Introduction Increasing human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) testing in South Africa is vital for the HIV response. Targeting young people is important as they become sexually active and because HIV risk rapidly increases as youth enter their 20s. This study aims to increase the understanding of high school learners’ preferences regarding the characteristics of HIV testing service delivery models and to inform policy makers and implementers regarding potential barriers to and facilitators of HIV testing.

Methods An attitudinal survey was used to examine HIV testing preferences among 248 high school learners in Kwa-Zulu-Natal. Statistical tests were used to identify the most favoured characteristics of testing service delivery models and examine key differences in preferences based on demographic characteristics and testing history.

Results Most learners were found to prefer testing offered at a clinic on a Saturday (43%), using a finger prick test (39%), conducted by a doctor (61%) who also provides individual counselling (60%). Shorter testing times were preferred, as well as a monetary incentive to cover any associated expenses. Time, location, the type of test, and who conducts the test were most important. However, stratified analysis suggests that preferences diverge, particularly around gender, grade, but also sexual history and previous testing experience.

Conclusion Human immunodeficiency virus testing services can be improved in line with preferences, but there is no single optimal design that caters to the preferences of all learners. It is unlikely that a “one-size-fits-all” approach will be effective to reach HIV testing targets. A range of options may be required to maximise coverage.

Introduction Although HIV rates among South African youth are among the highest in the world, most research efforts have overlooked anal sex as a contextualising factor.

Methods In 2012, a pencil-and-paper survey was completed by 937 youth 16 years of age and older who were attending low-income secondary schools in Cape Town.

Results Eleven and 31% of female and male youth, respectively, reported ever having anal sex. Among sexually active male and female respondents, those who had ever had anal sex were more likely to report inconsistent condom use, perpetrate dating violence, and experience victimisation and perpetration of sexually coercive behaviour. Female respondents who had ever had anal sex had significantly lower levels of HIV information than sexually active females who had not had anal sex.

Conclusion Rates of anal sex are higher for boys than girls in the survey, yet the associated risk factors were strikingly similar. Harm reduction strategies for anal sex should be made available to South African youth.