

# Chlamydia testing and diagnoses among people in prison in England, 2018-2022

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## INTRODUCTION

- People in prison are among the most marginalised in society and experience significant health inequalities including poorer sexual health than the general population.
- There is a lack of national data on diagnoses of sexually transmitted bacterial infections (STIs) in people in prison.

### Objective:

- To determine whether the **CTAD Chlamydia Surveillance System** can be used to identify and describe trends in chlamydia testing at prisons in England.

**84,372** 

prisoners in England and Wales

**49%**

of prisoners aged 25-39 years

**96%** 

prison population is male

Source: MoJ (data for Oct-Dec 2022), Offender Management Statistics Quarterly House of Commons Library

## METHODS

- Data on all chlamydia tests performed by publicly commissioned laboratories in England from 2018-2022 were obtained from the **CTAD Chlamydia Surveillance System**.
- To identify chlamydia testing in prisons, the postcodes reported with each chlamydia test were merged to those of English prisons and young offender institutions.
- Data were restricted to tests among people  $\geq 15$  years of age.

A descriptive analysis was undertaken to describe the trend and pattern in chlamydia tests and diagnoses among people in prison by:

- Gender
- Age-group
- Geographical region

- Positivity was calculated by dividing the no. of diagnoses by the total no. of tests.

## RESULTS

- There was a total of **84,685** chlamydia tests and **4,478** diagnoses made in prisons between 2018 and 2022.
- Chlamydia tests decreased (15.1%; from 17,177 to 14,581) between 2018-2020, as did diagnoses (18.2%; from 957 to 783).
- Both tests and diagnoses increased between 2020 and 2022 (20.1% to 17,514 and 7.3% to 840, respectively).

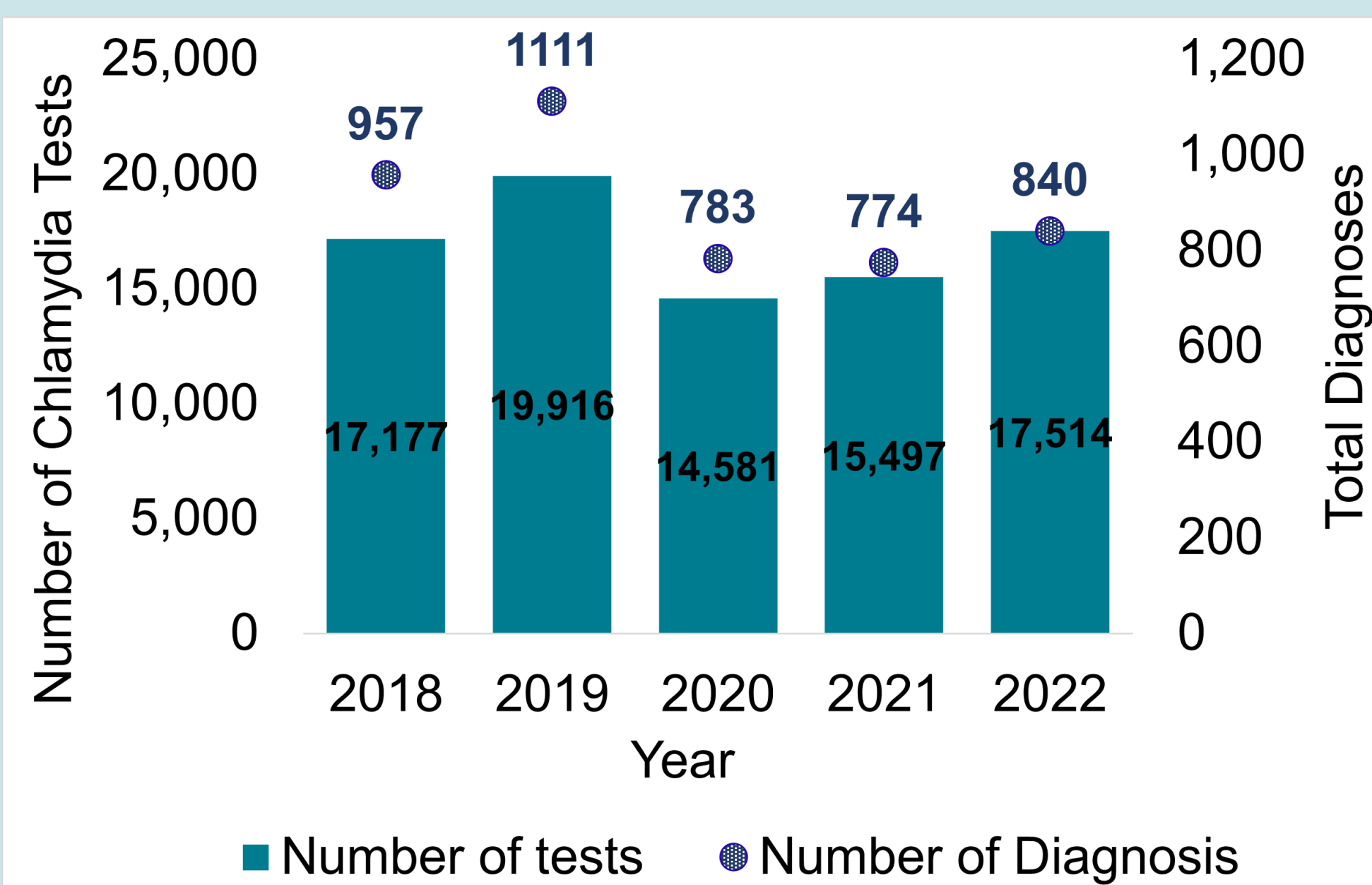


Figure 1. Chlamydia tests and diagnoses among people in prison per year, England, 2018 to 2022

- In 2022, most tests were among men (13,853, 79.1%), 25–34 year-olds (6,188, 35.3%), and from prisons in West Midlands (2,766, 15.8%).
- Among both women and men, chlamydia test-positivity was highest in the 15-19 year-olds (9/114 [7.9%] and 115/1,370 [8.4%] respectively in 2022 vs. older age-groups).
- In comparison, overall test-positivity in 15-19 year old women and men (from all settings) was (27,176/194,514) [14.0%] and (10,337/61,141) [16.9%], respectively in 2022. Source: (STI/NCSP Official Statistics for 2022)

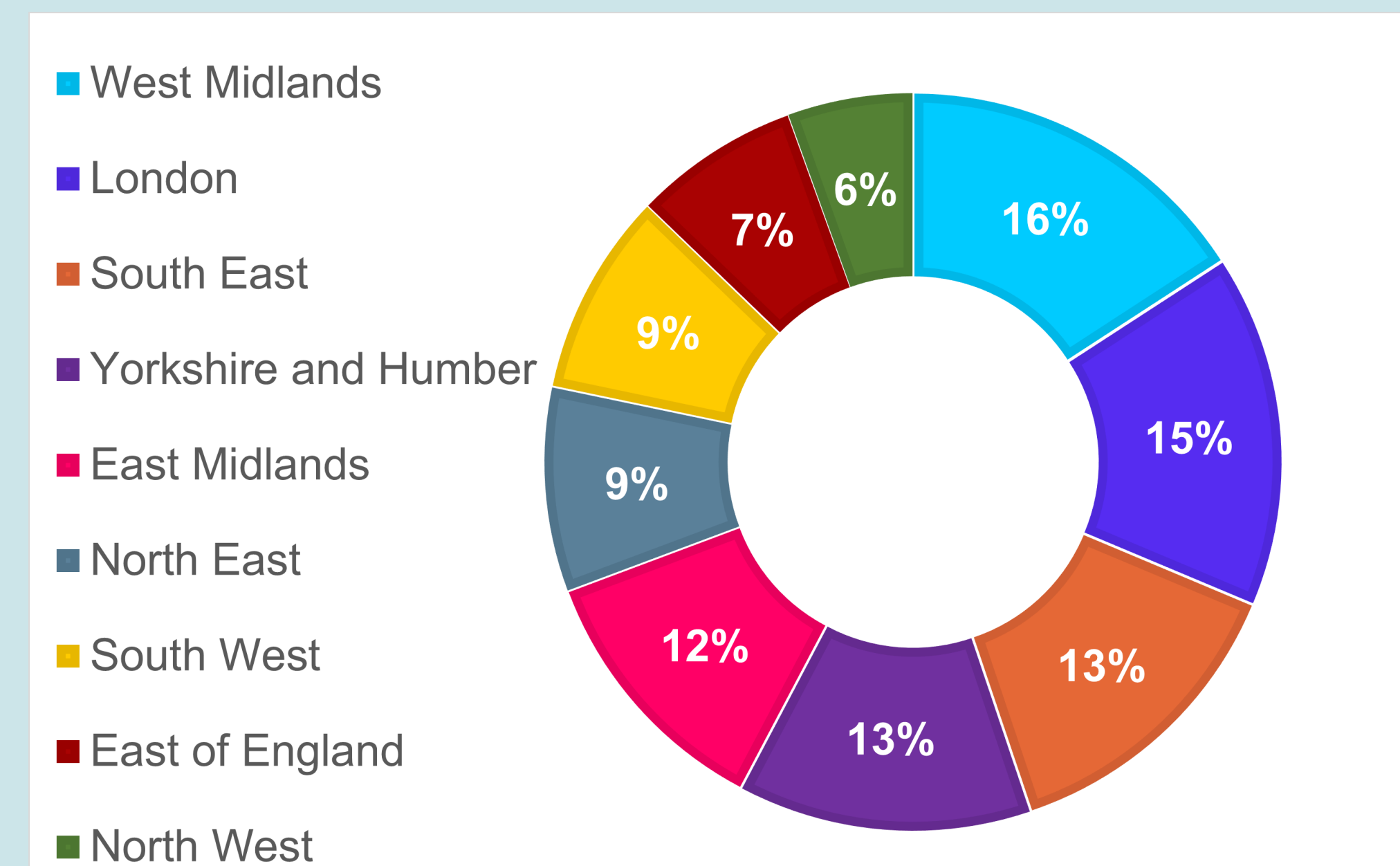


Figure 3. Proportion of chlamydia tests among people in prison by region, England, 2022  
<sup>1</sup> Total tests for 2022: 17,514

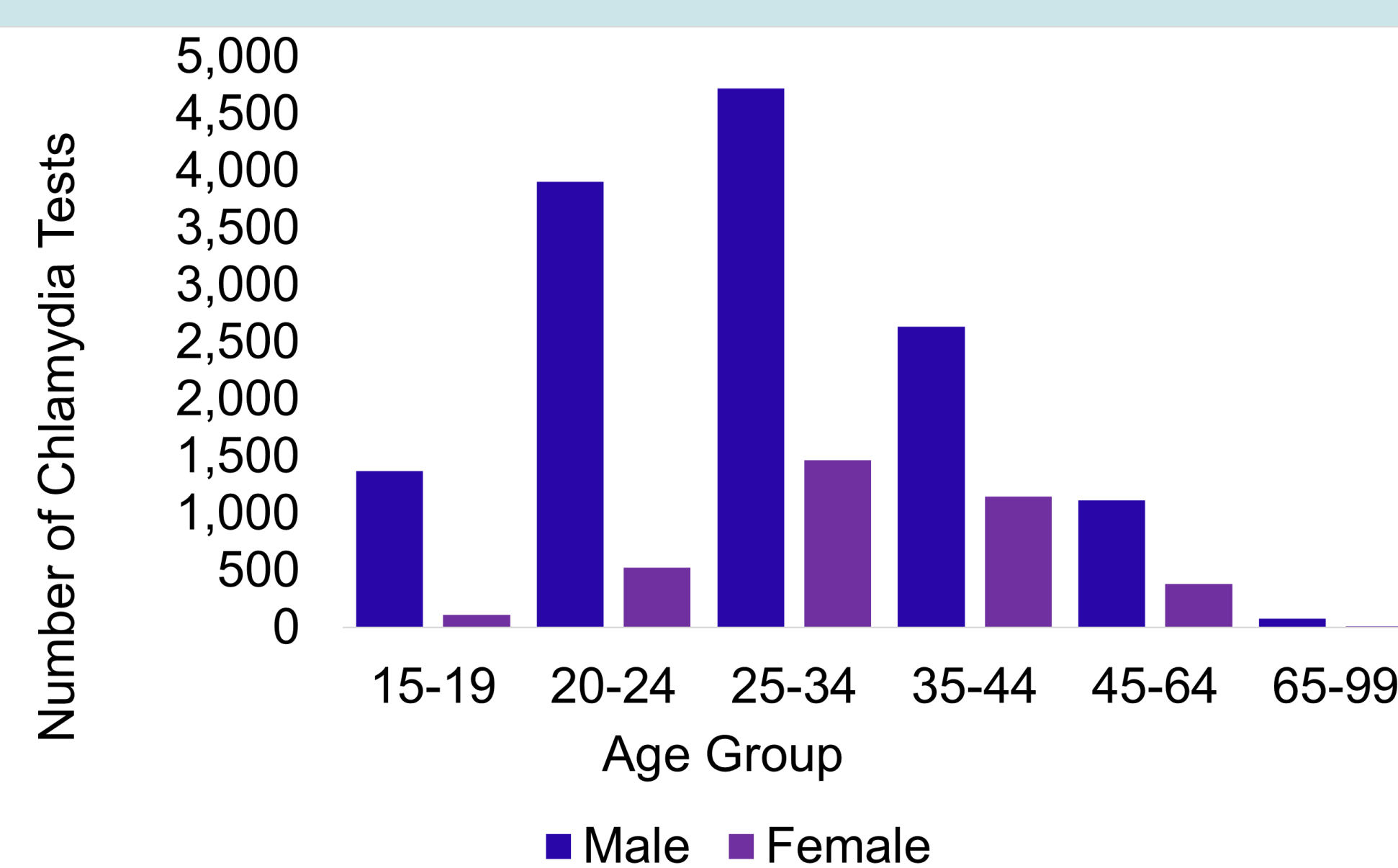


Figure 2. Chlamydia tests among people in prison by gender and age group, England, 2022

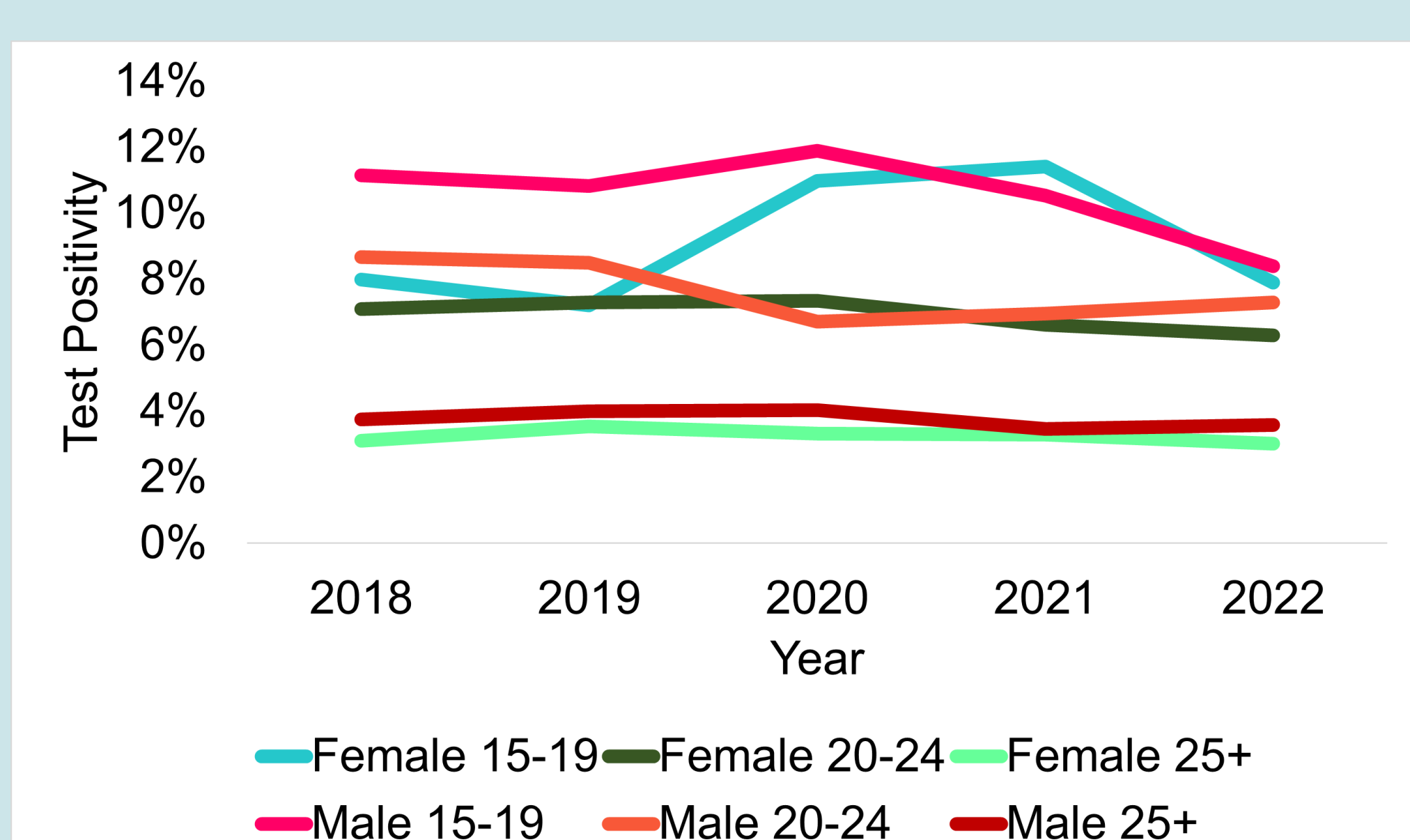


Figure 4. Chlamydia positivity among people in prison, per year, England, 2018 to 2022

## CONCLUSIONS

- The distribution of tests by gender, age-group and region largely reflects the prison population, while test-positivity by gender and age-group was lower than that of the general population.
- Routinely collected laboratory surveillance data can identify chlamydia tests performed in prisons, however better data is needed to monitor opt out testing uptake and outcomes.
- These data support the value of increasing coverage of chlamydia testing in prisons.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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