

# The Elephant in the Room

## Sexual Health Communications Toolkit – Primary Care 2026

(v1 27/02/2026)

### The Elephant in the Room

The NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB), in partnership with UKHSA, OHID, Directors of Public Health and public health teams, across all our region's local authorities have developed the **Elephant in the Room** campaign. Its aim is to raise awareness of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), promote confidential and FREE sexual health advice and services, and encourage safer sexual health behaviours among young people.

### Background

The North East has some of the highest sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates in the country. STIs, especially in young people aged 15-24, have increased since 2019, with rates of gonorrhoea and chlamydia of particular concern.

The **Elephant in the Room** campaign aims to reduce the stigma associated with sex and sexual health by encouraging honest conversations among young people, as well as increasing condom use and testing, to help reduce the number of STIs.

The [Elephant in the room digital toolkit](#) is available for use and adaptation by all communication leads across the NHS, local authorities and other partners, to encourage uptake of STI testing, condom usage and general sexual health advice.



## How can you help?

Information and content in the toolkit can be used on websites, social media, or other communication channels.

Your support in raising awareness of safe sex and sexual health is very much appreciated.

For further help or advice on using the toolkit or if you need support to tailor any assets, please contact: Andrea Jones, [andrea.jones2@nhs.net](mailto:andrea.jones2@nhs.net) or Anisah Sharmeen, [anisah.sharmeen@nhs.net](mailto:anisah.sharmeen@nhs.net).

## Contents

- Campaign aim
- Key messages
- Target audience
- Download assets
- Newsletter copy (stakeholders and young people)
- Social media
- Videos

## Campaign aim

To increase awareness and educate young people, aged 15-24, about STIs; promoting safe sex, including condom use, regular testing and how to access confidential sexual health services and information.

## Key messages

- Your sexual health is just as important as your physical and mental health
- If you're having sex, use condoms and get tested regularly for STIs
- Not all STIs show symptoms, so people may have an infection without knowing, meaning it can be passed on without realising and still cause serious long-term health problems
- Testing is quick, simple and confidential
- Condoms and STI testing are FREE to access online and in person from local sexual health services
- There's no judgement – sexual health services have heard it all before!

## Who are we targeting?

- Young people – age 15 - 24
- Those who are sexually active, or are thinking about becoming sexually active

## Download the campaign assets

All campaign assets for the **Elephant in the Room** sexual health campaign are available to download from the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) toolkit page.

Download here: [Elephant in the room digital toolkit](#)

### Assets available in the toolkit:

- Social media images and messaging
- Posters in varying sizes (with bleed)
- Digital screen designs
- Web banner - various shapes/sizes
- Animations
- Videos

### Visit the Elephant in the Room campaign landing page

A dedicated campaign landing page has been created, which is hosted by the ICB, to signpost people to existing information about

- Sexual health advice
- Testing
- Accessing free condoms
- Contraception information

This includes educational, informative videos from frontline health professionals and young service users (embedded from ICB's YouTube channel).

The page signposts to advice from Brook Advisory, NHS.UK and local sexual health services and condom distribution.

This will be the **main call to action** from all campaign materials – alongside messages about accessing FREE confidential advice, testing and condoms,

Visit the campaign landing page here – [www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk](http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk)

## Website copy

### Having sex? Thinking about it?

Let's talk about the **elephant in the room** - your sexual health!

Looking after your sexual health is just as important as your physical and mental health - but we get it... it can feel awkward to talk about.

Here's the thing, some STIs, like chlamydia and gonorrhoea, don't always show symptoms, which means they can be passed on without anyone knowing and still cause serious long-term health problems. That's why it's important to use condoms every time you have sex - it's one of the best ways to protect yourself and others. We also recommend getting tested regularly - it's free, quick, simple and confidential.

Want to know more? Visit [www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk](http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk) to:

- Check where you can get free condoms
- Find your nearest STI testing clinic (or order an at-home test kit)
- Get clear, trusted sexual health advice from Brook

No judgement.

No embarrassment.

Just support, whenever you need it.

# Social media

Please tag us in your social media posts #ElephantInTheRoom

Facebook - NorthEastandNorthCumbriaNHS

X - @NENC\_NHS

Instagram - nenc\_nhs

TikTok - @nenc\_icb

LinkedIn - @north-east-and-north-cumbria-nhs

YouTube - North East and North Cumbria NHS

Elephant in the Room campaign   Social				
Post	Instagram	Facebook	X	Visual/Film
<p><b>Encouraging people to get tested - STIs</b></p>	<p>It's time to talk about the elephant in the room!</p> <p>Having sex? Thinking about it?</p> <p>PROTECT YOURSELF against STIs like chlamydia and gonorrhoea.</p> <p>For FREE confidential advice, testing and condoms, visit: <a href="http://elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>It's time to talk about the elephant in the room!</p> <p>Having sex? Thinking about it?</p> <p>PROTECT YOURSELF against STIs like chlamydia and gonorrhoea.</p> <p>For FREE confidential advice, testing and condoms, visit: <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>It's time to talk about the elephant in the room!</p> <p>Having sex? Thinking about it?</p> <p>PROTECT YOURSELF against STIs like chlamydia and gonorrhoea.</p> <p>For FREE confidential advice, testing and condoms, visit: <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	

Post	Instagram	Facebook	X	Visual/Film
<p><b>Free condoms/testing</b></p>	<p>It's time to talk about the elephant in the room! Yeah, we're talking safer sex!</p> <p>PROTECT YOURSELF against STIs like chlamydia and gonorrhoea.</p> <p>If you've had sex without a condom – <b>GET TESTED</b> For free testing, condoms and confidential safe sex advice visit <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>It's time to talk about the elephant in the room! Yeah, we're talking safer sex!</p> <p>PROTECT YOURSELF against STIs like chlamydia and gonorrhoea.</p> <p>If you've had sex without a condom – <b>GET TESTED</b> For free testing, condoms and confidential safe sex advice visit <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>It's time to talk about the elephant in the room! Yeah, we're talking safer sex!</p> <p>PROTECT YOURSELF against STIs like chlamydia and gonorrhoea.</p> <p>If you've had sex without a condom – <b>GET TESTED</b> For free testing, condoms and confidential safe sex advice visit <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	
Post	Instagram	Facebook	X	Visual/Film
<p><b>Free confidential safe sex advice, testing and condoms</b></p>	<p>Having sex? Thinking about having sex?</p> <p>PROTECT YOURSELF against STIs like gonorrhoea and chlamydia.</p> <p>For free confidential safe sex advice, testing and condoms visit <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>Having sex? Thinking about having sex?</p> <p>PROTECT YOURSELF against STIs like gonorrhoea and chlamydia.</p> <p>For free confidential safe sex advice, testing and condoms visit <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>Having sex? Thinking about having sex?</p> <p>PROTECT YOURSELF against STIs like gonorrhoea and chlamydia.</p> <p>For free confidential safe sex advice, testing and condoms visit <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	

Post	Instagram	Facebook	X	Visual/Film
<p><b>Protect yourself</b></p>	<p>Having sex?</p> <p>Protect yourself!</p> <p>If you're sexually active, use condoms and get tested regularly. Some STIs don't show symptoms, so they can be passed on without you knowing and still cause serious long-term health problems.</p> <p><b>The good news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Free condoms</li> <li>✓ Free STI testing</li> <li>✓ Online testing available</li> <li>✓ Totally confidential</li> <li>✓ No judgement</li> </ul> <p>Find free, confidential sexual health services at <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>Having sex?</p> <p>Protect yourself!</p> <p>If you're sexually active, use condoms and get tested regularly - some STIs don't show symptoms, so they can be passed on without you knowing and still cause serious long-term health problems.</p> <p><b>The good news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Free condoms</li> <li>✓ Free STI testing</li> <li>✓ Online testing available</li> <li>✓ Totally confidential</li> <li>✓ No judgement</li> </ul> <p>Find free, confidential sexual health services at <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>Having sex?</p> <p>Protect yourself!</p> <p>Some STIs don't have symptoms - so they can be passed on without you knowing.</p> <p>Use condoms and get tested regularly.</p> <p><b>For</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Free condoms</li> <li>✓ Free STI testing</li> <li>✓ Online testing available</li> <li>✓ Confidential</li> <li>✓ No judgement</li> </ul> <p>Visit <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	

Post	Instagram	Facebook	X	Visual/Film
<p><b>Your sexual health matters just as much as your physical and mental health</b></p>	<p>Let's talk about the elephant in the room!</p> <p>Having sex? Thinking about having sex?</p> <p>Your sexual health matters just as much as your physical and mental health - and it's important to talk about it.</p> <p>For free, confidential, safe sex advice, testing and condoms, visit <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>Let's talk about the elephant in the room!</p> <p>Having sex? Thinking about having sex?</p> <p>Your sexual health matters just as much as your physical and mental health - and it's important to talk about it.</p> <p>For free, confidential, safe sex advice, testing and condoms visit <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>Let's talk about the elephant in the room!</p> <p>Having sex? Thinking about having sex?</p> <p>Your sexual health matters just as much as your physical and mental health - and it's important to talk about it.</p> <p>For free, confidential, safe sex advice, testing and condoms visit <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	

Post	Instagram	Facebook	X	Visual/Film
Let's keep talking about the <b>elephant in the room.</b>	<p>Let's keep talking about the elephant in the room.</p> <p><b>Your sexual health!</b></p> <p>Not all STIs have symptoms - but testing, including home testing, is quick, simple, confidential and <b>FREE</b></p> <p>Condoms are free too.</p> <p>No judgement. No pressure. Just support.</p> <p>Find free, confidential advice, testing and condoms at <a href="http://elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>Let's keep talking about the elephant in the room.</p> <p><b>Your sexual health!</b></p> <p>Not all STIs have symptoms - but testing, including home testing, is quick, simple, confidential and <b>FREE.</b></p> <p>Condoms are free too.</p> <p>No judgement. No pressure. Just support.</p> <p>Find free, confidential advice, testing and condoms at <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>Let's keep talking about the elephant in the room.</p> <p><b>Your sexual health!</b></p> <p>Not all STIs have symptoms - but testing, including home testing, is quick, simple, confidential and <b>FREE.</b></p> <p>Condoms are free too.</p> <p>No judgement. No pressure. Just support.</p> <p>Find free, confidential advice, testing and condoms at <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p><b>Put links in comments</b></p>
Post	Instagram	Facebook	X	Visual/Film
<b>Trusted Voices – information videos from sexual health care professionals</b>	<p>Getting an STI test for the first time might feel a bit embarrassing, but don't worry.</p> <p>Sexual health nurses are used to talking about the</p>	<p>Getting an STI test for the first time might feel a bit embarrassing, but don't worry.</p> <p>Sexual health nurses are used to talking about the</p>	<p>Getting an STI test for the first time might feel a bit embarrassing, but don't worry.</p> <p>Sexual health nurses are used to talking about the</p>	<p>Trusted voices video (when available)</p>

	<p>'elephant in the room.' Psst;.... Your sexual health! And don't worry, they have seen it all before!</p> <p>Visit our website to learn more about safe sex and how to protect yourself <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>'elephant in the room.' Psst;.... Your sexual health! And don't worry, they have seen it all before!</p> <p>Visit our website to learn more about safe sex and how to protect yourself <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	<p>elephant in the room.</p> <p>Visit our website to learn more about safe sex and how to protect yourself <a href="http://www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk">www.elephant-in-the-room.co.uk</a></p> <p>#ElephantInTheRoom</p>	
--	--	--	---	--