

## Scrutiny Action Log

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

Municipal Year: **2023-24**

Reference	Action	Assigned to	Scrutiny Lead	Due Date	Response
Insert date	Insert agenda item title and the action requested by the committee	Insert name of director	Insert scrutiny lead	Insert Date	Response provided by the service/ witness
<b>11.07.23</b>	Provide further data and information on Care Experience	<b>James Thomas</b> Corporate Director for Children & Culture	<b>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</b> CESSC Chair	08.08.23	Email sent on 09.08.23 with links providing further information included in Appendix 1.
<b>12.10.23</b>	Clarify the timescales for the completion of the research report on free schools' meals carried out by Queen Mary University	<b>Anna Murphy</b> Senior Strategy & Policy Officer	<b>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</b> CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 2.
	Provide school attendance data for Tower Hamlets	<b>Layla Richards</b> Head of Strategy and Commissioning	<b>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</b> CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 3.
	Research and provide any available data on the link between overcrowding, mental health and attendance.	<b>Layla Richards</b> Head of Strategy and Commissioning	<b>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</b> CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 4.
	Provide further data on Youth Service uptake including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Breakdown of new contacts</li> <li>- Gender split in participants</li> </ul>	<b>Kelly Duggan</b> Head of Youth Justice Service	<b>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</b> CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 5.

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	Provide a breakdown of the Equalities monitoring data for employees of the youth service, esp. gender	<b>Kelly Duggan</b> Head of Youth Justice Service	<b>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</b> CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 6.
<b>07.12.23</b>	A written brief on free school meal deals, including the type of options available and costs per meal to be brought to sub-committee members for review.	<b>Jenny Pittam</b> Head of Contract Services	<b>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</b> CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 7.
	Further details on young people with EHCP no longer studying BTEC Courses to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.	<b>Tina Sode</b> Head of Special Education Needs	<b>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</b> CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 8.
	Details on the numbers of young people who are NEET including those on remand to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.	<b>Lisa Fraser</b> Acting Corporate Director Childrens Services	<b>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</b> CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 9.
	A written brief on details and numbers on the Post 16 needs list to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.	<b>Lisa Fraser</b> Acting Corporate Director Childrens Services	<b>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</b> CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 10.
	Details on speech and language therapy provision in conjunction with BARTS will be brought to the sub-committee for review.	<b>Lisa Fraser</b> Acting Corporate Director Childrens Services	<b>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</b> CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 11.

## Appendix 1 - Care experience data and information

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

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

## Appendix 2 - Free School Meal Research Report

**Fantastic Food in Schools (Primary School Programme)** - Report to be shared in February 2024

**Secondary school UFSM Programme** – Timelines (tbc)

## Appendix 3 - School Attendance Data

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

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

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

## Appendix 4 - Overcrowding affects children's wellbeing, Finding solutions in Tower Hamlets



### Overcrowding affects children's wellbeing Finding solutions in Tower Hamlets



#### How many households are affected?

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

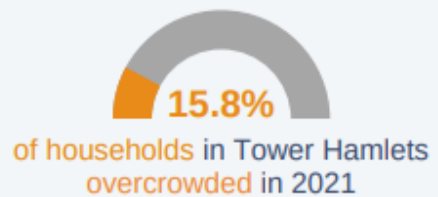


Figure 1: Percentage of households that met the overcrowding criteria as per 2021 census

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

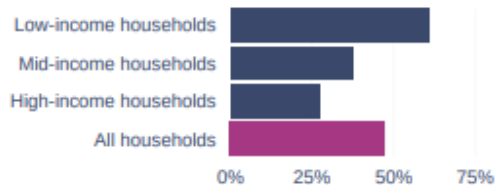


Figure 2: Percentage of households who reported not having enough space in their homes in a survey of 620 parents of children aged 0-4 and parents to be living in Tower Hamlets

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

#### Key research findings



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



Families experiencing overcrowding often face other issues with their homes.

#### Recommendations to improve residents' wellbeing

1

Policymakers could adopt **broader indicators** of overcrowding.

2

Landlords can provide space for **storage** and clothes drying, and **prioritise repairs**.

3

Planning rules can require child friendly, suitably sized **balconies** for new builds.

## Underpinning evidence

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

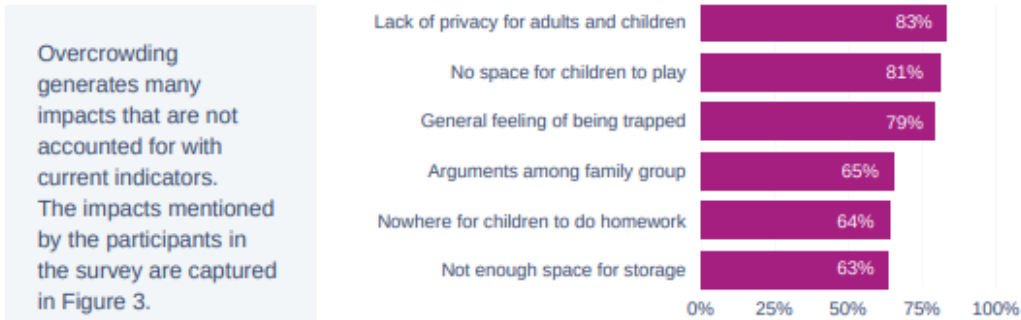


Figure 3: Impacts of lack of space, for respondents who reported this problem

**Families experiencing overcrowding often face other issues with their homes**

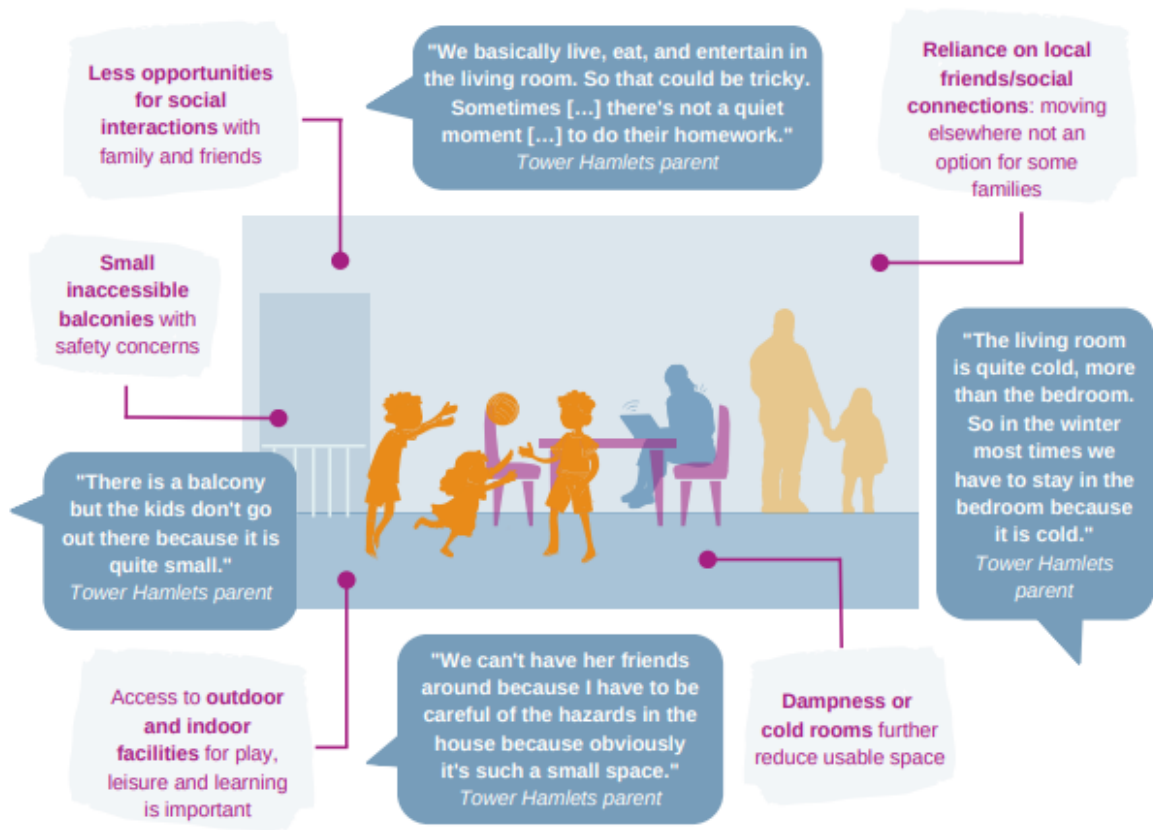


Figure 4: Overcrowding issues reported by parents

## Underlying research



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

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



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

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

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

### Partners



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

For more information contact Dr Marcella Ucci, [m.ucci@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.ucci@ucl.ac.uk)

May 2023

## Associated Links (Appendix 4)

[IJERPH | Free Full-Text | Exploring the Interactions between Housing and Neighbourhood Environments for Enhanced Child Wellbeing: The Lived Experience of Parents Living in Areas of High Child Poverty in England, UK \(mdpi.com\)](https://www.mdpi.com/1424-6460/11/12/2207)

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

## Appendix 5 - Breakdown of New Contacts with the Youth Service

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

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

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

## Appendix 6 - Breakdown of Gender Equalities Monitoring Data for Youth Service Employees

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



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

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

### **Appendix 7 - UFSM School lunch and "Meal Deal" offers in Tower Hamlets Secondary Schools**

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



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





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

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



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



## Meal Deal

1

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

2

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

**LOOK OUT FOR THE PURPLE LABELS**


*2 items for  
£2.61*

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



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


Respect | Aspire | Achieve

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



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

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# Accent Catering Sample Menu (Week 1)



*Week 1* **Spring Menu**

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

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

**JACKET POTATOES**

**MONDAY**  
Cheese and Beans topped Jacket Potato  
**(Mk)**

**TUESDAY**  
Tuna Mayonnaise topped Jacket Potato  
**(E,F)**

**WEDNESDAY**  
Cheesy Coleslaw topped Jacket Potato  
**(E,Mu)**

**THURSDAY**  
Chilli con Carne topped Jacket Potato  
**(None)**

**FRIDAY**  
Cheese and Beans topped Jacket Potato  
**(Mk)**

**DESSERT**

**MONDAY**  
Apple Crumble with Custard  
**(G,Mk)**

**TUESDAY**  
Fruity Flapjack  
**(G,Su)**

**WEDNESDAY**  
Baked Citrus Pudding with Lemon Sauce  
**(G,Mk,E)**

**THURSDAY**  
Banana Tea Bread  
**(G,Mk,E)**

**FRIDAY**  
Winter Fruit Crumble with Custard  
**(G,Mk)**

**Mulberry**  
Academy Shoreditch

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

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*every day!*  
**Look out for our**  
**Salad Bar**

Fresh every day packed with tasty choices!

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**MEAL DEAL**

**Check out what's on offer today!**

Also available for Free School Meals

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**ALLERGENS**

Speak to one of our chefs if you have any allergies or check on the daily menu template.

*we're allergy aware!*

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### **Appendix 8 - Further details on young people with EHCP no longer studying BTEC Courses to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.**

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

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

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



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

### Appendix 10 - Post 16 Needs

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Appendix 11 - Speech and Language Provision**

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

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

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