



# North East London Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy 2024-2029

Public Health

Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting

10 June 2024



# Overview



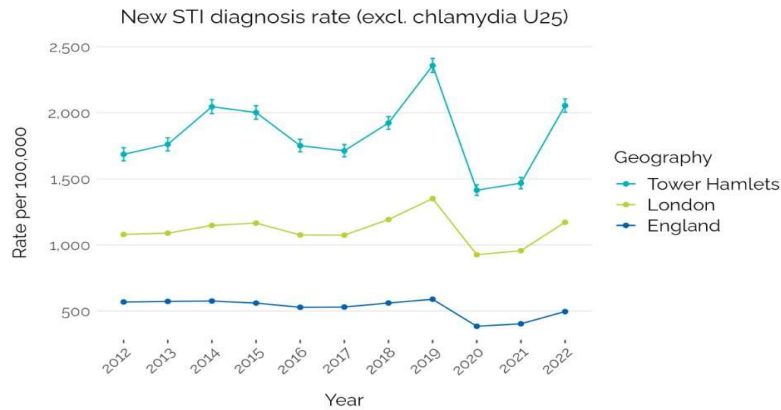
- Overview of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) needs in Tower Hamlets
- Rationale for a joint NEL sexual and reproductive health strategy
- Process of strategy development
- Aims and key priorities of action
- Proposed future review of the strategy



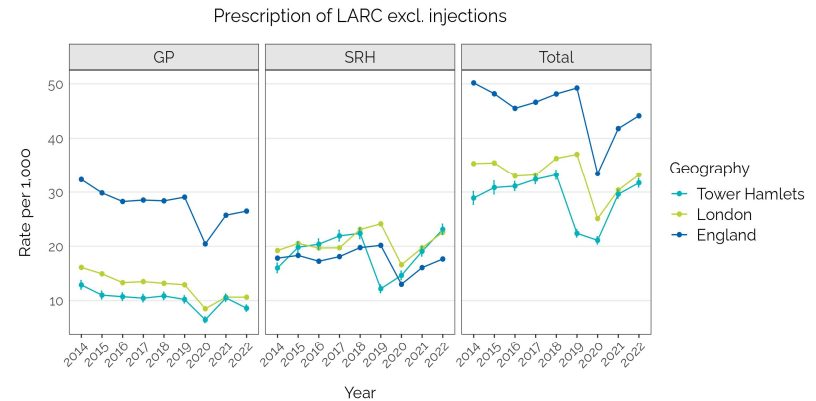
# Sexual and reproductive health needs are high in Tower Hamlets



- STI (Sexually transmitted infections) rates have increased nationally but Tower Hamlets continues to have significantly higher rates of newly diagnosed STIs rates compared to London and England which is largely driven by our young populations and high proportion of GBMSM (gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men) population.
- The most recent national data shows that Asian groups had the highest proportional increase and mixed ethnic groups had the highest rates of new STIs in 2023 compared to 2022.
- Long-acting reversible contraception (i.e. coils and implants) are the most reliable and cost-effective form of contraception however our rates of LARC are low and we have a high use of emergency contraception indicating that reproductive health needs continue to be unmet.



Source: Fingertips



Source: Fingertips

The best of London  
in one borough



# Sexual and reproductive health landscape – who are the enablers?



- Sexual and reproductive health covers the provision covers a wide range of services: contraception, STI testing and treatment (including PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis medication to reduce the risk of HIV), HIV testing, HIV treatment and abortion services are some of the services.
- These services are commissioned across different organisations which are mandated to provide specific services.
- We have multiple partners that deliver these services to our residents.
- The commissioning of sexual and reproductive services is complex and fragmented therefore a more collaborative approach to sexual and reproductive health is important to achieve better outcomes for our residents across NEL.

## Commissioning responsibilities

Local Authorities (LAs)	NHS England	Integrate Care Board (ICB)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contraception - except within GP contracts</li> <li>• STI testing</li> <li>• Psychosexual support (sexual health)</li> <li>• Specialist sexual health services</li> <li>• Sexual health support for young people</li> <li>• HIV prevention</li> <li>• Sexual health outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GP contraception</li> <li>• HIV treatment and care</li> <li>• Sexual health in prisons</li> <li>• Cervical screening</li> <li>• Sexual assault services (SARCs, Havens)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Termination of pregnancy</li> <li>• Vasectomy</li> <li>• Gynaecology</li> <li>• Psychosexual support (non-sexual health)</li> <li>• HIV treatment and care (transfers from NHSE April 2025)</li> </ul>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">                     Open access Sexual and contraception service where residents can access services out of borough                 </div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">                     Women's health hubs                 </div>



# The importance of having a joint strategy across North East London, and underpinning Local Action



A joint strategy provides an opportunity to set out a new vision for North East London which will:

- Shape sexual and reproductive services to work collaboratively
  - Address the rising rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and reproductive health inequalities faced by residents
  - Provide opportunities to build seamless care pathways and joined-up commissioning between different sectors
  - Joint efforts to reduce stigma attached to STI and HIV
- 
- As well as action across North East London, we need to take local action in Tower Hamlets that is aligned to the Strategy.
  - We have developed a local Action Plan that includes specific steps to deliver this strategy within Tower Hamlets.



# What are we trying to achieve with our sexual and reproductive health strategy 2024-2029



## Vision of the strategy:

- Residents lead healthy and fulfilling lives, in which they have the knowledge and are able to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health, with timely access to high quality, inclusive and equitable services.
- The purpose of the draft NEL Sexual and reproductive health strategy 2024-2029 is to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes for residents by:
  - *Ensuring that our residents have the ability and freedom to make safe informed choices regarding their sexual and reproductive health and can access services regardless of who they are and where they live.*
  - *Delivering high quality inclusive, accessible and equitable services across North East London.*



# How was the strategy developed?



- The strategy was co-produced by service providers, commissioners and across 8 NEL boroughs who set the vision:  
To deliver high quality, easy-access and equitable provision across the whole of North East London, with the prevention of illness and the promotion of healthy relationships at the core of all activity.
- This strategy is underpinned by a sets of NEL actions that will be implemented annually to deliver the strategy over the next five years.
- Each borough will also have a borough annual action plan. This approach allows us to collaborate to deliver an overarching strategy as well as taking action on individual borough needs.





# Strategy has 4 priority areas

Priority 1:  
Healthy and fulfilling  
sexual relationships



Priority 2:  
Good reproductive  
health across the life  
course



Priority 3:  
High quality and  
innovative STI testing  
and treatment

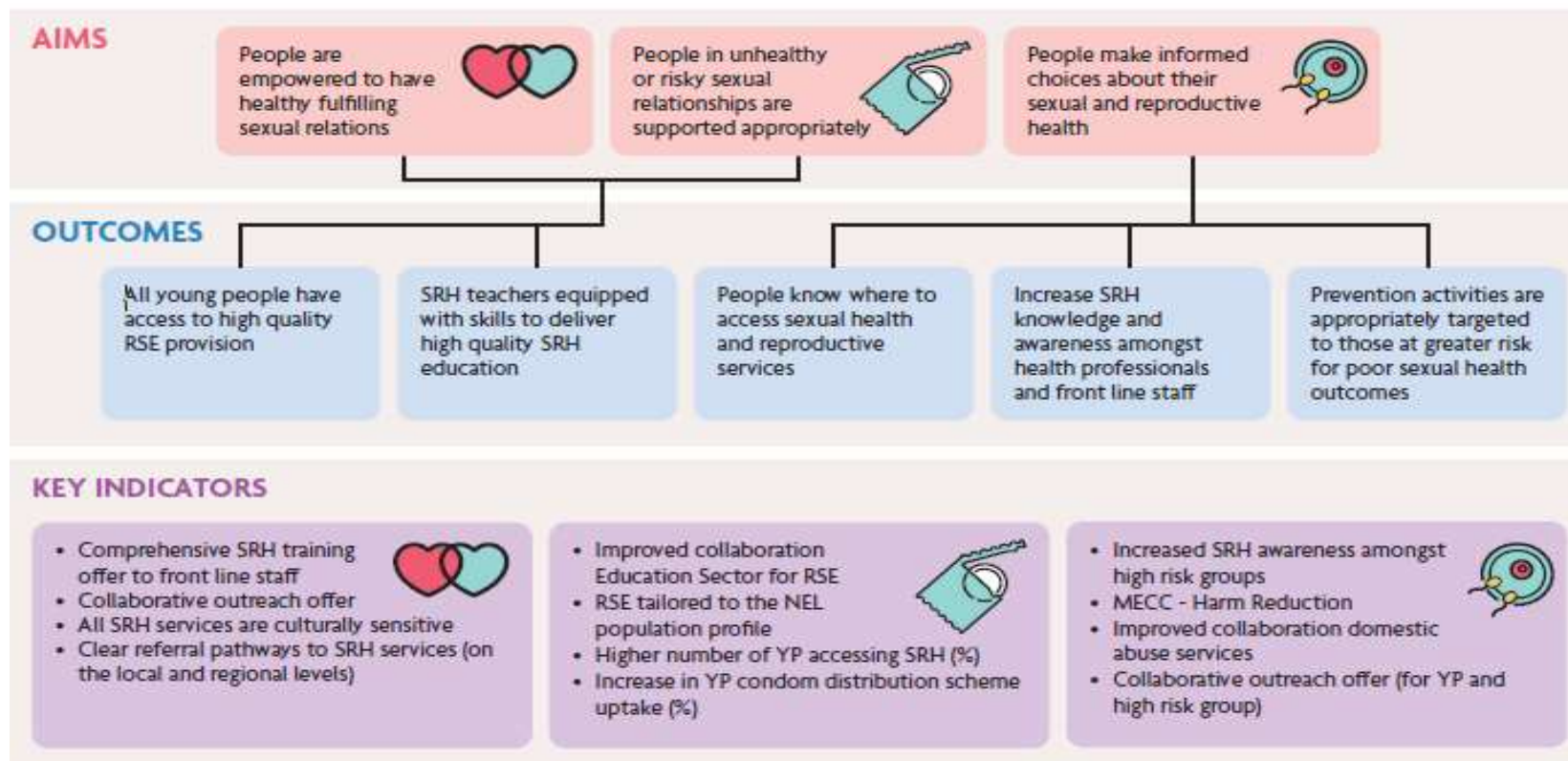


Priority 4:  
HIV - towards zero  
and living well

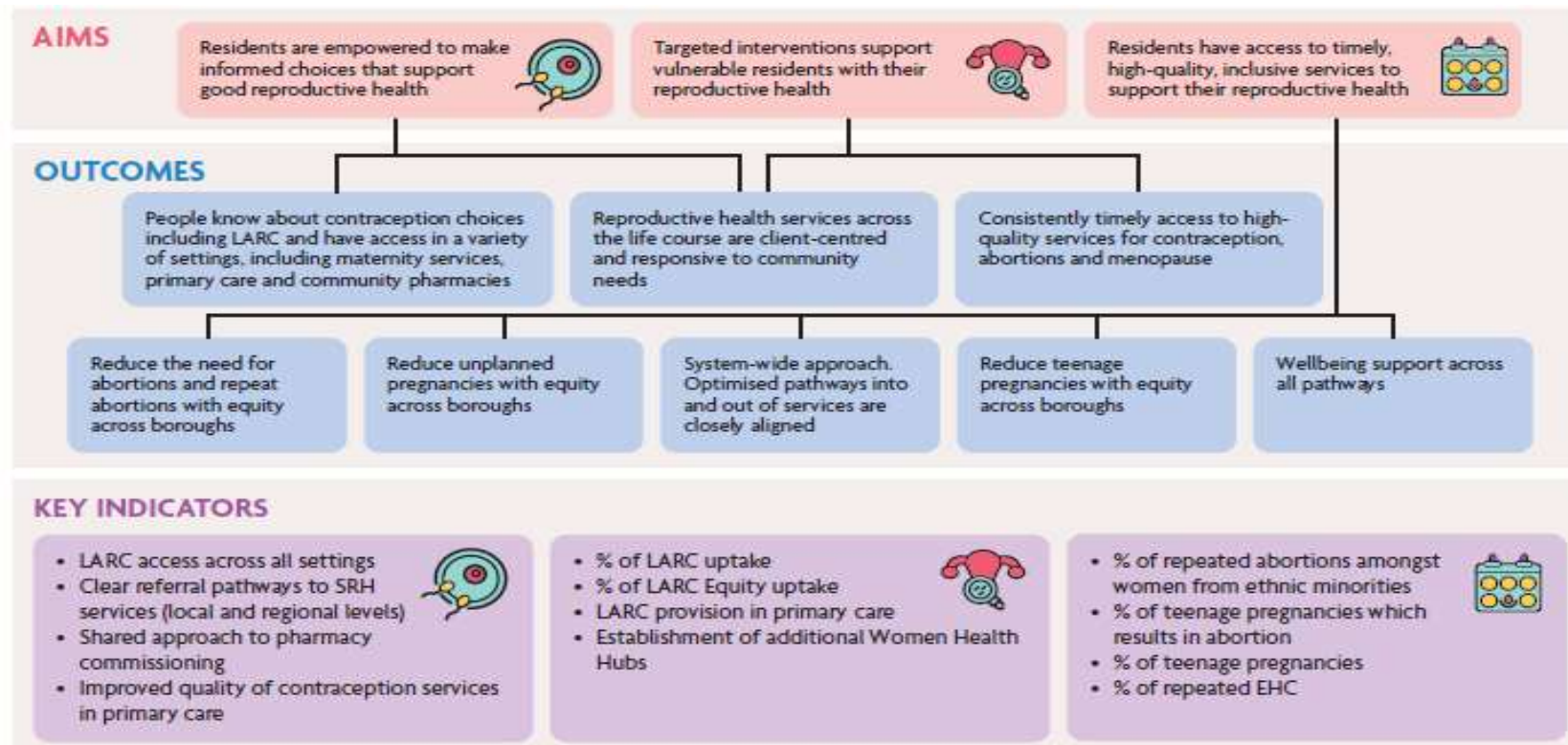




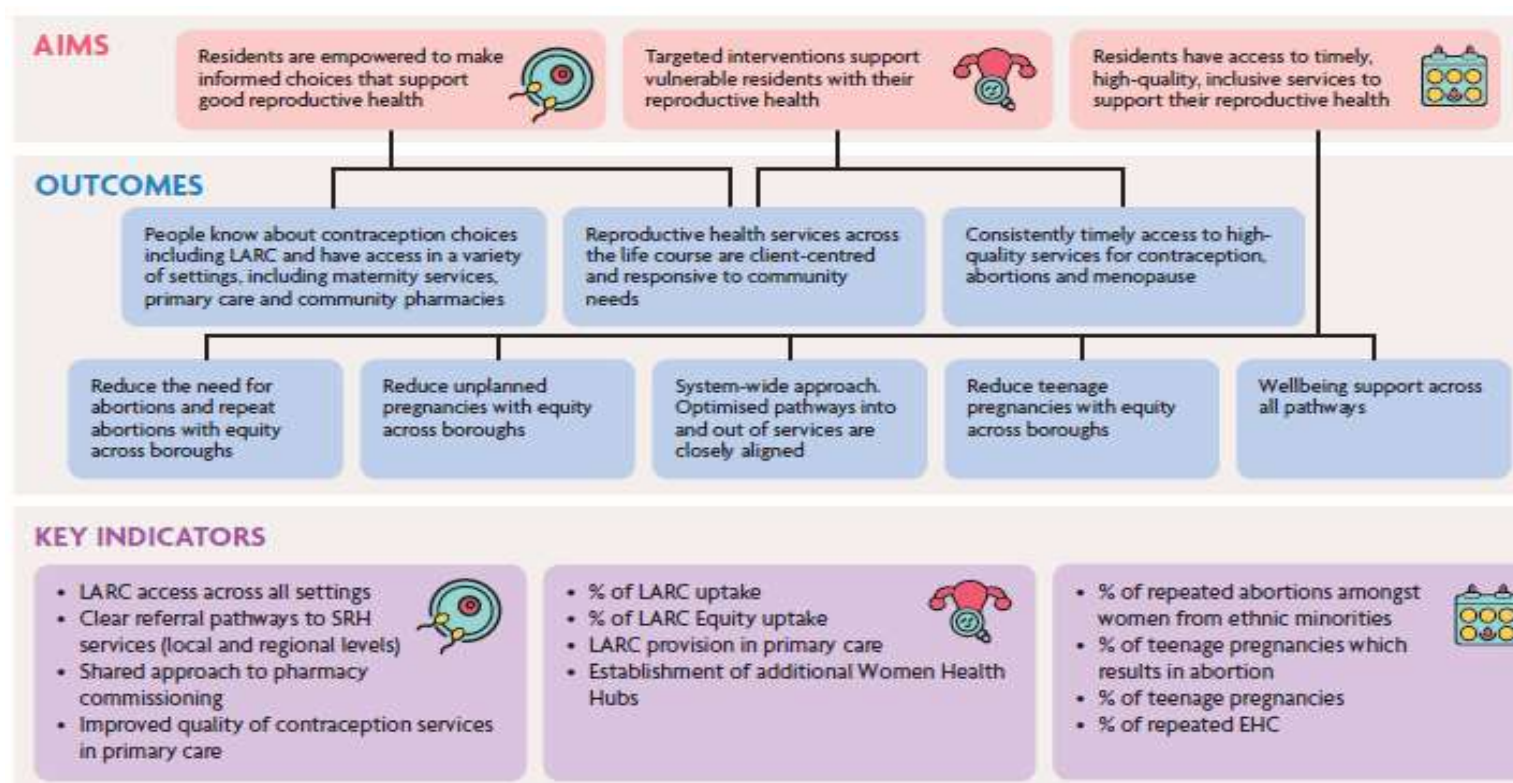
## Priority 1: Healthy and fulfilling sexual relationships



## Priority 2: Good reproductive health across the life course

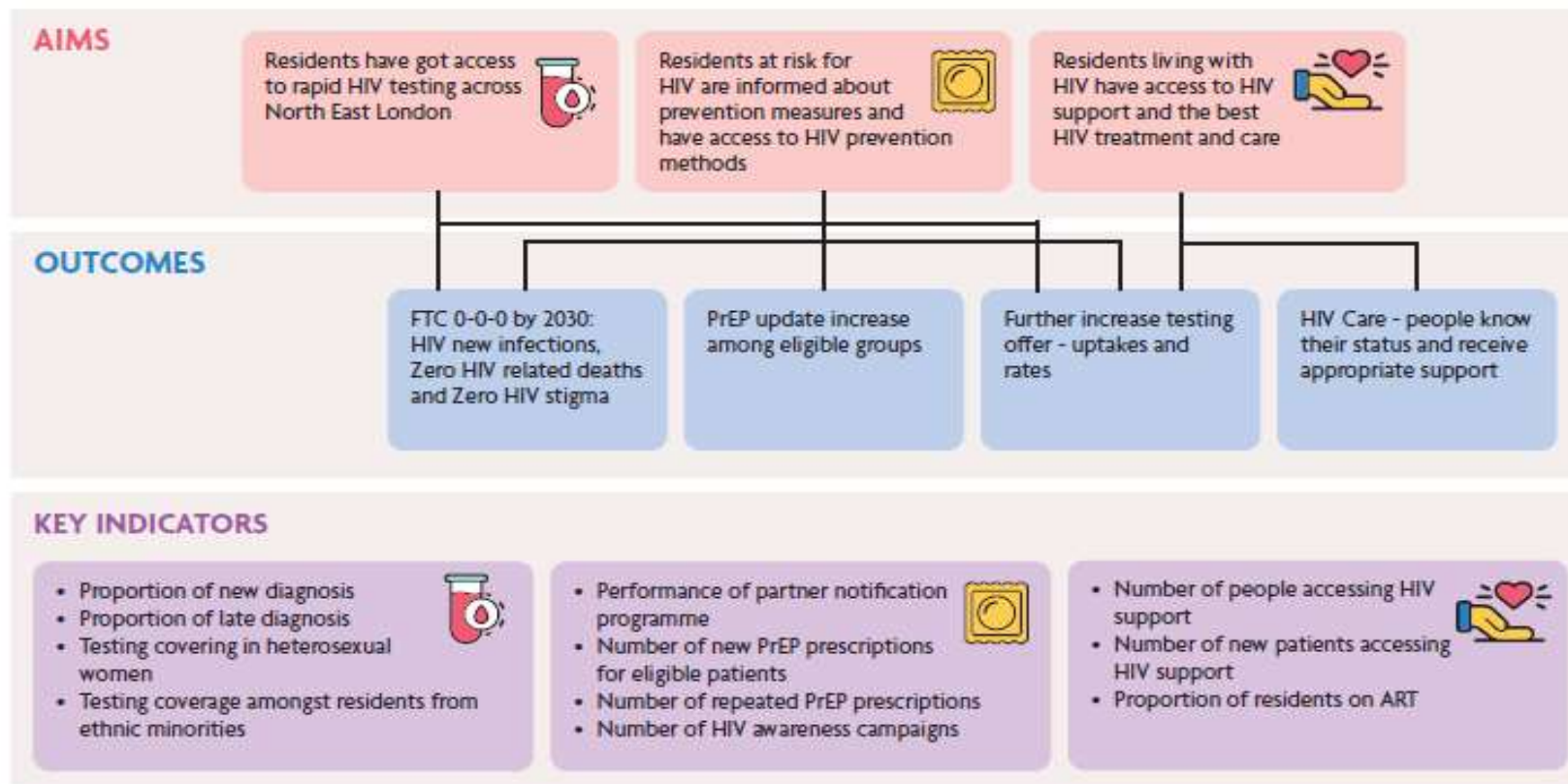


## Priority 3: High quality and innovative STI screening and treatment





## Priority 4: HIV Towards Zero transmission & Living Well



# Sexual and reproductive health strategy

## Tower Hamlets action plan for 2024-25 to be delivered by local partners



### Priority 1: Health fulfilling relationships

- Conduct a sexual and reproductive health needs survey with young people
- Map relationship, sex and health education delivered in secondary schools
- Young people's stakeholder event
- Frontline staff working with young people receive training/ refresher training on sexual violence and abuse

### Priority 2: Good reproductive health across the life course

- Engagement /co-production community on contraception options
- Increased GP LARC provision
- Increasing awareness about contraception methods among BAME communities
- Training community champions
- Evaluation of Tower Hamlets women's health hub service

### Priority 3: high quality and innovative STI testing & treatment

- Communications messaging is developed that targets population with high burden of STIs
- Resident engagement plan is developed with outreach partners and delivered to support high risk residents that don't engage with services
- Increase PrEP use in high-risk groups

### Priority 4: HIV towards zero transmission & living well with HIV

- Increase PrEP use in high-risk groups
- HIV training sessions delivered for GPs and other primary care staff.
- Continuation of HIV testing service in emergency departments
- Develop a plan for implementing the new HIV Confidential Charter to tackle stigma

### Cross cutting priorities:

- Sexual and reproductive health needs assessment to review local and make recommendations for action
- Review the SRH support needs of underserved communities ( GBMSM groups, asylum seekers, people living in hostels & sex workers)
- Reducing sexual and reproductive health stigma events
- Annual resident feedback on accessibility of the sexual health service

- The Tower Hamlets action plan has been developed by the Sexual and reproductive health *Tower Hamlets Partnership Group*, made up of key partners:
  - CVS and other charity organisations that work with local communities
  - Health Lives Team
  - Public health
  - Sexual health service & young people's service
  - Youth service
  - VAWG
  - Learning disabilities
  - Community pharmacy representative
  - Primary care representatives

The partnership group will oversee the implementation of the local action plan on a quarterly basis.

- Resident engagement took place through focus groups to check whether these were the right actions for 2024-2025.



# Governance process – system wide approach across NEL local authorities and NEL ICB



- The Health and Wellbeing Boards of each Local Authority will have oversight of the strategy.
- The HWBB have been asked to approve the strategy and action plan for NEL and Tower Hamlets. The HWBB will be updated on the progress on an annual basis.
- The strategy will be launched in September 2024
- Progress against objectives will be reviewed annually by the NEL Sexual Health Partnership Board, which will comprise of Commissioners/ Public Health, Providers and ICB representatives from across NEL.
- The Sexual Health Strategy Steering Group comprising strategic/public health/commissioning representatives from each LA will be responsible for the performance management of the strategy and will actively work with service providers to ensure efficient and effective implementation of this strategy.

**Borough-based Health and Wellbeing Board**  
- Strategy oversight

**NEL SH Commissioning Partnership Board**  
- Annual evaluation of progress against objectives

**SH Strategy Steering Group**  
- Strategy implementation and delivery

