**DIABETES IN TOWER HAMLETS**

Tower Hamlets is an borough of London with a population of 260,000 where more than 50% are from ethnic minority groups of whom 30% are South Asian and 10% black African Caribbean. It is also an area with high levels of social deprivation. Both of these factors contribute to a high prevalence of diabetes.

In 2008 the Quality and Outcomes framework (QoF) scores for diabetes were variable, with some among the lowest in England. There were high rates of hospital admissions for diabetes-related complications and little evidence of systematic diabetes care.

In response to this the local health community instituted a series of improvements which have rapidly improved diabetes care delivery so that in 2014 Tower Hamlets is one of the best performing areas for diabetes care in England.

The improvement package included;-

* Grouping the 35 GP practices geographically into 8 networks supported by a network manager, clerical staff and an educational budget
* A multidisciplinary team developed “care package” for type 2 diabetes management with financial incentives based on network achievement of targets
* Monthly electronic performance dashboards which enabled networks to track and improve performance
* Network multidisciplinary meetings including the diabetes specialist teams supported case management and education.

Other factors that assisted the improvements were that all GP practices used the same web-enabled clinical computer system and that the borough was a pilot site for the Year of Care in Diabetes care planning programme which involved a collaborative consultation based on shared decision making and support for self management.

The experience in Tower Hamlets demonstrates that investment of financial, organisational, and education resources into primary care networks can achieve clinically important improvements in diabetes care in deprived ethnically diverse communities.

This account is based on the paper by Sally Hull, Tahseen A Chowdhury, Rohini Mathur and John Robson entitled “ Improving outcomes for patients with type 2 diabetes using general practice networks: a quality improvement project in East London” published in BMJ Quality & Safety doi:10.1136/bmjqs-2013-002008