

## Committee: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020

## Subject: Merton Joint Sexual Health Strategy and implementation plan

Lead officer: Dr Dagmar Zeuner, Director of Public Health

Lead member: Cllr Tobin Byers, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment

Contact officer: Julia Groom, Consultant in Public Health /Kate Milsted, Sexual Health Commissioning Manager

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### Recommendations:

That the Health and Wellbeing Board members:

- A. ***approve and endorse the final borough wide sexual health strategy and implementation plan;***
  - B. ***note the work completed in response to their earlier comments on the draft strategy.***
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## 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report sets out the steps followed in the development of the final local authority and CCG sexual health strategy (2020-2025) for Merton, which have been made since the proposed vision and priorities were presented at a previous board meeting on 28th June 2019.
- 1.2. When the strategy was brought to the board meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June, members requested that the final version of the strategy along with the implementation plan be brought to a subsequent meeting for approval.
- 1.3. Board members are requested to approve and endorse the final version of the strategy and the associated implementation plan.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. A sexual health strategy for Merton has been developed to provide a joined up response to sexual health, by detailing how partners will collaboratively respond to increasing STI and HIV rates and the subsequent pressure on services. The long-term goal is to improve outcomes in sexual health and sexual well-being and access to services in the borough, which should in turn reduce the cost to the broader health and social economy.
- 2.2. The public health team undertook a comprehensive sexual health needs assessment, which has informed the vision, strategies and actions in the strategy.
- 2.3. A strategy development steering group was set up to oversee the development of the sexual health needs assessment, strategy and implementation plan. The group was co-chaired by Dr Tim Hodgson (GP

lead for sexual health, Merton CCG) and Julia Groom (Public Health Consultant lead for sexual health). All key partners were represented on this group.

- 2.4. Face-to-face consultation with over 300 professionals working in the borough has taken place as well as 123 focus groups held with young people. 1,283 people also provided feedback into the process via online surveys.

### **3 DETAILS**

- 3.1 The draft vision and priorities for the joint sexual health strategy were presented to the Health and Well-Being board meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The recommendations were agreed and it was requested that the final strategy and implementation plan were brought back to the board for agreement and endorsement.

- 3.2 At the meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> June board members asked for further consideration of how:

- older people are supported with their sexual health needs;
- Merton are working together with other local authorities;
- the principles that applied to successful work on the teenage pregnancy strategy can be utilised;
- links with other services, including mental health can be made.

- 3.3 The strategy steering group reviewed these areas and have addressed them within the strategy priorities and implementation plan. Actions include:

- a review of how services meet the needs of older people and engagement with those aged 50+ to further understand their needs;
- desk top research into good practice examples of how to meet the needs of those ageing with HIV;
- joint working with commissioners in South West London to standardise and re-commission pharmacy sexual health services across the sector;
- referral pathways developed and adopted between the integrated sexual health service and mental health and substance misuse service.
- development of a multi-agency steering group to oversee the actions identified in the sexual health implementation plan, ensuring a senior level champion is identified;

- 3.4 On the 5<sup>th</sup> November, the Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Group considered and commented on the draft sexual health strategy. They did not propose any changes, but had a helpful discussion about how much cross cutting and intersectionality exists between groups most affected by sexual health issues. The Director of Public Health informed

that there is some overlap but that the strategy seeks to strengthen this under priority three, a comprehensive approach. They were informed that focus groups with those who do not traditionally engage with services has been undertaken, to ensure actions to destigmatise sexual health issues amongst certain groups have been included in the implementation plan.

3.5 Since the board meeting on 28th June, the draft strategy and implementation plan has been presented to the following meetings and any feedback received has been incorporated. All these groups have supported the final version of the strategy and implementation plan:

1. Merton CCG Patient Engagement Group
2. Merton Local Medical Committee
3. Merton Children's Trust Board
4. Merton CCG Clinical Oversight Group
5. London Borough of Merton Corporate Management Team
6. Merton CCG Executive Management Team

3.6 In September, the draft version of the strategy and the implementation plan were sent to all groups who were initially consulted on the proposed vision and priorities, allowing them another opportunity to comment. Only a few minor changes were requested and these have been made.

#### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

Not applicable

#### **5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

Extensive consultation has been undertaken with residents, professionals who work in Merton, and those studying or looked after in the borough.

#### **6 TIMETABLE**

Please see below some key milestones in the next steps for strategy progress:

**Feb 2020:** Membership of the strategy development steering group will be reviewed, and a new strategy implementation steering group formed. This group will oversee the strategy implementation plan.

**March 2020:** First meeting of the strategy implementation group and work on the implementation plan commences.

**March 2020:** Strategy is published on the London borough of Merton website, and distributed to stakeholders.

**Sept 2020:** Six month review meeting of implementation plan progress.

## **7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

There has been no cost incurred whilst developing the strategy except staff time. The implementation plan will be delivered within existing budgets and staff resources.

## **8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

The strategy will have oversight of the following areas, which are the legal and statutory responsibility of local authorities:

- The statutory duty to secure the provision, for their residents, of open access services for contraception and for testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), which will come into effect in September 2020.

## **9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Assessment of need, research and consultation conducted indicates that there is recognised disparity and inequality of sexual health between different population groups. Young people, gay men, and black and minority ethnic groups are disproportionately affected by poor sexual health.

9.2 The strategy and corresponding implementation plan aim to address this disparity, and ensure equality and equity of access to education and sexual health services in the borough, with particular emphasis on these most vulnerable groups.

9.3 A equality impact assessment has been carried out and the results fed into the strategy and implementation plan.

## **10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are strong links between sexual health and wellbeing and domestic violence, sexual exploitation and abuse. The police and Sexual Assault and Referral Centres (SARC) are key partners in the strategy.

## **11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

None

## **12 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

Appendix 1: Merton joint sexual health strategy 2020-25

Appendix 2: Merton implementation plan: 2020-2025

## **13 BACKGROUND PAPERS - None**