

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Agenda

Thursday, 9 May 2024 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), Ashraf Zaman (Parent Governor) and Nafisa Ahmed (Parent Governor)

Substitutes:

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

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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

Thursday, 9 May 2024

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. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (PAGES 9 - 16)

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the held on 08 February 2024.

4. ACTION LOG

5. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 Scrutiny Government Reforms: Children's Social Care Update - For noting only (Pages 45 - 60)

5.2 Tracking: Recommendations: Increasing Women and Girls Access to Sports and Physical Activities in LBTH (Pages 61 - 72)

5.3 SEND and Inclusion Strategy (Pages 73 - 108)

5.4 Children's Safeguarding Work (Pages 109 - 134)



6. SCRUTINY CHALLENGE SESSION

6.1 Healthy Weight Recommendations

TO FOLLOW

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Next Meeting of the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Thursday, 11 July 2024 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.

Ben Jeffrey -(PFI Monitoring Officer)
Anna Murphy -(Strategy and Policy Officer)
Justina Bridgeman -(Democratic Services Officer (Committees))

Officers Present Virtually:

Kate Smith -(Head of Healthy Lives)
Grace Walker -((Interim) Head of Strategy, Commissioning and Youth)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests received.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Sub Committee meeting held on 7 December 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ACTIONS LOG

The actions were noted.

5. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 Children's Health

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning introduced the first item. Dr Somen Banerjee, Director of Public Health, and officers, requested sub-committee members to consider how to incorporate a holistic approach to health into the work of the council, including preventative healthy lifestyles.

Dr Somen Banerjee began by emphasising the importance of early years and child health, as the borough has one of the highest levels of child poverty in England. There are also higher levels of unhealthy weight and tooth decay in children and due to the pandemic, an increase in speech and language needs and higher mental health concerns. Details were also given on the current work to reduce and prevent the rise of youth vaping in the borough and the concerns around energy drinks, sugar and caffeine.

Pheobe Kalungi, Public Health Programme Lead for Children and Adolescents, then outlined the targeted high impact areas within child health and development, specifically the health and wellbeing of children aged between 0 and 19 years. This also focuses on improving parental mental health and healthy weight for both parents prior to raising children. This includes more awareness of alcohol consumption and smoking, to reduce the risk of harm to the child and further promoting a reduction in inequalities for mothers from black and ethnic groups.

Other considerations include more support with breastfeeding to begin the process of supplying nutritious and healthy food. Promoting stronger connections with external family members in raising children to live a healthy lifestyle and become confident in speech, language and wellbeing. Ms Kalungi then noted the various promotional health services now available in the borough.

Georgia Ramirez, Public Health Programme Lead, followed with a brief overview on how investments in health and wellbeing are implemented. This includes the maternity services at the Royal London Hospital in conjunction with the UNICEF Baby Friendly initiative specialists. Around £3.5 million has been invested in public health grants for health and wellbeing activities and children and family centres. Sub-committee members were also informed of the accreditation given to the maternity services.

Kate Smith, Head of Healthy Lives, then discussed the Healthy Lives initiative which works in partnership with Public Health, schools and other partners supporting schools to promote healthy environments. Details were given on the Healthy Schools Awards, where LBTH has received more awards than any other London borough from the Mayor of London, and the 'Daily Mile', where children are encouraged to maintain physical activity by leaving their desks for 15 minutes to walk or run. Further work with Contract Services is ongoing to ensure sugar intake is reduced in school deserts and that healthy food is provided for all children.

Grace Walker, Interim Head of Strategy, Commissioning and Youth, noted the current work to promote THRIVE, a person centred needs led approach to good mental health for all residents. Details on the strategic needs health assessment, compiled by partners outlines the boroughs health needs to enable effective assistance. The objectives of the mental health programme will enable early prevention to reduce the need for specialist mental health intervention at a later stage. Support for young residents is available from a range of services in schools, voluntary organisations, partners and online throughout the borough.

Further to questions from the sub-committee, Somen Banerjee and Officers:

- Confirmed that a combined effort to combat the supply of vapes to children is ongoing with the 'Combined Drugs Partnership', with Trading Standards, borough schools and Community Safety to warn of the dangers. This includes the illegal supply of vapes laced with drugs

such as 'Spice' and new legislation will prohibit retailers selling and marketing vapes, as they are not recommended for children.

- Noted that a stakeholder workshop took place in November 2023 regarding education, prevention and enforcement to discourage shops to sell sweet tasting vapes, which can entice children. Further workshops will be considered.
- Explained that further work with parents and childminders is ongoing to understand the low uptake of free childcare and early education, as places are available.
- Clarified that the East Safe service supports young people with substance abuse issues and visit schools to promote awareness. The All East service supports older people.
- Noted that concerns around portion sizes for the free school meals initiative have been relayed to the catering services within the borough for consideration, as uptake has increased by around 85-95% in some schools. It was noted that energy drinks are prohibited in schools, although further work on promotional safety campaigns on social media with young residents are being considered. A written brief on the uptake figures will be submitted for the sub-committee for review by the next meeting.
- Confirmed that a written brief on evaluations conducted on the positive impact of Safe East, Healthy Lives and THEWS has made will be sent to the sub-committee for review.
- Explained that collaboration with schools and Kooth, an online counselling service is ongoing within departments to support young people with mental health concerns as well as mindfulness and stress reduction projects and more promotion of family style dining within schools.
- Thanked sub-committee members for their feedback and ongoing support in visiting schools.

RESOLVED that;

1. A written multi-agency brief on tackling the issue of 'spice' in vapes within Tower Hamlets be brought back to the sub-committee.
2. An updated evaluation report on child health be brought to a later sub-committee meeting.
3. A written brief on uptake figures for Free School Meals to be submitted to the sub-committee for review by 09 May 2024 meeting.

4. A written brief on evaluations undertaken on the positive impact Safe East, Healthy Lives and THEWS initiatives have made to the borough will be brought to the sub-committee.
5. That the presentation be noted.

5.2 School Curriculum

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning introduced the second item, which considered the teaching of RSE and PHSE within the school curriculum. Kate Smith, Head of Healthy Lives, informed members that the Department for Education (DfE) is due to publish the new national guidance with regard to relationship, sex education and health education. It is anticipated that this will include recommendations regarding which topics should be taught at specific year groups.

Ms Smith outlined the current guidance on what should be taught by primary and secondary school end. It was noted that sexual health is not statutory in the primary school curriculum. Sub-committee members were informed of the importance of the DfE's recommendations in teaching RSHE in schools, as well as OFSTED's Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges in 2021, indicating the alarming figures and the need for more reports of inappropriate contact.

The council is committed to combating homophobic behaviour and increasing equalities, and guidance on teaching different types of families should be taken into consideration. In the interests of safeguarding children, the borough currently recommends the basic naming of body parts is also taught at a Key Stage 1, as schools sought advice on this from the council. Medical leaders in the borough also wrote a letter in support of different types of families being taught about within schools and the teaching of the names of sexual body parts.

The borough currently recommends that puberty lessons begin at Year 4,, as it is important for children to understand themselves and any changes in their body. Schools are not obliged to follow borough guidance. It is important that parents are consulted on decisions regarding the RSHE taught to their children.

Further to questions from the sub-committee, Lisa Fraser, Director of Education and Kate Smith;

- Clarified that the councils initial RSHE guidance was compiled following a time of safeguarding concerns. Once the updated DfE guidance has been published, Tower Hamlets will be adopting those recommendations. Further details on how parents' complaints in specific faith schools were resolved and how the council engaged with

parents and community groups will be discussed outside of this meeting.

- Confirmed that schools are advised to share RSE resources with parents and the community in order to fully comprehend what borough children will be taught. Parents are advised to discuss any concerns they may have with the school.
- Explained that following the OFSTED Review, more emphasis has been placed on teaching children the importance of appropriate methods of behaviour towards each other and to report any issues faced to school staff. The councils safeguarding team is also on hand to support all schools within the borough.
- Noted that the council expects the new DfE guidance to state the appropriate age in which the teaching of certain RSE subjects should occur. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have with schools and support is also available from the council for both parents and schools.

RESOLVED that;

1. A written brief on advice given to schools about working with parents and concerns that are raised.
2. That the presentation be noted.

5.3 Education PFI Contracts

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning introduced the last item, which discussed the commissioning of contracts in education and contract management of outsourced services.

Terry Bryan, Service Head, Pupil Access and School Sufficiency, and Ben Jeffery, PFI Monitoring Officer, provided an overview of the varying PFI contracts for 25 borough schools, due to expire in 2027 and how management will continue beyond that. Mr Bryan outlined the methods and contract terms in which public sector bodies use private finance to fund building and refurbishment projects.

Sub-committee members were informed that contracts primarily have three main elements; the output specification, methods of payment and any variations to the contract specific to a particular school, enabling long term guarantee of service maintenance by the private contractor, rather than the council. Additional school expenses were also included, such as necessary work not initially covered in the contract, inflation impacted by the schools capital interest and contract management costs.

Ben Jeffery then outlined the current arrangements of the PFI contracts and how the council will prepare for the expiration of those contracts in 2027. Although some schools are happy with the PFI providers, others have been concerned about the duration of the repairs, performance issues, under delivery of major capital projects, regular staff changes and rising annual charges. Monthly performance meetings with the provider are conducted to identify poor service delivery, and financial penalties are issued to providers and redirected as credit to the schools where violations have occurred.

Regular consultation with schools, annual satisfaction surveys and quarterly and annual health and safety audits are conducted to ensure compliance. The customer satisfaction survey results from 2023 showed an increase in satisfaction compared to 2022.

Preparation for the expiration of contracts began in 2021 in consultation with the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA), DfE and schools. Health checks have and will continue to take place, as will a gap analysis and sourcing additional funding. A working group has been established to ensure an effective termination to the contracts. Questionnaires has been sent to schools to establish if they would consider in-house provision going forward, and a working group to include schools will commence later in February to discuss the level of provision required.

Further to questions from the sub-committee, Terry Bryan and Ben Jeffrey;

- Acknowledged that schools unitary charges were largely impacted by rising inflation and compounded by a real term reduction in school budgets. The Council is supporting schools with rising costs by providing a contribution through its PFI reserves.
- Noted that cross department collaboration is necessary to ensure resources are available to the children's services.
- Clarified that the council was not aware of any instances where schools have had to cut their PFI services due to budgetary constraints.

RESOLVED that;

1. A breakdown on the PFI charges for all borough schools to be presented to the sub-committee for review.
2. A brief overview of the PFI value for money contract terms and council limitations to be presented to the sub-committee for review.
3. That the presentation be noted.

6. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

None

The meeting ended at 8.27 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Bodrul Choudhury

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Scrutiny Action Log

Name of Committee: **Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

Municipal Year: **2023-24**

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
11.07.23	Provide further data and information on Care Experience	James Thomas Corporate Director for Children & Culture	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	08.08.23	Email sent on 09.08.23 with links providing further information included in Appendix 1.
	The Chair requested details on all local universities' contributions to the borough in regard to the S106 Planning obligations and gave an open invitation to attend a sub-committee meeting to discuss	Anna Murphy Senior Strategy & Policy Officer	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair		I've run a quick search on both CIL and S106 records and it looks like there is only one development that shows up. Application PA/14/01852 relates to Queen Mary University and secured just over £38k in S106 financial contributions and several in-kind obligations relating to local employment opportunities. Unfortunately, we don't appear to have received the contributions and its unclear whether or not the planning permission was in fact implemented. My team is looking into this at the moment. Further information included in Appendix 2.

Scrutiny Action Log

Page 18	12.10.23	Clarify the timescales for the completion of the research report on free schools' meals carried out by Queen Mary University	Anna Murphy Senior Strategy & Policy Officer	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 3.
		Provide school attendance data for Tower Hamlets	Layla Richards Head of Strategy and Commissioning	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 4.
		Research and provide any available data on the link between overcrowding, mental health and attendance.	Layla Richards Head of Strategy and Commissioning	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 5.
		Provide further data on Youth Service uptake including: - Breakdown of new contacts - Gender split in participants	Kelly Duggan Head of Youth Justice Service	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 6.
		Provide a breakdown of the Equalities monitoring data for employees of the youth service, esp. gender	Kelly Duggan Head of Youth Justice Service	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 7.
07.12.23	A written brief on free school meal deals, including the type of options available and costs per meal to be brought to sub-committee members for review.	Jenny Pittam Head of Contract Services	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 8.	
	Further details on young people with EHCP no longer studying BTEC Courses to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.	Tina Sode Head of Special Education Needs	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 9.	

Scrutiny Action Log

Page 08.02.24 09	Details on the numbers of young people who are NEET including those on remand to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.	Lisa Fraser Acting Corporate Director Childrens Services	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 10.
	A written brief on details and numbers on the Post 16 needs list to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.	Lisa Fraser Acting Corporate Director Childrens Services	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 11.
	Details on speech and language therapy provision in conjunction with BARTS will be brought to the sub-committee for review.	Lisa Fraser Acting Corporate Director Childrens Services	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 12.
	A written brief on uptake figures for Free School Meals to be submitted to the sub-committee for review.	Somen Banerjee Director of Public Health	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.04.24	Further information included in Appendix 13.
	Share a brief on spice in Vapes and our work on this	Somen Banerjee Director of Public Health	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.04.24	Further information included in Appendix 14.
	Provide written evaluation of services including Safe East, Healthy Lives and THEWS	Somen Banerjee Director of Public Health	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.04.24	Circulated to Members via Email as Evaluations included commercially sensitive information. The Healthy Lives Evaluation has not been completed yet and will be brought back to CESSC in 3 months' time.

Scrutiny Action Log

Page 20	<p>Following the updated JSNA you have agreed to share an update on what has and hasn't worked in terms of your work on Childrens Health in the last year.</p>	<p>Somen Banerjee Director of Public Health</p>	<p>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair</p>	<p>30.04.24</p>	<p>Action To Follow The updated JSNA is incorporated into the Annual Public Health Report and will be shared at a later date when it is ready to be published. The due date for this response does not align with Public Health's end-of-year review and it has been requested that this information is shared at a later stage.</p>
	<p>A written brief on how parents' complaints in specific schools were resolved and how the council engaged with parents and community groups to discussed outside of this meeting</p>	<p>Lisa Fraser Director of Education</p>	<p>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair</p>	<p>30.04.24</p>	<p>Further information included in Appendix 15.</p>
	<p>Has the TH lead members made an active effort to liaise with the local representative organisations (such as the THPA and Muslim Parent Group) to address the concerns that have been raised by parents in relation to specific aspects of the RHSE curriculum e.g. naming of sexual body parts and menstruation at early years, LGBT content, sex education etc. If so, please provide some evidence of such engagement to address genuine concerns of the community.</p>	<p>Lisa Fraser Director of Education</p>	<p>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair</p>	<p>30.04.24</p>	<p>Further information included in Appendix 16.</p>
	<p>Has the TH Guidance considered the cultural and religious sensitivity that exists in the community in relation to some of the contentious aspects of the RHSE curriculum. I note that religion is also a protected characteristic under the equality act 2010.</p>	<p>Lisa Fraser Director of Education</p>	<p>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair</p>	<p>30.04.24</p>	<p>Further information included in Appendix 17.</p>
	<p>How was the TH Policy drafted? Was there any meaningful engagement with community</p>	<p>Lisa Fraser</p>	<p>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</p>	<p>30.04.24</p>	<p>Further information included in Appendix 18.</p>

Scrutiny Action Log

Page 21	stakeholders such as school leadership team, governors, parents and local community and faith organisation to ensure the DfE Guidance was adhered to, factoring in local demographic and religious sensitivity etc. Please provide any evidence of such engagements.	Director of Education	CESSC Chair		
	Has the TH lead team members made any effort to investigate some of the local protests that were organised by parents in some primary and secondary schools. Was there a role for the council to work closely with school and parent bodies	Lisa Fraser Director of Education	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.04.24	Further information included in Appendix 19.
	A breakdown on the PFI charges for all borough schools to be presented to the sub-committee for review including overview of the risks of insufficient knowledge and funding you have highlighted	Lisa Fraser Director of Education	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.04.24	Further information included in Appendix 20.
	A brief overview of the PFI value for money findings, difference between schools, contract terms and council limitations to be presented to the sub-committee for review	Lisa Fraser Director of Education	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.04.24	Further information included in Appendix 21.

Appendix 1 - Care experience data and information

In response to the request for further data and information on care experience the service have provided the below links, the first two links will be particularly relevant for those of you who were not members of the sub-committee last year:

1. The independent review of children's social care
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230308122449/https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/final-report/>
2. Stable homes built on love consultation - the government response to independent review
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love>
3. Care experience matters
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-experience-matters>

Appendix 2 - Universities contribution S106 and CIL

Attached is a spreadsheet summarising the planning applications relating to universities that I've identified and any financial and non-financial obligations that were secured. Regarding CIL, none of the schemes on the list paid any CIL - mostly because the developments all relate to educational type uses which is charged at £0.



University S106
Benefits.xlsx

Appendix 3 - Free School Meal Research Report

[Tower Hamlets Universal Free School Meal Policy Lived Experience Report](#)

Appendix 4 - School Attendance Data

Absence rates - autumn term: England, Inner London and Tower Hamlets between 2018/19 Autumn term and 2022/23 Autumn term

Area	Measure	2018/19 Autumn term	2019/20 Autumn term	2020/21 Autumn term	2021/22 Autumn term	2022/23 Autumn term
England	Overall absence rate	4.3%	4.9%	4.7%	6.9%	7.5%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	10.9%	13.1%	13.0%	23.5%	24.2%
Inner London	Overall absence rate	4.0%	4.5%	5.0%	6.0%	7.2%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	10.1%	11.8%	14.4%	19.0%	23.8%
Tower Hamlets	Overall absence rate	4.0%	4.6%	4.9%	5.5%	7.4%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	9.8%	12.0%	14.5%	17.0%	26.5%

- (1) Total includes state-funded primary, secondary and special schools. Data for special schools is available from 2016/17 to present.
 (2) The overall absence rate is the total number of sessions missed due to absence for all pupils as a percentage of the total number of possible sessions for all pupils. One session is equal to half a day.
 (3) A pupil enrolment is identified as a persistent absentee if they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions.

Appendix 5 - Overcrowding affects children's wellbeing, Finding solutions in Tower Hamlets



Overcrowding affects children's wellbeing



Finding solutions in Tower Hamlets

How many households are affected?

Commonly used indicators of overcrowding such as the 'bedroom standard' have various purposes, including to help prioritise and allocate housing for residents on the housing list. Using this criterion, **15.8%** of households in Tower Hamlets were estimated as living in overcrowded conditions in 2021 (see Figure 1).

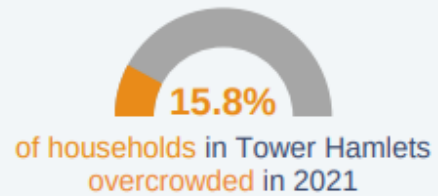


Figure 1: Percentage of households that met the overcrowding criteria as per 2021 census

About **half** of all responses to a survey of 620 families during the pandemic said they didn't have enough space. **Lack of space** is more prevalent for **low-income households** (see Figure 2).

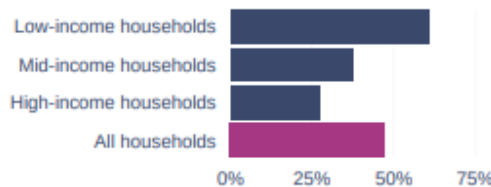


Figure 2: Percentage of households who reported not having enough space in their homes in a survey of 620 parents of children aged 0-4 and parents to be living in Tower Hamlets

"One of the biggest concerns in our area is overcrowding. And children just not having enough space for study, for play within their homes, that is a huge concern."
Tower Hamlets parent

Key research findings

- The usual indicators of overcrowding miss many of the ways in which lack of space affects families and children.
- Families experiencing overcrowding often face other issues with their homes.

Recommendations to improve residents' wellbeing

- 1** Policymakers could adopt **broader indicators** of overcrowding.
- 2** Landlords can provide space for **storage** and clothes drying, and **prioritise repairs**.
- 3** Planning rules can require child friendly, suitably sized **balconies** for new builds.

Underpinning evidence

The usual indicators of overcrowding miss many of the ways in which lack of space affects families and children

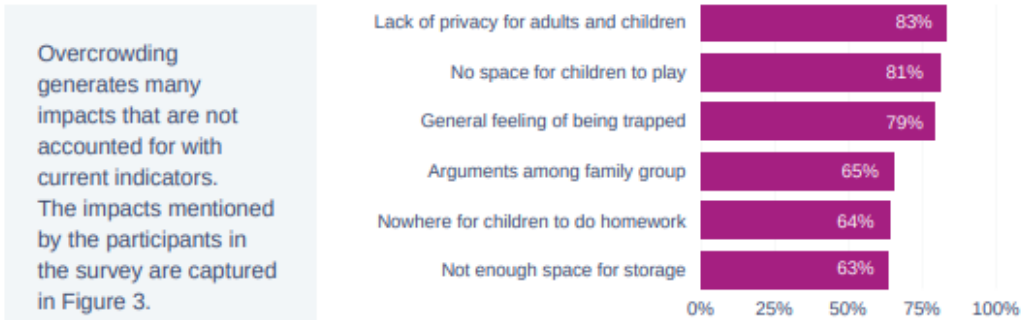


Figure 3: Impacts of lack of space, for respondents who reported this problem

Families experiencing overcrowding often face other issues with their homes

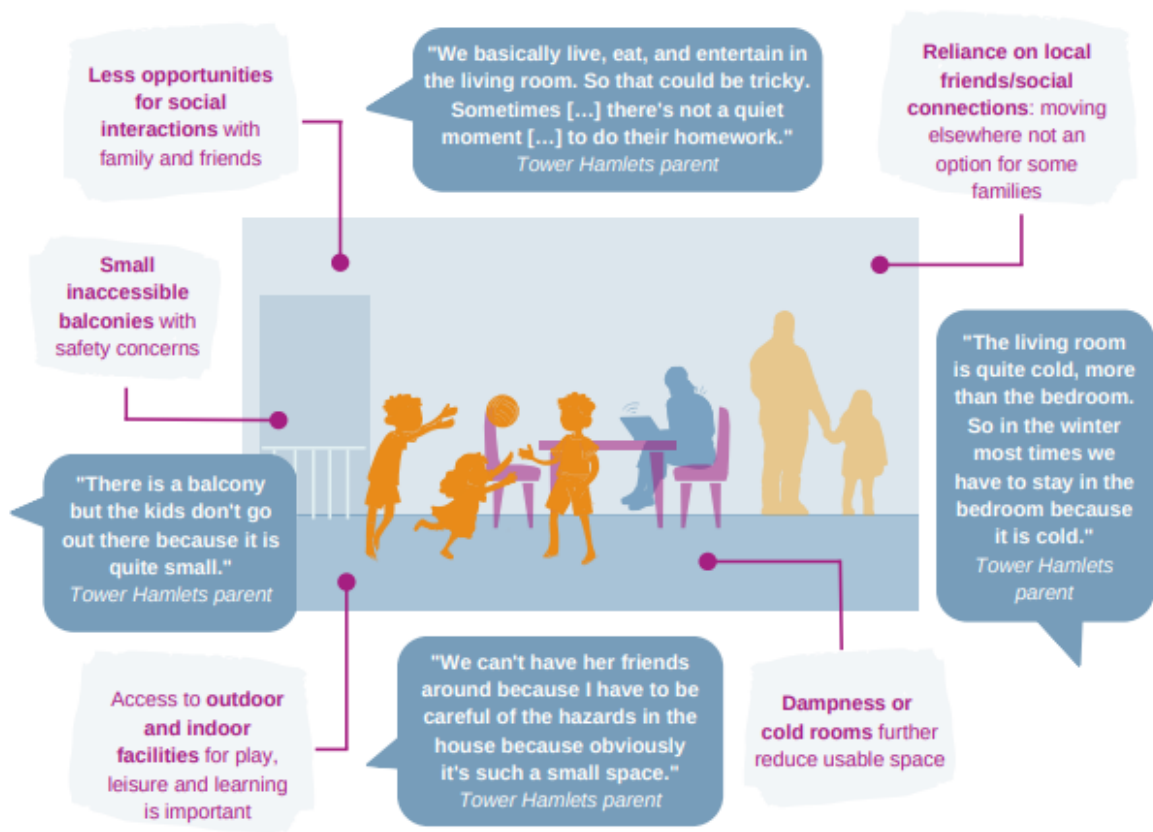


Figure 4: Overcrowding issues reported by parents

Underlying research



Cameron C, et al. "Housing and environment for young children during the pandemic: Families in Tower Hamlets community survey and panel findings".
<https://iris.ucl.ac.uk/iris/publication/2012917/1>

About the study: Community survey that collected data at two time points. Participants were families with young children, and pregnant women, who lived in Tower Hamlets during the COVID-19 pandemic. 992 people completed the first survey and most (620) also completed the second survey. People were recruited via communications from the local authority targeting low-income households.



Ucci M, Ortegon-Sanchez A, Mead NE, Godward C, Rahman A, Islam S, Pleace N, Albert A, Christie N. (2022) Exploring the Interactions between Housing and Neighbourhood Environments for Enhanced Child Wellbeing: The Lived Experience of Parents Living in Areas of High Child Poverty in England, UK. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*; 19(19):12563.
doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191912563

About the study: Carried out in partnership with community organisations to explore parents' lived experience of how housing and the local area affects child wellbeing. The study interviewed parents of children aged 2–12 years old from two local authorities in England with high levels of child poverty: Tower Hamlets in East London, and Bradford District in West Yorkshire. Here we present highlights from 13 interviews (and questionnaire data) with Tower Hamlets participants living in Watts Grove and Bromley by Bow, focusing on aspects related to overcrowding and/or space, which was one of the themes emerging from the study.

This work was undertaken as part of ActEarly: A City Collaboratory approach to early life changes to improve the health and opportunities for children living in areas with high levels of child poverty; Bradford, West Yorkshire and Tower Hamlets, London. ActEarly is supported by the UK Prevention Research Partnership, an initiative funded by UK Research and Innovation Councils, the Department of Health and Social Care (England) and the UK devolved administrations, and leading health research charities.

Partners



<https://actearly.org.uk/>

For more information contact Dr Marcella Ucci, m.ucci@ucl.ac.uk

May 2023

Associated Links (Appendix 5)

[IJERPH | Free Full-Text | Exploring the Interactions between Housing and Neighbourhood Environments for Enhanced Child Wellbeing: The Lived Experience of Parents Living in Areas of High Child Poverty in England, UK \(mdpi.com\)](#)

<https://actearly.org.uk/>

Appendix 6 - Breakdown of New Contacts with the Youth Service

That further data on Youth Service uptake, including a breakdown of new contacts and the gender split in participants, will be provided to the sub-committee for review.

	September	October	November	Total
Female	91	196	396	683
Male	131	302	1019	1452

The data above is in relation to the offer provided by Young Tower Hamlets

Appendix 7 - Breakdown of Gender Equalities Monitoring Data for Youth Service Employees

2. That a breakdown on equalities monitoring data for employees of the youth service, specifically gender to be provided to the sub-committee for review.

	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	White
Female	9	12	0	1	7
Male	12	8	0	0	1

The data above is in relation to the staff in Young Tower Hamlets. This includes the current permanent staff as well as the interim project team.

Appendix 8 - UFSM School lunch and “Meal Deal” offers in Tower Hamlets Secondary Schools

UFSM School lunch and “Meal Deal” offers in Tower Hamlets Secondary Schools



- The Mayor funds £2.90 per day for a Secondary School UFSM
- This can be spent on a 2 -course lunch or “Meal Deal” at midday to include a main or vegetarian choice and will also include vegetables, salad options, bread & a dessert option.
- In schools with limited dining facilities, the UFSM allowance can also be spent on a “Meal Deal” at morning break – samples provided.
- All schools will have 1, 2 or 3 week menu offer – samples provided.
- The price the Catering Contractor charges the school for the meals will vary depending on individual Contract Terms and Conditions.





Sample of a “Meal Deal” offered by Accent Catering who provide meals at the following schools

Mulberry Girls School
Mulberry Shoreditch
Mulberry UTC Canary Wharf College 3
(Crossharbour)
Bishop Challoner
Mulberry Stepney Green



Sample of a “Meal Deal” at CGFS, Bow & Morpeth Schools provided by Olive Dining Catering Services



Meal Deal

1

HOT MAIN **OR** SANDWICH **OR** WRAP **OR** BAGUETTE

2

HOT DESSERT **OR** SMALL FRUIT POT **OR** PIECE OF FRUIT

LOOK OUT FOR THE PURPLE LABELS


*2 items for
£2.61*

The best of London
in one borough



Contract Catering Services UFSM offer at Swanlea School (Week 1) £2.90



 SWANLEA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU OCTOBER 2023	SWANLEA SCHOOL WEEK ONE				
	MON (Planet Earth Day)	TUE (Street Food)	WED (Traditional Day)	THU (Favourites)	FRI (World Food Day)
Main	Beef Keema Curry with Rice	Chicken & Sweetcorn Pie with Mashed Potato	Roast Beef & Potatoes with Yorkshire Pudding & Gravy	Crispy Battered Fish with Homemade Tartar Sauce & Chips	Thai Red Chicken Curry with Rice
Vegetarian	Tomato & Basil Pasta Bake	Margherita Pizza with Baked Potato Wedges	Chickpea & Vegetable Tagine with Couscous	Italian Quorn Meatballs with Cheese Mega Sub with Potato Wedges	Thai Stir-Fried Vegetables with Noodles
Slides/Vegetables	Sweetcorn & Peas	Broccoli and Carrots	Roasted Root Vegetables	Peas & Baked Beans	Vegetable Medley and Sweetcorn
Salads	Crated Carrots & Sultanas Salad	Cauliflower & Coriander Salad	Chef's House Salad	New Potato Salad / Sweetcorn Salad	Sweet Chill, Tomato & Basil Salad
Dessert	Cheese and Crackers with Grapes & Apple Wedge	Fruity Yoghurt Bar	Homemade Cheese Twist	Fruit Salad with Vanilla Ice Cream	Thai Baked Pineapple with Yoghurt
Daily Options	Daily Salad / Fresh Bread / Seasonal Fresh Fruit Platter / Organic Yoghurts				


Respect | Aspire | Achieve

The best of London in one borough



Contract Catering Services UFSM offer at Swanlea School (Week 1) £2.90



 SWANLEA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU OCTOBER 2023	SWANLEA SCHOOL WEEK TWO				
	MON (Planet Earth Day)	TUE (Street Food)	WED (Traditional Day)	THU (Favourites)	FRI (World Food Day)
Main	Caribbean Brown Chicken Stew with Rice	Curried Beef Meatballs with Savoury Rice	Roast Chicken & Potatoes with Yorkshire Pudding & Gravy	Breaded Fish with Homemade Tartar Sauce & Chips or Teriyaki Salmon Wrap with Mixed Side Salad	Beef Bourguignon with Rice
Vegetarian	Macaroni Double Cheese with Fried Leeks	Vegan Spicy Chicken Style Strips & Sweet Chilli Sauce Wrap with Baked Potato Wedges	Chickpea & Mixed Vegetable Spicy Rice	Jack Sweet Potato, Bean and Vegetable Curry with Rice	Spinach, Pepper & Caramelized Onion Quiche with Provencal Potato
Slides/Vegetables	Sauteed Leeks and Sweetcorn	Curried Roasted Cauliflower and Peas	Broccoli and Carrots	Peas and Baked Beans	Ratatouille and French Beans
Salads	Carrots & Cucumber Ribbons	Asian Noodle Salad	Chef's House Salad	Crunchy Coleslaw	Macedoine of Vegetable Salad
Dessert	Cheese and Crackers with Grapes & Apple Wedge	Fruity Yoghurt Bar	Apple Crumble Style Yoghurt	Fruit Salad with Vanilla Ice Cream	Yoghurt with Cinnamon & Vanilla Pear
Daily Options	Daily Salad / Fresh Bread / Seasonal Fresh Fruit Platter / Organic Yoghurts				

Respect | Aspire | Achieve





Accent Catering Sample Menu (Week 1)

Week 1 **Spring Menu**

Week Commencing: 08/01/2024, 05/02/2024 and 11/03/2024

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
MAINS <i>Fresh Flavours</i>	Kung Pao Chicken Stir Fry with Peppers Served with Egg Noodles and Chinese Roasted Greens (G,So,E)	Chicken Tikka Masala Served with Turmeric Rice and Aromatic Cauliflower (None)	Mexican Chicken, Peppers and Beans Fajita Served with Mexican Wholegrain Rice and Sweetcorn (G,Mu,Mk,Ce)	Classic Italian Beef Lasagne Served with Garlic Bread and Green Beans (G,E,Mk,So)	Fish Finger Bap with Lemon Coleslaw (G,E,F,Mu) or Salmon Fishcakes with Lemon Mayo (G,E,F) Served with Beans and Peas
VEGGIE <i>(Meat free)</i>	Kung Pao Quorn Stir Fry Served with Egg Noodles and Chinese Roasted Greens (G,Mu,So,Ce,E)	Veggie Chickpea Tikka Masala Served with Turmeric Rice and Aromatic Cauliflower (None)	Roast Veggie, Beans and Cheese Quesadilla Served with Mexican Wholegrain Rice and Sweetcorn (G,Mu,Mk,Ce)	Mediterranean Vegetables Lasagne Served with Garlic Bread and Green Beans (G,E,Mk,So)	Homemade Veggie Burger with Tomato Relish in a Toasted Bun (G,Su) Served with Beans and Peas

JACKET POTATOES	
MONDAY	Cheese and Beans topped Jacket Potato (Mk)
TUESDAY	Tuna Mayonnaise topped Jacket Potato (E,F)
WEDNESDAY	Cheesy Coleslaw topped Jacket Potato (E,Mu)
THURSDAY	Chilli con Carne topped Jacket Potato (None)
FRIDAY	Cheese and Beans topped Jacket Potato (Mk)

DESSERT	
MONDAY	Apple Crumble with Custard (G,Mk)
TUESDAY	Fruity Flapjack (G,Su)
WEDNESDAY	Baked Citrus Pudding with Lemon Sauce (G,Mk,E)
THURSDAY	Banana Tea Bread (G,Mk,E)
FRIDAY	Winter Fruit Crumble with Custard (G,Mk)

Mulberry
Academy Shoreditch

At the heart of everything we do is our love of good, fresh and healthy food, prepared by a team who cares!

every day!
Look out for our
Salad Bar
Fresh every day packed with tasty choices!

MEAL DEAL
Check out what's on offer today!
Also available for Free School Meals

ALLERGENS
Speak to one of our chefs if you have any allergies or check on the daily menu template.
We're allergy aware!



Appendix 9 - Further details on young people with EHCP no longer studying BTEC Courses to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.

Data is not collected on the number of young people with EHC plans who initially enrolled on a BTEC course and later switched to another pathway due to the limited offer. However, we do know that BTECs often cater to diverse learning styles and abilities, providing a more practical and vocational approach for children and young people. By excluding BTEC qualifications (level 2 and below) from our 6th form offer, young people are limited in their educational choices, and their ability to thrive and excel in areas that align better with their individual strengths and preferences is hindered. A review of the current 6th form offer is in progress, and the outcome of this review will provide suggestions to address the concerns mentioned above.

Appendix 10 - Further details on young people with EHCP no longer studying BTEC Courses to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.

- At the start of the 23/24 academic year 130 young people (aged 17 to 25) fell under the NEET category. This has risen to 179 young people (January 2024).
- The NEET population is diverse in terms of age, with the following distribution:
 - 5 young people aged 17.
 - 15 young people aged 18.
 - 23 young people aged 19.
 - 42 young people aged 20.
 - 30 young people aged 21.
 - 26 young people aged 22.
 - 22 young people aged 23.
 - 14 young people aged 24.
 - 2 young people aged 25.
- 4 young people (aged 22-25) are currently servicing a custodial sentence.

- The highest number of NEET young people falls within the age group of 20.
- ASD is identified as the primary need for 22 young people who are NEET.
- SLCN is identified as the primary need for 37 young people who are NEET.
- The Preparing for Adulthood service team are:
 - further exploring targeted interventions for NEET young people with ASD and SLCN to address their unique needs and challenges.
 - working collaboratively with colleges and training providers to further develop and implement early intervention programs for younger NEET young people (17-18 years old) to prevent prolonged disengagement.
 - fostering collaboration between educational institutions, employers, and support services to create a seamless transition for NEET young people into education or employment.

Appendix 11 - Post 16 Needs

There are 1228 17- 25-year-olds with EHCPs in Tower Hamlets:

- **408** 17- and 18-year-olds
- **184** 19-year-olds
- **636** 20 – 25-year-olds

These young people attend a wide range of placements and access a variation of courses including A level qualifications and supported internships. However, only 79 are being educated in mainstream 6th forms in Tower Hamlets whilst 377 attend the local further education college (NCC). 156 young people are accessing the post 16 offer in our special schools (including Phoenix College) and 34 are educated out of borough. Work continues to reduce the number of young people being educated out of borough, but the needs of some young people are such that they need a level of care and education that cannot be provided in Tower Hamlets.

The needs of young people with SEN have been clearly articulated (via surveys, evaluation forms, face-to-face meetings, and presentations) by themselves and their parents and carers. A key area highlighted by young people and their families is communication. They want us to communicate better and have highlighted that accessibility to information about available services is crucial. They have expressed the desire to easily find information about what is on offer and gain a clear understanding of how the system operates. They feel that professionals

should possess a comprehensive understanding of the system and the available support and be able to communicate this in a way that is understandable for them. Young people were clear that they want to minimise the need to repeat their stories across different arenas. Parents and carers continue to request an increase in the availability of places for young people aged 16 and above, with a specific focus on Autism, Social, Emotional, and Mental Health, and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. Young people with SEN would like access to leisure opportunities and youth clubs tailored to their needs. Young people with SEN and their families expressed a need for more support to develop social skills in young adults to facilitate their transition into adulthood, further and higher education, and employment. Parents shared that some of their young people with SEN are at risk of exploitation and would like support in keeping them safe. Young people said they want to be heard and feel that the council listens but does not always act.

Services are collaboratively working to develop a 'tell-us-once approach to SEN,' enhance communication, and improve information sharing by updating and refining the local offer, alongside hosting regular Let's Talk SEND events. The post-19 specialist offer is currently under review with the aim of expanding services for young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder and considering post-19 developments for those with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. The Young People's Service and the Special Educational Needs Service are jointly developing youth sports and fitness sessions tailored for young people with SEN and exploring the introduction of Phab clubs in Tower Hamlets. New training providers, after assessment, have been added to the pool of organisations delivering life skills training to young people with SEN. There is an increased focus on creating new opportunities and providing additional support to ensure young people develop as much independence as possible, supporting their journey to adulthood.

Appendix 12 - Speech and Language Provision

- On average in Sep 2022 – Aug 2023, 92 referrals every month were received for children under 5 to SaLT, of which 58 were accepted on average each month.
- 2.0 FTE additional members of staff on fixed-term contracts and some temporary staff have been recruited to help reduce the waiting list for an initial contact with a therapist. The staffing has been in place since April 2023.
- There has been a reduction of numbers waiting from almost 500 in October 2022 down to 70 currently. The average wait time has reduced from a peak of 35 weeks to under 15 weeks.
- Bart's Health NHS are currently providing between 60 and 80 initial contacts every month which is enough to keep reducing the waiting list. Their current target is to reduce the average waiting time to below 10 weeks from referral.

- Referrals and Acceptances
 - On average, the Speech, and Language Therapy service received 92 referrals per month for children under 5 during Sep 2022 – Aug 2023,
 - Of these, an average of 58 referrals were accepted each month.
- Staffing Enhancement
 - To address the waiting list for initial therapist contact, 2.0 full-time equivalent additional staff on fixed-term contracts and temporary hires have been recruited.
 - The expanded staffing has been in operation since April 2023.
- Waiting List Reduction
 - There has been a significant reduction in the number of individuals on the waiting list, decreasing from nearly 500 in October 2022 to the current count of 70.
 - The average waiting time has also decreased substantially, dropping from a peak of 35 weeks to under 15 weeks.
- Bart's Health NHS Contributions
 - Bart's Health NHS is actively involved in providing between 60 and 80 initial contacts each month.
 - This level of service is instrumental in the continuous reduction of the waiting list.
 - The current target is to further reduce the average waiting time to below 10 weeks from the point of referral.

These developments indicate positive strides in addressing the demand for Speech and Language Therapy services, with a notable impact on reducing waiting times and enhancing accessibility for the referred children under the age of 5.

Appendix 13 - Uptake figures for Free School Meals

Uptake of Meals



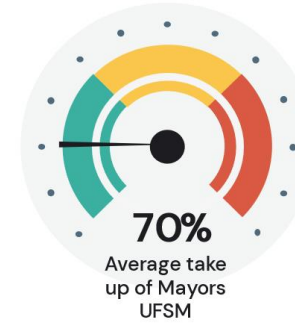
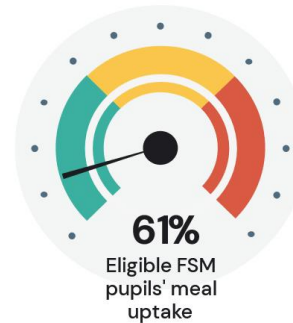
22/22

Eligible secondary schools receiving UFSM

16/16

Secondary schools received comprehensive equipment installations

Meal Take Up Performance (across all schools)



Performance Summary

Across all schools there is an average meal take up rate of 70%.

There has been an upturn in eligible FSM pupils having a healthy meal up from 55% to 61% since September 2023.

Please note: Meal uptake across all schools in the borough has seen an uplift. However, this was undermined by data accuracy issues at five schools. Therefore, the abovementioned figures have excluded these schools from the analysis.



Images show a POD and on-going installation works to a kitchen.



Appendix 14 - Written brief on Vaping - Action on vapes containing Spice

[Vaping CESSC briefing April 2024.docx](#)

Appendix 15 - Resolving parents' concerns: Collaborative engagement with schools and community

If parents are unhappy about any aspect of the curriculum and complain to the school, then the school's own complaints procedure needs to be adhered to. It is a matter for individual schools to deal with and address. Tower Hamlets schools have been advised by the Council to engage with parents, in line with the Department for Education recommendations that schools need to meet with parents to show resources, allow time for questions and to clarify how the topics will be taught in their school. After careful consideration, schools then make the final decision as to how topics will be taught at their school, with an awareness of what is best for their school community.

Source: [Relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education: FAQs - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix 16 - Engagement efforts with local representative organisations: Addressing concerns on RHSE Curriculum

Many meetings and discussions have been held with a wide range of Tower Hamlets groups and organisations, taking place over several years. Engagement with LBTH local representative organisations include: LBTH Heads Consultative; Children and Families Partnership Board; School Governing Bodies; LBTH RSE Steering Group which was set up by the previous Mayor and Lead Member and which included the Tower Hamlets Parents Association; separate meetings with the Tower Hamlets Parent Association; SACRE; LBTH branch of the National Association of Headteachers; the Maryam Centre; East London Mosque; LBTH Annual Parents Conference; Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum; the Mayor's Advisory Board; the SENCO conference and the RSE stakeholders forum. A Council Officer also spoke to large numbers at the Somali Mosque at Whitechapel and the East London Mosque at specially convened meetings. The curriculum preferred by the East London Mosque was also sent out to all schools by the Council.

Appendix 17 - Cultural and religious sensitivity in RHSE Curriculum

Much thought and consideration was given to the different cultural and religious sensitivities within the Borough before developing the borough advice to schools around RSHE. The Council is aware of the cultural and religious sensitivities and has worked with the Mayor's Advisory Group, Headteachers and local faith groups.

Appendix 18 - Drafting TH Policy: Stakeholder engagement and adherence to DfE guidance

The previous RSE Guidance from the Department for Education came out in 2019. Following this, many LBTH schools were unsure as to how to interpret and teach certain sections, especially the teaching of the body parts and same sex families in primary schools. Headteachers asked the Local Authority for advice and guidance. The advice developed was supported by Borough Safeguarding Leads and Medical

Leads. Again, engagement with LBTH local representative organisations included: LBTH Heads Consultative, Children and Families Partnership Board, School Governing Bodies, LBTH RSE Steering Group which included the Tower Hamlets Parents Association, SACRE, LBTH branch of the National Association of Headteachers, Maryam Centre, East London Mosque, Annual Parents Conference, Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum, Mayor's Advisory Board, SENCO conference, RSE stakeholders Group.

Appendix 19 - Local protests RHSE Curriculum

The Council is committed to supporting schools and our local community in order to give children the best start in life. The Council has worked closely with parents and schools, where there have been differing views, and has helped to ensure that due process has been followed through schools' individual complaints procedures, if necessary.

Appendix 20 - Breakdown on PFI charges and overview of PFI Value for Money

A breakdown on the PFI charges for all borough schools to be presented to the sub-committee for review including overview of the risks of insufficient knowledge and funding you have highlighted:

[Children & Education Scrutiny \(Annual PFI Charge\)](#)


London Borough of Tower Hamlets - PFI Charges Report	
Report Year	2023/24
School	Ben Jonson
Current Year PFI Charge	£587,780.79
Previous Year PFI Charge	£576,119.86
Change in PFI Charge	£11,660.93
Build Up of Current Year PFI Charge	
Base Costs	£354,757.54
Pupil Numbers - Latest	591
Pupil Numbers - Previous	593
Change in Pupil Numbers	-2
DSG Subsidy	£203,385.16
Indexation Factor	14.00%
ACR's	(£3,523.88)
Deductions	(£19,162.15)
Comms Rebate	(£658.40)
BSF Charges	£0.00
Insurance	£0.00
Benchmarking	£4,682.71
3rd Party Income Credits (Mulberry only)	Not Applicable to Selected School
Utilities Excess (Mulberry only)	Not Applicable to Selected School
Additional Hours / Life Cycle (Mulberry only)	Not Applicable to Selected School
TOTAL CHECK	£587,780.79

A brief overview of the PFI value for money findings, difference between schools, contract terms and council limitations to be presented to the sub-committee for review

[Children Education Scrutiny \(PFI Vs Budget\)](#)

Scrutiny Action Log

		2020-21			2021-22			2022-23			2023-24			
LAESTAB	School Name	Budget	PFI Charges	%	Budget	PFI charge	%	Budget	PFI charge	%	Budget	PFI charge	%	
2112043	Ben Jonson	3,647,423	365,396	10%	3,816,035	544,253	14%	3,869,110	576,751	15%	3,983,923	587,781	15%	1
2112056	Bonner	5,145,177	211,503	4%	5,341,624	337,865	6%	5,094,372	334,278	7%	5,091,593	351,372	7%	1
2114507	CFGS	9,508,282	1,186,574	12%	10,067,171	1,603,258	16%	10,218,669	1,657,475	16%	10,460,733	1,813,939	17%	1
2112159	Clara Grant	2,593,588	160,718	6%	2,704,529	280,791	10%	2,765,751	293,987	11%	2,792,259	334,043	12%	2
2112118	Columbia	2,394,469	202,503	8%	2,531,568	321,933	13%	2,544,297	340,631	13%	2,646,367	394,887	15%	2
2112281	Harbinger	1,712,122	183,452	11%	1,886,995	265,238	14%	1,819,749	281,503	15%	1,995,562	337,447	17%	3
2114105	Langdon Park	7,283,667	722,839	10%	7,799,706	1,112,280	14%	7,738,827	1,178,888	15%	7,910,118	1,355,851	17%	3
2112004	Lansbury Lawrence	2,622,828	359,144	14%	2,735,628	416,225	15%	2,790,964	445,929	16%	2,848,342	433,469	15%	-
2112397	Marion Richardson	2,540,168	203,468	8%	2,682,988	320,397	12%	2,723,872	348,364	13%	2,790,812	334,700	12%	-
2114242	Mulberry	8,704,844	842,983	10%	9,508,692	1,240,569	13%	9,898,054	1,384,149	14%	10,504,523	1,590,837	15%	2
2112001	Old Ford	3,722,673	351,973	9%	3,878,181	516,707	13%	3,859,772	538,376	14%	3,946,033	599,032	15%	2
2112446	Olga	2,245,439	408,721	18%	2,742,029	345,951	13%	3,189,113	403,005	13%	3,356,439	491,830	15%	2
2112908	Osmani	2,293,963	199,628	9%	2,502,350	296,331	12%	2,583,430	337,822	13%	2,708,025	395,883	15%	3
2114276	Stepney Green	7,107,018	1,041,641	15%	7,651,470	1,435,957	19%	8,021,223	1,568,498	20%	8,304,566	1,746,799	21%	2
2112499	Stepney Park (Redlands)	2,431,874	206,550	8%	4,629,278	281,573	6%	4,867,530	318,311	7%	4,752,779	364,961	8%	2
2112569	Stewart Headlam	1,834,437	129,880	7%	1,824,200	188,151	10%	1,828,891	195,525	11%	1,653,231	195,217	12%	2
2112828	Thomas Buxton Primary	2,478,197	202,575	8%	2,606,926	311,796	12%	2,624,864	332,553	13%	2,685,557	382,497	14%	2
2112623	Virginia	1,303,547	166,658	13%	1,362,940	228,089	17%	1,395,972	235,208	17%	1,422,930	283,680	20%	3
2112631	Wellington	2,461,568	227,932	9%	2,479,497	338,864	14%	2,556,424	355,772	14%	2,515,550	327,536	13%	1
		72,031,281	7,374,139	10%	78,751,805	10,386,227	13%	80,390,883	11,127,025	14%	82,369,340	12,321,760	15%	
	Childrens House													
	Columbia Market													
	Harry Roberts													
	Old Church													
	Phoenix													

<p>Scrutiny: Update of Childrens social care reforms</p>	
<p>Report of: Steve Reddy, Corporate Director of Childrens Services</p>	<p>Classification: [Unrestricted or Exempt]</p>
<p>Government commitment to reform children’s social care</p>	

Lead Member	Councillor Maium Talukdar, Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)
Originating Officer(s)	Susannah Beasley Murray – Director of Childrens Social Care Sheleena Powtoo – Improvement Delivery Lead
Wards affected	All
Key Decision?	N/A
Reason for Key Decision	Central government reforms that have an impact on the statutory work and delivery of children’s social care and implications for wider partners and senior leaders – See appendix 1 Ministerial Letter to Local Government.
Exempt information	N/A
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Accelerating education, Empowering Communities

Summary:

This cover report accompanies the written update

- To provide an update on progress since the government’s response into the Independent Review into Social Care.

Recommendations:

Scrutiny are recommended to:

1. To note the report which provides and overview of the reforms, intended course of action and an outline of updates, risks and issues.
2. Understand and engage with the reforms to ensure effective communication more broadly across the organisation and amongst relevant agencies.
3. Ensure compliance with the reforms so as to meet statutory obligations and improve the lives of children and families.
4. Engage with any future training sessions covering practical application of the reforms.
5. Engage with regular updates around progress and implementation.

Executive Summary

Following the publication of the 'once in a generation' Independent review of children social care in May 2022, the government outlined a commitment to deliver transformational whole-system reform in children's social care outlined in their response the 'Stable Homes, built on love' strategy.

In December 2023 the Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing, David Johnstone MP wrote to all local authorities to announce the publication of four key documents/ strategies to support delivery of the commitments made in the 'Stable Homes, built on love'. These are:

- The national kinship strategy, 'Championing Kinship Care',
- The Children's Social Care National Framework
- The multi-agency statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children',
- Digital and data strategy.

The documents outline the changes, actions and plans central government intend to take as well as the expectations of local authorities to support the reforms needed.

This update will provide an overview of the documents and key implications for Tower Hamlets as well as a plan of delivery to ensure effective implementation of the reforms.

Scrutiny overview

Senior Leaders, in both Political and Corporate capacities, must use the guidance actively. As owners of the vision and direction for children's social care, leaders must embrace the outlined reforms and incorporate them into the design and delivery of services. This is crucial for achieving positive outcomes in the well-being of children and families, as well as ensuring compliance with national legislation and expectations.

The reforms will form part of the consideration and assessment of regulatory children's social care inspections by Ofsted, of which the outcome carries a political and reputational risk.

This paper provides an update on our current position with an outline of key risks and issues and an overview of each of the reforms respectively.

1 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

Background:

1.1. The Independent Review of Children's Social Care published in May 2022, led by Josh MacAlister¹ was commissioned by the UK government to independently critically examine, assess and address concerns about the effectiveness and sustainability of the children's social care system in England.

¹ a former teacher and founder of the social enterprise Frontline.

- 1.2. The review highlighted issues such as the high number of children in care, variations in the quality of services across regions, and poorer long-term outcomes for children within the social care system. The findings and recommendations played a crucial role in shaping the governments subsequent 'Stable Homes, built on love' strategy, alongside the national reviews into the tragic deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson.
- 1.3. In early 2023 the Stable homes Built of love strategy was published and outlined a commitment by central government to deliver transformational whole-system reform in children's social care backed by £200 million investment.
- 1.4. To support implementation and delivery of the Stable Homes built on love strategy, four key documents and strategies were published, alongside a statement in December 2023:

"All children should be able to live happy, rewarding, and fulfilling lives. We want to transform children's social care, so that families get the help they need when they need it, children are safe and supported by their family network and children in care and care leavers have stable and loving homes.

Children's social care can change lives for the better, but every part of the system needs to work together to achieve this change. We must innovate, learn and reform services to improve the outcomes of children, young people and families.

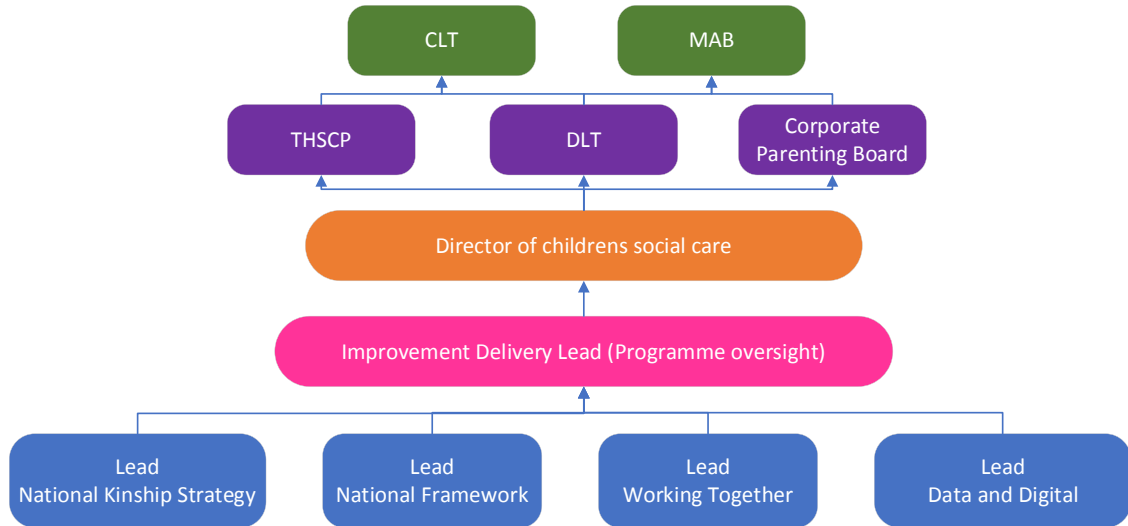
We have published:

- The first ever [national kinship strategy – Championing Kinship Care](#) to set out support for family networks providing loving and stable homes to children
- a new [children's social care national framework](#) to set out the purpose, principles and outcomes that should be achieved in children's social care
- updates to the [Working together to safeguard children](#) guidance which sets out how to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- a [data strategy](#) to set out long-term plans to transform data in children's social care"

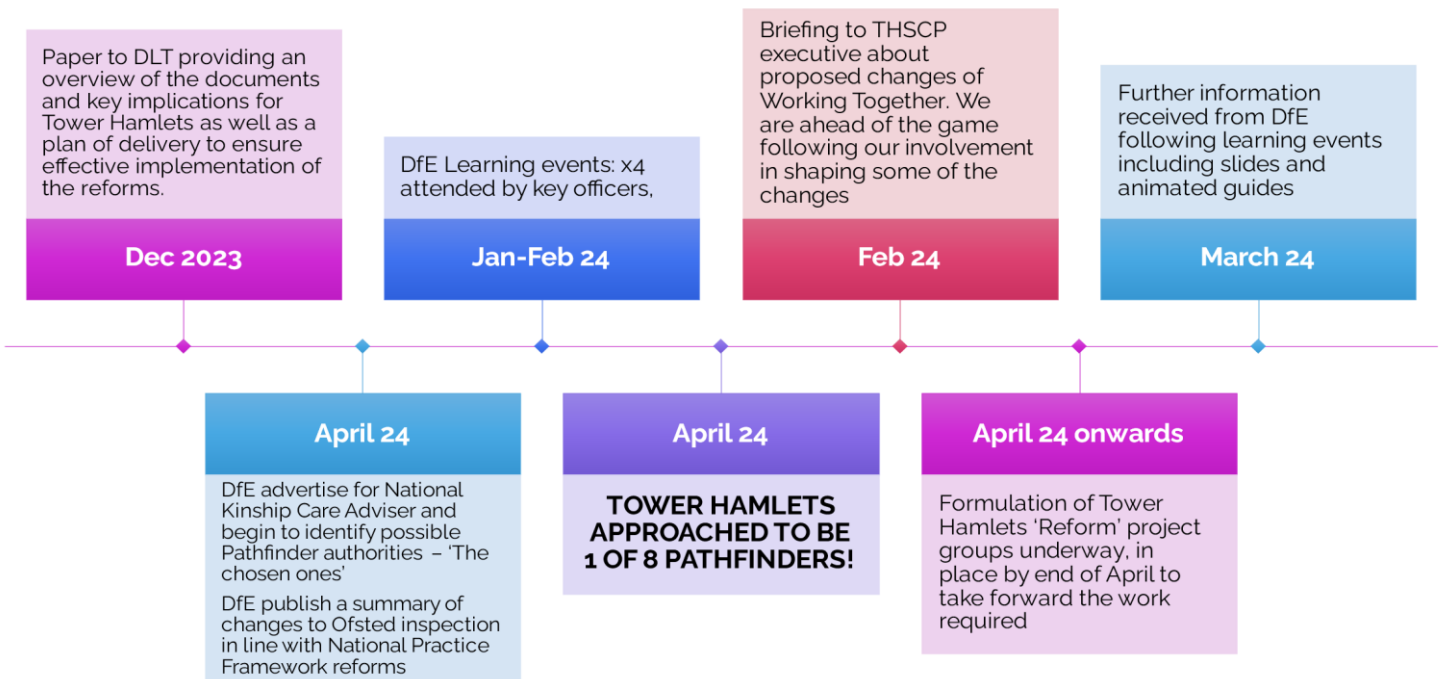
- 1.5. These documents outline transformative reforms and set expectations **for local government leadership, leaders across children's social care, safeguarding partners, relevant agencies (including educational settings and all practitioners)** in supporting and implementing the changes.
- 1.6. It is imperative that Senior Leaders (Political leadership and Corporate Leadership) comprehend and actively utilise the provided guidance to engage in reflective practices, continuous learning, and improvements in their approaches. As responsible owners of the vision and strategy for children's social care, senior leaders are at the forefront of designing and delivering services that effectively address the diverse needs of children and young people. Their commitment to understanding and applying the outlined reforms is integral to achieving positive outcomes for the well-being of children and families within the community.

1.7. This briefing will review each of the documents, providing an overview and examining the requirements for local authority leaders, partners and practitioners as well as the governance arrangements to ensure delivery.

Governance to ensure delivery of reforms:



High level update:



Risks and Issues:

Ref	Risk/ Issue	Mitigation	Impact following mitigation	Complete by
RI.01	THSCP Board Manager leaving impacting the delivery of Working Together changes. The current board manager has also been heavily involved in shaping the work ahead of the launch of the reforms	Recruitment underway, action plan in place and to be developed further prior to departure. This to be taken forward by new Manager, current coordinators and project team.	Medium	May 2024
RI.02	Ofsted inspection to take account of new reforms – need to ensure readiness. A publication in April outlined intended changes to the Ofsted inspection framework in line with the national framework.	Has been reviewed as senior manager 'Better Together' where practices and inspection preparation is discussed. Key changes relate to language, and we continue to monitor.	Low	Complete – but retain under review
RI.03	Challenging timeframes for pathfinder launch – As a prospective pilot authority testing the matched allowances for kinship carers, we have a tight turnaround to promote and launch (if it is agreed that we are progressing	Brief senior leaders on key requirements as a participant of the pilot and ensure that there is appetite and buy in form key areas such as comms to support promotion of the new scheme.	Medium	July 2024
RI.04	Senior leadership capacity (internally and within the partnership) to undertake and fulfil extended duties and roles under new arrangements outlined in the reforms	Ensure senior leaders are regularly briefed and receive guidance and updates on their roles through the project delivery.	Low	Ongoing

The reforms explained:

Championing Kinship Care: The National Kinship Care strategy:

- 1.8. This strategy aims to enable more children who cannot live with their parents to stay with people who are known to them and love them. Kinship carers are often a lifeline to vulnerable children who can no longer live at home. By stepping in, they allow children to grow up within their families and communities.
- 1.9. Kinship care (sometimes known as family and friends care) is the most prevalent form of alternative care for children. Children who grow up in kinship care often have better outcomes than children who grow up in other types of non-parental care. Evidence shows that, compared to these groups, children in kinship care:
- are more likely to have stable, permanent homes
 - achieve higher levels of employment later in life
 - have better social and emotional wellbeing and better long-term physical health compared to children in foster or residential care
 - are more likely to be kept with their siblings compared to those in foster care
 - are more likely to report that they feel loved.
- 1.10. Kinship carers provide love, protection, and stability to our most vulnerable children. Despite this, becoming a kinship carer can often be at great personal expense. It is an unfortunate reality that people who provide such vital support to their families often receive very little support themselves.
- More than 40% of kinship carers who were in employment had to leave work permanently and 45% needed to reduce their hours.
 - Over a third of kinship carers experienced an income drop of over 50%.
 - 28% of participants were dependent on welfare benefits due to changes in their employment status.
 - 68% of kinship carers said that their employer didn't offer support to kinship carers.
- 1.11. The new National Kinship Care strategy promises £20m additional investment (on top of the £200m allocated to deliver the Stable Homes built on love strategy) to minimise the barriers kinship carers face, so that they can more easily provide stable, loving homes for children. This includes strengthening guidance and support for local authorities, so they can improve the experiences of carers and children.
- 1.12. The strategy explicitly aims to ensure that children's services regulators, Ofsted, update their inspection training and guidance to consider kinship care. Tower Hamlets eagerly anticipates a forthcoming full inspection by Ofsted in the new year. It would be helpful to demonstrate our support, offer and plans to enhance relations with kinship carers as part of the inspection.
- 1.13. A project team will be formulated to include the key representative identified to drive forward the work which is expected to be implemented by December 2024.
- 1.14. In April, we were invited by the DfE to participate as a pathfinder pilot authority for championing kinship care. This presents an exciting opportunity for us to explore the

potential impact of prioritising kinship care arrangements. Our aim is to provide children in our care with the stability they deserve by facilitating living arrangements with familiar individuals. We have supplied the DfE with supplementary details and are currently awaiting confirmation of our participation.

National Framework

- 1.15. The government has launched new statutory guidance on the purpose, principles by which children, young people and families should be supported by children's social care. It details the enablers that should be in place so the system is effective, and the outcomes that should be achieved so that children and young people can thrive.

- 1.16. The National Framework sets out important information to create a common, shared understanding of what children's social care should achieve, which may help children, young people, and families to understand what to expect from children's social care when a local authority offers help, protection or care. It describes how practitioners listen, communicate with and support families.

National Framework – one page summary

Purpose of children's social care

Children's social care exists to support children, young people and families, to protect them by intervening decisively when they are at risk of harm and to provide care for those who need it so that they grow up and thrive with safety, stability and love.

Principles of children's social care

- Children's welfare is paramount.
- Children's wishes and feelings are sought, heard, and responded to.
- Children's social care works in partnership with whole families.
- Children are raised by their families, with their family networks, or in family environments wherever possible.
- Local authorities work with other agencies to effectively identify and meet the needs of children, young people, and families.
- Local authorities consider the economic and social circumstances which may impact children, young people and families.

Enablers

- **Enabler:** Multi-agency working is prioritised and effective
- **Enabler:** Leaders drive conditions for effective practice
- **Enabler:** The workforce is equipped and effective

Outcomes

- **Outcome 1:** children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need
- **Outcome 2:** children and young people are supported by their family network
- **Outcome 3:** children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes
- **Outcome 4:** children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes

- 1.17. The National Framework puts the voices of children, young people and families at the heart of practice, so they can have a say in how they are supported. An accessible version of the framework has also been published and can be provided to children and families we work with. [Accessible version of the national framework](#)

- 1.18. While the guidance is about local authority children's social care it is the responsibility of all agencies (Police, Health and schools and other partners) to ensure they also contribute to effective multi agency working, highlighted as the first enabler to good outcomes.
- 1.19. Safeguarding partners and relevant agencies should consider the National Framework when developing local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, how local authorities will approach their duties, and identify what local authorities will need from partner agencies.
- 1.20. The national framework is statutory and should be complied with unless exceptional circumstances arise.

What does this mean for Local Authorities?

- 1.21. Senior leaders, practice supervisors and practitioners should use this guidance to understand what is expected of their work with children, young people and families. It should be used in the design and delivery of services, and should underpin the interactions between practitioners and children, young people, and families. This guidance should be used to reflect, learn, and improve practice to achieve good outcomes.
- 1.22. In a blog by National Director for Ofsted Yvette Stanley, we know that the Ofsted ILACS (Inspecting Local Authority Childrens Services) framework, continues to set out what good looks like and the overall definition of good has not changed. However, there some 're-balancing' of ILACS to reflect the reforms. This will be about language and emphasis rather than wholesale change. Yvette says:

“The National Framework describes the outcomes that local authorities should achieve for children, young people and families. This fits well with how ILACS already describes positive experiences and progress for vulnerable children and their families. So, we will not be measuring compliance with the framework, but hope it helps you to deliver good services.”²

Measuring success and impact:

- 1.23. The National Framework will be supported by the Children's Social Care Dashboard (the Dashboard), which will bring children's social care data together in one place to understand progress towards the outcomes of the National Framework.
- 1.24. The Dashboard will include indicators, which will provide information on what is happening in practice.
- 1.25. The first version of the Dashboard will be published in 2024 to support learning and help bring transparency to the outcomes in children's social care, this will be developed from existing indicator sets.

² [How the children's social care reforms will affect inspection - Ofsted: social care \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk/2023/07/12/how-the-childrens-social-care-reforms-will-affect-inspection-ofsted-social-care/)

Proposed/ Potential Indicators

Outcome 1: Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need

- number of children receiving early help support following an Early Help (EH) assessment
- percentage of families receiving support and where children remain in the family
- children and family experience and wellbeing

Outcome 2: Children and young people are supported by their family network

- children in contact with family networks
- number of families receiving Family Group Conferencing
- number of evidence-based programmes families are accessing
- number of young people in kinship care placements (of any sort)
- pre-proceedings information
- children feel happy and settled where they live
- children placed with siblings
- percentage of children with supervision orders who do not subsequently return to court within a given number of years

Outcome 3: Children and young people are safe in and outside of their home

- extra familial harm categories
- Child Protection Information Sharing data (children on CPP presenting at hospital)
- how safe children feel / whether they have an adult they can trust.
- access to advocacy services
- EH plans that result in no further plans.
- health of the child
- percentage of s47 involving police and health

Outcome 4: Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes

- children's experience of their home
- percentage of placements that match what was requested

- reason for distance of placement from home
- wellbeing of care leavers
- care leaver views on quality of and satisfaction with housing

Enabler: The workforce is equipped and effective

- social worker stability, measured by how many social workers a child has had
- expand current measures to broader definition of workforce
- length of tenure, years of experience
- quality of relationship between practitioners and children and young people
- time use of social workers
- indicators on training and development
- social worker supervision frequency
- number of CIN who have a lead practitioner who does not have a social work qualification

Enabler: Leaders drive conditions for effective practice

- leaders creating learning and improvement environment for services to succeed
- percentage of social workers who believe their employer delivers the eight social worker employer standards
- experiences of workforce in local authority / staff satisfaction

Next steps for us:

- To communicate and share widely the National Framework and corresponding dashboard and data set (staff and partner agencies identified in the guidance) particularly through the THSCP
- Revisit our improvement plans to reshape, reconfigure and align activity to the new framework
- For the Learning academy to deliver sessions tailored sessions aligned to the detailed guidance for staff understand what is expected from them and a children's social care service.
- Learning academy to consider how this aligns with our Better together framework and quality assurance framework
- Revision of management information reports to incorporate new indicators
- Revising some of our policies and procedures to reflect amendments where necessary
- Monitor delivery and progress through the project group established to deliver the reforms.

Working Together to Safeguard Children

1.26. Working Together to Safeguard Children (usually just referred to as Working Together) is statutory guidance produced by the government that outlines how practitioners working with children, young people and families should work together in order to make sure that children and young people remain safe from harm.

1.27. In December 2023 the government updated the statutory Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance which sets out new child protection standards and advocates for a multi-disciplinary workforce to support the diverse needs of children and families when safeguarding children. Specific changes include:

- A new chapter bringing together new and existing guidance to emphasise that successful outcomes for children depend on strong multi-agency partnership working across the whole system of help, support and protection including effective work from all agencies with parents, carers, and families.
- Substantive changes to strengthen how local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (local authorities, integrated care boards and the police) work to safeguard and protect children locally, including with relevant agencies. No statutory roles or functions have been removed from the guidance.
- a renewed focus on how organisations and agencies provide help, safeguarding and protection for children and their families. There are three sections: Early help, Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and Child protection.
- Changes to the Prison and Probation sections highlights the mutual benefits of exchanging information with children's social care which strengthen and clarify processes and responsibilities for child safeguarding.
- Clarification of the expectation for keeping in touch with care leavers over the age of 21, and the non-mandatory reporting of care leaver deaths up to age 25 to improve learning and outcomes for this group of young people.

- A full summary of the changes have been published:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65803ff395bf65000d7191a2/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_summary_of_changes.pdf

1.28. As part of the support package to help local areas embed and implement the new ways of working set out in the revised Working Together and new National Framework within their Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASAs), additional capacity funding of £47,300 has been issued to Tower Hamlets. This funding must then be shared directly with the partnership itself and is to assist local areas in system transformation, implementing the reforms in Working Together, and embedding National Framework practices.

Next Steps for us:

1. Communicate the changes to the partnership (THSCP) - Complete
2. Implement a project group to support this work to be managed and monitored by the THSCP. To include:

Action
a) Strengthen multi-agency partnership working.
b) Clarify the roles of Chief Executive and senior leaders
c) Strengthen relationships with parents, carers, and families.
d) Align with the Children's Social Care National Framework.
e) Clarify roles and responsibilities of safeguarding partners.
f) Distinguish between Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) and Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs).
g) Enhance accountability in information-sharing, scrutiny, funding, and reporting.
h) Consider the role of voluntary, charity, and social enterprise organisations in arrangements.
i) Strengthen the role of education and childcare settings in early help.
j) Emphasise family networks and family group conferences for family engagement.
k) Clarify governance arrangements for practitioners supporting families.
l) Introduce new national multi-agency child protection standards.
m) Strengthen and clarify processes and responsibilities for child safeguarding, especially in Prison and Probation sections.
n) Keep in touch with care leavers over the age of 21.
o) Non-mandatory reporting of care leaver deaths up to age 25 for improved learning and outcomes.
p) Update processes based on factual changes, including new legislation and guidance.
q) Clarify roles and responsibilities of health practitioners in child safeguarding.
r) Incorporate Domestic Abuse Act 2021 legislation and National Framework statutory guidance.
s) Correct factual inaccuracies and update information-sharing references.
t) Include references to young carers recorded in the school census.
u) Reflect changes to existing statutory guidance, ensuring accuracy and clarity.

4. Revise associated and relevant policies and procedures.
5. Coordinate training and learning events to ensure changes are understood.

Children's Social Care data and digital strategy

1.29. The newly published Children's Social Care Data and Digital Strategy aims to leverage data and digital services to their full potential, ensuring appropriate and careful use. It addresses challenges identified in reviews, emphasising the importance of strong multi-agency partnerships, effective information sharing, and leveraging insights from data.

1.30. The strategy responds to identified issues such as poor case management systems, technology barriers to information sharing, and underutilisation of collected data. Aligned with the "Stable Homes, Built on Love" plan, it aims to shift towards meaningful family help, a decisive child protection system, and a continuous learning environment.

1.31. To address the challenges 6 foundations have been set out to act as a guide to improving children's social care. A focus on these areas will be important to for improving services for children, young people, and families.

1.32. Foundations 1 to 4 focus on what needs to change to support the transformation of data and digital services in children's social care. Foundations 5 and 6 are principles for how we approach change.

1. Culture and Leadership

Building a strong, confident culture across local authorities, with the backing of senior leaders, will enable the best use of data and digital tools. A strong culture around data and digital services and effective collaboration between technical and practitioner teams helps create services that best meet the needs of a local authority.

2. Systems and Technology

Ensuring systems and technologies meet the needs of practitioners can support them to make a bigger positive impact in the lives of children, young people, and families. More effective systems and technology can maximise the time practitioners can spend with families and make it easier to get the information they need.

3. Information sharing

Tackling the knowledge-based, cultural, perceived legislative, regulatory, and technological barriers to easier information sharing can help to ensure that decisions are made with the whole picture of the child and family. This will help reduce the worst consequences of the fragmentation of information across agencies and systems highlighted in serious case reviews.

4. Data collection, insights, and analysis

Improving the process around data collection will help to:

- tackle the burden on local authorities.
- address the data lags that currently hamper the information available across the country about the children's social care system

Data that is more relevant to the lived experience of children young people and families can inform decision-making that better meets their needs.

5. Supporting children, young people, and families to tell their story

Across all our work we must be mindful that the systems and data used by practitioners provide a record of a child or young person's experiences. By improving systems, technology, and information sharing, we can improve the experiences of children, young people, and families for example, by reducing the need to repeatedly provide the same information to different practitioners.

6. Trust and confidence in the use of children's social care data

Trust that the data and information generated about children, young and families when they interact with children's social care services is being used appropriately and with care,


will be critical for maintaining support for the transformation of the use of data and digital services. We will seek to be transparent and clear about how data is being used.

1.33. Three strategic objectives have been identified to guide the work the DfE will undertake with the sector between now and 2025 To begin building the foundations for transforming data and digital services. transformation will be a long-term plan requiring action far beyond 2025.

The strategic objectives are:

1. Supporting strong data culture and leadership.
2. Supporting systems and technology to meet sector need.
3. Improving the data we collect, share, and use.

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<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p>9th May 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Simon Baxter, Corporate Director of Communities</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Tracking Recommendations: How can the council and its partners increase women and girls' access and participation in sports provision and physical activities in the borough?</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Simon Jones, Head of Leisure Operations
Wards affected	All Wards

Summary

This cover report accompanies the presentation slidedeck

- To track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session on increasing women and girls' access to sports and physical activities in the borough.

Recommendations:

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

1. Review the accompanying action plan update in order to inform discussion for the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting.

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How the Council and its partners can increase women and girls access and participation in sports provision and physical activities in the borough

Recommendation 1
Community engagement
 Using the co-design framework, the Council's Sports and Physical Activity Service (CSPAS) will set up a steering group to engage women and girls on their needs for accessing sport provision and physical activities in the borough.

Comments from Service:

Action	Owner(s)	Completion date	Update
1.1 Conduct desk research and engage with key partners to obtain an evidence base for female sports participation and establish the participation baseline for Tower Hamlets	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 2 - 2023-24 (September 2023)	PH health intelligence team conducted an analysis from the Active Lives Survey for Tower Hamlets . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are less likely to be active than men (57,5% vs 65,5%) • Girls are less likely to be active than boys (26,7% vs 37,5%)
1.2 Establish The Tower Hamlets Women's Sports & Physical Activity Network (WS&PAN) & The Women's Sports Board to include Council officers, schools, Tower Hamlets community stakeholders, sub-regional and regional non-governmental and national governing bodies of sports (NGB's) to undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise as appropriate	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 1 - 2023-24 (June 2023)	T.H W&G SPA Collective Network Meetings held quarterly established 14 Dec '23. Second took place 12 March '24.
1.3 Scope and produce a community engagement strategy for women's sport & physical activity, linked with insourcing and youth service workstreams. Conduct consultation and targeted focus groups with female residents / VCS/service users to determine barriers to participation, mechanisms to improve accessibility and	Senior Communication Officer / Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 2 - 2023-24 (July 2023)	In November 2023 a women and girls engagement session was held at the Town Hall to identify barriers to participation and to inform the development of the new BE WELL offer – 80 women and girls attended. A summary of findings along with other engagement sessions with

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<p>co-produce a programme of activity informed by local women and girls.</p>			<p>underrepresented groups can be found here.</p> <p>Over the summer in 2023, a range of community engagement sessions were conducted across the borough, including 'Family Fun Days' at Millwall Park and Victoria Park - Summary of findings can be found here.</p>
<p>1.4 Work in concert with the Leisure insourcing workstreams to support the Women in Sport agenda and establish a SPA programme of women & girl's sporting activity for 2023-24 financial year informed by the WSN & WSB and consultation with key stakeholders, residents, and service users with a view to develop a co- designed programme of activity for Q3 2023-24</p>	<p>Head of Sport & Physical Activity / Service Manager (SPA)</p>	<p>Quarter 3 - 2023-24 (July 2023)</p>	<p>The new Youth Service and the urban adventure base offers an extensive programme with dedicated weekly after school girls' sessions. Total number of attendances in 2023/24 was 6012 of which 54% were female.</p> <p>Various events for international Women & Girls Week were conducted across Tower Hamlets locations with an overall attendance of 1,213.</p> <p>A range of women only sessions have been delivered across the borough in the last year including Our Park (total attendance=428), women basketball league (total attendance=582) etc.</p> <p>Looking ahead, the first year of the new BE WELL service will aim to improve access and inclusivity to W&G with the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening women only programming and women only spaces - Free swimming for W&G - Targeted communications and campaigns (e.g. Find your...)

			- work with key partners like the Women Inclusive team to implement new initiatives e.g. Creche
1.5 Work in partnership with GLL to increase women-only sports provision in the leisure centres to pre-pandemic levels.	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 2 – 2022-23- (July 2022) complete	Working with GLL several new Sessions has been introduced: Badminton, Cricket, Box fit & Self Defence, running
1.6 As part of the leisure insourcing workstream, consult and co-design a programme of leisure centre female only activity, training, voluntary and employment opportunities.	Head of Leisure Operations / Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 1 - 2023-24 (April 2024)	Please see update from Actions 1.3 and 1.4 The new leisure will also deliver lifeguard courses for W&G leading to employment opportunity.
Recommendation 2 Affordability CSPAS should work in partnership with the borough’s sport delivery partners, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and grass root sports to ensure that access and participation in sports provision and physical activities is both affordable and is actively encouraged to women and girls.			
Comments from Service:			
Action	Owner(s)	Completion date	

<p>2.1 Produce a community sports plan for Tower Hamlets Leisure Centres prioritising female sports provision and how GLL will engage with key partners to enhance and support community sports provision for women & girls</p>	<p>GLL Partnership Manager & Community Sports Manager</p>	<p>Quarter 1 - 2023-24 (May 2023)</p>	<p>The leisure insourcing team worked in partnership with GLL sport community manager to develop a proposal to improve W&G access and to inform the programming of future activities. The report can be found here.</p> <p>During 2024/25, a borough sport and physical activity strategy will be developed which will prioritise W&G access and engagement.</p>
<p>2.2 Conduct a benchmarking exercise of neighbouring boroughs to determine costs of female sports activity. Using examples of good practice, collect an evidence base to on the effectiveness inform the insourced leisure service</p>	<p>Leisure Contracts Manager</p>	<p>Quarter 2 - 2023-24 (July 2023)</p>	<p>As new activities and services for W&G develops, the team we will be benchmarking against neighbouring boroughs.</p> <p>The team also plan to collaborate with London Sport to host a London pan networking event to share ideas and learning around W&G sport and exercise.</p> <p>Local insight and research findings from the East London – Women and Physical Activity Report will also be used.</p>
<p>2.3 Conduct a review of leisure centre policies, strategies, and provision with regards to female participation and access to services as part of leisure insourcing project.</p>	<p>Head of Leisure Operations</p>	<p>Quarter 4 -2023-24</p>	<p>Sport Summit event conducted in March 2024 at the Town Hall with local sport clubs and physical activity providers to inform the development of the new council Sport and Physical Activity Strategy within which W&G participation will be a high priority.</p> <p>The insourcing team will plan a review of current W&G sessions that have transferred across from GLL into the new service.</p>
<p>2.4 To work in partnership with grass roots community provision to enable provision to be more accessible</p>	<p>Head of Sport & Physical Activity</p>	<p>Quarter 1 - 2023-24</p>	<p>SPA team continues to work closely with grass roots community provision to provide them with</p>

			<p>support to increase W&G participation. The SPA team will also come under the new leisure service to ensure a more joint-up approach.</p> <p>A new Community Activity Finder will be launched in May 2024 to form a comprehensive directory and improve awareness and accessibility of all the physical activity provision in the borough.</p>
<p>2.5 Explore funding opportunities to support this area of work.</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 67</p>	<p>Head of Sport & Physical Activity</p>	<p>Q3 – 2023-24</p>	<p>The team has identified the funding opportunities with the following external partners: football foundation, Sport England changes places, London Cricket trust.</p> <p>The team also works closely with Public Health and Integrated commissioning to identify local commissioning opportunity for the implementation targeted/specialist physical activity interventions.</p> <p>Last year, the Mayor’s Community Grants Programme (MCGP) contributed to funding VCS organisations to support women and girls to be active. Of the 110 projects funded by the MCGP, 18 projects (over 16%) focussed on sport and physical health, with just under 40% of these projects (7) aiming to support women and girls to be active. These seven projects represent a notable investment of £561,151 over the next 3.5 years. The average grant award for these organisations is approximately £24,000 with one organisation being funded the maximum £40,000 per annum.</p>

			Details can be found at the bottom of this report .
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<p>Recommendation 3 Campaigns and publicity CSPAS should consult the Council's Corporate Communication Service alongside partners' comms services to positively promote women's sport provisions and physical activities borough wide.</p>			
<p>Comments from Service:</p>			
Action	Owner(s)	Completion date	Update
<p>3.1 Recruit a dedicated communications officer (as part of the leisure insourcing work) to support the women and sport campaign, raising awareness, case studies, promoting opportunity and celebrating success.</p>	<p>Communications Team</p>	<p>Quarter 3 - 2023-24</p>	<p>Completed - communication officer in post.</p>
<p>3.2 Scope and produce a communications & marketing campaign with the Council's Communications Department, outlining the communication channels of the Council and its partners for example RSL, NHS, CVS etc to be used to improve the marketing of women's sport & physical activity opportunities in the borough</p>	<p>Senior Communication Officer / Head of Sport & Physical Activity</p>	<p>Quarter 1 - 2023-24</p>	<p>Completed the local women and girls' campaign "Find Your..." ran in August 2023 for 6 weeks leading to an increase in female membership from 48% in Q1 (Apr-Jun), to 48.6% in Q2 (July-Sept). Case study from the campaign can be found here.</p> <p>This campaign will be relaunched to inspire women and girls to participate in sports and physical activity, and to promote the range of activities available to them in the borough.</p>

<p>Recommendation 4 Female friendly infrastructure CSPAS will collaborate with key partners to develop dedicated female friendly infrastructure and includes location, timetable of facilities, build in competitions and develop scope for employment and training pathways for female to work in the fitness sector.</p>			
<p>Comments from Service:</p>			
Action	Owner(s)	Completion date	Update
4.1 To conduct a mapping exercise of existing female sports provision by the Council and its partners	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 1 - 2023-24 (March 2024)	In discussion/ planning through TH W&G SPA Collective Meeting
4.2 To work in partnership with the other Council departments to ensure accessibility and delivery of female activity is a key priority in the allocations of Council resources and commissioning	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 3 - 2023-24 (October 2023)	Working with public health who provided resources to run health & wellbeing sessions for staff in the Town Hall including International Womens Day community event. Town Centre Manager provide resources to run Health & Wellbeing sessions in Whitechapel Area (The Mosque, Whitechapel L.C & Townhall) The new leisure service will also work closely with other department in the council including youth justice, looked after children etc.
4.3 Scope and develop a programme of training and the creation of employment pathways to increase female workforce in the borough's leisure centres	Head of Leisure Operations / HR Workstream	Quarter 3 - 2023-24 (October 2023)	The new leisure service will offer the following opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifeguard training for women and girls • Fitness instructor courses for women and girls • Apprenticeship opportunity

Recommendation 5
 Quality monitoring, intelligence capture and audit
 CSPAS will develop robust systems to capture and measure key diversity, equality and usage performance information across all provisions for women and girls. Monitoring should also include, policy reviews, mystery shopping and pulse audits to ensure that the sports provision is relevant, and sustainable.

Comments from Service:


Action	Owner(s)	Completion date	Update
5.1 Although it can encourage and attempt to influence, CSPAS can only control the monitoring and evaluation systems within its service. However, CSPAS will work in partnership with other Council departments and key partners (e.g. CVS, National Governing Bodies, sports clubs etc. to encourage the development of robust data capture mechanisms.	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 4 - 2023-24	All SPA W&G data captured on Upshot. Going forward all data will be capture by gladstone LMS system.
5.2 Through the leisure insourcing project and development of the Leisure Management System (LMS) develop a system of monitoring to track participation against targets. In addition, the quality assurance framework for the new service with include mystery shopping, quality audits and the capture customer satisfaction.	Head of Leisure Operations	Quarter 4 - 2023-24	New LMS purchased (Gladstone) which include 4Global Technology which will be used to demonstrate impact and social return on investment. Audit and mystery shopping was also conducted as part of the insourcing project, and more will be planned during the first year of the new service.

Recommendation 6
 Women and girls safe routes to sports provision and physical activities
 CSPAS will use the feedback from women and girl (on safe routes to sport venues) and engage and work with key partners such as Transport for London, public realm and regeneration to ensure that any policy or access redesign takes on board and reflects the views women and girls.

Comments from Service:

Action	Owner(s)	Completion date	Update Th
<p>6.1 This recommendation requires a whole system approach and will need support and be resourced by all relevant Council departments and partners. CSPAS will liaise with partners to encourage the use of Sport England Planning guidance for all sport & physical activity spaces in borough, which incorporates safe routes for women and girls as a priority.</p>	<p>Planning / Highways / Parks / Strategy Leisure (TBC)</p>	<p>Quarter 4 - 2023-24</p>	<p>Cross referencing women and girls' activities and services going forward against Sport England Planning guidance. Future consultation with W&G will include a review regarding safety concerns.</p>
<p>6.2 Liaise with Health, Adults & Community Services, Violence Against Women Service to integrate safe leisure routes into existing work programmes such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A series of women's safety virtual walks across the borough, covering every ward in partnership with planning and the Police where women highlight places they don't feel safe (around their home address, routes to work or routes they travel regularly etc). - Develop action plans to help improve areas identified by women as feeling unsafe by making physical improvements (like lighting and CCTV), through to hotspots for misogyny and behaviour change campaigns as appropriate. This information will inform the Local Plan allowing more consideration for landscape design that better protects women going forward. - Community Engagement events (Safety Surgeries and Walkabouts) where local residents have the chance to engage with us and share their concerns. 	<p>Health, Adult & Community Services, VAWS</p>	<p>Quarter 4 - 2023-24</p>	<p>The leisure insourcing team has been working in collaboration with the VAWG Team to try and address concerns affecting women and girls around safety and security. The main suggestions made were around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility and Awareness: • Empowerment and Support: • Safety and Security • Inclusivity and Representation: <p>Further details can be found on page 16 of this report</p>

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<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p>9th May 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Steve Reddy, Interim Corporate Director of Children’s Services</p>	<p>Classification:</p> <p>Unrestricted</p>
<p>Report Title: Draft Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy: 2024-2029</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Lisa Fraser, Director of Education
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

The draft Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2029 sets how the partnership, led by the SEND Improvement Board, will secure the improvements needed so that we deliver the right support at the right time for children and young people with SEND and their families in Tower Hamlets. The strategy is due to be published for public consultation, prior to revision and approval later in 2024.

Recommendations:

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

1. Review the strategy in order to inform discussion for the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting.

This is a partnership strategy and includes commitments from services beyond the SEND system which have a key role to play in improving the lives of children and young people with SEND.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The current SEND Strategy (2020 – 2024) is set to expire shortly. A new strategy will be developed to ensure a clear vision and priorities for the partnership, aiming to deliver sustained improvements in support for children and young people with SEND and their families.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1. The current SEND Strategy (2020 – 2024) could be allowed to lapse. However, as part of the SEND area inspection anticipated in 2024, the partnership is expected to demonstrate shared outcomes that leaders will collectively work to achieve for all children and young people with SEND, as well as how partners will collaborate to attain these outcomes. An agreed-upon strategy is a crucial element in this process.
- 2.2. While the option of extending the current SEND Strategy (2020 – 2024) with a very light-touch refresh exists, it was initially considered at the beginning of the strategy development process and subsequently rejected. The prior strategy was formulated before several key developments: the Covid pandemic, the 2021 SEND Area Inspection, rapid increases in the number of children and young people with SEND, and the launch of the national government’s SEND and Alternative Provision reform programme. Consequently, the decision was made that a new strategy is necessary.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1. The partnership’s new Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy describes the steps we will take as a partnership to realise our vision of Tower Hamlets as a child-friendly borough, where children and young people of all abilities and from all backgrounds thrive, are listened to, achieve their best, and have opportunities. The strategy – to be delivered by the SEND Improvement Board – sets out six priorities that we believe will provide the appropriate support at the right time for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, as well as their families.

Policy context

- 3.2. The duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools, and colleagues to provide for children and young people with special educational needs are set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 and described in greater detail in the 2015 Statutory Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years.
- 3.3. The Government’s SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper was published in 2022 and echoed the widely held view that the 2014 reforms failed to achieve the goal of improving provision for children with SEND. In March 2023, the Government set out an improvement plan addressing national standards, preparation for adulthood, accountability, and financial sustainability. A clear timeframe for legislation has not been established yet.
- 3.4. This strategy sets out how the partnership will work at pace to deliver our statutory responsibilities. At the same time, we set out the ways that we will work together and with families to build confidence in the SEND system, to provide earlier support, to improve the sustainability of the SEND system, and

to ensure wider opportunities in our borough are inclusive for children and young people with SEND.

Local context: children and young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets

3.5. In common with other areas, Tower Hamlets has seen an increase in children and young people with SEND needs since the Children and Families Act 2014.

3.6. There have been substantial increases in the number of children and young people with SEND needs receiving support.

3.7. Between 2015/16 and 2022/23:

- The total number of children and young people aged 0 to 24 years resident in Tower Hamlets with EHC plans increased from 2066 to 4111. Some of this increase resulted from 20-25 year olds becoming eligible for EHC plans for the first time through the 2014 reforms. However, there were steady increases across all age groups with the exception of pre-school children. (Source: Statements of special educational needs (SEN) and education, health and care (EHC) plans, gov.uk)
- Amongst pupils in state-funded schools in Tower Hamlets, pupils with an EHC plan increased from 1850 to 2889 (from 4% to 5.9% of all pupils) and pupils with SEN support increased from 5870 to 6038 (12.6% to 12.4% of all pupils). (Source: Special educational needs in England)

In the two years since the Covid pandemic, there has been a particularly steep growth in new requests for EHCP assessments. In the academic year 2022/23, there were 780 requests compared to 465 in the 2020/21 academic year. Much of the increase has been for assessments for young children, for Autistic Spectrum Disorder, and for Speech and Language assessments, with assessment referrals for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder also growing.

3.8. The SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (to follow) will provide a detailed picture of the needs and experiences of children and young people with SEND in the borough. The most common primary SEND needs amongst pupils in Tower Hamlets schools receiving SEN support are speech, language and communication needs and social, emotional and mental health needs. Amongst children with EHC plans in Tower Hamlets schools, Autistic Spectrum Disorder is the most common primary need, followed by Speech Language and Communications needs. Many children with SEND have multiple needs which are not reflected in the 'primary needs' data.

3.9. Projections developed as part of the borough's SEND Sufficiency Review (2023) point to a likely growth in the number of EHCPs up until 2030. The three main areas of need are likely to be Speech Language and Communication; Autism; and Social, Emotional and Mental Health. This increase in need, combined with a declining school-age population will mean that children with SEND will make up a growing proportion of the school-aged cohort.

Local context: the partnership's support for children and young people with SEND

3.10. Improving the timeliness and quality of the support that children and young people with SEND and their families receive is a priority for the partnership. The previous SEND Strategy (2020–24) had 5 priorities:

- Leading SEND
- Early identification and assessment.
- Commissioning effective services to respond to local needs
- Good quality education provision for all children
- Supporting successful transitions and promoting independence.

3.11 There are many strengths in education support for children and young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets. 96.7% of pupils attend schools rated Good or Outstanding, with 3 out of 5 Special Schools rated outstanding. Attainment for children with EHCPs or SEN support exceed the national average at Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and GCSE levels. Rates of absence, exclusions, and suspensions for children with SEND are also better than average.

More than 9 in 10 children with SEND are educated in mainstream schools, and a lower percentage of them are in long term alternative provision in Tower Hamlets than nationally. Our recent SEND sufficiency review (2023) has identified priorities for expansion of specialist provision – now and in the future – to meet the educational needs of children with SEND in the borough.

3.12 In 2021, a SEND Local Area Inspection by Ofsted and the CQC found that leaders had a good understanding of what worked well and what does not. It noted improvements in SEND provision but identified significant weaknesses. These are the focus a SEND Improvement Plan, underpinned by a Written Statement of Action to address the quality and oversight of EHC plans and annual reviews; lengthy waiting times for ASD assessment and diagnosis; fragmented speech and language therapy; and weaknesses in communication between area leaders and parents.

Progress has been supported with additional investment: an extra £1.1 million in council funding and £870,000 from the NHS. Further resources have been earmarked in the council's new Medium Term Financial Strategy for SEND Services and SEN Transport.

3.13 In 2023, a Local Government Association SEND Peer Challenge assisted the partnership to take stock of progress. The challenge recognised the commitment across the partnership to drive better outcomes for children and young people with SEND. It highlighted the need to continue to improve the timeliness and quality of Education, Health and Care Plans and Annual Reviews, improve information sharing, and to develop a common and widely understood graduated response for children with different needs across the partnership, supported by a clear, concise strategy and strong governance through the SEND Improvement Board.

- 3.14 Alongside our commitment to improvement, the partnership has been exploring how to sustain high quality SEND support whilst the High Needs Block allocation (funding to support costs of pupils with additional education needs, across mainstream and special schools as well as the associated support costs) fails to keep up with growing levels of need. Through its participation in the Delivering Better Value Programme, Tower Hamlets will provide an improvement programme designed to meet children's needs earlier, bringing together multi-disciplinary teams to support children with SEND in mainstream education settings, and to rationalise financial top-up bandings and what support children should expect to receive at each level.

The implementation of the SEND Sufficiency Review recommendations will also contribute to financial sustainability, by increasing the number of children who have their educational needs met in local state-funded schools, reducing the number of higher cost independent and out-of-borough placements.

SEND and Inclusion Strategy development process

- 3.15 The starting point for the strategy is the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan 'A Tower Hamlets for All', supported by the Accelerate! Children and Families Partnership Strategy (2024-2029) They include the partnership's ambition that Tower Hamlets should become:
- 3.16 A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, are listened to, achieve their best, and have opportunities.
- 3.17 Young people, families and partners have requested a concise SEND strategy which clearly sets out the main things the partnership will do to support children and young people with SEND and their families. Although the strategy document itself is short, it is underpinned by engagement with stakeholders and residents, by the ongoing SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and survey and analytical work conducted for the SEND Sufficiency Review and Delivering Better Value Programme.
- 3.18 The draft strategy has been informed by consultation with young people, families, and professionals, including:
- an in-person discussion with the Our Time all ability youth forum to find out about the issues that matter most to young people with SEND (November 2023)
 - online surveys with partner representatives and Special Educational Needs Coordinators in schools (November to December 2023)
 - an online workshop to map initial challenges and issues (November 2023)
 - an in-person workshop attended by 50 people to which partners, parents and young people were invited, with a focus on developing practical strategy actions (January 2024)
 - analysis of recent consultation and engagement conducted as part of the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme – including survey responses from more than 100 parents and carers (2023 – 24)
 - Feedback from families attending Let's Talk SEND events.

3.19 The strategy has six priorities:

- **Priority 1** - Timely, effective, and well-coordinated support for children and young people with SEND - focuses on delivering continued improvements in the support provided for children and young people with SEND and their families in a context of increasing need for support.
- **Priority 2** - User-friendly services for children and young people with SEND and their families - reflects feedback from families and professionals that services are hard to navigate, and not sufficiently designed with children and families' needs in mind.
- **Priority 3** - Early identification and support for the under-fives - is part of our broader commitment to early identification and support. Providing early evidence-based support without delay can support children's development, avoid problems escalating and in some cases will mean that statutory assessment and plans are not required.
- **Priority 4** - A great education and support for every school-age child with SEND – includes wide-ranging commitments to ensure that more children's needs can be met within mainstream schools, whilst expanding supply of local specialist placements within the state-funded sector for children who need them.
- **Priority 5** - Opportunities and support for young adults with SEND – includes the development of more education, training, and employment opportunities for young adults.
- **Priority 6** - A borough that welcomes and celebrates children and young people with SEND and supports them to thrive – responds to calls from children and young people with SEND to make Tower Hamlets a genuinely accessible and inclusive borough, with opportunities for friendship, enjoyment, and activity for young people of all abilities.

3.20 Following review and feedback by the Health and Wellbeing Board, a consultation with children, young people, parents and professionals is planned on the draft strategy in May and June 2024. A final strategy, taking their feedback into account, will be agreed in late 2024.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.10 An initial equality analysis is attached. The issues identified will be explored further through the complete SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, consultation and engagement on the draft strategy, and additional actions incorporated into the final strategy if required.

4.11 The strategy has potential to have a positive equality impact, by enhancing the opportunities, life chances and outcomes for children and young people with disabilities and promoting a child-friendly borough where services and facilities are inclusive for disabled children and young people.

4.12 There are significant potential equality considerations in developing a strategy for SEND. These will be addressed through a full Equality Impact Assessment:

- In some cases, prevalence of different needs and disabilities can vary by age, sex, and/or ethnic background, and needs are affected by poverty and deprivation.
- Children with some characteristics may be more likely to have SEND identified than others.
- Children and families' experiences of accessing services and receiving support may vary according to their background.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.10 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.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 The financial context for the SEND Strategy is determined by the funding provided by the Government through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This is a ring fenced grant provided by the DfE to fund all education provision. If the Strategy is to realise its aims, then there will be financial implications and they will need to be achieved within the available resources and agreed by the Schools Forum.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 Section 27 of the Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to keep under review the educational provision, training provision and social care provision made for children and young people for whom the local authority is responsible who have special educational needs or a disability.

7.2 Section 30 of the Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to publish information about the local offer for children and young people in their area who have special educational needs or a disability.

7.3 Statutory guidance, SEND and disability code of practice 0-25 (2015) sets out the requirements on local authorities relating to children and young people with a disability.

7.4 The matters set out in this report demonstrate the Council's compliance with the above requirements.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 29
- Children and Young People with SEND: an overview
- Initial Equality Impact Assessment

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

Tina Sode, Acting Head of SEND

Frances Winter, Strategy and Policy Lead

Tower Hamlets

Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy 2024–29

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Foreword

On behalf of our Children and Families Partnership, thank you for taking the time to read our draft Special Educational Needs, Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion strategy for Tower Hamlets.

We are personally committed to making sure that we provide the very best services for our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Delivering SEND improvement is a Mayoral priority. The council is making additional investments in SEND improvement, and we know that the borough's excellent schools and our colleagues in the NHS work every day to do their best for children and young people with SEND. Community, voluntary and faith groups also make a big contribution. All organisations, families and communities must work together to provide the support our children deserve.

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Over the past few months, we have listened to what parents, young people and professionals have to say about our SEND services in Tower Hamlets. We have discussed how we can do more of the things that work well, and how we can tackle problems together where services fall short.

The strategy needs to be built around the things that matter to children, families and young people with SEND. Please take part in our consultation and help us to make sure that this really is a strategy for all our children and young people with SEND. We look forward to hearing from you.

Lutfur Rahman

Executive Mayor Tower Hamlets

Councillor Maium Talukdar

Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member
for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning



Tower Hamlets Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy: 2024–29

As a Children and Families Partnership we want Tower Hamlets to be:

A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, are listened to, achieve their best, and have opportunities.

We are so proud of our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We are determined that our vision of a child-friendly borough is inclusive, where the focus is on meeting children’s needs, and children of all abilities are welcome, and are nurtured to fulfil their potential.

To achieve this, our SEND and Inclusion Strategy sets out six priorities for 2024 – 29 that we believe will deliver the right support at the right time for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

These priorities were developed in discussion with young people, parents, carers and the professionals who make up our SEND Local Area workforce. They told us that there is lots to celebrate. We have great schools in Tower Hamlets and pupils with SEND achieve well. The young Our Time Ambassadors are passionate advocates for the rights of young people with SEND. Working together, we have made progress in meeting statutory requirements for assessments, Education, Health and Care Plans, and annual reviews. Families and professionals strive to do the best for children and young people, and there is a wealth of expertise and professionals who have worked in Tower Hamlets for many years.

But we don’t always get things right for children and young people with SEND. Our overriding priority is delivering the right support at the right time, working closely with children and young people, and those that know them best – their families. We will focus on providing early support so that children can fulfil their potential. We have also listened to what young people have told us and included a focus on the things that make for a good childhood : fun with friends, and inclusive play, sport, leisure and youth services.

At the same time, this strategy looks to the future. As a partnership we need to make sure we have the right services, staff and funding for the next ten years. The number of children and young people needing SEND support has been rising in Tower Hamlets and beyond. Through early support and the right education placements in local schools and colleges, our strategy sets out how we intend to meet this growing need with high quality and financially sustainable services for our children and young people with SEND.

Inclusion is everyone’s business. Our SEND Improvement Board brings together young people and family representatives in partnership with local decision makers from education, health and children’s services. The Board is accountable to the Tower Hamlets’ Health and Wellbeing Board. It will lead delivery of our SEND strategy and work with other organisations to make sure Tower Hamlets is an inclusive and child-friendly borough for every child and young person.

Priority 1: **Timely, effective and well-coordinated support for children and young people with SEND**

What we want to see

1. Strong leadership and governance, positive relationships and clear communications which build confidence and drive improvements for children with SEND and their families.
2. A whole system approach to delivering the right care, in the right place at the right time for early years, school-age children and young people through graduated pathways which everyone understands.
3. High quality case management and comprehensive management reports that are used by all partners to improve performance and make strategic decisions.
4. Statutory timelines met for all children and young people who need assessments, EHC Plans and annual reviews, with improvements in quality and the voice of the child reflected throughout.
4. Develop and implement a proactive SEND Improvement Communications plan to build parental confidence and ensure that families and professionals feel part of our improvement journey.
5. Through the new Designated Social Care Officer, deliver and implement a social care and SEND quality assurance framework and ensure high quality social care input into early intervention strategies, needs assessments and EHC plans.
6. Invest an added £400,000 to deliver high quality Education, Health and Care Plans for children who need them within statutory timeframes, with a co-production meeting as part of every EHC plan from 2024, and amendments at each Key Stage and during education transitions.
7. Improve our case management system through a 'hosted' system and an online SEN module which can be accessed by the SEN Service, parents and carers, and selected professionals in the Local Area.
8. Improve the SEND Management Information Report to inform decision-making, with performance measures across the partnership, benchmarked to assess progress
9. Use data from health visitor reviews and section 23 notifications to develop an understanding of emerging need and plan for future service provision.
10. Based on our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and management information data, identify, understand and address inequalities in identification and support.

What will we do together?

1. Reform the SEND Improvement Board to provide strategic and focused leadership.
2. Co-produce a shared understanding of a graduated response and inclusion across the local partnership. This will inform the universal offer, targeting of additional support, strategic commissioning and a consistent approach to growing needs.
3. Improve joint working between health, education and social care to achieve more strategic and efficient commissioning and a greater focus on prevention.

Priority 2: **User-friendly services for children and young people with SEND and their families**

What we want to see

1. Everything from individual plans to the strategic ambition for Tower Hamlets is shaped by the voices and views of children and young people with SEND and parents and carers.
2. Families and young people from all backgrounds can find out what they can expect from services and how the SEND system works, particularly at important moments for them.
3. All professionals have a good understanding of the support on offer and the role of different organisations
4. The number of times families and young people have to repeat information to different professionals and services is reduced.

What will we do together?

1. Launch and roll-out our SEND Co-production Charter, and review annually with professionals, parents and young people to ensure that meaningful coproduction at strategic and individual level is happening.
2. Introduce a new SEND 'front door' so that schools can access support for children easily and appropriate support can be identified systematically.
3. Develop our Local Offer so that it is accessible and supported by increased engagement, use of new technologies, and regular 'Let's Talk SEND' events.
4. Increase the impact of the independent Tower Hamlets and City SEND Information, Advice and Support Service through work with Family Hubs to ensure staff working directly with families have information about SEND services.
5. Develop support for 16 – 25-year-olds as laid out within the Minimum Standards for Information Advice and Support Services
6. Develop proposals for health passports for children and young people with SEND.
7. Gather annual feedback from children and young people with SEND about their lives, experiences and aspirations.

Priority 3: **Early identification and support for the under-fives**

What we want to see

1. Children's needs identified earlier and more consistently across different needs and characteristics.
2. Evidence-based support for young children so that needs do not escalate while they wait for an assessment
3. Parents and carers of babies and infants with SEN are supported by a confident, skilled workforce and through peer support, including before birth.
4. Fewer families feel they need to undertake lengthy statutory assessment procedures to secure the support their child needs.



What will we do together?

1. Develop and sustain a SEND Early Intervention approach and front door model, building on Family Hubs and bringing together different services in multi-disciplinary teams to meet children's needs as early as possible, through a graduated approach and increased use of group based interventions.
2. Develop and roll-out early identification and support programmes for infants as part of our Start for Life programme including a universal 12 month review, and a programme of parent-led therapy to support social and communication development in infants displaying early signs of autism.
3. Adapt and extend the Inclusion Framework and self-assessment tool to early years education settings.
4. Co-produce and implement a programme of speech and language therapy for 3 to 5 year-olds.
5. Development of pathways, skills development and communication for parents and professionals for supporting children, to include children with social communication needs as well as other areas of development

Priority 4: **A great education and support for every school-age child with SEND**

What we want to see

1. Expanding Tower Hamlets' successful inclusion model so that even more children with SEND are educated in a local mainstream school.
2. Education in state-funded settings for children who need specialist placements.
3. Well planned and supported transitions when children start primary, secondary and post-secondary education.
4. Reductions in rates of absence, suspensions and exclusions for pupils with SEND.
5. Effective planning for the long term so that current and future needs for specialist placements can be met through high quality provision in state-funded schools.

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What will we do together?

1. Implement an Inclusion Framework and self-assessment tool to support inclusion for children with SEND in mainstream primary and secondary schools for whole class and SEN support levels.
2. Introduce a more consistent approach to top-up funding and expected levels of support in mainstream schools.
3. Introduce and pilot SEN Units attached to mainstream schools: specialist Additionally Resourced Provision – in key areas where there is a shortfall in specialist placements – including in Autism, Communication and Interaction; Social Emotional and Mental Health; and Severe Learning Disabilities.
4. Continue work to develop and deliver a pipeline of appropriate support and placements for children and young people with more complex needs.
5. Support and learn from programmes such as the Phoenix Specialist Classrooms project where expertise in the borough is shared to benefit children and professionals.
6. Introduce an integrated therapies package for children in school, delivering a core offer with quality-assurance and monitoring.
7. Work together to deliver evidence-based interventions and advice to support attendance and reduce suspensions and exclusions for pupils with SEND.

Priority 5: Opportunities and support for young adults with SEND

What we want to see

1. Planning for adulthood starting at age 14 for young people with SEND.
2. More local education places for young people aged 16 and over with SEND.
3. More options for vocational learning or part-time alternative provision for young people with SEND
4. Timely and well-planned transitions for young people who will need support from adult social care services.
5. Support for life skills such as travel training, welfare entitlements and wellbeing for young adults.



What will we do together?

1. Increase in-borough places available to young people over the age of 16 years, especially in Autism, SEMH and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties.
2. Review the offer in sixth forms to ensure inclusivity for young people working below level 2.
3. Extend the Inclusion Framework and self-assessment tool to 16+ education and college settings.
4. Increase our investment in support for 18 to 30 year-olds with SEND as they transition to adulthood.
5. Implement the Transitions Protocol and pathways for young people with EHCPs who will transition from support from Children's Social Care to Adult Social Care, with oversight by the Transitions Board, and learning from regular quality assurance audits.
6. Conduct and implement the recommendations from a Preparing for Adulthood Audit with key stakeholders.
7. Develop a wider range of support options for young people with EHCPs who do not receive support from Children's Social Care.
8. Develop and implement a three-year action plan for supported internships and apprenticeships to meet the demand from young people with SEND for pathways to employment.

Priority 6: **A borough that welcomes and celebrates children and young people with SEND and supports them to thrive**

What we want to see

1. Children and young people with SEND are visible and celebrated in Tower Hamlets
2. A SEND workforce that promotes inclusion and has appropriate skills to enable children and young people with SEND to meet their potential.
3. Children and young people with SEND and their families feel connected with friends, peers and the wider community.
4. Children and young people have fun and improve their wellbeing by taking part in play, youth, leisure, and holiday activities.
5. Children and young people with SEND feel safe and supported.

What will we do together?

1. Support for the Our Time SEND Ambassadors forum, Independent SEND Parent Carer Forum, and Parent SEND Ambassadors to advocate for inclusion at a local, regional, and national level.
2. Recognise and celebrate our children and young people with SEND.
3. Agree a coordinated workforce development plan to enhance appropriate skills and capacity for all professionals across the SEND partnership.
4. Consider how best to meet the needs of children and young people who may have undiagnosed SEND and use other local services.
5. Work with partners to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND as part of the borough's Child Healthy Weight Programme.
6. Co-produce and implement an inclusive play programme which



7. covers infrastructure, play sessions and communications.
7. Ensure a minimum of 50% of new play equipment in park upgrades is accessible.
8. Co-design and deliver an inclusive Young Tower Hamlets service which is open to all abilities, and offers dedicated sessions for young people with SEND, supported by well-trained staff.
9. Improve accessibility to leisure services through environmental improvements, workforce development and more inclusive and holistic offer for people with disabilities, as part of bringing leisure services under council management.
10. Increase the number and range of free and low cost holiday activities that are accessible for children and young people with SEND.
11. Ensure the needs and experiences of children and young people with SEND are addressed in the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership's work programme around keeping children safe.

How we will measure change

	Priority	Measures
1	Timely, effective and well-coordinated support for children and young people with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent EHC plans completed within 20 week timeframe (including and excluding exceptions) • Number of SEN appeals • Number and time on waiting lists for ASD assessments. • Children and young people assessed by CAMHS within 5 weeks. • Therapy Referrals (all therapies excl. CAMHS): average waiting time after referral (weeks) • Number children on learning disability register that have received an annual health check. • Families and professionals' knowledge/feedback on outcomes achieved
2	Services that are user-friendly for children and young people with SEND and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual feedback survey from children, young people and parents • Percent young people and parents who rate the Local Offer as good or excellent.
3	Early identification and support for the under-fives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of children with good level of development at EYFS
4	A great education and support for every school-age child with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of children and young people with EHCPs being educated in Tower Hamlets. • % of children and young people with SEN support and EHCPs who are excluded, subject to fixed term exclusion or on a reduced timetable. • Absence and persistent absence rates for children and young people with SEN Support/EHCPs • Attainment for children and young people with SEN support and EHCPs
5	Opportunities and support for young adults with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit against Transitions protocol • % young adults with EHCPs receiving education in Tower Hamlets
6	A borough that welcomes and celebrates children and young people with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people with SEND at a healthy weight. • Annual Feedback from children and young people with SEND. • Number of Children and Young People with SEND accessing Young Tower Hamlets services.

Children and young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets: an overview

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This annex provides a brief overview of children and young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets, as background to the SEND and Inclusion strategy 2024 – 29.
- 1.2 A SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (in preparation) will replace this briefing, providing analysis and insight, drawing on wider research and comparative data, and with an in-depth focus on different SEND needs.
- 1.3 The recent Tower Hamlets SEND Sufficiency Review (November 2023) reviewed trends and pupil level data for EHCPs and specialist placements, alongside projections of future SEND needs to 2030. These projections are not included here.

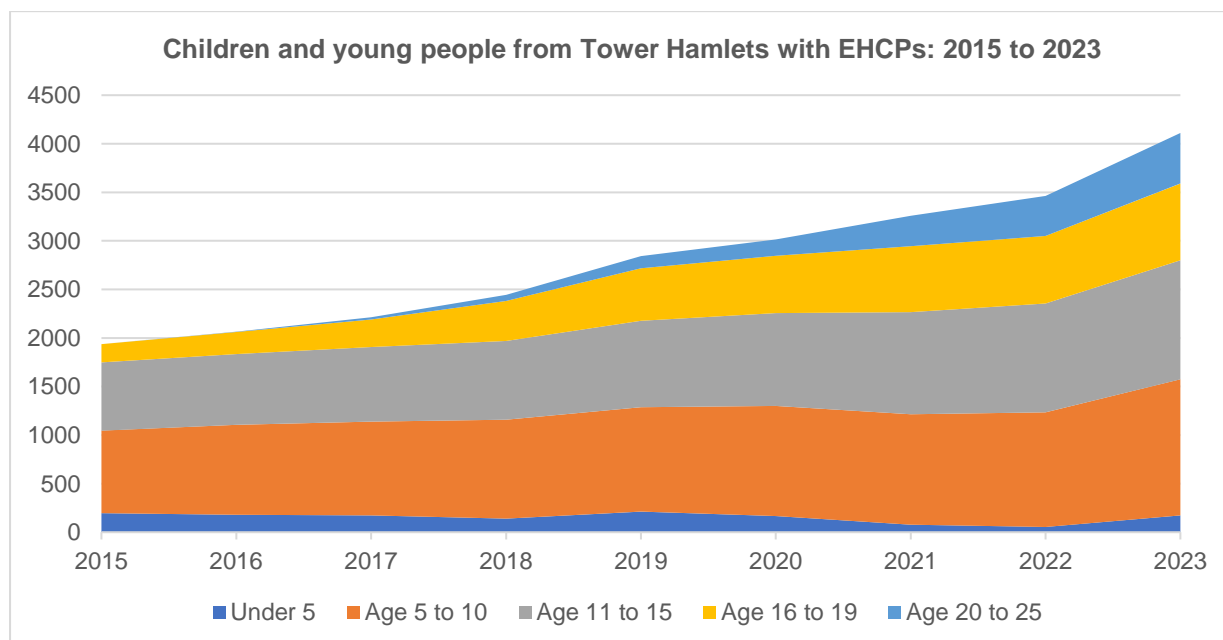
2. A note on data sources

2.1 The main data on SEND come from two sources:

- Information about pupils in schools in Tower Hamlets including pupils from other boroughs who are educated in Tower Hamlets. This information comes from the annual school census. It includes information about pupils with SEN support and EHC plans, but only includes school age children and young people.
- Information about those children and young people from Tower Hamlets with an Education, Health and Care Plan. It covers 0-24 year olds.

3. The number and proportion of children and young people with SEND

3.1 There has been a steady increase in children and young people from Tower Hamlets with EHCPs since 2015, across all age groups except the under 5's.



(source: Education, health and care plans, national statistics)

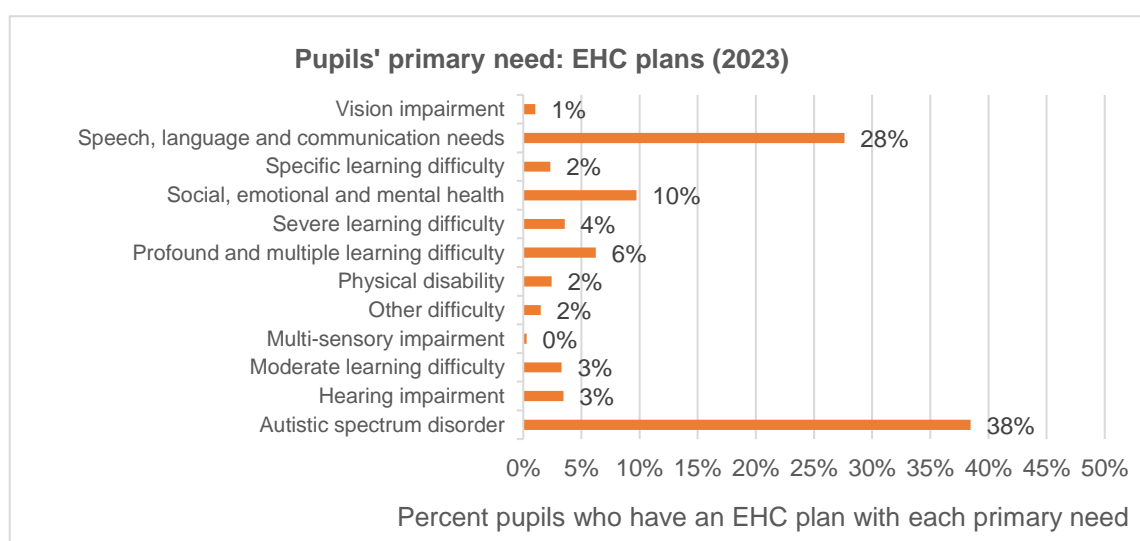
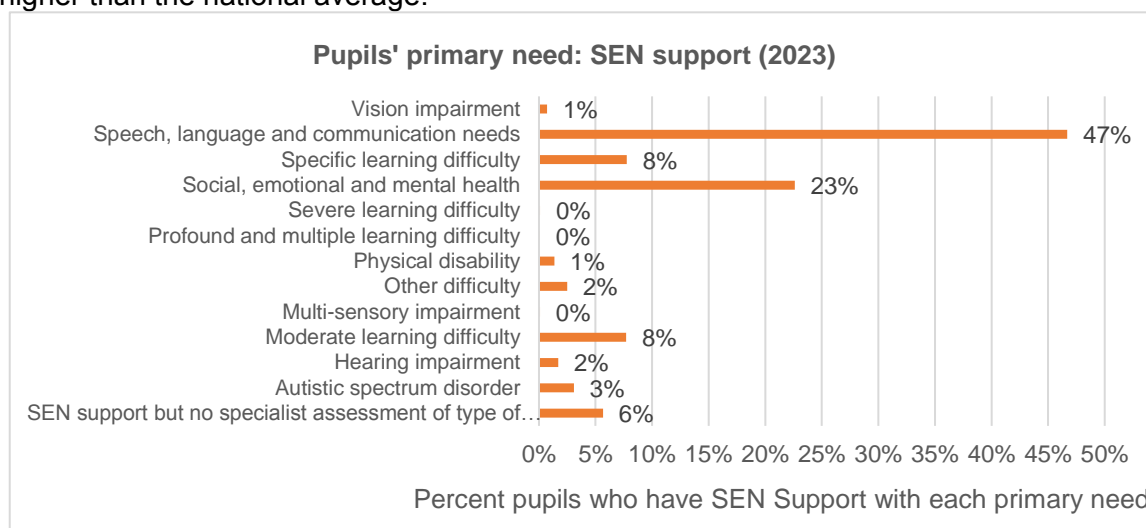
3.2 Tower Hamlets schools have a higher than average proportion of pupils with SEND. The percentage of pupils with an EHCP was the fifth highest in England in 2023.

2023	Tower Hamlets	London	England
Percent of all pupils with SEN Support	12.4%	12.1%	13%
Percent of all pupils with an EHCP	5.9%	4.5%	4.3%
Total: Percentage of Pupils with SEN	18.3%	16.6%	17.3%

(source: Special educational needs in England 2023, national statistics)

4. The needs of children and young people with SEND

The figures below show the ‘primary needs’ recorded for pupils in Tower Hamlets schools with SEN support and EHC Plans. In many cases, a child will have a range of needs which are not fully reflected in the classifications below. Out of pupils in Tower Hamlets schools who have SEN support, by far the most common needs are speech, language and communication needs, and social, emotional and mental health needs. Out of pupils with EHC plans, the most common needs are autistic spectrum disorder, and speech, language and communication needs. This reflects the national profile, although rates of autism are higher than the national average.



5. The profile of children and young people with SEND

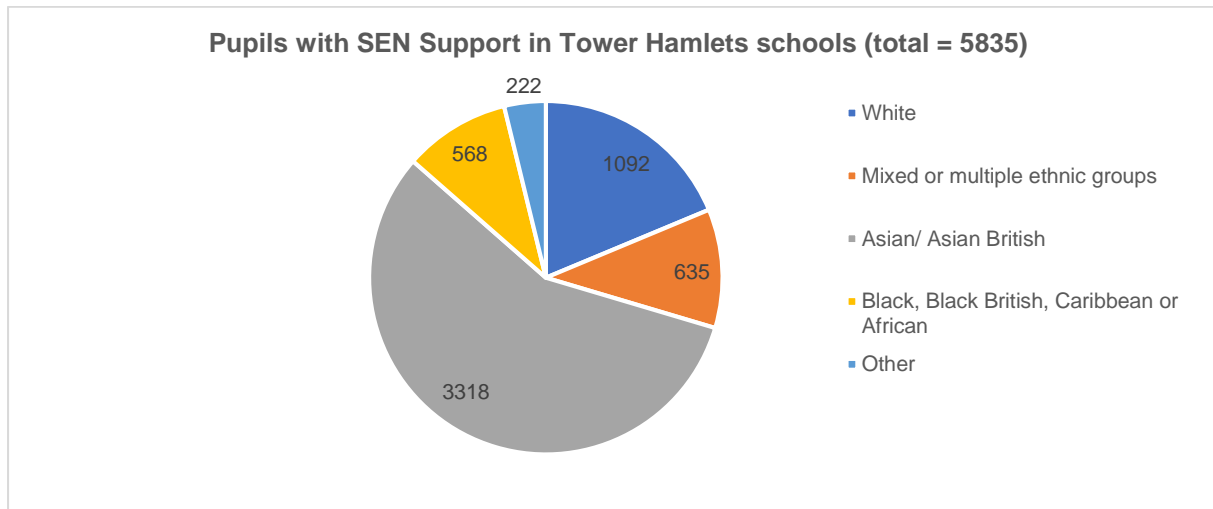
5.1 Boys are overrepresented amongst children and young people with SEND. Nearly 1 in 4 boys in Tower Hamlets schools had SEND in 2023, compared to around 1 in 8 girls.

Percentage of boys and girls in Tower Hamlets schools receiving support for SEND (2023)

	All pupils in Tower Hamlets schools	Boys in Tower Hamlets schools	Girls in Tower Hamlets schools
SEN Support	12.6%	15.4%	9.8%
EHC Plans	6.0%	8.9%	3.1%
Total pupils with SEND	18.6%	24.3%	12.9%

5.2 Pupils from an Asian and particularly Bangladeshi background make up a large majority of pupils in Tower Hamlets schools, and nearly 6 in 10 pupils with SEN Support or an EHCP are of an Asian background.

Ethnic background of pupils receiving SEN support in Tower Hamlets schools (2023)



Ethnic background of pupils with EHC Plans in Tower Hamlets schools (2023)

5.3 However, a pupil from an Asian background is less likely to be receiving SEN support or to have an EHC Plan than a pupil from a White background. Pupils from Black/Black African backgrounds are less likely to be receiving SEN support than pupils from White backgrounds.

Percentage of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds in Tower Hamlets schools receiving support for SEND (2023)

	All pupils	White	Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	Asian/ Asian British	Black/Black British/Caribbean or African	Other
SEN Support	12.6%	18.4%	17.5%	10.9%	13.2%	12.3%
EHC plans	6.0%	7.1%	6.0%	5.7%	7.4%	5.2%
No SEN	81.3%	74.6%	76.6%	83.4%	79.4%	82.5%

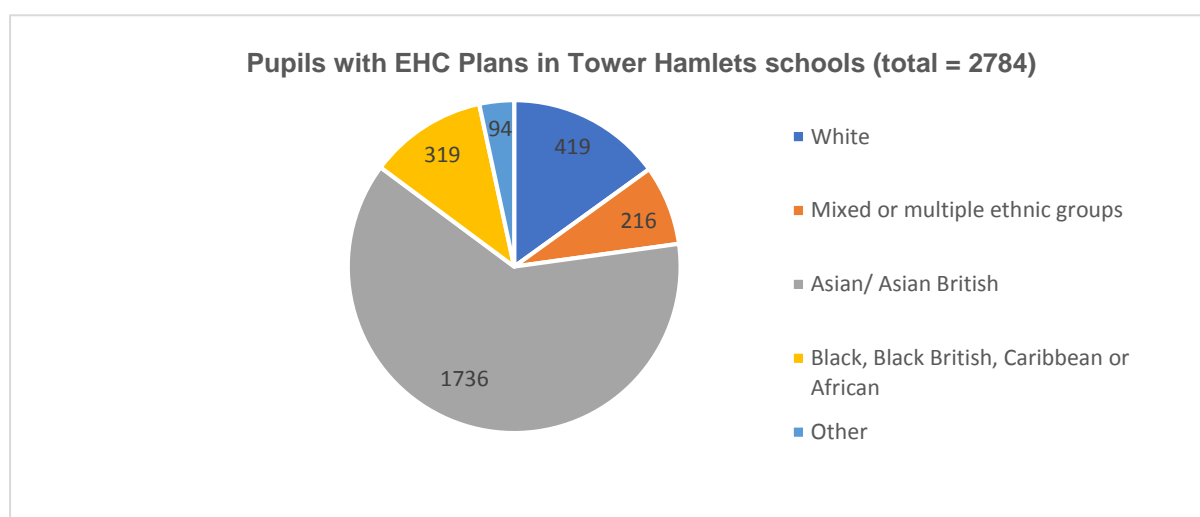
5.4 Pupils who receive means-tested free school meals because they are in lower income families are more likely than average to receive SEN Support or to have an Education, health and Care Plan.

Percentage of pupils in receipt and not in receipt of means-tested free school meals in Tower Hamlets schools receiving support for SEND (2023)

	All pupils	Pupils who are not eligible for means-tested free school meals	Pupils who are eligible for means-tested free school meals
SEN Support	12.6%	10.6%	15.8%
EHC plans	6.0%	4.8%	7.9%
No SEN	81.3%	84.6%	76.3%

6. Where children and young people with SEND are educated

The tables below show where pupils with EHCPs and SEN support are educated in Tower Hamlets schools. Tower Hamlets has comparatively higher numbers of pupils with EHC plans in mainstream settings than national and London averages.



Numbers and Percentages of Pupils with EHCPs within each setting (2023)

	Tower Hamlets		London		England	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Independent School	105	4.2	4,885	3.3	28,732	4.9
Non-Maintained Special School	N/A	N/A	252	100	3,995	98.2
State Funded AP school	19	14.2	490	22.8	3,368	25.5
State Funded Nursery	12	3.5	137	1.7	673	1.8
State Funded Primary	1,126	4.5	23,052	3.3	117,757	2.5
State Funded Secondary	861	4.4	15,842	2.7	87,219	2.4
State Funded Special	766	99.7	20,687	97.4	147,427	98.9
Total	2,889	5.9	65,345	4.5	389,171	4.3

Numbers and Percentages of Pupils with SEN Support within each setting (2023)

	Tower Hamlets		London		England	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Independent School	203	8.1	20,645	13.8	89,840	15.2
Non-Maintained Special School	N/A	N/A	0	0	57	1.4
State Funded AP school	82	61.2	1,251	58.2	7,518	57.0
State Funded Nursery	60	17.4	1,591	20.1	6,381	17.0
State Funded Primary	3,562	14.1	88,692	12.6	629,184	13.5
State Funded Secondary	2,129	10.8	64,364	11.1	448,967	12.4
State Funded Special	2	0.3	456	2.1	1,437	1.0
Total	6,038	12.4	176,999	12.1	1,183,384	13.0

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Equality Impact Analysis Template

Section 1: Introduction


Name of proposal
For the purpose of this document, 'proposal' refers to a policy, function, strategy or project
Draft Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 29
Service area and Directorate responsible
SEND service, Children's Services Directorate
Name of completing officer
Frances Winter
Approved by (Corporate Director / Divisional Director/ Head of Service)
Tina Sode
Date of approval
20/02/2024

Where a proposal is being taken to a committee, please append the completed EIA(s) to the cover report.

Conclusion – To be completed at the end of the Equality Impact Analysis process

This summary will provide an update on the findings of the EIA and what the outcome is. *For example, based on the findings of the EIA, the proposal was rejected as the negative impact on a particular group was disproportionate and the appropriate actions cannot be undertaken to mitigate risk. Or, based on the EIA, the proposal was amended, and alternative steps taken.*

The focus of this is to analyse the impacts of the proposal on residents, service users and the wider community that are likely to be affected by the proposal. If the proposed change also has an impact on staff, the committee covering report should provide an overview of the likely equality impact for staff, residents and service users and the range of mitigating measures proposed.

Conclusion	Current decision rating (see Appendix A)
<p>Initial assessment is that successful implementation of the strategy will have a positive impact – helping to reduce inequalities (particularly those based on disability) and improve cohesion and inclusion.</p> <p>This EqIA will be updated prior to the review of the draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 16 April, based on the completed SEND JSNA.</p> <p>It will be further updated to include outcomes of consultation/engagement before the strategy is finalised in late summer 2024.</p>	

The Equality Act 2010 places a ‘General Duty’ on all public bodies to have ‘due regard’ to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between those with ‘protected characteristics’ and those without them
- Foster good relations between those with ‘protected characteristics’ and those without them

This Equality Impact Analysis provides evidence for meeting the Council’s commitment to equality and the responsibilities outlined above. For more information about the Council’s commitment to equality, please visit the council’s [website](#).

Section 2: General information about the proposal

Describe the proposal including the relevance of proposal to the general equality duties and protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010

The SEND and Inclusion Strategy is a partnership strategy for 2024 – 29, led by the SEND Improvement Board.

The strategy sets out the partnership plans to improve support for children and young people with SEND and their families, and how it will work to improve inclusion for children and young people with SEND in activities and opportunities in the borough and support them to thrive.

There are three areas where the strategy has the potential to advance equality:

1. Advancing equality of opportunity for disabled children and young people

As a significant proportion of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities will meet the definition of disabled under the Equality Act, the objectives of the strategy are relevant to the general equality duties. The strategy aims to advance equality of opportunity for children and young people with SEND and foster good relations between them and their peers.

2. Identifying and reducing inequalities in the identification of children and young people with different SEND needs.

Boys are generally more likely than girls to be identified as having SEND, and the ethnic background of children with different SEND needs can differ from that of the child population of Tower Hamlets as a whole. The strategy and accompanying Joint Strategic Needs Assessment offer an opportunity to understand whether children with some protected characteristics are less likely to have their needs identified.

3. Identifying any barriers to effective support and positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND

The strategy offers an opportunity to understand how effective SEND support is in improving outcomes for children with different backgrounds and to address barriers to effective support.

Section 3: Evidence (consideration of data and information)

What evidence do we have which may help us think about the impacts or likely impacts on residents, service users and wider community?

The evidence will be included within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (2024) which brings together local and national data on different needs and includes a specific focus on inequalities and the impact of poverty and deprivation on children and young people with SEND.

DRAFT

Section 4: Assessing the impacts on different groups and service delivery

Groups	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Considering the above information and evidence, describe the impact this proposal will have on the following groups?
Protected				
Age (All age groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The strategy applies to children and young people aged 0 – 25 years, reflecting the Children and Families Act 2014.
Disability (Physical, learning difficulties, mental health and medical conditions)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	By improving the timeliness and effectiveness of support for children and young people with SEND, and supporting inclusion in local communities and activities, the strategy will support equality for young disabled residents.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Potential impacts to be identified.</p> <p>Boys are much more likely to be identified as having SEND than girls. The full JSNA will identify where this may be the result of under-identification of girls' needs', allowing</p>

				the strategy to identify areas where more attention is needed to identifying girl's needs.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient information to draw conclusions. However, strong focus on building the voice and wishes of children and young person into all plans and support.
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discrimination based on marriage and civil partnership status not relevant to this strategy.
Religion or philosophical belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information not available.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This section will be developed based on the information on the JSNA. For example, White British pupils are overrepresented in EHCP cohort. The JSNA will examine data on different needs and ethnic background to understand over/under-representation and support effective interventions.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient information to draw conclusions. However, strong focus on building the voice and wishes of children and young person into all plans and support.

Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discrimination based on pregnancy and maternity not relevant to this strategy.
People with Care Experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data to follow. Strategy includes commitments to strengthen joint working between social care and SEND services, which will enhance support for children and young people who we look after or are care experienced.
Other				
Socio-economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data to follow. JSNA will examine links between poverty/deprivation and SEND.
Parents/Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy includes focus on information and support for parents/carers.
People with different Gender Identities e.g. Gender fluid, Non-Binary etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient information to draw conclusions. However, strong focus on building the voice and wishes of children and young person into all plans and support.
Any other groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Section 5: Impact analysis and action plan

Recommendation	Key activity	Progress milestones including target dates for either completion or progress	Officer responsible	Update on progress
To follow				





Section 6: Monitoring

What monitoring processes have been put in place to check the delivery of the above action plan and impact on equality groups?


To follow consultation.

Appendix A

EIA decision rating

Decision	Action	Risk
<p>As a result of performing the EIA, it is evident that a disproportionately negative impact (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) exists to one or more of the nine groups of people who share a Protected Characteristic under the Equality Act and appropriate mitigations cannot be put in place to mitigate against negative impact. It is recommended that this proposal be suspended until further work is undertaken.</p>	<p>Suspend – Further Work Required</p>	<p>Red</p> 
<p>As a result of performing the EIA, it is evident that there is a risk that a disproportionately negative impact (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) exists to one or more of the nine groups of people who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is a genuine determining reason that could legitimise or justify the use of this policy.</p>	<p>Further (specialist) advice should be taken</p>	<p>Red Amber</p> 
<p>As a result of performing the EIA, it is evident that there is a risk that a disproportionately negatively impact (as described above) exists to one or more of the nine groups of people who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, this risk may be removed or reduced by implementing the actions detailed within the <i>Impact analysis and action plan</i> section of this document.</p>	<p>Proceed pending agreement of mitigating action</p>	<p>Amber</p> 
<p>As a result of performing this analysis, the policy or activity does not appear to have any adverse effects on people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i> and no further actions are recommended at this stage.</p>	<p>Proceed</p>	<p>Green</p> 

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<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p>Date 9th May 2024</p>	
<p>Report of: Steve Reddy</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Overview</p>	

<p>Originating Officer(s)</p>	<p>Louise Griffiths – Strategy and Partnership Manager</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All Wards</p>

Summary

This cover report accompanies the presentation slide deck and will focus on the key activities of the Safeguarding Children Partnership over the past year. Attached is an appendix of Children’s Social Care data.

Recommendations:

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

1. For Information

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Introduction to the THSCP

The Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership (THSCP) is fully established under the Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023 Arrangements and has developed over the last years into a responsive and agile system.

The Working Together Arrangements state that: A statutory safeguarding partner in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as: (a) the local authority (b) an integrated care board for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area (c) the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area

These three partners have a joint and equal duty

In Tower Hamlets there is a rotational chairing agreement between the three jointly responsible agencies.



Steve Reddy
Children's Services

Steve Reddy is the Interim Statutory Director of Children's Services for Tower Hamlets with lead responsibility for children's safeguarding as well as for the delivery of a range of social care, education, early help, and commissioned services. Steve works closely with partners to ensure the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough are safeguarded from harm.



Korkor Ceasar
Integrated Care Board

Korkor is the Deputy Director for Safeguarding Children, NHS North East London Clinical Commissioning Group. She leads on the implementation of all safeguarding statutory duties for children safeguarding and Looked after Children, ensuring all risks are escalated through the appropriate governance. She is responsible for providing expert advice and guidance to the Partnership Boards via Chief Nurse and other colleagues on all safeguarding functions, aspects and responsibilities; with a particular focus on ensuring the strategic needs are met. Korkor is also responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is effectively managed across the health system, engaging local providers in a robust partnership approach to commissioning and provision of health services.



James Conway
Metropolitan Police

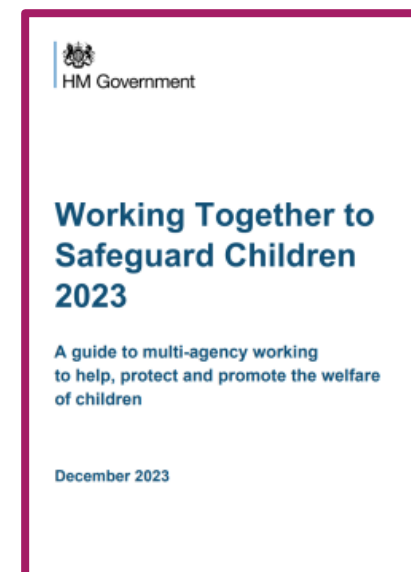
Detective Chief Superintendent Conway is the senior police officer responsible for the strategic and operational oversight for the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney. The Superintendent works closely with both internal and external partners in order to safeguard the vulnerable, tackle crime and continue to build on trust and confidence in policing amongst the community it serves.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

Working Together to Safeguard Children is statutory guidance produced by the government which outlines how practitioners working with children, young people and families should work together to ensure that children and young people remain safe from harm. Working Together 2023 underpins all of the activity of the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership and it sets out:

“Joint functions of lead safeguarding partners

1. Set the strategic direction, vision, and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively.
2. Lead their organisation’s individual contribution to the shared priorities, ensuring strong governance, accountability, and reporting mechanisms to hold their delegates to account for the delivery of agency commitments.
3. Review and sign off key partnership documents: published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including plans for independent scrutiny, shared annual budget, yearly report, and local threshold document.
4. Provide shared oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and national reviews, ensuring recommendations are implemented and have a demonstrable impact on practice (as set out in the yearly report).
5. Ensure multi-agency arrangements have the necessary level of business support, including intelligence and analytical functions, such as an agreed data set providing oversight and a robust understanding of practice.
6. Ensure all relevant agencies, including education settings, are clear on their role and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements”



Overview of Key Changes in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

2023 saw significant changes in the Working Together Guidance, the THSCP is currently reviewing how the partnership can be strengthened through further compliance

with the guidance. The headline areas for change are:



Multi-agency expectations for all partners



Further inclusion of the voluntary sector



Working with parents/guardians and families



Strengthening accountability, data and reporting



Changes to SCP's strategic leadership and funding



Tackling harm outside the home



Strengthening Scrutiny functions



Support for children with disabilities



Ensuring interdependencies with other boards

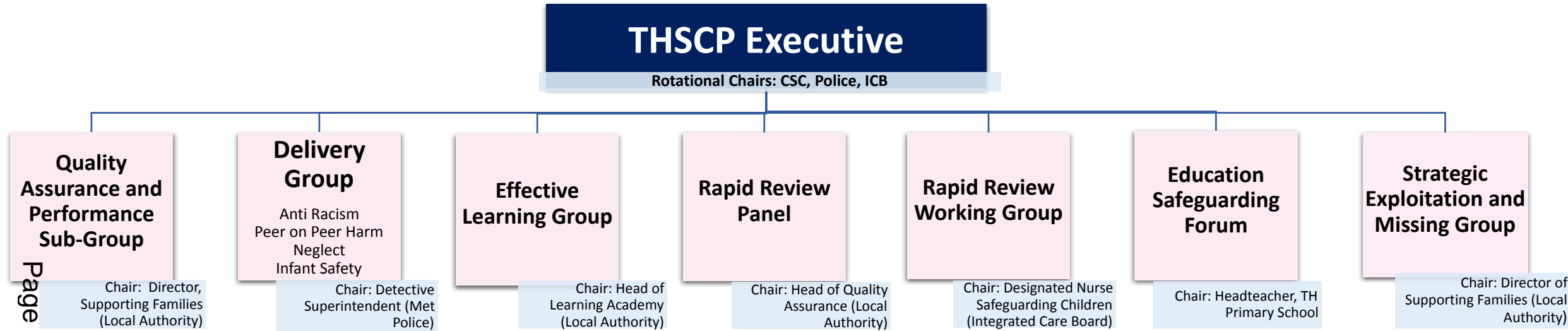


Role of education and childcare providers

In Tower Hamlets the THSCP is responsible for and produces...

- **Oversight and governance system** of all safeguarding activity in the borough.
- **Compliance** – Ensuring all agencies are fulfilling their safeguarding duties and responsibilities.
- **Serious incident notifications** – If a child is seriously harmed and abuse or neglect is suspected a Serious Incident Notification is made to the Department for Education and the Statutory Review Process is triggered, which is a 15 day process facilitated and supported by the THSCP.
- **Statutory reviews** – This is an overarching term for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Rapid Reviews. (Both of which have replaced the Serious Case Review systems) The THSCP oversees and facilitates all reviews and ensures the processes are robust.
- **Implementing the learning** from statutory reviews, including running learning sessions and creating 7 minute briefings.
- **Quality assurance** of all Safeguarding throughout the borough which includes, leading on **Multi-Agency Audits**, a **Multi-Agency Data Dashboard** (where over 10 partner agencies feed in their safeguarding data), dip sampling through all agencies, reviewing trends from reviews and data, ensuring partners are compliant with mandatory training and addressing any concerns that could affect safeguarding in all agencies such as recruitment and retention.
- **Delivery of multi-agency improvement projects**, the current priority projects are, anti-racism, neglect, infant safety and peer on peer harm. Each area has a project improvement plan for the topic.
- **Produce a statutory Annual Report** – which goes to the Local Authority Cabinet, Ofsted and the Department for Education
- Ensure **multi-agency policies** are up to date and robust. The THSCP also develops new multi-agency policies and pathways when required.
- Liaising with national bodies to look at best practice
- Responsibility for the **levels of need document**
- Employee's two **Young scrutineers** to ensure the voice of the child is at the centre of strategic work.
- **Hosts a webpage** with multi-agency policies, procedures and advice sits.
- Co-ordinates and commissioning **multi-agency safeguarding training** and creates an annual training needs analysis to identify key areas to target.
- **Run awareness sessions** into key areas of safeguarding (Especially in November!)
- An **engagement programme** with children and young people through pre-established groups including the Children in Care Group, CHAMs participation group and police cadets.
- THSCP is the formal route for **multi-agency** escalations and publishes an up-to-date escalation policy with key contacts in each agency.
- **Bulletins** which are sent out too all partners on key activity updates.
- Upkeeps a database of all key partner contacts across the borough.

Governance and Structure



The Groups Explained:

- The Executive Group oversees the THSCP which aims to continue to promote and support multi-agency working across all areas of Safeguarding. The local Police, Integrated Care Board and Local Authority are equally responsible for the Partnership and its outcomes.
- The Quality Assurance and Performance Group oversees the business part of the partnership which includes (but is not limited to), reviewing multi-agency data, audits and action plans that arise from statutory reviews.
- The Delivery Group oversees four multi-agency improvement projects which have been set up to focus a lens on an area that has arisen as a challenge within the borough.
- The Effective Learning group joins up training and awareness programmes across the borough.
- The Rapid Review Panel has been established to respond quickly to serious incidents when a child has been significantly harmed or died from abuse or neglect. The group reviews the cases, draws out any immediate learning and makes recommendations to the Executive on what level of Statutory Review is required.
- The Rapid Review Working Group has the responsibility of implementing the learning from statutory reviews.
- The Education Safeguarding Forum is a space for Education Providers to raise thematic and strategic safeguarding concerns.
- The Strategic Exploitation and Missing Group is a newly established group that complements and supports the operational practice of Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE)

Membership

“Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider are required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. A list of organisations that meet the criteria to be included as a relevant agency is set out in regulations.

Strong, effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements should be responsive to local circumstances and engage the right people in a collaborative way. This approach requires flexibility from all relevant agencies, to enable joint identification and response to existing and emerging needs, and to agree priorities to improve outcomes for children.” – Working Together 2023

The partnership has been made stronger this year through key agencies taking the lead in many areas including shaping and leading the work in our priority areas. The infographic shows a snapshot of members, but the membership is made up of over 200 professionals from various agencies and teams across Tower Hamlets. Partners include:

Almost any organisation that works with children and young people in Tower Hamlets but to name a few....

- Met Police
- Barts Health
- Integrated Care Board
- GP Care Group
- North East London Foundation Trust
- Education Providers
- Cafcass
- Voluntary Sector
- Probation
- Childrens Services
- Early Help
- Youth Services
- Exploitation Team
- The Education Partnership

Key External Stakeholders include, The Department for Education, Ofsted and The National Panel



Independent Scrutiny

“This is my second contribution to a THSCP Annual Report since joining as Independent Scrutineer in October 2022. The Annual Report provides an overview of the progress made by the THSCP between April 2023 and March 2024. Despite numerous ongoing pressures and challenges, partner efforts have supported continuous improvement in key areas, such as the rapid review process. The implementation of three-way serious incident decision-making in 2022/23 has positively impacted this year in reinforcing joint responsibility among statutory partners and strengthening multidisciplinary rigour and learning opportunities. Learning from rapid reviews has also informed training delivery across multiple agencies, the identification of new Partnership priorities, and the development of Partnership protocols.

At the beginning of the year, I conducted a scrutiny exercise in collaboration with the Young Scrutineers, using the [Six Steps Framework](#). While some recommendations from the scrutiny report are still under review, several positive changes have been implemented across the Partnership, in alignment with the recommendations, including:

- Refreshed Partnership arrangements, including the establishment of a Delivery Sub-Group and an Effective Learning Sub-Group.
- Migration of the Partnership’s website to the Tower Hamlet Council website, facilitating access to information for partners, families, and children whilst a new THSCP website is planned.
- Introduction of webinars to facilitate the dissemination of rapid review learning across the partnership.
- Facilitation of the first Anti-Racism conference, contributing to enhanced awareness and practice among partners and agencies.
- Strengthening of the Quality and Assurance Sub-group, with increased collaboration and constructive dialogue among partners.
- Formation of an Independent Scrutineer-led Task and Finish group to update the Partnership’s data dashboard.

This year, significant attention has been drawn to institutional discrimination and the handling of child exploitation by the Met police through the publication of the [Baroness Casey Review](#) and an [HMIC inspection report](#). The Partnership has since identified ‘Anti-racism’ as a 2-year priority and confirmed exploitation as the focus of a scrutiny deep dive at the start of next year.

While progress has been made in establishing effective Partnership structures and processes this year, there are areas acknowledged as requiring further attention, including local child safeguarding practice reviews, performance and assurance approach and impact, feedback from children and families, health representation and information governance, and strategic oversight and leadership.

Finally, the past year also presented various changes and challenges, including notable workforce changes, impacting the effectiveness and continuity of the partnership, and the Executive. The dedication of individuals covering vacant roles and supporting colleagues has been invaluable in maintaining the Partnership’s core work at what remains a challenging time.

It has been a privilege to continue collaborating with the Partnership this year. I extend my sincere gratitude to practitioners and managers across all agencies for their tireless efforts in safeguarding children. Special thanks to the Young Scrutineers for their exceptional dedication and contributions, even with demanding academic schedules!” – Laurelle Brown



The THSCP Independent Scrutineer is Laurelle Brown who is responsible for ensuring the THSCP is compliant, raise any challenges, review processes and procedures and liaise on a national level with other partnerships and key external stakeholders.

“Independent scrutiny should drive continuous improvement and provide assurance that arrangements are working effectively for children, families, and practitioners. It should also consider learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews, national reviews and thematic reports. The independent scrutineer or scrutiny group should be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills and expertise in the area being scrutinised and consequently add value to the work of local agencies.” – *Working Together 2023*

Young Scrutineers

The THSCP are proud to have introduced 'Young Scrutineers' into the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership which was the result of an innovative bid to the Department for Education and means we can involve young people in the work of the Partnership. As a result of the successful bid, we have three Young Scrutineers, who are paid at an adult living wage hourly rate, and who work up to 4 hours a week. The contract is flexible to work around their educational needs, so they can work fewer hours when school is more demanding. The Scrutineers started the role at ages 16 and 17 and work alongside our Adult Scrutineer. Their role is to give their views, share their and peers' experiences, and review policies and projects to ensure we have the voice of the child at the centre of the work. Tower Hamlets are 1 of only 5 safeguarding partnerships with paid young scrutineers across the UK. Our young scrutineers have been with us for almost 2 years and as their contracts come to an end in June they will be supporting with the recruitment of new young scrutineers. We originally had 3 young scrutineers but last year Mia-Ly left us to study medicine at university.

During their time in the THSCP they have completed and been involved with the following activities:

- 1:1 meetings with over 15 senior managers and directors
- Gave initial feedback on priority areas and project plans, which resulted in the amendment of project plans to reflect the opinion of children and young people
- Took part in tours of police stations, The Royal London and Town Hall
- Benchmarked the THSCP website and gave feedback on how parts of the website should be accessible for children and young people when they wish to seek information on safeguarding
- Completed a jargon-busting exercise that breaks down commonly used terminology into a young person-friendly guide
- Helped facilitate a scrutiny workshop when the THSCP had a changeover in Independent Scrutineer
- Are working alongside the Independent Scrutineer on the Six Steps of Scrutiny project to highlight improvements to the THSCP
- Presented feedback to priority task and finish groups
- Presentations at Every Chance for Every Child Forum
- Helped analyse and feedback a survey regarding online safety which was sent out to schools
- Gave feedback on how to make the Thresholds document more accessible for children and young people and are now working on a guide for young people and children to navigate a thresholds document.
- Engaged other groups of children and young people to help set the THSCP new priorities
- Are currently working on a survey to capture more views of children and young people around the priority areas
- Conducted research into anti-racism and reviewed media articles
- Attended national feedback meetings with other young scrutineers
- Collected feedback from peers and family members to support the community language programme run by Tower Hamlets Local Authority
- Review anonymized social care case extracts to give feedback on the language used by professionals when documenting children and young people in case files
- Attend Executive level meetings to give feedback on THSCP activity.

Young Scrutineers in their own words

Imanna

"I started working as a young scrutineer at sixteen during 2022. Domestic abuse was originally my priority area and my goal was to give the council a new perspective on domestic abuse from the view of a young person. I wanted to improve the help that victims received and ensure that the voice of the child was heard. Additionally, I gave ideas on how to make sure victims feel safe and comfortable enough to seek help. Since working here my confidence and public speaking skills have grown, which was something I found challenging when I first started. I am now eighteen, and we have joint priority areas of peer-on-peer harm, racism, infant safety and neglect. Again, I think it is extremely useful for the safeguarding children partnership to have the perspectives of young people living in the borough. Recently we have been given research tasks on racism which was beneficial as we have highlighted all different types of racism and not just the obvious.

We also had a webinar with King's College London and other young scrutineers from different boroughs. This was useful as we saw what other young people were doing in their councils and we told them what we were doing, which they took advice from. We found that not many other councils employ their young scrutineers, unlike Tower Hamlets, and they're instead just volunteers.

Since working here we have met and spoken with young people in the borough to get their views on what it is like in Tower Hamlets. This included the CAMHS participation group, Barts Health young people's engagement group, spotlight and young carers. After getting their views we have looked at what we, as a partnership, need to do to make sure that children and young people's voices are heard. Hence our new priority areas this year, which came from young people and practitioners themselves. Throughout this role we have constantly communicated how important the voice of children and young people is. The best part about being a young scrutineer for Tower Hamlets was being heard and feeling like we made a difference." – Imanna

Imtiyaaz

"I am currently in my final year of A levels and embarked on my journey as a young scrutineer from April 2022. I was assigned to one of three priority areas at the time, with me being sat on the online safety area, I was able to put forward my input and offer my opinions on current policies and work revolving around online safety. I wanted to ensure that the council were up to date with the upgrade in technology that has surpassed over the coming years and highly believed that keeping up to date with and being aware of such amendments in technology would help the partnership in being able to offer the right and effective amount of support needed for both parents, young people, and children. From this role, I have developed several skills, such skills that I know have very much benefit me now and will in the future. I have been able to grow as a person and expand knowledge and experience of working within a professional environment. Being able to work with a wide range of people from very diverse backgrounds has given me an interesting insight into the different lives we all live and how I can myself develop on learning from different cultures. Our new priority areas which consist around anti-racism, peer-on-peer harm, infant safety and neglect are areas of concern that was very much highlighted by several individuals and interactions during my first year as a scrutineer and seeing these being recognised and considered as an area that is important by the council and partnership has me hopeful in the work we carry out being heard and seen by the council and partnership. Since my statement in the last review, I am happy to be able to include a variety of new work I have been to complete and take part in which includes meeting with the CAHMS participation group and being able to listen to their feedback directly from young people who have had to make major sacrifices within their lives and setting out the contents and structure for a questionnaire that revolves around racism and collecting data on the effects individuals may have undergone as a result. The most enjoyed part of my role was being able to work with many unique individuals and have been able to establish professional networks with them as well as being able to make a difference to improve the lives of children and young people within the borough and being heard and having it considered as well as implemented." – Imtiyaaz

THSCP Key Achievements 23-24

Overview	Impact
Publication of new arrangements	The THSCP Arrangements were updated to reflect current practice. This has demonstrated the development of the partnership since arrangements were last updated in 2019. This allows transparency of the arrangements with all partners and the public.
Delivery of safeguarding month	During Safeguarding Month, the THSCP delivered an Anti- Racism conference which featured speakers from the Independent Scrutineer, feedback from children and young people, Children’s Social Care, and the Met Police. The conference brought together professionals across Tower Hamlets, which helped build relationships and improve practice. In addition to the conference, weekly bulletins were sent out with key information on Safeguarding areas including safe sleep for infants.
<p>Page 120</p> <p>Set new priority areas</p>	Every 2 years the THSCP sets priority areas which are multi-agency improvement projects into those topical areas. This year new priorities were set, and a new agile methodology was implemented. The THSCP Executive reviewed data, audits, feedback from children and young people, learning from CSPRs/ Rapid Reviews, and feedback from a workshop with partners and reviewed survey feedback from partners to set four priority areas which are, anti-racism, neglect, infant safety and peer on peer harm. This ensures that the capacity within the partnership has focused on the most critical areas to make improvements.
Improvements to the rapid review working group	The Rapid Review Working Group was set up in 22-23 with the sole purpose of implementing learning from CSPRs and Rapid Reviews, this group meets every other month and works through a ‘statutory review action plan’- (which combines all actions from all reviews to ensure they are thematic and to reduce duplication). As a partnership, we have strong evidence of the implementation of recommendations. In the last year, the Chair introduced ‘spotlight items’, where agencies bring presentations of evidence of the recommendations they have implemented and the impact in their area. This area was also audited and received very positive results, the audit outlined the learning from reviews as ‘a sound system of governance and risk control’.
Implementation of 30 minute webinars for rapid reviews	Learning from all reviews have been a priority of the THSCP in the last year. This year the THSCP implemented 30-minute webinars after each Rapid Review to share the key learning and themes from the cases. This information is highly anonymised to protect identities. 3 sessions have been held with attendee numbers ranging from 88 – 130. These sessions put areas of key concerns and themes on the radar of a broad range of professionals.
Improvements to meetings including a safeguarding risk register	Improvement of governance arrangements has been an ongoing focus in the last 4 years and is continuously under review for improvement. This year a shared risk register was introduced to highlight strategic safeguarding concerns across the borough and allocate Executive Members for risk mitigation.

THSCP Key Achievements 23-24

Overview	Impact
New webpage	The THSCP moved from its own website to a local authority webpage. This has made the information more accessible to partners and the public and has saved over £3k per year.
3-way serious incident notifications	In Tower Hamlets, the decision to take a case to Rapid Review is now jointly made between the local authority, health and the police. This ensures further rigor of the decision-making processes, promotes appropriate challenge between agencies and encourages information sharing.
Set up of 'effective learning group'	The budget is limited for training in the THSCP, the effective learning group aims to bring together training offers from various agencies, jointly plan awareness sessions, and jointly deliver multi-agency audits and implement the learning from them.
Development of strategic exploitation group	A partnership strategic group has been set up to support MACE (an operational exploitation group), this group reviews any multi-agency strategies, protocols, and policies regarding children at risk of exploitation and missing. The group also reviews themes and arising concerns that come out of MACE. This allows professionals to focus on the individual children at MACE and separates the strategic work for professional focus.
Strengthened scrutiny arrangements	The Independent Scrutineer delivered a review named the 'six steps of scrutiny' which highlighted several areas for the partnership to improve and become further compliant with the Working Together Arrangements. This allows the partnership to take on a critical friend perspective of the partnership as a whole and focus attention on key areas for improvement.
Strengthened audit	Although the partnership has conducted multi-agency audits hosted by the business unit, capacity and participation were key issues. The learning academy in the local authority are supporting with audit activity and recently conducted an audit of the MASH.
Review of multi-agency dataset	The THSCP hosts a dataset that is collected quarterly from 10 different teams and agencies, attention has been focused on this area to improve the dataset. This is to support improved line of sight to practice, comparative analysis and understanding of impact for children.

Key Challenges

Overview	Impact
Workforce – THSCP business unit	The THSCP Business Unit consists of 3 employees, Manager, Co-ordinator, and Apprentice. At the end of 2023, two posts in the team became vacant. The local authorities’ processes affected the timely recruitment. The business unit went from 3 members of staff to 1 for 2 months and is still currently recruiting for the 3 rd post. This affected delivery within the THSCP as the Business Unit supports all THSCP activity.
Budget Page 122	The THSCP budget is shared between the three statutory partners, at present the budget just covers staffing, scrutiny, statutory reviews, and minimal training. The local authority contributes the largest slice of funding followed by the ICB. Across London safeguarding partnerships only receive £5000 from the Met Police which is centralised by MOPAC. The Safeguarding Partnerships should have a strong multi-agency training offer but with the current budget, it is not possible.
Leadership changes	The THSCP Executive Group is led by key directors across the three statutory partners, there have been changeovers in personnel in the Local Authority and at various levels in the Met Police. The Local Authority has had interim DCS measures for approx. 4 months.
Priority areas implementation	With a Business Unit under-resourced in the final quarter of 2023-24, the priority areas under the delivery group have not received as much support as they would on a business-as-usual basis, in addition, participation from partners has been low. Although the priority area of Infant Safety has made significant process, other areas have not progressed in line with the forecast.
Partnership capacity	The partnership as a whole have reported capacity issues within their agencies, and this affected their input to the THSCP. Capacity issues are due to an increase in demand of services and savings/ budget cuts in agencies.
Publication of a CSPR	A thematic CSPR into infant safety and overcrowding was commissioned and completed in partnership with all agencies involved. There have been delays in the publication of the report due to various reasons, including concerns from families, and potential risks to families. The Executive are weighing up various routes of publication, so the learning is embedded but the families are protected.

Strategic Plan for the Year Ahead

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Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership



Data Dashboard - Quarter 4 2023/24

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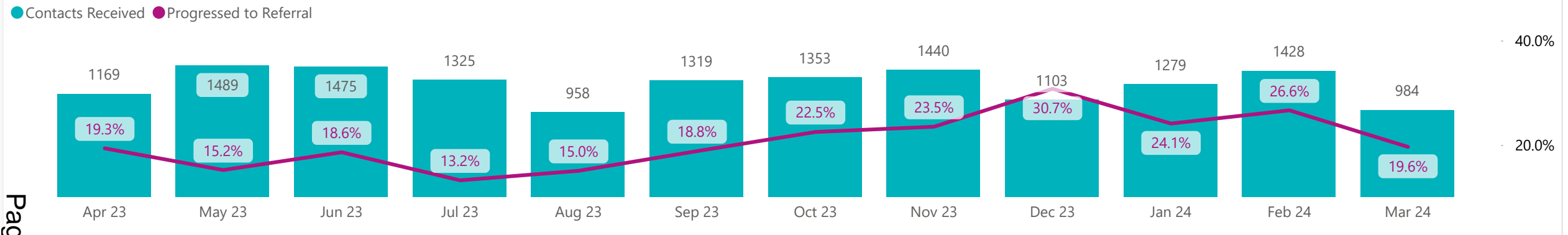
Prepared by: Children's Performance Team (18/04/24)

Data Sources: March 2024 MI Scorecard and RP_188 Report (April 2024)

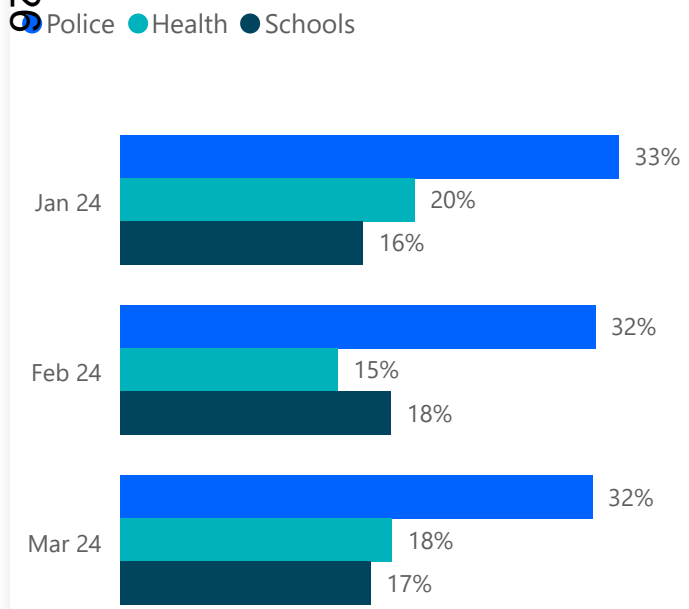


Children Social Care - Contacts and Referrals

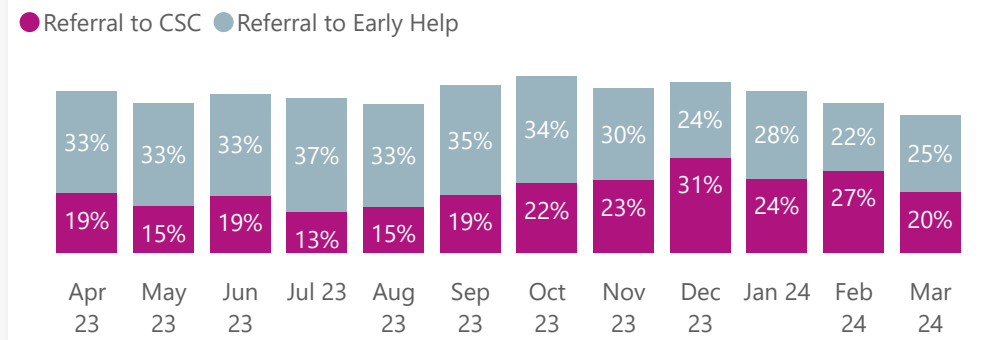
Number of Contacts Received and the Proportion Progressed to Referral



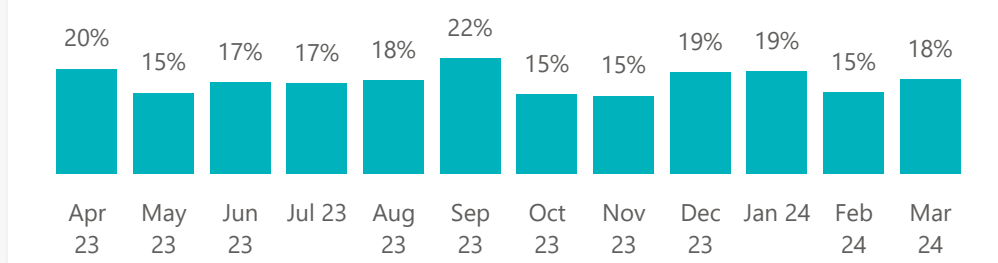
Contacts from Top Three Agencies



Contact Outcomes: Progress to Referral or Early Help



Re-Referral Percentage



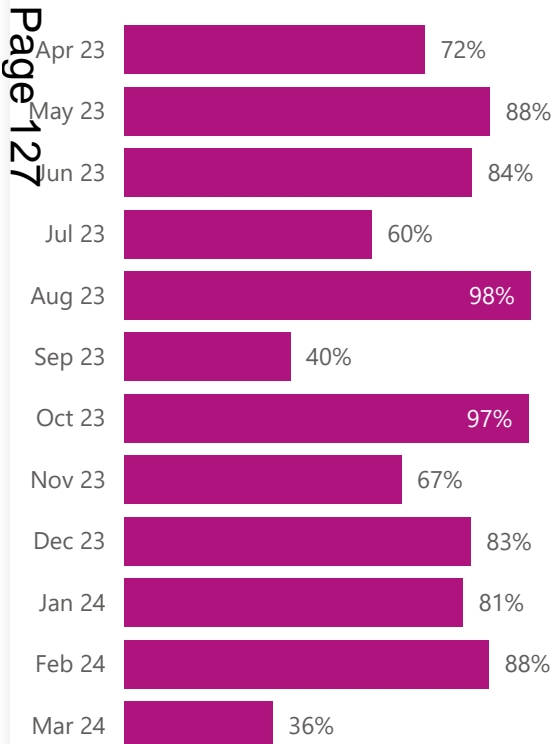
Average Contacts per Month	Average Contacts to Referral %
1277	21%
Average Referrals per Month	Average Contacts to Early Help %
345	30%
Average Re-referral %	Average Referrals to Assessment %
18%	90%

Children Social Care - Child Protection

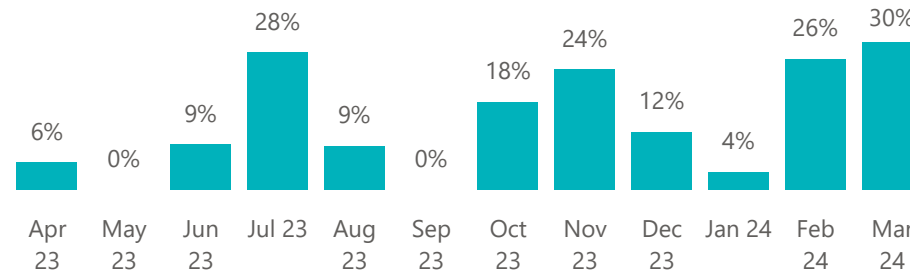
Number of Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan



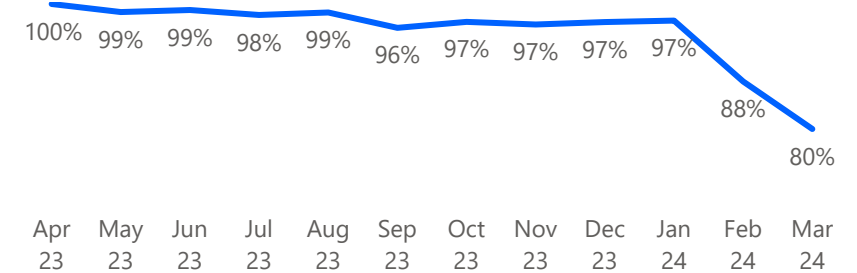
ICPCs Held within 15 Days



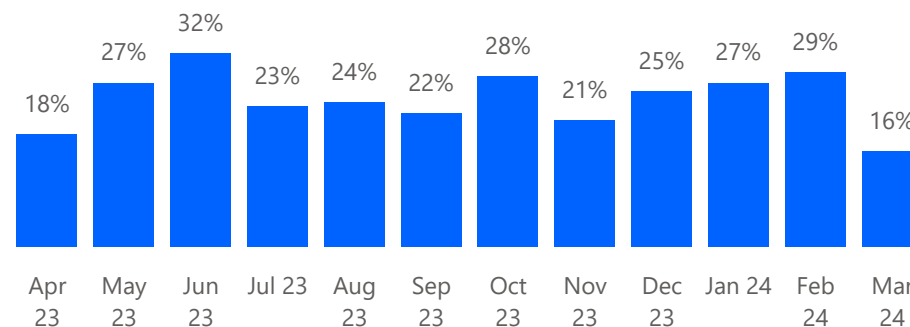
Proportion Becoming Subject to a Plan Second or Subsequent Time



Proportion of ICPC and RCPC Quorate i.e. 3 or more agencies present



Section 47s Progressing to ICPC



Average CP Plans per Month

269

Section 47 to ICPC Average

24%

Average Second or Subsequent Plan

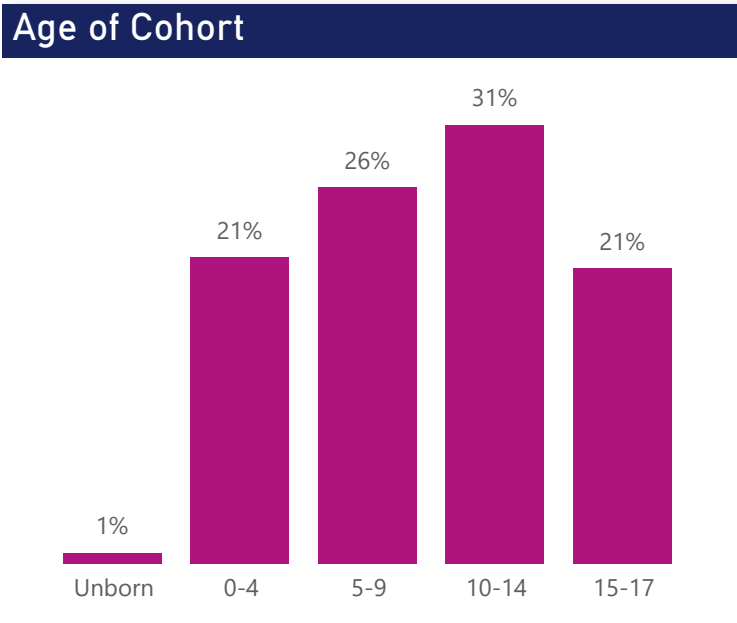
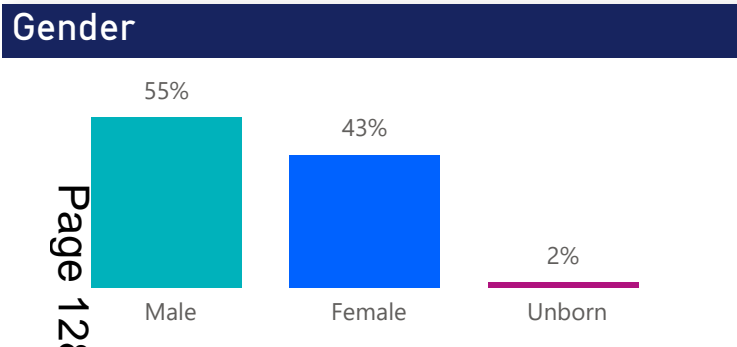
13.7%

Average % Quoracy ICPC and RCPC

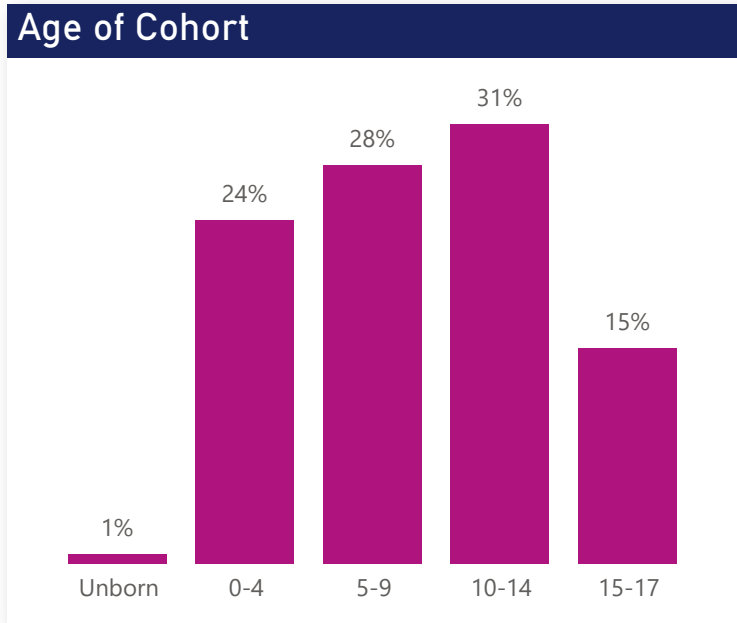
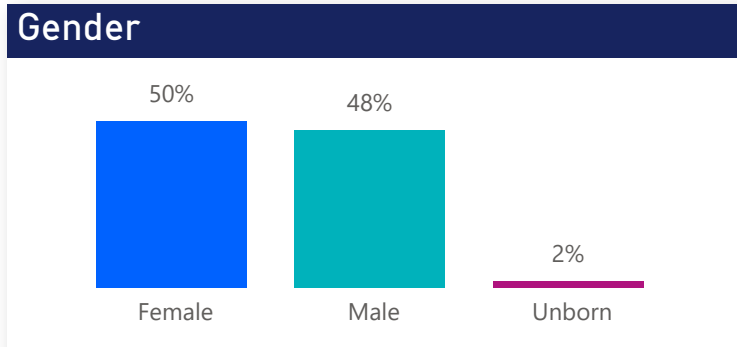
96%

Children Social Care - Plans: Gender and Age

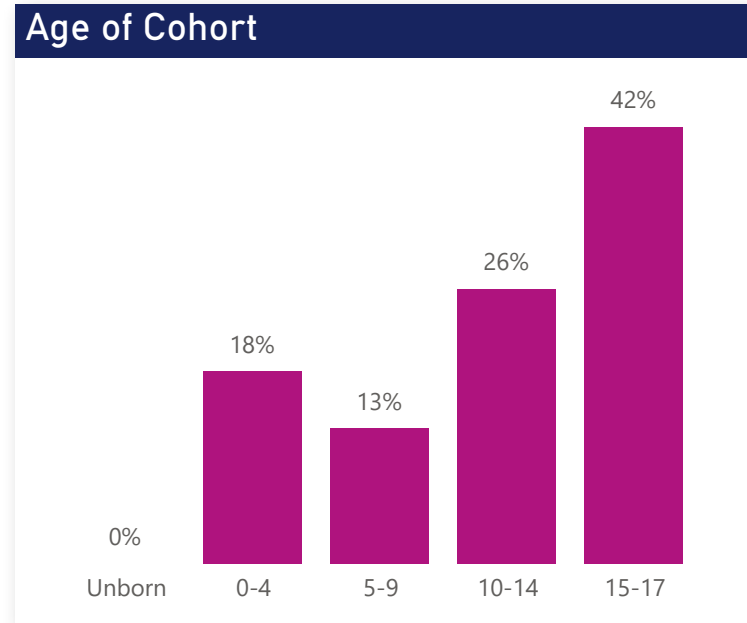
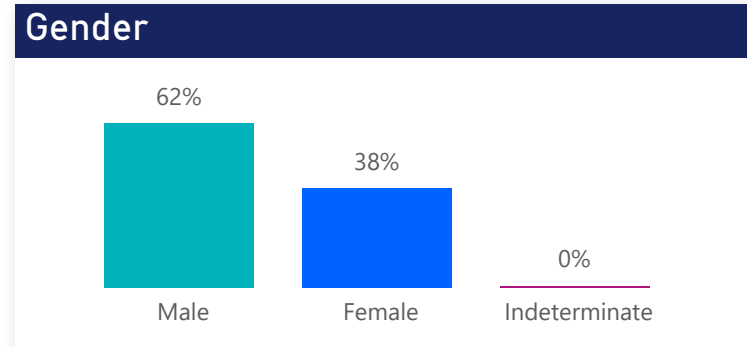
Children subject to CIN Plans
797



Children subject to CP Plans
307



Children Looked After
276



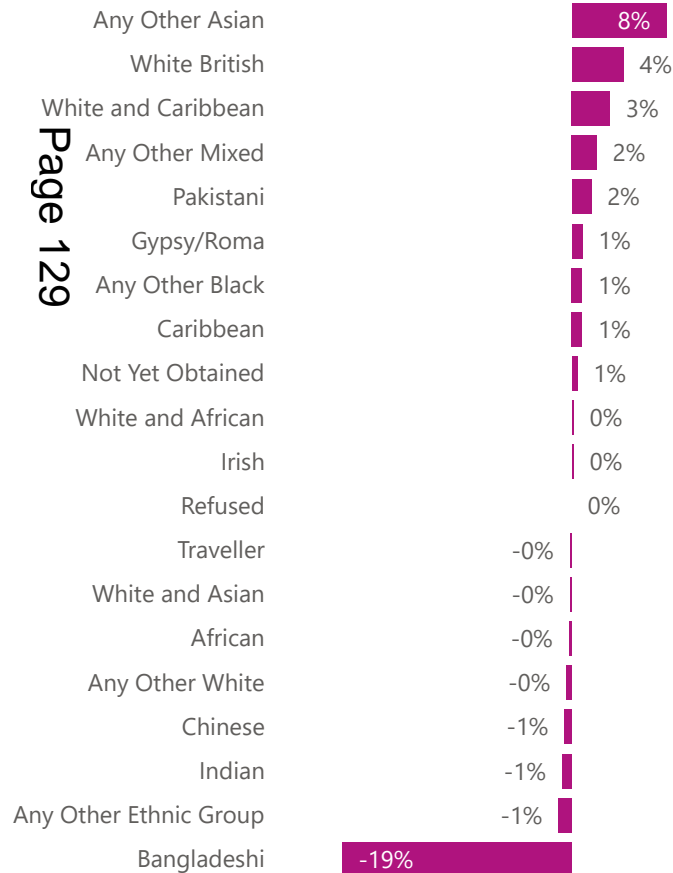
Children Social Care - Plans: Ethnicity Disproportionality

The graphs below show the ethnicity for each Children's Social Care cohort and how it differs from the overall child (0-17) population by ethnic group from the 2021 Census (Data Source: ONS). A positive difference shows there are more children in the Social Care cohort from this ethnicity group compared to the overall child population. A negative difference shows there are less children in the Social Care cohort from this ethnicity compared to the overall child population.

Children subject to CIN Plans

797

Ethnicity - Over or Under Represented

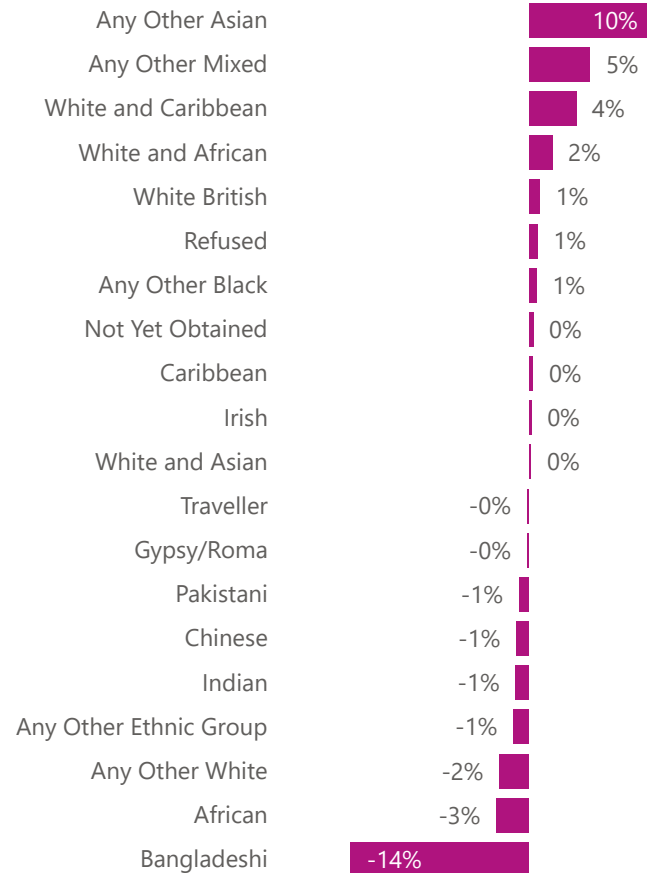


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Children subject to CP Plans

307

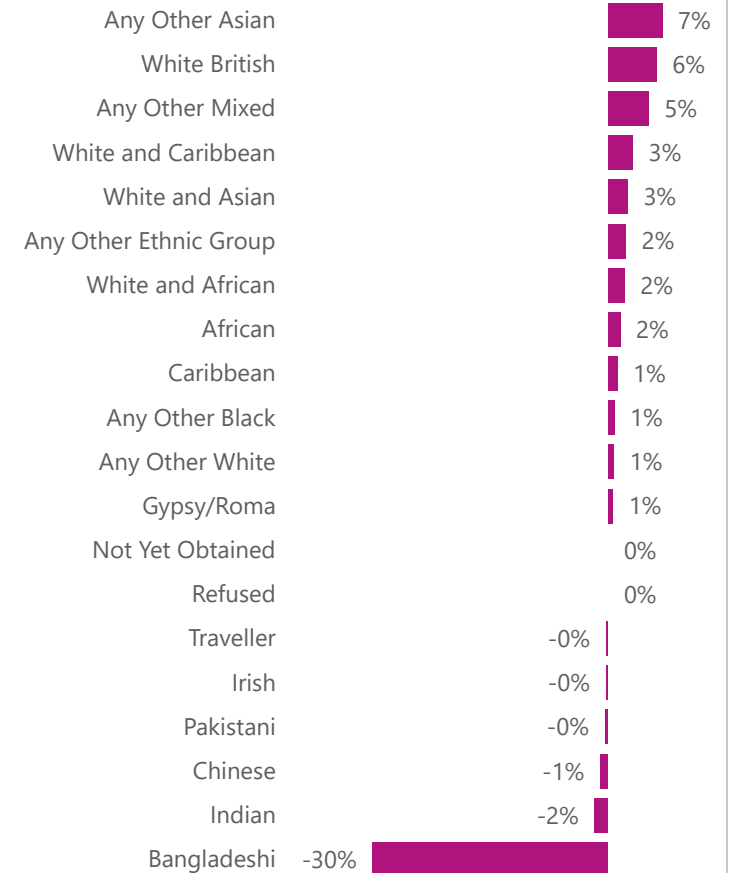
Ethnicity - Over or Under Represented



Children Looked After

276

Ethnicity - Over or Under Represented



Children Social Care - Plans: Ethnicity Groups

The ONS data set is the overall child (0-17) population by ethnic group from the 2021 Census (Data Source: ONS).

Ethnicity Name	ONS Proportion	CIN Plan Cohort	CIN Plan %	CP Plan Cohort	CP Plan %	CLA Cohort	CLA %
Bangladeshi	58.5%	311	39.0%	137	44.6%	78	28.3%
White British	11.5%	127	15.9%	38	12.4%	49	17.8%
African	6.8%	52	6.5%	13	4.2%	23	8.3%
Any Other Asian	1.4%	75	9.4%	34	11.1%	23	8.3%
Any Other Mixed	2.8%	39	4.9%	23	7.5%	22	8.0%
Any Other Ethnic Group	3.5%	19	2.4%	7	2.3%	16	5.8%
White and Asian	2.6%	19	2.4%	8	2.6%	14	5.1%
White and Caribbean	1.9%	41	5.1%	17	5.5%	14	5.1%
Any Other White	3.6%	25	3.1%	4	1.3%	12	4.3%
White and African	1.1%	10	1.3%	9	2.9%	9	3.3%
Any Other Black	1.4%	18	2.3%	6	2.0%	6	2.2%
Caribbean	1.0%	15	1.9%	4	1.3%	6	2.2%
Gypsy/Roma	0.1%	8	1.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.7%
Pakistani	1.1%	22	2.8%	1	0.3%	2	0.7%
Chinese	1.0%	3	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Indian	1.7%	7	0.9%	2	0.7%	0	0.0%
Irish	0.1%	2	0.3%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Not Yet Obtained	0.0%	4	0.5%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Refused	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.7%	0	0.0%
Traveller	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	100.0%	797	100.0%	307	100.0%	276	100.0%

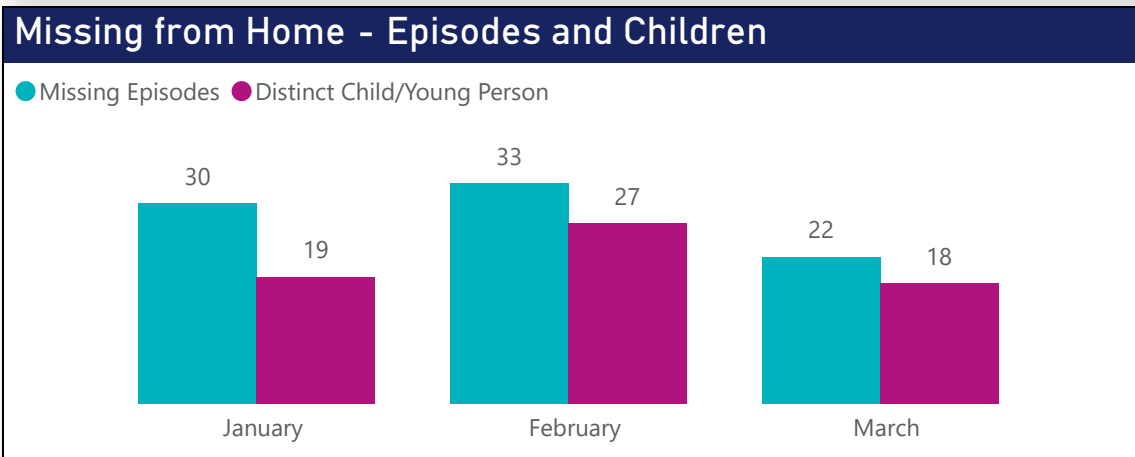
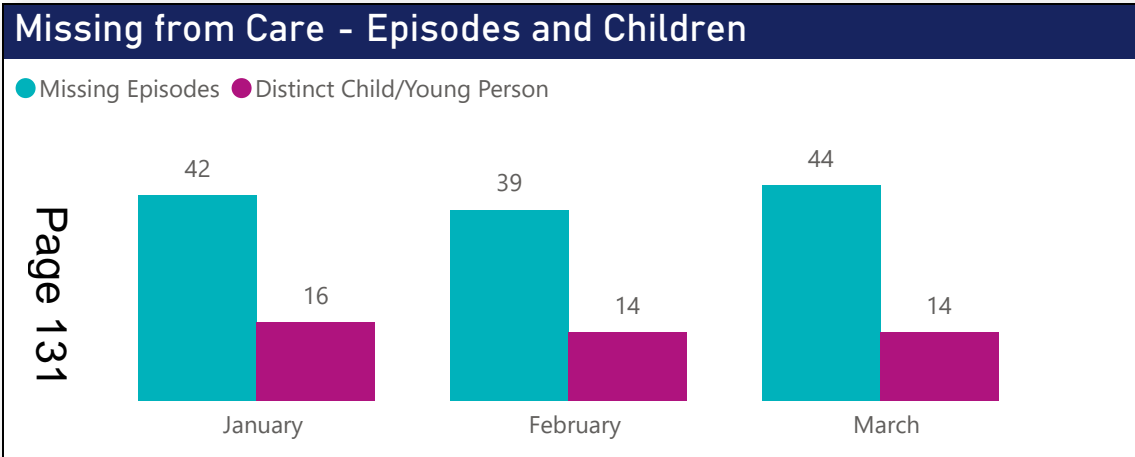
Exploitation: Missing Episodes and Young People

Total Missing Episodes

210

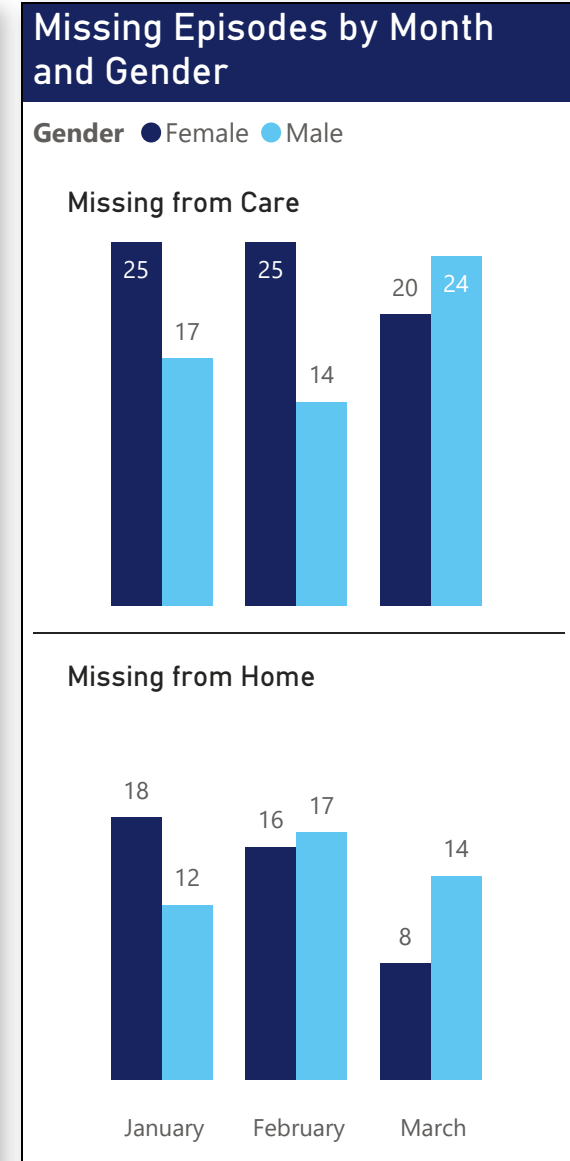
Total Children & Young People

80



Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Missing from Care	Missing from Home	Total
African	6.40%	3.53%	5.24%
Any Other Asian Background	10.40%	2.35%	7.14%
Any Other Black Background		3.53%	1.43%
Any Other Ethnic Group		4.71%	1.90%
Any Other Mixed Background	6.40%	10.59%	8.10%
Bangladeshi	30.40%	36.47%	32.86%
Caribbean		8.24%	3.33%
Indian		1.18%	0.48%
Pakistani	0.80%		0.48%
Somali	12.00%	7.06%	10.00%
White - British	9.60%	8.24%	9.05%
White - Irish		3.53%	1.43%
White & Asian	2.40%		1.43%
White & Black African	8.00%	5.88%	7.14%
White & Black Caribbean	13.60%	3.53%	9.52%



Exploitation: Missing from Care

Missing Episodes

Total Missing Episodes

125

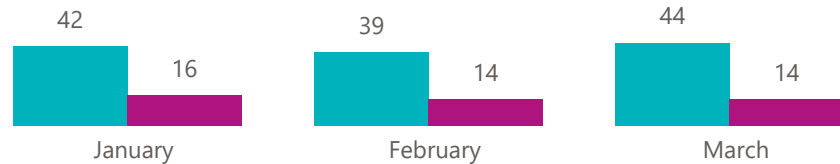
Total Children & Young People

29

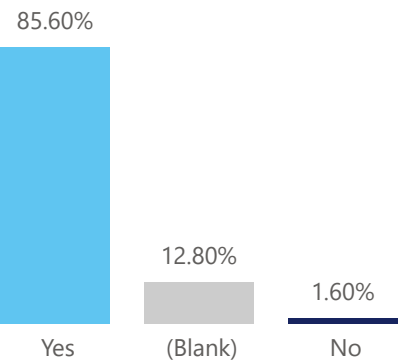
Missing Episodes from Care and Missing Young People

Missing Episodes Distinct Child/Young Person

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RHC Offer

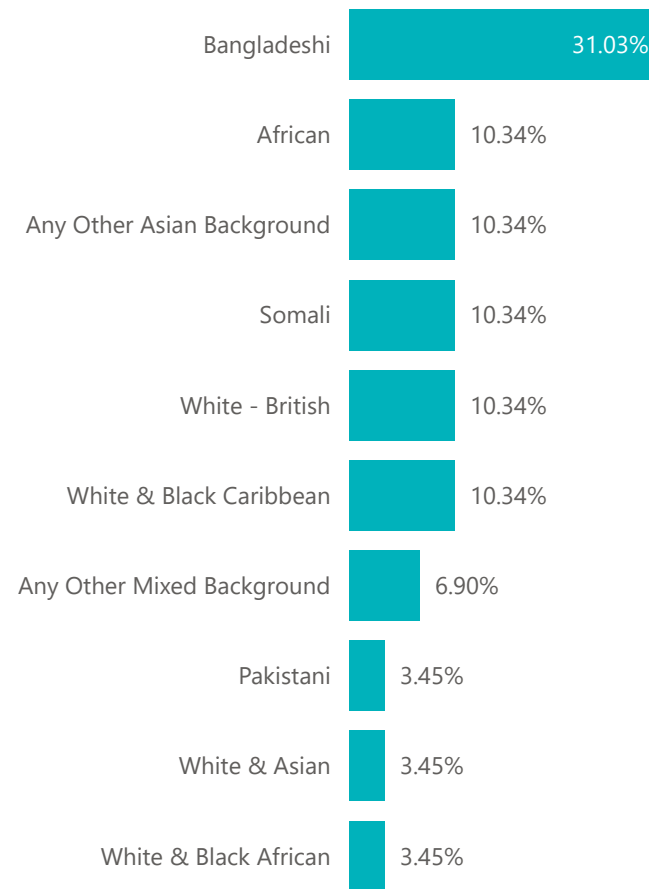


RHC Acceptance

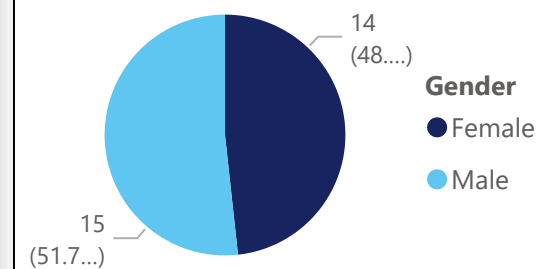


Children and Young People

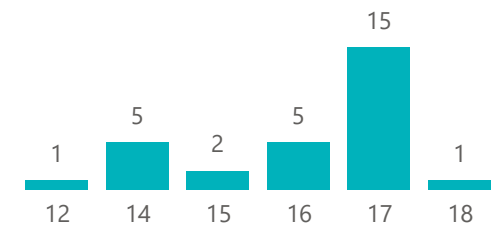
Ethnicity



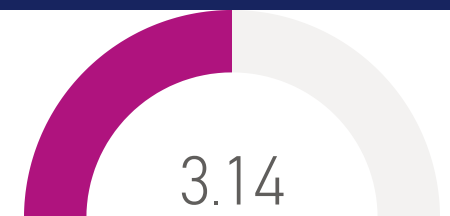
Gender



Age Recorded when Missing



Average Days Missing

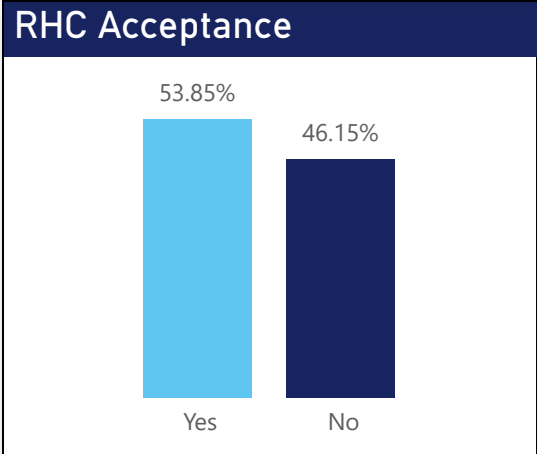
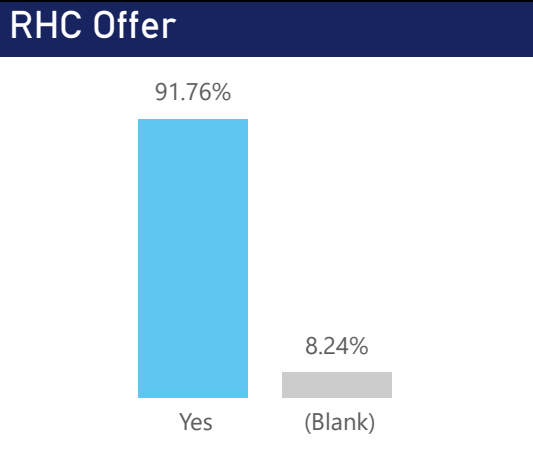
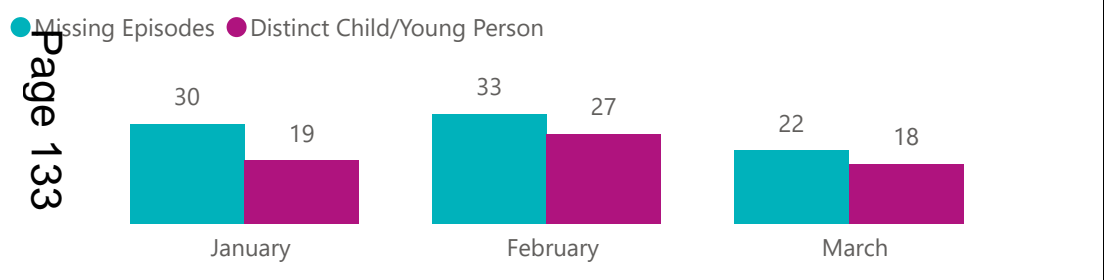


Exploitation: Missing from Home

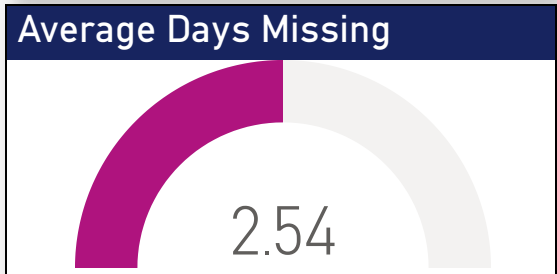
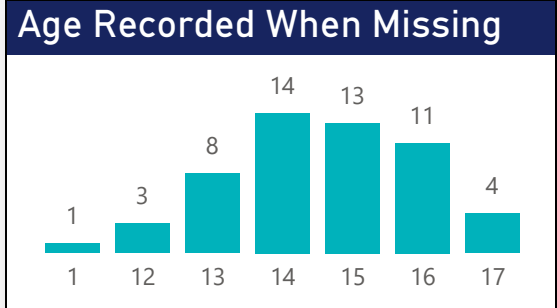
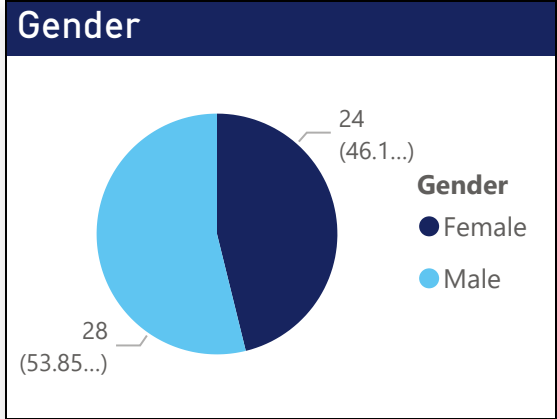
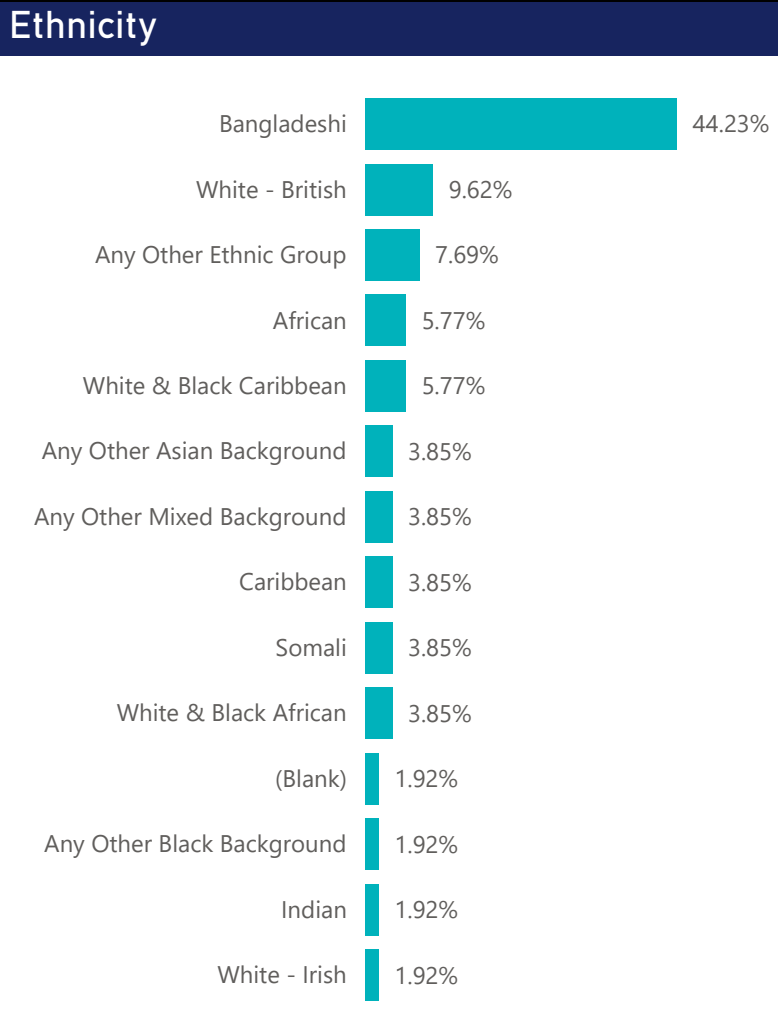
Missing Episodes



Missing Episodes from Home and Missing Young People



Children and Young People



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