



# TOWER HAMLETS PARTNERSHIP

Working together for a better borough

## Tower Hamlets Plan

Annual Report and priorities going forward  
(2021-23)

28/04/2021



## Table of Contents

Foreword from Mayor John Biggs .....	3
Introduction .....	5
Governance .....	5
Performance – outcomes and measures .....	9
Tower Hamlets Plan data .....	10
Better health and wellbeing .....	11
Pre COVID-19 .....	11
Pandemic response .....	13
Good jobs and employment .....	16
A better deal for children and young people .....	19
Pre COVID-19 .....	19
Pandemic response .....	20
Strong, resilient and safe communities.....	22
Impact of COVID-19 .....	22
Looking ahead.....	24
Priorities going forward: collaborative action to support recovery from COVID-19 impacts .....	24
Health and wellbeing .....	25
Economy.....	25
Bouncing back to learning .....	26
Climate change.....	26
Inequality .....	26
Anchor approach .....	27
Appendix A Performance Trends .....	28

## Foreword from Mayor John Biggs

The Tower Hamlets Partnership is the borough's Local Strategic Partnership. It brings together key stakeholders to improve services and outcomes for residents.

As Chair of our Tower Hamlets Partnership, I am committed to working with partners from the public, private, community and voluntary sector to improve the lives of our residents. We were already seeing the value of this way of working before the pandemic and it will play a vital role in our recovery.

Throughout this crisis our aim has been to keep our residents safe and supported. We recognise the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on everyone's everyday lives from work, school, health, to the way we interact with each other. As a community at an appropriate time, we must recognise the contribution everyone has made in tackling this virus and mark those we have lost.

Our partnership working has been crucial to delivering an effective response including new ways of working. Moving forward the borough faces significant challenges which include dealing with increasing inequality, ensuring there is a sustained economic recovery and that with our community we continue to control the virus. This can only be achieved by working together and I am committed to ensuring our partnership continues to grow

The pandemic has exposed existing inequalities and we know some of our most vulnerable residents who use our social care services will need more support as a result. Many people will experience financial hardship, and the impact on employment, deprivation, mental health, education, and domestic abuse will continue to be felt by our residents.

We have seen a disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population reflecting the consequences of the structural disadvantage and discrimination faced by BAME communities. This was most evident in the second wave where disparities in risk of infection and death worsened for Bangladeshis and Pakistanis but improved for some other ethnic groups as noted in the second quarter report from the government's Race Disparity Unit. Given our large Bangladeshi community this is of particular concern.

During this difficult time there have been opportunities which we would be keen to hold onto. Our communities have really rallied round each other and worked with organisations across the borough, getting involved in the pandemic response in a variety of ways. More than 2,500 residents volunteered to support people especially those who were isolating as well as local organisations delivering food, fundraising and befriending. This is something to be immensely proud of, and we want to continue this work going forward.

The pandemic has required us to work differently to adapt and meet the needs of our community, and we have rapidly developed new ways of delivering essential services. As part of our recovery we need to consider how we can learn from some of the new ways of working about how services are delivered.

This report outlines the wide variety of work undertaken across the Partnership to deliver our Tower Hamlets Plan ambitions and how this evolved to support our communities through the pandemic so far. It also highlights the work already underway and key priorities going forward that will assist our recovery from the impact of COVID-19 on Tower Hamlets.

**John Biggs**

**Executive Mayor of Tower Hamlets and Chair of the Tower Hamlets Partnership Executive Group**

## Introduction

Just over two years on from adopting the Tower Hamlets Plan, our partnership working has continued to deliver on our priorities for the borough. The Tower Hamlets Plan Annual Report 2021 recognises the key activities and achievements of the past year, alongside some of the challenges we face, not least the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report illustrates how we have continued to work in partnership towards implementing our central objective of tackling inequality by building a strong, inclusive and fair borough, through our four areas of focus:

- a better deal for children and young people: aspiration, education and skills
- good jobs and employment
- strong, resilient and safe communities
- better health and wellbeing

It also describes how our work has been impacted by the global pandemic, and how partnership working has been key in supporting our communities during these challenging times.

Looking forward, the report outlines our key priority areas for recovery, supporting our communities and tackling the impacts of the pandemic. Underlying this activity is ensuring we understand and address inequality in all contexts and work towards delivering our key objective: tackling inequality by building a strong, inclusive and fair borough.

## Governance

The Tower Hamlets Partnership not one organisation but many working collectively to improve outcomes for residents by prioritising, coordinating and mobilising our collective efforts and resources. Elected politicians and organisation leaders in the borough meet regularly as the Partnership Executive Group (PEG), chaired by Mayor John Biggs. Thematic partnership boards coordinate and collaborate to determine and deliver priorities and outcomes for local people. Our partnership arrangements have strengthened considerably since the PEG was reconvened in January 2017 and now, halfway through the delivery of the five-year Tower Hamlets Plan, we can be proud of what we have achieved together so far. The diagram below sets out the main partnership structure in Tower Hamlets. There are several other partnership boards and group which play a crucial role in supporting the borough priorities such as the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum, partnership safeguarding boards and so on.



The partnership continues to review its structure amid the changing national, regional and local priorities and landscape we are working in. Some of the recent changes to the partnership are set out below:

### Cooperate Partnership

The Cooperate partnership is a joint strategic body made up of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Public Sector partners within Tower Hamlets. Together they endeavour to transform and thereby enhance the lives of local people in the borough through the collective work of the partners. It uses its collective knowledge, skills and expertise to maximise the effective delivery of the Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy. Cooperate has recently been reviewed and a greater link has been established with the partnership governance structure.

The VCS Strategy focuses on achieving positive outcomes for residents of Tower Hamlets, across all of the Tower Hamlets Plan outcomes, and supporting the VCS to play a key role in the recovery process for COVID-19 in the borough and in the post-pandemic world.

The VCS made a significant contribution to the response to the pandemic in Tower Hamlets, providing services to housebound, socially excluded and vulnerable residents. The VCS Strategy aims to build upon the good practices that the VCS has already demonstrated, particularly during the pandemic, and to support the VCS to provide services that are fully responsive to local residents' needs going forward

### **Children and Families**

Currently there are a number of partnership boards that consider the needs of children and families, including Born Well, Grow Well (BWGW), the Children and Families Partnership Board and the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership. Over time, the remit, terms of reference and membership of the various boards have become less clear and the possibility of duplication has increased. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the strength of the partnerships and created a renewed sense of collaboration. As a result, the structure has been reviewed to propose a more effective and well-defined approach building on the strengths of the existing arrangements.

A new Children and Families Executive will fulfil all the current functions of BWGW as a key part of the structure of Tower Hamlets Together and work towards an integrated care system. It will also oversee the strategic priorities as outlined in the Children and Families Strategy. Beneath this will sit an engagement group providing a valuable forum to discuss a wide range of issues that impact on children and families.

### **New areas**

As new priorities arise and the need to tackle them becomes more imperative, there is a requirement to have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure we can deliver against these. Wanting to work as effectively and efficiently as possible, the nature of the partnership arrangements will be dependent upon what is currently in place alongside existing resource and capacity.

The central objective of the Tower Hamlets Plan is building a strong, inclusive and fair borough. With the recent Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Inequalities Commission reporting their recommendations, we must have the appropriate structures in place to ensure they are delivered. There is a need for all individual strategic partners and partnership boards to have a role in implementing the recommendations. However, alongside this, there is likely to be a requirement to strategically drive some of the larger cross cutting actions. Following the launch of the Commission's report, a partnership sub-group will be established to drive through the change required to combat the inequalities faced by the BAME communities in Tower Hamlets.

The ever pressing need to tackle climate change is becoming more critical as the impacts become more visible. A Net Zero Carbon partnership event held in March 2021 brought together partners and the community to engage and raise awareness across the borough. It is important that any commitments that result from this event are put in place. While the partnership boards will ensure a green recovery is integrated in their delivery plans, it may be appropriate to establish a partnership subgroup to ensure delivery against our ambitious plans to become a Net Zero Carbon borough.

### **Communications Pandemic Group**

In direct response to the pandemic, the Communications Pandemic Group was set up with representatives from the council, health, faith, housing, education, business and voluntary and community sectors. Meeting weekly over the course of the pandemic they have:

- helped inform and educate residents about issues such as restrictions, safety, lockdown, tiers, safety on high streets, shop reopening, aid including grants for businesses and for self-isolation, testing and vaccines.
- cocreated COVID-19 campaigns to deliver together, including Shop Safe Shop Local, Hands, Face, Space, symptoms and testing, food banks, shielding/CEV social distancing, testing and vaccines
- tackled misinformation about COVID-19, such as on face coverings or vaccines, to support people to be safe
- Created more than a dozen films in different languages on issues including Ramadan, social distancing, testing and vaccines
- Worked together on #towerhamletstogether advertising to thank key workers for keeping Tower Hamlets, safe and supported

The work of the group has now expanded to look and promote wider issues for the borough such as Black Lives Matter and the BAME Inequality Commission and Climate Change. Going forward, they will be working together to launch the Tower Hamlets celebration of place campaign later this year, an important part of the borough's recovery as it brings people together, celebrates our borough and will drive inward investment.

## Performance – outcomes and measures

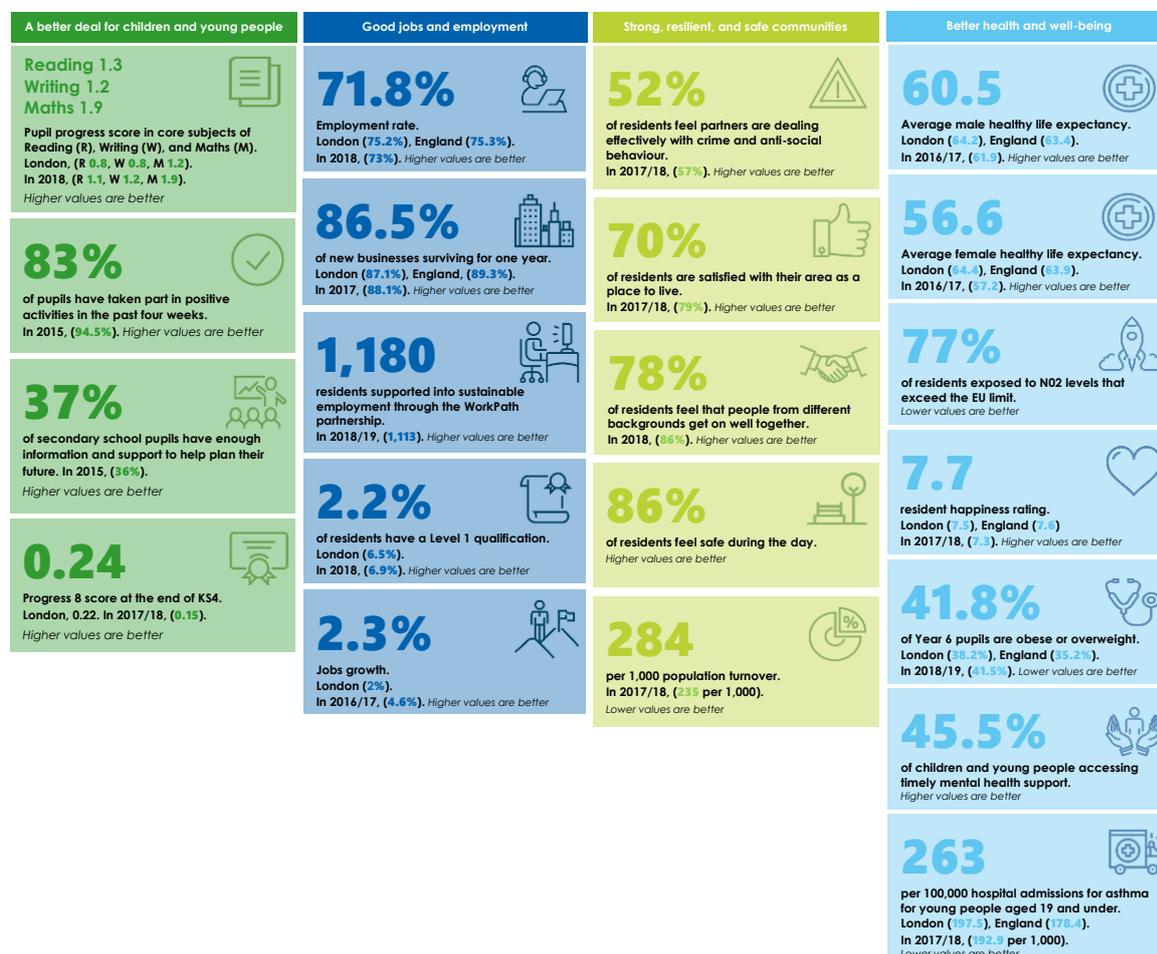
Performance measures to monitor progress towards delivering our agreed outcomes were developed as part of the 2019 Annual Report. The diagram below illustrates how each measure relates to our desired outcomes for Tower Hamlets.

<b>Building a stronger, more inclusive and fairer borough</b>	<b>Better health and well-being</b>	<b>People have a good level of happiness and wellbeing</b>	Residents' self-reported level of happiness	Children and young people accessing timely mental health support
		<b>People live in a borough that is clean and green</b>	Residents exposed to NO2 levels that exceed the EU limit	Hospital admissions for asthma for under 19 year olds
		<b>People are supported to achieve independent, healthy, safe and fulfilling lives</b>	Average male and female healthy life expectancy	Year 6 prevalence of overweight or obese
	<b>Good jobs and employment</b>	<b>People are provided with help to find good quality jobs</b>	Jobs growth	Overall employment rate
		<b>People have access to lifelong learning, employment and opportunity</b>	Residents with a Level 1 qualification	Residents supported into sustainable employment through support from the WorkPath partnership
		<b>People and businesses are supported to be innovative and enterprising</b>	New businesses which survive for one year	
	<b>A better deal for children and young people</b>	<b>People access high quality education and training</b>	Pupil progress in core subjects of reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2	Progress 8 score at the end of Key Stage 4
		<b>People are encouraged to participate in positive activities such as sports, arts and volunteering</b>	Pupil participation in positive activities	
		<b>People feel valued and everyone has the opportunity to succeed</b>	Secondary school pupils who feel they have enough information and support to help plan their future	
	<b>Strong, resilient and safe communities</b>	<b>People feel safe and live in a cohesive community</b>	Residents' perception of safety during the day	Resident's perception of partners dealing effectively with crime and ASB
		<b>People are proud of and want to live, work, study and stay in the borough</b>	Residents' satisfaction with the local area as a place to live	Population turnover
		<b>People live in a friendly and welcoming borough with strong community spirit</b>	Residents' perception of people from different backgrounds getting on well together	

Performance against the measures is influenced by external factors, which are out of the control of the Partnership. However, it is considered important to understand how each of the outcomes for the borough are progressing on a regular basis and show direction of travel.

## Tower Hamlets Plan data

The table below provides the latest available data (2017/18 – 2019/20) for each of our performance measures, illustrating current performance levels against each of our outcomes.



For a more detailed look at our performance trends (progress over time), please see the performance tables in Appendix A of this report. These tables also show our progress against London and national benchmarks.

However, as performance against these high-level measures is influenced by external factors, additionally the tables include progress against key outputs towards achieving our outcomes.

Overall, the current data show the direction of travel against outcomes has been mixed, for example employment rates are down, however, residents supported into sustainable employment through the WorkPath partnership are up. The direction of travel of outputs that contribute towards the Tower Hamlets Plan outcomes is positive. This includes long term looked after children who are in stable placements, people who are more independent after being supported through reablement services and number of homes built. This demonstrates how our activities are on track and partners are delivering benefits for Tower Hamlets.

## Better health and wellbeing

### Pre COVID-19

#### Introduction

The Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board, a statutory board, and Tower Hamlets Together, our local borough-based partnership, bring together senior leaders from the council (including social care, education, housing, environment, public health and employment services), the NHS, community groups and other key partners including housing providers and the police and organisations that represent the voice of local people such as Healthwatch Tower Hamlets. Their aim is to work together to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Tower Hamlets and reduce health inequalities.

Health and social care services are facing significant challenges, both financially and in meeting the needs of changing populations. Whilst we celebrate the fact people are living longer, it means more people are living with long-term health conditions that require more support and care.

Our community faces unique health challenges, with significant levels of poverty and health inequality, high premature death rates from cancer, circulatory and respiratory diseases. Our population is also growing faster than any other area in the country, which will lead to greater challenges if we fail to act now.

That is why the partnership is exploring new and innovative ways to provide care and why partnership sits at the heart of how we work. Our shared mission is to transform people's health and lives, reduce inequalities and reorganise services to match people's need. This vision is set out in the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-20, and its priorities are detailed in the current activities section below.

#### Current activities

##### 1. Communities driving change

Through co-production initiatives, residents can get involved in the design, delivery and assurance of health and care integration, empowering them to take control over their immediate environment.

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets is helping to reshape the way we address health inequalities by developing 'community insights' into real life health and wellbeing problems and engaging with community groups on behalf of the partnership to support service improvements. Considering the current pandemic, there is a concerted effort to better understand the impact on services and the community at large. Healthwatch along with Tower Hamlets Together are supporting the development of community insights in areas such as impact on BAME communities and impact of local test and trace systems.

The Health and Wellbeing Board is also dedicating part of its activity to hear stories directly from residents, service users and front-line providers about their experiences of health and wellbeing priorities such as homelessness in the borough, with the

partnership actively learning and shaping its response to issues that matter most to people in Tower Hamlets.

## **2. Creating a healthier place**

Air quality is associated with several adverse health impacts; it is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. We know it affects the most vulnerable in society; children and older people especially those with heart and lung conditions. The Health and Wellbeing Board has taken over governance and ensuring delivery of the Air Quality Action Plan 2017-22 which sets out its ambitions to improve air quality in the borough.

There are many projects underway in Tower Hamlets designed to tackle pollutant issues mainly due to traffic by launching awareness campaigns and working with our partners to increase electric fleet motor vehicles, reviewing parking across the borough and improving air quality through local interventions including liveable streets programme.

## **3. Employment and Health**

There are 1.5 million people with a learning disability living in the UK, but only 6% are in paid employment. Yet evidence and research show that many people with a learning disability want to work and build careers.

Tower Hamlets has a target to support 110 individuals with a learning disability into employment each year. An employment support service and an employment skills and development service are commissioned in Tower Hamlets to deliver these targets, both through the Tower Project.

## **4. Children's weight and nutrition**

Childhood obesity continues to be a pressing issue in the borough, with Tower Hamlets having the 5th highest rates of overweight by Year 6 in London, as well as the 9th highest rates (2018/19). More than 1 in 5 children (21.4%) in Reception are overweight or obese in the borough. By Year 6, this doubles to more than 2 in 5 children (42.1%). There are also stark inequalities in levels of obesity locally, with children of Black and Asian ethnicity, children with disabilities and additional needs and children from more deprived backgrounds more likely to be overweight.

We are strengthening our approach to tackling childhood obesity in Tower Hamlets by refreshing the Childhood Healthy Weight Strategy. The Childhood Healthy Weight Action Plan, will set out ambitious proposals to improve childhood weight through transformational change across the whole system in the borough. This approach will capitalise on the wealth of existing knowledge, assets and resources available locally and regionally by delivering innovative and sustainable system change. This is even more important as childhood weight is likely to have worsened due to the impact of lockdowns.

## **5. Developing an integrated system**

Tower Hamlets Together (THT) has implemented important changes to enable the delivery of integrated health and social care services, including major changes to our commissioning and operational delivery approach.

At the strategic level, THT has overseen key developments, including the 'Whole Systems Dataset', a ground-breaking programme linking a wide range of council (wider determinant) datasets with health data. This supports our drive towards population health by reviewing a whole population dataset providing rich data about our community's needs.

Operationally, include reorganisation of Adult Social Care teams into four localities to align with community health services and better enable integrated working at the neighbourhood level. For example, homecare providers within the south east locality are working alongside District Nurse Leads and GP Multi-Disciplinary teams to provide higher quality patient care. Further work is being undertaken to roll this model out to the other localities.

### **Looking ahead**

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership is refreshing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25. By working closely with partner agencies and the community it will define a population health system.

Building on the excellent work that already exists, the partnership will encourage coproduction to be the central part of how health and wellbeing in the borough is improved. It is proposed that the refreshed strategy will have a local focus, potentially looking at health and wellbeing issues in four 'localities' in the borough. Neighbourhoods should frame our engagement work and the locale of our implementation.

### **Pandemic response**

The Health and Wellbeing partnership and Tower Hamlets Together have been fundamental in supporting the borough's response to COVID-19. The Health Protection Board has overseen the system response to the epidemic, including the development and implementation of the borough's local outbreak control plan. The HPB is accountable to the 'Local Engagement Board' which provides political accountability.

Over the past year, partnership work has delivered major interventions to prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 and support the health and care system to remain resilient, including:

- A network of symptomatic and asymptomatic testing sites hosted across partner sites and geographically spread with varied opening hours to meet the needs of local businesses and public sector agencies, as well as supporting schools to deliver regular rapid testing to their pupils and staff
- Extending access to COVID-19 vaccination through the roll-out of community vaccination clinics across different settings in the borough, for example the East London Muslim Centre and Granby Hall, and the deployment of a 'Vaccination Roadshow' to engage with residents in areas of low take-up
- Weekly joint tasking between the council and the Metropolitan Police to align the 'on the ground' presence to 'engage, explain, encourage and enforce' the

COVID-19 regulations with local businesses and residents. This has included advice to businesses on safe trading practices, regular 'Days of Action' to focus on challenging areas and the daily deployment of Stay Safe Ambassadors to areas of high prevalence to distribute information and face masks

- Establishing a network of COVID-19 Community Champions, members of the public who receive regular information on COVID-19 through a weekly newsletter and weekly webinar and then take responsibility for disseminating the key messages and information to their friends, families and networks. This gives the system regular qualitative insight into the impact and effectiveness of our work
- Commissioning a Local Contact Tracing service, delivered by the Tower Hamlets GP Care Group, giving greater responsiveness to efforts to reach those who have tested positive and who need to self-isolate
- Collaboration between the council, social care providers and GP Care Group to arrange vaccinations for the social care workforce and provide direct information and advice on the benefits of vaccination to social care staff, increasing take-up rates
- Close working between social care and NHS partners through the Integrated Discharge Hub to ensure the timely discharge of patients through the pandemic, supporting hospital capacity to treat patients. The Hub has managed high volumes of patients and liaised across boroughs and regions to support out of area discharge

Going forward the partnership vision for responding to the ongoing challenge of COVID-19 is set out in our Local Outbreak Management Plan, and commits to making *“Tower Hamlets a place where coronavirus infection is kept as low as possible, uptake of vaccination is maximised and those who are most at risk from impacts of COVID-19 are protected and people can get on with their lives free from disruption. We all need to work together to make this happen.”*

To achieve this vision, the Local Outbreak Management Plan articulates the following strategic aims:

1. To have a robust COVID-19 surveillance system that integrates national, regional, and local data sources providing insight into the local epidemiology of COVID-19, early warning of outbreaks, and enables future forecasting.
2. To support people in the borough to follow social distancing and hygiene measures to limit transmission both in public and private spaces
3. To maximise uptake of testing:
  - a. To communicate and engage with residents on testing, contact tracing and self-isolation support
  - b. To ensure sufficient and equitable symptomatic and asymptomatic testing capacity across the borough
  - c. To normalise testing in the longer term by increasing access to testing in familiar sites such as primary care and pharmacy

- d. To better integrate the pathway across testing, contact tracing (national and local) and self-isolation support
  - e. To ensure preparedness for surge testing in response to identification of Variants of Concern
4. To identifying and contain outbreaks as quickly possible through intensive test and trace and support for self-isolation:
- a. Ongoing review of infection control procedures in high risk settings and support where needed
  - b. Daily surveillance of data to identify potential outbreaks or community hotspots
  - c. Rapid response to outbreaks working across Public Health England, the council and site of outbreak
  - d. Review of underlying reasons for outbreaks and learning to prevent further outbreak
5. To maximise vaccination uptake in eligible residents:
- a. To ensuring that there is resource invested in helping those currently eligible who have not taken up the vaccine to access it.
  - b. To ensure the right balance between scale/pace and focused, targeted support deep within communities.
6. To address inequalities in the impact of COVID-19 on individuals and communities and ensure that our COVID-19 response is led by residents and communities

## Good jobs and employment

Tower Hamlets is a borough of sharp contrasts. While many people working in Canary Wharf earn over £100k per annum, it is estimated that around four in ten households in the borough are living below the poverty line.

Residents identify a lack of jobs as one of their top three areas of concern. This is in the context of low skills, poor qualifications, and inequality. Inequality can act as a significant barrier in the search for employment and progression with much lower rates for certain groups, including those from ethnic minority communities, including newly arrived migrants and refugees; people with disabilities or health issues; and women.

The on-going challenges of austerity and welfare reforms coupled with the uncertainty around the possible economic impacts of UK's withdrawal from the European Union have required us to find innovative solutions and seize opportunities to ensure residents get the best deal possible.

The council together with the Growth and Economic Development Partnership Board and other networks work closely to achieve a more inclusive Tower Hamlets by creating pathways that will allow residents to succeed in their job aspiration.

Our work is multi-faceted as we seek to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of the borough. Our Regeneration Strategy is key to ensuring everyone has access to the opportunities derived through growth.

However, this year, the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, with claimants of out-of-work benefits more than doubling since the pandemic began. The COVID-19 resident impact survey shows more than 50% of residents identified that there has been a negative impact (extremely negative or fairly negative) on their employment status and work, and respondents named support for residents who are unemployed or reduced in income (35%) as their top concern. Many people will experience financial hardship, and the impact on employment will continue to be felt by our residents going forward.

### Current Priorities

The Growth and Economic Development Partnership has been working to deliver the following priority outcomes:

Creating opportunity by supporting aspiration and tackling poverty. The aim is to get:

- more residents into good quality, well-paid jobs
- young people realising their potential
- securing real jobs for local residents from new development

Harnessing economic growth by:

- actively attracting and securing inward investment, particularly in skilled industries
- maximising social value and coordinating business support

- promoting the historic entrepreneurial energy of our communities

### **Current Activities**

The year has been dominated by response to the pandemic. Below are some examples of partnership working in response to the crisis.

#### *Crisis Response*

In response to the pandemic, the Partnership Board was re-shaped as the Local Economy Silver Group, in order to monitor the impact on the local economy, communicate support programmes for local businesses and workers, and coordinate council services to support the re-opening of local high streets.

Partners regularly monitored local and national data-streams in order to react to trends in local employment and business health. In addition to this, the Silver Group serves as a space to share potential opportunities for our local residents – for example, large-scale recruitment exercises for public bodies such as the NHS and HMRC and growth sectors such as health and social care, which can provide a source of employment during the pandemic.

Since March 2020:

- Over £200m in grants and reliefs has been disbursed to businesses.
- The council's Enterprise Team have responded to over 1,800 calls from businesses
- Considerable work has been undertaken to reopen our local street markets safely where possible (such as Columbia Road) and to put in place systems to enable social distancing
- Almost 600 job opportunities for young people have been created through the local Kickstart scheme

#### *Shaping Support Programmes*

The Group has connected with partners in order to prepare for the implementation of national programmes such as the Kickstart youth employment scheme, for which employers can act as direct recruiters or as intermediaries for smaller employers.

Partners have also helped shape the local offer for DWP's Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) scheme that went live in October 2020 and are doing the same for Restart Programme currently under development. The Group has also served as a forum to disseminate the full range of local and national support schemes available to businesses during the pandemic.

Finally, the partners have fed views into the existing support programmes such as the local PIVOT project, which aims to help businesses adapt their business models to rapidly changing times, a pilot delivery service scheme, which enables local business to develop their online trading capacity and to local schemes to support the creative industries through the crisis and emerge without lasting damage.

#### *Towards Recovery*

In parallel with crisis response, focus has also turned to the year ahead and to economic recovery once the pandemic subsides. This will involve the expansion of

successful local interventions such as the council's PIVOT project and free masterclasses for businesses on aspects such as social media and improving their online sales presence.

In addition, we are also reviewing potential bids for recovery funds as well as hosting joint workshops with our regional counterparts on emerging business growth agendas such as Green Skills, feeding into a conference in March 2021 on the Zero Carbon agenda.

As we move into 2021 and when the crisis subsides, the partnership will return to a more strategic position as we are able once again to plan for the longer-term.

### **Case Study**

Tower Hamlets was the first authority in London to establish co-location of local JCP and council employment support (WorkPath) specifically to deliver 18-14 Youth Hub services. The co-location went live at the end of September 2020 after intense work on lease and service level agreements, and stringent risk assessments to make sure health and safety precautions were well embedded for staff and client safety.

Whilst the Covid-19 Lockdown has obviously presented difficulties in working together physically, the cooperation between JCP and WorkPath officers has been ground-breaking and means that recruiting young UC claimants for our 597 Kickstart placements is well underway.

## A better deal for children and young people

### Pre COVID-19

#### Introduction

The Tower Hamlets Children and Families Executive brings together the local authority, police, health services, schools, voluntary sector and other agencies who support children and their families, so that they can work together to meet local needs and address priority issues.

Effective relationships across the sector has ensured 95% of our schools are judged Good or Outstanding, while our Children's Social Care is judged Good. We continue to deliver a strong family support offer which ensures that we have low numbers of children that need the protection of coming into care or being subject to Protection Plans.

The five-year strategy for children and families 'Every Chance for Every Child' was launched in October 2019 at a packed event with over a hundred children and their families at Meath Gardens Children's Centre.

#### Current Priorities

Working together to make sure that children and young people achieve, are healthy and stay safe has been more important than ever and the partnership's strategic priorities remain:

- Aspiration to Action – children and young people have the skills to prepare for their future
- Healthy Families – families have good health, wellbeing and healthy relationships
- Safe and secure – children and young people feel and are safe where they live, work, play and study

#### Current Activities

Over the last year the partnership had worked together to deliver a number of the priorities in the Children and Families Strategy.

- A programme of work to support young people to prepare for their future as part of a new learning and achievement strategy for 14 to 25 year olds, led by a steering group
- A new strategy for tackling Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation bringing together community safety and safeguarding children organisations with a renewed focus on early intervention as well as multi-agency support to protect young people at the greatest risk
- A Play Charter with ideas and principles to support residents, businesses, voluntary organisations and charities, providers of childcare and education, the council, and developers to open up opportunities for play in every part of the borough
- The partnership is working with young people to design a campaign to encourage parents, other trusted adults and children and young people themselves to discuss wellbeing, emotional health and resilience and access support when they need it

## **Case Study**

### **Accessing the world of work: Project Search**

A new initiative as part of Project Search, led by Queen Mary University of London, aims to tackle the barriers that young people with learning difficulties and/or autism face in accessing the world of work.

The University has provided Supported Internship placements for five interns, with support from an onsite Tutor and Job Coach, and what makes this Supported Internship programme unique is the collaborative partnership between Queen Mary Student's Union, the council, Phoenix School, Phoenix College and the Supported Employment Agency Kaleidoscope Sabre.

Samil is one of the programme participants undertaking his placement at the Queen Mary reception desk and said: "I enjoy the different areas that I have been able to work in, as well as meeting new colleagues in my rotations, and becoming friends with the other interns.

"I would tell others to join Project SEARCH because it can help you decide what you want to do with your career."

The Queen Mary Project SEARCH team are aiming to double the supported internship placement opportunities on campus for the next intake.

## **Pandemic response**

The Children's Silver Operational Group was put in place at the start of the pandemic with bronze groups established as priorities became clear. The bronze groups focused on children and young people with complex medical needs, socially vulnerable cohorts and mental health and wellbeing concerns. The pandemic response groups brought together representatives from council services and partner agencies from all sectors to regularly review the situation and plan a joined-up response. The work of the groups has focused on maintenance and adaptation of services as well as understanding and responding to the impact of the pandemic on families, children and young people in order to support them throughout the year.

### **Support for clinically extremely vulnerable children**

Early in the pandemic, the distinct needs of children and young people who had been advised by the NHS to remain at home were identified as a priority. A multi-agency task and finish group was formed to oversee the partnership's support for these children and their families. The group agreed data-sharing arrangements to ensure the list of shielding children was complete, accurate and cross-matched against existing council data sets (including SEND and school census data) as well as being appropriately shared with key services such as schools. Weekly calls were arranged with children and their families, with workers from the youth, early years, school health and early help services taking the lead depending on the age and needs of the child. Callers used a holistic script developed via multi-agency collaboration to signpost to appropriate support and initiate referrals to other services. Age appropriate play and activity bags for shielded children were designed and distributed by the Parental Engagement Team working closely with voluntary

sector organisations Toyhouse, Play Association Tower Hamlets and with the help of community volunteers.

### **Support for socially vulnerable children and young people**

Schools, council services and health partners worked together to make sure that vulnerable children were identified, and all were contacted during the period when schools were closed. This work included tracking school attendance and working across agencies to ensure regular contact, and referrals where necessary, were taking place through the council and schools. Tower Hamlets has applied a broad definition of 'socially vulnerable' to include more children and young people in this approach. A key strand of this work has been to encourage and support school attendance through communications for children, parents and professionals. The impact of this was demonstrated during the autumn term 2020 when school attendance was consistently higher in Tower Hamlets than in England as a whole. Schools have already been deploying "recovery curriculums" to address any deficits resulting from the long period of school closure, and have been ensuring a focus on the non-educational issues that may have emerged during lockdown including mental health, bereavement and economic difficulties.

#### Case study:

### **Health Visiting for new parents**

Through an innovative new collaboration between the Health Visiting Team, the GP Care Group, local hospitals and five of the borough's Children's Centres that remained open, face to face appointments with health visitors and other health professionals were re-introduced at an early stage during national lockdown for a small number of new mothers and their babies for whom online consultations were not suitable. Healthy Start vitamins and vouchers, Bookstart baby packs and home activity packs have been made available for collection at Children's Centres for all new parents.

### **Food for families**

Schools across Tower Hamlets have mobilised in support of their pupils and local communities. Several schools worked with the council's contract service team to deliver food bags to families eligible for free school meals. Mulberry Girls School has set up a food bank with support from the Bow Foodbank and the council's Tackling Poverty Team, who arranged a corporate donation from Investec as well as bringing the school into the Children's Society Co-ordinated Crisis Support project, from which they have received £20,000 supporting 320 families a week. Manorfield School is working with Fareshare and the Tackling Poverty Team, who have arranged food donations from a variety of sources, to support 300 families each week. During the Easter Holidays, the council worked with the charity A Plate for London to provide free meals for children and families. 12,750 hot meals were distributed in nine locations across the borough with an additional 300 meals per day in the second week provided through the generous support of Queen Mary College. The council's Tackling Poverty Team is leading on the council's food response and is working alongside the other council teams and the Voluntary and Community Sector through a food task and finish group.

## Strong, resilient and safe communities

### Introduction

The Tower Hamlets Community Safety Partnership Board (CSP) has the statutory responsibility to protect local communities from crime and to help people feel safer. The Board co-ordinates the partnership response to reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, and re-offending.

### Impact of COVID-19

The CSP has continued to function and perform its statutory duties and has adapted to the changing operating environment and focused on achieving its agreed outcomes during these testing times. The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant and wide-ranging impacts on crime and disorder. This is reflected nationally and across London. The CSP has been responsive to the changing demands and emerging issues that have presented themselves; specifically increases in hate crime, domestic abuse, and a significant rise in anti-social behaviour. Plans have had to be adapted in response, but operational delivery has been maintained. The policing of COVID-19 restrictions required co-ordination between the police and council services to tackle behaviour ranging from a lack of social distancing to organised unlicensed music events. This has been a demand on all partner resources.

### BLM

The impact of the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement led to a marked increase in community tensions with a renewed focus on potentially intrusive/aggressive policing. The Tension Monitoring Group met frequently to ensure community involvement to enable the police and wider partnership to tailor their response appropriately.

### Other activity

The following sub-groups of the CSP have also continued to meet to drive their specific actions and objectives within the CSP Plan:

- Reducing Reoffending Board
- Contest Board
- VAWG and Domestic Abuse Strategy Board
- Drug and Alcohol Action Team Management Board
- Youth Justice Management Board
- No Place for Hate Forum

A Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Board has been set up to reflect the priority given to tackling ASB and crimes affecting neighbourhoods such as burglary and street robbery.

A new Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy has been developed. The Partnership Violence Reduction Action Plan has been refreshed and a new CSP Plan for 2021 to 2024 is under development informed by a strategic assessment reviewing the past three years of crime and disorder data.

Our partnership approach to tackling drugs and violence, Operation Continuum has continued to deliver some notable results including numerous charges for drug supply and large-scale drug seizures. It is proven to be a highly successful initiative and is vital in suppressing the supply of drugs within Tower Hamlets and surrounding areas. Tower Hamlets is estimated to have one of the highest prevalence of Class A drug users in London with over 1200 opiate clients alone in treatment. It is believed that drugs are inextricably linked to a high proportion of violent criminality and we will therefore continue to target perpetrators; seeking to bring them to justice. Our latest operation in Whitechapel and Stepney this year resulted in 16 arrests, 16 people charged with 42 drug charges and £13k in cash seized under the proceeds of crime act. Our approach represents an enhanced package of measures that compliments robust policing, allowing teams from across the police, council, Tower Hamlets Homes and other housing providers to work together to make a bigger impact and more sustainable difference for our residents.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced the principal aim of the youth justice system, which is to prevent offending and re-offending of young people under the age of 18. The formation of local Youth Justice Partnerships is central to this work, and Tower Hamlets ensures our Youth Justice Management Board has a strong link with the Community Safety Partnership Board.

### **Case study**

#### **16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence Campaign**

The VAWG and Domestic Abuse Strategy Group is a multi-agency partnership sub group of the Community Safety Partnership. The Group has three priorities:

- a) Ensuring support and protection for victims of VAWG
- b) Holding perpetrators to account
- c) Working with communities to challenge misogyny

The 16 days of Activism Campaign ran from 25th November (International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women) to 10th December 2020 (Human Rights Day). The campaign aims to emphasise the link between violence against women and human rights: with women and girls still subjected to many forms of human rights violations solely based on their gender. As part of this campaign, the VAWG team ran a range of activities, training sessions and workshops. These included awareness raising sessions on the various types of abuse women and girls are subjected to. New for 2020 was the 'Country a Day' sessions, encouraging professionals and/or survivors to talk about their experiences. This included stories from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan, highlighting campaigns in those countries to tackle domestic abuse.

Alongside this campaign, 25 November marked International White Ribbon Day. The basic principle of White Ribbon Day is the importance of men and boys speaking out against all forms of violence against women. The campaign was supported by individuals and partner organisations who were encouraged to pledge never to commit any form of violence against women and girls, and to speak out against those who do. Participants wore a white ribbon as a symbol of their support.

## Looking ahead

The Tower Hamlets Plan sets our commitment to work together on shared priorities and outcomes and provides a framework for partnership collaboration. What is most important is the work we do together to facilitate improvements for residents and our ongoing commitment to working together on shared priorities. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted almost all areas of life and the current climate we are now operating in has meant a shift in the focus of our collaborative working. While our objectives remain the same, we will all be living and working with COVID-19 for years to come, and our joint focus must be on controlling the virus and protecting our most vulnerable residents. As a partnership it is critical that we secure the economic recovery and address the stark inequalities that exist in the borough. Ahead, together, we must continue to act on the climate change emergency.

### **Priorities going forward: collaborative action to support recovery from COVID-19 impacts**

Ongoing COVID-19 infections and fatalities means that Tower Hamlets will still be very much focused on the pandemic response effort, and post-COVID-19 health impacts. Nevertheless, the health and social care system will be moving to restore support to communities for non-COVID-19 issues and looking to build on the public attention on health matters to promote public health improvement.

Many have felt the impact of a COVID-19 lockdown response through loss of employment and/or loss in household income. Some people have experienced unemployment for the first time in their lives. The retail, hospitality, arts and entertainment sectors have borne the brunt of the impact of COVID-19. There are many businesses now in search of support or on verge of closure - some businesses will not recover.

This has necessitated an unprecedented level of financial and direct support from both national and local governments, as well as support from the voluntary and community sector organisations and private businesses, small and large. While the government's furlough scheme has initially helped lessen the impact, as time goes on numbers of redundancies and unemployment rates are starting to rise.

Voluntary and community sector organisations have played an integral role in the borough's response to COVID-19, with many adapting their services to respond to the needs of the community.

London, like many of the world's major cities, has been affected more seriously than the rest of the UK, with the capital having the highest age-standardised mortality rate of all UK major cities. Recent analysis from the Office for National Statistics has also shown higher levels of deprivation and ethnicity are likely to be compounding the virus' death toll, with deprived and BAME Londoners most exposed and vulnerable. One consequence of the pandemic has been the exposure and exacerbation of existing inequality.

The significance of such inequality is also seen in the economic fallout from the pandemic. As with previous economic downturns, residents in 'lower-skilled' work are more likely to be vulnerable to the negative effects of recession than those in high-skilled graduate jobs.

Education across all sectors has been severely impacted by the pandemic with students of all ages missing out on learning, especially face to face teaching over the last year. While online learning has become a fallback for many, this has exposed a digital divide with those without the equipment, connectivity and/or skills being left further behind. The same divide has also been widened in other contexts too, where the intensified transfer of services online has left those without digital opportunities unable to access them.

COVID-19 has also impacted the attainment of qualifications. Exams have been cancelled and practical studies and hands-on experience have in many areas come to a stop. As the pandemic continues this only exacerbates the problem and is likely to have an impact of years to come.

There is consensus among many organisations about the acute impact of the pandemic on mental health. Tower Hamlets is an outlier for common mental health disorders, such as anxiety and depression (CMD), where self-reported levels of anxiety and depression were the highest in London. The rate of diagnosis for all mental health conditions is higher for residents in the most deprived groups compared to the least deprived, particularly for post-natal depression and serious mental illness (SMI). In terms of ethnicity, the diagnosed rates of SMI are twice as high for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents, which is a clear example of the health impact of the intersectionality of poverty and racial inequality locally. The burden of mental ill health in Tower Hamlets falls disproportionately upon the poorest, BAME and female residents.

Throughout the pandemic there has been excellent examples of exceptional partnership working. We would like to see this sustained in the year ahead, for example through the Communications Pandemic Group. We will strengthen and improve co-ordination of our collaborative working across the partnership.

We have identified and understand the huge impacts on our communities and how the need to tackle inequalities has been brought into sharp focus. At the heart of our plan remains a constant cross-cutting theme to address inequality - and as a partnership the way this is achieved is a focus on these priority areas:

## Health and wellbeing

We are still very much in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, so PEG first acknowledges that **ongoing pandemic management of the virus** will be a key priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board and all boards that have a role in assisting and protecting our communities.

However, the impact of the pandemic on health and wellbeing goes far beyond the virus itself. **Mental Health** and **healthcare** more generally have been severely impacted by the context around COVID-19, such as social distancing, lockdowns, cancelled medical appointments and treatments. From discussions with partners, the PEG is keen to see these areas of focus explored through the partnerships and are recommending the Health and Wellbeing Board ensure this is part of their work programme. PEG is keen to progress an investigation of a **trauma-informed approach** and becoming London's first trauma-informed Borough. This is something that would also be explored by the Children's and Families Executive.

## Economy

The impact on the economy of COVID-19 has been severe and will be felt for many years, long after the pandemic is over. The PEG acknowledges the work the Growth and

Economic Development Partnership Board, has done to promote recruitment exercises, shape support programmes and support schemes for businesses. Going forward, the PEG would endorse a focus on **assisting SMEs** and **helping businesses open** back up again. They would advocate reviewing the **use of purchasing power** to support the local economy. Additionally, they would support the consideration of **recruitment pathways** and how partners can work together to get people back into jobs, including by **improving their own offers as employers** of the local community.

As part of the economic recovery, the PEG would like to ensure a response to both the impacts and opportunities arising from Brexit, particularly around ensuring our communities have the right skills to fill any gaps that might appear in the workforce.

Additionally, the recently established Co-operate Partnership will endeavour to transform and thereby enhance the lives of local people in the borough through the collective work of the partners. The PEG supports **delivery of the VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) Strategy**, assisting the sector to support our residents.

### **Bouncing back to learning**

COVID-19 has had an enormous impact upon education. Our schools, early years providers and post-16 settings will be focused upon supporting all our children and young people with their learning recovery, with a particular focus upon ensuring that gaps do not develop in the outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people. Partners will be supporting this work collaboratively, including with a bounce back to play and a wide range of opportunities for children to explore their interests and develop their passions, and with a focus on supporting those who have additional needs, not least to address the impact on the mental wellbeing of our young people. The PEG fully supports the rollout of Every Child Online and the work to reduce the digital divide for young people.

### **Climate change**

While the environment has largely seen beneficial impacts from COVID-19, such as lockdown-related traffic reduction resulting in improved air quality, the effects of climate change are tangible and action is now imperative. The PEG endorses the principle of a 'green recovery', with partners using this opportunity for the **environment to be a key consideration** in our renewal. This is something for all Boards to implement.

Alongside this, a **Net Zero Carbon – Climate Engagement Event**, taking place in March 2021, will raise awareness across the borough. It provides the opportunity to work as 'one Tower Hamlets' to generate ideas and discussion, identify priorities for action and any barriers. The event sees the launch of a carbon free programme, as well as community and SME grants programmes.

### **Inequality**

Inequality runs across all these themes and has always been core to our partnership working, with tackling inequality by building a strong, inclusive and fair borough being the central objective of the Tower Hamlets Plan. Addressing Inequality must be more central to our ways of working, with partners able to outline what action is being taken to address key areas especially work to progress digital inclusion.

Additionally, going forward the recommendations from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission Report will be a key focus for all Boards of the Tower Hamlets Partnership over the coming year. The Commission was set up in September 2020 to examine the inequalities experienced by Tower Hamlets Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

Communities. It scrutinised where we are making progress, where we are stalling and where we are falling short. It is envisaged that all strategic partners will be committed to implementing the recommendations arising from the Commission.

## Anchor approach

Building on our collaborative work and understanding the impact organisations can have on inequalities, many partners that are key anchor institutions are working towards some joint principles for action.

The term ‘anchor institutions’ is used to refer to organisations which:

1. Have an **important presence in a place**, usually through a combination of: being largescale employers, the largest purchasers of goods and services in the locality, controlling large areas of land and/or having relatively fixed assets.
2. Are **tied to a particular place** by their mission, histories, physical assets and local relationships. Examples include local authorities, NHS trusts, universities, trade unions, large local businesses, the combined activities of the community and voluntary sector and housing associations.<sup>1</sup>

A local charter is being developed to identify core principles which will collectively deliver social, economic and environmental benefits for Tower Hamlets. The anchor approach will involve working with wider local partners as well as working in equal partnership with local communities to understand and build on their assets and needs, which in turn will support and strengthen our own organisations.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://cles.org.uk/what-is-community-wealth-building/what-is-an-anchor-institution/>

## Appendix A Performance Trends

### Better health and wellbeing

Measure	Polarity	2017/18	2018/2019	2019/2020	Direction of Travel (between latest available year and previous year)	London Benchmark (latest)	England Benchmark (latest)	Performance compared to London Benchmark	Performance compared to England Benchmark
Healthy life expectancy for men (at birth)	Higher is better	61.9 (2015-2017)	60.5 (2016-2018)	Data not published	↓	64.2 (2016-18)	63.4 (2016-18)	↓	↓
Healthy life expectancy for women (at birth)	Higher is better	57.2 (2015-2017)	56.6 (2016-18)	Data not published	↓	64.4 (2016-18)	63.9 (2016-18)	↓	↓
Year 6 prevalence of overweight or obese	Lower is better	42%	41.5%	41.8%	↓	38.2%	35.2%	↓	↓
Percentage residents exposed to N02 levels that exceed the EU limit	Lower is better	77% (2016)	Data not published	Data not published	N/A	2016 Data Central 100% Inner 48% Outer 3% Greater London 24%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Residents happiness rating compared to London and England (Respondents gave a score of 0 to 10)	Higher is better	7.3	7.7	Data not published	↑	7.5	7	↑	↑
Children and young people accessing timely mental health support	Higher is better	N/A	N/A	45.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hospital admissions for asthma for young people aged 19 and under. London, (188.1), England, (186.4)	Lower is better	192.9	263.0	Data not published	↓	197.5	178.4	↑	↑

### Good jobs and employment

Measure	Polarity	2017/18	2018/2019	2019/2020	Direction of Travel (between latest available year and previous year)	London Benchmark (latest)	England Benchmark (latest)	Performance compared to London Benchmark	Performance compared to England Benchmark
Employment Rate	Higher is better	64.7%	73.0%	71.8%	↓	75.1%	75.9%	↓	↓
Business survival rate (in one year)	Higher is better	88.1%	86.5%	Data not published	↓	87.1%	89.3%	↓	↑
Residents supported into sustainable employment through support from the WorkPath partnership	Higher is better	994	1113	1180	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Residents with a Level 1 qualification (% with NVQ1 only - aged 16-64)	Higher is better	5.3%	6.9%	2.2%	↓	6.5%	10.1%	↓	↓
Job growth	Higher is better	2.8%	2.3%	Data not published	↓	1.2%	1.4%	↑	↑

## A better deal for children and young people

Measure	Polarity	2017/18	2018/2019	2019/2020	Direction of Travel (between latest available year and previous year)	London Benchmark (latest)	England Benchmark (latest)	Performance compared to London Benchmark	Performance compared to England Benchmark
Pupil progress in reading for KS2	Higher is better	0.8	1.1	1.3	↑	0.8	0	↑	↑
Pupil progress in writing for KS2	Higher is better	1.4	1.5	1.2	↓	0.8	0	↑	↑
Pupil progress in maths for KS2	Higher is better	1.2	1.9	1.9	→	1.2	0	↑	↑
Pupils have participated in positive activities in the past four weeks	Higher is better	83%	N/A	Data not published	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of secondary school pupils who have enough information and support to help plan their future	Higher is better	37%	N/A	Data not published	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Progress 8 score at the end of KS4	Higher is better	0.25	0.15	0.24	↑	0.22	-0.03	↑	↑

## Strong, resilient and safe community

Measure	Polarity	2017/18	2018/2019	2019/2020	Direction of Travel (between latest available year and previous year)	London Benchmark (latest)	England Benchmark (latest)	Performance compared to London Benchmark	Performance compared to England Benchmark
Percentage of residents who feel safe during the day	Higher is better	N/A	86%	Annual Resident Survey results will be available in May 2021	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of residents who feel that partners are dealing effectively with crime and anti-social behaviour	Higher is better	57%	52%		↓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of residents satisfied with their area as a place to live	Higher is better	79%	70%		↓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of residents who feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together	Higher is better	86%	78%		↓	75%	81%	↑	↓
Population turnover rate (per 1,000 population)	N/A	235	284	Data not published	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

## Output measures

Measure	Polarity	2017/18	2018/2019	2019/2020	Direction of Travel (between latest available year and previous year)	London Benchmark (latest)	England Benchmark (latest)	Performance compared to London Benchmark	Performance compared to England Benchmark
Number of SMEs and new enterprises supported through the council's business programmes	Higher is better	N/A	N/A	124	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of 16-17 year olds in education, employment and training	Higher is better	93.2%	92.9%	94.6%	↑	95.5%	92.6%	Lower	Higher
People who are more independent after being supported through reablement services	Higher is better	54.6	60.2	78.1	↑	79.3	79.5	Lower	Lower
Long term looked after children who are in stable placements	Higher is better	57.0%	62.0%	74.0%	↑	70.0%	68.0%	Higher	Higher
Young people engaging with the youth service who receive a recorded outcome	Higher is better	54.0%	49.9%	61.0%	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
% of clients using social care who receive self-directed support (up to 2014/15 also included carers) - Snapshot	Higher is better	73%	83.80%	93%	↑	94.6%	91.90%	Lower	Higher
Percentage of child protection reviews carried out within statutory timescales	Higher is better	91.1%	98.9%	98.2%	↓	95.8%	91.5%	Higher	Higher
Victims of violence against women and girls who feel safe after engaging with victim support	Higher is better	N/A	N/A	97%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Tower Hamlets Plan

Measure	Polarity	2017/18	2018/2019	2019/2020	Direction of Travel (between latest available year and previous year)	London Benchmark (latest)	England Benchmark (latest)	Performance compared to London Benchmark	Performance compared to England Benchmark
Number of opiate users starting treatment (new presentations)	Higher is better	432	388	404	↑	5,680	40,512	N/A	N/A
Percentage of all drug (opiate) users completing treatment and not re-presenting	Higher is better	4.5%	5.5%	6.5%	↑	N/A	5.70%	N/A	Better
Number of homes built	Higher is better	N/A	1031	4098	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of affordable homes built	Higher is better	N/A	132	1005	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Average annual income increase for residents receiving benefits maximisation	Higher is better	N/A	£559.87	£773.34	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lets to overcrowded households	Higher is better	N/A	755	1078	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A