



Havering

LONDON BOROUGH

CABINET

Subject Heading:

North East London Joint Sexual & Reproductive Health Strategy (2024 – 2029)

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Gillian Ford, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Care services

ELT Lead:

Mark Ansell, Director of Public Health

Report Author and contact details:

Emily Grundy, Assistant Director of Public Health, Emily.grundy@havering.gov.uk

Policy context:

This strategy supports the Council in delivering against its statutory responsibility for improving the health of the local population and the effective delivery of mandated sexual health service provision, under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Financial summary:

Adoption of the strategy has no direct financial implications, but may encourage and facilitate commissioning of services across a larger footprint to deliver economies of scale or other efficiencies and maximise value for money within existing budgets. Any funding decisions arising will be subject to relevant financial governance/approval processes.

Is this a Key Decision?

Yes, significant effect on two or more Wards

When should this matter be reviewed?

October 2024

Reviewing OSC:

People

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

- X People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well
- Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy
- Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

SUMMARY

This paper seeks Cabinet approval of the North East London Joint Sexual & Reproductive Health Strategy (2024-2029), and of proposed governance arrangements for the development and implementation of an accompanying local action plan. The strategy aims to support the delivery of a high quality, easy access and equitable sexual and reproductive health offer across the North East London, strengthening existing joint working practices to deliver best outcomes for local residents.

The strategy and proposed local oversight arrangements were endorsed by the Havering Health and Wellbeing board in July 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are recommended to:

- approve and adopt the North East London Joint Sexual & Reproductive Health Strategy (2024-2029) (attached as Appendix 2).
- approve the proposed governance arrangements under the Havering Place-based Partnership for oversight of the development and implementation of a Havering action plan.

REPORT DETAIL

Background

1. The Council has statutory responsibility to commission a range of sexual and relationship health (SRH) services, including STI testing, treatment and contraception, alongside its broader responsibility to improve and protect the health of local residents.
2. There are numerous examples of the delivery of collaborative cross-borough approaches and initiatives in the field of sexual health; for example, the current specialist sexual health service provided by Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (BHRUT) is jointly commissioned by the London Boroughs of Havering, Redbridge and Barking & Dagenham and pan-London efforts have delivered developments such as the shared e-service for easy online access to simple STI testing for the residents of participating authorities.
3. The North East London (NEL) Joint Sexual & Reproductive Health Strategy seeks to build on existing collaborative working arrangements and new opportunities arising from the establishment of integrated care systems, to agree an approach for addressing shared SRH priorities and challenges across NEL.

Strategy vision and priorities

4. The overall purpose of the strategy is to support the delivery of a high quality, easy access and equitable SRH offer across NEL, with the prevention of illness and the promotion of healthy relationships at the core of activity. In delivering this, the strategy seeks to support the realisation of the following vision for NEL residents:

Empowered residents leading healthy and fulfilling lives, in which they have the knowledge and agency to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health, with timely access to high quality, inclusive and equitable services.

5. The strategy has been developed through a programme of engagement with health professionals and residents, building on analysis of local and regional data and intelligence. This process has identified the following shared priority areas for action:

Priority 1: Healthy and Fulfilling Sexual Relationships

Priority 2: Good Reproductive Health across the Life Course

Priority 3: High Quality and Innovative STI Screening and Treatment

Priority 4: HIV: Towards Zero and Living Well

The full strategy and executive summary are enclosed with this report (Appendix 1 and 2)

Action plans

6. The strategy is underpinned by a NEL-level action plan, which identifies key opportunities to contribute towards progress across the priority areas (see appendix 3). This action plan has been developed with and approved by the relevant delivery partners across NEL, including Public Health teams, acute trusts, third sector providers and the NEL Integrated Care Board (ICB).
7. In recognition of the fact that each local authority will have its own particular issues or areas of focus, it has been agreed that each will develop an accompanying local action plan, intended to complement, rather than replicate, actions already in scope of the NEL action plan.
8. Activities to be included within the Havering action plan are to be agreed, but will likely include:
 - Evaluation of the local c-card condom distribution service, gathering insights from young people to explore service awareness, accessibility and best routes for promotion;
 - Review of the Havering teenage pregnancy strategy;
 - Exploration of opportunities to embed elements of sexual health provision within the new St George's Health & Wellbeing Hub;

- Steps leading towards the recommissioning of the BHR integrated sexual health service;
- Opportunities arising from the development of the BHR Women's Health Hub model.

Proposed strategy governance

9. At a NEL level, it has been agreed that the action plan will be delivered through new governance structures (to be established), with a quarterly NEL Action Plan Implementation Group Sexual Health Strategy Group taking responsibility for implementation and delivery, to be overseen by the NEL Sexual Health Commissioning Partnership Board.
10. At a local level, it is proposed that the development and implementation of the Havering action plan be taken forward through a new dedicated working group, with oversight provided by the Havering Place-based Partnership (PbP) (a proposal that was accepted by the PbP on 14 August 2024). This reflects the fact that the scope of the Havering action plan will predominately align with the PbP's focus on improving health and care services.
11. Each of these Partnership Boards/Groups involve senior representatives of the partner agencies, who will probably have executive delegated powers to commit their relevant agency. However, the partnership groups do not have the power to commit the Council to any spend or specific actions.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

12. The Council has a statutory duty to improve and protect the health of residents and to commission a range of sexual health services that address local population need.
13. The adoption of the NEL Sexual and Reproductive Health strategy offers the opportunity to build on and strengthen collaborative working amongst partners across NEL to deliver action on shared local priorities, achieving a cumulative impact beyond what could be realised through individual partners acting independently.

Other options considered:

Do not adopt the strategy

14. This option is not recommended; the strategy will act as an important vehicle to strengthen and develop opportunities for partnership working, while also raising the profile of SRH across NEL. Local stakeholders could still develop a Havering SRH action plan, but would not benefit from the scope and scale of impact that could be achieved through a collaborative approach at NEL-level.

Recommend an alternative governance arrangement for local action plan

15. This option is not recommended; as described, the scope of the Havering action plan will predominately align with the PbP's focus on improving health and care services, making it the best group to have oversight of local action plan development and implementation.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

Adoption of the strategy has no direct financial implications. Any funding decisions arising from the NEL or local action plan will be subject to relevant financial governance/approval processes.

Legal implications and risks:

Under s 2B NHS Act 2006 as inserted by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 the Local Authority must take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area.

The adoption of the North East London Joint Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy is consistent with the Council's statutory duty set out above.

In terms of governance arrangements, as set out in the Report, if the Boards/Groups do not have power to commit the Council to any spend or actions there is minimal legal risk in participation.

Human Resources implications and risks:

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce. The Strategy will strengthen and build on existing good work of the council teams and external partners across Havering and North East London.

Equalities implications and risks:

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

Addressing the known inequalities in SRH outcomes is a key part of the strategic vision of the North East London Joint Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy, and embedding universal proportionalism as a means of increasing the equity of SRH outcomes is identified as one of the strategy's guiding principles.

An accompanying local EqHIA assessment has identified broadly positive or neutral impacts of the strategy across the breadth of protective characteristics, while also identifying significant health and wellbeing benefits.

The strategy and accompanying NEL action plan identify a number of actions aimed specifically at addressing known inequalities in SRH outcomes, while broader actions are also deemed likely to have a positive impact on inequalities. Equally, the strategy identifies that there are opportunities to improve insight into and understanding of SRH inequalities across NEL, which will be able to inform further action to address these across the lifetime of the strategy.

In development of a local SRH action plan, there will be further opportunities to consider and respond to inequalities in SRH outcomes that may be of particular significance for the population of Havering.

Health and Wellbeing implications and Risks

SRH is fundamental to the overall health and well-being of individuals, couples and families, and as such, action to improve SRH is an important part of the Council's duty to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.

Adoption of the NEL joint SHR strategy and implementation of the action plans will support the delivery of improved population SRH outcomes, while also seeking to address particular barriers or challenges faced by those populations that are disproportionately affected by poorer sexual health outcomes.

There are no perceived health and wellbeing risks arising from this decision.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The strategy has no direct environmental and climate change implications and risks.

Cabinet, 18 September 2024

1. North East London Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy (executive summary)
2. North East London Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy (full report)
3. North East London Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy (NEL action plan – year 1)
4. North East London Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy (data pack)
5. Local EqHIA