

# Public Health Position Statement

## Whitechapel South site allocation and access to sexual health facilities

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### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The council has a statutory obligation to ensure residents are able to access sexual health and contraceptive services. This obligation is met through procuring a health provider to deliver this service.
- 1.2. In 2016 Barts Health NHS Trust (Barts) were commissioned by the Council to provide the service on a 5+1+1+1 basis, totalling 8 years with over 7 years left on the current contract. This service is provided in the Ambrose King Centre, located within the Whitechapel South Site Allocation.
- 1.3. When the service was tendered, Whitechapel was identified as the most suitable location, in recognition of a variety of factors, as outlined below. In recognition that the existing Sexual Health Facility, the Ambrose King Centre was in this location, Barts (as the building owner) indicated they would be willing to discuss another provider using the site<sup>1</sup>.

### **2. Sexual Health Location Review**

- 2.1. The Borough conducted a Sexual Health location review before the service was commissioned. The analysis considered prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), current and future trends, patient flows across London, accessibility, service user engagement and a contraceptive needs assessment. It concluded that Whitechapel has some of the highest rates of STIs in the borough, North East London region and the

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<sup>1</sup> Specification for the provision of integrated sexual health services in North East London – Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, June 2017. Available from: <http://www.government-online.net/sexual-health-services-contract-north-east-london/>

Country<sup>2</sup>.

- 2.2. The paper recommended that Whitechapel and Stratford would be best placed to locate the sexual health services to meet growing population need. As such when the service was tendered, two sexual health centres of excellence were established within these two sites<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.3. The current provider (Barts) endorsed these two localities in their method statement when responding to the tender.

### **3. Public Consultation**

- 3.1. Extensive public consultation and engagement was conducted before the service was commissioned with one of the key headline findings stating that the location of sites near to major transportation hubs was seen as essential to any future service delivery. Once again Whitechapel was seen as the ideal location to support resident access, as one of the most accessible areas in East London<sup>4</sup>.

### **4. Service Specification, Commission and Population Health Needs**

- 4.1. Insight from the user engagement and the location analysis review all informed the specification and contract, signed by the current provider.
- 4.2. The specification and contract stated Whitechapel as the location for the Sexual Health Centre of Excellence and it described the key features of housing this facility within this site<sup>5</sup>.
- 4.3. A Sexual Health Centre of Excellence offers an enhanced Sexual Health service similar to a hub and spoke model where we have two central localities (Whitechapel and Stratford with outreach clinics.) We have chosen to integrate our Sexual Health offer to enhance user engagement, increase accessibility, and to create trust with our residents to access the facility in an area of high need.
- 4.4. The location of this site has seen an increase in patients accessing the service from local residents. The service is seeing more patients than ever and it is becoming one of the largest and most popular clinics in the Country.
- 4.5. The Whitechapel site is also located in close proximity to the Royal London hospital site which has additional benefits such as inpatient HIV services, including patient treatment

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<sup>2</sup> North East London Sexual Health Transformation Programme (NEL SHTP) Integrated Level 3 Sexual Health Location Review, 2016

<sup>3</sup> North East London Sexual Health Transformation Programme (NEL SHTP) Integrated Level 3 Sexual Health Location Review, 2016

<sup>4</sup> North East London Sexual Health Transformation Programme (NEL SHTP) Resident and Service User Engagement Report.

<sup>5</sup> Specification for the provision of integrated sexual health services in North East London – Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, June 2017. Available from: <http://www.government-online.net/sexual-health-services-contract-north-east-london/>.

and emergency protocols when needed. A future development of co-locating termination of pregnancy services, currently provided from Mile End Hospital, within sexual health services located at Whitechapel was also identified as being a longer term objective of Barts in order to improve integration.

## **5. Barts Health Location Reports**

- 5.1. In 2011 before the service was commissioned and therefore before the site was endorsed through the tender response, Barts conducted a 'Clinic requirement report'<sup>6</sup> to assess possible location for the service. The decision was made to remain in the existing location.
- 5.2. In 2017 LBTH employed Gerald Eve to undertake a commercial property search in and around the Whitechapel area but were unable to locate suitable premises<sup>7</sup>.
- 5.3. In 2017 Barts conducted a further options appraisal<sup>8</sup> to consider other locations within Whitechapel that the service could move to and offer the same level of service. Although two recommendations were proposed, neither were considered to be viable options and an alternative facility wasn't found and it was decided to remain in the existing location.

## **6. Summary**

- 6.1. The Tower Hamlets Public Health Service, as commissioners of this service, are keen to continue to work with Barts as our service provider to deliver the Sexual Health service.
- 6.2. Tower Hamlets Public Health Service consider that the delivery of this service within Whitechapel is key to its continued success and ability to meet the needs of service users. It is therefore expected that the location of this service in the Whitechapel area in close proximity to the hospital site and easily accessible from Whitechapel Underground/Overground station will continue to be a requirement for any future procurement of this service, with the existing site being the proposed default delivery location. It is noted that the previous procurement specification indicated the willingness of the site's owner (at that point Barts) to discuss the site's utilisation by alternative potential bidders.
- 6.3. Tower Hamlets Public Health recognise a risk, as evidenced through previous unsuccessful searches (including by Barts), that there are no suitable premises available beyond this site, and within Whitechapel, that could house a Sexual Health Centre of Excellence.
- 6.4. In order to safeguard the Council's ability to continue to meet its statutory obligation and procure a high quality Sexual Health service in the most suitable location, we consider it necessary for the re-provision of this service to be included within the Site Allocation. As such the existing sexual health facility (including HIV services) will need to be re-provided on site in accordance with prevailing sexual health facility building guidance (e.g. Health Building Note 12-01: Consulting, examination and treatment facilities Supplement A: Sexual and reproductive health clinics), unless an alternative location can be found which meets the requirements of policy D.CF2. A continued service will need to be maintained to the satisfaction of the Council's Public Health Team

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<sup>6</sup> Deloitte and Barts and the London NHS Trust (2011), Clinic Requirement Reports

<sup>7</sup> Gerald Eve- LBTH Whitechapel Clinic Search

<sup>8</sup> Bunn S and Grayer M (2017), Relocation of Sexual Health and HIV Services at Whitechapel – summary of options appraisal, Barts and the London NHS Trust