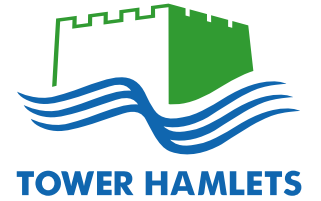


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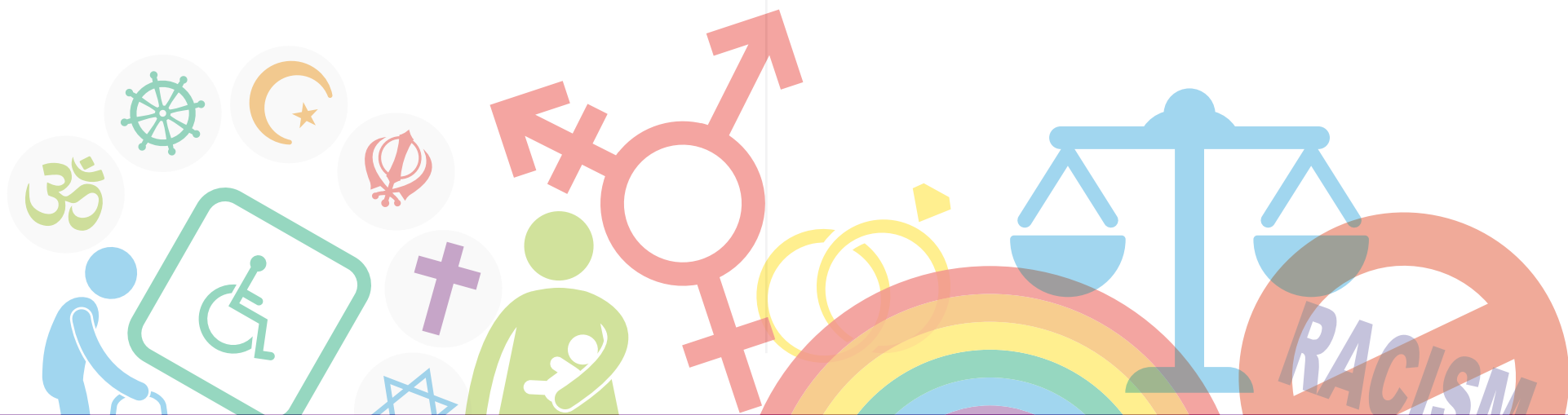
# Tower Hamlets Annual Equality Report 2018-19

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# Foreword

**We are proud to introduce the Tower Hamlets Annual Equality Report which outlines key activities the council has undertaken to address inequality in the borough. This report is informed by the Borough Equality Assessment (BEA) 2017-18, which assesses inequality in Tower Hamlets and will be updated in 2019.**

This report builds on our commitments made in our manifesto in 2018 which have been embedded into the council's strategic plan and business planning process and over the next few years will bring forth key strategies and activities that will help address inequality in Tower Hamlets.

The council, as a community leader and place shaper has both a moral and legal obligation to its residents to address inequality. We do this through the services we provide, the money we spend, the people we employ and working effectively with our partners to ensure better outcomes for those living, working and studying here. This enables us to guarantee better value for money spent on services, empower our communities to be inclusive and to improve our performance for our residents.

Our borough's diversity is one of its greatest strengths and promoting this along with equality is at the forefront of everything the council and our partners do to improve the quality of life for everyone in the borough. Our vision for equality is to have equal opportunities by building a strong, inclusive and fair borough. Our partnership Tower Hamlets Plan and strategic plan both have these values embedded in them.

At the time of writing this report, Tower Hamlets is the 10th most deprived local authority in England with child and pensioner poverty levels the highest in England. This isn't good enough and protecting our young people and older residents remains one of our top priorities. Further investment will be made to ensure our young people have the best start in life in addition to the £10m already invested in children's social care over the past two years. Adult social care will also be prioritised with a further £10m invested between now and 2022. We continue to address poverty through the £6.6 million Tackling Poverty Fund dedicated to supporting those most in need in the borough.

We also need to acknowledge and celebrate our diversity with programmes for International Women's week, Black History Month and LGBT History Month including a diverse range of events. The community equality forums we commission aim to give a voice to our borough's most vulnerable.

In 2018-19 we have supported over 250 women into sustainable employment, delivered over 300 new council homes and continue to work alongside our health partners to improve outcomes for our residents.

Community cohesion in our diverse borough continues to be a challenge. Brexit has had a country-wide impact with people nationally reporting feeling less safe and less welcome in the climate of hate not only directed against migrants but also other racial and religious minorities. This has been the experience of some of our community members and as a result the council launched a Brexit Commission and corresponding 'this is your home too' campaign. These have both worked to tackle issues of inequality felt by residents in the borough and reassure our 53,000 EU residents.

Our No Place for Hate message continues to be strengthened with more people signing our No Place for Hate Pledge this year than ever before and the council's violence against women and girls (VAWG), domestic abuse and hate crime team being awarded the prestigious national Team of the Year award at the Local Government Chronicle Awards for all of their work in this area.

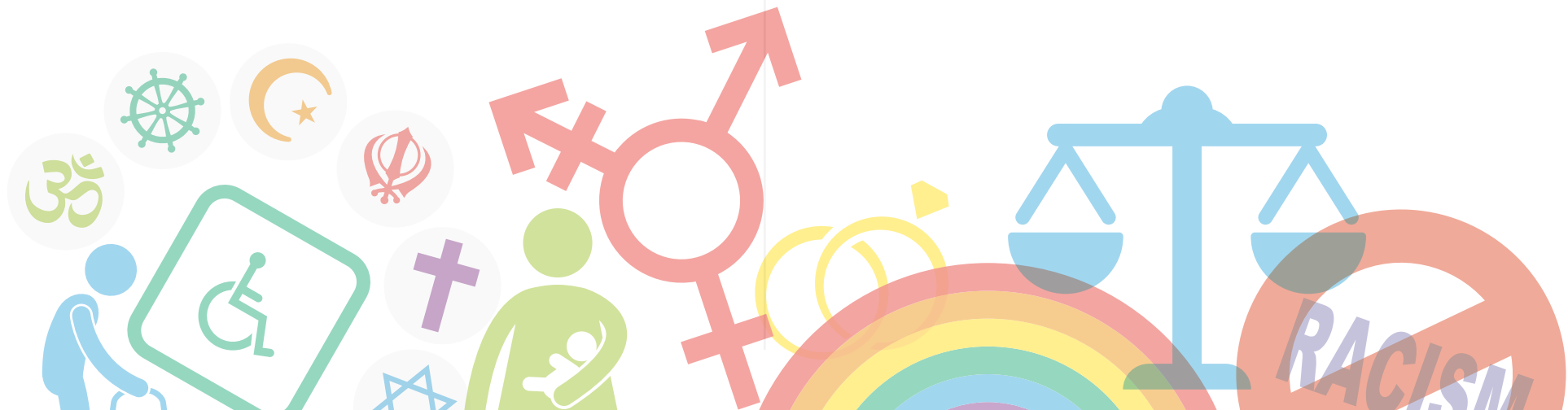
There is so much we can do for our residents and as community leaders will work alongside our partners and community organisations to ensure that our residents feel safe in their borough, can make the most of the opportunities available and reduce inequality to improve the lives of everyone in Tower Hamlets.



**John Biggs**  
Mayor of Tower Hamlets



**Councillor Asma Begum,**  
Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equalities



# Our commitment to equality in Tower Hamlets

Equality in Tower Hamlets is first and foremost addressed through the Tower Hamlets Plan and Strategic Plan which set the strategic direction for the council and its partners. Equality is embedded throughout these plans and is a key driver for everything we do.

## Tower Hamlets Plan 2018 -2023

The Tower Hamlets Plan 2018-23 sets out the Tower Hamlets Partnership's five year vision for the borough, articulating local aspirations, needs and priorities. It informs all strategies and delivery plans including the council's strategic plan. The key objective of the plan is **tackling inequality by building a strong, inclusive and fair borough** while focusing on the following four themes:

- A better deal for children and young people: aspiration, education and skills;
- Good jobs and employment;
- Strong, resilient and safe communities; and
- Better health and wellbeing.

## Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan 2019-2022

The strategic plan is a central part of the council's performance management and accountability framework and is the main strategic business planning document. It sets out the corporate priorities and outcomes, the high level activities that will be undertaken to deliver outcomes, as well as the measure that will help us determine whether we are achieving the outcomes.

**Priority 1:** People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities

**Priority 2:** A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in

**Priority 3:** A dynamic, outcomes based council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough

While equality is embedded throughout the strategic plan, **Priority 1 Outcome 4 - Inequality is reduced and people feel that they fairly share the benefits from growth** specifically works to address our most prominent inequalities related to housing, health and employment.



# About this report

Tower Hamlets Council is committed to diversity and equality in everything we do, whether it is through the services we provide, the money we spend and the people we employ. Our diversity is one of our greatest strengths and we work with our partners to provide accessible and responsive services that enable us to improve outcomes for local people. By ensuring we meet local needs it helps us deliver value for money, improve customer services and our reputation, and enables us to empower local people to lead fulfilling lives.








This report provides some examples of our work over the last year to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not as well as foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not. The focus of our case studies has been drawn from our Borough Equality Assessment (BEA) which was undertaken in 2017-18. The BEA used intelligence from national, regional and local data, engagement with local people through our equality forums and engagement with council and partner services to identify equality issues and performance challenges. The BEA is supplemented by our bi-annual Borough Profile which provides data to enable us to understand our progress and areas of continuous challenges. The Borough Profile and BEA are due to be updated at the end of 2019 which will enable us to incorporate this into our Strategic Plan for 2020-21 and our business planning.

Page 7 of this report provides a summary of our borough and some of the key equality challenges we face and at pages 8-9 we set out the 51 equality issues we identified in the 2017-18 BEA according to protected characteristics themed by Strategic Plan outcome areas.

From 2018-19 our work to address the equality issues has been through our Strategic Plan and business planning framework ensuring addressing inequalities is a core part of our service delivery. Many of the equality issues faced by those with protected characteristics are compounded by the multiple issues faced by some residents and our focus remains supporting our most vulnerable residents. Finally, pages 10-23 provide some examples of work we have undertaken to address the equality issues identified. This is not exhaustive list and we will continue to work with local people and partners to address inequality challenges facing our borough and residents.



# Our borough and key equality challenges

POPULATION		EMPLOYMENT	HOUSING	HEALTH
<p><b>308,000</b> residents in Tower Hamlets projected to reach <b>365,200</b> by 2027 and <b>400,000</b> by 2041</p>	<p>More than <b>4 in 10</b> residents (43%) were born outside the UK</p>	<p><b>7.7%</b> of the working age people in Tower Hamlets are <b>unemployed</b></p> 	<p>Highest rate of <b>social care</b> among older resident in England: <b>12,235</b> users per 100,000 population</p>	<p><b>Lower life expectancy</b> for men and women compared to London and England averages</p>
<p><b>Half</b> of all residents aged <b>60+</b> live below the <b>poverty line</b> (three times the national rate)</p>	<p>Highest rate of <b>child poverty</b> in England at <b>32.5%</b></p>	<p><b>21%</b> of households have no adult in employment</p> 	<p><b>35,110</b> additional homes needed by 2029</p> 	<p><b>42%</b> of <b>10-11 year olds</b> are overweight or obese</p> 
<p><b>16th</b> most <b>ethnically diverse</b> borough in England with 38% of residents identifying as Muslim</p> 	<p><b>4th youngest</b> population in the UK with almost half of residents being aged between 20 – 39 years</p> 	<p><b>58%</b> of borough residents aged <b>50-64</b> in work compared with 69% across London</p>	<p><b>18,808</b> on housing waiting list (3rd highest in London)</p>	
<p><b>10th</b> most <b>deprived</b> local authority in England</p>			<p>Average house price in Tower Hamlets is double the national average (<b>£421,131</b> vs £244,597)</p>	
<p><b>3,252</b> children in need</p> 	<p><b>Second</b> most <b>densely populated</b> local authority in the UK after Islington</p>		<p><b>28,500</b> households rely on housing benefit to pay their rent</p>	

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY	PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	EQUALITY ISSUES
<b>Priority 1</b>		
<b>Outcome 1</b> People access a range of education, training and employment opportunities	<b>AGE</b>	High levels of pensioner poverty Employment rates for people aged 50+ High levels of child poverty
	<b>DISABILITY</b>	Employment levels for people aged 50+
	<b>SEX</b>	Employment levels amongst working age women
	<b>RACE</b>	Employment levels amongst BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) (particularly Somali & Bangladeshi) residents
	<b>RELIGION/BELIEF</b>	Employment levels amongst Muslim residents
<b>Outcome 2</b> Children and young people are protected so they get the best start in life and can realise their potential	<b>AGE</b>	Number of NEET (Not in education, employment or training) compared to London/England) The number of Looked After Children who are NEET
	<b>SEX</b>	Attainment for boys at GCSE (Attainment gap between girls and boys)
	<b>RACE</b>	Number of White British NEET (Compared to London / England) White British attainment at GCSE
	<b>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</b>	Transphobia in schools and the promotion of understanding
	<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>	Homophobia in schools and the promotion of understanding
<b>Outcome 3</b> People access joined-up services when they need them and feel healthier and more	<b>AGE</b>	Childhood obesity
	<b>DISABILITY</b>	Access to health services for people with a learning disability
	<b>SEX</b>	Healthy life expectancy amongst men Healthy life expectancy amongst women
	<b>RACE</b>	Childhood obesity amongst BAME children BAME health outcomes BAME smokers to quit smoking BAME service user satisfaction with Social Care services
	<b>RELIGION/BELIEF</b>	Health outcomes of Muslim residents
	<b>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</b>	Access to primary health care services for the transgender community Access to mental health services for the transgender community
	<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>	Access to domestic violence services for same sex victims The growth in 'chemsex' amongst the LGBTQ community Access to mental health services for the LGBTQ community
	<b>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</b>	Pregnant women and new mothers to quit smoking



STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY	PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	EQUALITY ISSUES
<b>Priority 2</b>		
<b>Outcome 6</b> People live in good quality affordable homes and well-designed neighbourhoods	<b>AGE</b>	Homelessness amongst younger age groups
	<b>DISABILITY</b>	Access to housing for disabled residents
	<b>SEX</b>	High levels of lone parent women in temporary accommodation
	<b>RACE</b>	BAME families living in overcrowded housing
	<b>RELIGION/BELIEF</b>	Muslim families living in overcrowded housing
	<b>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</b>	Homelessness amongst transgender young people
	<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>	Homelessness amongst LGBTQ young people
<b>Outcome 7</b> People feel safer in their neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour is tackled	<b>SEX</b>	Violence against women and girls
	<b>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</b>	Hate crime reporting amongst transgender community Transgender hate crime
	<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>	Hate crime reporting amongst LGBTQ community Homophobic abuse and ensure the LGBTQ community feel safe
<b>Outcome 8</b> People feel they are part of a cohesive and vibrant community	<b>AGE</b>	Isolation and loneliness amongst people aged 65+
	<b>DISABILITY</b>	Give disabled people a voice in decision making Hate crime and negative stereotyping of disabled people Isolation as a result of the built environment
	<b>RACE</b>	Vulnerability and increases in intolerance and abuse faced by new residents and migrants
<b>Priority 3</b>		
<b>Outcome 11</b> People say we continuously seek innovation and strive for excellence to embed a culture of sustainable improvement	<b>DISABILITY</b>	Representation of disabled staff at the senior manager level
	<b>SEX</b>	Representation of women at the senior manager level
	<b>RACE</b>	Representation of BAME staff at the senior manager level
	<b>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</b>	Staff who are transitioning in the workplace
	<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>	The council is an inclusive environment for LGBTQ staff

# Strategic Plan Priority 1

## Outcome 1: People access a range of education, training and employment opportunities

### What we know

Four in 10 households in Tower Hamlets live below the poverty line and the borough has the highest rates of child and pensioner poverty in England. Half of all residents aged 60+ live below the poverty line which is more than three times the rate nationally (16 per cent). 31 per cent of children live in families who are considered to be below the poverty line which is almost double national rate of 17 per cent. While levels of deprivation have been reducing the borough remains England's 10th most deprived. In contrast, Tower Hamlets is home to Canary Wharf, the country's financial hub where household incomes are nearly three times the average found in neighbouring areas (£61,038 vs £23,034).

Levels of worklessness have fallen in recent years however trends in welfare support show a rise in in-work claimants, meaning that the level of in-work poverty is increasing in the borough driven among other things by the rising cost of living. The finance industry based in Canary Wharf contributes to 44 per cent of jobs in the borough making the sector the boroughs largest employment sector.

**519** BAME residents placed into sustainable jobs in 2018/19

**98** residents with disabilities placed into sustainable jobs in 2018/19



### What we're doing

#### WorkPath Programme

While employment levels have risen in recent years, worklessness is still an area of inequality that exists in Tower Hamlets, with certain groups continuing to face higher risks than others. These groups include residents from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, disabled residents and people aged 50+.

In order to address these equality issues, in April 2017 WorkPath was launched to provide a bespoke job brokerage and training service for residents looking to get into work either for the first time or after a period of unemployment. Since its inception, 5,000 Tower Hamlets residents have been supported into work or training thanks to the WorkPath programme. Men and women of all ages across the borough have engaged with WorkPath and have been assessed to establish what support they need.

Building on the success of WorkPath, Young WorkPath was launched in 2018 to deliver a full range of information; advice and guidance to young people aged 16 – 24. The basic key skills builder (BKSB) programme was integrated into WorkPath in November 2018. The BKSB is an initial diagnostic assessments for literacy, numeracy and IT programmes which helps to enhance the training and support package offered to clients.

## Tackling Poverty Fund

In order to address the high levels of poverty in Tower Hamlets the Mayor's Tackling Poverty Fund was established in April 2017. The £6.6 million programme is dedicated to supporting those most in need. To date, several programmes have been launched to tackle poverty including a £200,000 fund to support 17 local organisations (including voluntary community sector organisations and schools) tackling poverty in innovative ways. In addition, other funds have been created to address specific issues such as poverty proofing the school day, digital inclusion, council tax arrears support and in work poverty. The council has a tackling poverty outreach team of four people located throughout the borough who offer practical support to residents moving onto universal credit. In addition, the council has invested in a new 'tackling poverty dashboard' which helps council teams map the needs and circumstances of individuals and plan the most effective delivery of services for them.

**194** WorkPath clients have completed the basic key skills builder (BKSB) programme since November 2018

**263** female residents placed into sustainable jobs in 2018/19



**81** residents aged 50+ placed into sustainable jobs in 2018/19



Young WorkPath works across **26** schools and **2** colleges in the borough

**£197,120.00** awarded for school clothing grants in 2018 with Tackling Poverty Dashboard identifying **2,046** eligible households in 2019 who were sent letters encouraging them to apply for grant.



**8,500** meals provided through the holiday hunger programme aimed at children who qualify for free school meals during term time. **11,900** meals provided to children over 2018 summer in programme run alongside schools in the borough



**£500,000** worth of grants administered through the Resident Support Scheme in 2018/19 paying for items ranging from clothing and petrol to bedding and white ware

**21,571** clients assisted throughout the borough in 2018/19 with social welfare advice services through the MSG Fund



Since October 2019 over **500** residents have been assisted with making a universal credit claim by the Tackling Poverty Outreach Team which has resulted in residents receiving an additional **£250,000** worth of income

**800** residents were identified as eligible for pension credit through the Tackling Poverty Dashboard in 2019 with letters sent to encourage them to claim this benefit

# Outcome 2: Children and young people are protected so they get the best start in life and can realise their potential

## What we know

It is estimated that 75,455 children and young people aged 0 – 19 years live in Tower Hamlets. Ensuring that these children and young people are afforded the opportunity to live in a safe environment with access to a good education is integral to their success later in life. There are 137 languages spoken in schools in Tower Hamlets with the top three being Bengali, English and Somali. This in itself speaks for the diverse nature of the school communities.

Attainment in the borough is good, with average attainment 8 scores at Key stage 4 constantly above the national averages for the past four academic years. However, the attainment of White British boys on free school meals and Black Caribbean boys lag behind all other groups at GCSE. The average attainment 8 score for all pupils in Tower Hamlets is 47 (45 nationally), while it is 28 for White British boys on Free School Meals and 36 for Black Caribbean boys.

**93.2%** of young people in Tower Hamlets aged between 16-19 years are in employment, education and training

**18.6%** of looked after young people were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in 2018/19 – no change since last year

## What we're doing

### Family Group Conference

Those facing multiple inequalities are also some of our most vulnerable families and in 1999 we established the Family Group Conference (FGC). The FGC service was established to deliver family-led planning meetings with independent FGC coordinators, who are often matched to families by ethnicity and/or linguistic background. Parents, children/young people, and their wider family and friend networks come together at the FGC to make a coordinated plan for ensuring the child is safe and well cared for. This 'family plan' enables the family to find their own unique and culturally sensitive solutions to address any concerns that have been identified, usually by professionals who know the child or sometimes by the family themselves. The family are then supported by a social worker to put the plan into action, and the family plan has a central role in keeping the child safe. All children aged 0-18 who are known to social care and early help services can be referred for FGC with the child's interests being the paramount concern. Originating in New Zealand, FGC is used in over 20 countries worldwide and is now used throughout the UK in a number of areas including safeguarding work, looked after children and planning leaving care as well as education (truancy and exclusions) and anti-social behaviour and youth justice.

In 2017/18 there were 436 FGC referrals made in Tower Hamlets- the highest FGC referral rate in London. Key results of FGC include children and their family networks being empowered to find their own solutions for the children's care and ensuring that they remain in the care of the parent/carer or in a kinship placement, avoiding the need for public care. Additionally, the FGC process enables family and the professional network to forge respectful and practical partnerships where the families role is respected and honoured, resulting in improved relationships and outcomes for both children and their families.

## Learning & Achievement Strategy for 14 - 25 year olds 2019-24

The Learning & Achievement Strategy for 14 to 25 year olds sets out how we can support young people to achieve their best educational and employment outcomes. It outlines our vision for the future and sets out priorities, what we will do in the first 12 months and the outcomes we want to achieve over the strategy's five year lifecycle. An evidence base was developed to inform the strategy and includes data and insight about the protected characteristic groups wherever possible. Where gaps have been identified this has informed outcomes and actions within the strategy. For example, the strategy references the issue of under achievement for White British and Black Caribbean pupils (most notably boys), especially when looking at results for Key Stage 4. The Strategy includes actions to improve our understanding of equality issues and to develop new approaches to addressing them, as well as measures which include using data broken down by pupil characteristics to monitor progress.

**44.8%** of pupils in Tower Hamlets scored Grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSEs in 2018. This is higher than the England average of **40.2%**

In 2018/19 **2.6%** of young people were not in employment, education and training which is lower compared to 2016 when it was **3.1%**

In 2018, **82%** of Tower Hamlets students achieved grades 9-4 in English and **70%** of students achieved grades 9-4 in maths

The number of White British pupils in Year 12 and 13 who were NEET increased from **27.8%** in February 2018 to **34.1%** in February 2019

**100%** of Secondary Schools in the borough are signed up to deliver the Healthy Schools Programme which includes the delivery of a comprehensive relationship and sex education programme

In 2017/18, Tower Hamlets pupils achieved above average **Progress 8 scores** compared to pupils across England. This score shows how much progress pupils have made between the end of key stage 2 and the end of key stage 4



# Outcome 3: People access joined-up services when they need them and feel healthier and more independent

## What we know

There are significant health inequalities that exist in Tower Hamlets with 15 of the inequalities identified in the BEA relating to health. Life expectancy for both male and female residents is lower in Tower Hamlets compared to the England average. This area and the factors contributing to life expectancy in Tower Hamlets are explored in the 2018 Annual Public Health Report.

Child obesity remains the highest in the UK with 21% of our 4-5 year olds and 42% of our 10-11 year olds being overweight or obese. However positive steps are being taken to address this including 12 schools in the borough signing up to the Sugar Smart pledge and more schools in the borough taking part in the daily mile initiative than any other London borough.

Disability inequality is a key priority for the council. The Adult Learning Disability Strategy set out below is just one of the initiatives aiming to reduce this. The health outcomes and the wellbeing of social care users remain a priority for the council and its partners with some of the programmes working to address the inequalities experienced by vulnerable residents set out in the case study below.

The life expectancy of people with a learning disability is significantly lower than the general population at **59** years for men and **56** years for women

Health action plans completed for people with a learning disability rose from **64%** in 2017/18 to **96%** in 2018/19

## What we're doing

### The Adult Learning Disability Strategy 2017-20

Developed alongside the NHS the Tower Hamlets Adult Learning Disability Strategy 2017/20 aims to address the inequality faced by adults with a learning disability. The strategy builds on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities and has an overall goal (vision) that adults with learning disability in Tower Hamlets live well. In order to achieve this goal the strategy is underpinned by the following six outcomes and objectives.

1. Be happy and healthy – reduce health inequality and the length of stay in hospital
2. Live locally – increase the number living locally
3. Be part of the community and involved in local activities – increase the number involved in the community and local activities
4. Work or volunteer – increase the number who work or volunteer
5. Have choice and the right support – increase the number reporting they have choice and the right support
6. Be respected and safe – increase the number reporting they feel respected and safe

Adults with a learning disability are encouraged to see their GP once a year to have a check-up. The proportion of people doing this rose from **74%** in 2017/18 to **82%** in 2018/19

## Adult Social Care and Public Health Initiatives

The role of public health is to support the local authority to put health and wellbeing at the heart of everything it does. It aims to reduce health inequalities and improve the health of the population through services such as promoting good sexual health or offering support for smokers trying to quit. The core role of the public health team is to work across the council and with partners to deliver improved health and wellbeing in the borough. There are six key public health functions which include public health intelligence and insight, strategy, partnership and engagement, commissioning and delivery, evaluation and lastly, research and innovation.

Alongside public health are adult social care services which help and support people who are disabled, ill, elderly or vulnerable for another reason. Support services empower these groups and try to tackle inequality. A great deal has been achieved over the last year with multiple programmes of work underway to improve the health outcomes of these residents. One initiative has been the distribution of assistive technology such as personal alarms and sensors which have enabled residents to stay safe and active in their own home. We continue to encourage people to exercise more choice and control over the support by receiving a direct payment from social care. Programmes of work supporting mental health recovery and tackling isolation of social care users have also resulted in positive outcomes and remain areas of focus for the future. Tackling adult abuse and neglect is a key priority for adult social care going forward. More information on this area is set out in the Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report. Partnership work alongside the NHS will remain an essential component to the success of adult social care in Tower Hamlets.

**26** pregnant women in Tower Hamlets were supported to quit smoking in quarters 1 – 3 2018/19



**88.45%** of BAME respondents to the 2018/19 Social Care survey were satisfied with social care services in Tower Hamlets



**525** people received a direct payment from the council to purchase support for themselves in 2018/19

An average of **2,802** residents were supported each month through the use of assistive technology in 2018/19



Female life expectancy in Tower Hamlets has increased from **55.2** years in 2009/11 to **57.2** years in 2015/17



Male life expectancy in Tower Hamlets has increased from **55.5** years in 2009/11 to **61.9** years in 2015/17



# Strategic Plan Priority 2

## Outcome 6: People live in good quality affordable homes and well-designed neighbourhoods

### What we know

Our location at the edge of London City with landmarks including the Tower of London, Brick Lane and Victoria Park make Tower Hamlets a desirable place to live. This however has led to issues in the borough around the lack of affordable housing caused by a fast growing private rented sector with high rents and house prices.

Overcrowded housing is identified as an area of inequality in the BEA along with increased levels of homelessness driven by high housing costs and low incomes. This is being addressed through the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy as set out below and includes a specific priority for young people in the borough who are at increasing risk of becoming homeless. We are also focused on ensuring our disabled residents have access to housing and the continuation of Project 120 which began in 2012 illustrates this commitment.

### What we're doing

#### Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23

The council has produced a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2018 – 2023. The strategy sets out how we will over the coming five years prevent homelessness, support those who face homelessness, and those who are at risk of becoming homeless. The two key themes are the prevention of homelessness which will focus on tackling the causes of homelessness and implement the Homeless Reduction Act and preventing homelessness by access to affordable and sustainable housing options. Theme 2 is the response of services to homeless households and vulnerable people and will focus on preventing rough sleeping as well as supporting children, families and young people and vulnerable adults.

The percentage of lets to overcrowded households increased from **53%** to **55.5%** at the end of Quarter 3 2018/2019 compared to the same time in 2017/18

Of all market homes delivered **20%** will be family housing (3+ bedrooms), of all affordable homes delivered, **45%** will be family housing and all homes are to be designed to have separate kitchen and living rooms

The average length of stay in hostels dropped from **32** months in 2016-2017 to **26** months in 2017-2018



26



## Project 120: Meeting the needs of residents who use wheelchairs

Project 120 (P120) was established in 2012 to address the specific housing needs of families with a wheelchair user and complex medical needs who were on the council's housing waiting list. Although demand continues to outstrip supply, the wheelchair units delivered so far have allowed the borough to rehouse a number of families who have a wheelchair user as part of the household, in good quality wheelchair accessible homes that were previously inadequately housed in overcrowded and/or unsuitably designed accommodation. Without P120 many of these families would have remained on the rehousing list indefinitely due to the complex needs of their family members.

In 2017/18 there were **106** homeless service applications made in Tower Hamlets



Of all market homes delivered **20%** will be family housing (3+ bedrooms), of all affordable homes delivered, **45%** will be family housing and all homes are to be designed to have separate kitchen and living rooms

**25** young people aged 16 – 24 years accessed the 'Crash pad facility' in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18 when 18 young people accessed the service

The council's policy is to ensure at least **10%** of affordable homes delivered are wheelchair accessible



In the 2017/18 financial year, **146** wheelchair accessible units were delivered representing 16% of total affordable housing and data received to date for 2018/19 reports that 11.2% of all affordable housing completions were wheelchair accessible

# Outcome 7: People feel safer in their neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour is tackled

## What we know

Reducing crime in Tower Hamlets was our resident's top priority according to the 2018 Annual Residents survey. Anti-social behaviour and substance misuse remain a critical issue and are being targeted through a detailed programme of work. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is also a key priority for the council and was identified as an area of inequality in the BEA. VAWG is a significant problem in Tower Hamlets, and 97 per cent of victims of domestic violence are women. Making Tower Hamlets safer for women and girls is a key focus for the council and the Mayor who has committed to this in his manifesto.

## What we're doing

### Tower Hamlets Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2019-24

Tower Hamlets have had a VAWG action plan in place since January 2013 and most recently agreed the Tower Hamlets VAWG Strategy 2019-24 which sets out the council's priorities for tackling all forms of gendered violence over the next five years. The strategy builds on existing commitments and set three priority areas for action which cover support for victims, holding perpetrators accountable, engaging the community and challenging misogyny. In addition to the VAWG strategy, a VAWG Charter was launched in November 2018 and sets out the response that the victims of gender based violence in the borough can expect from the local authority and its partners.

**214** people have signed up to become VAWG professional champions since 2014

**242** residents accessed the Domestic Violence One Stop Shop – Located at the Idea Store, Whitechapel in 2018



**47** residents were provided with safety and security through The Sanctuary Project in 2018/19. This scheme provides victims of domestic violence tailored home security and safety planning support so they can remain in their home and exclude the offender

The council's violence against women and girls (VAWG), domestic abuse and hate crime team were awarded the prestigious national **Team of the Year award** at the 2019 Local Government Chronicle Awards for all of their work in this area

**34** refuge spaces are provided at any one time in Tower Hamlets including 19 spaces for those from Black, Asian and minority backgrounds

The Single Women's Project offers **9** bed spaces for single women with complex needs, including one bed space for a woman with no recourse to public funds

# Outcome 8: People feel they are part of a cohesive and vibrant community

## What we know

Community cohesion in a diverse borough like Tower Hamlets is essential. Increasing engagement and interaction between people from different backgrounds and cultures is a key priority for the council.

We have specifically funded community cohesion programmes for a number of years with project that include Local Voices Project which works to influence local issues that affect disabled residents and ESOL classes for new migrants. Unfortunately instances of hate crime still occur in the borough and between 2015 - 2018 there were 2572 hate offences and 2317 hate incidents reported in Tower Hamlets. 71% of these reports related to race hate and 12% to faith hate.

Recommendations from the councils Brexit Commission undertaken in 2018-19 have aimed to address the vulnerability and increases in intolerance and abuse faced by new residents and migrants here in the borough and the councils 'this is your home too' campaign has been well received by the community.

## What we're doing

### No Place for Hate Forum

To address hate crime the No Place for Hate campaign was developed in December 2010. This campaign aims to send a clear and consistent message that hate will not be tolerated in Tower Hamlets. The council works alongside partners to prevent all forms of hate crime and take action against offenders and support and protect victims.

Organisations and individuals can sign the pledge against hate to signal their support of the campaign and as part of the No Place for Hate campaign extensive training and outreach has taken place alongside specialist LGBTQ providers targeting LGBTQ hate crime. While instances of LGBTQ hate crime have reduced since the previous financial year, these offences remain chronically under reported so there is still a long way to go.

To date **142** organisations and **2,864** individuals have taken the no place for hate pledge

**24** No Place for Hate training and outreach activities/events have taken place to date including 3 sessions especially for LGBTQ History month

The number of disability hate crime offences reported has reduced from **27** in 2016-17 to **21** in 2017-18

The number of LGBTQ hate crime incidents reported reduced from **118** in 2016/17 to **110** in 2017/18



**12** community forum meetings have been held where LGBTQ issues are discussed and forum members can have input into strategies/policy developments to target these

**92%** of residents surveyed in the Annual Residents survey agreed that people of different background get on well together in Tower Hamlets

## ESOL Classes

To support community cohesion in the borough the council commissions several organisations to provide ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) classes to residents from all backgrounds and ages including new migrants. ESOL classes are mainly aimed at those who have come to the UK to settle and live permanently and for whom English is not their first language. ESOL courses aim to improve the ability of residents to speak, listen, read and write in English in order for them to be employable, participate in the community, communicate with doctors/teachers and undertake homework with their children. To build on what is learnt in ESOL classes, organisations in the borough also offer less formal conversation clubs to improve the confidence of participants. Participants have reported making new social connections with people from different communities and cultures as well as feeling a greater understanding of other cultures and backgrounds and feeling more confident in their community.

## The Somali Task Force

The Somali Task Force was set up in 2017 to help address some of the challenges facing residents of Somali origin in the borough, following data which revealed they were less likely to engage with services and more likely to have poorer outcomes than other groups across the key areas of health and wellbeing, housing and employment. The Task Force, made twenty-three recommendations with a focus on improving access to services including through a 'service hub' approach, skills development and jobs support and capacity-building and empowerment. Progress to date includes the development of a Somali Graduate Scheme providing employment support to 43 graduates, Somali Parents Network meetings providing support to over 120 parents, an increase in measles, mumps and rubella vaccination rates and the election of two Young Deputy Mayors of Somali heritage. The community has been especially pleased with the council's Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities initiative which has supported more than 20 families through two thirteen week programmes delivered between April – July 2018 and January – March 2019.

ESOL classes are offered **7 days a week** in Tower Hamlets



**20** parents of **Somali heritage** have completed the Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities Programme

**8 Local Voices Steering Group** meetings held in 2018/19 giving disabled residents a voice in decision making

**190** Book Break Sessions held since April 2018 across the Borough to prevent loneliness and isolation and improve mental well-being amongst residents aged 50+

The number of school incidents relating to homophobia decreased in 2018 to **11** compared to 2017 when **27** incidents were reported

**340** private and **70** group citizenships ceremonies conducted in 2017/18 with 35% of new citizens born in EU countries and 20% born in Bangladesh

The **Tower Hamlets Parents Centre ICT Embedded Women's ESOL Project** is a three year initiative that will offer ICT embedded ESOL Classes to 90 unemployed women from Tower Hamlets

Since March 2019 **239 residents** have made a booking to utilise the ID verification service provided by the council to help with those applying under the EU Settlement Scheme following the recommendation made in the Brexit Commission report

# Strategic Plan Priority 3

## Outcome 11: People say we continuously seek innovation and strive for excellence to embed a culture of sustainable improvement

### What we know

It is important that as an organisation we are representative of the people we seek to serve. We are proud of the diverse workforce we have at Tower Hamlets Council and the fact that it is reflective of the population of the borough. 40% of our workforce identify as white and 25% as of Bangladeshi descent. This is reflective of our community where 35% of residents identify as white and 32% as Bangladeshi.

The key themes identified in relation to our workforce and equality are representation and inclusion. Increasing representation of disabled staff, women and BAME staff at senior manager level was identified as an area of focus. We have undertaken pay gap reporting of these protected characteristics which has enabled the council to further identify the size of this inequality and draft an action plan to address it.

### What we're doing

#### Annual Equality Monitoring Report and Gender Pay Gap Reporting

Tower Hamlets is proud to be reporting on items beyond what is legally required and sees it as an important measure to address inequality in the workplace.

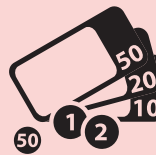
Gender pay gap regulations now require the council to publish information on its gender pay gap. While there is no statutory requirement to provide information in relation to the pay gaps for other protected characteristics in 2018 the council took an unprecedented step to publish where possible information on pay gaps across the protected characteristics – of race (BAME staff), staff with disabilities and LGBTQ Staff. Limited information was reported in respect of age of staff and religion of staff.

This work illustrated the council's commitment to equality as set out in the strategic plan and its measure to deliver a programme of targeted work of recruitment, retention and staff development to remain in the top quartile of London Boroughs with the highest percentile of top earners who are female, BAME or disabled. In addition to the commitment in the strategic plan, the council also monitors performance against LGBTQ staff in terms of workforce as a whole and in the top 5% and 2% of employees by earnings.

The outsourcing and retaining of particular council services contributes to some inequalities and despite best efforts, many jobs still attract applicants of a particular gender which to a degree impact the results of the annual equalities monitoring. In April 2020 waste collection, recycling and street cleansing services will be bought back in-house to the council which will further contribute to some gender inequalities in reporting going forward.

In 2018 Tower Hamlets remained in the **upper quartile** of London Boroughs with the highest percentile of top earners who are female, BAME or disabled

In 2017/18 women earned **£1.69** per hour less than men (mean) and **£1.30** per hour less (median)



**51.55%** of staff at Senior Manager Level (LP07+) are female



**31.32%** of Senior Staff (LP07+) at the council are BAME with 57.94% of all employees across the organisation being BAME

**6.63%** of Senior Staff (LP07+) at the council have a declared disability with **6.39%** of all employees declaring a disability

The **Corporate Equality Board** was established in 2018 to lead the embedding of equality practices throughout the council

The council have **4 staff forums** including Tower Pride, n-Able Disabled Employee Network, BAME Empowerment Network and The Women's Network. It also has 2 self-organised groups which include a Christian prayer group and Muslim staff forum

**6.6%** of employees in the top quartile of earnings for the council identify as LGBTQ with LGBTQ employees representing **4%** of the workforce

# Our next steps

This report and the work detailed throughout, illustrates our commitment to tackling inequality in Tower Hamlets. It is at the heart of everything we do however it is clear there is still work to be done.

The Borough Equality Assessment has set out where inequalities exist in the borough and we are proud of the work the council and its partners have undertaken to address these to date. However, we know this needs to be updated to reflect the current climate and equality landscape. This will be done by the end of 2019.

We also know that further alignment between the BEA and the strategic plan needs to occur. We have already addressed this by incorporating the BEA into service planning throughout the council. This will feed into our strategic plan monitoring and will equip us with data to inform our decision making and ensure services are targeting residents who need it the most.

We expect that we will be able to provide even more detailed data and information on our achievements in the next equality report and will continue to work alongside our partners and the community to tackle inequality by building a strong, inclusive and fair borough.

Sign up to the council's e-newsletter to find out what's on in Tower Hamlets, take part in competitions and receive the latest news and local offers: [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/signup](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/signup)



# How to get involved

Our Community Engagement Strategy sets out our vision for transparency and openness by encouraging active participation of our residents to influence and shape the borough in which they live and work. We want communities to lead the way in making Tower Hamlets a great place to live and we want communities to have the power to influence issues that affect them the most.

Find out about the latest council news and events by visiting our website: [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Check out our calendar of meetings to find out about upcoming council and committee meetings: [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/meetings)

We regularly consult our residents and local businesses about proposals that are likely to impact them: [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/consultation)

If you need this document in another format such as braille, large print, translated, call 020 7364 4389 or email [communications@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:communications@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

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