

NHS Lothian want you to tweet to them

People living in Lothian are being given the chance to tweet their views on sexual health and HIV services.

NHS Lothian is looking for feedback on their plans to improve sexual health and reduce the harm caused by HIV in Lothian.

And for the first time, people can use social media to give their views on the proposals, through NHS Lothian's twitter and facebook pages.

This is part of the Lothian Sexual Health and HIV Strategy consultation, which is running until 31 January 2011, and sets out the vision for sexual health and HIV services over the next five years (2011-2016).

Feedback is also being collated through an online survey, or respondents can write, phone or email their views, to help shape sexual health and HIV services.

The consultation aims to get views on the plans to develop sexual health and HIV services in Lothian from 2011-2016.

The draft strategy focuses around four core aims, which are to reduce harm from sexual ill health and HIV, ensure people with HIV live long and healthy lives, reduce unintended pregnancies and to encourage people to make confident and competent decisions about sex.

It also outlines the importance of directing more resources towards those people who are more at risk of poor sexual health, HIV or unintended pregnancy.

This is the first time that sexual health and HIV has been combined into one strategy.

NHS Lothian spends more than £13 a year on sexual health, HIV and reproductive health services.

Completing a review of the location of local sexual health clinics, developing a programme to reduce the level of stigma associated with HIV and raising awareness of and improving access to longer-acting reversible contraception (LARC) are among the proposals set out in the draft strategy.

It has been developed by a wide range of people representing different groups and services.

It aims to build on some of the successes of the last five years including the development of an integrated sexual health service which will open at Chalmers Sexual Health Centre in early 2011, and a 14% increase in the uptake of the most effective long-acting methods of contraception.

Jamie Megaw, Strategic Programme Manager for Sexual Health, said: "We want to respond to the needs of the people who use our services, so we need feedback on what they think of our services, and what they think of our proposals.

"This feedback will help to shape the final strategy and set out the way forward to help improve sexual health and reduce the harm caused by HIV in Lothian."

Feedback from the public will help to shape the final strategy which is due for final approval by Lothian NHS Board in March 2011.