

Title of Report	Update on the development of the City and Hackney Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy		
Author(s)	Chris Lovitt, Deputy Director of Public Health Froeks Kamminga, Senior Public Health Specialist		
Group Director Sponsor	Helen Woodland Group Director AH&I		
Meeting Title	Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission	Meeting Date	20th December 2023

Purpose of the Report	
For Discussion & Input	Health in Hackney are asked to note:- a) the progress on the development of the City and Hackney Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and b) the development of the accompanying action plan for formal adoption at the Hackney Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2024.

Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hackney council is mandated to make provision for contraception, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STI) ● Hackney has some of the highest levels of STIs in England and significant inequalities in provision of contraception services ● The NEL Integrated Care Board commissions key services relating to fertility services, termination of pregnancy and menopause services ● NHS England commissions other services such as sexual assault referral services (SARS) and also HIV treatment and care services ● The 5 year strategy proposes 5 areas to focus on that will address the need and consultation was undertaken on the strategy which ended in November ● The strategy and 1st year action plan will be considered at the 24th January 2024 Health and Wellbeing Board for formal adoption by all partners 	

Key Issues	
1	Fragmented Services: Current commissioning arrangements are fragmented. There are opportunities to better align and join up service provision across the wider sexual and reproductive health services.
2	Stigma and discrimination: We need to strengthen our work with communities where there are high levels of need to ensure that health literacy, health promotion and increased testing do not increase but reduce discrimination. Sexual health and contraception can still be a taboo subject for some communities which can be contrary to the strategic objectives of increasing health literacy and improving sex education provided to children, young people and adults of all ages.

1. Background

1.1 The London Borough of Hackney has a statutory responsibility to protect and promote the sexual and reproductive health of our local populations. We invest approximately £8m per year in clinical services as well as services to promote good sexual health from the NHS, local voluntary sector and council insourced services.

1.2 Other key services such as fertility, terminations, sexual assault referral services and HIV treatment and care are commissioned and provided by the NHS.

1.3 Hackney continues to have a very high level of unmet need with significant inequalities in sexual and reproductive health which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and reduced access to services.

1.4 Hackney has a young population, a high proportion of people who identify as gay or bisexual and large global majority communities. Within these communities there can be a concentration of particular "at risk" sexual behaviours such as frequent partner change, multiple and concurrent sexual partners, stigma and health care seeking behaviours which together lead to higher rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

1.5 Increasing health literacy, health promotions and reducing barriers to accessing services are all key to addressing these very high levels of need both to reduce rates of STIs and improve access to contraception. More detail is provided in the Sexual Health Needs Assessment.

1.6 A five-year strategy for Hackney and the City (sitting alongside a North East London Strategy) will enable a more joined up and coherent approach to address need and inequalities, bringing together commissioned services and providers, including the NHS and the voluntary sector as well as cross-local authority initiatives, to address the most pressing issues and gaps in provision and uptake of care.

2. Strategy and consultation

2.1 The strategy is built around five themes:

- a) Healthy and fulfilling sexual relationships
- b) Good reproductive health across the life course
- c) STI prevention and treatment
- d) Getting to Zero new HIV transmissions
- e) Vulnerable populations and those with complex needs

2.2 The draft strategy was approved for consultation by the Hackney and City Health and Wellbeing Boards in June 2023. The formal consultation period was from 1 July to 20 September and consisted of a) an online survey that asked residents and others to provide feedback on the identified priority areas and b) online and in-person engagement sessions. Some of these were theme-based and others were with a specific audience or population group, including for example young people, people with learning disabilities, commissioned providers and other key stakeholders. The last of these sessions was held in November 2023.

2.3 The Boards also approved an action planning process to take place during the consultation period, meaning consultation feedback would feed directly into action plan development.

2.4 The strategy and action plan, once finalised, will inform future commissioning decisions and will shape the provision of services over the next five years, with a renewed annual action plan outlining priority areas.

3. Feedback from the consultation

A total of 102 responses were received to the online survey, while a further 13 people completed the Easy Read survey. Online consultations were attended by 71 people, and in-person consultations had a total of 23 attendees while the workshops with commissioned providers and key stakeholders had 20 participants.

The online survey asked respondents whether they agreed with priorities and key outcomes that were proposed. There was strong agreement on priorities and outcomes across the five themes. For example, 95% of respondents (strongly) agreed with the proposed priority that all young people should have access to high quality Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). Even higher was the agreement (98%) for the aim that all residents should be able to recognise whether a relationship is abusive or unhealthy.

On average, proposed priorities and outcomes received around 80-90% agreement on importance. Although agreement was still high there were lower levels of agreement related to reducing reinfection of sexually transmitted infections (72%) and making tailored sexual and reproductive health services available for transgender and non-binary residents (72.5%).

Respondents also had the opportunity to provide written comments which provided an important insight into issues that are important to people, as they often reflected personal experiences. Access to services was an often mentioned barrier, balanced by many comments that the quality of service received was friendly, professional, confidential and non-judgemental. This is consistent with other sources of insight e.g. from mystery shopping exercises that access to services continues to be an area for further consideration.

Online and in-person sessions allowed deeper engagement on the themes and the proposed outcomes. Feedback received included:-

- a) making outcomes more ambitious (Increase access to services by those with higher or more complex needs, rather than improve understanding and functioning of pathways to support those with higher or more complex needs)

- b) having more concrete suggestions on actions to undertake to achieve proposed outcomes (joint online information resource on sexual and reproductive health with booking options and direct links to relevant services).

Following the consultation and feedback the sections on fertility services and menopause will be expanded to reference the recent motions passed by Hackney Council. The action plan will also include additional actions to ensure the motions recommendations are included.

4. Governance

4.1 In January and February 2024, the finalised strategy and action plan will be submitted to Hackney and then the City of London Health and Wellbeing Boards for adoption. The Boards will then be updated annually on progress and asked to approve the next year's action plan.

4.2 As many of the services are commissioned and provided by the NHS either at a North East London (NEL) or pan London level it is essential that the NEL Integrated Care Partnership Board adopt the overarching North East London strategy. The governance of the NEL level strategy and reporting mechanisms are still being developed. The presentation of the NEL ICB Strategic Framework at the January 2024 Health and Wellbeing Board will provide a further opportunity to consider this. Updates on the strategy development have been provided to the City and Hackney Neighbourhood Care Partnership Board and it is envisaged that this board will assist in delivering on the action plan.

4.3 Each of the NEL place partnerships, including City and Hackney, have participated in the development of the overarching NEL Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and opportunities for this to be formally adopted by the ICB are being explored.

4.3. Further opportunities to join up the approach to commissioning and provision of services are being explored with the ICB and NHS England.

Appendix:-

- 1) [Presentation on consultation](#)
- 2) [Easy Read Strategy](#)
- 3) [Pre-consultation draft strategy](#)