

123,000 new sexually transmitted infections diagnosed in Londoners in 2022, with gonorrhoea and syphilis exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

Data from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) shows there were 122,912 cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) diagnosed in 2022 in Londoners, a 21% increase from 2021.

STIs remain an important public health problem in London which has the highest diagnosis rate (1,397.3 per 100,000 residents), more than twice as high as any other English region. Sixteen of the twenty local authorities in England with the highest rates of new STIs were in London.

Comparing 2022 to 2021, gonorrhoea diagnoses rose by 36%, syphilis by 8% and chlamydia by 19%.

- 51,732 chlamydia diagnoses in Londoners in 2022, compared to 43,383 in 2021. 19% increase
- 33,728 gonorrhoea diagnoses in Londoners in 2022, compared to 24,831 in 2021. 36% increase
- 7,036 genital warts diagnoses in Londoners in 2022, compared to 7,240 in 2021. 3% decrease
- 6,366 genital herpes diagnoses in Londoners in 2022, compared to 5,487 in 2021. 16% increase
- 3,947 syphilis diagnoses in Londoners in 2022, compared to 3,654 in 2021. 8% increase

Gonorrhoea diagnoses were 2% higher in 2022 than in 2019, the final pre-pandemic year, and syphilis diagnoses were 3% higher. However, the number of STIs overall in 2022 was 18% lower than in 2019.

Diagnoses in gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) accounted for 86% of syphilis diagnoses and 73% of gonorrhoea diagnoses where gender and sexual orientation were known. Gonorrhoea diagnoses in this population were 11% higher in 2022 compared to 2019 and syphilis diagnoses were approaching pre-pandemic levels.

- 10,013 chlamydia diagnoses in GBMSM Londoners in 2022, compared to 8,160 in 2021 (GUMCAD data only as CTAD, which collects information on testing within the community, i.e. outside specialist sexual health services, does not record sexual orientation). 23% increase
- 22,897 gonorrhoea diagnoses in GBMSM Londoners in 2022, compared to 16,512 in 2021. 39% increase
- 781 genital warts diagnoses in GBMSM Londoners in 2022, compared to 757 in 2021. 3% increase
- 939 genital herpes diagnoses in GBMSM Londoners in 2022, compared to 648 in 2021. 45% increase
- 3,133 syphilis diagnoses in GBMSM Londoners in 2022, compared to 2,760 in 2021. 14% increase

White Londoners made up around 6 in 10 of Londoners diagnosed with a new STI in 2022 and black Londoners made up around 2 in 10.

Almost 3 in 10 Londoners diagnosed with a new STI were young adults aged between 15 and 24 years old (4 in 10 of those diagnosed with chlamydia, 2 in 10 of those diagnosed with gonorrhoea and 1 in 10 of those diagnosed with syphilis).

Black Londoners and those belonging to the mixed ethnic group who were diagnosed with a new STI were more likely to be young adults than white and Asian Londoners who were diagnosed. In 2022, almost 4 in 10 black and mixed ethnicity Londoners diagnosed with a new STI were aged 15 to 24 years, compared to just over 2 in 10 white and Asian Londoners.

The figures suggest that some STIs have returned to circulating at similar or even higher levels than before the pandemic. The increase in STI diagnoses has been accompanied by an increase in STI testing which, at 8,662 per 100,000 population, was at its highest for the past decade. However, the proportion of tests that was positive also rose in 2022 compared to 2021. This suggests that the rise in diagnoses is not simply a result of more tests being performed.