

Tower Hamlets Sexual Health Services are changing

Barts Health are changing how and where sexual and reproductive health services are delivered in Tower Hamlets. We're bringing together Sylvia Pankhurst Centre, currently based at Mile End Hospital alongside Ambrose King Centre (AKC) based at Royal London Hospital to form a comprehensive one stop service for all walk in sexual and reproductive health care.

The, new, integrated service will offer extended opening hours across six days of the week, in newly refurbished premises, with excellent transport links, delivered by skilled, experienced staff.

We have also reviewed our community based services for Tower Hamlets residents, and have developed a revised schedule of services delivered across the Borough to maximise access to sexual and reproductive health care.

In addition to these changes we have been working extensively with community pharmacy to ensure that free access to condoms, emergency contraception and self-sampled STI and HIV testing are widely accessible across 46 venues.

Why are we making these changes?

Tower Hamlets has some of the highest rates of sexual health needs and problems across the UK, and demand for support care and treatment continues to increase year on year. This creates particular challenges for Local Authorities to fund these services at current levels. Tower Hamlets Council have approved a savings plan to reduce spending on sexual health services which comes into effect from October 2016.

Barts Health is working closely with LB Tower Hamlets to carefully review the needs of the resident population. We are both invested in ensuring our services are providing high quality, safe care to the community, with a key focus on targeting those at greatest need. We also recognise the need for services to be efficient, responsive to patient need and cost-effective.

What will this mean?

From 10th October 2016 Ambrose King Centre will become the hub for sexual and reproductive health care in Tower Hamlets, offering extended walk-in services for 46 hours per week, over six days, with clinics open four evenings.

Sylvia Pankhurst Clinic will offer booked, nurse led sexual and reproductive health services, as part of a refreshed community clinic schedule across four days of the week. Our revised 11 hour timetable takes into account both young people and adults living in Tower Hamlets, with convenient, discreet access across the borough.

Increasingly more sexual and reproductive health care can be accessed across a range of primary care services

Tower Hamlets General Practices are able to test and treat sexual health problems and offer a range of contraceptive care, in addition to providing advice and referral onto specialist services where required.

Community pharmacy plays an important role in provision of healthcare and advice to the population. Tower Hamlets pharmacists are now able to offer a range of services to Tower Hamlets residents including access to STI and HIV testing, emergency contraception and condom provision. These services are free, discreet and accessible 7 days per week across the Borough.

We will be publishing a revised confirmed timetable for all Barts Health delivered sexual health services at the end of September.

Your Feedback matters

We recognise that some people may find it more difficult to give open feedback or raise concerns about changes to sexual health services, so we have established a confidential email address with which to contact us with your opinions, suggestions or concerns. We will be consulting with stakeholders regarding our proposed changes and will be reviewing implemented changes to ensure our services remain accessible to all.

Whitechapel.integration@bartshealth.nhs.uk