Health Centre employed key staff at the YHS and provided on-going support and management to the service there during 2017.

Sexual Health Centre & Know Now

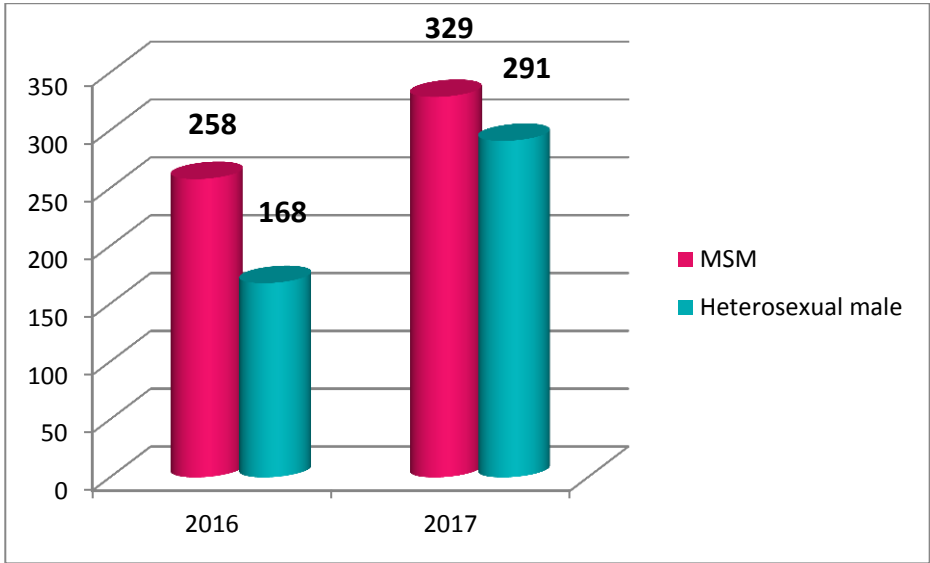
Know Now is a national Rapid HIV Testing Programme which enables more people to know their HIV status. The Sexual Health Centre partnered with HIV Ireland and GOSHH in Limerick for the purpose of this project. Aids West in Galway will be joining this partnership in 2018. Know Now is a peer led testing initiative that offers HIV tests in a wide variety of settings. The Sexual Health Centre holds testing sessions in venues such as bars, clubs, gay saunas and our centre in Peters Street to men who have sex with men and other high risk groups.

In November 2017 we were delighted to welcome another 8 new volunteers to this programme. Our volunteer total is now over 20.



Recently trained Know Now volunteers at their first night of testing

Profile of Rapid HIV Testing clients in 2016 and 2017 (sexuality)



European Testing Week



The Sexual Health Centre provided 36 rapid tests for European Testing Week (ETW), 17-24th November. Advertising was specifically targeted at men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers (SW) and people who are using drugs (PWUD). European Testing Week (ETW) is a European wide initiative supported by the AIDS Health Fund.

World AIDS Day Campaign

The message of the campaign was ‘Everyone has a HIV status. Update Yours’ and was developed by the HSE communications strategy group which has representation from our centre.

This online campaign was run for 1 day this year, 1st December, World AIDS Day. The aim for this campaign was to raise awareness around the issues that PLWHIV may face in their lives and to promote HIV testing. During his speech on WAD 2017 President Michael D. Higgins acknowledged the work of The Sexual Health Centre along with other agencies involved in the area of HIV. (The full speech can be read on www.president.ie - 1st December 2017).





Company Networking

The Sexual Health Centre places a high priority on networking, across Europe with Esticom training, nationally through participation with the HSE Sexual Health & Crisis Pregnancy Programme, HIV Services Ireland and working with other organisations, statutory and non-statutory, in Ireland on specific initiatives and of course regionally and locally.

Representation on HSE National Sexual Health Strategy Advisory Group and Communications Group

The Sexual Health Centre continued to participate on the HSE SHCPP Advisory Group and also the Communications Working Group who provide strategic advice and direction to support the National Sexual Health Strategy (2015-2020).

Cork Healthy Cities

The Sexual Health Centre is an active participant in this inter agency group along with other key NGOs, the HSE and the City Council so as to facilitate and enable Cork in being a healthy city.

Cork Chamber

The Sexual Health Centre became a member of The Cork Chamber of Commerce towards the end of 2017.

Irish Street Medicine Symposium

The Executive Director attended the Irish Street Medicine Symposium in late September and facilitated a “buzz session” on one of the days.

HIV Ireland Conference

The Executive Director participated at the National HIV Conference held in Dublin; the topic in 2017 was the exploration of the history of HIV in Ireland and stigma in relation to diagnosis.

UCC Student LGBT Society

The Sexual Health Centre was asked to make various presentations to the UCC LGBT Society. One of the main presentations was at UCC's first Queer Conference in November 2017.

Annual Gay Health Forum

In June 2017, the Sexual Health Centre presented on the work of the organisation for 2016/2017.

SSTDI Conference

The annual SSTDI (Society for the Study of Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Ireland) conference took place in Dublin. The aim of the conference every year is to provide a forum for the discussion and co-ordination of clinical services and to promote, encourage and improve the clinical and public health aspects of sexually transmitted diseases. The organisation had the opportunity to showcase two posters detailing outreach work and our learnings from 30 years of service delivery in the area of sexual health.

The Sexual Health Centre's 30th Anniversary Celebration at the Crane Lane



In August the Sexual Health Centre celebrated its 30th anniversary with a gig in the Crane Lane. The line up on the night featured St Caoilian, Marlene Enright, Karen Underwood and Jack O'Rourke. We would like to give very special thanks to all of the musicians who performed on the night, especially Jack O'Rourke who was the driving force behind recruiting the musical talent for the night. A great night was had by all who attended and this special anniversary was marked by a fantastic night of music performed by homegrown talent.



Our stellar line up for our 30th Anniversary Concert, clockwise from top left, Jack O'Rourke, Karen Underwood, Caoilian Sherlock and Marlene Enright.

Sexual health services are not very conducive to typical fundraising activities and the organisation has had to acknowledge this difficulty. When The Sexual Health Centre organises a fundraising event it will yield a lot of goodwill but not enough revenue to sustain services. To this end, we would especially like to thank our main funders to enable us to continue with service delivery.

We would also like to thank the staff of Brown Thomas and MAC cosmetics in Cork for their continued support through the years especially in relation to World Aids Day every year where they hold fundraising events for the organisation.

Acknowledgements

The Sexual Health Centre would like to express their appreciation to all those who worked with, and provided us with support throughout the year. We would like to thank the Board of Directors which consisted of; Ciaran Lynch (Chairperson), Miriam Forde (Treasurer), Sheila Connolly (Secretary), Carl Plover, Giles Reid, Elizabeth Murphy, Evelyn Grant Suzanne Hegarty and Thomas Quigley.

Former CEO: Deirdre Seery

Executive Director: Martin Davoren

Managers: Catherine Kennedy, Phil Corcoran

Staff: Denis O'Mahony, Irene Kidd Murphy, Carol Jeffreys, Emma Coughlan, Susan Walsh and Niamh O'Connor. Community Employment Staff: Gosia Waldowska, Lorraine Sisk and Roland Baldwin and all our volunteers.

Our thanks to our principal funders: Aidan Warner, Triona Healy, HSE South (CHO4); Helen Deely, Janice Donlon, Anita Ghafoor Butt, HSE SHCPP; Ruth Griffin, (YPFSF) Cork ETB **And our appreciation to these additional**

organisations and individuals for their support: The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress; Professor Mary Horgan, Danny Queally & staff at SIVUH; Dr Arthur Jackson, Liz Murphy & Jacinta Joyce (HIV Liaison nurses) & staff (Infectious Diseases) CUH; Health Promotion & Improvement Dept, HSE South led by Sandra Coughlan; Youth Health Service; Dr Aidan Horan & staff at Arbour House; Dr Anna Marie Naughton & staff at The Simon Community; Ann Mason & staff at GOSHH; Joe McDonagh & staff at Aids West; Niall Mulligan & staff at HIV Ireland; Siobhan O'Dea & staff at GMHS; Dr. Michael Byrne & staff at Student Health Services UCC; Prof Ivan Perry & staff at the School of Public Health UCC; Aileen Dooley National Drug/HIV Helpline; Marie Sheehan & team at GSK Ireland; Gay Men's Health Project Cork; Kate & staff at LINC; Cork Local Drugs Task Force; Robin & staff at Chambers Bar; Johnathon & staff at The Loft; Mac Cosmetics staff at Brown Thomas Cork.



An Roinn Leanaf agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of Children and Youth Affairs



cetb
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Chorcaí
Cork Education and Training Board



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