

BAME Inequalities in accessing Mental Health Understanding why BAME communities experience inequalities in accessing mental health services

Review and Scrutiny Committee
2023

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in the Borough of Tower Hamlets



Equalities is integral to our Approach

- System wide commitment to tackling health inequalities through the North East London Integrated Care System
- Borough wide focus on Tackling Health Inequalities working with our partners and listening to a range of voices through our Tower Hamlets Together Partnerships
- ELFT wide focus on addressing disparity. Working closely with residents and stakeholders to design solutions and putting lived experience at the heart of co-production, co-delivery.
- Neighbourhood Approach – addressing the social determinants of Health & Inequality through our community services transformation. Reducing ethnic inequalities in mental health care by improving access, experience, and outcomes



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The Challenges

“Mental health services struggle to meet the needs of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. Despite this knowledge and previous attempts to engage with the BAME communities, many of the same issues remain: difficulties engaging the BAME community, an overrepresentation of BAME people in acute settings and an underrepresentation in psychological therapies.” - Lets Talk Report

- Stigma within communities leads to concerns about asking for help early
- Services are not always perceived as culturally sensitive or appropriate or capable of individualisation
- Deeper and more systematic partnership working with community organisations
- Nationally Black and Black British people are disproportionately detained under the Mental Health Act and subjected to Community Treatment Orders; have longer periods of detention and experience more repeated admissions. They are also more likely to be subject to police holding powers under the MHA. This is consistent with our data. For example, in the past year, our inpatient services have admitted 14% more Black or Black British service users than White-British people under the MHA and length of stay also varies between groups.
- National data shows an overrepresentation of black and minority ethnic communities in crisis care.
- Our equity analysis of waiting times, shows disparities with some minority ethnic groups waiting longer than others for assessment.
- Service users from certain groups are not accessing routine community mental health services as swiftly as we might expect. This may have an impact on their level of acuity at the point of needing admission to hospital.



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“Mental health cannot be tackled by any organisation working in isolation. Councils, the NHS, education, and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) must come together with people who use services (children, young people and adults), carers and advocates to ensure that each area has a joined-up and coherent strategy and that services and approaches are delivered in an integrated way.”

<https://www.local.gov.uk>

Tower Hamlets Mental Health Strategy (2019-2024)

Overseen by the Tower Hamlets Mental Health Partnership Board.

Tower Hamlets Adult Mental Health Strategy 2019-2024

Themes	Examples of actions
1. Raise awareness and understanding of the importance of good mental health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Promoting mental health and wellbeing literacy- Reducing stigma against mental health/illness- Improving social and physical environments (workplaces, community spaces, streets, air quality, housing, social inclusion/connections)
2. To ensure early help is available particularly in times of crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Improvement of Talking Therapies / IAPT- Crisis services and suicide prevention- Analysis of needs of at risk groups
3. To ensure the provision of high-quality mental health care and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Community mental health transformation- Improving support for people who use drugs/alcohol- Co-production, involvement and peer support- Improving transition from CYP to adult services

Children and Young People Priorities

Strategy/Plan	Relevance
Children and Families Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Priority 2 (Healthy Families) relates directly to mental and physical health and wellbeing• Priorities 1 (Aspiration to action) and 3 (Safe and secure) relate to social determinants of mental health
Children and Young People Mental Health Transformation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advice, prevention, and early help• Goal based interventions for CYP with moderate to complex needs• Specialist support for CYP with complex needs and/or additional vulnerabilities



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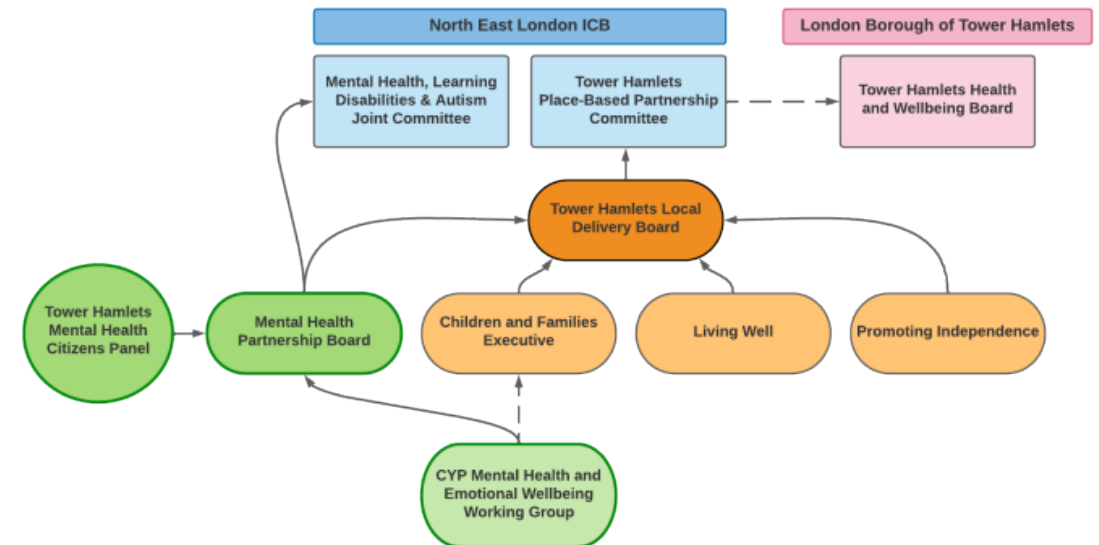
Tower Hamlets Mental Health Partnership Group

Role of the group

- Newly forming place-based, adult-focused governance group
- Oversee decisions related to mental health and wellbeing, autism and learning disabilities (including delivery of the Adult Mental Health Strategy)

Proposed structure of the group

- Accountable to the Tower Hamlets Together Delivery Board and the North East London Mental Health, Learning Disability & Autism Collaborative
- There will be a 'Citizens Panel' to enable shared decision making with residents with lived experience (e.g. service users, carers)

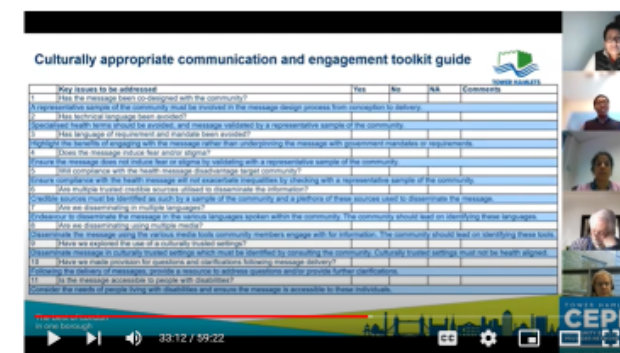


Working with our Partners in Public health

Public health have a key role in health intelligence and evidence to address wider determinants of mental health, which can affect BAME residents to a greater extent

Culturally Appropriate Health Communication and Engagement Toolkit

- Public Health project aimed at developing and implementing guidance for culturally appropriate communications and engagement (recommended by the BAME Commission)
- This involved reviewing literature as well as semi structured interviews with residents and relevant organisations
- Guidance including the checklist have been shared as a report and via a webinar to professionals working in the borough <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYmwEnHluHM>



Culturally Appropriate Health Communication and Engagement Webinar

Cultural Tailoring of Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

- Another recommendation of the BAME Commission was to co-design services by working with local communities so that they are more appropriate and accessible
- LBTH Public Health has worked with residents via trusted voluntary and community sector organisations to offer culturally tailored mental health and wellbeing activities, support, and capacity building to address stigma (Coffee Afrik, Bangladeshi Mental Health Forum, Women's Inclusive Team, Somali Senior Citizens, Praxis, and faith groups)
- ELFT Community Psychology have supported this work – through their skilled culturally relevant approaches – narrative therapies, strength-based approaches, group work, trauma-informed approaches



bmhf
Bangladeshi Mental Health Forum

Managing Well-being during Ramadan
WEBINAR

Tuesday 29th March at 2pm

This webinar is available live & recorded

To register, sign up on:
<https://forms.office.com/r/337PKtHi62>

Available for Tower Hamlets residents only

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Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors

- The Ambassadors are local residents who are employed to work in locality based teams (North West, North East, South West, South East).
- This team have capabilities to speak to people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in a sensitive way. Nearly all of come from a BAME background.
- They provide outreach to residents on specific health topics (mental health, vaccinations, cost of living, and smoking cessation); originally their focus was on covid-19.
- They have participated in a range of mental health related trainings and have materials to go out and speak with residents about mental health and signpost to services.

Tower Hamlets Together Improving Equity Programme – Talking Therapies Project

- LBTH Public Health has supported the proposal and development of an 18-month quality improvement project as part of the wider Tower Hamlets Together IEP with a focus on identifying and testing ways to improve outcomes experienced by Bangladeshi residents who use Tower Hamlets Talking Therapies or Mind Talking Therapies.
- The project was proposed on the basis that while referral rates to the service by ethnicity somewhat mirror prevalence of common mental illness in the community, recovery rates were under target (<50%) for both Bangladeshi men and women.
- The project will involve working with previous and potential patients to understand how the services provided could be improved to achieve better outcomes, then testing and evaluating change ideas for improvement.



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Patient and Carers Race Equality Framework

East London NHS Foundation Trust is one of the national pilots for the PCREF (Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework) in its London Boroughs. At its core, the PCREF aims to support NHS Mental Health Trusts to:

1. Improve their interaction with racialised and ethnically and culturally diverse communities,
2. Raise awareness of organisations' own cultural and racial bias and provide a framework to reduce them
3. Improve governance, accountability, and leadership on improving experiences of care for racialised and ethnically and culturally diverse communities

ELFT have engaged a number of community groups to identify and agree core organisational competencies requiring further development. This was followed by consultation with six charitable organisations, serving different but often overlapping communities.

- Mind in Tower Hamlets & Newham
- East London Mosque
- Coffee Afrique
- Solace Women's Aid
- London Black Women's Project
- JAMI

Workstreams to agree measurable and practical actions to define and develop Organisational Competencies in local PCREF Plan.



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“People will respond more if they know that their way of life is respected and empowered.”

- A Series of focus groups with BAME Service Users across East London to understand their experience of Mental Health Services – and views on what would make them more accessible and culturally appropriate – Culminated in the **“Lets Talk Report”**
- The aim was to:
 - Understand the experience of black and minority ethnic people with lived experience of accessing mental health services, or caring for someone accessing services. Allowing participants to share their experiences with one another and have their stories felt and validated.
 - Generate ideas for change, building on the momentum of wider Community Services Transformation within the Trust.
- Trust Working Group focused on implementing the recommendations from this report

Cultural awareness, empathy and compassion

- Mandatory Training in cultural competence for staff that includes first-hand accounts of BAME people with lived experience.
- Increasing diversity in the workforce across all professions including psychiatry and psychology

Accountability

- Staff probation period including cultural competence
- Access to independent mental health advocacy.
- Regular service user feedback forums

Accessibility of MH services

- Increasing awareness of services – community outreach
- Improve signposting to support from other services
- Move away from GP as gatekeepers- referrals from other sources
- An easy process of being accepted back into services
- Increased community support in community spaces



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Holistic understandings

- Support to reflect people's cultural, ethnic, religious sensitivities, beliefs and needs.
- Value and work with individuals belief systems and encourage access support from different services.
- Reduce stigma and misconceptions in the community to improve access
- Understand social and psychological causes of distress
- Greater involvement of families – better understand social circumstances and informal caring roles.
- Increasing access to talking therapies
- Increasing awareness of services
- Increase partnership work with third sector
- Provide support with housing, benefits, accessing legal support and finding jobs and employments

Lets Talk Report - Our Progress

- Shifting our operational culture with the introduction of new non-clinical roles. For example new peer support into clinical operational settings
- Mandatory Cultural Awareness training empowering cultural understanding and knowledge. Key training partnerships with organisations such as The Islamic Centre and Women's Inclusive Forum.
- Introduced new People Participation Workers for population groups facing health inequalities.
- Introduced a new Somali task and finish group to develop cultural awareness for the whole Trust
- Developing our services within Community Spaces– Mind in Tower Hamlets Connecting Communities; Working Well Trust Supported Employment scheme; Recovery College; Independent Advocacy.
- Expanded Early Intervention and Early Detection Service, providing holistic offer service Users are asking for including CBT for Psychosis and Family Therapy. The team is working with local Communities to ensure their approach is inclusive
- Enhancing our routine monitoring of differential experience and outcome measures, disaggregated by ethnicity, across all pathways.
- Held 'Time to Talk' days with our Partners MIND and peer support workers to support and influence uptake of interventions to support recovery and to reduce crisis within Neighbourhood Teams.
- Specific projects to improve accessibility to key services such as Psychological Therapies and IAPT
- Improving Awareness of service offer through culturally appropriate communications
- Transformed our crisis and community pathways, providing greater opportunities to avoid admission and manage deterioration in mental health in the community: community mental health teams; crisis cafes, and crisis lines



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Community Mental Health Transformation - Reducing Health Inequalities and Improving Outcomes for Underrepresented Groups

The formation of Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams

- Organising our core community mental health teams around four neighbourhoods (aligned to social care localities and Primary Care Networks)
- New ways of working which bring together professionals daily in these footprints to collaborate in providing care, and shift focus towards population health across the neighbourhood
- Blended teams, partnering with voluntary sector

The introduction of new professional roles

- Community Connectors – *Focus on connecting people to their communities*
- Clinical Associates in Psychology (CAPs) – *A new Psychological profession in applied psychology*
- Mental Health Practitioners (through ARRS Programme) – *Jointly funded roles spanning primary care and mental health*
- GP Mental Health lead – *The Primary Care voice in Neighbourhood Mental Health*

New and expanded service offers

- Recovery College learning streams for Community Inclusion and Young Adults
- New Complex Emotional Needs Pathway and new Adult Eating Disorder Service

Additional investment into Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector to tackle inequalities

- Grant schemes to tackle inequalities and build resilience
- New partnerships and projects to improve access, experience and outcomes for local communities



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