



Tower Hamlets
SEND Improvement Board
Annual Report 2023 / 24

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Introductions from the Chairs

Welcome to the Tower Hamlets SEND Improvement Board Annual Report 2023-24. This report outlines the progress that has been made in delivering improvement across the SEND system in the borough during the last year and sets out priorities for 2024-25. The report is organised around the five priorities of the SEND Strategy (2020-24).

Since our inspection in 2021 we are pleased to report that good progress has been made across all areas identified for improvement and this had been recognised by the DfE and NHS England as part of our regular monitoring meetings. Many actions are now embedded as business as usual, including the popular Let's Talk SEND engagement events, which continue to attract a wide breadth of parents and carers with children at different stages in their SEND journeys.

We know that increased demand continues to put pressure on the SEND System, including our schools – our school population has the highest percentage of EHCPs in England at 6.8%. This means that assessment and support are sometimes not put in place quickly enough for our children and young people with SEND. We recognise that more work is needed to improve EHCP quality and timeliness at pace, as well as a clearer multi-agency offer for children, young people and their families.

During the past year we have benefitted from an intensive period of external scrutiny, co-analysis and peer support, including an LGA SEND Peer Challenge; peer support from Islington Council; and involvement in the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme. We have used this learning to develop our draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy. This has been informed by a programme of consultation with young people, families and professionals - they want a concise SEND strategy which clearly sets out what the partnership will do to drive improvement and we are committed to delivering this in partnership with children, young people and their families.

Introductions from the Chairs

Parents, carers, and professionals have told us they want a clear route to earlier support, and more knowledge of what is available at each stage. We recognise the need to pull together the positive work happening across the Local Area into a multi-disciplinary offer, which would allow us to identify SEND and target our support offers earlier. In addition, we are prioritising development of an Inclusion Framework to provide guidance, training and whole school approaches to strengthen schools' universal and SEN Support offer before a statutory assessment is considered.

A raft of recently approved Mayoral growth bids also demonstrate political commitment to continuous improvement and include £1,121k for SEN Transport and £604k for additional caseworkers in the SEN and Preparing for Adulthood Teams. In addition, the NHS has committed £740k over the past year.

We have taken steps to reform the membership and structure of the SEND Improvement Board to sharpen the strategic focus of the group, improve its ability to drive the new strategy and to hold to all stakeholders to account for delivery.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on our journey to excellence.



Steve Reddy

**Chair of Tower Hamlets
SEND Improvement Board.
Corporate Director of
Childrens Services.**



**Warwick Tomsett,
Deputy Chair of
Tower Hamlets
SEND Improvement Board.
Joint Director of Integrated
Commissioning.**

Introductions from the Chairs



Over the past year the [Our Time All Abilities Youth Forum](#) has:

- Worked with the Youth Service on developing inclusive SEND provision.
- Consulted with the team working with the team redeveloping St George's Leisure Centre to ensure it is SEND family friendly.
- Presented at the London SEND Summit. This was well received by senior London Managers who plan to consult Our Time about setting up similar forums in their areas.
- Become a Certified Interest Group Ltd by guarantee to attract external funding.
- Our Time report increased use of social media, noting that more people are engaging with their posts; followers on Instagram have increased from 79 to 215 since this time last year. A recent Linked In post on the Youth Matters Conference in Birmingham was viewed 320 times.
- Shaped the new SEND strategy and participated in the SEND Hackathon
- Presented at a Let's Talk SEND event at Brady Arts Centre
- Presented at Every Chance for Every Child Forum
- Promoted Our Time at Your Voice Matters Birmingham Conference



Priorities for 24/25

- We will continue to increase our social media presence
- We are working together on films to spread SEND Awareness and to promote Our Time during the summer holiday
- We are doing continuous work to update the Local Offer Young People's Zone
- We will continue to meet with Youth Service managers to look at improving access for young people with SEND



Sornnaly Hossain, Our Time Forum Chair, Young Person Ambassador and member of the SEND Improvement Board



[Tower Hamlets Independent SEND Parents' Forum](#)

The forum has had a great year, which has included a range of different outreach events, these have included 10 summer events, school fairs, a Let's Talk SEND Forum Fun Day and a mini-Autism roadshow.

Themed workshops have also been delivered, covering puberty, Epilepsy, behaviours and dressing skills. As a result, we are delighted to report that our membership has increased from 85 to 245 members across 2023.

The forum has worked with Langdon Park on an Autism in school project. This included taking thirteen parents to the National Autism Show, which inspired them to create their own local road show.

The forum has helped to shape the new SEND & Inclusion Strategy flagging areas of current challenge, including:

- The need for a clear offer for CYP with SEND; some parents are unsure where to look for information
- Communication around eligibility and availability of Short Breaks provision
- School readiness, including toilet training
- Inconsistency across schools regarding SEND provision
- Long waits for statutory and specialist assessment

Parents have welcomed the chance to speak with the EHCP team throughout the summer at different events and although there is still some way to go parents feel hopeful that changes are happening.

The School Nursing Team School nursing team also had a visible presence at events throughout the summer and parents valued the helpful health and school advice provided.

Parents recognise that SEND is becoming more the norm and that there are some really good programmes running, including a sensory after school clubs and disability sports at Poplar Baths; we need to replicate what is working well across other areas of the borough.

Priorities for 24/25

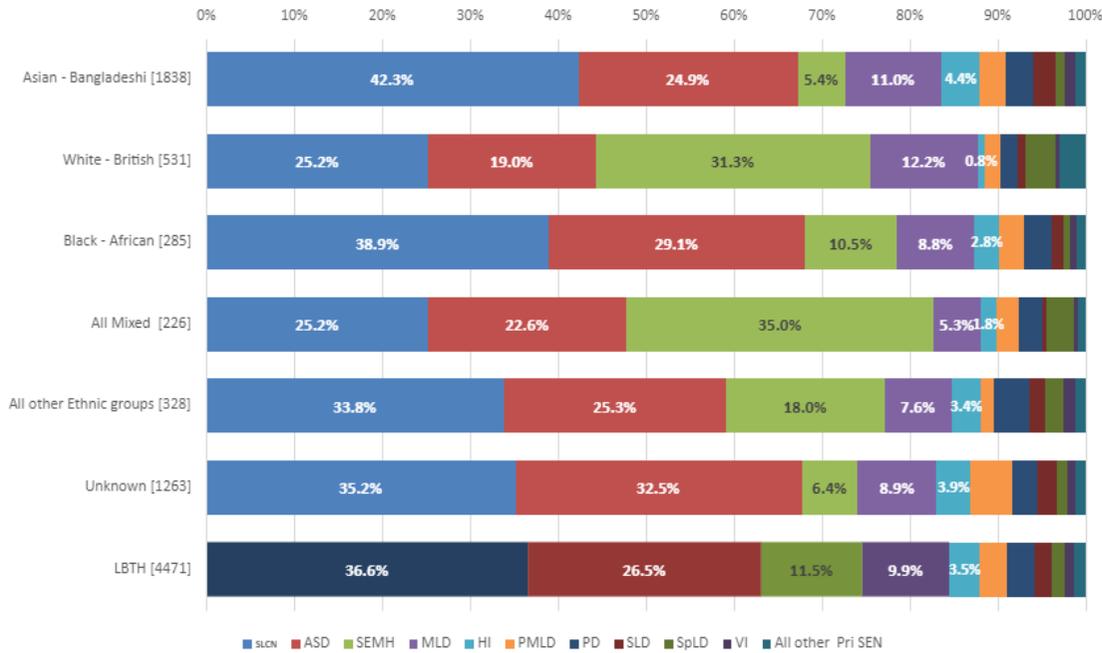
- Early years
- Early intervention
- Complex needs
- Post 16
- Downs syndrome & cerebral palsy peer to peer support

Samantha Gager
Chair of the Tower Hamlets
Independent SEND Parents'
Forum
Member of the SEND
Improvement Board



Tower Hamlets Contextual Picture

Broad Ethnic Breakdown by EHCP Primary Needs (April 2024)

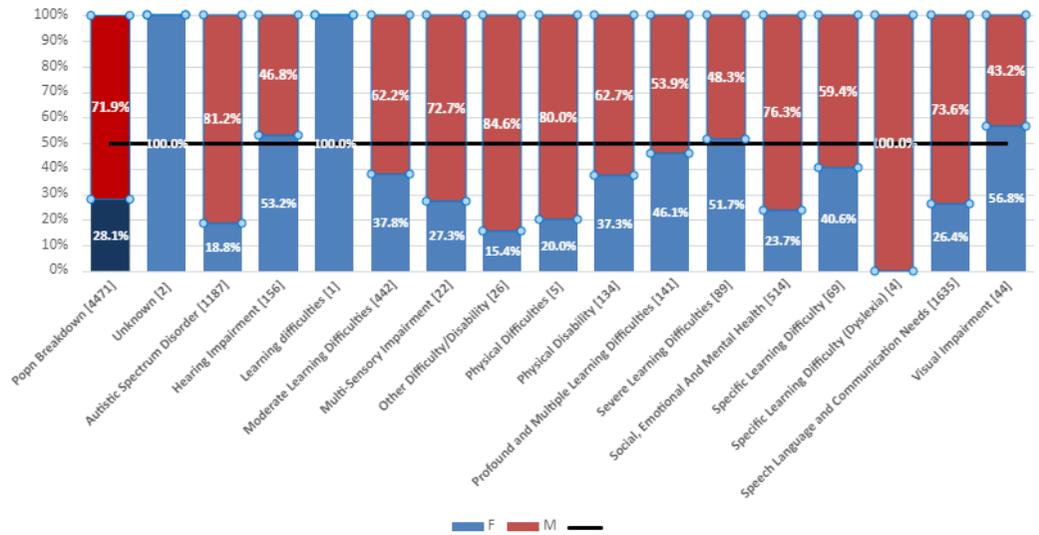


The percentage of our school population with an EHCP is 6.8% - the highest in England (June 2024)

- This figure increased from 5.9% in 2023 and exceeds the national average of 4.8% and London average of 4.9%.
- Pupils requiring SEN Support sits at 12.4%, below the national average of 13.6%.
- In May 2024 we had 4659 Active EHCPs.
- For our EHCP cohort the most prevalent primary need groups are SLCN and Autism; these two areas of need account for almost two-thirds of EHCPs in the Local Area.
- Boys are more likely to have an EHCP (28% female vs 72% male); this is in line with national figures.

- The majority of our EHCP cohort are aged between 5 and 19, but some cohorts are out of step with national figures: 29.2% are aged 11-15, which is below the national average (36.4%), whilst 12.4% are aged 20-25, twice the national figure (6.2%).

EHCP Gender breakdown by Primary Needs (April 2024)



ASD – Autistic spectrum disorder	HI - Hearing impairment		MLD - Moderate learning difficulty	MSI - Multi-sensory impairment	NSA - SEN support but no specialist assessment of need
PD - Physical disability	PMLD - Profound & multiple learning difficulty		SEMH - Social, emotional and mental health	SLCN - Speech, language & communication needs	SLD - Severe learning difficulty
VI - Vision impairment					

Local Government Association (LGA) SEND Peer Challenge



The LGA SEND Peer Challenge was commissioned to provide an external view on the effectiveness of the strategic response and quality of practice. The review took place from 3rd – 6th October 2023.

We are committed to working together to respond to the recommendations highlighted by the review, outlined below.

Review the size and remit of the SEND Improvement Board to ensure that it is more strategic.

Board membership has been revised and a new governance structure is being developed in line with the new SEND and Inclusion Strategy to enable more strategic oversight of improvement priorities.

Co-produce a concise, revised SEND Strategy.

A draft Strategy has been co-developed with young people, families and professionals and published for public consultation during May and June 2024.

Devise a way to test the impact of the progress on the Written Statement of Action against outcomes for children and young people.

We constantly strive to improve how we listen to children and young people. Feedback is gathered in a variety of ways and provides indications of where outcomes have improved. You Said We Did reporting is one way we can evidence how service improvements have been made in response to feedback. Examples are included throughout this report.

Improve information sharing between partners and with all stakeholders

This remains an area of continuous improvement and includes building upon our Local Offer, Let's Talk SEND events and Let's Talk SEND termly bulletins.

At pace, develop a common understanding, and implement a universal offer for early years settings, schools and colleges

We are prioritising development of an Inclusion Framework to provide guidance, training and whole school approaches to strengthen schools' universal and SEN Support offer before a statutory assessment is considered.

Continue the programme to improve the quality and timeliness of EHC plans

This remains an area of continuous improvement; average EHCP timeliness for 2023 was 48%.

Priority One: Leading SEND

Key achievements in 2023/24

The SEND Improvement Board has supported the draft SEND Strategy which will be approved and launched in 2024.

The strategy has been informed by a programme of consultation with young people, families and professionals, including in person discussions with the Our Time Forum, online surveys and an in-person workshop attended by 50 people.

Our Delivering Better Value grant submission was developed in response to extensive engagement with parents, carers, professionals, and young people on what needs to be done to improve the SEND system. The submission was approved in February 2024.

Our SEND Young Person and Parent Ambassador scheme is well-established and expanding. We now have five Young People Ambassadors and 14 Parent Ambassadors working in the community.

Between October 2023 and March 2024 Parent Ambassadors attended 17 events, including school coffee mornings, reaching 356 parents.

The Local Offer is continuously improved through coproduction with young people and parents. We have improved ease of navigation and created a Young Person's Zone following feedback from parents and in co-production with young people.

A raft of recently approved Mayoral growth bids demonstrate political commitment to continuous improvement and include £1,121k for SEN Transport and £604k for additional caseworkers in the SEN and Preparing for Adulthood Teams.

Tower Hamlets & City of London Youth Justice Service (YJS) is working towards a SEND Quality Lead status, with Child First Commendation. Assessors were impressed with the offers for children, including Break the Cycle, YJS Nurse, Educational Psychology, SEND youth justice champion, collaboration with LEAP, and child voice.

Membership of the Co-Production Charter Working Group includes young people from the Our Time Forum and a broad subset of parents of children with varying needs. A draft charter will be consulted upon across education, health, & social care.

SEND Parents Forum were consulted about the redevelopment of St George's Leisure Centre and identified barriers to inclusion. All facilities at the new centre have been designed to be fully accessible.



A Family Hubs SEND awareness campaign (pictured above) was launched following feedback received from parents and carers as part of the Early Help Strategy consultation process.

Eight young people attended a SEND hackathon as part of the new Youth Service engagement programme. Attendees gave their views on shaping a new and inclusive Young Tower Hamlets Youth Service. Adjustments were made to the in-person Sunday workshop, including additional assistance for varying levels of need and accommodation of carers.

Priority One: Leading SEND

What difference is it making for young people and their families?

YOU SAID

Celebrate young people with SEND so young people have role models

There is a need for youth sessions for children and young people with mild to moderate SEND

WE DID

Mayoral funding will establish mentoring for young people with SEND. Young adults who have successfully transitioned can mentor those currently going through the process.

Established weekly sessions at Haileybury Youth Centre. These sessions aim to support SEND young people with their development, including physical, social and emotional skills and raise their self-esteem, self-confidence and independence. There are a range of activities available including sports, fitness studio, homework club, health, wellbeing and employability.

In response to feedback that travelling to Haileybury was a barrier to attendance, a youth session has also been set up at George Green's School on the Isle of Dogs.

Other feedback received

Our Time Forum feedback on the youth sessions for SEND

We are very grateful to Young Tower Hamlets for making these special arrangements for young people with SEND so that they can feel more included and are able to participate in a further range of activities across Tower Hamlets as a whole.

Priority One: Leading SEND

What next?

Priorities for improvement in 2024/25

Following our successful Delivering Better Value grant application, we will initiate strategic delivery of programmes and recruitment to improve the SEND system. These will be focused on:

- Improving our SEND early identification and intervention system, including a new Participation and Co-production Officer role.
- Completion and implementation of our Inclusion Framework at both universal and SEN Support levels, along with associated quality assurance, training and support for schools,
- A review of banding arrangements,

We are committed to engaging a wide range of residents as part of our SEND and Inclusion Strategy consultation. Once finalised, the new strategy will be launched and implemented in 2024/25.

The SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) will be completed in 2024/25.

We will launch our SEND Co-production Charter, developed with young people and parents. This will strengthen understanding of successful co-production, including how to consider the specific needs of children and young people with SEND.

A review of the SEN Service will be carried out to ensure that the operational structure is efficient and has good quality assurance practice in place.

Our SEND improvement work will continue to focus and respond to the lived experience of children, young people, and their families. We will achieve this by the public re-launch of the Local Offer website and development of a One Minute Guide on independent travel training in response to feedback from the Parent Care Forum.

Priority Two: Early Identification and Assessment

Key achievements in 2023 / 24

In 2023 the percentage of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks was 48%, compared with a national average of 50% (SEN2 return). Demand remains high, with a 184% growth in EHCPs issued since 2020.

Since January 2024 allocation of work between caseworkers in the SEN Service has changed, split between Annual Review and Casework Teams to improve performance and quality.

Feedback from the DfE and evidence from audited EHCPs identified the voice of the child as the most significant area for improvement. Supported by continuous training, development, and monitoring on plan writing, EHC Coordinators are now more confident in holding co-production meetings, where capturing child voice is prioritised.

There are well developed systems for early identification of needs in Early Education and Childcare (EEC). The EEC Inclusion Team provide a comprehensive and well-received package of advice, inclusion training and workshops to support settings in further developing inclusive practice.

We launched our Family Hub programme, with hubs in launched in the Southeast and Southwest Locality of the borough. Tower Hamlets Council is one of the first 75 local authorities to pilot the government's Family Hubs model.

Our Family Hubs approach has an explicit focus upon SEND. We consulted with parents to identify gaps in provision and will provide services to meet those gaps from 2024/25.

Work to understand the impact of the revised EHCP template and co-production process for parents continues. Since the summer term satisfaction surveys have been provided with each final plan issued, embedded as a QR code.

Although the uptake has been initially slow, the feedback that has been received is very positive, with individual Coordinators receiving specific praise for their positive communications and attention to detail.

A new full-time Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) has been recruited to support improvement of quality and frequency of social care input, strengthening links between social care, health and education.

We have taken steps to prioritise the ceasing of plans, where appropriate, including expanding the capacity of our dedicated Preparing for Adulthood Team. This will add five additional full-time posts to the team and the increased resource has already identified 60 cases which are in the process of being ceased.

A successful £616k Start for Life bid has initiated a workforce pilot which will explore screening for Social Communication Difference at 12 months old, to enable even earlier intervention. This would include interventions such as support and coaching for parents.

What difference is it making for young people and their families?

YOU SAID

Waits for EHCP assessment are too long

Parents highlighted gaps in the Family Hubs SEND support offer

Parent feedback from satisfaction surveys on the revised EHCP template:

The communication was very regular and effective. The updates enabled us to plan and support the child's needs.

The SEND coordinator was extremely professional and always willing to listen.

WE DID

The Mayor has approved £604k in funding for additional caseworkers in the SEN and Preparing for Adulthood Teams

We will deliver the following sessions from 2024:

- A dads' stay and play session at the Isle of Dogs Family Hub on Saturdays,
- Sensory Play sessions for 5-11 year olds at the Isle of Dogs Family Hub,

Impact

- 95%+ of decisions to assess to Panel and a decision made within four weeks.
- All 248 final EHCPs for phase transfer due on 15 February 2024 were issued on time.

Priority Two: Early Identification and Assessment

What next?

Priorities for improvement in 2024/25

We will continue to improve EHCP timeliness as a priority. Additional funding for caseworkers will reduce active caseloads enabling more timely assessment and improved quality of content. A planned review of the SEN Service will ensure that the structure is efficient, with suitable and sustainable operational capacity.

The timeliness of Annual Reviews remains a priority. Throughout 2024/25 we will:

- Continue to develop our monthly reporting capability via our data system which will ensure Annual Reviews can be tracked electronically and will be subject to the same quality assurance process once amended as new EHCPs.
- EHC coordinators to continue contacting schools at the beginning of every half term to prompt for due Annual Review dates.

We are focused on continuous improvement. We will ensure we have the right staff with the right skills by:

- Holding further training for coordinators on co-production with a focus on ensuring the child or young person's direct views are obtained and meaningfully included in the review of the draft EHCP.
- The newly recruited Designated Social Care Officer will work strategically to improve links between social care, health and education specifically around social care engagement and quality of input into EHCPs.

Priority Three: Commissioning Effective Services to Respond to Local Need

Key achievements in 2023/24

A Social Communication Difference Navigation model has been developed to support families through the process of referral to the ASD waiting list and diagnosis, clarifying the support available along the way.

102 families were consulted and inputted into the proposed model, raising what support is most important to them.

We have engaged with a Queen Mary University led project to review the barriers to accessing services in the Somali community. A workshop was held in October and partners are engaging with how to make universal services more accessible.

A Joint Neurovariance Diagnostic Review Group has been set up. This group is responsible for overseeing improvements in neurovariance diagnostic pathways including autism, learning disability and ADHD.

We have developed a new 3-5 Treatment offer with four Parent Coaching sessions a week. Up to 10 families attend per session.

Therapists are also supporting the Children and Family Centre offer as part of the provision.

We are exceeding ASD Assessment Service discharge targets, but high numbers of referrals continue to put pressure on waiting times and caseload figures; on average, 50-60 referrals are accepted per month, compared to 20 per month pre-Covid. Non-recurrent funding has been approved to extend Bart's Capacity and the London Autism Clinic, with additional recruitment to address the need for more paediatric capacity, which has helped to manage the additional demand.

The Social Communication Navigation Lead (SEND Specialist Health Visitor) is leading on the implementation of Social Communication Stay and Play in Children and Family Centres which will be a drop-in group session supported by specialists for children with suspected autism. The focus of the group is to provide initial support and signpost families to the wider support offer.

The Stephen Hawking Stay and Play session has been launched. The session is for pre-school children with PMLD providing interim support while families wait on Early Years, school placements and/or EHCP assessment. This is supported by staff in the Early Help and Therapy Services and jointly commissioned by Health and Education. The group has received positive feedback from parents and professionals.

Priority Three: Commissioning Effective Services to Respond to Local Need

What difference is it making for young people and their families?

YOU SAID

Families wanted more support whilst waiting on the Autism Diagnostic waiting list

Parents said waiting times for speech and language therapy assessment were too long

Impact

- Parent Coaching has received 90% positive feedback from families who would recommend it to others.
- Bart's Health delivered 'Feedback February' on its Therapies Services and saw 80% of families reporting their experience as Very Good or Good.
- 92% of individual therapy outcomes achieved or partially achieved.

WE DID

Invited families with children on the Autism Diagnostic waiting list to parent coaching sessions as part of our 3-5 Treatment Offer.

We have also recruited a SEND Specialist Health Visitor to lead on sessions for children with suspected autism and signpost families to the wider support offer.

Average waiting time for under-fives Speech & Language Therapy (SLT) assessment - reduced significantly from a high of 35 weeks (Oct 2022) to 10 weeks.

Other feedback received

Parent of a child receiving SLT

I liked the way they dealt with the children's condition with respect and understanding.

Priority Three: Commissioning Effective Services to Respond to Local Need

What next?

Priorities for improvement in 2024/25

Average waiting times for autism diagnosis remain high at 88 weeks, with local pressures also reflected at a national level. The new Neurovariance Diagnostic Review Group will develop a business case for longer term funding and an updated pathway to address this pressure by Summer 2024.

We will continue to prioritise support for families on the waiting list in 2024/25, to ensure that families are well informed about the assessment process and support available while they wait.

We have made good progress on our integrated therapies model for early years and school age children and will continue to develop our offer to strengthen early intervention support available to families. Over the next year, we will roll out:

- Social Communication Stay and Play sessions by the summer term.
- A Sylheti workshop and develop a tailored offer to provide autism support for Bengali families.
- Improvement of the Children and Family Centre offer, including the mobilisation of Educational Psychology Sessions to support social communication and mobilise Early Talk Boost in Early Years Settings.

We will support schools to help pupils develop communication skills by trialling a digital Speech and Language Therapy platform with some schools in the summer term. We will roll this out to all primary schools by the beginning of autumn term.

Priority Four: Good Quality Education Provision for All Children

Key achievements in 2023/24

Phoenix School launched the Autism Specialist Classroom pilot in September 2023, working with 20 mainstream schools. The project is supported by London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Bart's Health, NHS North-East London and Tower Hamlets Schools. This specialist outreach will upskill our school workforce and support children and young people to remain in mainstream provision.

We are the first place in the country where every primary and secondary school pupil receives a free school meal. The funding is part of the council's effort to improve the life chances of all young people in the borough, including children and young people with SEND.

The SEND Sufficiency Review has been undertaken. The review identified a significant shortfall in specialist provision and placements.

The review identified that our largest areas of need are Speech, Language and Communication; Autism; and Social Emotional and Mental Health.

Planning is underway to address these shortfalls. We have already initiated the following provision:

- A secondary school age Autism resource base
- A two-year Autism Pilot with Phoenix Special School

Work is underway to develop an Inclusion Framework co-produced with schools, children and young people, parents and key stakeholders across education, health, and social care, with support from the Council for Disabled Children (CDC).

The framework will provide guidance, training and whole school approaches to strengthen schools' universal and SEN Support offer before a statutory assessment is considered.

The Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and University Bursary (UB) schemes were introduced in 2023 to support students from low-income households. Twenty SEN learners benefitted from these grants across 2023-24

Priority Four: Good Quality Education Provision for All Children

What difference is it making for young people and their families?

YOU SAID

Some parents not always aware that their child(ren) are receiving SEND support

Some parents of children with Autism told us they want their children to remain in mainstream settings, but there is a lack of available places

WE DID

A new Delivering Better Value funded Participation and Co-production Officer will take the lead working with parents and carers, to ensure that information on provision at universal and SEND support is known and understood.

The Phoenix pilot has been initiated:
Outreach support from specialist schools to support mainstream schools with children and young people with SEND is particularly successful and is an effective use of joint resources. A good example being the outreach work by The Phoenix School which is highly valued. (LGA Peer review)

Priority Four: Good Quality Education Provision for All Children

What next?

Priorities for improvement in 2024/25

Our SEND Sufficiency Review identified a significant shortfall in specialist provision and placements, with a shortfall of up to 260 places within the next ten years. We will:

- Pilot a programme of specialist Additionally Resourced Provisions. These will take the form of SEN Units (specialist provision attached to mainstream schools). We will establish up to six specialist Additionally Resourced Provisions within the 2024/25 academic year, benefitting up to 150 pupils.
- Develop a new Autism resource base at a primary school increasing access to mainstream provision for up to 12 pupils with Autism by September 2026.

We will roll the Inclusion Framework out to all schools in 2024, complemented by a training programme to support auditing of inclusive practice and identification of areas for development. Once embedded, the framework will provide clarity for parents and carers on what support to expect from schools before statutory assessment is considered.

The Mayor's Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and University Bursary (UB) schemes have been extended and are set to benefit up to 2050 students in 2024/25. The Mayor has approved an extra £750k to increase the EMA award from £400 to £600 and extend this to up to 1,250 students across 2024/25. In addition, a total of £1.2m will extend the UB award from 400 to 800 students.

Priority Five: Supporting successful transitions and supporting independence

Key achievements in 2023 / 24

The Transitions Board continues to oversee transitions and support.

The board has driven work to improve the transition pathways for children and young people with EHCPs from Children's Social Care to Adult Social Care.

A Transitions Booklet and 'TUBE' Map document have been co-developed between health, education and social care to inform young people's awareness of the support available in the Local Area as they progress into adulthood.

A Quality Assurance audit of young people transitioning to Adult Social Care has been undertaken and highlighted timeliness and joint working as areas for improvement.

We know there is more to do to improve the process of transition for young people with SEND. There are plans to develop and enhance our support offer, including exploration of a peer mentorship program and training and mentorship events.

Embedding Let's Talk SEND events themed around transitions. A recent presentation from Young Workpath was particularly successful in terms of raising awareness of what is available. Most families attending had been unaware that their children would be offered careers advice from Year 9 onwards.

We have amended the Annual Review template to incorporate a dedicated transitions section (for age 14+) to support young people in preparing for adulthood. Anecdotal feedback has been very positive from families and an audit is planned to test whether this is embedding and being consistently used.

The Central London Careers Hub, and the Prince's Trust joined to deliver the 2023 'Let's Work' event which was attended by over 300 young people and 30 employers. Many young people had interviews for entry level jobs and/or offers of work experience as a result.

Priority Five: Supporting successful transitions and supporting independence

What difference is it making for young people and their families?

YOU SAID

Young people need more pathways into employment

Parents told us there is a need to teach more life skills and more support is needed for young people to develop independence

Other feedback received

At the Let's Talk SEND event on transitions, a young person spoke about his successful journey to employment via the council's internship programme. Parents fed back that it was useful to hear the positive impact of these initiatives as it helped them understand the scope of future opportunities for their children.

WE DID

The council has developed a programme of in-house apprenticeships and internships

We have made travel training more readily available by employing three additional Travel Trainers to reduce the time on the waiting list.

More pupils have been able to access the travel training programme at a faster rate to provide the confidence required to travel safely and independently to and from their place of education.

An Our Time ambassador commented on the personal impact of travel training:

Travel training helped. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to go to work when I was 16. My parents didn't want me to travel to college in Hackney, but I was determined, and I could go to the college because of travel training.

Priority Five: Supporting successful transitions and supporting independence

What next?

Priorities for improvement in 2024/25

We know there is more to do to improve the experiences of transition for young people with SEND.

A Transitions Protocol has been developed in response to the outcome of a multi-agency transitions audit. The protocol will be launched to staff by the end of summer term 2024 with the aim of improving multi-agency working and ensuring consistency across service areas. The Transitions Protocol will strengthen the following areas identified as priorities by the Transitions Board:

- Timeliness of communication, assessment and support.
- Joint working.

We will explore a transitions improvement programme, including additional capacity to provide comprehensive support across Education, Health and Care – with a specific focus on the ‘cliff edge’ transition stages.

We will conduct an audit of EHCPs to assess whether the transitions section of the Annual Review is being used effectively to capture preparing for adulthood discussions.

Case Study



Background

A young person aged 16 on bail support known to the Youth Justice Service with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP).

The young person relied on taxis provided to attend school due to his specific needs. However, due to his bail conditions necessitating residence in Hackney, there arose a complication with his transportation arrangements.

Support provided

During a routine home visit, the young person's Case Manager learned that the provision of taxis had been discontinued, posing a significant barrier to his school attendance. As a year 11 student preparing for his GCSEs, this became a pressing concern.

The Education Officer (EO) contacted the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) representative to clarify the situation. It was determined that the transport department had not been informed of the young person's change of address, leading to the disruption in services.

The SEND representative promptly liaised with the transport department, highlighting the urgency and impact of the situation.

Outcome

As a result of the multi-agency communication facilitated by the EO and the SEND representative, the issue was swiftly resolved. Taxis were reinstated, ensuring the young person's continued access to transportation, and enabling him to attend school without interruption.

Case Study



Background

A young person who is severely sight impaired. They use a long cane and access work through braille. The young person started college and wanted to become more independent, particularly as it was their aspiration to go to university at the end of their course.

Support provided

The young person received regular support from the Habilitation Specialist to develop cane skills and to learn the route to college.

The young person accesses learning through a laptop and Brailenote Touch Plus. The Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired Team (QTVI) provided training to college staff on visual impairment awareness, modification of resources, tactile graphics machine and the use of Brailenote. A large Braille embossed was also installed in the Sensory Hub at the college.

Specific visual impairment resources were provided in the lunch club to promote inclusion and to improve confidence and social skills, with games such as Braille UNO, Braille Scrabble and activities such as boxing.

Outcomes

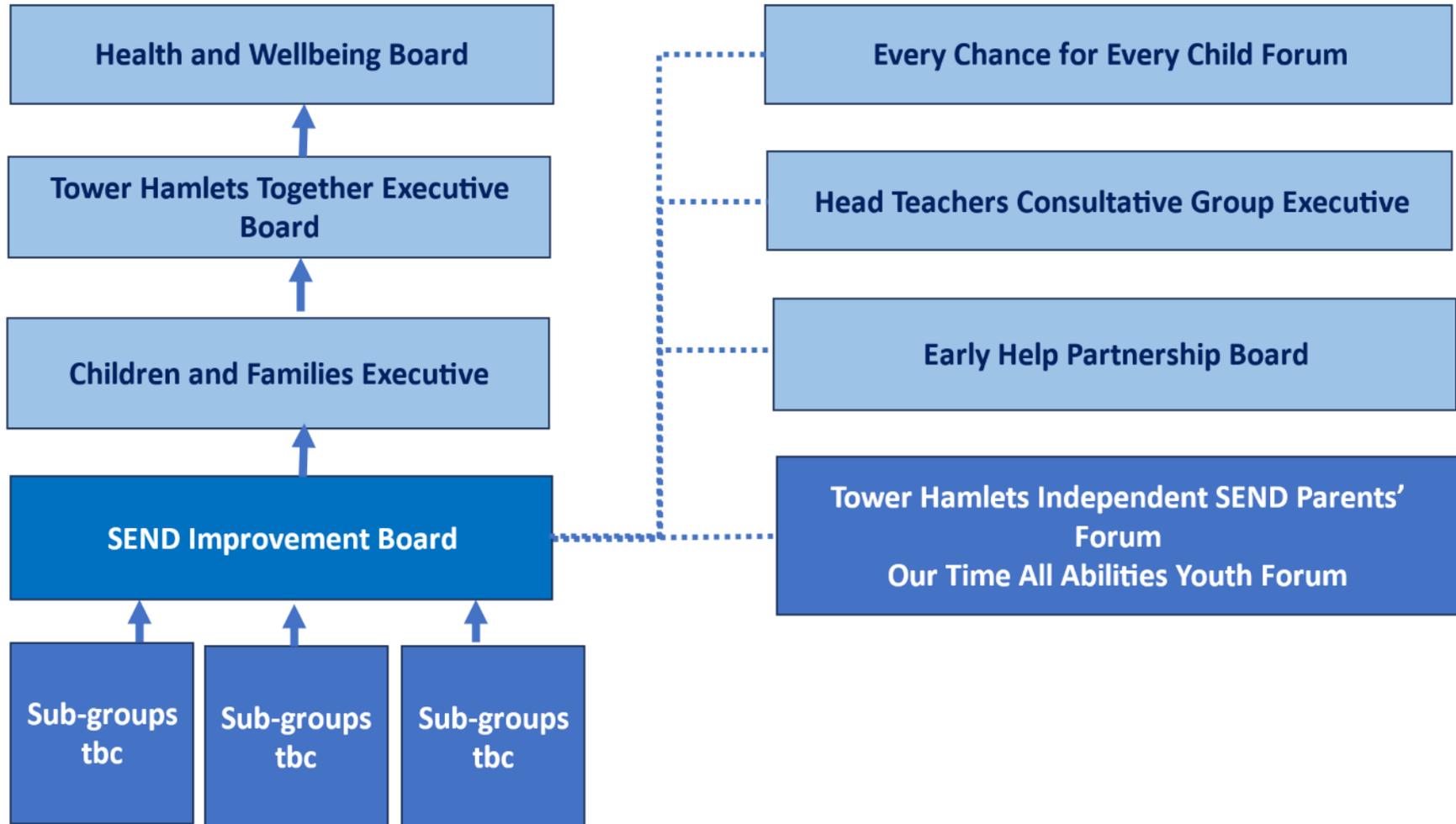
The young person has become a confident traveller.

The young person has improved their Braille skills and has achieved their objective of gaining a Level 3 qualification.

The young person was offered a place at Queen Mary University.

Appendix One: SEND Governance Structure

SEND governance and accountability



Appendix Two: Performance

48%

of EHCPs issued in 20 weeks in 2023

50% national average
65.7% statistical neighbour average.
(January 2024, SEN2 return)

53.6%

of children with EHCPs are educated within mainstream settings

43.3% national average
(January 2024, SEN2 Return)

88 weeks

Average Autism diagnostic waiting time– reduced from 98 weeks (May 2023). Tower Hamlets is performing above the national average.

57% SEN Support

24% EHCP

Year 1 phonics outcomes for pupils with SEND are better than National

(2023, DfE Explore Statistics)

97.5%

of all pupils attend schools judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted

(April 2024, Ofsted)

91.8% attendance for secondary pupils with EHCPs (outperforms national: 83.1%)

90% attendance for primary pupils with EHCPs (in line with national: 89.5%)

(2022/23 academic year
DfE Explore Statistics)

10 weeks

Average waiting time for under-fives Speech & Language Therapy (SLT) assessment - reduced significantly from a high of 35 weeks (Oct 2022)

GLOSSARY

ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
BASS	Behaviour and Attendance Support Service
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CLA	Children Looked After
CLDS	Community Learning Disability Service
CSC	Children's Social Care
CWD	Children with Disabilities
DfE	Department for Education
EHCNA	Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EY	Early Years
FNP	Family Nurse Partnership
HVS	Health Visiting Service
IEYS	Integrated Early Years' Service
LA	Local Authority
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
SEN	Special Educational Need
SENco	Special Educational Need Co-ordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENDIASS	SEND Information, Advice and Support Service
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
SHWS	School Health & Well-being Service
SLS	Support for Learning Service