

<b>Committee(s): Health and Wellbeing Board</b> For Information	<b>Dated:</b> 07/02/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Annual report on implementation of the City & Hackney Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and Action Plan	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse Engaged Communities</li> <li>• Providing Excellent Service</li> </ul>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Sandra Husbands Director of Public Health	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Froeks Kamminga Senior Public Health Specialist, DCCS & Public Health	

## Summary

This paper provides the annual update on implementation of the City and Hackney Sexual and Reproductive Health strategy adopted by the board in February 2024. It presents examples of system wide and overarching work as well as work specifically focused on each of the five thematic areas of the strategy. The report also presents priority areas of work for the next year of implementation.

## Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.
- Note and comment on the recommended priority areas of work for 2025/26.

## Main Report


### 1. Background

- 1.1. Following an extensive period of consultation, the City Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) adopted a five year strategy<sup>1</sup> to improve sexual and reproductive health. Within the strategy and its accompanying action plan<sup>2</sup>, there are overarching and system wide areas of work, as well as activities focused more on one of the five thematic areas.
- 1.2. To support monitoring and system wide collaboration, the City and Hackney HWB agreed to set up a joint subcommittee on sexual and reproductive health (HWB SRH subcommittee).
- 1.3. The HWB requested an annual progress as well as a refreshed annual action plan.
- 1.4. This report details work undertaken during the financial year 2024/25 towards implementing the SRH strategy and action plan, with a focus on areas of work particularly pertinent to the City of London.


### 2. Current Position

- 2.1. **Governance:** The HWB SRH subcommittee, co-chaired by the Chairman of the City Health and Wellbeing Board and the Hackney Council Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture, met four times in April, July and September 2024, and on 6 February 2025. At the first meeting, Terms of Reference<sup>3</sup> were agreed.
- 2.2. **Crosscutting and system wide joint work**
  - 2.2.1. Coordination: Overall coordination of partnership work to support implementation has rested with the Sexual Health lead at the City and Hackney Public Health team, with leadership from the Deputy Director of Public Health.
  - 2.2.2. North East London (NEL) partnership working: The NEL Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and action plan is to be formally adopted by the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) in March 2025. Each local authority within NEL has a local action plan to further implement the strategy locally, while there is also a NEL action plan for overarching issues.
  - 2.2.3. NEL wide Collaboration has been strengthened around sexualised drug use (often referred to as ChemSex) and high risk sex pathways through a series of workshops, bringing together commissioners, providers and allied services and

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<sup>1</sup>  City & Hackney Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy 2024-20...

<sup>2</sup>  C&H SRH Action Plan 2024-25 high level

<sup>3</sup>  Terms of Reference C&H HWB sub committee for sexual and repro...

community partners. This has clarified what services are available and where and what the referral pathways are. It has allowed for sharing of best practice and wider uptake of harm reduction tools, as well as increased understanding of the practice and implications of sexualised drug use among commissioners.

- 2.2.4. (Re)Commissioning: During 2024, commissioning processes were started for all currently commissioned Local Authority sexual health services using the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) regulations for clinical services and the Public Contract Regulations for non clinical services.

### 2.3. **Data and needs assessment**

- 2.3.1. A sexual health dashboard has been developed by the Public Health Intelligence Team (PHIT) to support monitoring and analysis of SRH activity by commissioned providers, as well as financial spend. The dashboard supports improved planning and decision making.
- 2.3.2. In 2025 stronger collaboration will be forged around data collection and population level health outcomes in women's health (including contraception and reproductive health) in City & Hackney through collaboration with the NHS, via the Women's Health Hub, Integrated Primary Care CIC (IPC, formerly known as the GP Confederation), and Homerton Sexual Health Services as well as Public Health.
- 2.3.3. By collating service and activity data from different sources, a more comprehensive picture can be built of who is accessing and receiving services, and who is not, or whether any groups are under or overserved (in relation to their proportion of the population). This in turn can help to develop promotion campaigns as well as inform alternative approaches to service delivery to address inequalities.
- 2.3.4. During 2025 the SH needs assessment will be updated, using the findings and analyses from the dashboard(s).

### 2.4. **Implementation**

- 2.4.1. To facilitate the implementation of the strategy and its action plan, delivery plans were created for all key system partners to allow easier oversight and monitoring of designated aims and actions for key partners.

### 2.5. **Overarching initiatives**

- 2.5.1. Sexual and reproductive health campaign: From September 2024, a sexual and reproductive health campaign was launched, focusing on different strategy themes every month, highlighting or reinforcing SRH messages and information, including awareness days, signposting to services and events, and promoting commissioned providers. Most messages contain a link or QR code, and data can be gathered regarding clicks and engagement, to assess impact of the various elements of the campaign.
- 2.5.2. The campaign has initiated a men's sexual health drive, focusing on sex positive messages, encouraging healthy sexual choices and signposting to online testing. It is aimed predominantly at heterosexual men who often have poorer health seeking behaviour. Beermats and posters were developed with input from a range of stakeholders, aimed at pubs and bars as well as leisure centres/sports clubs. Venues in the City are included in this.
- 2.5.3. A dedicated SRH Comms group meets monthly and includes comms and public health colleagues, as well as representatives from commissioned providers and other system partners where relevant. A City comms colleague is invited to these meetings.
- 2.5.4. Health literacy: Health literacy is people's ability to access, understand, and apply health information in order to make informed decisions about their health. The importance of access to and availability of good quality information is embedded within the strategy and action plan.
- 2.5.5. To translate this into practice, the concept of 'Let's Talk About...' was developed to support SRH conversations that can be proactive, tailored, informative and supportive through a practical resource. It is aimed at people who are volunteers, Health Champions, navigators, community reps, befrienders etc. These are people who are actively talking to people in their organisations, neighbourhoods, communities and who may want to know more about or build confidence in engaging on SRH topics.
- 2.5.6. A first coproduction workshop was held in December 2024 on the topics of contraception, menopause and heterosexual men and sexual health. It was attended by almost 30 participants, representing City Healthwatch and Healthwatch Hackney (including public reps) commissioned providers (Homerton Sexual Health Services, Positive East), Public Health and

Population Health Hub colleagues, Woodberry Wetlands and Springfield Park Neighbourhood, Community Health Champions, community based organisations (LoveTank) and volunteers (Community African Network).

- 2.5.7. The concrete output of the workshop was three draft resources on the three topics that will be further developed with the participants. Once finalised they will be actively promoted and added to the Make Every Contact Count (MECC) resource base, shared with Health Champions and other community based volunteers, and made available online.
- 2.5.8. More workshops on different topics are expected in 2025, with the next one focusing on young people and sexual health.
- 2.5.9. The added value of working with a varied group of stakeholders, including volunteers and residents from different communities, as well as clinicians, is that lived experience, barriers and misconceptions can be heard and addressed in the workshops and fed into the resources that are being developed.

### **3. Thematic delivery**

The sexual health strategy has five themes and the following presents a summary of actions:

#### **Theme 1: Healthy and fulfilling sexual relationships**

While a broad and inclusive theme, in the first year the focus has been on young people.

- 3.1. Relationship and Sex Education (RSE): Work is ongoing between Public Health and Young Hackney to reassess the existing Service Level Agreements and strengthen capacity within schools and settings of alternative provision to deliver RSE education in line with government guidance. This will include ensuring this support work includes City of London venues.
- 3.2. City and Hackney HealthSpot: In September 2024, the Super Youth Hub (SYH) was launched at the existing Forest Road Youth Club. This SYH incorporates City & Hackney HealthSpot, which in turn includes a dedicated clinic for sexual and reproductive health, accessible to all young people under 25, every Tuesday from 3-7pm. The clinic is operated by a specialist YP sexual health nurse from Homerton Sexual Health Services. The nurse also participates in Q&A sessions and participatory work with young people.
- 3.3. Prior to opening the SYH, Participatory Action Research was undertaken to establish the approach and service model. Two City of

London youth groups were engaged in this and one young person from the City was recruited as part of the team of Young Researchers.

- 3.4. Psychosexual support and high-risk sex counselling services
- 3.5. During 2024, in addition to improved collaboration across NEL on high risk sex pathways and especially sexualised drug use, also known as chemsex, local services for people accessing the high risk sex pathway at the Homerton Sexual Health Clinics improved.
- 3.6. Through partnership work between the public health team, Turning Point and the Homerton Sexual Health Services, a MSM (men who have sex with men) peer mentor/Assistant Psychologist and a recovery worker are now embedded at the Clifden Sexual health clinic, covering all weekdays between the two posts. This means that people with problematic sexualised drug use, or other addiction issues that impact their sexual wellbeing, are triaged more effectively when they present at a sexual health clinic, and receive intervention better tailored to their needs. Through the recovery worker, harm reduction tools such as PIP Packs and Naloxone are permanently available in sexual health clinics.
- 3.7. A further example of enhanced partnership work is the Sexualised Drug Use Operational Case Coordination meeting, which is convened and facilitated by Public Health and attended by a broad range of partners, including Open Doors (sex worker service), Turning Point (addiction service), Homerton sexual health high risk sex pathway, social care (when relevant) and others.

## **Theme 2: Good reproductive health across the life course**

### Contraception

- 3.8. During 2024, work was initiated at GP practice level and through the Women's Health Hubs to improve access to and uptake of Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC). For example, self-referral for LARC is now possible with three practices that offer LARC to all of City & Hackney<sup>4</sup>. Within the Shoreditch Park and City primary care network (PCN), the Lawson Practice offers LARC to any resident within that PCN, meaning that women attending the Neaman practice can access LARC within their PCN.
- 3.9. As mentioned above in section 2.5.6, a health literacy coproduction workshop was held that included a focus on contraception and menopause. The resources that are being developed will be shared with Health Champions and other volunteers, navigators or befrienders working at community level, and will also be made available online, for example via the Make Every Contact Count (MECC) resource library.

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<sup>4</sup> See the City & Hackney [LARC map](#).

3.10. Collaborative commissioning

3.11. With regards to the aim of collaborative commissioning, the development of a joint NHS and LA commissioning plan for SRH is the goal. In 2024, work has started on developing a vision and identifying the stakeholders to drive this work forward, involving the Deputy Director for Public Health, the Consultant and Clinical Lead for Women's Health in City and Hackney, and the Director of Planned Care & Women's Health Champion for the NHS North East London. A working group has been set up to develop scope and take it forward in collaboration with Tower Hamlets and the Women's Health Hubs. This is expected to gain momentum in 2025/26.

**Theme 3: STI prevention and treatment**

Young people

- 3.12. Work around young people and sexual health has been described under theme 1, and is further exemplified by the work of the condom distribution scheme for young people. Within the City of London, Young Hackney regularly visits the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. The school is signed up as a stakeholder, meaning they can sign up young people and distribute condoms. The City of London school is another educational setting where the YP condom distribution scheme is active.
- 3.13. Working with the Public Health Community Wellbeing van, Health Spot Outreach Team sessions in the City have taken place at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and as part of the Society Links summer barbecue.

Mystery shopping

- 3.14. With regards to clinical services in the City of London, a mystery shopping exercise was undertaken in partnership with City Healthwatch to assess to what extent non-residential postcodes/addresses were accepted by sexual health clinics for service delivery. The clinics were linked to different providers and local authorities, but known to see relatively high numbers of City based service users.
- 3.15. The finding was providers did accept non-residential postcodes, which meant that the City of London was paying for services provided to non-residential service users. This has been addressed with the providers and their commissioners, and a list of non-residential postcodes has been re-shared. One provider has since issued a credit note for incorrect charges during 2023/24 and the first months of 24/25.
- 3.16. A second implication of this incorrect practice is that epidemiologically, the STI rates attributed to City of London residents will have been an overestimation of the actual rates.

## **Theme 4: Living well with HIV and zero new HIV infections**

### Prevention: condom distribution

- 3.17. Through Young Hackney and Community African Network (CAN), active condom distribution is ongoing aimed at young people and people of Black heritage, respectively. CAN increased its presence in the City, with the share of distribution increasing from 4% in Q1 24/25 to 7.6% in Q2.

### Prevention: PrEP digital offer

- 3.18. City & Hackney have spearheaded the commissioning of a digital PrEP offer, or DPrEP, as an alternative to PrEP provision via sexual health clinics. Among groups with higher risk of acquiring HIV, such as MSM and people of Black African heritage, some -for example, young MSM of diverse ethnic backgrounds, or Black African heterosexual women-, do not consider themselves at risk or do not attend sexual health clinics, for a number of reasons.
- 3.19. To address these inequalities and improve access to all who may need it, DPrEP will offer a clinically robust alternative whereby PrEP will be sent by post, following the necessary clinical consultations and STI tests.
- 3.20. In addition to addressing inequalities, DPrEP is also likely to present a saving by reducing cost of clinic based consultations, in particular with out of area providers.

### Prevention: testing

- 3.21. A pilot project to introduce HIV opt-out testing in NHS 40+ Health Checks took place across all City and Hackney GP practices, including the Neaman practice in the City. The purpose was to increase testing in the 40+ age group in order to potentially reduce the late diagnosis of HIV, which has worse long term outcomes than when people are diagnosed soon after seroconversion. In City & Hackney, late diagnosis is relatively common. For example, in 2023, for City & Hackney combined, there were 33 new HIV diagnoses, of which 42% were a late diagnosis.
- 3.22. The opt-out approach helps to normalise testing in alternative settings (e.g. non sexual health clinics) while the Health Checks offer an existing infrastructure to perform this. A 'how to' toolkit has been developed to share with other local authorities who wish to implement this approach.
- 3.23. The Neaman practice had undertaken a total of 66 HIV tests as part of 124 Health Checks during Q1 and Q of 2024/25 (53% of checks included an HIV test.)



### HIV Confident Charter

- 3.24. The HIV Confident Charter is a new charter mark that was developed by a partnership of National AIDS Trust, Positively UK, and aidsmap. It is funded by Fast Track Cities, London, as part of their work to tackle HIV Stigma.
- 3.25. When an organisation signs up to be HIV Confident, they make a commitment to ensure that people living with HIV can work for them or access their services without fear of discrimination and with confidence.
- 3.26. The Homerton has confirmed it will become an HIV Confident charter organisation in 2025. The City of London Corporation has paused all work on signing up to charters pending a review.

### **Theme 5: Inclusion communities and those with complex needs**

#### Young people with special education needs and learning disabilities

- 3.27. Through collaboration by Health Spot and a range of partners, work is being undertaken with and for YP with special educational needs to assess how they can be better supported with their SRH needs, especially as they mature. This is in line with both theme 1 and theme 5 of the strategy.
- 3.28. An open day on sexual health and relationships for young people with SEND (age range 13-25) is being held on 20 February 2025 at the Forest Road Youth Hub. It will be an introductory day with information and interaction on a number of topics, with sensory support such as a quiet room, noise cancelling headphones, fidget spinners etc. Information sessions will be held beforehand with parents and carers.
- 3.29. This initiative is in line with the aim to improve information and access for young people with SEND, and ensure services are offered in a way that works for them.

#### Coproduction

- 3.30. Healthwatch Hackney has been collaborating with a peer group of (former) rough sleepers on coproduction and prioritisation of health related activities. As (former) STEPS<sup>5</sup> service users, they are best placed to design interventions and methods of communication that work best for them, and highlight which areas of health they most wish to engage with. The group actively advocated for condoms and sexual health information resources to be made available during their outreach work in City and Hackney through a community stand, and their

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<sup>5</sup> The Supporting Transition and Empowering People Service (STEPS) Team is a part of the C&H Public Health team.

advocacy in turn led to STEPS workers being able to provide condoms to service users, or for condoms to be made available at the brunch club, a regular drop in for STEPS service users.

#### **4. Proposals for the 2025/26 action plan**

- 4.1. For 2025/26 a refreshed action plan is being developed that builds on the work started in 2024/25, and that will roll over initiatives that have not yet been progressed. Partnership work is a continuous process that requires time and effort, with the added challenge of not becoming reliant on a person but to be embedded in ways of working and processes.
- 4.2. For 2025/26 the areas of focus are to continue the work around young people and sexual health and relationships as momentum and partnership work is building. Ensuring good levels of knowledge, awareness and agency among young people is pivotal to improving longer term outcomes, especially among groups that are known to have worse outcomes. This has relevance to all five themes of the strategy.
- 4.3. It is also proposed to continue with the overarching health literacy work. It combines partnership work with coproduction. Further workshops can be developed around key topics as prioritised by e.g. Health Champions and public reps, with involvement of clinical experts and wider system partners.
- 4.4. Within theme 2, on reproductive health, high level collaboration on future joint commissioning approaches will be pivotal to ensuring women and transgender or non-binary people with wombs and ovaries can access the broad spectrum of reproductive health services as easily as possible, through clarity on pathways and referral systems, and ensuring contraceptive choices are available in all relevant settings.
- 4.5. A concrete objective to pursue is establishing a single point of access for long acting reversible contraception and for access/referrals to the City & Hackney Women's Health Hub.
- 4.6. Establishing an online resource -likely using existing platforms- where all relevant information about SRH services in City & Hackney is easily accessible is another aim that will be further pursued to accomplish in 2025/26. This again will be relevant to all themes of the strategy. A City & Hackney map where all services are highlighted is also under development and will be finalised in 2025.
- 4.7. Within theme 3, STI prevention and treatment, looking at reducing repeat infections and the importance of partner notification (PN) as a tool for prevention are suggested as priority areas. This can be incorporated in the development of the service specification for the specialist sexual health service.

- 4.8. Linked to that, doing engagement work with communities that have higher STI rates - for example, Chlamydia in young Black Caribbean men- and developing communications strategies that are better able to connect with certain groups will be important in order to build more trust and confidence in services, to support better health-seeking behaviour. One approach being explored is 'chicken shop sex chat'; a selection of short videos on SRH made by and for young people that could be accessible via a QR code in 'chicken shops', that young people and young adults like to frequent after college, work or a night out. It could explore knowledge and awareness, decision-making, relationships and consent, and access to services, with signposting to local YP friendly services and online testing.
- 4.9. Within theme 4, work around the HIV Confidential charter will continue as a key component of HIV stigma and discrimination initiatives. Equally, to reach the goal of zero new HIV infections by 2023, a committed focus on testing will remain crucial.
- 4.10. Effective from April 2025 the responsibility for commissioning of HIV treatment services is being devolved to Integrated Care Partnership Boards from NHS Specialist Commissioning. This will present future opportunities for local services to be developed to meet local needs of people living with HIV.
- 4.11. For theme 5, a focus to improve visibility and accessibility of services from multiple and intersectional perspectives (physical disability, learning disability, homeless, substance misuse, mental health, LGBTQ+) and undertaking a mapping exercise, or inventory of key stakeholders and organisations that can also feed into coproduction of communication and resources. The approach that was taken with regards to young people with SEND can be taken as an example and built on.
- 4.12. The February HBW subcommittee on SRH will consider the above areas in more detail and agree the 2025/26 action plan.

## **5. Corporate & Strategic Implications**

### **Strategic implications**

The work to improve sexual and reproductive health across the City of London supports delivery of the Corporate plan priorities:- a) Diverse Engaged Communities as well as b) Providing Excellent Service.

### **Financial implications**

None

### **Resource implications**

None

**Legal implications**

None

**Risk implications**

None

**Equalities implications**

The strategy actively sets out to address inequalities in access to services as well as outcomes in sexual and reproductive health, especially linked to age, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

**Climate implications**

None

**Security implications**

None

**Conclusion**

This report provides an overview of work undertaken during the first year of the City and Hackney SRH strategy and action plan. The Board is asked to note the report, and to agree on the direction and priorities for the next year of implementation.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – 'None'

**Report Author**

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