

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Re-Procurement of the Pan-London Sexual Health E-Service (AH/2025/06)	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Cabinet	DATE 4 June 2025
STRATEGIC CONTEXT We Make Camden is our joint vision for the borough, developed in partnership with our community. This strategy supports the We Make Camden commitments to ensure that Camden communities support good health, wellbeing, and connection for everyone so that they can start well, live well and age well. This commissioning strategy has been informed by a local comprehensive needs assessment of sexual health and a detailed review of activity within the current contract. The Way We Work is the Council's response to We Make Camden. These proposals contribute to the commitments and ambitions relating to the way Camden works to support its citizens: working creatively and beyond service silos in the provision of innovative and integrated provision. This re-procurement will require the provider to work in partnership with key delivery partners locally and across London to ensure the service is accessible for all residents. Improved data collection of protected characteristics will be used to inform the delivery model to ensure the service offer is equitable for all residents and removes barriers to access.	
SUMMARY OF REPORT This report seeks the approval to enter into an inter-agency agreement with the City of London Corporation (CoL) for the re-commissioning and delivery of the Pan-London Sexual Health E-Service. CoL will lead on behalf of Camden Council and 31 other London boroughs. The Sexual Health E-Service provides at home asymptomatic sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing kits and contraception to residents as an alternative to attending in-person clinics. Camden Council are part of the existing arrangement in which Preventx Limited have been the service provider since 2017. The service performs well against KPIs and has remained responsive in adapting the service offer to meet the needs of residents. For example scaling up their online offer during the covid-19 pandemic and developing and delivering additional services such as an online contraception. Performance of the contract is monitored by London Sexual Health Programme's E-Service Management Board, in which Camden are active members.	

The report is being submitted to Cabinet for approval as required by Contract Standing Order C4.

Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information

No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.

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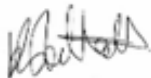
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RECOMMENDATIONS

That, having considered the equalities impact assessment (Appendix 1) and having due regard to the obligations set out in section 149 of the Equality Action 2010, the Cabinet is asked:

1. To authorise that City of London Corporation undertake the commissioning of the Pan-London Sexual Health E-Service on behalf of Camden Council.
2. To delegate authority to award the contract to the Director of Health and Wellbeing following consultation with the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care.
3. To delegate authority to the Director of Health and Wellbeing to vary the contract where new services are brought online or additional grants provided by Central Government.

Signed:



Date: 23 May 2025

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report sets out the commissioning strategy for the Pan London Sexual Health E-Service when contract with the current provider, Preventx Limited, comes to an end on 15th August 2026. It considers the commissioning options available to the Council before making a recommendation on the preferred option for the future of the service. The focus of the recommended option is to re-commission the service with the City Of London Corporation leading the procurement on behalf of Camden Council and 31 other London authorities via and inter agency agreement.
- 1.2 Local authorities are responsible for commissioning most sexual health interventions and services as part of their wider public health responsibilities, with costs met from the ring-fenced public health grant. While local authorities can make decisions about provision based on local need, there are also specific legal requirements ensuring the provision of certain services, which are set out in the Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013.
- 1.3 Locally Camden commissions an Integrated Sexual Health Service with the London Boroughs of Barnet, Haringey and Islington. This service provides comprehensive clinic based sexual health services for Camden residents. The Pan London Sexual Health E-Service supplements this by offering access to some Sexual Health Services online.
- 1.4 The current service offers; testing for a range of sexually transmitted infections including chlamydia, gonorrhoea, HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B and hepatitis C via samples residents can collect at home. Residents can also access a variety of contraceptive pills, patches and condoms.
- 1.5 Camden Council are part of the existing arrangement with City of London Corporation, in which the existing provider, Preventx Limited, have been delivering the service since 2017. Whilst there have been changes in the levels of activity since the contract began, e.g. increase in online access to services during the covid-19 pandemic, the core objectives and outcomes of the service have remained unchanged.
- 1.6 The re-commissioning of this service will increase its online offering through access to online PrEP. Currently PrEP is provided in clinics via Camden's Integrated Sexual Health Service contract. To increase the reach of PrEP local authorities will be able to 'switch on' online PrEP access under the new Pan London Sexual Health E-Service. This will be done based on individual borough requirements.
- 1.7 Local authorities now have to arrange relevant health care services, such as these, by following The Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Regulations 2023, which came into effect on 1 January 2024. City of London Corporation are proposing to use the Competitive Process available under the PSR 2023 Regulations to award the new contract. The new contract will begin on or around 15th August 2026 for sixty (60) months, with two twenty-four (24) months extension options at an annual value for Camden of £650,000

p.a. (£5,850,000 over the lifetime of the contract). The service is activity led and can fluctuate but the proposed contract value is based on an average activity from previous years.

National and Local Context

- 1.8 Most of the adult population of England is sexually active, and there are long term changes in the sexual attitudes, lifestyles and behaviours across much of the population. Access to high quality sexual health services improves the health and wellbeing of individuals, populations and is an important public health priority in Camden, including addressing significant inequalities in sexual health between population groups. The need for services that can respond to the needs of different communities and with the aim of reducing the rate of STIs is set out in the recently published STI Prioritisation Framework.
- 1.9 Commissioning responsibilities for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), sexual and reproductive health have undergone major changes since April 2013, and are currently distributed between NHS England, Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). A Framework for Sexual Health Improvement, published in 2013, set out national ambitions for the new sexual health system in England.
- 1.10 Councils are mandated to secure the provision of open access sexual health services, including contraception and the testing, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and testing and diagnosis of HIV. The Sexual Health E-Service provides access to online testing and contraception to any resident within London via self referral.
- 1.11 City of London Corporation leads the current Pan-London Sexual Health E-Service contract, which consists of 31 London boroughs. This partnership has been successful to date and the London Sexual Health Programme has recently published a London Sexual Health Needs Assessment where a key recommendation highlights the need to continue E-Service provision.
- 1.12 Camden's HIV prevalence rate of 9 per 1,000 people aged 15-59 in 2022 is categorised as extremely high by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). In 2021/22 Camden ranked 5th highest out of 148 upper tier local and unitary local authorities in England, rising from 8th in 2021. London has a higher prevalence of HIV than England and when compared to similar London boroughs Camden ranks 4th out of 16. The HIV prevalence rate showed a steady downward trajectory in Camden with a 15% reduction over the previous two years, until 2020, when it began to climb. This differs from the National picture where the prevalence rate has remained relatively stable.
- 1.13 Nationally, STIs and HIV are known to disproportionately effect gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) and Black ethnic minorities. In London, rates of STIs tend to be highest in the more deprived and inner-city areas. Reducing the rate of STI transmission and infection in these groups will remain a priority. Young people suffer from STIs at a higher rate than any other age group. UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) report that young people are at a higher risk as they typically have more sexual partners and

are less likely to use protection. They are also at an increased risk of re-infection. Camden's Sexual Health Needs Assessments also finds the highest positive tests in men who have sex with men (MSM).

- 1.14 While the overall number of new STIs is stable in London, there is a concerning increase in gonorrhoea and syphilis in MSM and persistent high rates of STIs relative to the rest of the country, with Camden's rate at 2,082 per 100,000 residents which is above the average for London (1229 per 100,000). The rates of gonorrhoea and syphilis have been consistently higher in Camden than in London since 2012. The upward trend in gonorrhoea and syphilis between 2016 and 2019 reversed during the covid-19 pandemic but has since risen to above pre-pandemic levels. The rate of gonorrhoea compared to England (149 per 100,000) is much higher in Camden (590 per 100,000).
- 1.15 Syphilis rates were trending downward, reaching a low point in 2020, but have since risen. Camden has much higher rates than regional (40.4 per 100,000) and national levels (13.3 per 100,000).
- 1.16 Teenage conception rates have fallen significantly since the late 1990s in Camden and are below national rates. In 2021, Camden had an under 18 pregnancy rate of approximately 10 per 1,000 compared to 10 and 13 per 1,000 in London and England.
- 1.18 Abortion rates in 2021 in Camden (13.2 per 1,000) were lower than the national average (19.2 per 1,000). National trends reported via Office for National Statistics (ONS) suggest a steady reduction in abortion rate in the over 25 age group, this does not appear to be the case in Camden where rates have remained relatively stable. In 2021 the proportion of repeat abortions among women under 25 in Camden (24%) was slightly lower than that in England (29%).

2. PROPOSAL AND REASONS

- 2.1 The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced a new set of rules for selecting providers of health care services in England: the Provider Selection Regime (PSR), which came into force in January 2024. The regime aims to introduce a flexible and proportionate process for selecting providers of health care services so that decisions are made in the best interest of the people who use them. The Pan London Sexual Health E-Service is within the scope of the new regime.
- 2.2 The PSR is a set of rules for procuring health care services in England by organisations termed relevant authorities, these include local authorities. The PSR has introduced three provider selection processes that relevant authorities can follow to award contracts for health care services. These are the:
 - Direct award processes (A, B and C);
 - Most suitable provider; and
 - Competitive process

The City of London Corporation is proposing to use the Competitive Process available under the PSR 2023 Regulations to award the new contract. This option enables all local authorities who are part of the Pan London Sexual Health E-Service inter-agency agreement the opportunity to source a provider who can deliver the best quality service for the most economically advantageous price.

- 2.3 The re-procurement of this service will be managed via the Pan London E-Service Management Board. Agreement on service specification, evaluation processes and award will be discussed and agreed in this forum with all London authorities who form part of the inter-agency agreement.

3. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option 1: Do Nothing. This option is not viable. As stated above local authorities are mandated to secure the provision of open access sexual health services, including for community contraception and the testing, diagnosis and treatment of STIs and testing and diagnosis of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Option 2: Camden does not enter into an inter-agency agreement with City of London Corporation and commissions their own Sexual Health E-Service. Although this option is available it is not recommended. The pan-London online service offer is a very effective way of delivering STI testing and contraception in terms of both cost and ease of access for residents. A Camden only e-service would come at considerably greater cost to the borough. There is also a clear benefit in having a consistent cross-borough offer that is able to respond quickly to the needs of Camden, and London, residents and avoids confusing and potentially losing residents who may access a 'London' service only to be turned away to access the Camden service.

Option 3: Camden enters into an inter-agency agreement with the City of London Corporation to lead the re-procurement of the Pan London Sexual Health E-Service.

Option 3 is the preferred option as it provides the most economically advantageous option with the least disruption to residents accessing the service.

4. WHAT ARE THE KEY IMPACTS / RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

Risk	Impact	Mitigation strategy
Governance timescales in Camden do not align with City of London timescales.	Camden are not able to approve	Camden can be 'named' in the process and join the contract at any point up until 15th August 2026 with no disruption to residents.
Social value outcomes are not aligned with Camden	Social value is being led by City of London on behalf of 31 boroughs so Camden's influence on the reportable outcomes will be limited.	Social value outcomes will be developed and reported back through the Pan-London E-service Management Board, of which Camden is a participating member.

PrEP activity comes online and demand is high.	Once PrEP activity becomes available through the e-service activity may increase which could create a financial pressure on the service.	Commissioners to phase in PrEP function and carefully monitor any shift in PrEP from face to face clinic activity to online and manage services accordingly.
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5. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT

5.1 As part of their pan-London sexual and reproductive health needs assessment, the London Sexual Health Programme (LSHP) team compiled a list of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE) and Community Advocates operating in London for priority groups and invited them to be interviewed during summer 2024. Interviewees were asked the questions about their Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) online and in-person service needs. Salient points raised during the interview process were identified through thematic analysis of the transcripts. General findings relevant to all sexual health services and those specific to the e-service have been included in the Equalities Impact Assessment Form completed by City of London on behalf of London Boroughs (Appendix 1).

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council is required to carry out its procurement activities in accordance with the Council’s Contract Standing Orders. Legal Services have reviewed this report in light of the Council’s Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) and the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 (“PSR”).

6.2 Legal Services have assessed the strategy set out in this report and believe the recommendations are in compliance with CSOs and the PSR.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The report proposes that Camden enters an inter-agency agreement, led by the City of London Corporation (CoL), to reprocure the Pan-London Sexual Health E-Service under the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) 2023.

7.2 The service provides online STI testing and contraception.

7.3 The contract will run for an initial 60 months, with two optional 24-month extensions. Camden’s estimated spend is £650,000 per annum, totalling £5.85M over the full potential 9-year term and will be funded from the existing Sexual Health Budget.

7.4 The projected spend for Camden Council over the lifetime of the proposed contract for the Pan London Sexual Health E-Service is as follows:

- Annual projected spend: £650,000
- Total projected spend over the full contract term (including optional extensions): £5,850,000

This total is based on an initial 5year contract (60 months), plus two possible 2year extensions (24 months each), making a total potential contract duration of 9 years.

The cost is activity led, so while £650,000 is based on average usage in recent years, actual annual spend may fluctuate depending on demand.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Environmental initiatives will continue to be a key consideration in the delivery of the e-service. The current service delivered by Preventx Limited has recently been awarded 'Environmental Sustainability Project of the Year' at the HSJ Partnership Awards 2025 through;

- Replacing rigid plastic clamshell containers with soft, recyclable transport pouches.
- Reducing plastic use from 24g per kit to just 1.6g
- Maintaining safety standards whilst cutting environmental impact

8.2 This has achieved an 80% reduction in single use plastic, 10 tonnes of plastic waste saved annually across the UK and a carbon saving of over 26 tonnes of CO2 per year.

8.3 As part of the re-procurement of this service City Of London Corporation will be asking prospective bidders to sustain and further improve on the positive environmental initiatives already in place.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Key milestones	Indicative Date (or range)
Procurement strategy report – Cabinet	4th June 2025
Tender advert	June 2025
Invitations to tender issued	26th June 2025 (indicative)
Deadline for submission of tenders	September 2025
Tender evaluation and clarification period	September 2025
Contract Award (TG2) – CPB	TBC
Contract Award Report – Chief Officer in consultation with Cabinet Member	Feb 2026 – March 2026
Winning Tenderer's Social Value Delivery Plan logged	Feb 2026 – March 2026
Alcatel (10 day standstill procedure)	Feb 2026 – March 2026
Contract signature / sealing	Feb 2026 – March 2026
Transition to the new arrangements	Feb 2026 – March 2026
Contract start date	15th August 2026

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – EQIA completed by City of London on behalf of London Boroughs

REPORT ENDS