

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Agenda

Tuesday, 11 July 2023 at 6.30 p.m.
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel

Members:

Chair: Councillor Bodrul Choudhury

Vice Chair:

Councillor Shafi Ahmed, Councillor Ahmodul Kabir, Councillor Bellal Uddin, Councillor Leelu Ahmed, Councillor Sabina Akhtar, Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain and Councillor Maium Talukdar

Co-opted Members:

Shiblu Miah ((Muslim community representative)), Dr Phillip Rice (Church of England Representative), Joanna Hannan (Representative of Diocese of Westminster), Abena Adeji (Parent Governor), Ashraf Zaman (Parent Governor) and Nafisa Ahmed (Parent Governor)

Substitutes:

[The quorum for the Sub-Committee is 3 voting Members]

Contact for further enquiries:

Democratic Services,

justina.bridgeman@towerhamlets.gov.uk

020 7364 4854

Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel, London, E1 1BJ

<http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk>



Public Information

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A Guide to Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee has been established to scrutinise the provision, planning and management of children and young people's services – including children's social care; safeguarding children; children in care; SEN and education inclusion, troubled families and the Youth Offending Service (YOS) education, learning and schools; youth services; early years; education capital estate and youth & play services.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee will discharge the Council's statutory functions to undertake overview and scrutiny, insofar as these pertain to Children's and Education matters. This will include:

- a) Reviewing and/or scrutinising decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's children social care and education functions;
- b) Advising the Mayor or Cabinet of key issues/questions arising in relation to children and education reports due to be considered by the Mayor or Cabinet;
- c) Making reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or Mayor or Cabinet in connection with the discharge of children and education functions;
- d) Delivering (c) by organising an annual work programme, drawing on the knowledge and priorities of the Council, registered providers and other stakeholders, that will identify relevant topics or issues that can be properly scrutinised;
- e) Holding service providers to account, where recent performance fails to meet the recognised standard, by looking at relevant evidence and make recommendations for service improvements;
- f) Considering children and education matters affecting the area or its inhabitants, including where these matters have been brought to the attention of the sub-committee by tenant and resident associations, or members of the general public; and
- g) The sub-committee will report annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on its work.

Public Engagement

Meetings of the committee are open to the public to attend, and a timetable for meeting dates and deadlines can be found on the council's website. More detail of how residents can engage with Overview and Scrutiny are available here

[Overview and scrutiny \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/overview-and-scrutiny)

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Tuesday, 11 July 2023

6.30 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (PAGES 7 - 8)

Members are reminded to consider the categories of interest, identified in the Code of Conduct for Members to determine: whether they have an interest in any agenda item and any action they should take. For further details, see the attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

Members are also reminded to declare the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity and the agenda item it relates to. Please note that ultimately it is the Members' responsibility to identify any interests and also update their register of interest form as required by the Code.

If in doubt as to the nature of an interest, you are advised to seek advice prior the meeting by contacting the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

4. CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, QUORUM, MEMBERSHIP AND MEETING DATES FOR 2023/24

4.1 Terms of Reference for Children and Education Scrutiny Sub Committee (Pages 9 - 18)

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (PAGES 19 - 24)

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the held on 04 May 2023

6. CESSC ACTION LOG

7. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION



- 7.1 CABINET MEMBER OVERVIEW OF PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24
- 7.2 CORPORATE DIRECTOR REFLECTIONS AND PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24 (Pages 65 - 66)
- 7.3 CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY REFRESH (Pages 67 - 104)
8. DRAFT SUB-COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
9. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Next Meeting of the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Thursday, 12 October 2023 at 6.30 p.m. to be held in Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel



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Agenda Item 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AT MEETINGS– NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Code of Conduct for Members at Part C, Section 31 of the Council's Constitution

(i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)

You have a DPI in any item of business on the agenda where it relates to the categories listed in **Appendix A** to this guidance. Please note that a DPI includes: (i) Your own relevant interests; (ii) Those of your spouse or civil partner; (iii) A person with whom the Member is living as husband/wife/civil partners. Other individuals, e.g. Children, siblings and flatmates do not need to be considered. Failure to disclose or register a DPI (within 28 days) is a criminal offence.

Members with a DPI, (unless granted a dispensation) must not seek to improperly influence the decision, must declare the nature of the interest and leave the meeting room (including the public gallery) during the consideration and decision on the item – unless exercising their right to address the Committee.

DPI Dispensations and Sensitive Interests. In certain circumstances, Members may make a request to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation or for an interest to be treated as sensitive.

(ii) Non - DPI Interests that the Council has decided should be registered – (Non - DPIs)

You will have 'Non DPI Interest' in any item on the agenda, where it relates to (i) the offer of gifts or hospitality, (with an estimated value of at least £25) (ii) Council Appointments or nominations to bodies (iii) Membership of any body exercising a function of a public nature, a charitable purpose or aimed at influencing public opinion.

Members must declare the nature of the interest, but may stay in the meeting room and participate in the consideration of the matter and vote on it **unless:**

- A reasonable person would think that your interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair your judgement of the public interest. **If so, you must withdraw and take no part in the consideration or discussion of the matter.**

(iii) Declarations of Interests not included in the Register of Members' Interest.

Occasions may arise where a matter under consideration would, or would be likely to, **affect the wellbeing of you, your family, or close associate(s) more than it would anyone else living in the local area** but which is not required to be included in the Register of Members' Interests. In such matters, Members must consider the information set out in paragraph (ii) above regarding Non DPI - interests and apply the test, set out in this paragraph.

Guidance on Predetermination and Bias

Member's attention is drawn to the guidance on predetermination and bias, particularly the need to consider the merits of the case with an open mind, as set out in the Planning and Licensing Codes of Conduct, (Part C, Section 34 and 35 of the Constitution). For further advice on the possibility of bias or predetermination, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting.

Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 - Declarations which restrict Members in Council Tax arrears, for at least a two months from voting


In such circumstances the member may not vote on any reports and motions with respect to the matter.

Further Advice contact: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer, Tel: 0207 364 4800.

APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

(Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Reg 2 and Schedule)

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by the Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the Member. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p>11th July 2023</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Classification: Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p>Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of Meetings 2023/24</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Justina Bridgeman, Committee Services Officer
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

This report sets out the Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of Meetings of the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2023-24 for the information of the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee members.

Recommendations:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Note its Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of future meetings as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to this report.
2. Determine the preferred time at which the scheduled meetings will start.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The report is brought annually to assist new and returning Members by informing them of the framework of the Committee set out in the Council's Constitution.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not applicable to this report

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 At the Annual General Meeting of the full Council held on 17th May 2023, the Authority approved proportionality, establishment of the Committees and Panels of the Council and appointment of Members.

3.2 As per tradition, following the Annual General Meeting of the Council at the start of the Municipal Year, various committees are established and those committees note their Terms of Reference, Dates of meetings, Quorum and Membership for the forthcoming Municipal Year. These are set out in **Appendix 1 and 2** of the report.

3.3 Meetings are scheduled to take place at 6.30pm **See Appendix 3.**

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 When drawing up the schedule of dates, consideration was given to avoiding school holiday dates and known dates of religious holidays and other important dates where at all possible.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment

5.2 No statutory implications have been identified.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1. Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 requires a local authority to appoint an overview and scrutiny committee and sets out the matters which an overview and scrutiny committee must have in its remit. Section 9 FA of the Local Government Act 2000 permits an overview and scrutiny committee to appoint sub-committees and to arrange for any of its functions to be discharged by the sub-committee.

7.2. The Constitution sets out the Terms of Reference and procedures for the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

7.3. The matters set out in this report comply with the requirements in the Constitution and the above legislation.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 –Terms of Reference of Scrutiny Sub Committee.
- Appendix 2 –Membership for the Scrutiny Sub Committee.
- Appendix 3 – Dates of Scrutiny Sub Committee Meetings 2023/24

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A

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Terms of Reference of Scrutiny Sub Committee

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Summary Description: The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee has been established to scrutinise the provision, planning and management of children and young people's services – including children's social care; safeguarding children; children in care; SEN and education inclusion, troubled families and the Youth Offending Service (YOS) education, learning and schools; youth services; early years; education capital estate and youth & play services.

Membership: 7 non-executive councillors – the chair and six councillors; and 6 co-opted members (consisting of: - a Church of England and a Roman Catholic representative; 3 Parent Governor representatives under paragraph 7 of Schedule A1 to the Local Government Act 2000; and a Muslim faith representative).

Functions	Delegation of Functions
1. Reviewing and/or scrutinising decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's children social care and education functions.	None
2. Advising the Mayor or Cabinet of key issues/questions arising in relation to children and education reports due to be considered by the Mayor or Cabinet.	None
3. Making reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or Mayor or Cabinet in connection with the discharge of children and education functions.	None
4. Delivering (3) by organising an annual work programme, drawing on the knowledge and priorities of the Council, registered providers and other stakeholders, that will identify relevant topics or issues that can be properly scrutinised.	None
5. Holding service providers to account, where recent performance fails to meet the recognised standard, by looking at relevant evidence and make recommendations for service improvements.	None

<p>6. Considering children and education matters affecting the area or its inhabitants, including where these matters have been brought to the attention of the sub-committee by tenant and resident associations, or members of the general public; and:</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>7. The sub-committee will report annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on its work.</p>	<p>None</p>

Quorum: Three voting Members

Additional Information: Is contained in:

- Constitution Part A Section 9 (Overview and Scrutiny)
- Constitution Part B Section 30 (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules)
- Constitution Part D Section 53 (Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee Procedure Rules)

SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2023-2024

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub Committee (Seven non-executive members of the Council plus six co-opted members) Can be drawn from all non-executive members. Lead Scrutiny Member for Children & Education will chair			
<i>Aspire Group (4)</i>	<i>Labour Group (3)</i>	<i>Ungrouped (0)</i>	<i>Co-Opted Members (for information – to be appointed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee)</i>
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury Councillor Shafi Ahmed Councillor Bellal Uddin Councillor Ahmodul Kabir Substitutes Councillor Ana Miah Councillor Abdul Malik Councillor Abdul Mannan	Councillor Leelu Ahmed Councillor Sabina Akhtar Councillor Shubo Hussain Substitutes Councillor Mufeedah Bustin Councillor Sabina Khan Councillor James King	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joanna Hannan • Philip Rice • Abena Adeji • Ashraf Zaman • Nasfisa Ahmed • Shibli Miah

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CHILDREN AND EDUCATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
SUB-COMMITTEE

MEETING PROCEDURE AND SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES
2023-2024

1. Chair and Membership

- 1.1 Sub-Committees will be chaired by a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. For this Sub-Committee it will be the Lead Scrutiny Member for Children and Education for 2023-24. The membership of the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee has been determined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. Frequency of meetings

- 2.1 The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee will meet 5 times this year. The following dates are available in the Corporate Diary for 2023/24:

- 11 July 2023
- 12 October 2023
- 07 December 2023
- 08 February 2024
- 09 May 2024

Meetings are scheduled to take place at 6.30pm. The Sub-Committee may arrange other meetings as and when necessary to consider any urgent issues as well as arranging meetings for detailed scrutiny reviews and challenge sessions.

Support to the Sub-Committee

- 4.1 The Divisional Director for Strategy, Policy and Performance, will be the senior officer lead and champion the work of the Sub-Committee.
- 4.2 The servicing of meetings will be undertaken by the Council's Democratic Services Team which will include:
- (a) Agenda preparation and dispatch
 - (b) Taking minutes and recording of actions/decisions
 - (c) Dissemination of minutes and decisions

The Corporate Strategy and Communities Policy Team will provide policy support to the Sub-Committee which will include:

- (d) Research and analysis
- (e) Work programme development
- (f) Support with undertaking reviews and challenge sessions
- (g) Drafting review reports and challenge sessions

5. Proceedings

5.1 The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee will generally meet in public and conduct its proceedings in accordance with the rules and procedure contained in the Council's Constitution such as the:

- (a) Council Procedure Rules;
- (b) Access to Information Procedure Rules, and
- (c) The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

COMMITTEE, 04/05/2023

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN & EDUCATION SCRUTINY SUB
COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.31P.M. ON THURSDAY, 04 MAY 2023

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS – TOWN HALL, 160 WHITECHAPEL ROAD,
LONDON E1 1BJ**

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Bodrul Choudhury -(Chair)

Councillor Ahmodul Kabir

Councillor Abdul Wahid

Councillor Ana Miah

Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain

Co-optees Present in Person:

Joanna Hannan -(Diocese of Westminster Representative)

Dr Phillip Rice -(Church of England Representative)

Ashraf Zaman -(Parent Governor)

Co-optees Present Remotely:

Nafisa Ahmed -(Parent Governor)

Officers Present in Person:

James Thomas -(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)

Susannah Beasley-Murray -(Director of Supporting Families)

Filuck Miah -(Senior Strategy and Policy Officer)

Justina Bridgeman -(Democratic Services Officer, Committee Governance)

Invited Guests

Korkor Caesar -(Associate Director, NHS North East London Health and Care Partnership)

James Conway -(Borough Commander)

COMMITTEE, 04/05/2023

Laurelle Brown

-(Independent Scrutineer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Amina Ali, Cllr Maium Talukdar and Shibli Miah, Muslim Community Representative.

2 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The minutes of the Sub Committee meeting held on 9 February 2023 were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

4 CESC ACTION LOG

The action log was circulated for attendees.

5. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 Improvements made since Ofsted Inspection and Councils Response to National Review

James Thomas, Corporate Director of Children and Culture, and Susannah Beasley-Murray, Director of Supporting Families, gave an overview of the Children's Social Care performance, which included improvements made since the Ofsted Inspection.

Further to questions from the sub committee, James Thomas and Susanna Beasley-Murray;

- Clarified that scrutiny sessions such as the Children and Education Sub-committee assist in preparation for Ofsted inspections, as the role of elected members and their level of interest are key components to ensure council safeguarding is actively taking place as corporate parents.
- Explained that the annual Corporate Parenting Board report will be submitted to Cabinet in July.
- Confirmed that a monthly Management Information Report is robustly inspected at the Childrens' Services Improvement Board, to highlight and monitor performance. Audits on focused areas are undertaken with action plans to ensure a high-quality service is provided and protection for children

COMMITTEE, 04/05/2023

in social care is maintained. Performance Surgeries and Child in Need Summits are also undertaken to monitor progress and performance, which includes feedback from children and families.

- Conceded that further work is required to improve the single assessments not yet completed or outside the one-year timescale. Children who are on child protection or in need plans, should receive family assessments if there are changes in circumstances or within 12 months, however it appears that reviews are undertaken at a child protection conference, or with child in need plans. Auditing updates will be submitted to the Children's Services Improvement Board.
- Clarified that although the Department of Education (DFE) have not yet confirmed the selection process for the 'Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme'. Tower Hamlets would like to be put forward as one of the 12 local authorities to commit to the scheme in September 2023 and discussions are ongoing.
- Noted that the rise of domestic abuse throughout the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, have both impacted the need for more council support, with early help and, or social work assistance.
- Explained that less families require social work assessments as early help is now provided, although more long-term investment is required.
- Clarified that details on the number of children placed with culturally matched foster placements, as well as those not placed will be submitted by 4th June to the sub-committee.

RESOLVED that

1. A written brief on the number of Children placed with culturally matched foster placements and details on those not placed be submitted by the 4th June 2023 to the sub-committee.
2. That the presentation be noted.

5.2 Children's Safeguarding Partnership Review

James Thomas, Corporate Director of Children and Culture, gave the sub-committee an update on the Children's Social Care Review, the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children's Partnership's (THSCP) work and statutory reviews. This included details on the tripartite partnership arrangement between the council, NHS and police, the key priorities in tackling the exploitation of children, domestic abuse and on-line safety.

The sub-committee also heard from Korkor Caesar, NHS North East London, James Conway, Borough Commander and Laurelle Brown, Independent

COMMITTEE, 04/05/2023

Scrutineer, who discussed the partnership's priorities, achievements and key challenges in safeguarding children.

Further to questions from the sub-committee, James Thomas, Korkor Caesar James Conway and Susannah Beasley-Murray;

- Confirmed that increasing THSCP's digital presence for 2024 will include updating the website to ensure a toolkit is more accessible for children. Young scrutineers will also play a crucial advisory role.
- Explained that priority areas will be reset in September and may include infant safety, as best practise on safe sleeping with parents and babies requires more promotion by practitioners and families via social media. Data received across the partnership will be submitted at an extraordinary meeting to determine the new priorities to be set.
- Conceded that receiving meaningful data from all three partners is challenging, although this is a requirement for 2024 with improvements ongoing. Ensuring effective safeguarding of children is a national challenge.
- Confirmed that despite more survey responses received came from primary schools, further awareness from THSCP to both primary and secondary school children is required to mitigate harm online.
- Explained that formal discussions with the GP Care Group in regard to recruitment and retention of health professionals, including school nurses are taking place, although the latter has slightly improved. Partnership conferences allow a greater understanding of frontline staff needs and only enhances safeguarding practices.
- Clarified that there are no children in inadequate placements, although Ofsted is aware of one child placed in an unregulated placement. Children may be placed in residential placements but the majority are placed in foster care.
- Thanked the sub-committee for the ongoing scrutiny and requested THSCP be notified regarding any concerns the members have with any future investigations.
- Confirmed that engagement occurs with Faith groups on both an individual and interface forum level. Consideration will be given to naming the groups and organisations in due course.
- Conceded that resources are limited within the public sector which has affected training and capacity. The ongoing effects of the pandemic are also a factor. At present team mobilisation, as well as an increasing London virtual training offer and multi-agency training is available. A commitment by

COMMITTEE, 04/05/2023

Scotland Yard has also been given to increase safeguarding provision for the next few years for both this council and Hackney Council.

RESOLVED that

1. The presentation be noted.

6. ANY OTHER RESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

None.

As this was the last meeting of municipal year 2022/23, the Chair thanked all sub-committee members, officers and invitees for their assistance, and gave a special thanks to the Care Leavers and Foster Care visits undertaken during Ramadan, which were extremely beneficial.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm

Chair, Councillor Bodrul Choudhury

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub Committee

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Scrutiny Action Log

Name of Committee: Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Municipal Year: 2022-23

Reference	Action	Assigned to	Scrutiny Lead	Due Date	Response
Insert date	Insert agenda item title and the action requested by the committee	Insert name of director	Insert scrutiny lead	Insert Date	Response provided by the service/ witness
14.07.22					
13.10.22	<p>1. Youth Justice: The Youth Justice Service Performance with a specific focus on drugs, grooming of young people and county lines</p> <p>The committee requested a response about the new responsibilities around education and attendance.</p>	<p>James Thomas</p> <p>Corporate Director for Children & Culture</p>	<p>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</p> <p>CESSC Chair</p>	20.10.22	Response provided on 19.10.22. See Appendix 1 for response.
	<p>2. Youth Justice: To understand the findings from the inspection report and review the plan for improvement</p> <p>The committee raised concerns about the rising number of children from Tower Hamlets entering the criminal justice system and wanted to know why.</p>	<p>James Thomas</p> <p>Corporate Director for Children & Culture</p>	<p>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</p>	20.10.22	Response provided on 19.10.22. See Appendix 2 for response.
21.11.2022	<p>Challenge Session: Increasing women and girls access to sports provision</p> <p>The committee requested data/breakdown of female participation in sports in Tower Hamlets, with a specific focus on ethnicity.</p>	<p>James Thomas</p> <p>Corporate Director for Children & Culture</p>	<p>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</p>	20.12.22	See Appendix 3 response received on 12 th January 2023

	<p>The committee requested a response on whether the 'first come' policy has been reviewed.</p> <p>The committee requested a response on any actions or plans being taken to redesign existing sporting facilities in Tower Hamlets to make them more accommodating to women and girls.</p>				
08.12.22					
09.02.23	<p>5.2 Safe East School Health Service</p> <p>The committee requested further data on the uptake of Safe East Outreach Sessions.</p>	Somen Banerjee	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury	10.03.23	Response provided 03.05.23. See Appendix 4 for response.
	<p>5.2 Safe East School Health Service</p> <p>The committee requested detailed information on Tower Hamlets Together including the workplan.</p>	James Thomas Corporate Director for Children & Culture	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury	10.03.23	Response provided 09.03.23. See Appendix 5 for response.
	<p>5.1 Youth Provision</p> <p>To provide a written response on how ethnicity data is being collected for youth service participation with specific reference to Black African or Caribbean young people and provide clarity on whether there is any overlap between categories e.g., Somali and Black / African.</p>	James Thomas Corporate Director for Children & Culture	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury	10.03.23	Response provided 21.03.23. See Appendix 6 for response.

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Insert attachments as appendices where applicable

Appendix 1:

The new responsibilities and attendance

The role of the Virtual School supporting the YJS and the *educational engagement of children on orders.**

*Please note that educational engagement is the term used by the Department of Justice that means attendance but also has a wider meaning re: enabling attendance for children with no ETE offer. i.e. Taking a child presenting as NEET to ETE.

The Virtual School for Children in Our Care (CIOC) works alongside the YJS to support all children who are on an order, to improve or create engagement with education. Put simply, this is attendance with or sourcing of an educational offer.

There is an element of cross over with the most difficult to reach cases in care also coming under the YJS so the Virtual School jointly funded an education officer with the service.

The Education Officer is a qualified teacher (QTS) who works between the Virtual School and YJS.

The Virtual School also works across Education and the Social Care provision of the authority to get the best outcomes for children in its remit. This is a very powerful synergy, providing comprehensive insight and support for professionals and the children. At inspection this was seen as strength.

The Education Officer is part of a team of education professionals in the Virtual School, receiving constant educational continuous professional development (CPD) essential due to the fast-paced movement of curriculum change in KS4, KS5 and vocational education that our children access. The post holder provides strategic support to all YJS staff across the entire cohort whether in care or not. This support includes navigating school and college offers to make sure all children have an ETE offer. For example at the start of the academic year advocating for young people, often in place of their parents, to make informed decisions about education offers. This advocacy is essential due to the challenging nature of the cohort, which has high levels of SEND, EAL and histories of underachievement, exclusion and disruption to learning.

The Education Officer and Headteacher of the Virtual School are the visible face of the service for our schools and other establishments, reassuring, supporting and challenging teachers and leaders to promote the educational engagement of our children. It is essential that our children and their needs are visible. This representation extends to the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Service (THESS) which is also under the remit of the Virtual School Headteacher. This linkage provides regular insight

into the Designated Safeguarding Lead network (DSLs) of all our schools. This allows the service to clearly communicate policy and expectations for education in the YJS across the LA.

Education placement and via this attendance, is further supported by the Education Officer being a sitting member of the Fair Access Panel (FAP) which makes sure that school age children with issues arising are placed in the most suitable provision. This linkage means that 100% of our school age children have a school to attend.

It is essential that the needs of our learners are advocated for with internal and external agencies who can offer support to improve engagement. When needs are met, attendance improves.

The education officer links with the wide variety of education, vocational and careers areas that the LA offers. For example, the SEND department has a Youth Justice Champion who assists advocating for needs assessments and health requirements to be reflected into comprehensive Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs) sometimes created from scratch because the need has previously been missed.

The THESS also has oversight of Children Missing in Education and any child Electively Home Educated (EHE). In other authorities' children known to the YJS can fall into these categories in particularly EHE. Our joined-up services mean we are alerted to any child in these categories instantly. We do not have any electively educated child out of school on an order nor would it be allowed.

Attendance work in place - A key responsibility of the Education Officer is to promote engagement with education. This means good and regular attendance to set ETE hours and for statistical purposes, this is measured as "on the last week of the order." This is that we aim to improve attendance, or in many cases, gain education offers for children so their engagement is better by the time their order is complete, than when they joined the service.

School age - In the Virtual School, we monitor attendance in real time for all children in care. To do this for the YJS, we work with the Behaviour Attendance Support Service – BASS – to monitor attendance daily with our schools. This monitoring has 100% coverage for children of school age and has proved very effective in spotting attendance tailing off or difficulties at school. Schooling provides many the supervision hours required by an order. Our work with the BASS means that 100% of our school age children have an educational offer and 70% of those children improved or maintained their attendance while on an order last year. 30% of those children had very good attendance at 85%+. This confirms that being on an order has a positive impact on a child's engagement with education. This makes sure a child is safe and gaining the skills and support to we hope not to reoffend.

Post-16 - Monitoring attendance for young people Post-16 is more problematic. This is due to the wide range of institutions involved, varying attendance requirements for College Courses and the co-operation of FE colleges in data collection. To counter these issues, the Virtual School pays for an Attendance and Welfare Officer from the BASS to phone institutions and develop relationships. The officer has now been in place for the last year, progressing attendance monitoring from just at New City College and LEAP in the LA to a wider range of both in and out of borough institutions. Coverage is not 100% and there are children in this cohort NEET. However, 54% of children in a provision monitored had improved or maintained their attendance while on an order last year.

The challenge at Post-16 remains the number of children NEET. Many come to notice out of the academic cycle, making it very difficult to gain a place on a course. Work and apprenticeship options are limited because the majority do not have L2 English and Maths – a requirement for these options.

We have put in place three solutions to this issue

- Halilbury Youth Centre offers access to Street League, which provides sports leadership qualifications and L2 Functional Skills English and Maths. This is often 1:1 support for the most challenging young people.
- Prevista at KitKat Terrace also offer Functional Skills L2 English and Maths. This is in a group setting and can be joined on a rolling basis as children come to notice. This also supports over 18's who need to gain L2 English and Maths.
- Finally, in the past two years, LEAP – our alternative provider – has extended its offer to children Post-16. At present, this is for children already studying at LEAP graduating from KS4. This is a sizable number of our cohort. This is a fantastic support for our children as it provides a continuous education offer with professionals they know and trust. Courses include Functional Skills in English and Maths as well as pathways into work via the West Ham Foundation and NHS. The offer at LEAP has been further improved for children known to YJS by winning funding for a Task Force from the Department of Justice to support children who could be drawn into crime.

New responsibilities for the Virtual School and how these will support the YJS - The Education Officer was put in place to give expert support to our children but also because horizon scanning by the Headteacher indicated a direction of travel from the DfE and central government re: Virtual Schools being asked to support a wider remit of children vulnerable.

You will notice the Virtual School Headteacher has the additional title: Executive Headteacher of the Corporate School for Children Vulnerable. The latest of these additional responsibilities is now formally in place: Children With A Social Worker (CSW) – See attachment.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1086931/Promoting_the_education_of_children_with_a_social_worker_-_virtual_school_head_role_extension_2022.pdf

This new responsibility is strategic. It requires the Virtual School to move to monitor and give support to schools and agencies working with CWS, making the needs of these children visible. Underachievement of this group is higher for all metrics than Children in Care. Care in almost all cases sees a rise in attendance, outcomes and progress for

CIOC. Our first step on meeting this challenge has been to appoint an Assistant Headteacher to be the visible advocate for CSW and champion initiatives to support key groups in the cohort. The YJS cohort is one of these groups – we will be researching what works and what are the common challenges for CSW on cohorts. This work will be supported by a DfE research partner, and we have further reached out to the National College of Education for academic support.

The new responsibility is formative, and the post holder must contribute to research re: what works for Children in Need (CIN), requiring Child protection (CP) or close to care. Every authority will be sharing their findings to agree national policy going forward.

Appendix 2:

More children are in our criminal justice system.

We are not able to compare the total number of children that we are working with in total to that of our neighbours. However, we can compare performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that all Youth Justice services are marked against.

First Time Entrants:

Our First Time Entrants are higher than Waltham Forest and Hackney. However, we have been able to reduce our numbers year on year by a similar extent to our neighbouring boroughs.

The HMIP report highlighted that we were not using our diversionary offer as well as we could have done. We have had a renewed focus on this and we have already been able to see this in our data of the last 6 months.

Tower Hamlets and City of London	Waltham Forest	Newham	Hackney
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25962

25962

First Time Entrants

Apr 21 - Mar 22

First Time Entrants

72	55	93	49
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Rate per 100,000	236	214	278	192
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Apr 20 - Mar 21

First Time Entrants	96	72	116	82
Rate per 100,000	313	279	345	321

% difference	-25%	-23%	-19%	-40%
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Use of Custody

In relation to the custody KPI of the number of children that we have in custody, we have the lowest rates of children in custody and are doing significantly better than our neighbours for the last 2 years.

Tower Hamlets and City of London	Waltham Forest	Newham	Hackney
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Use of Custody

Jul 21 - Jun 22

25674

Custodial disposals	2	4	8	11
Rate per 1,000	0.07	0.16	0.24	0.44
Jul 20 - Jun 21				

Custodial disposals

4	4	7	8
0.13	0.15	0.21	0.31

Rate per 1,000

% difference

-6%

0%

3%

12%

Appendix 3**1. Data/breakdown of female sports participation in Tower Hamlets, with a specific focus on ethnicity.**

Leisure Centre Female Participation Breakdown can be viewed in the table below and illustrates the current percentage of BAME female users across the borough. Usage figures were configured from Dec 22 Usage.

Centre	Pre-Paid Members		Usage	
	BAME %	Non-BAME %	BAME %	Non-BAME %
John Orwell Sports Centre	25.23	74.77	60.55	39.45
Mile End Park Leisure Centre	55.49	44.51	64.36	35.64
Poplar Baths Leisure Centre	60.78	39.22	60.91	39.09
Tiller Leisure Centre	51.36	48.64	51.73	48.27
Whitechapel Sports Centre	79.23	20.77	74.27	25.73
York Hall Leisure Centre	28.26	71.74	26.42	73.58
Total	51.96	48.04	58.51	41.49

Current BAME female participation has risen in Q3 but with a slight decrease in pre-paid members across the borough. It should be noted that GLL has declared that the statistics are representative of those who have listed their gender as female and does not incorporate data from pre-paid members that did not disclose their gender or “preferred not to say”. For context it is a national trend that membership and participation reduce as the nights get longer, weather changes and we build to the end of the year.

The recognised way that sports participation, including that for women, is recorded is the Sport England Active Lives Survey. The Council is currently working with Sport England and London Sport to obtain the female participation data for Tower Hamlets, which will be used to set the baseline for our Women & Girls Sport Action Plan

2. A written response on the ‘first come’ policy (first refusal for bookings) being a barrier to women and girl’s sporting provisions in Tower Hamlets and how the council plan to address this.

The first come first served priority booking system is an industry standard employed across the country, whereby an existing booker of a sports facility get priority booking in the next period if an application is submitted within the given time period. This provides continuity for the booker and its participants and consequently the ability to maintain participation. There have been no complaints regarding limited or less access for female sport and there is no indication that this policy has adversely impacted female sports participation in any way. Examples of where female participation is well represented (in female football, hockey and rugby) can be evidenced at both John Orwell and Mile End between 18.00 – 22.00.

3. A written response on any prospective plans for the commissioning/redesigning of existing sporting and leisure spaces to ensure the safety of women and girls, once sports and leisure services move in-house. Also, a written response on working on co-production with women and girls to bring sports into the community.

All sports facilities are and will be designed in accordance with Sport England Technical guidance, which outlines best practice. Safety is a key consideration within the design guidance and the technical design guidance can be viewed on Sport England’s website [here](#).

A Women’s & Girl’s Sport Action group has been established initially with representation from various Council Departments with the intention to increase membership to include:

- Community / sport representatives and

- Regional and national organisations such as the Muslim Women’s Sport Foundation, The Youth Sport Trust, London Sport etc

The Group is currently planning a programme of female sport starting with the tasks informed by the calls to action from the Overview and Scrutiny and the promotion of International Women’s Day with a week of activity co-produced with the local community designed by women for women.

In preparation for the service coming in-house, the Council will undertake consultation and co-production with partners, users, staff and the community to inform and potential future investment and programming. It is proposed that the first workshop is held in first quarter 2023 to look at options for the future programming of the estate.

As set out above, the Council will seek to engage in April 2023 on how the Leisure Service will operate from May 2024. This consultation is being developed currently, and is expected to include the following themes, if not exclusively:

- Identify what actively deters women and girls from using leisure centres now, whether this is driven by the way facilities are designed, their condition, the cost of the service, the level of staff training, etc.
- Discover what activities women and girls would most want our leisure centres to offer, when, and in what format (e.g. mother & child swimming sessions on a Saturday morning, women only swimming for an hour every day, etc.)
- Find out what improvements would encourage more use of our leisure centres by women and girls, prioritised by the scale of impact, to identify any ‘quick wins’
- Seek advice on what other, non-leisure, facilities and/or activities would encourage women and girls to enter our leisure centres, e.g. places to meet, family friendly spaces, refreshments, etc.
- How women and girls want to be engaged and find out about activity and opportunities.
- Opportunities to gain qualifications, volunteer or enter employment

Appendix 4 - Uptake of Safe East Services

The Young People's Integrated Health & Wellbeing service (SafeEast) is a service commissioned by Public Health, provided by Compass UK. The service offers universal, targeted and specialist sexual health and substance misuse prevention and treatment services that are non-judgemental, evidence-based, prevention-focused, and age-appropriate to young people aged 10-19 years. The core offer extends to those 19-25 years old with SEND. These are delivered at the 'hub' and 'spokes' at other youth centres, schools and young-people-friendly settings around the borough.

As part of the service key performance indicators (KPIs), SafeEast are required to undertake targeted outreach in community settings (section 4.1). These outreach sessions are used to provide impartial health information, provision of 'expert speakers', clinical advice and screening. The service also provide non-clinical outreach in education, youth and community settings across Tower Hamlets.

In 2022/2023, the service delivered 420 outreach sessions (2818 young people attending the sessions over the year) with 2198 referrals into the service following the outreach sessions. The number of sessions showcases the relationships the service has built with both professionals and young people in the borough. Outreach sessions were delivered in a range of settings including:

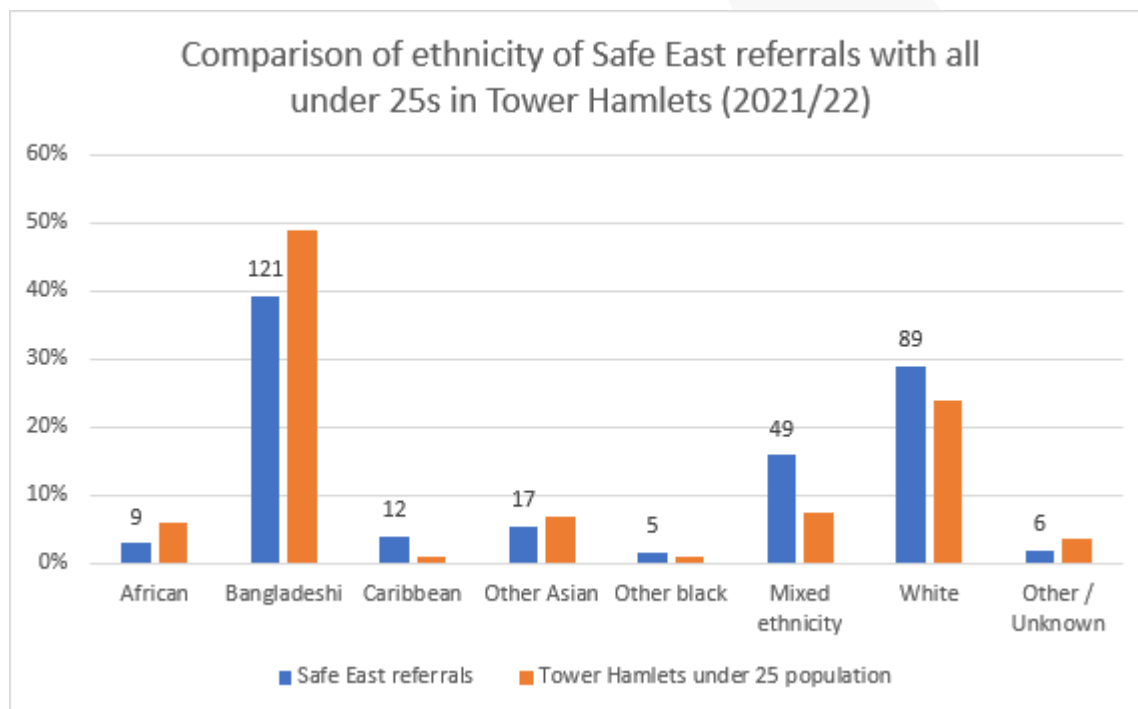
- East side
- Spotlight
- Health spot
- Linc centre
- LEAP (London East Alternative Provision)
- South Quay
- LEA (London East Academy)
- New City College
- Langdon park
- Ian Mikardo
- Youth Justice Service
- Supported housing providers

The table below shows the 2021/2022 referral breakdown by gender, showing that almost double the number of females were referred into the service than males.

Referrals by sex

Male	121
Female	234

The chart below shows referrals by ethnicity, compared to the total under 25s population in the borough in 21/22. A health needs assessment of adolescents in Tower Hamlets is underway. It will consider whether the referral data below reflects differences in health needs between ethnic groups (e.g. lower substance misuse or sexual health needs amongst young people of Bangladeshi ethnicity), or whether there are inequities in service access between different ethnic groups.



Appendix 5 –Tackling Race Inequalities work (BAME commission) health workstream

BAME Commission Public Health Projects

Project Sponsor:

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Introduction

The lived experiences, opportunities and outcomes for Tower Hamlets' Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities (BAME) differ detrimentally from those of their White peers. Structural and institutional racism remains a debilitating issue and many residents have neither had equal access to services or employment nor fair treatment and opportunities.

These were emphasised by the London borough of Tower Hamlets BAME Commission which also highlighted the poorer health outcomes associated with ethnicity, linkages to structural racism and the impact of COVID-19 in bringing these inequalities into focus.

This paper outlines indicative projects and interventions commissioned by Tower Hamlets Department of Public Health in response to the recommendations of the BAME commission. These projects include:

- Embedding Learning from Covid-19 Health Communication in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- Culturally Appropriate Health Communication and Engagement
- Barriers and Enablers of Trust in Health Services
- Ethnic Health Inequalities in Tower Hamlets: key stakeholder interviews
- Quantitative data on ethnic health inequalities: June 2022

- Vaccine Hesitancy and Lack of Trust

Embedding Learning from Covid-19 Health Communication in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Background

This 'lessons learned' project was aimed at evidencing health communication practices with BAME communities during the Covid-19 pandemic towards replicating initiatives that worked well in the Covid-19 response on other health issues. The project adopted a three phased approach to data collection which entailed a qualitative survey completed by professionals who provided health communication and/or engagement activities in response to Covid-19 to Tower Hamlets residents (Phase 1), semi-structured interviews with residents of Tower Hamlets (Phase 2), and semi structured interviews with professionals who provided health communication and/or engagement activities in response to Covid-19 to Tower Hamlets residents (Phase 3).

Recommendations

Towards embedding learning, a model of health communication and engagement is set out for use in addressing health issues across the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. This model advocates for ensuring health messages are co-produced, use trusted settings and people to communicate health information, and adopts the use of visual representations and multiple languages in conveying health messages.

1. Ensuring health messages are co-produced

Co-production is necessary for creating and delivering health messages which recognise and reflect the reality of residents. However, in co-producing, it is important that the contributions of members of the community are acknowledged and incentivised.

2. Use of trusted settings and people

Using trusted settings and community leaders in promoting health messages is essential and underpins the need to convey health messages in settings regularly visited by members of the community for needs not aligned to health.

3. Conveying health information using visual representation

Conveying health information through direct and symbolic reflection highlights the broader need for the adoption of different communication format for different groups. Therefore, it is important that health messages are conveyed using direct or symbolic reflections which may be photos, images or memes towards ensuring messages have a wider reach and are understood by a large subset of the population. This also speaks to the need for ensuring messages are accessible to residents living with a disability.

4. Conveying health information in multiple languages

Recognising the multicultural nature of Tower Hamlets, the use of translations which reflect the ethnic makeup of the borough is essential in ensuring health messages do not unwittingly exclude sections of the community based on languages written and/or spoken.

Culturally Appropriate Health Communication and Engagement

Background

This project aimed at developing and implement guidance for culturally appropriate communications and engagement was intended to in the first instance develop a resource for culturally appropriate health communication and engagement, and thereafter, embed this resource into the working practice of all council departments. Importantly, this is aligned with all five ambitions in the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2025 as embedding

culturally appropriate health communication and engagement ensures our approach to partnership working is evidence based and informed by the lived reality of Tower Hamlets residents.

Finding

To implant the approach of culturally appropriate health communication and engagement, a checklist was generated to be used as a tool to embed this ethos across the London borough of Tower Hamlets:

	Key issue to be addressed	Yes	No	NA	Comments
1	Has the message been co-designed with the community?				
2	Has technical language been avoided?				
3	Has language of requirement and mandate been avoided?				
4	Does the message induce fear and/or stigma?				
5	Will compliance with the health message disadvantage target community?				
6	Are multiple trusted credible sources utilised to disseminate the information?				
7	Are we disseminating in multiple languages?				
8	Are we disseminating using multiple media?				
9	Have we explored the use of a culturally trusted setting?				
10	Have we made provision for questions and clarifications following message delivery?				
11	Is the message accessible to people with disabilities?				

Recommendations

- Recognising the limitations in health literacy and agency to advocate on own behalf congruent with the health reality of individuals from BAME backgrounds, **opportunity for questions and clarifications must be provided** following the delivery of health messages and engagement activities.
- Consideration should be given to creating a **web version of the checklist** to enable ease of completion.
- The importance of accountability when using the checklist was raised and underpins the need for **sign off by divisional leads of health messages** only following completion of the checklist.
- A mechanism to **monitor and collate the use of the checklist** across the council public health team should be implemented. This could be via the use of an online portal with a dedicated staff responsible for monitoring and training staff on use where appropriate.

- It is important that the checklist is **shared across the region** as an exemplar of good practice and to importantly ensure that the ethos of culturally appropriate health communication is embedded as a norm not only in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, but across regional health systems.

Barriers and enablers of trust in health services: health inequalities in BAME communities in Tower Hamlets

Background

Delivered by the Young Foundation and underpinned by co-creating insights with BAME communities on what will facilitate trusting relationships between Tower Hamlets residents and service providers, this was an action-focused piece of research which was resident led and involved semi-structured interviews and round table discussions with 51 Tower Hamlets residents from BAME backgrounds. Through semi-structured interviews and a final round-table discussion, data was also collected from eleven professionals representing local health, council and voluntary sector organisations.

Recommendations

- Developing an understanding of cultural competence: Training of all professionals within the health system: this should cover principles of working with ethnically diverse communities rather than attempt to curate knowledge about all cultures.
- Person-centred approach to commissioning of services: Commissioners could consider adopting a more participatory approach to commissioning. Such approaches allow residents to have greater influence over service provision, build understanding of the trade-offs required in commissioning, and help to build trust.
- Improve digital access: Ways to access care online are not straightforward. An equality impact assessment of this digital turn in health services will highlight the ways in which digital services pose a barrier to access.
- Improved in-person access: It is paramount for ethnically diverse communities that in-person access to health services is increased. Residents with specialised needs feel cut off from health services due to the shift online and reported being made to leave if they attempted to visit the GP in person. Better communication of capacity issues and proposed strategies to deal with such issues could also help to manage expectations of residents.
- Accountability and quality checking: Residents suggested using mystery shoppers at the GP or CCTV on wards during the night shift. While these suggestions may not be feasible, they show a desire to know that health services are being quality assured and that there is a route to complaint and redress. This could be achieved through working with commissioners to raise awareness of compliments and complaints processes, and to promote the activities of organisations like Healthwatch. There is a need to understand if and how such existing mechanisms can be strengthened within ethnically diverse communities or if completely new mechanisms are required. Commissioners could also work with ethnically diverse communities to create KPIs around cultural competencies that health services could be benchmarked against.
- Building advocacy capacity: There is a need for ethnically diverse communities to advocate for health service provision which meets their needs, and to have support to navigate the complaints process when inadequate care is received. Long-term funding to enable community organisations to provide this advocacy service could build trust.

Ethnic Health Inequalities in Tower Hamlets: key stakeholder interviews

Background

Twelve semi-structured interviews were carried out with key stakeholders and community leads. Participants were from a variety of fields including general practice, voluntary and community organisations, faith leaders, community participation leads, and NHS organisations. Topics covered in the interviews included:

- Experience of the pandemic and issues exacerbated by the pandemic.
- Impact of grief on communities and how this has affected their perception of health services.
- Level of trust between residents and statutory services.
- Whether residents feel that their ethnicity impacts on the services they receive.
- How services can begin to restore trust with various diverse communities.

RecommendationsAccess to culturally appropriate health services:

- Improve health literacy so that diverse communities are better equipped to negotiate the health and care system; this should include information on migrants' rights and information on the purpose of primary care.
- Fund interpretation qualifications for people who are embedded in ethnically diverse and underserved communities; this should include specific training on how to have sensitive conversations around health.
- Continue to run/fund awareness-raising sessions for diverse communities on stigmatised issues.
- Train healthcare staff on ethnically informed care; this should include not perpetuating unhelpful racial stereotypes and recognising symptoms in all ethnicities.
- Embed options for care in community settings e.g. pop-ups, co-location.
- As far as possible, ensure ethnically diverse communities can access a range of services in one location.
- Have single-points-of-contact for each ethnically marginalised group, so that there is always a phone number people can call if they are unable to access needed services.

System barriers

- Use the voluntary and community sector to alleviate burden from statutory health services i.e. make the voluntary sector part of the official care pathway. This could be facilitated by shared line management.
- Funding barriers: consider the realistic length and amount of funding needed to a) meet the administrative and running needs of organisations and b) to realistically achieve the set goals.
- Representation where decisions are made: this should also include putting aside time to integrate new members from ethnically diverse communities into these spaces e.g. buddying.
- Actively work to find and support advocates from 'hidden communities' whose views are rarely represented.
- Recruitment of ethnically diverse professionals into primary care should be prioritized.
- Put in place straightforward complaint procedures, which don't rely on residents needing to 'persist'.

Data

- Come to an agreement across Tower Hamlets/North East London around how all services should be recording ethnicity data locally.
- Educate communities around why it is important that they accurately fill in their ethnicity data.
- Train frontline staff who collect ethnicity data on how to have these conversations.
- Enumerate the communities where we do not have accurate data.

Cultural competence

- When undertaking service design, be more creative about the 'cultural translation of services': this means merging biomedical models with other approaches and using a strengths-based approach for some issues.
- Reassess the use of BAME as a blanket term for ethnically diverse communities.
- Integrate family approaches in models of care.
- In terms of improving the cultural competence of workforces, it is important to a) know how to meet the basic common needs which are prevalent to your service area e.g. being able to maintain religious observance properly when in hospital and b) ensure that all staff are trained in emotionally astute approaches, where they do not necessarily need to know everything about every culture, but they need to be able to show respect, to listen, and to be flexible to needs which may be culturally specific.

Trust

- Change the emphasis of KPI requirements for community and voluntary sector organisations who are working with ethnically diverse groups
- Include 'building trust' as a key objective in contracts with CVS organisations.
- Cultivate trust with ethnically diverse youth in Tower Hamlets from a young age: this can be done through mentoring, career days, and sessions in schools and youth hubs.
- Maintain feedback loops. When you haven't been able to do something, also go back and relay this.
- Services should apologise for some of the experiences people had during the pandemic.
- When services are building relationships with community partners, show that you are willing to sit and have uncomfortable and transparent conversations.
- Stop carrying out further research until recommendations from previous pieces have been acted on.
- Retain the partnership and cross-boundary working from the pandemic.

Quantitative data on ethnic health inequalities: June 2022

Background

Data held by Tower Hamlets Council and regional health data were collated towards quantitatively conveying the health profile of Tower Hamlets. It is important to highlight that accessible data was not always disaggregated by ethnicity.

Top prevalent health conditions: all TH GP-registered residents

Condition	Patients with condition	% compared to list size
Depression	36,560	9.70%
Hypertension	25,951	6.89%
Diabetes mellitus	19,820	5.26%
Asthma	15,135	4.02%
Chronic kidney disease	7,115	1.89%
Chronic heart disease	5,064	1.34%
Mental health	4,623	1.23%
Cancer	4,622	1.23%
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	3,535	0.94%
Stroke and transient ischaemic attack	2,519	0.67%
Atrial fibrillation	1,917	0.51%
Learning disability	1,493	0.40%
Heart failure	1,468	0.39%
Rheumatoid arthritis	1,280	0.34%
Epilepsy	1,244	0.33%
Peripheral arterial disease	866	0.23%
Dementia	779	0.21%
Palliative care	450	0.12%
Total	83,635	22.19%

Top prevalent health conditions: BAME residents*

Condition	Patients with condition	% compared to list size
Depression	18,921	9.93%
Hypertension	16,591	8.70%
Diabetes mellitus	16,222	8.51%
Asthma	9,274	4.86%
Chronic kidney disease	4,016	2.11%
Chronic heart disease	3,107	1.63%
Mental health	2,995	1.57%
Cancer	1,875	0.98%
Stroke and transient ischaemic attack	1,361	0.71%
Learning disability	1,020	0.54%
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	991	0.52%
Rheumatoid arthritis	792	0.42%
Heart failure	744	0.39%
Epilepsy	577	0.30%
Atrial fibrillation	572	0.30%
Dementia	443	0.23%
Peripheral arterial disease	323	0.17%
Palliative care	209	0.11%
Total	49,515	25.97%

*North East London CCG could only disaggregate the data by excluding White and Unknown ethnicities from the data in order to generate the most prevalent conditions for BAME residents

key findings

General: Analysis by ethnicity in Tower Hamlets shows that for many chronic diseases, particularly smoking associated diseases, prevalence is highest in the White population, with **diabetes more prevalent in the Asian population**, and **hypertension, obesity and serious mental illness more prevalent in the Black population**

Hypertension, CVD, and COPD: Black patients (72%) were less likely to be on optimal anti-hypertensive treatment compared to patients of White (76%) or South Asian (77%) ethnicities. COPD prevalence is markedly higher in the White population of Tower Hamlets than all other ethnic groups. Nationally, uptake of cardiac rehabilitation has been found to be lower among BAME groups.

Cancer and Smoking: There are minimal differences in the proportion of cancer diagnoses made at each stage between ethnic groups. Overall cancer incidence was lower than, or similar to, the White population in Asian, Chinese, Mixed men and women, and Black women across all London STPs, but significantly higher in Black men. High overall cancer incidence in Black men was driven by prostate cancer incidence (2.6 times higher than White men). Smoking prevalence and the prevalence of cancer and COPD, which are closely associated with smoking, is higher in the White population in Tower Hamlets

Diabetes and NHS Health Checks: South Asian adults make up 34.1% of the GP registered population, but account for 63.3% of the patients with diabetes. Diabetes prevalence is 3.2% in the White population and 7.6% in the Black population. 87% of South Asians met their target cholesterol level compared to Black patients (77%). Reduction in NHS Health Checks will have had an impact on identifying those at risk of diabetes. Clinicians have raised concerns that this has disproportionately impacted on BAME communities. South Asians and Black residents are over-represented at NHS Health Checks.

Mental Health: White residents have significantly higher rates of bipolar, depression, anxiety and postnatal depression but are significantly less likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia and SMI. Black residents are more likely to be diagnosed with bipolar and more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia and SMI. Asian residents are less likely to be diagnosed with most conditions but are significantly more likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia and SMI. Whilst there is a large population of Black residents with CMIs, fewer residents of Black ethnicity are accessing IAPT. Black adults represent 1 in 6 people in East London, but make up 1 in 3 people detained under the Mental Health Act at the point of admission.

Maternity: Tower Hamlets has the highest overall stillbirth rate in NEL at 6.2 in 1000 and this is mainly due to stillbirths to White women and those with Unknown ethnicity. Unknown ethnicity have a very high stillbirth rate at 12 per 1000 births. Babies born to Black (12%) and Asian (11%) women are twice as likely to have a low birth weight than those born to White women (5%). Tower Hamlets has one of the largest differences in rates between Black (42%) and Mixed (40%) women attending A&E during pregnancy compared with White (26%) women. On average 8% of Black women that gave birth in 2021 have hypertension compared with 5% among White women.

Children: There are higher rates of asthma incidence amongst children in South Asian and Black groups. In London, after adjusting for deprivation and health area, compared with White-British children, Somali and Bangladeshi children were less likely to have received three doses of DTaP/IPV/Hib by six months of age (-11% and -5% respectively). 2019/20 NCMP data: Children from Black and Asian ethnic groups are more likely to be overweight and obese.

Miscellaneous: Data from Tower Hamlets indicated that within the high-level ethnic groupings, all non-White groups have a higher rate of Covid-19 cases than the White population. Black, Mixed and Other ethnicities experienced the highest rates of hospitalisations and deaths. At Barts Health Trust, outpatient Did Not Attend (DNA) rates are highest in the Black ethnic group (13.56%), closely followed by the Mixed ethnic group (13.37%). Rates are lowest in the White

ethnic group (9.77%). Unplanned hospital admissions are higher for BAME patients compared to White patients, with the highest unplanned admission rates seen in the Bangladeshi population. Data from 2020 shows that there is a significantly greater proportion of White representation (88%) on the Barts Health NHS Trust Board, as compared to BAME representation (13%)

Poor quality of ethnicity data

- **Accessing high quality data** which was disaggregated by ethnicity was **extremely challenging**. Some of the data presented is taken from out-of-date datasets where more up-to-date figures could not be accessed.
- Even when consistent data on ethnicity was provided, the categories were often too broad.
- Groups other than those enumerated in the national statutory data collection systems may be important to consider because of their large numbers and/or particular health needs (e.g. Turkish, Somali).
- Qualitative information collected suggested that some people don't like to declare their ethnicity on demographic forms and may tick 'Other' or 'Prefer not to answer'. The data collected reveals this tendency, with 'Other' often being over-represented.
- Without knowing what the population number of different ethnic groups are, and without accurate recording of ethnicity, it is impossible to know if some groups are being underserved for particular health conditions.

Obvious data gaps that emerged from this piece of work

- At what ages are different ethnicities affected by their first, second, third long-term condition?
- What is the ethnic breakdown of the most common causes of premature mortality (and at what age do these deaths on average happen by different ethnic groups)?
- Collating ethnicity data of people who attend the referrals after their NHS Health Check.
- Childhood immunisation uptake by ethnicity
- Cancer screening uptake by ethnicity: **screening services do not extract this.**

Vaccine hesitancy and lack of trust

Background

Through a series of community conversations led by University of East London (UEL), issues around Covid-19 vaccines were used to explore distrust of institutions, power dynamics, historical and structural racism and neglect towards identifying ways trust can be generated and relationships built between communities and services in Tower Hamlets. The target groups for this piece of work were Somali, Black African, and Black Caribbean communities.

Update

The majority of this piece of work has been completed, with seven workshops carried out with the different target groups. The workshops were well received, and participants gave very positive feedback on how these were facilitated by UEL. The data from these workshops is currently being analysed and written up, and a final report is expected by December.

Appendix 6 – Ethnicity Reporting for Tower Hamlets Youth Services

Response:

Reporting from April 2023 will collect data on 19 ethnicity categories as listed below which includes Black Caribbean, Black African and Black Somali:

WBRI	White - British
WOTH	Any other white background
WROM	Gypsy/Roma
MWBC	White and Black Caribbean
MWBA	White and Black African
MWAS	White and Asian
MOTH	Any other mixed background
AIND	Indian
APKN	Pakistani
ABAN	Bangladeshi
AOTH	Any other Asian background
BCRB	Black Caribbean
BAFR	Black - African
BSOM	Black - Somali
BOTH	Any other black background
CHNE	Chinese
OOTH	Any other ethnic group
REFU	Refused
NOBT	Information not yet obtained

The data that has been shared was only indicative and does include some overlap due to the limited categories previously. However, going forward from April 23 as part of the new financial year the service is planning to have all data analysed including demographic analysis that will include the 19 categories listed above.

Appendix 7 – EHCP Performance Report

Response to Scrutiny Action Log Request

April 2023

The summary below provides information on the reason behind missed EHCP targets. What activity has been taken to understand the root causes of this increased demand, forecast the demand for 23-24 and make plans to ensure we are better placed to manage the demand next year?

a) The reason behind missed EHCP targets.

There has been significant increase in the number of new requests for EHCNA in recent years:

- o A 45% growth in the last three months, relative to the 2021/22 academic year.
- o A 35% growth, 2022 against 2021.
- o A 70% growth, across the whole of the last 2 years.

Workforce capacity challenges, including the recruitment and retention of key SEND roles, as well as some leadership gaps made it difficult to keep up with the increased number of requests. This resulted in a backlog and impacted timeliness.

There were also considerable delays in assessing the needs and providing advice on the needs of children and young people (CYP). CYP with complex needs frequently require more detailed assessments, these often take additional to complete and also impact timeliness.

The current Management Information System did not and continues not to provide the support required to speedily and effectively access and utilise data.

b) What activity has been taken to understand the root causes of this increased demand.

SEN practices and procedures have been fully reviewed as part of the Islington/Tower Hamlets Improvement Partnership. This included an audit which looked at the quality of plans and quality of advice.

c) Forecast of demand for 23-24

The increased demand outlined in (a) mirrors the national landscape. In 2021, the national number of requests for new assessments rose by 23%. This high level of demand, continued throughout 2022 and into 2023 – both locally and nationally. Tower Hamlets has historically high levels of need with one of the highest percentages of EHCPs in the country, thus, we predict that the demand will continue to rise.

d) Plans to ensure we are better placed to manage the demand next year?

Additional funding has meant that sufficient interim staff are now in place to ensure the timely administration of, and the annual review of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Increased capacity has ensured there has been month by month improvement in the timeliness of decisions to assess, the request for advice and the number of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks. An approved growth bid has enabled the service to replace the interim workers with permanent staff. The recruitment has begun (April 2023).

Additional funding has meant that there is extra resource within the EP Service to deliver timely statutory advice. Plans and interventions are being put in place to ensure the Health Service have the capacity to produce advice in a timely manner.

A specific and dedicated team is working to clear all overdue and outstanding assessments (with a due date of up to 31/03/2023). These will be cleared in reverse date order. This exercise will provide other officers with the space to focus on new assessments whilst actively working to prevent another backlog. This exercise has a completion date of July 2023.

Advice is tracked weekly, and all professionals are provided with clear, set and expected return dates. To mitigate further missed EHCP targets, all partner services have been informed that advice is to be provided 6 weeks from the decision to assess rather than 6 weeks from allocation.

Partner services are expected to allocate work for assessment within 3-5 working days of the decision to assess. This is communicated informally on the day the decision is made and before advice is formally requested.

Partner services are met with weekly to identify and track late or outstanding advice and progress these cases where possible, either for expedited advice or progression to a Draft EHCP.

The SEN service has introduced weekly tracking of assessments – this will ensure ‘flagging’ cases are identified and addressed earlier than previously done.

Plans are in progress to put an efficient Management Information System (MIS) in place. This will be used to record and track all annual reviews, the EHCNA process, and post 16 destinations. The new system will also include online modules for monitoring and completing workflows and for reporting on timeliness and SEN2.

Further information

Work has started on the development of an Inclusion Framework which will set out the provision that should be made ordinarily available for CYP with SEN in mainstream schools (and later, in colleges). This framework, in part, will promote early intervention and action through settings and help schools to meet the needs of pupils identified as requiring SEN Support. It will also offer parents and carers transparency around the available SEN provision in Tower Hamlets. The eventual goal is that this framework will facilitate a reduction in EHCP requests, as SEN support needs will be met earlier.

There is an expectation that the LA will at least meet national averages of 50% timeliness in the month April 2023.

There is an expectation that at the LA will exceed the national average (up to 65-75% timeliness) in the months of May, June and July 2023.

Appendix 8 – Support provided to care leavers

Response to Overview & Scrutiny Subcommittee Questions

Support to Care Leavers

(1) **Q:UASC – numbers and support provided**

A: We are current working with 199 current and former Unaccompanied Minors. We provide education, accommodation, financial support, emotional support, clothing, PA support, money management, independent living skills development, and support for family tracing. We also offer financial support for dentals and opticians appointments/care, support for gym and other health club memberships (based on assessment of need) and with immigration matters (to include limited financial support on a case by case basis).

(2) **Q: Assessment process – how do we assess individual care leavers needs and then meet them**

A: All care leavers have 6-monthly pathway assessment, planning and reviews. Together with them we agree relevant interventions and provide necessary support to achieve them, e.gg. financial support for college and higher education, in line with our Local Offer for Care Leavers.

(3) **Q: Housing – what support provided to care leavers around accommodation. When do they get their own homes, how many and what ages. What support is providing to those in their own accommodation – Types of accommodation based on assessment (supported, semi-independent with or without support, standalone with or without support and permanent accommodation)**

A:Types of Accommodation provided to care leavers.

(1) Supported – with and without 24/7 staffing.

(2) Semi-independent with floating support based on assessed needs. This can be time limited to achieve a specific need e.g., support with accessing Universal Credit and attending appointments

(3) Standalone accommodation – for care leavers assessed to be able to live with little or no support but not ready for permanent housing.

(4) Staying Put Arrangement

(5) Permanent Housing

Process for 1,2,3 and 4

A Pathway Assessment is completed for care leavers to identify appropriate accommodation which includes matching with appropriate young people if accommodation will be shared. There is also management scrutiny to ensure that accommodation being provided will meet the needs of the young person and is consistent with the above pathway.

Permanent Housing

The Through Care Service together with Housing and other partners provides suitable and affordable permanent accommodation for care leavers which is based on:

- Their assessed needs as able to live independently using an independent living skill check list. This is undertaken with support workers and Staying Put carers (when young people are in this arrangement)
- Completion of a Money House Training – This helps care leavers prepare to move into independent housing, manage their money and maintain their tenancy. The aim is to ensure that care leavers have practical, financial, and digital skills to help them pay their rent-on time, keep up with bills and budget their living costs. This to prevent homelessness.
- Not having any rent arrears at the time the Housing Application is being completed. If the young person has rent arrears they will not be allowed to proceed until the arrears are cleared. On a case by case basis, support may be provide with paying these down.
- Attendance at Housing Panel where the worker (and the young person if they accept the invitation to attend) is assisted to think through the referral process. The Panel also reiterates the rights and responsibilities/expectations of having a tenancy for permanent housing.

Age at which a particular type of accommodation is considered.

Every care leaver will be provided suitable accommodation as part of the service's intervention. However as mentioned earlier, the type of accommodation provided is based on the care leaver's assessed needs and the type of accommodation best suited to meet those needs.

This is reviewed 6 monthly (but this can be reviewed earlier if new needs are identified (e.g., mental health) and relevant interventions agreed with the care leaver is put in place.

Type of support provided

- Every care leaver has a Personal Advisor up to the age of 25.
- Some care leavers in addition to the Personal Advisor have support workers who through assessed and agreed key work sessions provide support to young people in their contact with professionals and also in developing appropriate independent living skills.
- Time limited support to care leavers in their permanent accommodation to help them to settle, engage with service providers such as utility companies, landlords and the benefit agencies. This support is provided in addition to that which is provided by PAs
- Continuing emotional, practical, and financial support to maintain their tenancy.
- Council Tax exemption until their 25th birthday
- Setting Up Grant of £3,000 (effective April 2023) to assist care leavers to furnish their properties.

(4) Q: Education – break down of all the care leavers and their education provision and outcomes. What is the educational support offer

A: We are currently review our Education, Employment, and Training (EET) offer to include recruiting additional capacity to support this work. Our intention is that every care leaver Not in education, training, or employment (NEET) will have a designated EET keyworker intensively working with them for up to 6 months to rectify this.

Employment, education, and training outcomes for care leavers are a key area of focus in Tower Hamlets. Underscoring this, in April 2021 the local authority appointed two EET Advisors whose main role it is to support care leavers in increasing access to, securing, and sustaining such opportunities both within the borough and more widely within London and beyond.

We have had some marked successes to date, considering that the EET Advisors were appointed whilst we were still in the height of the pandemic.

Our successes include nine of our care leavers successfully securing places on the Civil Service Internship Scheme in 2020-2021, with a further three in 2021-22 and four in 2022-23. Working closely with the Supported Employment Team (Workpath) care leavers are also supported to access vacancies within the council, and recently one such care leaver secured employment with the Mayor's Office with another offered an interview.

Also, we have had a significant number of care leavers express interest working in the construction sector and we have put CSCS training in place to enable care leavers to obtain the necessary trade card to access these opportunities. The education, health, and care sector proves to be another popular choice expressed by care leavers, and working in partnership with Workpath, Early Help, and Children & Family Services we have sourced employment opportunities for them in Tower Hamlets schools.

Care leavers who wish to work and are not job-ready are referred to programmes to enhance their employability such as the Matrix programme and Prince's Trust employability programme, as well as in house workshops and individualised support from the EET service.

We have made access to education and training more accessible by working in partnership with a wide range of providers with opportunities available throughout the year. We also continuously promote further and higher education to young people and aid in identifying courses, support with UCAS applications/personal statements and advise on student loan/fees. Our care leaver local offer also includes 'top up' financial support with university and associated fees.

In 2021-22, for example, 19 care leavers secured university admission for undergraduate courses, our highest rate for the last two years running.

As we have lost one EET Advisor this past summer to the further education sector, we will be reviewing the scope of the role for the remaining advisor, whilst recruiting additional EET keyworker capacity in the coming weeks.

Appendix 9 - Data on how many children are/ are not placed with culturally matched foster placements. (Slide 16 – Childrens Social Care Improvements since Ofsted)

The data below is from April 2023, the cohort refers to 119 in-house placements/children.

As @ 30 Apr 2023

	Number	%
No. with recorded Ethnicity	111	-
<i>Matched Ethnicity (recorded)</i>	50	45%

Main Ethnic Category	No. Matched
Asian or Asian British	38
Black or Black British	13
White	11
Mixed/Dual background	2
Any other ethnic group	1

Sub-ethnicity	No. Matched
Bangladeshi	32
White - British	8
African	4
Caribbean	2
White & Black African	1
Somali	1

Any Other White Background	1
Any Other Ethnic Group	1

	Number
In house placements	119
Child Religion missing	44
Carer Religion Missing	17

	Number	%
No. with recorded Religion	58	-
<i>Matched Religion (Recorded)</i>	51	88%

<i>Matched both Ethnicity and Religion</i>	33
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Appendix 10 – Action Log Appendix 3 – Data on the breakdown of of female sports participation in Tower Hamlets, with a specific focus on ethnicity. “Good news on the increase in BAME participation in quarter three but what have we done differently?”

GLL’s community sports manager has highlighted the following initiatives and engagements which have contributed to the increased BAME participation levels:

Scrutiny Action Log

- Working with Ocean Regeneration trust's women and girls department in enhancing current provision through hire of facilities, attendance at coffee mornings and events.
- Continuation of partnership with groups such as the black swimming association and Fern Street family centre to engage with ethnically diverse women.
- Continued expansion of the WO programme in centres including swimming provision, sport provision and extension of swimming times.
- Continued recruitment focus of female workforce at local recruitment fares, careers days and festivals.
- Driving the give it a go scheme to inactive female participants through social prescription and outreaching at local women's centre.

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<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11th July 2023</p>	
<p>Report of:</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Corporate Director's - Reflections and Priorities for the Children and Culture Directorate for 2023-24</p>	

<p>Originating Officer(s)</p>	<p>James Thomas, Corporate Director of Children & Culture</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All wards</p>

Summary

This cover report accompanies the verbal update and will focus on:


- Reflections on the previous year's work within Children and Culture 2022-23 and any strengths or lessons learnt.
- Priorities for the Directorate for 2023-24.

Recommendations:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Utilise the verbal update in order to inform the forward planning activity for the Sub-Committee

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<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Executive Report of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Full Council</p> <p style="text-align: center;">19th July 2023</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: James Thomas, Corporate Director – Children and Culture</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Our ambition to be the best corporate parent - Adopting care experience as a protected characteristic</p>	

Executive Summary

A proposal to join over 25 authorities (including 4 London boroughs) who have introduced care experience as a protected characteristic, recognising the disparity and disproportionality faces by those with care experience when it comes to health, education, housing, employment, and criminality amongst others.

It is within our power to create a society that embraces the unique journeys of care experienced individuals and protects them from discrimination and disadvantage. By making care experience a protected characteristic, we send a powerful message of inclusivity and empathy to create a more inclusive and compassionate society that upholds the rights and dignity of all.

Recommendations:

The Full Council is recommended to:

- A. Recognise that care experienced people are a group likely to face discrimination.
- B. Agree to treat care experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic, conducting Equality Impact Assessments for future services and policies.
- C. Proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies.
- D. Include care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and annual information relating to Protected Characteristics.
- E. Call upon all other local organisations and partners to treat care experience as a Protected Characteristic and adopt corporate parenting principles.
- F. Identify and review barriers impacting care experienced people in recruitment, offering guaranteed interviews for eligible applicants.
- G. Encourage statutory partners and small businesses to adopt similar employment practices.
- H. Establish a cross-council approach to creating opportunities for care experienced individuals, including training for recruiting managers and support into apprenticeships.

- I. Report progress and achievements in the annual Corporate Parenting Board report and lobby central government for care experience to be a protected characteristic.
- J. To note the Equalities Impact Assessment / specific equalities considerations as set out from Paragraph 4.1

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Addressing Discrimination: Approving care experience as a protected characteristic shows the council's stance against discrimination and promotes equal rights for all individuals.
- 1.2 Promoting Equality: Extending protected characteristic status ensures equal legal protection for care experienced individuals, fostering fairness and equality in society.
- 1.3 Reducing Disadvantages: Recognition as a protected characteristic helps address challenges faced by care experienced individuals, improving their opportunities and well-being.
- 1.4 Amplifying Voices: Granting protected characteristic status values the perspectives of care experienced individuals and includes their input in decision-making processes.
- 1.5 Fostering Inclusive Policies: Treating care experience as a protected characteristic encourages inclusive policy development that considers the unique needs of care experienced individuals.
- 1.6 Challenging Stigma: Acknowledging care experience as a protected characteristic challenges stereotype and promotes a compassionate society.
- 1.7 Demonstrating Leadership: Approving care experience as a protected characteristic showcases the council's commitment to social justice and encourages other organisations to follow suit.
- 1.8 Encouraging Accountability: Protected characteristic status holds the council accountable for addressing discrimination and inequality faced by care experienced individuals.
- 1.9 Aligning with National Efforts: Recognizing care experience aligns with national efforts to provide legal protection and support for this group.
- 1.10 Building Trust and Collaboration: Extending protected characteristic status builds trust, promotes collaboration, and fosters positive social change within the community

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The council could decide not to approve care experience as a protected characteristic. There is no legal requirement to do so, however doing so demonstrates a significant commitment as a corporate parent and can significantly benefit us reputationally as one of the first adopters in London. It is likely that this will also be a recommendation by the Department for Education National Advisor for Care Leavers Mark Riddell who has endorsed this campaign elsewhere and visited our Through Care service in May 2023

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

Background and context

3.1 Every child deserves the best start in life. Adults, children and young people who are care experienced often face significant barriers in life, including access to equal education, training, and employment opportunities. They are more likely to experience discrimination and stigma and are disproportionately represented in terms of poorer health outcomes, social mobility the criminal justice system. As a result, they are at a higher risk of experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

3.2 The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care headed by Josh McCallister published in May 2022 had a final report recommendation that:

“Government should make care experience a protected characteristic” and “New legislation should be passed which broadens corporate parenting responsibilities across a wider set of public bodies and organisations.”

3.3 Although the recommendation has not been formally adopted by central Government, many local authorities have taken forward the motion to pass this legislation locally. 25 authorities nationally of which four are London boroughs (Lambeth, Sutton, Ealing and Waltham Forrest) have made the decision to recognise care experience as a protected characteristic.

3.4 As corporate parents, councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by the authority and has a duty to put the voices, needs, and rights of care experienced people who face challenges and discrimination at the heart of decision-making.

3.5 To demonstrate our commitment to children in our care and to be the best corporate parent, Tower Hamlets Council proposes to recognise care experienced people as a group likely to face discrimination and treat care experience as a protected characteristic.

3.6 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to exercise due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

Why make care experience a protected characteristic

3.7 The outcomes for care experienced people today are extremely poor. It is estimated that 26% of the homeless population have care experience; 24% of the prison population in England have spent time in care; that 41% of 19-21 year old care leavers are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

compared to 12% of all other young people in the same age group¹; and adults who spent time in care between 1971-2001 were 70% more likely to die prematurely than those who did not.²

Some specific areas where care experienced people are disproportionately impacted and disadvantaged as a result of being in care are:

Education	Studies have shown that care-experienced children are less likely to achieve good grades and go on to higher education than their non-care-experienced peers. They are also more likely to be excluded from school and experience disrupted education due to frequent placements and changes in schools.
Employment	Care-experienced individuals may face significant barriers when it comes to employment, including a lack of qualifications and work experience, as well as stigma and discrimination. This can lead to a higher risk of unemployment and poverty.
Mental health	Care-experienced individuals are more likely to experience mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This may be due to the trauma they have experienced in their early lives, as well as a lack of stability and support.
Homelessness	Care-experienced individuals are at a higher risk of becoming homeless than the general population. This may be due to a lack of support when leaving care, a lack of affordable housing, and difficulty in maintaining stable employment.
Criminal justice	Children in care are much more at risk of interacting with the criminal justice system by the age of 24 than their peers. National figures indicate that over half (52%) of care experienced children had been convicted of a criminal offence by the academic year they turned 24.

3.8 We must level the field for care experienced people. Every individual deserves to be treated with kindness, compassion, and understanding. It is within our power to create a society that embraces the unique journeys of care experienced individuals and protects them from discrimination and disadvantage. By making care experience a protected characteristic, we send a powerful message of inclusivity and empathy. We recognise the immense challenges these individuals have faced and the resilience they have shown in navigating life's complexities.

3.9 Granting them protected status is an act of compassion, ensuring they are heard, valued, and afforded the same rights as others. It is a call to action, an

¹ (Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2020; Williams et al., 2012; Department for Education, 2021b)

² (Murray et al., 2020)

opportunity to rewrite the narrative and build a future where care experienced individuals are no longer stigmatised or overlooked.

What implementing care experience as a protected characteristic means in practice

- 3.10 Implementing care experience as a protected characteristic means recognising the unique challenges and experiences faced by care experienced individuals and taking concrete steps to address them. It means providing equal opportunities in education, employment, and housing, ensuring access to support services and resources tailored to their needs, and actively combating discrimination and stigma. It means fostering a society where care experienced individuals are not defined by their past but are valued for their potential and contributions.
- 3.11 We must ensure that in the key areas of education, employment, health, housing and criminal justice we undertake significant work to understand how we can break down barriers of inequality for care experienced individuals.
- 3.12 As a council will formally call upon all other bodies and partners to treat care experience as a Protected Characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation and to adopt corporate parenting principles for children in care and care leavers until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.
- 3.13 The council will assess future services and policies made and adopted by the council through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience. This means ensuring that services are inclusive and accessible for all care-experienced people, regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or transgender identity. It also means working to address the structural and systemic barriers that can prevent care-experienced people from achieving their full potential.
- 3.14 The council will also proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views. It will identify and review barriers that impact care experienced people in the council's recruitment process, extend the right to a guaranteed interview for applicants who are care experienced and meet the minimum requirements for a job vacancy, and work with statutory partners and small businesses to encourage them to take a similar approach in their own employment practices. The council will create a cross-council approach that proactively creates opportunities for care experienced people with training for recruiting managers, work experience opportunities, careers advice, and support into council apprenticeships.
- 3.15 Partners and service providers need to be educated on what protected characteristics are, why they matter, and how to identify and avoid discrimination. Training should cover how to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds, how to make services accessible, and how to recognise and respond to discrimination. Care experience will also be included in any equality training programmes delivered by the council or its partners

- 3.16 It's important to note that implementing protected characteristics is not just the responsibility of service providers. Everyone has a role to play in creating an inclusive and equitable society. Individuals should advocate for their rights and the rights of others, speak out against discrimination, and educate themselves and others about the importance of protected characteristics.
- 3.17 The council will report its progress and achievements in the annual Corporate Parenting Board report and write to the government calling for care experience to be made a protected characteristic as part of the government's Independent Review into Children's Social Care and for a sustainable, long-term funding settlement for Children Social Care.
- 3.18 Overall, care-experienced individuals may face multiple challenges throughout their lives due to the experiences they have had in care. It is important for policymakers, social workers, and others to recognise these challenges and work to provide adequate support and resources to help care-experienced individuals succeed in life. In conclusion, implementing protected characteristics means ensuring that everyone has equal access to services and opportunities, regardless of their personal characteristics. This requires education, training, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and a commitment to creating inclusive environments. By working together, we can create a society that values and respects diversity, and ensures that everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Introducing care experience as a protected characteristic within the borough and council has significant implications for equality. It acknowledges the unique challenges and experiences faced by care-experienced individuals and recognises the need for specific protections and support. By including care experience as a protected characteristic, the council demonstrates a commitment to addressing the inequalities and barriers faced by this marginalised group. It ensures that care-experienced individuals are afforded the same rights, opportunities, and access to services as other protected groups. This recognition not only promotes fairness and social justice but also encourages greater inclusivity within the borough and council. It creates a platform for care-experienced individuals to have their voices heard, their experiences valued, and their needs met.
- 4.2 Known challenges for care experienced children and young people include that they are more likely to have a lower Attainment 8 score at Key Stage 4 (see definition below^[i]). This was 20.7 in 2021-22 in Tower Hamlets, compared to 49.8 for all students. They are also more likely to be 'not in education, employment or training (EET) or activity not known' with 10.6% of children in our care aged 16/17 in this position in March 2022, compared to 3.6% for all 16/17-year-olds (it should be noted that the number of children in our care that the percentage is based on is very small).
- 4.3 Data on the prevalence of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability in Tower Hamlets shows that 34.9% of children in our care have an Education, Health & Care Plan and 20.9% are with SEN Support

- 4.4 Recognising care experience as a protected characteristic demonstrates a commitment to ensuring equal treatment and opportunities for individuals with care backgrounds, preventing discrimination in various aspects of life, including education, employment, housing, healthcare, and access to public services.
- 4.5 It will require an assessment of our existing services and any future services through a revised Equality Impact Assessment to address potential barriers that care-experienced individuals may encounter when accessing public services. This includes evaluating the accessibility of services, providing reasonable accommodations, and ensuring that care-experienced individuals are not disadvantaged or excluded.
- 4.6 A consideration of positive action measures to address inequalities or disadvantages faced by care-experienced individuals. This can include targeted support programs, mentorship opportunities, or additional opportunities to promote their inclusion and help them overcome barriers. Guaranteed job interviews is an example.
- 4.7 Data collection and monitoring on care experience as a protected characteristic will be required to provide valuable insights into the experiences and needs of care-experienced individuals. Monitoring and analysing this data will allow for evidence-based decision-making, targeted interventions, and evaluation of progress over time.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.
- 5.2 Care-experienced individuals may be more vulnerable to various forms of abuse, exploitation, or neglect. Introducing care experience as a protected characteristic emphasises the local authority's commitment to safeguarding this group, necessitating the development and implementation of robust safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 5.3 Care-experienced individuals can face a higher risk of involvement in criminal activities due to various socio-economic factors and lack of support networks. Incorporating care experience as a protected characteristic enables the local authority to focus on crime reduction strategies tailored to their specific needs. This may involve targeted support services, diversionary programs, and restorative justice initiatives to prevent offending and support rehabilitation.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 Although there are considerable pressures on Children Looked After budgets this proposal is not expected to have any adverse financial implications for future years

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Corporate Parenting Principles are set out in Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and are as follows:
- (a) to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
 - (b) to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
 - (c) to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
 - (d) to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
 - (e) to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
 - (f) for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
 - (g) to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
- 7.2 It is for the Council to determine how it meets these duties. It is therefore a matter for the Council to decide whether care experience should become a protected characteristic so far as the Council is concerned. However, if the Council makes this determination, it can only affect internal decisions.
- 7.3 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires local authorities to eliminate harassment, discrimination and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and people who do not share it; and to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- 7.4 This report demonstrates the Council's commitment to meet the requirements set out above.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- None

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- None

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Draft

Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting

Strategy

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2023 – 2028

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FOREWORD TO OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

When a child comes into our care, we become their ‘corporate parent’, and there is no responsibility more important to us than this.

You deserve nothing but our very best and we know what type of parent we are striving to be. Not just good, but exceptional, and willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure you have every opportunity to develop, realise your aspirations and thrive. We aim to show you unconditional love and care as every good parent should.

We know that the things you need most are the same as they are for any child – to be loved in a safe and stable home.

We are asking everyone to think about how they can play a part in offering you more opportunities and making life better. Part of how we are doing this is through a ‘Pledge’, which is a set of commitments that show how everyone can contribute.

From opening the door to a new experience, learning a skill or being that additional support at the right moment, we will concentrate on removing any barriers and creating the environment where you can see the possibilities in every part of your life.

We are also seeking targeted offers, such as apprenticeships specifically for our care experienced young people, so that our partners take on greater corporate parenting responsibilities. By working with the Pan London Care Leavers Compact, extra support will come from joined up efforts with other local authorities as well.

This strategy shows you what we plan to do to in response to the things you have told us are most important. These are the ‘key messages’ that you shared with us and you can see them throughout this document.

You have our full commitment that we will be tireless in our efforts to deliver the work set out in this document.

The opportunities available to you will also be boosted by the investment we are making in services and support for all young people in the borough. This includes universal free school meals, educational allowances and bursaries, and transformation of the Youth Service.

We want you to be able to see and feel the difference this work makes to your experiences. We will keep checking back in with you about the progress we are making. We look forward to hearing what you think.

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Introduction

Corporate parenting is the term that describes the shared responsibility of elected members, all the staff in the council and partner agencies towards you - the children in our care and our care experienced young people.

You were involved in the development of this strategy right from the start and the contents have formed around what you told us is most important (the key messages on page 9).

**It
years
for how**



Mayor, Lutfur Rahman

**covers
and sets
we will**



**James Thomas,
Corporate Director of
Children and Culture**

**the next 5
out a plan
bring
everyone**

together and work with you to

improve your experiences and make your lives better. The strategy is made up of a ‘Pledge’ (for everyone to be a part of) and a set of five priorities with actions to show what we are going to do.

The Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board (CPB), including its young people’s representatives, will take the lead on making sure this strategy, and the actions it describes, are delivered. You can see more about how this will be done at the end of this document in the section ‘Making the Strategy Happen’.

We know that things will change during the next five years so we will keep talking to you about these plans. Together we will update them regularly so they stay focused on what you want to see happening.

The context for developing this strategy

When producing this strategy we have taken into account legal requirements as well as the relevant things happening nationally and

locally. We have outlined what this includes below and there are references to the full documents at the bottom of the page.

DRAFT Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023 to 2028

Section 1 of Children and Social Work Act 2017 (Section 1) sets out seven corporate parenting principles which local authorities must have regard to for children looked after or care experienced young people. In February 2018 some guidance for local authorities (like Tower Hamlets Council) called 'Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care experienced young people'¹ was published'.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care which was published in May 2022. The review examined the needs, experiences and outcomes of the children supported by social care and put forward recommendations for changes.

In February 2023 the UK government published its implementation strategy and consultation called 'Stable Homes, Built on Love'². The strategy responded to the independent review and concentrated on how to provide nurturing, stable and loving homes for children in care and care experienced young people.

In December 2022 Ofsted announced the introduction of a new judgement for care experienced young people to the framework for inspecting local authority children's services (ILACS)³. The new judgement will focus on experiences and progress of care experienced young people. This will include consideration of whether local authorities are making good decisions for care experienced young people, and what they are doing to support them into adulthood.

Children we care for and care experienced children

The age distribution of our care experienced young is likely to continue growing older following the introduction of support up to the age of 25 and the majority - **55%**, move into semi-independent accommodation when they become 18 [care experienced young people](#)

¹ Applying corporate parenting principles

² Stable Homes, Built on Love

There were **301** children in our care in Mar 2023 there are variations over time but given the overall rise in the population it is unlikely that the number will fall in the near future

Age groups for children in our care – **29%** are under 10 years old, with **29%** aged 10 to 15 and **42%** were aged 16 to 17 (at Dec 2022). Tower Hamlets tends to have an older population of children and the rise in the number of unaccompanied minors is likely to affect the number aged 16+

The majority of our children are from Black, Asian and Multi Ethnic background (% at Dec 2022). **25%** of children in our care are from a Bangladeshi background and they are significantly under-represented when looking at the overall population of under 18 year olds.

Children in our care are more likely to have Special Educational Needs (SEN) **34.9%** have an Education, Health & Care Plan and **20.9%** are with SEN Support (for 2022) **add figures for all children*

Children in our care achieve Attainment 8 scores (GCSEs / Key Stage 4) consistently above the national average – **32.4** compared to **23.2** (in 2020/21)

71% of our care experienced young people aged 17 to 25 are in touch with us and in education, employment or

Our Pledge to children in our care and care experienced young people.....

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OUR PLEDGE

- We will ask ourselves ‘what can we do?’ to play a part in making your lives better
- We will join with others (across the whole borough) working together to form a community of support for you
- We will take time to learn more about the experience of care, so we understand you better
- We will work to empower you, open the door to opportunities, and help you make the most of them
- We will look for ways to make your voice heard in what we do, and how we do it

Our Pledge is a set of commitments that we are asking everyone to sign up to – all parts of the council and partner organisations across all sectors.

The purpose of the Pledge is to challenge everyone to do more.

These commitments describe the practical steps everyone can take to contribute to making a real difference to your lives.

We will promote sign up to the Pledge as we prepare to launch the strategy and beyond.

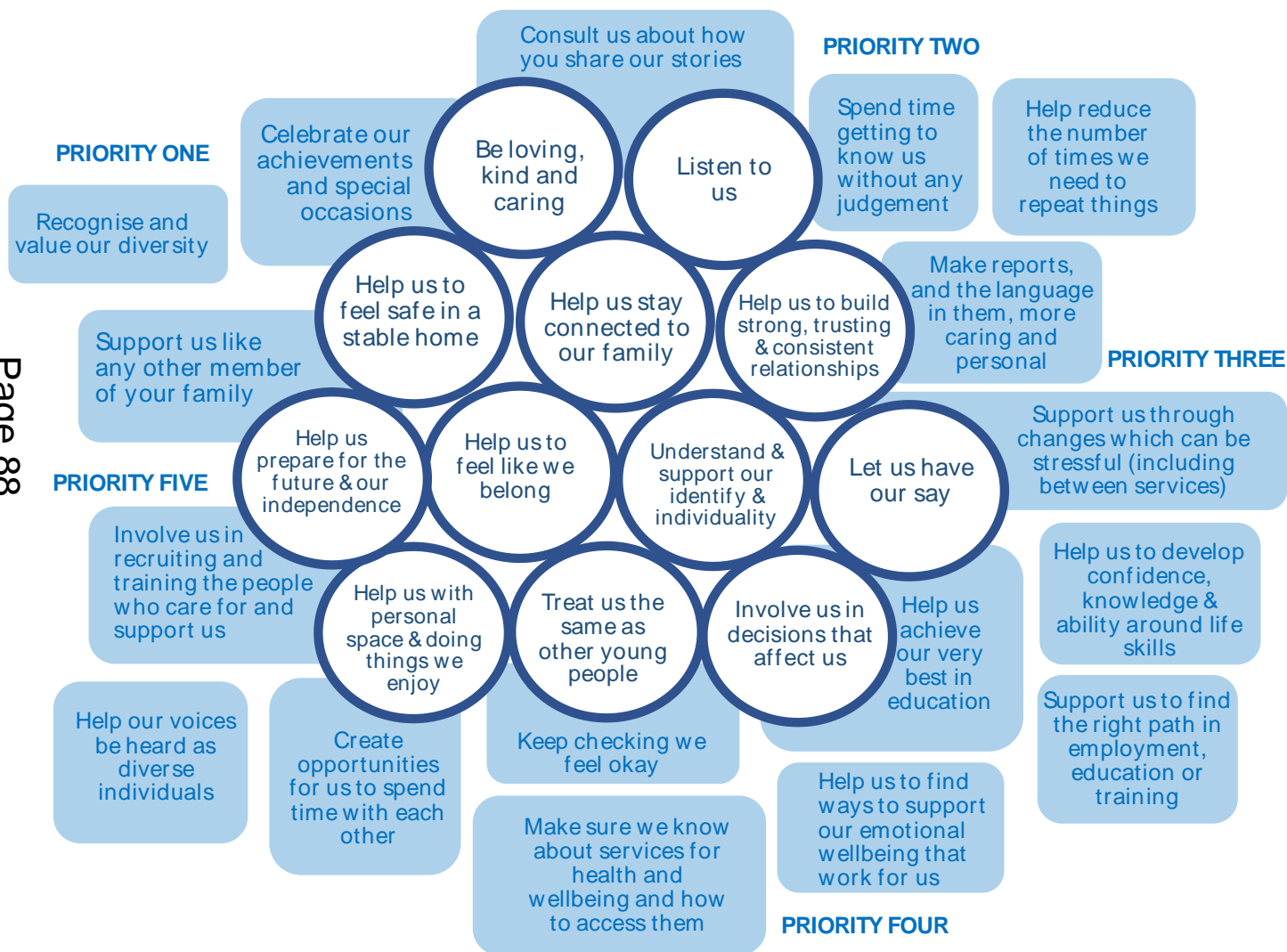
We will report on what has been done as a result of putting the Pledge into action as part of our regular progress reports (see page ‘Making the Strategy Happen’).

Our Priorities

Tower Hamlet's Corporate Parenting Priorities for the next five years



What you told us – key messages from young people



These messages are the foundation of this strategy.

They are central to our pledge and all of our plans for the future. Our focus is on how we can respond more effectively and consistently to what you want to see happening.

They came out of a series of workshops where you held discussions about what mattered most to you. These messages highlight what is fundamental in making life good.

We also reviewed what you shared with us during other meetings, events and activities to help shape these messages.

The cycle of feedback and review with you will continue as we work to respond to what you've told us.

Priority 1: Safety and stability - ensuring you feel loved and well cared for in a home that is right for you

We know that living in a happy and secure home is fundamental to your wellbeing. We want every child to feel loved, cared for and to enjoy life so that they can grow into a confident and successful young adult.

Your individual needs and your safety are central to how we seek the right home for you where you can live in a nurturing environment without disruptions.

Joyful celebrations for the special days and events in your life are wonderful moments and we will cherish them with you at every stage.

We are committed to ensuring that children live in a home that promotes their culture and identity, and they live close to their family and community wherever

What you told us – key messages from young people



YEAR 1 STRATEGIC FOCUS : creating and maintaining stability for children and young people through homes where they feel loved, cared for and secure

What we will do....

- Help our children to experience long term, stable living arrangements as much as possible - within homes where they can build strong relationships, feel like they belong, and have a wide support network. The actions we are taking to achieve this include carefully planning what is needed for every child through groups and meetings set up just for this purpose (we use the phrases 'permanency' & 'placement stability' to describe this work)
- Ensure our children live in a home that meets their diverse needs as much as possible. We will do this by supporting carers to make sure their religious, cultural and identity needs are met and by working to have more Foster Carers from the communities where we know this is needed
- Create a way of accessing children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to provide support if difficulties are being experienced that affect the stability of where a child lives (we call this a 'pathway')
- Help more children to live in a home in their local community, with everything that is familiar to them, by increasing the number of Foster Carers who can offer this within the borough. We will do this through the actions set out in our Fostering Recruitment Strategy 2022-25
- Build on the supportive and caring environment that we offer to our carers. Our training programme and a competitive incentives package will be important parts of how we do this. We will also do more to development strong, caring communities through expanding a programme called the 'Mockingbird' model
- Support our children who have contact with the Youth Justice Service (YJS) with an approach that recognises and understands the potential impacts of their experiences. This will include specialist training for professionals, support from the YJS Education Officer and improved access to physical and mental health services

Priority 2: Trusted and strong relationships – surrounding you with caring people who work hard to listen, understand and respond to your needs

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What you told us – key messages from young people

Being able to build consistent, positive relationships with all the people who support you is vital. How we listen to you and respect your experiences plays an important part in developing strong and trusted connections to everyone around you.

We recognise that all children are different and we need to pay special attention to understanding what life is like for you and what relationships are important to you.

Helping you to build and maintain support



YEAR 1 STRATEGIC FOCUS : building of deep, enduring and trusting relationships which support children and young people in every dimension of their lives

What we will do....

- Make sure that building good relationships is at the very heart of how all professionals work and offer support. This includes paying close attention to the time professionals spend with children & families, how they are listened to and being open and honest (we set out what this means in practice in our framework called 'Better Together')
- Make sure having fun and doing the things that children enjoy is recognised as an important part of how relationships are built with social workers, other professionals and carers. This will include organising events such as the 'Just4U' days with an emphasis on having a good time in a relaxed setting
- Help more children to build strong, supportive relationships with family members, and other people they care about, through initiatives like Lifelong Links, that help our children to reconnect with people they might not have been able to see for a while and keep them in their lives
- Help make sure our children feel supported as individuals, and have opportunities to try new things and develop their confidence, through initiatives like mentoring and befriending
- Use a 'child friendly' approach, and language that is respectful and caring in records and documents - such as the letters written after a review. This includes work on how Care Plans are produced, which is being led by our Independent Reviewing Officers
- Communicate in a personal way, that recognises individuality and seeks to explain decisions and arrangements that affect our children clearly. This will include groups of professionals looking at the language we use so that we avoid words and phrases that are unhelpful or too technical
- Review the service we provide for care experienced children who are 16+ years old. We will concentrate on designing a service that starts to plan for the future with them at the age that is most helpful to them. This will include an emphasis on building strong

Priority 3: Education and aspirations – helping to find what inspires you, achieve the best possible outcomes and create the future you want

Good quality education and access to lots of different opportunities to try new things, and develop new skills, are essential to finding the path through life that is right for you.

Like all children and young people you might experience challenges during your education journey and as you make plans for the future. We will support you every step of the way with a focus on what you as an individual need, especially when things change.

What you told us – key messages from young people



YEAR 1 STRATEGIC FOCUS : more opportunities for children and young people to try new things, whether it is just for fun, to increase confidence, or to take steps towards future plans

What we will do....

- Act as the education champions for every one of our children by helping them to achieve their goals and overcome any issues they experience, such as changes to where you live or go to school or college. Our specialist teachers (from the 'Virtual School') will concentrate on what they need as individual, using tools like the 'Personal Education Plan' to help make sure what they need is in place or planned for
- Offer exciting and diverse opportunities to try new things so children can find out what inspires them. Such as the 'Give it a go' programme which provides access to activities with places like the English National Ballet and West Ham United
- Bring together education providers, business and others who play a part in education, employment and training to create a network of support and opportunities. This could include tutoring, work experience and career mentoring
- Create apprenticeship opportunities in the council for care experienced young people. Our programme will include a support package that is designed to help you through all the stages of an apprenticeship - in the workplace, whilst learning and for their wellbeing
- Improve the 'Local Offer for Care Leavers' and the 'Know Now App' so that finding out about rights and entitlements is even easier. Our children will lead on making these resources provide what they are looking for
- Recruit a dedicated housing officer to help with identification of the right housing option and support for our children
- Refresh our joint housing protocol so that roles and responsibilities for different services are clear for everyone. This will help make sure decisions are made as quickly as possible and the right outcomes are achieved

Priority 4: Health and emotional wellbeing – supporting you, through warm and nurturing care, to stay physically and emotionally healthy

What you told us – key messages from young people

Help us to find ways to support our emotional wellbeing that work for us

Be loving, kind and caring

Listen to us

Make sure we know about services for health and wellbeing and how to access them

Help us to feel safe in a stable home

Help us stay connected to our family

Help us to build strong, trusting & consistent relationships

Help us prepare for the future & our independence

Help us to feel like we belong

Understand & support our identity & individuality

Let us have our say

Help us with personal space & doing things we enjoy

Treat us the same as other young people

Involve us in decisions that affect us

Keep checking if we are okay

Supporting your physical and emotional wellbeing, so it is the best it can be, is important for every part of your life.

Being able to easily access kind and caring health care professionals (like GPs & nurses) who understand your needs is essential.

We will work with people in health services to provide you with clear information about what is available and how it can help. Our focus will be on making services work better for you and that they respond to your feedback on

YEAR 1 STRATEGIC FOCUS : supporting good emotional wellbeing and mental health for children in our care and care experienced young people

What we will do....

- Make sure we offer emotional wellbeing screening for all of our children when they come into care as well as advice, assessment and intervention from the Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service at any time (for under 18 year olds)
- Explore how we can make sure our care experienced young people who are 18 & over find and access support for mental health & emotional wellbeing more easily. We will investigate whether this could be through a dedicated post which would help with providing advice and guidance to them and their personal advisers.
- Work with colleagues in Public Health to develop a joint strategic analysis of the health needs of our children in care and experienced young people to inform service planning and provision
- Improve how health assessments offered to our children are made available and carried out. This will include sharing more information with children, foster carers and professionals about how to get the best out of them
- Use the ‘Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire’ to help identify any health needs or issues at the earliest possible stage so that our children don’t experience delays in being supported
- Work with partners in health organisations to develop their strategy for health services to children we care for and care experienced young people. The strategy aims to improve experiences with health services such as GPs, nurses and hospitals. This will include through listening to the views and wishes of our children.

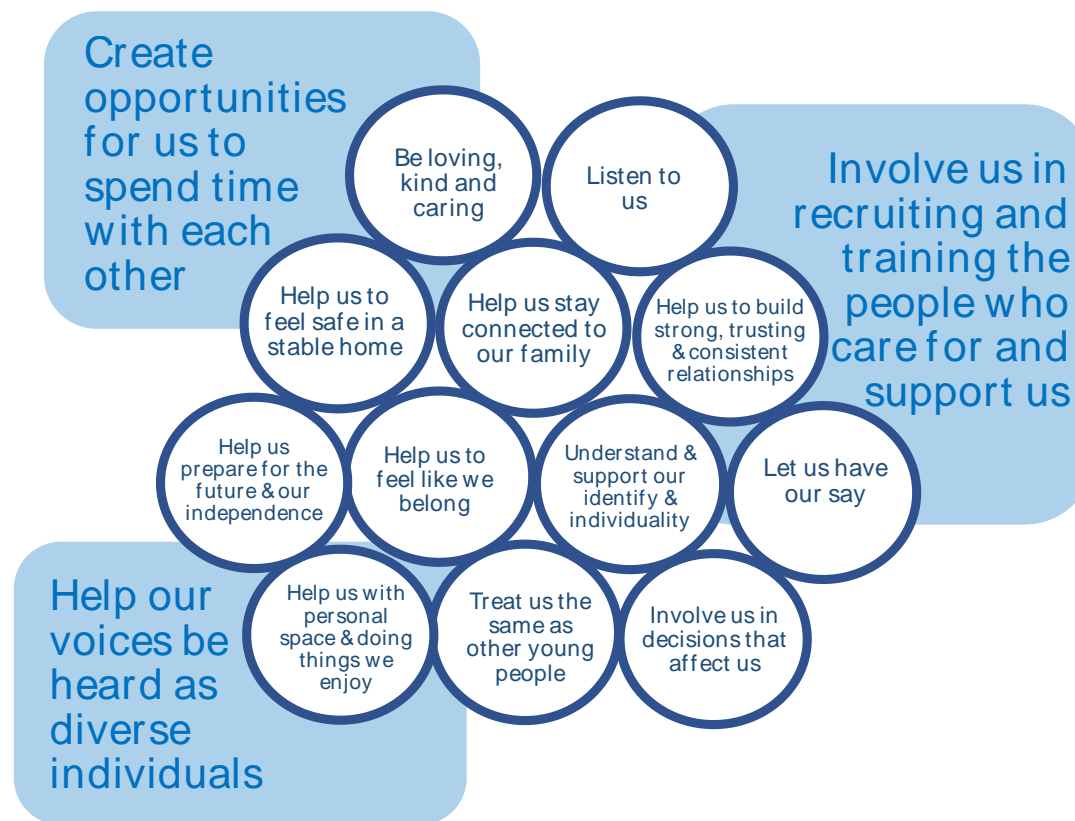
Priority 5: Co-production – placing your experiences and views at the centre of what we do and how we do it

What you told us – key messages from young people

We are committed to increasing and improving the ways in which you can share what you think and can see that we have listened carefully and responded in a meaningful way.

It is also essential to consistently show that we are acting on your feedback and demonstrating the difference it has made.

Like all children, the views of those with care experience are unique and individual. We will remember your diversity as we work with you to create



YEAR 1 STRATEGIC FOCUS : empowering children and young people so they feel confident, comfortable and well equipped for making their voices heard and getting involved

What we will do....

- Put forward a proposal to introduce care experience as a ‘protected characteristic’ to help tackle inequality and improve outcomes for our children. This would mean that we will look at the impact of decisions the council makes about services and policies on our care experienced children. We would then consider if we need to make changes to ensure they are not disadvantaged.
- Offer new ways for children, young people and families to have their say about the support and services - including through a new survey which they can use to tell us about their views, wishes and experiences
- Provide more chances for children who have experienced care to get together, have fun and support each other. The Children Living in Care Council Groups will lead on designing opportunities and activities with them that respond to what they want to see
- Create more opportunities for our children to raise issues that matter to them, and steer how they are addressed. This will include creating an ‘All Participation Forum’ where they can join forces with members of the youth council, young mayor, deputy young mayors and youth empowerment board
- Expand the opportunities for involvement in recruitment and training of the people who work with and support our children and families. This will include preparation and planning so that our children can join in with confidence and get the most out of experiences
- Bring our children in to the work we do to design services and choose providers that affect them, such as being involved in the process to select supported housing providers. This will include making sure they are well prepared to take part in activities like evaluating the information that organisations provide


Making the strategy happen

The Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board will be responsible for seeing that the strategy is delivered. The following will be produced for the board, and all the people who have an interest in the strategy, so that progress can be reviewed regularly. Children Living in Care Council Representatives, who are members of the board, will be actively involved in monitoring delivery of the strategy.

- Quarterly Progress Reports – each report will summarise progress against the actions for all priority area. Any barriers or issues will be identified so that a way of addressing them can be found.
- Action Plan Annual Review – at the end of every calendar year the action plan will be reviewed and refreshed. We will work with children and young people to make sure the action plan remains focused on the things that matter most to them. The review will also be a chance to look at any changes that have occurred in the year that might impact our plans, and make any amendments needed to respond.
- The Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report – this report will provide a full overview on progress in delivering actions within the strategy on a yearly basis.

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Agenda Item 8

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p>11th July 2023</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of:</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Draft Forward Plan for the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee 2023-24</p>	

<p>Originating Officer(s)</p>	<p>Anna Murphy, Strategy and Policy Officer</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All wards</p>

Summary

This cover report accompanies the presentation slide deck [to follow] and will focus on:

- The proposed topics for the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee 2023-24, meetings on:
 - Tuesday 11th July 2023
 - Thursday 12th October 2023
 - Thursday 7th December 2023
 - Thursday 8th February 2024
 - Thursday 9th May 2024

Recommendations:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Review and feedback on the presentation in order to inform the forward planning activity for the Sub-Committee

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