



Health and Wellbeing Board

Report title: Lewisham Sexual and Reproductive Health Local Action plan to deliver LSL Sexual Health Strategy - Update

Date: 4th August 2022

Key decision: No.

Class: Either Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All wards

Contributors: Vikki Pearce, Pearce Consulting, Dr Catherine Mbema, Director of Public Health, London Borough of Lewisham, Kenneth Gregory, interim Director of Joint Commissioning, Jason Browne, Public Health commissioner.

Outline and recommendations

Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham (LSL) together face some of the greatest sexual health challenges in England, with similarly young, mobile and diverse populations. In response to these challenges, Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham agreed a shared Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy for 2019-2024 and LSL Action Plan to deliver this strategy.

Lewisham recognised the need to also have a Local Action Plan to bring together local stakeholders in the borough to work collaboratively to improve sexual health outcomes for our residents.

The Health and Wellbeing Board are recommended to note progress in delivering both the LSL SRH Strategy and the Lewisham SRH Action Plan.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

Extensive consultation was carried out in 2018 on the development of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy 2019-24. The Consultation included engagement with the public, sexual health professionals and other stakeholders. The Strategy was considered at Healthier Communities Select Committee, Safer Lewisham Partnership and CYP Strategic Partnership Board. It was formally adopted at the Health and Wellbeing Board on March 2019.

Local Action plan consultation included working with representatives from SRH Clinic Service Providers, Primary Care, YP Service, Education, Abortion Services, London E-service, Council and Voluntary sector organisations working in and around sexual and reproductive health in Lewisham to develop the local Action Plan. This was agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board in December 2020.

Ongoing dialogue and discussion with providers helps us to better understand the impact of Covid-19 on the services and patients and to inform future commissioning of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services.

1. Summary

- 1.1. Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham (LSL) together face some of the greatest sexual health challenges in England, with similarly young, mobile and diverse populations. In response to these challenges, Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham agreed a shared Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy for 2019-2024 and shared LSL SRH Action Plan.
- 1.2. LSL has a shared Action plan to deliver the LSL SRH Strategy 2019-24 which delivers strategic needs assessments and cross-cutting projects to improve sexual and reproductive health across LSL.
- 1.3. Lewisham recognised the need to have a Local Action Plan to bring together local stakeholders in the borough to work collaboratively to improve sexual health outcomes for our residents. This was agreed in December 2020.
- 1.4. This report sets out progress to date in delivering against the strategy and the Lewisham Local SRH Action Plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board are recommended to :
 - note the progress made to date in delivering the LSL Sexual Health Strategy

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The sexual health services commissioned jointly across LSL support the priority identified in the 2018-2022 Corporate Strategy "Delivering and defending : Health, Social Care and Support – Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need". This year's Mayor's manifesto pledges to increase access to anonymous online sexual health services.
- 3.2. Sexual Health is an important public health priority at both a national and local level. In 2013, Lewisham's Health and Wellbeing Board identified sexual health as one of the 9 priorities for Lewisham. Lewisham continues to experience high demand and need for

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sexual health services reflected through high rates of teenage pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted infections. Contraception and sexual health services for diagnosis and treatment of STIs are currently commissioned from Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust (LGT).

- 3.3. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 (“the Act”) introduced changes by way of a series of amendments to the National Health Service Act 2006. The Act gives local authorities a duty to take such steps as it considers appropriate to improve the health of the people in its area. In general terms, the Act confers on local authorities the function of improving public health and gives local authorities considerable scope to determine what actions it will take in pursuit of that general function.
- 3.4. Secondary legislative provision, such as the Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013 require local authorities to provide certain public health services. The public health services which local authorities must provide are:
 - National Child Measurement Programme
 - Health checks
 - Open access sexual health services
 - Public health advice service to Clinical Commissioning Groups

4. Background

- 4.1. LSL together face some of the greatest sexual health challenges in England, with similarly young, mobile and diverse populations. Our rates of HIV and STIs are the highest in England, and there are persistent inequalities in sexual and reproductive health, with young people, men who have sex with men (MSM) and black and minority ethnic (BME) communities suffering the greatest burden.
- 4.2. In response to these challenges, Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham agreed a shared [Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy for 2019-2024](#). The Strategy has the following four pillars:
 - Healthy and fulfilling sexual relationships
 - Good reproductive health across the life course
 - High quality and innovative STI Testing and Treatment
 - Living well with HIV
- 4.3. Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham (LSL) have been jointly commissioning sexual health services since April 2016. A specialist commissioning team, based at Lambeth Council, carries out a range of commissioning functions on behalf of the three boroughs, including overseeing a shared LSL Action Plan to deliver strategic needs assessments and cross-cutting projects to improve sexual and reproductive health across LSL. Progress to date includes the development of a sexual health e-service, the introduction of HIV Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) across the borough and focussed work with specific population groups. A rapid review of the impact of COVID-19 on sexual health services identified areas that worked well, and areas needing additional focus during recovery.
- 4.4. Lewisham recognised the need to also have a Local Action Plan to bring together local stakeholders in the borough to work collaboratively to improve sexual health outcomes for our residents This was developed and agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board in December 2020.

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5. LSL Progress to date

5.1. This table sets out the achievements against the LSL Action Plan which supports the LSL strategy

Strategy Priority	Achievements to date
Healthy and fulfilling sexual relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Love, Sex, Life to build capacity in staff not working in sexual health services • Expanding the number of outlets who have signed up to Come Correct
Good reproductive health across the life course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and support to primary care services • Introduction of LARC hubs across LSL • Oral Contraception now available 24/7 via E-service
High quality and innovative STI Testing and Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued use of the SXT partner notification system across all Trusts • PrEP awareness raising to try and increase numbers
Living well with HIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling the stigma of HIV and increasing participation in BAME populations • Elton John Aids Foundation has been successful in introducing routine testing in A&E • Commissioning of PrEP community projects via Brook and AAF • Appointment of the HIV/BBV GP champions • Pilot of an e-service for adult and young people's substance misuse services to target the vulnerable, at risk communities

6. Post pandemic activity

6.1. The COVID-19 needs assessment identified a number of impacts from the pandemic. Pharmacy Reproductive Health Services, including Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EHC), Progesterone-only Pill (POP), and the C-Card scheme (free condom distribution for young people) remained available during lockdown, though total contraception activity in pharmacy was substantially lower in Q1 and Q2 of 2020 than in the same period for 2019 - activity in April 2020 was just over 10% of that of April 2019. This is driven mainly by large reductions in provision of Emergency Hormonal Contraception, but Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) referrals and Condom issuing also reduced, including used of C-Card (scheme giving free condoms for young people). GP Sexual and Reproductive Health services also remained available and though activity reduced in the first months of lockdown, this was not as substantial as reductions seen in specialist and pharmacy services. Contraception activity in GP recovered rapidly after the pandemic, but is still lower than we would like. Work with LSL colleagues continues to refresh pathways and promote throughout primary care.

6.2. Access to Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) in GP Practices was restricted during the first lockdown. A project to develop provision of LARC in

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Lewisham began in January 2022 and is being led by APLOS. Marie Stopes International at St John's is offering LARC, and there are plans to open a pilot in the north of the borough. Continuing to improve community provision of LARC remains a priority in Lewisham.

- 6.3. As reported in the last update, the drop in STI testing in clinic was met with a corresponding - and planned - increase in use of the SHL - the London E-Service (STI testing kits ordered online). This activity was uncapped as part of business continuity measures, and clinics were encouraged to direct patients towards the service. E-service activity increased and 40% more STI tests were ordered through the platform in May to September 2020 than in January to April 2020. This change in service delivery has been maintained and now approximately 30% of all contact is via the e-service, with some return to face to face appointments for those who choose that option.
- 6.4. Abortion providers reported consultations are returning to pre-pandemic levels. The success of Early Medical Abortions ("Pills by Post") has seen an increase of 15% on pre-pandemic levels. Surgical abortions are still lower than they were before the pandemic. In 2021/22 Lewisham are the second highest spender on abortion services in South East London, after Lambeth.
- 6.5. Women's use of sexual and reproductive health services is typically higher than males, and numbers of women accessing services have now exceeded pre-COVID levels. The same is true of people aged 25-34. Whilst service data does not suggest that people of BAME ethnicities were disproportionately impacted by service changes during lockdown, use of SRH services by people of Black ethnicity has not resumed to pre-COVID-19 levels; use by people of all other ethnicities has broadly returned to previous activity levels. From May 2020, we have observed an increase in SRH service activity where the ethnicity of the service user is not stated. At this time, it is not known if this increase is distributed evenly across people of all ethnicities. If there was a bias towards Black people either declining to record their ethnicity when accessing services, or health professionals declining to ask, this may account for the apparent reduction in service activity in this group. Use of the E-Service started to rise in April 2020, with largely proportionate increases among users of all ethnicities.
- 6.6. Use of Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EHC) by women of Black ethnicity remained high during and after lockdown which continues to signify distinct unmet contraceptive need.

7. Sexual Health Commissioning

- 7.1. Commissioners will work with Public Health to ensure that services are developed, reviewed and where necessary renegotiated or reprocured. There is an opportunity to continue to move activity around the Sexual Health system to better deliver the shared LSL Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy whilst reducing overall spend.
- 7.2. LSL Commissioners based at Lambeth continue to lead a programme of work to look at how services are recommissioned to meet the current and future needs of LSL residents with a focus on those services which they contract manage on our behalf through our Tripartite Agreement for Sexual Health which include the Sexual Health Core Clinic Contract with Lewisham and Greenwich Trust (LGT) which has been provisionally extended until 2023. However, there are ongoing discussions around the service offer between LGT and LBL which should be resolved by the end of 2022.
- 7.3. Sexual Health Services in Primary Care (Pharmacy and GP) have been extended until March 2024 and will allow continuity of Pharmacy EHC and POP and GP LARC Services. Lewisham accesses e-services for STI Testing and Treatment via an agreement with The City of London that provides greater access to SRH services and the contract ends 2026. The Young Person's Integrated substance misuse and

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Sexual health service was awarded to Humankind – Lewisham Insight – and has been offering a service to the young people of Lewisham from April 2022.

- 7.4. Brook was contracted to co-create and deliver a support programme to develop capability, competence and confidence to deliver the secondary school Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum from April 2022 to March 2023.
- 7.5. Further decisions about commissioned services will go through the appropriate governance processes and come back to DMT if required.

8. Lewisham Sexual and Reproductive Health Action Plan

- 8.1. The below table highlights some of the activity that has taken place over the last 14 months against the four priority areas of the strategy. This is in addition to work which is going on across LSL, though some services which have contributed work across LSL.

Strategy Priority	Activity
Healthy and fulfilling sexual relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Health in Primary Care training; XX people trained • Commissioning Brook to deliver additional support and guidance for PSHE in schools
Good reproductive health across the life course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to new SRH Pharmacies and refresher training to existing SRH Pharmacies • LGT midwives are now giving contraception to new mums
High quality and innovative STI Testing and Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling the stigma associated with STIs in BAME groups • The sexual services achieved Pride in Practice Gold Awards
Living well with HIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of SRH HIV GP champion (Dr Grace Bottoni)

- 8.2. An LSL wide impact assessment was carried out in December 2020 which explored how Covid-19 and service changes had impacted on service users and made a series of recommendations. These were:
- 8.3. To undertake stakeholder engagement to understand how and where people seek information about available services (this has been taken forward via AAF and Brook)
- 8.4. Continue to monitor the use of the e-service platform and ensure use remains equitable (ongoing monitoring continues and approximately 30% of all STI testing is now done via the e-service route in Lewisham). One of the consequences of this shift is an increase in the complexity of those being treated in person.
- 8.5. Monitor the availability of in person appointments and contraceptive counselling (this continues to be monitored and reported by commissioners)
- 8.6. Improving access to long acting reversible contraception (LARC) (this is monitored locally and the contract with pharmacy and primary care overseen by public health commissioners)
- 8.7. Action should be taken to identify and overcome the barriers to contraception that women of black ethnicity are experiencing (this continues to be discussed)

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8.8. LSL have conducted an extensive engagement programme over the last year to understand residents experiences of access to services and the handovers from one service to another. Many Lewisham residents took part in an E-survey, in-depth interviews of co-creation workshops. Experience of services was reported very good but problems with access (finding services and booking appointments) were identified. A digital tool is in development to help residents better navigate the sexual health system.

9. Financial implications

9.1. None – for information only

10. Legal implications

10.1. None – for information only

11. Equalities implications

11.1. As with many health outcomes, sexual health is patterned by socioeconomic inequalities, with those from deprived areas at greater risk of negative outcomes, such as sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancy. HIV rates are much higher in men who have sex with men, and in Black African communities.

11.2. An Equalities Analysis Assessment (EAA) was undertaken for the LSL Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy. The Strategy and Local Action Plan aim to reduce health inequalities and improve health outcomes.

11.3. A Rapid Impact Assessment of Covid-19 was conducted in December 2020 and the findings and recommendations reported above.

12. Climate change and environmental implications

12.1. There are no climate change and environmental implications pertaining to this report.

13. Crime and disorder implications

13.1. There are no crime and disorder implications pertaining to this report.

14. Health and wellbeing implications

14.1. This report recommends that The Health and Wellbeing Board recognise the work undertaken as part of the Local Lewisham SRH Action Plan, which aims to improve sexual and reproductive health in Lewisham and to reduce health inequalities.

15. Background papers

15.1. LSL Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy 2019-24.

15.2.3 December 2020 Report to the Health and Wellbeing Board: Lewisham Sexual and Reproductive Health Local Action Plan to deliver LSL Sexual Health Strategy 2019-24

16. Report author(s) and contact

16.1. Kerry Lonergan, Consultant in Public Health, kerry.lonergan@lewisham.gov.uk

16.2. Comments for and on behalf of the Executive Director for Corporate Resources

16.3. [Type here, Arial size 11]

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17. Appendices

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