

GP Care Group



Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24



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Our Mission

To improve the health and wellbeing of the residents of boroughs that we serve by providing excellent community and primary care in partnership with others.

Our Values

Work together for patients

Be the difference

Be respectful

Be kind

Be the best we can

Everyone counts

For more information, visit the annual report page on our website:
gpcaregroup.org/annualreport

ABOUT THE GP CARE GROUP

Over the years, the GP Care Group has found its place within the local health and care landscape, working in partnership with organisations like Barts Health, ELFT, Tower Hamlets Council/ public health and voluntary sector organisations.

This growth is illustrated by our annual revenue, which has jumped from £0.2m in 2014 to £41m in 2024. We proudly deliver borough-wide primary care and community health services within Tower Hamlets, such as the 0-19 children and family service which includes Health Visiting and School Health, now also delivered in Waltham Forest.

Tower Hamlets Out of Hours GP services, Urgent Treatment Centre based in Royal London Hospital, health advocacy and interpreting services and the patient experience team are also among the services we provide.

Our year in numbers



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF GP CARE GROUP



Dr Simon Brownleader
**Chair of GP Care
Group CIC**

Another dynamic and eventful year has flown by, marked by significant changes on social, financial, political, and global fronts – all of which have impacted us in various ways. While we navigated both highs and lows, we continue to press forward as an organisation and continue to deliver excellent services for the populations that we serve.

During the year 2023/24, there were numerous notable achievements within our organisation, a clear testament to the skill, professionalism and passion of our workforce. During the autumn, we received the incredible news that our Tower Hamlets Health Visiting and Family Partnership team achieved the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) level three status. The accreditation is a mark of quality care and gives babies and mothers in Tower Hamlets an extra level of assurance of the care provided by the Care Group.

Staying on the support we offer for families with young children, our Health Visiting team joined hundreds of families over several months as part of the launch of Family Hubs within Tower Hamlets, offering visibility, support and guidance.

Supporting our local community remains a key commitment of the Care Group, which is why I was particularly proud of the Women in Motion programme, delivered in partnership with local charity Women’s Inclusive Team. Learn more about this further in this report.

The year also saw our Tower Hamlets Urgent Treatment Centre and GP Out of Hours service receive an overall “Good” rating from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) following a routine inspection. The rating is a clear reflection of the commitment and hard work of our workforce and partners to ensure patients get the very best care when they use our services.

We bid farewell to two valued Board members, Dr Phil Bennett-Richards and Dr Marco Bocchino, whose contributions were instrumental in guiding us over the years. We sincerely thank them for their dedication and service. We also welcomed two new Board members, Petr Knava and Meher Hossain, representing Networks 1 and 7, respectively, and we look forward to their fresh perspectives and leadership.

As we look ahead, I want to express my gratitude to all our employees for their dedication, resilience, and hard work throughout the year. Your efforts are the driving force behind our success, and together, we will continue to thrive and make a difference.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



Zainab Arian
**Chief Executive Officer,
GP Care Group**

During 2023/24, we consolidated our position as a provider of high-quality community and primary care services in Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, while continuing to provide vital support to general practice in Tower Hamlets.

We built on our founding principles of providing a voice to primary care; being an at-scale provider; providing system resilience to general practice; and delivering social value.

This annual report is structured around our three areas of work:

- Federated Support
- Preferred Provider
- Anchor Organisation.

Federated Support

To support our busy general practices throughout 2023/24, we worked closely with Primary Care Networks to deliver Extended Access Hub appointments. Our collaborative and flexible working approach allowed us to offer more than 37,000 appointments, including almost 12,000 GP appointments, across evenings and weekends for our local population.

Through our Care Group partnership model, we continued to support Jubilee Street Practice and Island Health practices, so that they can continue their excellent work. This model has many benefits, including removing financial risks from partners, providing a guaranteed income and supporting practice transformation.

In addition, we saw an impressive boost in childhood immunisation numbers during the year, with particularly good improvements in measles, mumps and

rubella (MMR) vaccination rates. Learn more about this further in this report.

Preferred Provider

We are proud of the progress in providing vital healthcare services to residents of Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. Our 0-19 service in Waltham Forest celebrated its first year of operation with the Care Group in July 2023, following the transfer to our organisation the previous year.

Our Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel had another busy year, with more than 95,000 patients receiving care. We were pleased that the UTC, together with our GP Out of Hours service, received a 'Good' rating from the Care Quality Commission – with inspectors highlighting the respect and compassion shown to patients by our staff.

Anchor Organisation

As a community interest company, our ethos is rooted in developing and supporting communities. During 2023/24 we carried out a great deal of work to widen participation in the job market, such as hosting the

North East London Employability Programme, offering apprenticeships and supporting work placements. Our Anchor Organisation work will grow year on year, as we look to hire local, buy local, and deepen our links within the communities we serve.

Outlook and prospects

During the year to March 2024, we maintained our position as a leading provider of healthcare services in Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and across North East London (NEL). We are widely regarded as an innovative organisation that cares about the people who work for us, with us, and most of all, residents who access the services we provide.

I would like to thank all Care Group colleagues for their dedication to doing the best we can for residents every single day. Thank you also to our partners across the NEL system. We want to collaborate even more deeply going forward.

As we move forward, we will do everything we can to reduce health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of the populations we serve.



A CARE GROUP YEAR IN REVIEW

The GP Care Group had a successful year in 2023/24. We are proud to have delivered high quality healthcare and services across the boroughs we serve, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. We are grateful to our partners, stakeholders and our residents who engaged with our services so positively during this financial year.

Read on for some notable highlights during the year.

April 2023: Launch of the Tower Hamlets Child Healthy Weight Directory of Support Services

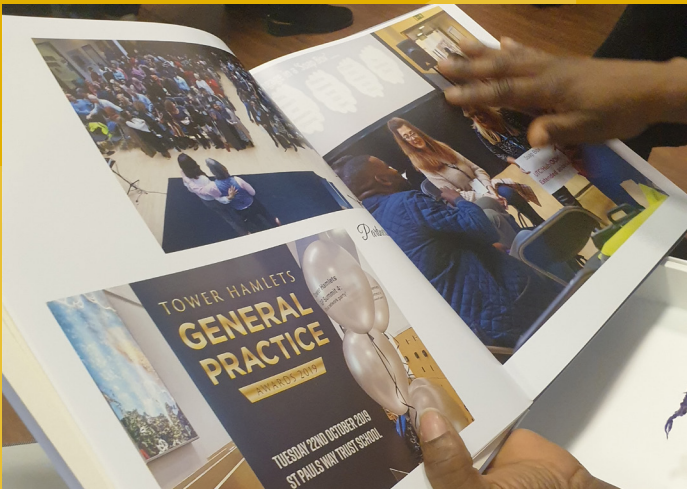
In collaboration with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, we launched the Child Healthy Weight Directory of Support Services, a comprehensive resource connecting health professionals with families seeking healthy weight assistance. This initiative aims to address the growing issue of childhood obesity and promote healthier lifestyles for children and young people across the borough.

Award-winning Health for Under-5s website

Our 0-19 Service teams contributed information and support to new Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest pages of the award-winning Health for Under-5s website. The popular site was co-designed with families and provides trusted information and health advice for parents and carers from pregnancy through to when a child starts school.

May 2023: Training for asylum seeker support

Recognising the growing asylum seeker population in Tower Hamlets, we introduced a training programme for GPs and practice staff following the opening of a 400-bed hotel locally. This training provided staff with the tools and knowledge to support asylum seekers, addressing both health needs and entitlements. This initiative highlights our commitment to addressing health inequalities and improving access to care for vulnerable groups.



June 2023: Showcasing our unique role to the Integrated Care Board (ICB)

A visit from the Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer of the North East London Integrated Care Board (ICB) allowed us to highlight the dual role we play in the local health system: representing general practices and acting as a service provider. Our flagship services – including the 0-19 Health Visiting Service, Urgent Treatment Centre and Extended Access Hubs – were showcased as examples of our innovative and effective service delivery.

August 2023: Employability programme for underrepresented groups

Our Community Education Provider Network (CEPN), in partnership with local charity Women's Inclusive Team and Tower Hamlets Council, successfully supported 15 Somali women into healthcare roles. The Women in Motion employability programme provided practical skills and work experience, helping these women overcome barriers to employment and encouraging a more diverse workforce within healthcare services.

July 2023: Waltham Forest 0-19 Service – first anniversary

In July 2023, we celebrated the first anniversary of our successful delivery of the Waltham Forest 0-19 Healthy Child Programme, following the transfer of 109 staff members to the Care Group. The programme has been pivotal in supporting child health and development across the borough, with a particular focus on improving immunisation rates and offering a blend of face-to-face and virtual care to meet families' diverse needs.



October 2023: UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative – accreditation

Our Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership teams achieved UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) Level Three accreditation. This status recognises our commitment to supporting breastfeeding and fostering close, loving relationships between parents and infants. This accreditation demonstrates our dedication to giving babies the best possible start in life.



November 2023: ‘Good’ rating for our Urgent Treatment Centre and GP Out of Hours service

We were thrilled to receive an overall ‘Good’ rating from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) following a routine inspection of our Urgent Treatment Centre and GP Out of Hours services. Our services were assessed as being effective, caring, responsive and well-led with the CQC highlighting that, “Staff involved and treated patients with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.”

Ministerial visit for Family Hub Start for Life pilot

The Care Group, working with Tower Hamlets Council, was successful in securing funding for a Start for Life pilot within the Family Hubs. A trailblazing workforce project in 14 local authorities, it supports the workforce to give babies the best start in life. This garnered support from then-Secretary of State for the Department of Health and Social Care, Dame Andrea Leadsom, who visited John Smith Family Hub in Tower Hamlets.

Record success in General Practice Nurse recruitment

In November, our Open Doors Programme set a new recruitment record, with seven General Practice Nurses joining seven Tower Hamlets practices. This influx of new talent will help address future nursing shortages in the borough and highlights the success of our focused recruitment strategies.

December 2023: Staff recognition and awards

Several of our staff were recognised for their dedication and hard work through our Inspire Awards. The Waltham Forest South East Health Visiting Team was named Team of the Year, and our Open Doors Programme received recognition for its creativity. These awards reflect the positive impact our services have on the community and our ongoing commitment to excellence.



February 2024: Care Group hosts the Schools and Partner Conference 2024

Our School Health and Wellbeing Service once again hosted the borough’s Schools and Partner Conference in February. A good mix of partners attended the virtual conference, including headteachers, key school colleagues and health leaders. Geraldine Collins, School Health and Wellbeing Service Lead, said: “Some of the clear themes that emerged from the conference touched on the importance of partnership working and how to improve communication between services and schools.”

March 2024: Care Group Annual General Meeting: reflecting on 10 years

To close out the financial year, we held our Annual General Meeting where Zainab Arian, our Chief Executive Officer, reminded us of the founding principles of our organisation: “You wanted us to be the voice of primary care, to be able to deliver services across the borough at scale, provide system resilience and deliver on social value. All these principles remain in everything that we do today.”

Conclusion

In 2023/24, we continued to build on our reputation as a trusted service provider and advocate for primary care. Our achievements reflect our commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve, while our strategic efforts ensure that we remain a resilient and forward-thinking organisation. We remain dedicated to delivering high-quality, integrated care and creating a sustainable future for healthcare in Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and beyond.

FEDERATED SUPPORT

A key function of our role as a GP Federation (a collective of local general practices), is to advocate for our GP stakeholders. As part of this, the Care Group develops and delivers services that support our GP practices' patient population. Read on for a list of some of these services and examples of some key highlights during 2023/24.

Teams and services which sit within our Federated Support work

- Social Prescribing
- P-RESET (Drug and Alcohol Use Support Service)
- Extended Access – including LARC (Long-acting reversible contraception) and Asthma reviews
- Same Day Hub
- Childhood Immunisation Screening
- Primary Care Networks
- Practices – Island Health and Jubilee Street
- Open Doors (nurse education and support for nurses, and health care assistants working in GP surgeries)
- Community Education Provider Network (CEPN)



Services spotlight Federated Support

P-RESET (GP Care Group's primary care drug and alcohol service)

P-RESET supports GP practices to provide care for people with drug and alcohol problems. It is in partnership with Tower Hamlets Council's commissioned drug and alcohol service, RESET, run by Change, Grow, Live.

P-RESET aims to improve the quality of life, health, and wellbeing of vulnerable residents in Tower Hamlets who have drug and alcohol issues. The team does this by providing clients with holistic clinical care and prioritises health as an aspect of recovery.



P-RESET Highlights

Campaigns supporting GP practices during 2023/24

- **Morning coffee sessions**
Providing a relaxed environment for patients to discuss their health concerns and receive guidance on drug and alcohol issues.
- **Walk-in health checks**
Making it easier for individuals to get screened for alcohol and drug use.
- **Training programmes**
Conducted for both clinical and non-clinical staff within primary care to boost skills and knowledge to support patients with substance use issues.
- **Awareness campaigns**
To educate the community about available services and the importance of seeking help.
- **Collaborative workshops**
To discuss best practice, share experiences, and develop strategies for improving patient care.

Impact

P-RESET created greater community engagement and awareness of services, leading to increased uptake of alcohol-use screening. We saw enhanced capacity at GP practices for individuals with substance misuse issues and, ultimately, improved health outcomes for RESET-registered patients.

Social Prescribing Service

The phrase ‘more than medicine’ is often used to illustrate the social prescribing ethos. Social prescribing aims to address the social factors affecting health and wellbeing by connecting residents to non-medical support available within the borough. Issues relating to social isolation and mental wellbeing, financial problems, housing issues, employment and access to exercise facilities often have a negative impact on an individual’s health and wellbeing.

11,000

number of local residents referred for social prescribing support from April 2023 to March 2024.

Our Tower Hamlets GP practices have an allocated social prescriber who receives referrals from GPs, nurses and other practice staff, and helps residents find appropriate support, from charities, community groups and statutory services. The team also accepts referrals from non-primary care services and self-referrals.

Social Prescribing Highlights

Social Prescribing Innovators Fund: ‘Men’s Project’ addressing health inequalities

We secured NHS funding with St Margaret’s House to address health inequalities and increase men’s engagement with social prescribing. We identified 25 men to co-produce projects with us. Three co-creation sessions were held in August 2023. They designed project ideas around healthy lifestyles initiatives, including a cooking project for men.

Faith Action project

The Faith Action Social Prescribing Champions project ran from September 2023 to January 2024. The aim was to raise awareness of social prescribing among the community and signpost to the Tower Hamlets social prescribing services.

Faith Action recruited four volunteers as Social Prescribing Champions – faith leaders who are trusted in their communities.

The champions held engagement activities in their faith settings, with engagements taking place at a mosque and three churches across Tower Hamlets.

“Coming across the Social Prescriber lightened my life and took away the huge pressure and burden I felt. The Social Prescriber was very understanding and accommodating and knew who to signpost me and my family with our needs and concerns.”

Local resident

Childhood Immunisation Screening

The Childhood Immunisation Screening team works with our GP practices to enhance vaccination uptake within the 0-5 patient population, helping to protect children from infections and diseases like measles and polio.

During the reporting period there was an uptake in childhood immunisations. The first immunisation, called Dtap, increased from 88% in August 2022 to 90% in March 2024. The first measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination improved from 83% to 85% during the same period. Uptake of the second MMR vaccination improved most markedly, from 77% in August 2022 to 82% in March 2024.

WHAT WE DID

These improvements to the uptake in vaccinations were due to several factors. A self-booking system made it easier to book appointments for patients. In addition, those who were not sure of the benefits of vaccination were given educational information to support their decision-making. Those working in GP practices were given support to look at performance data, with improved processes, so they could take action and contact parents who had not booked appointments.

Extended Access Hubs Service

Our Extended Access Hubs Service offers convenient and accessible appointments to registered patients within six hub sites across Tower Hamlets. Patients registered in the borough can access routine GP and

nurse appointments outside of regular practice hours. Patients can see GPs, nurses, advanced nurse practitioners, prescribing pharmacists or health care assistants while accessing hubs services such as the Same-Day Primary Care, 48-hour Asthma Review Clinic, P-RESET Annual Health Check Clinic and our Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) clinic.

EXTENDED ACCESS HUBS HIGHLIGHTS			
appointments offered during 2023/24			
37,126	Total appointments	6,176	Nurse appointments
11,841	GP appointments	213	Pharmacist appointments
6,704	Advanced Nurse Practitioner appointments	12,192	Healthcare Assistant appointments

PREFERRED PROVIDER

Our ‘Preferred Provider’ approach centres around delivering high quality patient-centred services for our patient populations.
Read on for a list of our flagship Preferred Provider services and examples of key highlights during 2023/24.

Teams and services which sit within our Preferred Provider work

- Patient Experience Team
- Advocacy and Interpreting
- 0-19 Children Services (Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest)

- Urgent Treatment Centre
- SPA – Single Point of Access
- Out of Hours

Team and services spotlight Preferred Provider

Patient Experience Team

The Patient Experience Team (PET) is responsible for gathering feedback from people who receive health, social care and housing support services within Tower Hamlets and neighbouring boroughs.

Through in-depth reviews, the team captures feedback and makes recommendations for replicable, cross-organisational improvements.

PET Highlights

During 2023/24, the team carried out a ‘whole systems review’ looking at falls prevention work in Tower Hamlets. The process involved the team visiting more than 20 community organisations in the borough, engaging with service users, carers and residents as well as front line workers, to hear their experiences about falls prevention. Care providers and those receiving services were given opportunities to identify gaps and come up with ideas to promote falls prevention.

Another highlight during 2023/24 saw the team supporting Tower Hamlets Council to design and deliver a more culturally sensitive drug and alcohol recovery service. The team engaged with seven local organisations and established new connections with community groups that ensured rich and diverse survey responses were gathered.



Advocacy and Interpreting Service

The Tower Hamlets Advocacy and Interpreting Service is free and confidential for individuals requiring bilingual advocacy and face-to-face and telephone interpreting services. The patient must be registered with one of our partner GP practices or partner organisations in Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

The service supports patients, relatives and carers who do not speak English as a first language. There is also provision for users of British Sign Language, touch manual or lip reading to be able to access Care Group services.

The service works with thousands of patients each month with a high of 4,919 in October 2023 and a low of 3,221 in April of that year.

The service provides this support using three approaches:

- The permanent, in-house team
- A third sector interpreter provider, Praxis Project
- A Language Shop Service for languages we may not have on our books.

The service plays a crucial role in improving the health of our diverse populations and helps reduce inequalities in health. It has robust systems in place to respond to changing community needs. This year witnessed an increase in the use of the On-Demand Service, which provides ad hoc language support to all general practices and other community health services.



School Health and Wellbeing Service

The School Health and Wellbeing Service provides support in primary and secondary schools across Tower Hamlets, supporting the physical, mental and emotional health of children, young people and families in the community.

The team, made up of nurses, nursery nurses and support workers, carry out hearing, vision and height and weight screening for reception children, and a further height and weight screening for year 6 children.

School Health Highlights

During the year, the team embarked on various engagement activity with parents with the aim of improving the quality of correspondence they receive. Community drop-ins and one-to-one work were also carried out.

Another innovation were also to text directly to parents whose children are overweight to inform them of the service.

Further influence came through the recruitment of Youth Justice Service nurses to support vulnerable children and young people, and a specialist 'Educated Other Than at School' nurse to support those who are home-schooled.

In response to school feedback, named nurses were given face-to-face updates in schools to help improve take-up of school staff in Level 1 medical condition awareness training.





Tower Hamlets 0-5 Health Visiting Service

Health Visitors are nurses or midwives with specialist training to support families and improve their health outcomes during pregnancy, after a baby is born, up until the child is five years old.

Our multi-skilled team incorporates specialist health visiting, covering key areas such as breastfeeding support, staff nurses, nursery nurses and support workers.

During the year, the service moved successfully to more effective staff time management systems.

0-5 Highlights

Following reassessment, the team maintained full accreditation of the prestigious UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative. Other notable achievements included strengthening Care Group integration with Family Hubs, and the launch of the Bright Beginnings pilot to support families began.

Health Visiting service user survey

The team carried out a user survey to better understand the experience of those using the service. There were 478 responses.

The results were strikingly positive:

- **Nine out of 10 (89%)** respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt listened to by the team
- **Eighty-five per cent** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt involved in decisions about their care,
- **Three-quarters (76%)** agreed or strongly agreed that the professionals involved in their care talk to each other and work as a team.
- Overall, **85%** said their experience of the service was either **very good (60%)** or **good (25%)**.

Health Visiting team in numbers	
1,869	Antenatal delivery visits
3,431	New birth visits (within 14 days of birth)
2,451	6-8 week reviews
2,220	3-4 month review
2,670	One-year review completed by 15 months
2,681	2.5-year check delivery

Family Nurse Partnership

The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) is the early intervention home visiting programme for first-time young parents from early pregnancy until the child is two years old. The programme supports with health concerns but can also help with independent living skills, such as budgeting. It is recommended by the Early Intervention Foundation as a parenting programme which can improve perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationships.

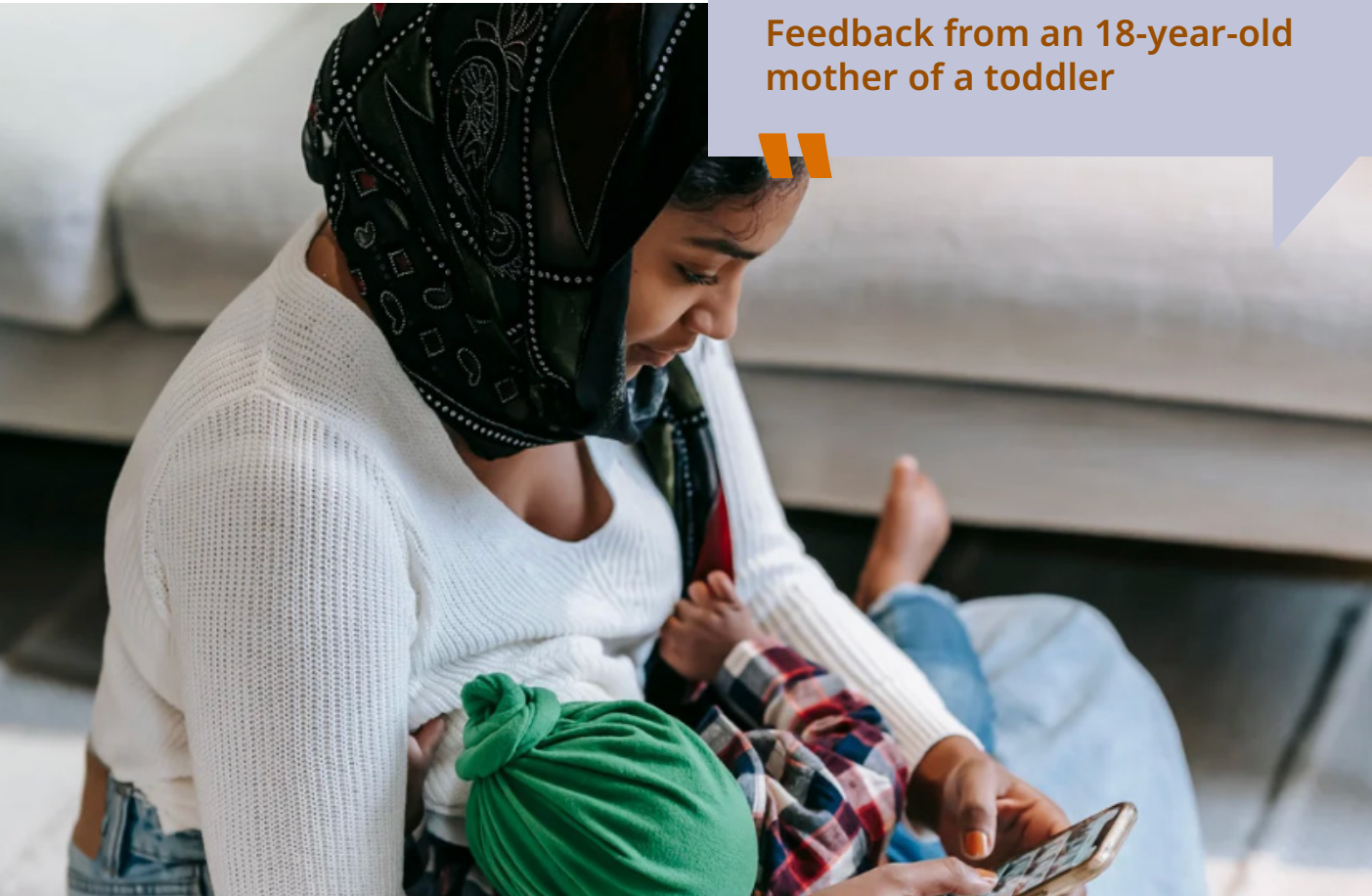
2023 saw an increase in referrals, and an increase in the requirement for interpreting services. The family nurses completed 1,137 home or community visits. For the parents who completed this early intervention parenting programme, a graduation party was held to celebrate. In addition, a peer support group to combat loneliness and isolation, run by FNP, is thriving.

During the year there was an increase in the uptake of contraception and sexual health services as a result of closer working relationships between the Family Nurses and the Health and Wellbeing Nurses in Safe East.

FNP is a ‘trauma informed’ service, and this informs its work with young parents and families who have multiple adversities. The team shared its expertise on what this means at the Trauma Informed Community of Practice Forum, a local forum which supports the aim of Tower Hamlets becoming the first trauma informed London borough.

“Having a Family Nurse helped me to know the meaning of motherhood. She said ‘don’t give up you are a good and strong mother’. She always inspires me. She supports me in everything about my baby. It cheers me up whenever I am stressed. Thank you so much. I wouldn’t be a good mum without you.”

Feedback from an 18-year-old mother of a toddler



Waltham Forest 0-19 Service

The contract to run the 0-19 service was secured by the Care Group in July 2022, making 2023/24 the first full business year of operation.

The service began a transformation programme in July 2023, which was completed in January 2024. A key improvement explored and developed caseloads management. Another notable piece of work saw the development of a health promotion plan to raise awareness of health issues such as asthma and epilepsy.

Healthy Start vitamins campaign

The team delivered the Healthy Start vitamins campaign, for infants and families with a child under four years of age. The universal scheme involves giving up to three bottles of vitamins to newborn babies and infants. The campaign helps to prevent vitamin D deficiency in newborn babies and improve vitamin uptake in babies and young children. The team handed out 2,969 bottles of vitamins to parents during new birth visits, and a further 1,894 bottles were given during the visit which takes place at six to eight weeks.

WALTHAM FOREST HEALTH VISITING TEAM IN NUMBERS

576	Antenatal delivery visits
3,362	New birth visits (within 14 days of birth)
2,563	6-8 week reviews
1,708	One-year reviews completed by 15 months
1,856	2.5-year checks



Single Point of Access

The Single Point of Access (SPA) service is the access point to community nursing services in Tower Hamlets. Referrals are accepted from a wide range of partners and are processed by the team 24 hours a day.

A strengthened SPA service, with increased automation and digitalisation to improve efficiency was designed, consulted upon, and implemented in March 2023, and became fully functional in June 2024.

11,098	Number of messages
31,281	Total inbound referrals
32,836	Total outbound referrals
75,215	Total activity
Jun-23	Busiest month for total activity (6,890)
Apr-23	Quietest month for total activity (5,699)



Out of Hours Service

The Out of Hours Service ensures continuity of care for Tower Hamlets residents when GP surgeries are closed. The service operates seven days a week, 6.30pm to 8am, Monday – Thursday. There is a 24-hour service from Clinic 1 at Royal London Hospital from 6.30pm on a Friday to Monday morning at 8am.

For patients who cannot attend the clinic in person, a home visiting service is available. Patients access the Out of Hours service by contacting NHS 111.

The service has seen a growth in demand, with a 40% increase in patients requiring face-to-face care, up from 2,983 patients in 2022/23 to 4,191 in 2023/24. The number of home visits have almost doubled from 300 in 2022/23 to 573 in this reporting period.

Out of Hours in numbers

4,191	Face-to-face care
573	Home visits
12,354	Advice
88.61%	Set and seen within six hours
62.23%	Set and seen within two hours



Urgent Treatment Centre

Our Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) in Tower Hamlets is based at the Royal London Hospital site and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is one of the busiest in the country. In 2024, the UTC saw 95,028 patients who had an urgent but not life or limb threatening problem.

A highlight was the Good rating by the CQC in the September 2023 inspection. The team also performed well against the obligation to see 95% of patients within the four-hour key performance indicator.

Urgent Treatment Centre in numbers

95,028	Attendances at the UTC (54% from Tower Hamlets residents and 33% from other boroughs within London)
260	UTC attendees on average per day
3h 23mins	Average length of stay
May 2023	Busiest month with 8,751 patients
September 2023	Quietest month with 7,436 patients

“We pride ourselves on our collaborative working with Barts Health Emergency Department and we care about the patients in Tower Hamlets and beyond. We see patients from our borough as well as international patients with urgent need who are visiting London's East End.”

The UTC Team



ANCHOR ORGANISATION

Being an Anchor Organisation means we are fully committed to playing a positive, sustainable role within the community.

We actively look to recruit from our local communities and have a well-developed, widening participation and local apprenticeship programme. Where we make procurement decisions, we look to use local businesses and build long-term relationships with them.

Read on for key highlights of our anchor organisations activity.

- Sustainability
 - Creating a great workplace for all
 - Training the local healthcare workforce
- Other training initiatives
 - Widening participation and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)



Sustainability

We are committed to being a socially responsible provider. We are exploring ways of giving back to our community and also working to reduce our carbon footprint.

During 2023/24 we began work on the following initiatives within Tower Hamlets:

- **Enabling healthier communities:** Providing our community with health and wellbeing activities.
- **Training and Development:** Providing our community with employment opportunities within the Care Group.
- **Buy Local:** Using local suppliers where possible in our procurement decisions to help boost the local economy.
- **Green Project:** Aligning our Green Strategy with the North East London sustainability plan.





Creating a great workplace for all

We made significant strides towards creating a positive and inclusive place for our workforce during 2023/24.

We launched a new People Committee, chaired by Ayaan Gulaid, a Care Group Non-Executive Director, in February 2024. The Committee meets monthly and oversees the ongoing development and implementation of our People Strategy with the aim of ensuring that all employees enjoy a positive working experience and improved health and wellbeing.

New Staff Survey approach

We ran our first WorkBuzz survey in October 2023 and hosted staff workshops to explore the feedback in more detail and delivered changes.

Modernising the employee experience

We developed a programme of digitising HR processes to help the employee and manager experience become more streamlined, quick and reliable. As part of this approach all staff are now able to have early access to payslips, and opportunities for managing personal information. It also creates opportunities for us to improve protected characteristics data to inform our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) work and make Care Group an even more inclusive place to work.

Embracing flexible working

We continue to offer flexible working and have now gone further by offering hybrid working for all staff. Currently, about 40% of the workforce chooses to work part-time, for example.

Our new Hybrid Working policy was launched. This was an early example of our new approach involving staff in consultation on workforce policies before they are signed off.

Enhancing our great wellbeing offer

We continued to promote our friendly and supportive employee forums, Mighty Minds, for neurodivergent colleagues, LGBTQ+ Forum and Black and Asian Forum. We also had quarterly wellbeing days where people connected with each other and took opportunities to relax in our busy work days.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

We pride ourselves as being an inclusive and equitable employer and our pay gap reports demonstrate how we are doing. Our Gender Pay Gap remains very positive with women typically earning about 20% more than men and making up a slightly higher proportion of the top pay quartile too.

In our staff survey, 81% said they can be themselves at work without worrying about how they will be accepted. This is the sort of experience we want people who work here to have.

Training the local healthcare workforce

The period of this annual report saw the continued growth of Community Education Provider Network (CEPN), our local training resource. This fostered the professional development of staff and helped to enhance community wellbeing and contributed to reducing health inequalities.

Nursing and Healthcare Assistant development programmes

During 2023/24 we delivered Care Certificate training to 20 Healthcare Assistants (HCAs) across North East London (NEL). We provided Clinical Skills Training for four HCAs in primary care, resulting in increased confidence and improved staff retention. We recruited seven new General Practice Nurse (GPN) trainees studying at City

University, with placements in Tower Hamlets practices. We trained four GPNs who completed their courses and remained in employment within Tower Hamlets.

One Clinical Tutor began a PGCert Education at King's College, London. We also provided flu update training to practice staff, including nurses, HCAs, clinical pharmacists and Allied Health Professionals.

Staff and community wellbeing programmes

We hosted a wellbeing tent at a Tower Hamlets Together event, offering hand massages, henna, and activities for Tower Hamlets colleagues. In addition, we delivered 40 wellbeing sessions (in-person and virtual) to primary care practices.

We piloted gentle movement sessions for the community, offering virtual sessions to residents. Finally, we continued our collaboration with New City College to provide wellbeing sessions to education staff.

Other training initiatives

We delivered Mental Health and Suicide Prevention training to more than 1,200 individuals across North East London (NEL). We secured a two-year contract extension to continue delivering suicide prevention training across NEL.

Our motivational interviewing and Making Every Contact Count initiatives proved popular, with more than 400 people participating.

We began delivering vaccination and motivational training, commissioned by Tower Hamlets Public Health.



Widening participation and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

As part of our drive to help local people get a good start to their careers, we hosted 12 apprenticeships across the Care Group, in programmes including leadership, supervision, and operational management. We supported eight local residents in securing work placements within

healthcare settings, enhancing their skills and employability. We hosted the NEL Employability Programme, successfully training 30 residents, 16 of whom gained employment within a year. We represented NHS and Primary Care roles at over 12 career and community fairs, engaging with more than 2,500 people. Finally, as part of our work to increase diversity, we delivered anti-racism training to more than 1,200 staff and delivered EDI training for 600 staff across Tower Hamlets and NEL.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- **Behind the scenes: Care Group people.**
As an employer we look to encourage the passions and motivations of our workforce. The following are a few examples during 2023/24 we hope you enjoy reading about. Learn more by clicking the “Read More” buttons or scan the QR code with your phone.
- **Safeguarding**



Behind the Scenes



Care Group Board takes part in triathlon

Members of the Care Group Board practiced what they preach by taking part in the Challenge London event in August 2023. Chief Executive Officer, Zainab Arian, along with Non-Executive Director and Audit Chair David Monk and Board Chair Simon Brownleader, took part in the Olympic distance relay race to demonstrate the Care Group’s commitment to a healthy lifestyle for all. Zainab took on the 40km bike ride, David finished the 10km run and Simon completed the 1500m swim.



Read the story





Helping students in Rohingya refugee camps

The Care Group donated 50 laptops to schools in Bangladesh, as part of a charity drive to support the education of young people. The donation was made in October 2023 to the Lonely Orphans charity. The laptops were sent to makeshift schools in Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh, a group who had fled persecution in Myanmar. The laptop donation means students within the camps have attained proficiency in a range of fundamental computing skills, such as Microsoft Office applications, internet navigation, and graphic design using programmes like Photoshop. Zainab Arian, Care Group CEO, said:

“We are delighted to know that the laptops are benefitting so many. We hope they help the students achieve their fullest potential so they can make their own unique mark on the world.”




Read the story



Global Impact – Suicide prevention workshop in Istanbul

In September 2023, our Head of People Development, Sarah Tahsildar, delivered a workshop on suicide prevention in Istanbul, Turkey, as part of a global initiative to tackle the issue. Participants left with practical skills and renewed hope, ready to implement suicide prevention strategies within their communities.

“I felt uplifted as I was able to equip individuals with the tools and knowledge necessary to address the pervasive issue of suicide.”



Read the story





Safeguarding

Our corporate Safeguarding service works to improve safeguarding practice. When people are safeguarded it results in positive health outcomes for victims and survivors of abuse and exploitation for the citizens we care for. Among many activities, the Safeguarding service ensures the Care Group has effective systems and processes to keep children and adults safe from abuse, with staff confident to act on safeguarding concerns. It shares findings from local and national reviews and contributes to safeguarding reviews.

SAFEGUARDING HIGHLIGHTS

During 2023/24, the team provided training to case holding staff, which was monitored internally through governance meetings and externally by the Integrated Care Board and commissioners.

The Safeguarding team continued to support the Waltham Forest and Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Partnerships for children and adults and participated in learning reviews for both adults and children.

FINANCE

2023/24

During 2023/24 the Care Group maintained stability in renegotiating key contracts. This included the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) contract at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, ensuring the continuation of this critical service amid increased activity levels. While economic challenges, such as inflation and wage pressures continue to affect the broader healthcare sector, the Care Group has focused on securing financial resilience and maintaining high-quality service delivery.

- Revenue
 - Spend Profile
- Going Concern
 - Profit and Loss Result

The company’s performance in 2023/2024 shows declines in profitability and efficiency, with negative EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation), ROCE (return on capital employed), and operating cash flow. However, there has been an improvement in liquidity, as reflected in higher working capital and increased investment in staff.

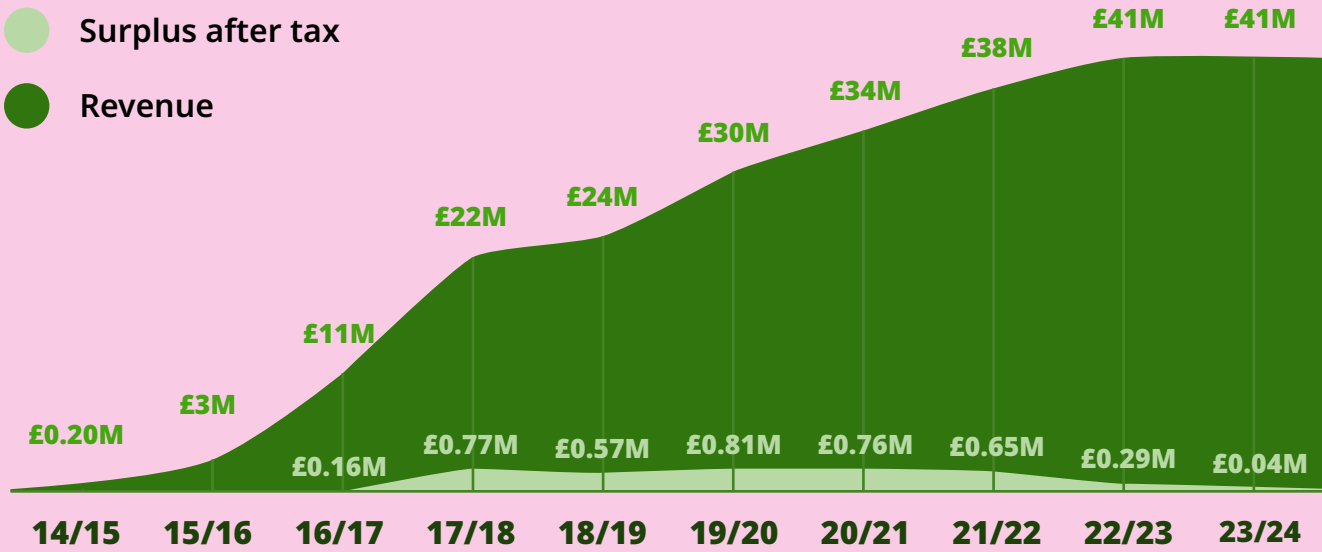
Revenue - £41 Million

Service developments

Service improvement has always been a strong driver for the Care Group. We pride ourselves on collaborating with partners to develop better solutions for patient care

- and we continue to identify opportunities to develop our business and grow services in a sustainable way.
- We maintained all our other contracts except for the phasing out of Covid support:
- **Community Covid Testing**
 - **Home Monitoring**
 - **111 GP support** – providing central GP support for local 111 clinical call service.
 - **Covid Vaccination**
 - Phase 4 borough-wide delivery of vaccinations
 - Providing community out-reach vaccinations
 - Booster programme for care homes and housebound patients.

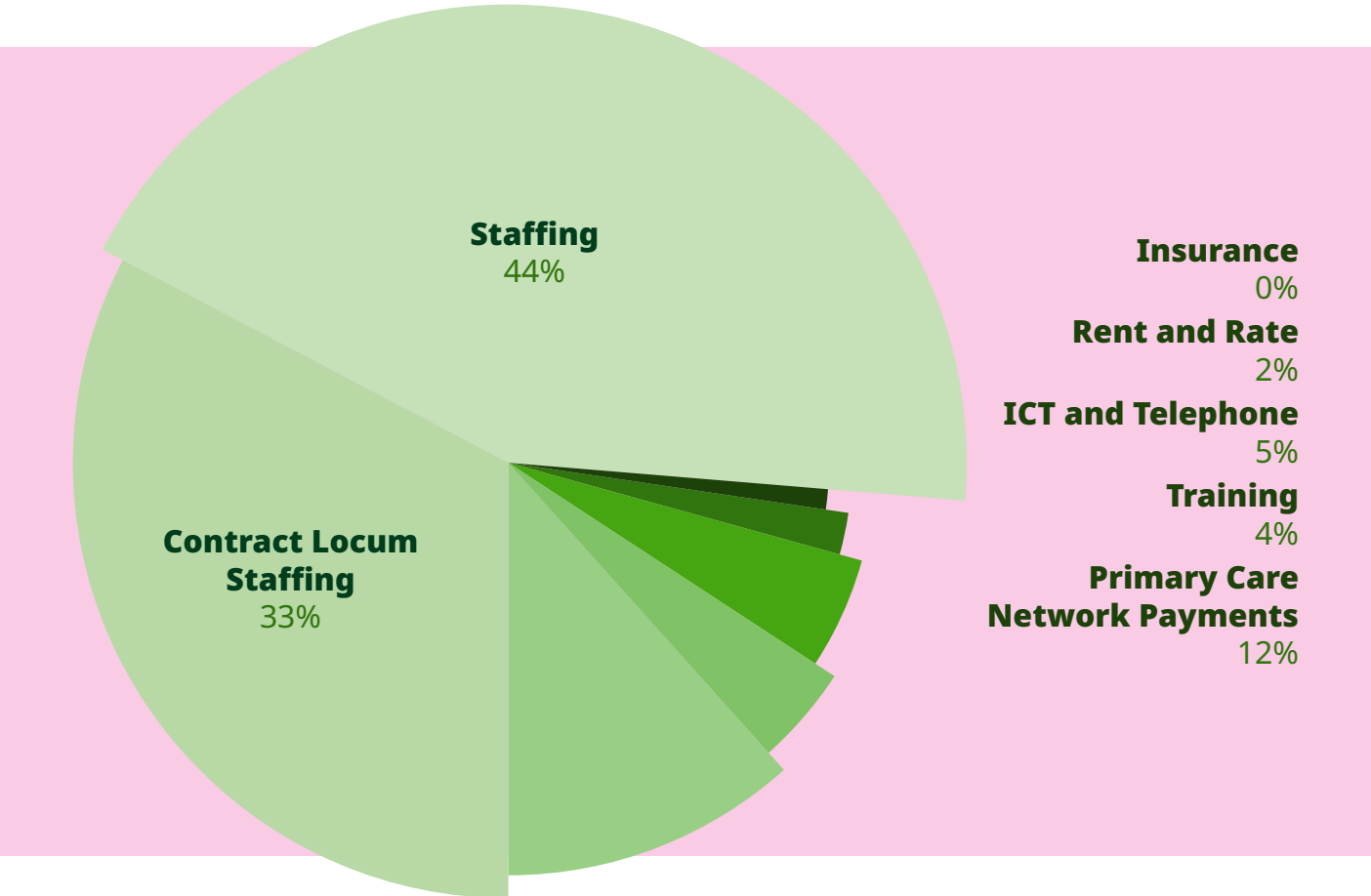
Revenue growth & surplus generated by year



Spend Profile - £41.2 Million (2% Increase)

Our spend profile was £41.2 million, which represents a two per cent increase. Due to the nature of our services, just under half of our expenditure relates to staffing costs. We continue to invest in ICT, enhancing the use of Office 365 across our workforce. Primary Care Network payment is the second largest area of spend. Contract and locum staffing spend relates to both project management and GP expenditure. Non-pay items span across the normal categories.

Top expenditure area



Going concern

The Board of Directors is required by company law to assess the Care Group's ability to remain trading for at least the next 12 months. The test for going concern was undertaken and the Board's assessment shows that the Care Group can sustain the impact of significant prudent assumptions and continue to operate beyond a 12-month period.

Profit and loss result

Financial results

MKS LLP, our External Auditors, have issued an unqualified audit opinion on the individual financial statements. They have confirmed that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the

companies' affairs and there are no issues to report in respect of going concern. These 2023/24 accounts are the first year that the Care Group has submitted Large Company accounts:
1. Annual Revenue of £41 million
2. Number of employees above 350.

A version of the full set of accounts is available at Companies House.



We want to say a special 'thank you' to our staff, teams, Integrated Care Board and Tower Hamlets Together partners, and everyone else who supported us to deliver high quality services during the year.

Tower Hamlets GP Care Group CIC Island Health, 145 East Ferry Road, E14 3BQ

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