



North East London

Accessible Health Care – General Practice

December 2023

Tower Hamlets

Care Quality Commission (CQC) – Requirements of General Practice

- R2.4 Are reasonable adjustments made so that people with a disability can access and use services on an equal basis to others?
- R1.4 How does the service identify and meet the information and communication needs of people with a disability or sensory loss?
- S1.9 Do the design, maintenance and use of facilities and premises keep people safe?
- S1.2 How do systems, processes and practices protect people from abuse, neglect, harassment and breaches of their dignity and respect? How are these monitored and improved?
- S1.3 How are people protected from discrimination, which might amount to abuse or cause psychological harm? This includes harassment and discrimination in relation to protected characteristics under the Equality Act
- E1.2 What processes are in place to ensure there is no discrimination, including on the grounds of protected characteristics under the Equality Act, when making care and treatment decisions?
- R1.2 Where people's needs and choices are not being met, is this identified and used to inform how services are improved and developed?
- R1.3 Are the facilities and premises appropriate for the services that are delivered?
- C2.2 Do staff seek accessible ways to communicate with people when their protected equality or other characteristics make this necessary?

Physical Infrastructure of Primary Care Facilities & Assisted Technologies

- All GP Practices must be Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant – this makes it mandatory for all service providers that are open to the public to take reasonable steps to provide access for disabled people
- There are new builds in Tower Hamlets, built since the DDA legislation (Wellington Way, Barkantine, Blithehale, Wood Wharf, Suttons Wharf), which are all DDA compliant and built from the Department of Health Building Notes, which take into account access issues
- Some of the older buildings predating the Disabilities Act face challenges. Older premises must make 'reasonable adjustments' to be DDA compliant but can't move the bricks and mortar of the building to widen corridors for example.
- Older premises are on a longer term plan for regeneration within the Borough
- S106 funding has been made available for DDA compliant newbuilds in TH and refurbishments for older buildings
- Assisted Technologies, such as hearing loops, are paid for and installed by practices
- A practice can apply for a London Improvement Grant (LIG) to improve premises that are not compliant, for example – to redesign a waiting area where fixed chairs are making access more difficult. Funding is limited and not guaranteed

Systems to identify and address unique needs of patients with cognitive or development disabilities

- All General Practice staff in North East London have access to a Portal that hosts 'Learning Disability pages', which provide many different examples of accessible information developed for people with learning disabilities pertaining to different health needs
- A 'Learning Disability Quality Checker' service has been set up to review access to health services for people with learning disabilities [NHS England » NHS Quality Checkers toolkits](#)
- The 'Reasonable Adjustment Flag' on Practice Medical Information Systems should be mandatory early 2024, which allows all healthcare staff to immediately see key information about the patients access needs. [Reasonable Adjustment Flag - NHS Digital](#)
- The Universal Care Plan (UCP) can be digitally accessed by many parts of the health care system, particularly urgent care services, to ensure that it reflects the needs of people with learning disabilities. This can be used as a way of communicating people's support needs and adjustments required when accessing health care services [About – Universal Care Plan \(onelondon.online\)](#)
- Tower Hamlets has a Learning Disabilities Clinical Lead for x1 session a week to support primary care

Resources to assist patients in navigating administrative process

Every Practice in Tower Hamlets has a Policy for Digitally Excluded Patients, with processes in place to manage appointments for patients who do not have digital access. These policies are updated annually and have been reviewed by the Digital Transformation Clinical Lead and LBTH Digital Exclusion Lead

Below are extracts taken from practice policies in TH:

- To register digitally excluded patients, the practices will complete these registrations with patients in paper form
- All contact numbers are input correctly on the patient's record. Admin and reception teams will regularly check this
- Digitally excluded patients are asked how they would like to be contacted. This will be done through 'make every contact count', letters, emails, Patient Participation Groups, and innovative/opportunistic ways of engaging with patients such as community events
- Those that walk in and book an appointment receive an appointment slip as they won't receive reminder texts
- Practice information can be accessed by coming to the practice and seeking information face to face. During this encounter, residents may also have access to printed material subject to the nature of their enquiry and the availability of material

Accessible Formats – working example in primary care

- From April 2023 Practices in TH are required to send young people a letter with leaflet when turning aged 14 years on how they can access primary care and other services
- Development of the leaflet included:
 - **Factual** – based on NHS reputable sources
 - **Co-produced** – involved patient voice
 - **Culturally appropriate** – used toolkit from LBTH
 - **Accessible** – easy read – visuals and text size/font, audio version via QR code – Speech Language Therapy (SLT) and others input
 - **Digital version** – hosted by spotlight [Know Your Rights – Health Care | Spotlight \(wearespotlight.com\)](https://wearespotlight.com)

Tower Hamlets “YP health rights” leaflet



Are you under 18? - Know your Rights!

Did you know that the way you can get health care will start changing.

This includes how you can:

- Get appointments with a health professional.

Someone who is paid to look after your health - like a doctor, nurse or therapist.



- Get a repeat prescription.

A letter from the doctor saying you need more of the medicine you had before.



- See your medical records

What the health professional writes about you.



- Health care is private.

You decide:

- If you want, your parent or carer can still come with you to appointments.
- You can also talk to us without anyone else knowing.
- It is important that adults in your life know that this is OK.



Contacting your GP

Check the letter from your GP to find:

- Phone Number
- Email
- Website



Contact them to find out more about making your own appointments.

Important

We need to check with you how you want to be contacted and will ask you at your next appointment.



We look forward to listening to you and supporting you.

Hear this Leaflet out loud
And get links to support:

www.wearespotlight.com/your-rights



please get in touch with your GP if you need this leaflet in a bigger font.

Some other places you can contact for your health care in Tower Hamlets:

Health Spot

A young people's GP Clinic in Spotlight. See a Doctor or specialist Nurse for free.

www.wearespotlight.com/health-spot
Contact Treaser: treaser@wearespotlight.com
Call: 07734 346 127



Safe East Sexual Health and Substance Misuse support

Call: 020 3954 0091
Email: compass.towerhamletsyphws@nhs.net



Barnardo's Young People's Mental Health support / counselling

Call: 0203 988 4706
Email: emotionalwb-lh@barnados.org.uk



Kooth Online Counselling and Support

www.kooth.com



CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service)

Call: 0207 426 2375

24 hour Mental Health Crisis Line

Call: 0800 073 003

The NHS App

From the age of 13 you can use the NHS APP to manage appointments and order repeat prescriptions.
<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/>



More information

Here is a great website.

It tells you more about your rights in healthcare and how to see a doctor:

<https://www.seeingthegp.co.uk/>



We are Spotlight

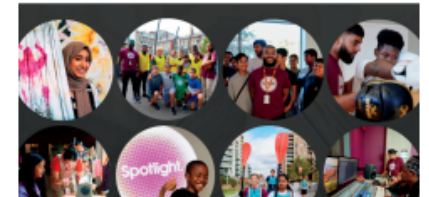
Health Spot is part of Spotlight - Tower Hamlet's number one youth destination.

Open to Inspire. Get involved in arts, music, sports, empowerment, work pathways and much more.

Also, it's all free!

www.wearespotlight.com

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Training for Healthcare staff

- The Tower Hamlets Training Hub are holding an awareness session for all practice staff on the Disabilities Competency Programme, with training delivery to commence in January 2024
- Public Health Embedding Disability Awareness Pilot (EDAP) training for practices – seeking expressions of interest
- Oliver McGowan Mandatory training is being rolled out across health services. [The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism | Health Education England \(hee.nhs.uk\)](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/learning-disability-and-autism)

Embedding Disability Awareness Pilot (EDAP) – hosted by Tower hamlets Public Health

- Two TH practices have taken part in the EDAP so far, with others expressing interest

Practice participation includes:

- Training - upskill staff and build awareness for how they can make their services equal at the point of entry, and adjust their behaviours, actions and services to meet different people's access needs
- Enter and View – Assessing access from finding a GP to personalised care plans
- Making reasonable adjustments (furniture layout, desk height)

Feedback mechanism for patients to report any challenges they face in accessing health care services and how feedback is used to improve services

All complaints are processed through the ICB, unless made directly to the GP Practice. The ICB complaints team is currently reviewing the complaints process to ensure it is accessible itself to all patients and residents by addressing the following concerns:

- Can we send residents complaint leaflets to explain what we do and how patients can access us
- What do we have in place for patients with the following disabilities – hard of hearing, deaf, learning disabilities or visual impaired, blind – how do patients know how to access these additional services if they need support
- How do we request interpreter services if we need them or need leaflets or letters or consent translated
- Patient leaflet and consent forms to be in easy read format
- The ICB complaints team is available to meet with individual practices for support
- Practices routinely carry out patient surveys. Specific questions regarding accessibility could be considered

Healthwatch

Healthwatch has highlighted the following:

- Residents with disabilities told us that it is important to have GP services near home
- Disabled residents are less likely to think that they have good access to spaces for play and recreation compared to residents with no disabilities – creating health inequalities
- Autism has prevented some residents from accessing GP services