

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Agenda

**Thursday, 17 October 2024 at 6.30 p.m.
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel**

Members:

Chair: Councillor Abdul Mannan

Vice Chair:

Councillor Harun Miah, Councillor Abdul Malik, Councillor Suluk Ahmed, Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain, 1 Vacancy and Councillor Leelu Ahmed

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), Hasan Chowdhury (Parent Governor) and Nafisa Ahmed (Parent Governor)

Substitutes: Councillor Sabina Khan, Councillor Faroque Ahmed, Councillor Rebaka Sultana, Councillor Ana Miah and Councillor Amin Rahman

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

Contact for further enquiries:

Democratic Services,

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

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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, 17 October 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.

Further Advice contact: Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer,
Tel: 0207 364 4348

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 11 July 2024.

4. CESSC Action Log

5. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 Early Help Offer (Pages 23 - 28)

5.2 Inspection Preparation: Children's Social Care (Pages 29 - 42)

5.3 SEND Inspection Preparation & Improvement Update (Pages 43 - 62)



6. **ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**

Next Meeting of the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Thursday, 5 December 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.

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.33 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 11 JULY 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Abdul Mannan -(Chair)

Councillor Harun Miah

Councillor Abdul Malik

Councillor Suluk Ahmed

Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain

Shiblu Miah -(Muslim community representative)

Joanna Hannan -(Parent Governor)

Hasan Chowdhury -(Parent Governor)

Other Members Present in Person:

Councillor Maium Talukdar -(Deputy Mayor & Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor))

Members in Attendance Virtually:

Dr Phillip Rice -(Church of England Representative)

Ashraf Zaman -(Parent Governor)

Officers Present in Person:

Steve Reddy -(Corporate Director, Children's Services)

 Lead)

Daniel Kerr

Justina Bridgeman Democratic Services Officer (Committee)

Zaid Ul-Islam -(Strategy & Policy Officer)

Shafiur Rahman -(Interim Director of Youth Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests received.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

The Chair requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub Committee for the municipal year 2024/25. Councillor Harun Miah proposed Councillor Suluk Ahmed for the position. This was seconded by Councillor Abdul Malik.

There were no further nominations received.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Elect Councillor Suluk Ahmed the Vice-Chair of the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2024/25.

4. CHILDREN AND EDUCATION TERMS OF REFERENCE, MEMBERSHIP, QUORUM & DATES OF MEETING FOR 2024/25

Justina Bridgeman, Democratic Services Officer requested members to note the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee's terms of reference, membership, quorum and meeting dates for the municipal year 2023/24. The terms of reference were agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 21 May 2024.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note it's terms of reference, quorum, membership and meeting dates as set out in appendices 1,2 and 3 of the report.
2. Agreed hold all Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee meetings at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber for the municipal year 2024/25.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Sub Committee meeting held on 9 May 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

Co-optee Introduction

Hasan Chowdhury was introduced to the sub-committee as the new Parent Governor. This was officially confirmed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 April 2024.

6. ACTIONS LOG

The actions were noted.

7. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

7.1 Cabinet Member and Corporate Director Reflections for 2023/24 and Priorities for 2024/25

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning, introduced the first item and noted achievements and investments made in the borough such as, the Universal Free School Meals, University Bursaries and the Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance schemes.

Councillor Talukdar expressed a desire to continue the work that has been completed and to ensure that the preparations for the inspections on Children's Social Care, Youth Justice, and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are in place.

Steve Reddy, Corporate Director of Children's Services, then gave an overview of the directorate and the demographics of young people in the borough, Priorities include the ongoing support for Key Stage 5 students and the development of proposals for the Institute for Academic Excellence. Other priorities are Young Tower Hamlets launch, the Family Hubs and the continued work with partners to deliver the Accelerate! partnership plan. Mr Reddy then outlined the role that stakeholders, the Partnership Board and sub-committee Members play in shaping the service.

Further to questions from the sub-committee, Councillor Maium Talukdar, and Steve Reddy:

- Acknowledged that there were issues with the website and digital responses on EMA bursaries, which have now been resolved. Parents were advised to check emails for notifications. Members were requested to forward any feedback on specific cases to Officers for further investigation.
- Clarified that the criteria for EMA bursaries involves an assessment. The funds are limited although they have been increased. Full details on data comparing the percentage of children eligible for EMA funding, the percentage of applications submitted, and the percentage of awards granted will be forwarded to the sub-committee for review.

- Noted that no significant concerns have been made in relation to the safety of concrete used All Saints school in Stepney. Full details will be brought to the sub-committee for review.
- Confirmed that consideration will be given to extending provision for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within mainstream schools and discussions will take place in due course.
- Observed that the Council supports School Governors. Consideration to better represent School Governors to ensure that they represent the community will be given. Parents should address any school concerns to the Headteacher and governing body, and any issues that cannot be resolved should then be addressed to the Department of Education (DfE) who have ultimate authority.
- Noted that significant investment is being made to SEND services and the SEND strategy will combat ongoing concerns. It was acknowledged that more support is required to assist children in the early stages.
- Tower Hamlets have various summer holiday activities in the borough and details will be brought back to the sub-committee for review.
- Confirmed that information on any national or regional funding available for investment into new technologies to support young people with additional needs will be returned to the sub-committee for review.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED**:

1. That data comparing the percentage of children eligible for EMA funding, the percentage of applications submitted, and the percentage of awards granted to be forwarded to the sub-committee for review.
2. That an update on concrete at All Saints School in Stepney and a current assessment of safety be forwarded to the sub-committee for review.
3. That a written brief on the summer schools available in the borough be forwarded to the sub-committee for review.
4. That a written brief highlighting whether there is any national or regional funding available for investment into new technologies to support young people with additional needs.
5. That the presentation be noted.

7.2 CESSC Draft Work Programme 2024/25

The order of business on the agenda was changed at the meeting. This item was swapped with the third.

The Chair introduced Zaid ul-Islam, Strategy and Policy Officer, to present the proposed topics to discuss at the remaining meetings for the 2024/25 municipal year. The Chair informed sub-committee members that the draft was submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 9 July for discussion and additional comments will then be submitted to Cabinet for finalisation. The final draft will then return to the OSC in September.

Zaid ul-Islam informed Members that due to the LGA conference, the 24 October meeting has moved to 17 October 2024.

Following the presentation, sub-committee members suggested:

- That a follow-up visit to care leaver services should be arranged prior to the meeting on 05 December for the proposed Corporate Parenting discussion.
- That at the 13 February 2025 meeting, young people should be present to give feedback on the Contract Services 'Free School Meals' (FSM) programme. Consideration should also be given to invite Contract Services to the meeting to hear the feedback.

Daniel Kerr, Strategy and Policy Lead, then requested any additional suggestions be submitted by Members to the Chair.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED**:

1. Confirmation will be given by the Chair on availability for the site visit to care leavers services.
2. The Chair will discuss with Lead Member Councillor Maium Talukdar to determine if there is any feedback from children on the FSM service.
3. That the presentation be noted.

7.3 Youth Services

The order of business on the agenda was changed at the meeting. This item was swapped with the second.

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning, introduced the next item and gave an update on the Young Tower Hamlets programme, which was devised in conjunction with young residents who participated in consultations and surveys.

Councillor Talukdar noted that eight youth safe spaces have now opened in the borough and that £488k has been secured for refurbishment and to expand the youth sports offer. Sports coaches will be working with borough

schools to increase participation in sports and physical activities. Members were informed that the Supported Families team recently had a restructure.

Further to questions from the sub-committee, Councillor Maium Talukdar and Officers:

- Confirmed that there will be commissioned youth services in partnership in the proposed model. A written brief of safe spaces for young people in Tower Hamlets, including the delivery method and an agreement status will be forwarded to the sub-committee for review.
- Clarified that there will be internships and recruitment opportunities for younger residents to work within the service, as well as training and apprenticeships for young care leavers and collaboration with Universities for qualified youth workers. The Young Tower Hamlets recruitment program will be launched in the coming weeks to fill positions that reflect the community.
- Noted the aim is to have at least one safe space for young people in every ward. A written brief of all safe spaces for young people in the borough, including the delivery method and an agreement status will be forwarded to the sub-committee for review.
- Explained that sites are being procured in all wards in equal distance, to ensure that the service is not in close proximity to each other.
- Clarified that all safe spaces require Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to ensure accountability and include spot checks.
- Explained that the recruitment process will also focus on encouraging young girls to join the program. A Young Tower Hamlets website will be launched to promote all services in the borough. A development program to encourage young people to achieve their potential will also be implemented.
- Observed that the input provided by young people will shape the service to ensure that activities provided will engage them and that qualified youth workers are employed to encourage them to participate in a safe environment. The Integrated Detached team will also be available to assist young people with services near them.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED**:

1. That a written brief of safe spaces for young people in Tower Hamlets, including the delivery method and an agreement status be forwarded to the sub-committee for review.
2. That the presentation be noted.

8. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

None.

The meeting ended at 8.14 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Abdul Mannan

Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

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Name of Committee: Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Municipal Year: 2024-25

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
11.07.24	Provide data comparing the percentage of children eligible for EMA funding, the percentage of applications submitted, and the percentage of awards granted.	Lisa Fraser Director of Education	Cllr Abdul Mannan CESSC Chair	8.10.24	Further information included in Appendix 1.
	Provide an update on any concerns regarding the concrete at Stepney All Saints School and current assessment of safety.	Lisa Fraser Director of Education	Cllr Abdul Mannan CESSC Chair	8.10.24	Further information included in Appendix 2.
	Provide details on the summer schools available in the borough.	Layla Richards Director of Commissioning and Culture	Cllr Abdul Mannan CESSC Chair	8.10.24	Further information included in Appendix 3.
	Highlight whether there is any national or regional funding available for investment into new technologies to support young people with additional needs.	Lisa Fraser Director of Education	Cllr Abdul Mannan CESSC Chair	8.10.24	Further information included in Appendix 4.
	Provide the updated list of safe spaces in Tower Hamlets, including the delivery method and agreement status.	Shafiur Rahman Interim Director, Youth Services	Cllr Abdul Mannan CESSC Chair	8.10.24	Further information included in Appendix 5.
05.12.24					
13.02.25					
08.05.25					

Appendix 1 – EMA Awards

A breakdown of items 2 and 3 is provided below. However, we do not have access to the data on the percentage of children eligible for EMA funding. The Education Awards Team administers the awards, and in line with the eligibility criteria outlined below, we can only access data for students who have submitted an application. We do not have a list nor the authority to access data for non-applicants who may be eligible but have not applied.

Breakdown of EMA Applications for 2022/23 & 2023/24

2022/23 EMA

- Total applications: 1,931
- Total number eligible for grant: 806*
- Total number of grants awarded: 746

*For the 2022/23 round, we received 1,931 EMA applications. Of these, 806 applicants were eligible for the grant, but only 746 were awarded. The 60 applicants we were unable to pay did not provide the required bank statements/supporting documents for payment.

2023/24 EMA

- Total applications: 949
- Total number eligible for grant: 767*
- Total number of grants awarded: 752

*For the 2023/24 round, we received 949 EMA applications. Of these, 767 applicants were eligible for the grant, but only 752 were awarded. The 15 applicants we were unable to pay also did not provide the required bank statements/supporting documents.

EMA Eligibility Criteria:

- You need to be between 16 and 19 years old on 1 September 2024.
- You must be enrolled in a full-time study programme at a recognised sixth form provision/college.
- Your household annual income (excluding Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction) must be below £25,000.
- You must have been a resident of Tower Hamlets for three years, unless you are a refugee on the Ukraine or Afghan scheme.
- You need at least a 95% attendance record by the end of your first term.

- Allowances are made for authorised absences.

Appendix 2 – Concerns Regarding Concrete at Stepney All Saints School

The Council would not be able to comment on the safety of Reinforced Autoclave Aeriated Concrete (RAAC) at Stepney All Saints as this is not a building for which the Council is the responsible body.

Responsibility for building safety falls to the Diocese as a Church school. Discussions on the removal of RAAC is therefore managed between the Diocese and the DFE. The Council are however aware that temporary measures have been put in place and the school is now approved on the School Rebuilding Process to facilitate full removal. The timescales for this school within the programme is currently being progressed.

Appendix 3 – Summer Schools and Activities

Summer Fun – which includes a link to HAF Providers:

[Tower Hamlets Local Offer :: Blog Articles / Summer Fun 2024! \(localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk\)](https://www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk/blog/articles/summer-fun-2024/)

Holiday Childcare – Ofsted registered:

[Tower Hamlets Local Offer :: Providers / Search Results \(localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk\)](https://www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk/providers/search-results/)

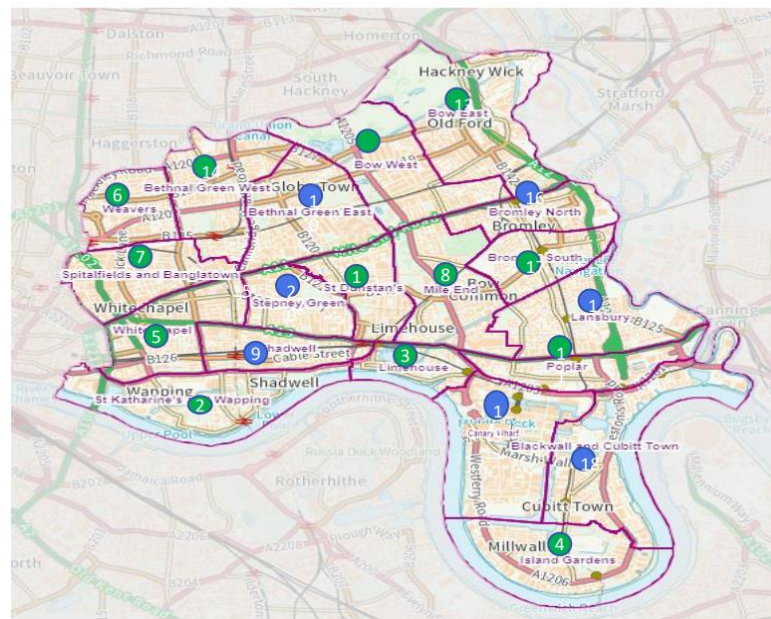
Appendix 4 – Funding for Investment into New Technologies for SEND

I do not know of any, but the DfE SEND capital funding can be used to support schools with resources which could include technology that can enhance learning environments. We have not received any requests from schools, this year, for investment in new technologies. - **Dr Tina Sode**, Head of SEND.

Appendix 5 – Updated List of Safe Spaces in Tower Hamlets

Safe Spaces Status Update

No	Ward	Building (C) = community owned	Delivery Method 2024-25	RAG	Target Opening Date
1	St Dunstan's	Haileybury Youth Centre	YTH/Commissioned (C)	G	
2	St Katharine's & Wapping	Wapping Youth Centre	YTH/C	G	
3	Limehouse	Limehouse Youth Centre	YTH/C	G	
4	Island Gardens	St Andrew's Wharf	YTH/C	G	
5	Whitechapel	Christian Street Hub	C	G	
6	Weavers	Columbia Road Youth Centre	YTH	G	
7	Spitalfields & Banglatown	Old Castle Street Youth Centre/ Osmani Centre (C)	YTH/C	G	
8	Mile End	UAB (YTH) / 99 St Pauls Way (C)	YTH/C	G	
9	Shadwell	Bigland Primary School (C)	YTH	A	Nov 24
10	Bethnal Green East	Bethnal Green Library	YTH	A	Dec 24
11	Poplar	The Reach (C)	YTH	A	Nov 24
12	Lansbury	TBC	YTH/C?	R	
13	Bow East	East Side (C)	C	G	
14	Bethnal Green West	Minerva Centre (C)	C	G	
15	Bow West	Kitcat Terrace (specialist) / +1 TBC	YTH/	G	
16	Bromley North	TBC	YTH/C?	R	
17	Bromley South	Bow Community Hub Linc Centre (C)	YTH/C	G	Nov 24
18	Blackwall & Cubitt Town	Samuda Centre (50p club)	YTH	A	Dec 24
19	Canary Wharf	Phoenix Heights	YTH	A	Dec 24
20	Stepney Green	New City College Corp – Arbour Sq	YTH	A	Dec 24

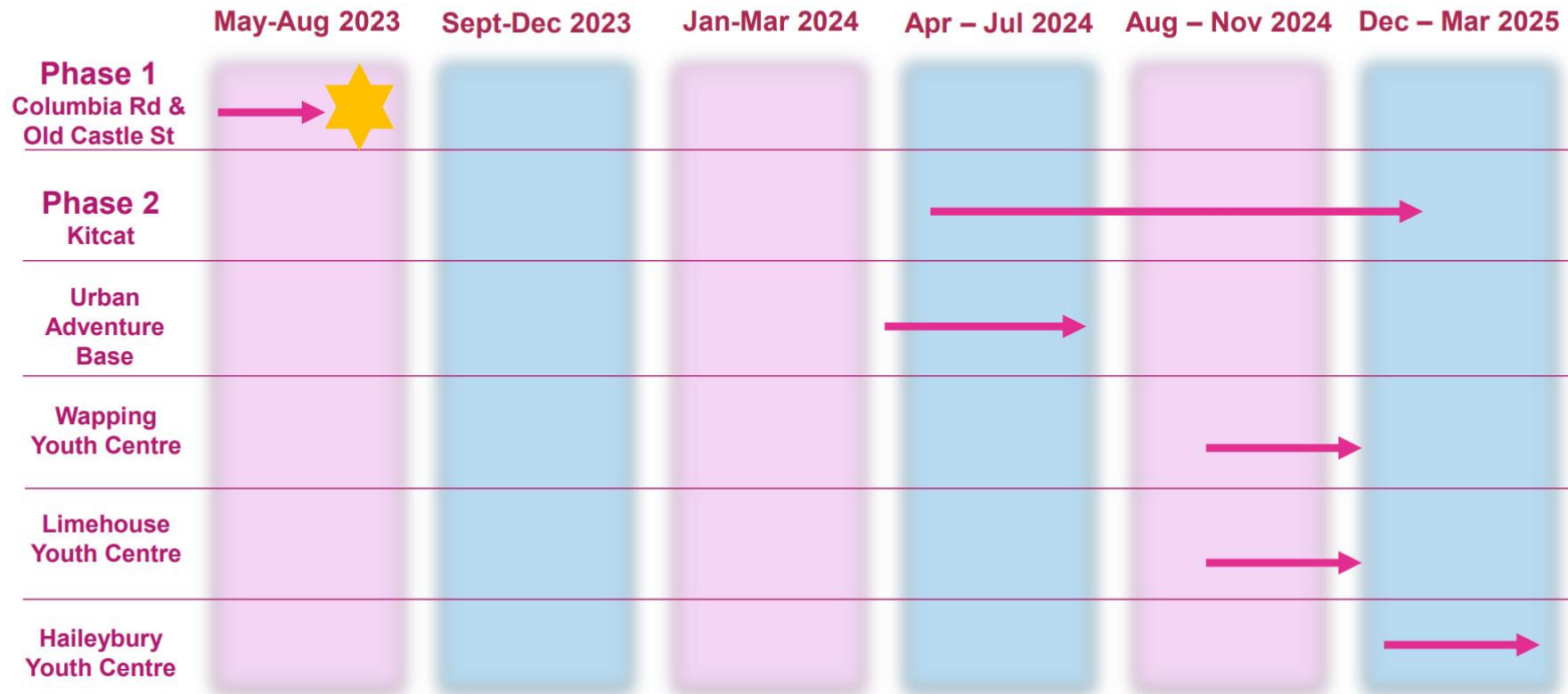


RAG	Wards	No. of Youth Centres 2024-25
G	12	14
A	6	6
R	2	2
Total	20	22


Safe Spaces – Capital Works Refresh Timeline



- The service have been successful in securing £488k in Youth Investment Fund grant funding which needs to be spent by March 2025.



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<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Executive Report of the: Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thursday, 17 October 2024</p>	
<p>Report of: Steve Reddy, Corporate Director Children’s Services</p>	<p>Classification: Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p>Early Help Offer</p>	

<p>Originating Officer(s)</p>	<p>Susannah Beasley-Murray, Director Children’s Social Care</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>All Wards</p>

Summary:

This cover report accompanies the report and will focus on:

- Progress update on the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programmes

Recommendations:

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

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

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Meeting Date:	17 October 2024
Title of Report:	Family Hubs progress report
Author(s):	Sayed Miah, Early Help Senior Transformation Project Manager and Mohammed Jolil, Head of Service Early Help
Presented by:	Susannah Beasley-Murray, Director Supporting Families

Executive Summary

This paper is a progress update on The Family Hubs and Start for Life programme which aims to enhance integrated support services for families during the critical early years from conception to age two by establishing accessible community hubs that provide a wide range of resources, including parenting support, mental health services, and early language development, while fostering collaboration among stakeholders to reduce inequalities and improve family well-being.

Key issues

The Family Hubs and Start for Life programme focuses on integrated support services for families with children from conception to age two.

- Establishment of Family Hubs as accessible community spaces offering various services (parenting support, mental health services, infant feeding advice, early language development).
- Recognition of the significant impact of early intervention on children's development and family support.
- Enhancement of support networks through innovative service delivery models (both in-person and virtual).
- Implementation of evidence-based training interventions tailored to families' needs.
- Availability of the Start for Life offer through online and printed materials.

Details of recommendations and timescales for decisions

Enhance Collaborative Efforts:

- Continue to strengthen partnerships among local authorities, healthcare providers, and community organisations to ensure comprehensive service delivery and resource sharing.
- Implement targeted outreach programmes to engage hard-to-reach families, including those from low-income backgrounds, single-parent households, and marginalised communities. Use a variety of communication methods to ensure inclusivity.
- Invest in ongoing training for staff and volunteers across Family Hubs to enhance their skills in delivering evidence-based parenting interventions and mental health support.

Monitor and Evaluate Programmes Effectiveness:

- Establish clear metrics for evaluating the impact of Family Hubs and associated services on family outcomes. Regularly assess the effectiveness of programs and adapt them based on feedback and data.
- Invest in ongoing training for staff and volunteers across Family Hubs to enhance their skills in delivering evidence-based parenting interventions and mental health support.

- Ensure that all information about services and resources is readily available and accessible in multiple formats (online and offline) to cater to different community needs.

1. Background

The Family Hubs and Start for Life programme aims to create integrated support services for families, focusing on the crucial early years from conception to age two. The programme aims to establish Family Hubs as accessible community spaces where families can receive a range of services, including parenting support, perinatal mental health services, infant feeding advice, and early language development resources.

The programme recognises the significant impact of early intervention on children and families and aims to restore and enhance support networks through innovative delivery models, including both in-person and virtual services. Local authorities are expected to develop delivery plans that focuses on collaboration among various stakeholders.

The programme aims to improve families' lives, reduce inequalities, and foster a supportive environment for children to thrive.

2. Transformation

The final two of the four family hubs in Meath Gardens and Overland were launched in July. Health visiting and midwifery are now fully collocated in the hub sites, and 37 partners out of 70 who signed a memorandum of understanding with us regularly offer services from family hubs across the borough. The physical Family Hubs in each locality are now clearly signposted in the borough, and branded leaflets are available in all Children and Families Centres and Family Hubs. Consistent, clear information is available through the Family Hubs website. A universal pathway for the Start for Life offer is available to families on and offline.

Family Hubs have a strong external communications profile with 70,400 subscribers to our Residents Newsletter, and 57, 407 subscribers across social media (FB, X, Instagram, LinkedIn). Over 4000 people attended the launch events of the Family Hubs throughout 2023 and 2024. A new activity brochure with session information and a new timetable is being designed to make the timetables easier to understand for everyone.

We developed a new data-driven outreach strategy for community engagement, focusing on hard-to-reach and seldom heard families. Target demographics for outreach include low-income families, families with children with special needs or disabilities, single-parent families and fathers, BAME groups, young families, and those with mental health issues. To reach these families, strategies include home visits during EL2 outreach, joint community outreach with partners, targeted marketing, and working in partnership with schools, healthcare providers, and community groups.

The strategy uses Live Birth Data & Healthy Start to identify families with new-borns and encourage them to register and access services and support offered by the service. The approach ensures no new birth is overlooked, maximising the potential for families to benefit from family hubs and other support services.

3. Parenting

The Family Hub is delivering evidence-based training interventions, including the Empowering Parents Empowering Communities Being and Parent 1-3, Triple P Baby Face to Face, Triple P Baby Online, Parents as First Teachers, and Incredible Years. These programmes aim to provide targeted interventions tailored to families' specific needs.

The EPEC Hub has successfully completed Parent Group Leader training in Being a Parent 1-3, with 14 parents completing the programme in July 2024. The hub plans to recruit for a Baby and Us Parent Group Leader Training in September 2024.

Triple P Baby Face to Face has successfully reached 24 staff across the LBTH Family Hub, with 2 Triple P Baby Classroom programmes since Jan 2024. The hub aims to deliver 6 Triple P Baby by March 2025 and reach an additional 72 families.

The Solihull Approach Universal Online Parenting Platform has gone live in April 2024, offering 19+ courses to meet the different needs of parents at different stages of their parenting journey. The hub has started advertising the courses and promoting them through partnerships.

Families receiving support	Staff training
<p>773 families to date have received support and training.</p> <p>Courses included Incredible Years, Solihull Online, Triple P online, Stay and Play with fathers, Triple P Baby, VIG, Reflective Mental health Supervision, EPEC, PAFT, Baby Massage, NBO, NBAS.</p>	<p>114 staff have received accredited training as part of the Parenting Support Project.</p> <p>Courses included Triple P Baby, VIG, Reflective Mental health Supervision, EPEC, PAFT, Baby Massage, NBO, NBAS.</p>

4. Home learning Environment

The Early Talk-boost project is set to be fully mobilised in November 2024, with Speech and Language UK providing dedicated support and oversight from the Early Education and Childcare Service. Local funding has been sourced to deliver the service beyond March 25 to maximize the long-term impact of HLE interventions. Early Words Together is being delivered and we aim to train 130 practitioners by March. Educational Psychology team will deliver 165 sessions between August 2024 and September 2025.

5. Infant Feeding

Family Hubs provide a safe and secure breastfeeding space, universal antenatal infant feeding education, physical information, one-to-one practical help, and support for mothers in the postnatal period. In 23-34 the service reached 3579 mothers. In Q1 24-25, 995 new mothers were contacted. 97% within 48 hours of discharge. In Q1, there were 136 home visits with up to an hour-long meaning conversation. Fifty-six group sessions to place in Q1. The service also offers peer support services, face-to-face support from healthcare professionals and trained peer supporters, and support for complex infant feeding needs. The workforce is trained to identify and respond to more complex needs, providing timely support to families. Drop-in sessions, online information, and virtual and out-of-hours support are available.

Local infant feeding services are promoted, and peer supporters are community representatives. Special focus and additional support are available for less likely to breastfeed, such as younger, first-time, and more vulnerable parents/carers. Language services are offered to those in need. Staff and volunteers receive accredited training to identify and intervene early, and specialist support is brought in when necessary.

6. Perinatal Mental Health and Parent-Infant Relationships

Trauma counselling and peer support are now being taken up by women and mothers with experience of birth trauma, baby loss, domestic violence and other adversities. Group and one-to-one support for parents and parents-to-be struggling with attachment are being provided. The Family hubs website includes links to local services and a project is underway to improve the communication and marketing of services with residents. In Q1 24-25, there were 18 new participants for Mellow Bumps, 18 active participants for Mellow Babies, 13 receiving counselling for birth trauma, 11 receiving Trauma Peer Support, 6 parents receiving Sure Steps Peer Support that included 7 children, and 16 volunteers. There were 6 active services users on Babies matter programme, and other services. An expanded Maternity Mates groups for those least likely to access maternity care is being commissioned.

An external facilitator has been commissioned to help develop a local strategy and improved pathways across services for different levels and types of need, with involvement from stakeholders and residents. An external evaluator has also been commissioned to support learning and development of future business case for long-term funding.

Workforce development training offers which have or are being commissioned, tailored to different workforce needs, include newborn behavioural observation for clinical workforce as well as Solihull Approach and trauma-informed practice.

Antenatal classes in family hubs are being developed to include mental health elements. An expanded Maternity Mates offer provides emotional and practical support during pregnancy, birth, and postnatally. The Solihull online offer offers advice on low to moderate mental health issues.

7. Start for Life offers and Parent Carer Panels

The Start for Life offer is available online and hard copies in family hubs. We have created a leaflet with the pathway of services and support for the first 1001 days which is available in family hubs, used in outreach, and given to parents-to-be.

The PCP has undergone a review in the Spring due to difficulties in maintaining attendance and focus. In July, a locality model was piloted, resulting in better engagement. A plan-do-review approach is being used to improve meeting delivery based on feedback. From September meetings were rebranded as Talktime, and promoted more strongly, with 31 parents attending face to face sessions. A parent volunteer has assisted in running face-to-face meetings. The first online PCP meeting took place in October. The format will be developed based on participant feedback and success.

<p>Non-Executive Report of the: Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p>Thursday, 17 October 2024</p>	
<p>Report of: Steve Reddy, Corporate Director Children’s Services</p>	<p>Classification: Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p>Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILCACS) – Inspection Preparation</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Susannah Beasley-Murray , Director Children’s Social Care
Wards Affected	All Wards

Summary:

This cover report accompanies the report and will focus on:

- Inspection preparation and readiness for the Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS).

Recommendations:

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

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

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Better Together
STRENGTHENING
FAMILIES.
BUILDING
COMMUNITIES.

Page 31

Tower Hamlets - Ofsted Preparation - Scrutiny

October 2024



When an inspector calls: Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)

ILACS – Week 1



Page 32

Call comes on a Monday morning –
by 9.30am

Set up meeting will take place that
day

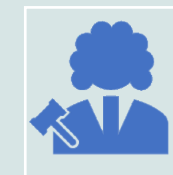
Annexe A Data Lists – 11 lists will
be submitted by end of day Tuesday

List of Audits carried out in the last 6
months will be shared, from this up to 12
cases will be selected by Ofsted for case
tracking

Annexe A Document list will be
submitted by end of day Wednesday

Timetable for the following week
will be finalised

ILACS Week 2



As we will receive a short inspection –
inspectors will arrive the following
Monday and be on site for one week.

When inspectors arrive, we will deliver
an opening presentation – they will
then spend time case tracking and in
teams.

The inspection team will be 4 social care
inspectors, who will be joined by one
education and one regulatory HMI for
part of the inspection.

We expect a significant focus on care
leavers as this now has a separate
judgment.

Will receive initial feedback and
indicative judgment on Friday.

What inspectors look at....

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection

Early Help

Identifying and responding to children's needs and appropriate thresholds

Making good decisions and providing effective help

Management oversight of frontline practice

Participation and direct work with children and families

Identifying and responding to all types of abuse recognising the vulnerability of specific groups of children. (Youth justice, Exploitation , LADO etc)

The experiences and progress of children in care

Making good decisions for children

Participation and direct work with children in care

Helping and protecting

Health

Learning and enjoyment

Stability and permanence

The experiences and progress of care leavers

Relationships and participation

Health and emotional well-being

Local offer for care leavers

Making good decisions for care leavers

Helping and protecting

Employment, education and training

Support into adulthood

Our Strengths

Our vision: “We believe that the: best place for children is to be **raised within their own families**, immediate or wider, wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.

We are committed to **building relationships and strengthening families** by working **with** people in a compassionate and understanding way. We are **ambitious** for Tower Hamlets children and families and endeavour for every child and young person to be **healthy, safe and successful.**“

Page 34

Workforce Excellence

- Our workforce stands as our greatest asset—motivated, managing low caseloads, and passionately dedicated to improving outcomes for children. The prevailing culture nurtures social workers' professional growth and ambition.

Embedding excellence in Practice:

- Our Better Together practice framework places relationships at the core of our approach. The synergy between our framework and Quality Assurance (QA) initiatives underscores our commitment to excellence.

Supportive and Challenging Culture:

- We've fostered a culture of high support and high challenge, welcoming both internal and external scrutiny. This approach ensures continuous improvement and a commitment to delivering the best for children.

Effective Leadership:

- Strong leadership supports the development and passion of staff to undertake their best work and be leaders of tomorrow.

Early Intervention Focus:

- Our success in maintaining low numbers in care is attributed to our proactive approach, offering support to families at earlier stages e.g. Early Help, FGC and Edge of Care etc.

Our Areas of Focus

Relentless focus on our practice priorities

Strengthening our response to domestic violence, harm outside the home, and neglect, further aligning these priorities with our practice framework. Enhancing interventions and impact through improved risk identification and targeted strategies.

Partnership Enhancement:

Elevating and solidifying our partnerships even further to strengthen our offer and practice interventions and effectiveness.

Better together refinement:

Embedding, enriching, and ensuring greater consistency and curiosity in supervision as part of continuous improvement in our professional practice.

Cultural and Diversity Integration:

Evidencing greater cultural and diversity considerations in our assessments and work. Champion the career development of Black and global majority professionals.

Early Help transformation:

Deliver the Early Help transformation to Family Hubs. Elevating family well-being through robust assessments and ensuring smooth transitions between services.

MAST Integration:

One Front Door and the rollout of Levels of Need within the MAST framework is a focal point. This integration aims to streamline processes and enhance our responsiveness to needs.

Themes emerging from other local authority inspections

Step up/ step down

16/17 Homeless

Young Carers

Impact

Care leavers

Incorporation of the professional network,
multi-agency decision making and partnership

Unregulated placements

Exploitation and missing

Senior leaders taking an active role and
championing children's safeguarding and
corporate parenting

Annual Engagement Meeting

- Took place in March 2024, attended by Senior HMI for Ofsted along with Senior Local Authority staff.
- We presented our updated Self-Evaluation and had a wide-ranging discussion about our areas of strength and focus.
- They did not highlight any significant concerns and while they confirmed that our next inspection would be a Short ILACS, they gave no indication in respect to timing.

Improvement Plan

- Improvement Plan refreshed in April 2024. Contains 5 key priority areas
 - Providing effective help and protection
 - Helping, supporting and protecting adolescents
 - Improving the experience and progress of children we care for and those leaving care
 - Making good decisions, understanding, learning, and achieving consistency
 - Leadership and governance that promotes a high support, high challenge culture
- Developed at a series of away days reflecting on performance, service area audits and wider national and regional developments in the sector
- Plan is monitored monthly at the Childrens Services Continuous Improvement Board

How are we remaining prepared

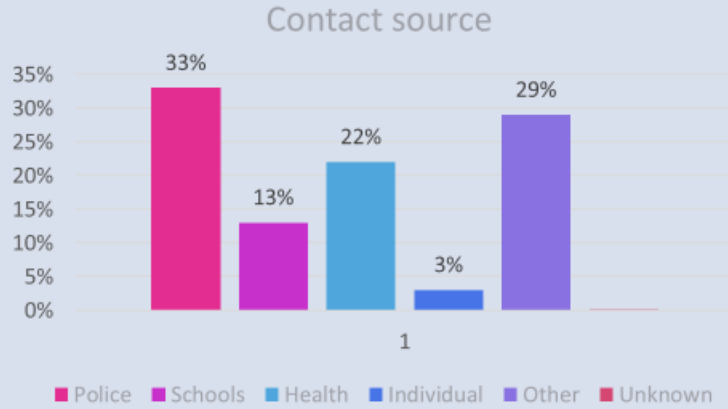
- Children's Services Continuous Improvement Board, chaired by the DCS continues to meet monthly. Considers all of our qualitative and quantitative data as well as spotlights on other key issues
- Fortnightly meetings chaired by the Director of Support Families (Better Together) to ensure that our inspection preparation is on track.
- Weekly KIT meetings – including some that have been extended to focus on inspection preparation
- Staff briefing and communications
 - Audit programme continues to focus on different areas of the service, supplemented by dip sampling and more targeted deep dive audit activity.
 - Monthly performance surgeries
 - Have a good understanding of our work with children and families – series of peer reviews

Our work with children (August 2024)

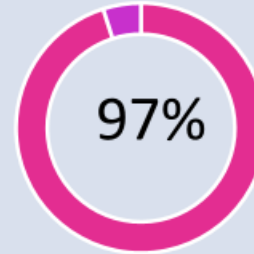
In the last 6 months
(Mar 24 – Aug 24)

7261

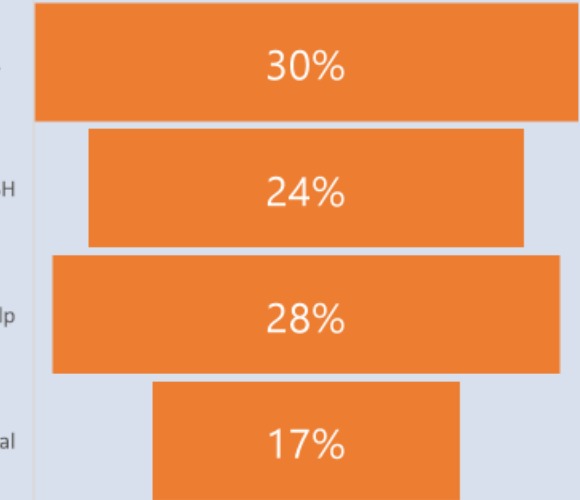
Contacts on avg.
per month: 1210



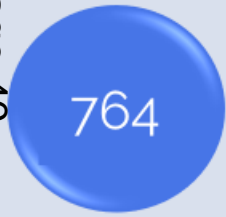
Contacts progressed in 1 day
(avg. Mar 24 – Aug 24)



% Information or Advice...



Page 40



Early Help
Assessments

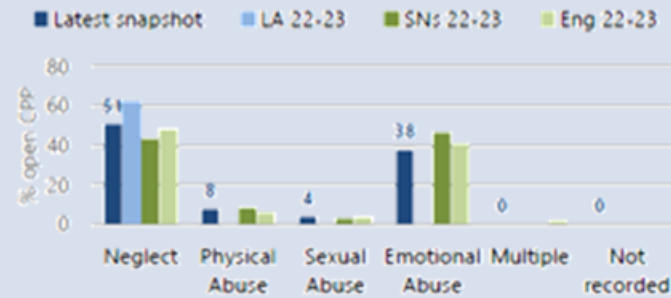
12

Children and
Family
Centres



Children subject to a
child protection plan

Latest category of abuse for current CP plans



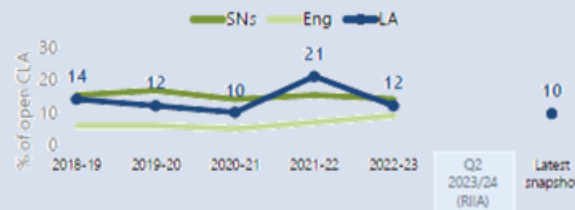
Children
looked after



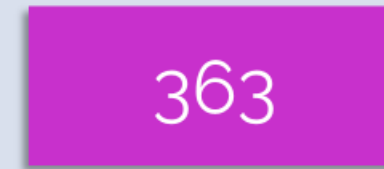
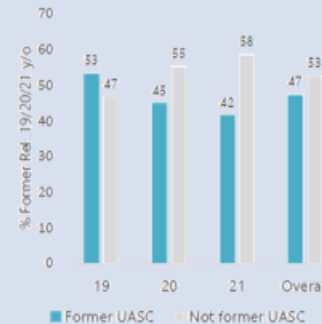
62 Open cases to Youth Justice

27 open unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)

UASC as a percentage of CLA (snapshot)



Former relevant 19/20/21 year olds by UASC Status



Care Leavers

13

Average
caseload

Children's Social Care Highlight Indicators

Aug-24

This report provides summary overview of KPIs linked to child-centred performance management data being used in support of performance improvement across CSC

Ref	Performance Measure	2023/24	Current	Period	Mar 24	Apr 24	May 24	Jun 24	Jul 24	Aug 24	Trend
Management Oversight											
1.1	% cases with Management Oversight recorded in past 8 weeks	96%	93.6%	Snapshot	96.2%	94.7%	96.4%	93.8%	93.6%	93.6%	
Cohorts											
1.2	Number of CIN (exc. LAC, CP, Care Leavers)	876	901	Snapshot	876	898	906	902	905	901	
1.3	Number of children subject to CPP	307	255	Snapshot	305	304	297	291	261	255	
1.4	Number of LAC	276	280	Snapshot	277	279	271	272	283	280	
Front door / assessment											
2.1	% of contacts completed within 1 day	96.0%	97.0%	YTD	98.1%	97.8%	98.8%	96.9%	97.5%	93.3%	
2.10a	% of single assessments completed within 45 working days	90.1%	82.8%	YTD	88.6%	85.3%	88.9%	79.3%	80.9%	79.6%	
Plans											
3.1	% of children in need with CIN Plan completed	86.2%	85.1%	Snapshot	86.2%	89.0%	90.6%	88.6%	80.9%	85.1%	
Visits											
3.3	% of CIN children visited within the past four weeks	85.0%	73.9%	Snapshot	85.0%	86.1%	85.4%	81.5%	78.0%	73.9%	
4.7.2	% of children on a child protection plan receiving a visit within 10 working days	92.2%	88.6%	Snapshot	92.8%	92.4%	91.9%	90.4%	88.5%	88.6%	
5.10	% of LAC Single Assessments not yet completed or outside the one year timescale	14.5%	5.7%	Snapshot	14.5%	12.1%	14.0%	11.0%	10.4%	5.7%	
5.11	% of LAC with visits in last 6 weeks	88.0%	85.4%	Snapshot	88.0%	90.7%	87.1%	82.7%	87.1%	85.4%	
Reviews											
3.2	% of children with CIN Plan with reviews within last 3 months	89.7%	85.8%	Snapshot	89.7%	87.1%	87.0%	86.0%	93.0%	85.8%	
4.8	% of CP reviews carried out within statutory timescales	88.9%	95.8%	Snapshot	88.9%	88.3%	91.1%	96.8%	96.4%	95.8%	
5.18	LAC cases which were reviewed within required timescales	97.5%	97.5%	Rolling Year	97.5%	95.4%	98.2%	98.2%	99.6%	97.5%	
Care Leavers											
6.1	% care leavers "in touch" (17,18,19,20,21 yr. olds with activity updated within last year)	98.2%	97.4%	Snapshot	98.2%	96.7%	97.5%	96.8%	95.7%	97.4%	
6.2	% care leavers EET	76.8%	73.8%	Snapshot	76.8%	77.4%	77.8%	76.3%	74.3%	73.8%	
6.3	% care leavers in suitable accommodation	92.8%	93.7%	Snapshot	92.8%	94.5%	94.9%	94.2%	92.9%	93.7%	

Duties and responsibilities of politicians and senior leaders – Ofsted expectations



Ofsted will want to ensure that Children's Services is a corporate and political priority. They will want to see that senior leaders have a sound understanding of the key issues and priorities.



There will want to test the mechanisms that are used to ensure that Senior Leaders are informed about key issues.



They will not expect granular knowledge but will want to see that there is grip and challenge at the most senior levels.

<p>Non-Executive Report of the: Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p>Thursday, 17 October 2024</p>	
<p>Report of: Steve Reddy, Corporate Director Children’s Services</p>	<p>Classification: Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p>SEND Inspection Preparation and Improvement Update</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	<p>Lisa Fraser, Director of Education Dr. Tina Sode, Head of Special Education Needs</p>
Wards Affected	All Wards

Summary:

This cover report accompanies the report and will focus on:

- Progress delivering the SEND Improvement Programme and readiness for Area SEND Inspection, including performance against key measures such as the timeliness of EHCPs.

Recommendations:

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

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

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SEND Inspection and Improvement Update

Page 45

Children's and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

17 October 2024



Aims for this session

- to share what we know about the inspection, including learning from other areas.
- to update on preparedness for the Area SEND inspection
- to update on areas of improvement focus
- to highlight the impact our work has had for children, young people and their families
- to share our priorities for the next 12 months



What we know about the inspection

- we will be inspected by the end of 2025 calendar year.
- TH and Hounslow are final two London local areas with a WSoA left to have an inspection called.
- Ofsted mindful of inspection traffic in local areas and will ensure a 6-month gap between inspections.
- more weight on feedback from children, young people and parents – above what we might say.
- includes evaluation of alternative provision.
- six cases will be selected to test quality and impact of support across all services



What we know about recent inspection outcomes

- of the 41 local areas already inspected:

- 27% rated positive
- 46% rated inconsistent
- 27% rated as having widespread and/or systematic failings

Page 48

- themes from recent inspections include:

- EHCP timeliness and quality; absence of child and young person voice
- annual review timeliness and quality; many EHCPs out of date
- long waiting times for neurodevelopmental and specialist health assessment
- lack of multi-agency working and information sharing
- fewer families benefitting from antenatal and 2-2.5-year-old review visits
- lack of effective preparing for adulthood support



How we are preparing for inspection

- SEND self-evaluation developed, sense checking with parents, young people and schools
- multi-agency inspection preparation group established.
- Risk log regularly updated.
- Annex A data and evidence being assembled.
- multi-agency audit team confirmed, and trial run planned.
- data led approach for operational and strategic reporting with a commitment to system-based recording.



Learning from other local areas

- new inspection process is now much more intensive.
- led by experiences of children, young people and parents.
- multi-agency audit process tests effectiveness of partnership working.
- political engagement essential.
- inspectors will not read through all documentation submitted.



Outcome of the last inspection

- local area inspected by Ofsted & CQC in 2021.
- inspectors found that much of the support provided was of a good quality.
- Written Statement of Action required to address the following areas identified for improvement:
 - poor quality and oversight of Education, Health and Care plans including the annual review process.
 - lengthy waiting times for assessment and diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
 - fragmentation in the provision of speech and language therapy.
 - weaknesses in communication between area leaders and parents.



Progress against our Written Statement of Action

- recognition from DfE and NHSE on significant progress made since last inspection.
- continued focus on evidencing the impact of our work.
- EHCP advice tracker developed to monitor progress and enable better interagency coordination.
- SEN taskforce undertaking review and audit of all annual reviews to identify gaps and ensure efficient tracking.
- ASD discharge targets consistently exceeded.
- ASD waiting time performance remains stable and has been impacted by sustained high referral rate.
- social communication pre-diagnosis support rolling out across four localities.
- good uptake and positive feedback on social communication parent coaching sessions.
- early years therapies model launched; good progress on school therapies model – 55 schools signed up to Verbo.
- four transition themed Let’s Talk SEND events established annually, reaching a wider range of parents.
- over 300 parent forum members contributed their experiences via drop-in sessions, surveys, or consultations in 23/24; membership has grown from 245 to 682.



Areas of improvement focus

- SEND strategy and 12-month delivery plan
- Self-evaluation
- Inclusion framework
- Resource base review
- SEND front door for information and support

Highlights include:

- **London East Alternative Provision rated Outstanding by Ofsted**
- **Youth justice SEND quality lead status** with child first commendation
- **Relationships with parents, carers, and young people** continue to be strengthened with the expansion of the SEND volunteer programme



What impact are we having?

- since January 2024, 222 EHCPs ceased, or in the process of ceasing

- EHCNA timeliness
– year to date

Within 20wk Timescale?	Total	Total (%)
Completed Outside 20 Weeks	2866	61.7%
Completed Within 20 Weeks	1578	34.0%
OOB/Manual DM	199	4.3%

- average ASD diagnostic waiting time is 92 weeks (below national average)
- 51 families accessed parent coaching offer for social communication with 90% positive feedback.
- over 300 SEND parent forum members contributed their experiences via drop-in sessions, surveys, or consultations in 23/24.
- regular and well-attended Let's Talk SEND events are reaching a wider range of parents.
- of parents surveyed at the last Let's Talk SEND event:
 - 65% agreed that their child's EHCP adequately helps to support the child and their needs.
 - 85% were satisfied or very satisfied with the ongoing monitoring and assessment of their child/young person's needs.



Priorities for the next 12 months...

1. Finalise and implement the SEND and Inclusion strategy; strengthen the SEND Improvement Board
2. Improve internal systems and processes – particularly around EHCP timeliness, annual reviews, quality assurance and our use of data – “on time, every time”
3. Implement the DBV programme, including tackling the DSG cumulative High Needs deficit through a funding review of resource bases and EHCP banding
4. Build on existing early help and intervention systems so that we can both support schools, settings, parents and carers before they feel they need to pursue statutory assessment, particularly targeting the under 5s
5. Launch the Inclusion framework with schools
6. Support children and families at transition points, including Post 16 vocational opportunities
7. Embed innovation including research projects into the prevalence of ASD amongst Somali children, the Phoenix specialist classroom autism pilot
8. Streamline our local offer, co-production and communication channels for parents, carers, children, young people and professionals
9. Secure sufficiency across local provision utilising capital investment and enhancing existing services, particularly to address the increasing demand for specialist provision in autism and speech and language



Questions and discussion



Our new SEND and Inclusion Strategy (2024-29) sets out our core aspiration: **A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, are listened to, achieve their best, and have opportunities.**

To do this we will prioritise:

1. Timely, effective, and well-coordinated support for children and young people with SEND.
2. User-friendly services for children and young people with SEND and their families.
3. Early identification and support for the under-fives.
4. A great education and support for every school-age child with SEND.
5. Opportunities and support for young adults with SEND.
6. A borough that welcomes and celebrates children and young people with SEND.

The Local Area Partnership

There have been significant changes to the senior leadership in Tower Hamlets SEND Services since the last inspection.

These include the recent permanent appointment of a director of children's services, director of education and head of special educational needs. A new senior transformation lead for CAMHS and transforming care as part of the local authority and NEL ICB integrated children's commissioning service is now in place.

Our SEND context

Children and young people with EHC plans held by LBTH (Source: [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

- 4463 EHCPs for 0-25-year-olds held in Jan 24. (rising to 4704 July 24)
- 72% male; 28% female.
- 40% are Bangladeshi; 8% are from a Black background; 6% from a Mixed ethnic background; 14% from a White background; 2% from another ethnic group; and 28% from an unknown background.
- 6% are pre-school age; 34.6% aged 5-10; 29.2% aged 11-15; 17.7% aged 16-19; 12.4% aged 20-25.
- 35% have Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SCLN) as a primary need; 26% have Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- From those children and young people with an EHCP; 10.4% are Children in Need, 0.51% are subject to a Child Protection Plan and 1% are Children in Care.

Pupils in Tower Hamlets Schools (Source [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

- 19.2% of pupils have SEND; 12.4% receiving SEN Support; 6.8% with an EHCP.
- 51% of pupils with SEN are eligible for free school meals compared to 37.5% of pupils with no SEN.
- 56% of pupils with SEN have English as an additional language, compared to 61% of pupils with no SEN.
- 21 children with EHCPs are electively home educated.

Progress against our Written Statement of Action (WSOA)

Tower Hamlets continues to make good progress on their WSOA priorities (Department for Education, March 2024)

- 48% of EHCPs were issued in 20 weeks in 2023, in line with national average.
- Average ASD assessment waiting time is 88 weeks, reduced from 144 weeks in 2022.
- 3-5s Speech & Language Therapy (SLT) treatment pathway launched; waiting times for assessment reduced from 35 weeks in 2022 to just over 10 weeks in 2024.
- Integrated Therapies Early Years Model launched.
- New full-time Designated Social Care Officer in place to support links between social care, health and education.

Our Strengths

- Strong partnership and secure governance which support the identification of strengths, areas for development and maximise allocation of resources.
- Comprehensive Family Hub and locality based integrated therapies provision; this will enable us to identify children at the earliest opportunity.
- Excellent schools: high attainment and attendance for pupils with SEND relative to national and London peers.
- Inclusive schools with the highest percentage of EHCPs nationally.
- Well established relationships with parents and carers support our drive for co-production.
- An ambitious culture of innovation linked to evidence-based research is supporting our improvement journey.

Areas for focus over the next 12 months

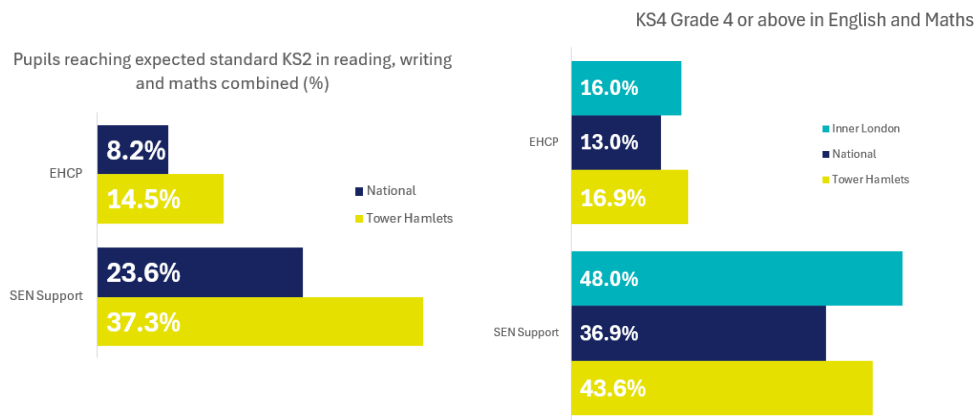
- Finalise and implement the SEND and Inclusion strategy; strengthen the SEND Improvement Board.
- Improve internal systems and processes – particularly around EHCP timeliness, annual reviews, quality assurance and our use of data – “on time, every time”. Strengthening child voice in EHCPs remains a priority.
- Implement the DBV programme, including tackling the DSG cumulative High Needs deficit through a funding review of resource bases and EHCP banding.
- Build on existing early help and intervention systems so that we can both support schools, settings, parents, and carers before they feel that they need to pursue a statutory assessment, particularly targeting the under 5s.
- Launch the Inclusion framework with schools to enable schools to hold each other to account for good practice in SEND.
- Support children and families at transition points, including Post 16 vocational opportunities.
- Embed innovation, including research projects into the prevalence of ASD amongst Somali children, the Phoenix specialist classroom autism pilot.
- Streamline our local offer, co-production and communication channels for parents, carers, children, young people and professionals.
- Secure sufficiency across local provision utilising capital investment and enhancing existing services, particularly to address the increasing demand for specialist provision in autism and speech and language. E.g. pilot Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs); move of Phoenix College to create more autism places in Phoenix special school and Phoenix college.

Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish.

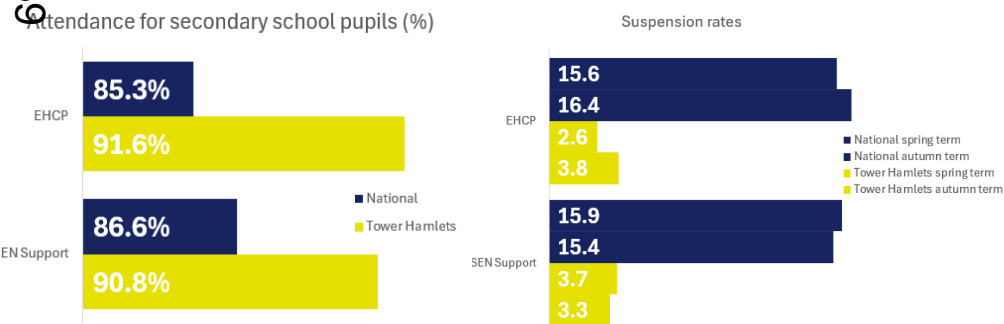
- Refreshed SEND Improvement Board (SIB) provides strategic oversight for multi-agency working, informed by recommendations from the LGA Peer challenge and peer support from DfE funded Sector Led Improvement Partner LB Islington.
- The LGA peer review recognised *strong system leadership from headteachers and senior leaders who are ambitious for continued improvement in schools and settings.*
- During 2022/23, 136 professionals engaged in the SENCO and Inclusion Leadership Network convened by the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership. SENCOs are supported through a programme of continuous professional development and termly conferences. 92% rated the autumn 2023 conference as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’.
- Royal London Hospital’s emergency department holds an Autism Inclusion Award accredited by the National Autistic Society.
- Interventions to support wellbeing and safety of children with additional vulnerabilities include: close integrated working between education and children’s social care; review of home education provision for children with SEN by an experienced SENCO; our Online Safety Conference included a focus on SEND; training to support young people who have exhibited harmful sexual behaviour delivered to SENCOs and Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- Our Virtual School assigns a trained teacher to every school with a child in care, working closely with the SENCO, attendance and welfare officer and SEN colleagues.
- Tower Hamlets and City of London Youth Justice Service is renewing its Youth Justice SEND Quality Mark and is on track to achieve SEND Quality Lead status, with Child First commendation. Its Breaking the Cycle team has received core training from the SEND service.

Children and young people achieve strong outcomes and are well prepared for their next steps.

- 97.5% of pupils attend schools rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted; 3 of our 5 Special Schools are rated Outstanding.



- There were no permanent exclusions in 2022/23 for pupils with an EHCP, and one pupil with SEN Support.



- Senior Leaders committed to an effective joint response to increasing levels and complexity of need.
- Our Parent and Young Person SEND Ambassadors: an exemplar of good practice.
- 95% of young people with SEND post 16 are in education, employment, or training; for young people with EHCPs, 16.7% attend further education (14.6% nationally).

Needs are identified accurately, assessed promptly and effectively; the right help at the right time.

- 309 children receive SEN Inclusion funding; Early Education Childcare (EEC) settings have a named Inclusion Co-ordinator; Since Spring 2023 over 1,200 EEC provider staff have attended training facilitated by the EEC Inclusion Team.
- Family Nurse Partnership & Health Visiting rated by the CQC as GOOD in 2022.
- School Health & Wellbeing Service delivers hearing and vision screening for 4-5-year-olds.
- £616k Start for Life bid secured for workforce pilot including screening for social communication difference / speech & language needs at 12 months old.
- Well-received Stay & Play sessions at Stephen Hawking Special School for pre-school children with profound & multiple learning disabilities provides interim support whilst families wait for assessment or placement; 100% of parents and carers attending Play & Connect sessions reported increased confidence using therapy strategies to support their child.
- The under 5s complex needs therapies team provides high quality intensive and long-term support for children at home with complex needs, which is particularly valued by parents.
- The roll out of Verbo across primary schools, funded by the NHS, will allow schools to share communication targets and strategies with parents and help parents more easily engage and share understanding of their children's needs.
- All 248 final EHCPs for secondary phase transfer due on 15 February 2024 were issued on time.
- 81% of young people in acute need accessing CAMHS assessment seen within 5 weeks of referral. (March 2024)
- We have an active group of SEND Parent Ambassadors who support families in understanding services available to support them.
- Monthly Dynamic Support Register meetings are well attended by partners; risk assessment tool viewed as best practice.
- Social workers .. are effective advocates for disabled children* (2022 OFSTED focused visit).

Participation in individual plans and support; valued, visible and included in communities.

- Our Time Youth Forum has local and national visibility and produces regular newsletter.
- Well-established parent and young person SEND Ambassador scheme supports families to access impartial advice; Ambassadors attended 45 events from April 2023 - February 2024. Young person SEND Ambassador training empowers engagement with peers to raise awareness of post-16 options.
- Autism cards designed by young people to use in situations where communication may be difficult. These have had positive impact in highlighting hidden disabilities; over 2000 cards issued.
- Established weekly dedicated sessions for young people with SEND at a youth centre, in response to feedback.
- SENDIASS caseworkers worked with 1,192 families in 2023; 76 young people received support from the Young Peoples Advice Centre; 99% of service users surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied that SENDIASS was neutral from the Local Authority (LA); 94% reported having a better understanding about SEN & the support their child was entitled to.
- Regular EHCP workshops are delivered by SENDIASS; most parents agree or strongly agree that this helps them understand more about EHCPs & the assessment process.
- Travel training made more readily available by increased Travel Training offer with parental advice.
- Wide ranging & well-attended short breaks offer and holiday offer.
- Parent Carer Forum active membership has grown from 85 to 245.
- Commitment to further improving the Local Offer.

Leaders commission services & provision to meet the needs & aspirations of children & young people, including alternative provision; evaluate services and make improvements.

- Decisions relating to needs assessment, provision, & placements, & decisions on joint funding are made by the multi-agency SEN panel.
- Joint decision-making on packages by Continuing Care (NHS) & Personal Care (social care) since 2022 has led to clearer & more holistic packages, with opportunities for families to attend the funding panel with their social worker.
- A range of joint initiatives are underway: Pilot Additionally Resourced Provision to address shortfalls in specialist placements; and the Phoenix Specialist Classroom pilot - a multi-agency project led by Phoenix School supported by the LA, Bart's Health, NHS NEL & schools.
- We were successful in our bid to open a new 5-19 alternative provision Free School with the Mulberry School's Trust.
- Our commissioned alternative provision is recognised as being an example of best practice.
 - The LGA peer review noted that the fair access procedures *work well resulting in appropriate placements of 'hard to place' young people*, commending the *strong multi-agency offer within the London East Alternative Provision (LEAP) provision*.
 - 70-80% of pupils at LEAP are reintegrated into mainstream schools.

Leaders are ambitious for & actively engage with children & young people; there is an accurate, shared understanding of needs.

Strong, well-established partnerships supported by robust governance arrangements.

- *Senior council leaders are visible and accessible, and both schools and parents commented on how their leadership has driven change.* (LGA peer review)
- DCS chairs the SIB, which includes parent and young person representation.
- Projects and support to ensure our young people can access employment opportunities.
 - Since 2021, 62% of our most vulnerable young people referred to the Tower Project & Tower JET Services have progressed into employment.
 - 80% of interns on the Queen Mary University of London Project SEARCH programme successfully transitioned into employment with a 100% retention rate after 3 months.
 - Council-based apprenticeship programme for young people with SEND established.
 - *Let's Work* event attended by over 300 young people with SEND & 30 employers.
- *You Said, We Did* report allows leaders to feedback to young people & parents on changes made in response to their comments.
- SEND Annual Report is commissioned by the SIB & facilitates multi-agency accountability.
- Seeking, listening to, working with voices of young people with SEND is embedded as an area of strength.

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