

# to engage young people across NSW- A pilot program

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## Introduction

Young people (YP) are at highest risk of sexually transmitted infections (STI) and are a priority population within NSW STI Strategy 2016-2020.

The 'Sexing up the sector' program provides youth services with

- a comprehensive sexual health resource kit
- a one-day training in how to engage with young people around sexual health,
- and mentoring and support from the local HIV and Related Programs (HARP) health promotion (HP) workforce.

These activities build both the capacity of the organisation and the workers to engage in sexual health with their clients. This program was piloted in 8 services. The purpose of the pilot was to determine if the 'Sexing up the sector' program is feasible and effective in youth service settings in NSW.

*"So it's more like: "OK you've been having sex, have you been having safe sex? Are you confident putting on a condom? Let's talk about that!" Rather than doing an activity, it's more about a conversation, and having that one-to-one direct conversation, so yeah."*

*Youth Worker from Platform Youth Service, Nepean, Blue Mountains Local Health District.*



## Aim

To evaluate the real-life effectiveness of the pilot on increasing organisational capacities to deliver sexual health promotion to youth across different settings, an organisational checklist was implemented pre- (n=12) and post-training (n=8).

## Method

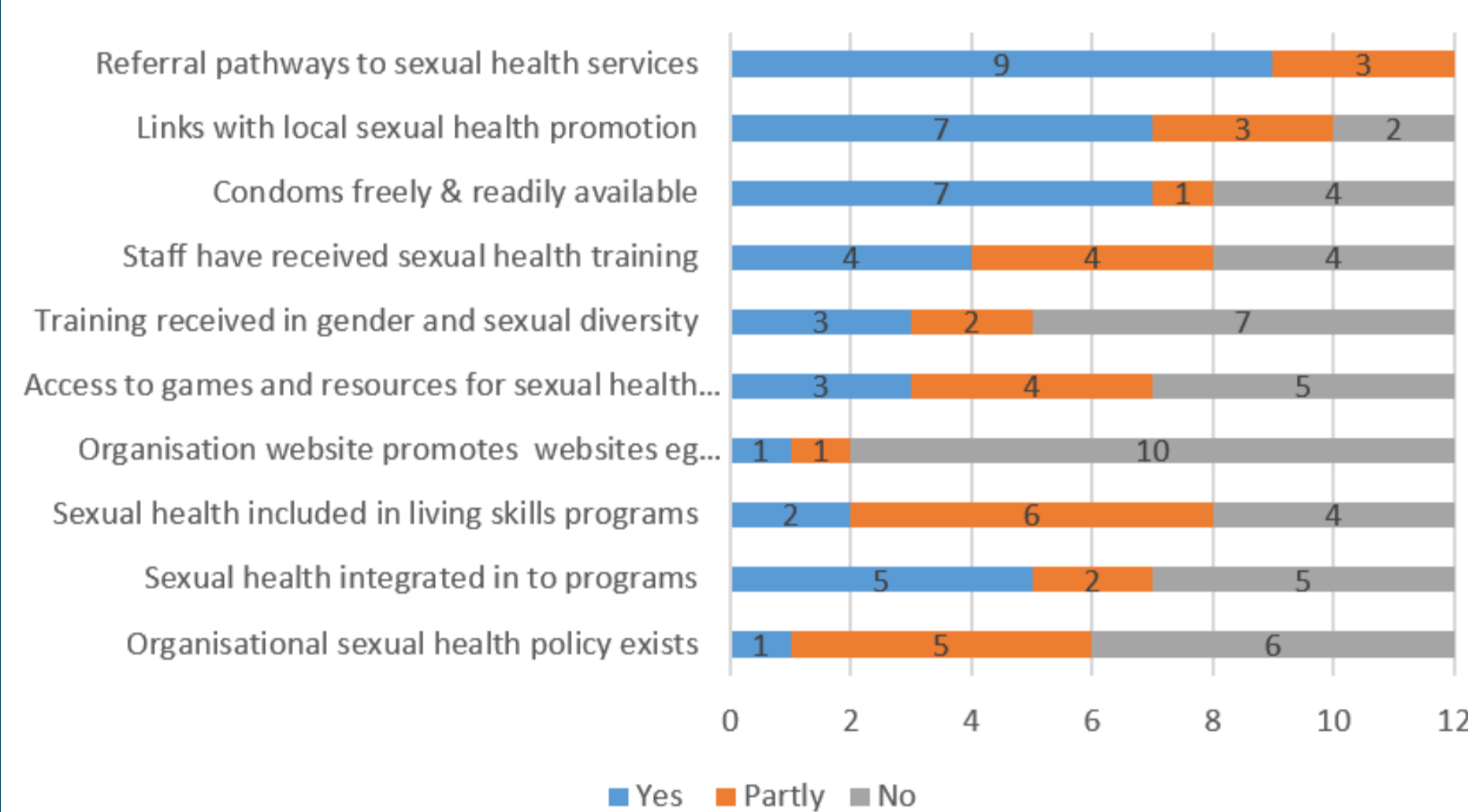
The pilot was undertaken as a collaboration between youth workers within seven Specialist Homelessness Services (SHSs), one Out of Home Care Service (OOHC) within three NSW Local Health Districts (LHDs).

A PRECEDE/PROCEED model of systematic health promotion planning was applied to guide monitoring and evaluation.

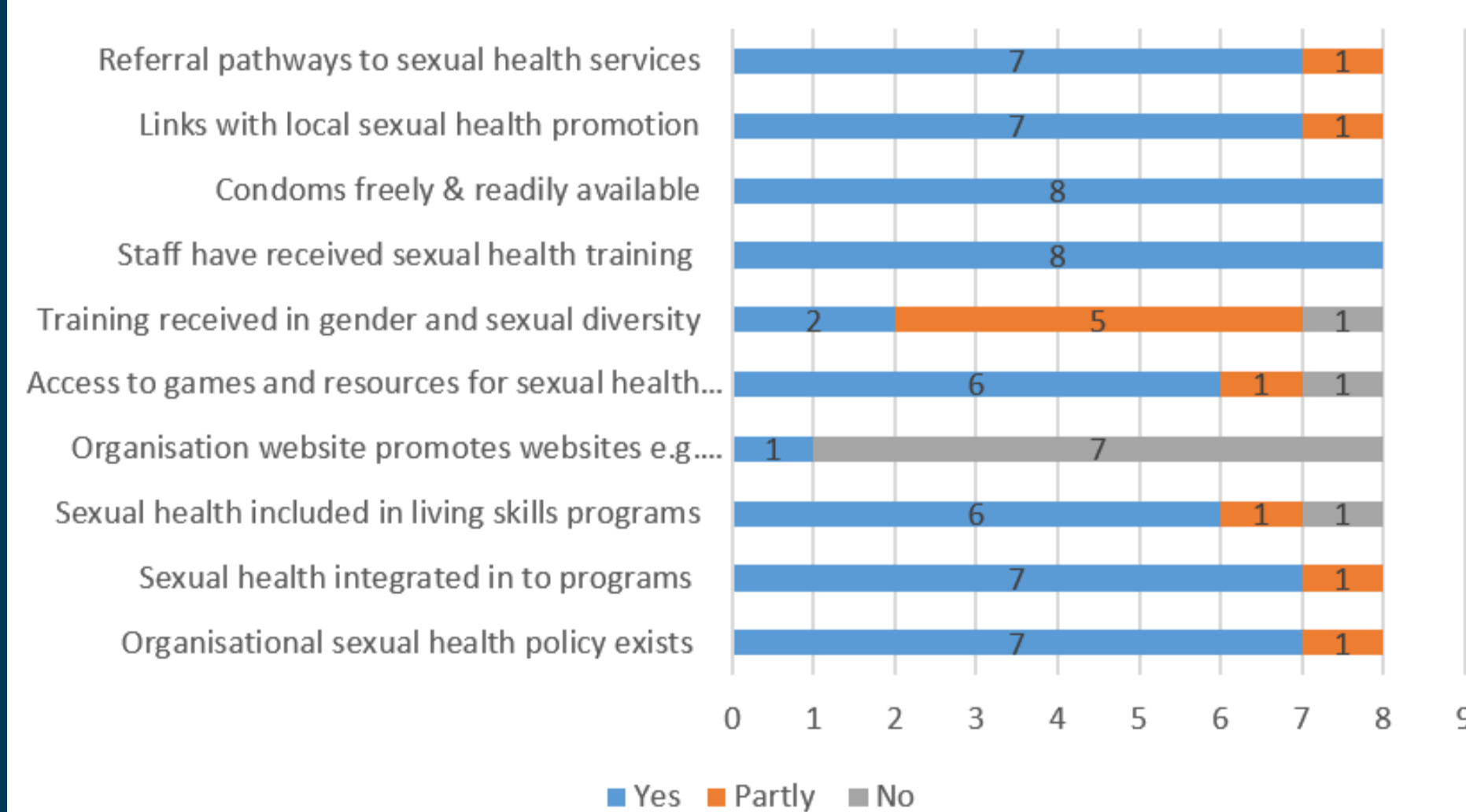
A total of 24 key indicators across five domains

- supportive environments
- community action
- health information marketing
- sexual health education skills development
- client screening and assessment.

Organisational checklist items: pre-pilot (sites n=12)



Organisational checklist items: post-pilot (sites n=8)



## Results

Pre-post evaluation identified positive organisational and practice changes by all youth services.

**All services adopted sexual health policy, and incorporated sexual health activities within programming.**

The results showed an increase over baseline in condom distribution (40%), knowledge (49%), skills (43%), and confidence (29%) to engage young people around sexual health.

**All services reported increased frequency of conversations about sexual health with young people and improved access to sexual health resources and referral pathways.**

## Conclusion

The evidence-informed pilot has successfully increased capacity of participating youth services and staff to engage with marginalised young people around sexual health. A systematic scale up of the program to all NSW SHS is underway.

## Outcomes

### Youth services

- Adopted sexual health policy
- Increased condom distribution
- Felt supported by local HIV and Related Programs (HARP) services to undertake sexual health promotion activities
- Included sexual health content into routine client activities

### Youth workers

- Increased their knowledge of key sexual health messages
- Increased their confidence and frequency of engaging in conversations about sexual health
- Improved access to resources and tools
- Reported increased referrals to local sexual health clinics due to improved referral pathways

## Acknowledgements

NSW Health, HARP Units in NSW, Yfoundations, Family Planning NSW, Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW.

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*I mean I didn't even know there were sexual health clinics around the town at all until the training ... It's good we're able to let clients know that they [sexual health services] are out there obviously. Some services are on online and some other services, well, you jump on the phone to have a chat with services and see these nurses and doctors. It's the big thing for us here.*

*Youth Worker from Hunter, New England Local Health District.*