



Condom Distribution

The aim of this policy is to give guidance on condom distribution in order to be as effective as possible in promoting sexual health, and in HIV prevention. Sexual Health West is committed to sexual health promotion which is accessible to all people, affirms their diversity and enables positive, holistic and empowering model of sexual and reproductive health.

The Policy is that:

- a) Sexual Health West provides condoms to the general public free of charge
- b) Distributing condoms to the general public and in particular marginalised/at risk groups group is an effective and practical way of preventing sexual infections, and also offers Sexual Health West useful opportunities for sexual health promotion in safe and informal settings. We also provide general information on contraception. In the case of young people we would refer them to their doctor or family planning clinic also for specific help.
- c) We recognise that the public (including young people) can buy condoms at pharmacies and other outlets. Equally Sexual Health West is aware that the law in relation to the provision of condoms to young people below the age of 16¹ or 17² is particularly unclear. Accordingly in the absence of Irish legal guidance and in line with common practice in Irish healthcare, staff of Sexual Health West will consider the best interests of the young person and will be guided by the Fraser Guidelines³, which advises that condoms and contraceptive can be supplied to young people provided that:
 - The young person is deemed Gillick competent, that is they understand the advice and have sufficient maturity to understand its moral, social and emotional implications.

¹The age by virtue of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997, at which a young person can consent to medical treatment

²The age at which a young person is capable of giving valid consent to penetrative sexual acts.

³“Fraser Guidelines” are widely followed in England by health care professionals in the context of contraceptive advice, and have also formed the basis for comparable mature minor guidance in other States.

- The person providing the advice and /or condoms should not persuade the young person to inform their parents, or persuade the young person to allow the staff member to inform their parents that they are seeking contraceptive advice.
- The young person is very likely to begin or continue having sexual intercourse with or without contraceptive support and would be at risk of pregnancy or sexual infections.

Sexual Health West distributes condoms by a number of different means:

- Via Outreach programs such as gay bars/clubs, asylum hostels and to other potentially high risk sectors
- Via student union groups , at 3rd level events such as Sexual Health Awareness & Guidance Week etc
- By special request for organised events, seminars, launches
- By request from organisations working with community groups
- At Sexual Health West information stands at various events
- They are also available at our offices between office hours
- Sexual Health West are registered with the HSE Sexual Wellbeing National Condom Distribution Service – please see <https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/for-professionals/national-condom-distribution-service/terms-and-conditions/>
- As a result of COVID-19, SHW developed a condom and lubricant mailing campaign. Due to the temporary closure of our offices due to COVID-19, and in an attempt to ensure we reach out to service users in need of protection, we provide a service of mailing directly to the requesters address. We will be continuing the campaign when the offices reopen, while exercising the full caution of Sexual Health West condom policy through our mailing service.

The Sexual Health West Condom Policy is to be clearly displayed in the main office reception desk area

