



Media release

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New approach to community health services in Tower Hamlets

People in Tower Hamlets will have access to improved community health services under a ground-breaking partnership.

NHS Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has signed an alliance partnership agreement between three local healthcare providers: Tower Hamlets GP Care Group Community Interest Company (CIC), Barts Health NHS Trust, and East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT).

The partnership will enable local GPs to work much closer with hospital and community trusts to offer patients more joined up health services across the borough and reduce duplication.

Services within the partnership range from district nurses visiting people at home to speech and language therapists working with children in schools and local health centres, and include a stroke rehab team who support patient rehabilitation in hospital as well as helping people to get well after they have left hospital, and specialist diabetes nurses.

The new arrangements, which will be introduced from 1 April, will see around 350 staff move from Barts Health NHS Trust to the GP Care Group and ELFT.

On day one patients will still receive services from the centres they currently do and contact numbers will remain the same.

Key developments will include a new single point of access that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, better integration of adult and children services, and a single patient record.

By adopting the alliance model, the CCG and the three providers are looking to build on the strong working relationships they have developed as part of the Tower Hamlets Together vanguard.

Simon Hall, Acting Chief Officer of Tower Hamlets CCG, said taking this approach would support true partnership working and integration of care, bringing long-term benefits for local people: "Back in 2014 people in Tower Hamlets told us that community health services needed to improve.

"They wanted high quality health care close to home when they needed it, but many of the existing services were inconsistent.

"The new model has been designed to meet the needs of individual patients and benefit the wellbeing of the Tower Hamlets population and the local health system.

"As local GP practices will be working in close partnership with providers, we will also be able to reduce duplication and deliver effective services that will really make a difference for our patients.

"I want to thank the Tower Hamlets community for its support. We couldn't have reached this point without the help of the patient leaders, voluntary organisations and other local groups that were involved in the commissioning process.

"I'd also like to reassure patients that they will continue to be able to access community services throughout this transition period."

The partnership approach will improve children's and adult services by:

- Improving accessibility to provide more people with safe and compassionate care at home or in their local community
- Transforming community health services in a way that would not be possible in a single organisation. For example, implementing new models of care that support early discharge from hospital – providing person-centred care at the right place, at the right time based on the needs of the local Tower Hamlets population
- Helping local people to achieve better health outcomes being supported by a truly multi-skilled team.

Claire Hogg, Director of Community Health Services at Barts Health NHS Trust, said: "The alliance partnership is a unique opportunity to transform community health services in Tower Hamlets and put patients at the heart of their care.

"We are committed to building on our successful track record of partnership working across health and social care, embracing innovation and improving efficiency to ensure we provide the best care to local people."

Dr Navina Evans, Chief Executive at ELFT, said: "We look forward to working more closely with our partners to explore innovative ways to provide care and support.

"We welcome the community teams who are joining ELFT on 1 April and look forward to sharing skills and expertise.

"We will be able to learn from each other and spread best practice to service users and their families."

Dr Phillip Bennett-Richards, Chair of Tower Hamlets GP Care Group, said: "We are delighted to be able to use our local knowledge and understanding to develop partnerships that support local patients.

"We are proud to lead Tower Hamlets Together, a national multispeciality community provider vanguard site that has helped shape and deliver our innovative approach.

"Collaborative working is extremely important to enable the sustainability of general practice to continue to deliver the highest possible level of patient care in these challenging times."

Over the course of over two years, Tower Hamlets Healthwatch and many voluntary organisations worked closely with the CCG.

They brought together hundreds of people, including patients, independent clinicians and potential providers, to work together to design the services and come up with innovative solutions that best meet the needs of the local community.

Farzana Khanom, a resident who was involved in the negotiations, said: "I'm pleased and proud to have been part of the patient representative group that played an extensive part in the commissioning process.

"It was a refreshing and rewarding experience to see all the partners working together and valuing our input.

"This helped ensure patients' views were listened to and used to shape the new community health services. I'm confident this will result in better care for local people in Tower Hamlets."

The new alliance arrangement will also aim to:

- Reduce health inequalities – ensuring that people in Tower Hamlets lead more healthy and fulfilling lives through a longer and healthier life expectancy
- Provide effective signposting of services and pathways – so people understand how and when to access the most appropriate care and avoid unnecessary delays
- Promote self-management – ensuring patients are provided with the knowledge and guidance they require to look after themselves where appropriate
- Encourage innovation – in the design of services and the use of technology, including implementation of a 'paperless' system by April 2018

The value of the five-year deal is £185million - £37million per year.

Notes to editors:

Further information is included below. For any additional media inquiries, please contact the NELCSU media team at nelcsu.media@nhs.net (Telephone 0203 688 1216).

About the community health services contract

- Community health services help people get well and stay well without having to travel too far from home.
- Services within the partnership range from district nurses visiting people at home to speech and language therapists working with children in schools and local health centres, and include a stroke rehab team who support patient rehabilitation in hospital as well as helping people to get well after they have left hospital, and specialist diabetes nurses.
- The CCG and providers jointly agreed to develop an alliance agreement, which will ensure providers work together to deliver services in a joined-up way. An over-arching alliance contract has been signed by all partners, and separate individual contracts have been awarded to the GP Care Group, Barts Health and ELFT for the specific services they will provide.
- The services re-procured include most of the community health services that are currently managed by Barts Health in Tower Hamlets. This broadly includes:
 - the coordination function, such as the out-of-hours and single point of access service, advocacy and interpreting and the patient experience team - managed by Tower Hamlets GP Care Group CIC

- early years and children's services, such as speech and language therapy, safeguarding teams, audiology and community nursing - managed by Barts Health NHS Trust
- adult rehabilitation and therapy services, such as psychology teams, audiology and inpatient beds, and adult recovery and prevention services, such as foot health, stroke rehabilitation and community diabetes and education. Services for adults will be managed by ELFT.

It does not include services from other providers, such as health visiting or sexual health.

- This is a five-year contract with an option to extend for two extra years, so it could be in place for a maximum of seven years. There will be a break clause at year two in 2018 in order to undertake a review of national policy guidance and progress to date. Providers will be paid for delivering outcomes. The proportion of the contract based on outcomes will increase over time.

Community and patient involvement

- The community and patients were involved from the start:
 - From mid-2014: existing patient and community feedback about the services was analysed to assess how the services were performing and identify areas for improvement.
 - In late 2014, Healthwatch, voluntary organisations and patient leaders were invited to join a steering group. Twenty members have been receiving regular updates about the procurement, and throughout the process they have:
 - advised on how local people should be involved
 - designed the engagement processes and worked with the CCG to gather feedback from the local community
 - helped develop the patient engagement section of the initial bid specification. This asked potential bidders to consider how they would engage with patients, carers and the local community, and use feedback to continually develop their services.
 - From January 2014, the CCG ran a two-month engagement period where it worked with Healthwatch, voluntary organisations and an independent researcher to gather detailed feedback from patients, carers, health providers and staff. During a series of events, meetings, focus groups and discovery interviews, the CCG spoke with almost 500 people. Their feedback was used to develop the patient outcomes that the CCG will now evaluate the providers on.
 - In early 2014, the CCG worked with Healthwatch to recruit a small group of patients and carers to be part of the independent procurement panel. They became an essential part of the team: attending programme board meetings, participating in competitive dialogue discussions with the provider, helping to refine the specification documents and assessing the bids.
 - From 1 April 2017, patients, carers and voluntary organisations will be involved in working with the provider to continuously develop and improve services. Built into the final specification is a requirement that the provider works extremely closely with the local community, and involves local representatives on an ongoing basis.

About Tower Hamlets CCG

NHS Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group's role is to commission most local health services, from cancer care to mental health, hospital operations to prescriptions. All GP practices in the borough are part of this CCG. The CCG has a board, which meets regularly, and is chaired by a local GP. Visit www.towerhamletsccg.nhs.uk for more information.

About GP Care Group

Tower Hamlets GP Care Group CIC was founded in 2013 by the 37 GP practices in Tower Hamlets, and was formally incorporated in September 2014. Its purpose is to ensure GP practices are sustainable and able to provide excellent care. It gives the GP community the ability to work collectively at scale to provide an effective leadership voice within the borough, and to take on borough-wide contracts. From 1 April 2017 it became responsible for providing Tower Hamlets' health visiting service for families and children in their early years. Visit www.gpcaregroup.org for more information.

About Barts Health NHS Trust

With a turnover of £1.4 billion and a workforce of around 16,000, Barts Health is the largest NHS trust in the country, and one of Britain's leading healthcare providers. The Trust's five hospitals – St Bartholomew's Hospital in the City, including the Barts Heart Centre, The Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, Newham University Hospital in Plaistow, Whipps Cross University Hospital in Leytonstone and Mile End – deliver high quality compassionate care to the 2.5 million people of East London and beyond. Visit www.bartshealth.nhs.uk for more information

About East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT)

ELFT provides a wide range of community and inpatient services to children, young people, adults of working age, older adults and forensic services to the City of London, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Bedfordshire and Luton, and additional services in Barnet, Redbridge and Richmond. In addition, the Trust provides forensic services to the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest, and some specialist mental health services to North London, Hertfordshire and Essex. The Trust was awarded an 'outstanding' rating by the CQC in September 2016 and in November, they were voted Provider Trust of the Year by the Health Service Journal. Visit www.elft.nhs.uk for more information.