

*Draft* Tower Hamlets

# SEND Improvement Board Annual Report 2020

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## A word from the Chairs

Welcome to the Tower Hamlets SEND Improvement Board Annual Report 2020. 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 2021-22.

Our vision in Tower Hamlets is for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to lead a fulfilling life, to be as independent as possible, and supported to learn, thrive and achieve by their families, services and local communities. This drives everything we do to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and the programme of improvement work, which is structured around the priorities within the Tower Hamlets SEND Strategy 2020-24.

Strong partnership working arrangements are a central feature of our improvement work. The SEND Improvement Board brings together partners from across agencies and services to deliver improvement activity steered by feedback from children, young people and parents and intelligence from key performance indicators and quality assurance findings. Over the last year we have undertaken work to strengthen the understanding of SEND priorities for all partners across the local area so that every part

of the system works together to address issues and deliver improvement.

We are committed to ensuring that parents and young people are active partners in decision-making and service improvement. The journey towards implementing and embedding a co-production approach to the commissioning of services with children, young people and parents is underway. This work is essential to ensuring that services are shaped by the knowledge and experiences of the people who use them.

The challenges of the last year have underlined the value and importance of closer working, enhanced communication and joined up thinking to find solutions and identify new approaches. We will build on these principles so that through the work of the SEND Improvement Board, and with all partners, we further strengthen and develop our SEND services.

**James Thomas, Chair of Tower Hamlets SEND Improvement Board and Warwick Tomsett, Deputy Chair of Tower Hamlets SEND Improvement Board**

## Introduction from the Tower Hamlets Independent Send Parent Forum and 'Our Time' SEND Young People's Forum

The Tower Hamlets Independent SEND Parents Forum had a successful 2020/21 and built some really good foundations for the future. We held a number of successful consultations, began working on co-production with the local authority and delivered our biggest achievement with the completion of our website [www.thsendforum.co.uk](http://www.thsendforum.co.uk)

The pandemic affected our plans for a conference in 2020 and brought changes to how we communicate with and support parents. Despite the challenges we have been able to maintain support for carer and parent relationships and used IT solutions and social media to engage and communicate, including through regular updates on our website.

We have developed closer working relationships with health partners and the local authority and now have parent representation on the SEND Improvement Board and other key boards. We have also been working in conjunction with the Newham and City of London SEND Parents Forums as we felt it was important to work across these areas as parents share many services.

The main focus for the forum in 2021/22 will be on bringing together other small groups and becoming an umbrella source of information. Along with a look at wait times and access in emergency departments and SEND experiences. We also want to hold workshops and consultations with a focus on transitions through life stages and family mental health, as issues which were raised through our steering group meetings. We are also planning to do some focused work with the Our Time SEND Young People's Forum around independent expectations and fear between children and young people with SEND and their families, for example, independent travel and money management.

**Samantha Gager, Chair of the Tower Hamlets Independent Send Parent Forum and Member of SEND Improvement Board**

My name is Sornnaly Hossain I am 21 years old and at present am a student at NCC Hackney and Newham colleges. I have been a member of Our Time Forum for more than 2 years and am now trained as a SEND YP Ambassador.

I am a member of SEND Improvement Board representing the voice of young people with SEND. I find it interesting and I have been able to find out more about how SEND system works and ensure that the professionals understand what is important to young people. Our priorities in the coming year are to ensure that our voices are heard and that professionals work with us to make a difference.

The Forum's plan for the next year are:

- Greater involvement at strategic level and commissioning
- Mystery shopping of services
- Development of YP Zone on Local Offer
- Create videos to inform other YP, parents and professionals
- Recruit more members

SEND YP Ambassadors priorities are:

- Outreach- to inform and consult with YP
- Promote inclusion – working with professional, commercial and community groups
- Training for new Ambassadors

**Sornnaly Hossain 'Our Time' Member, YP Ambassador and Member of SEND Improvement Board**

The Covid 19 emergency has had a profound and far reaching impact on people's lives over the last year with some particular challenges for families of children and young people with SEND.

### Tower Hamlets Pandemic Structures

As part of the structures established in the borough to respond to the pandemic a Children's Services Silver Group was set up and a number of task and finish (Bronze) groups were convened including groups with a focus on 'Socially Vulnerable Children', 'Children with Complex Medical Needs / Shielding' and 'Emotional Health and Wellbeing for Children and Young People'.

These groups brought together key representatives from the local authority, health services, the voluntary sector and other organisations to work in partnership as they undertook work to help address the impacts of the pandemic. The Children with Complex Medical Needs / Shielding Task and Finish Group collated data across organisations, made calls to families of children who were shielding offering support, referrals and sign posting. Digital devices were distributed and age-appropriate play-bags to children and their siblings were made available. Support continued throughout the second lockdown and regular

webinar opportunities were delivered for families of children with SEND to address their concerns and help them to feel prepared for their children's return to school.

Children with Education Health and Care Plans were part of the cohorts that the Socially Vulnerable Children Task & Finish Group focused their work on. The group provided guidance and data for schools on monitoring attendance as well as on making contact and providing attendance support to vulnerable students at schools and childcare/early years settings during the lockdown. The group also facilitated professionals from schools, health services, the voluntary sector and the local authority to come together to identify groups of children with particular vulnerabilities and identify appropriate responses.

The work of the Tower Hamlets SEND Improvement Board, alongside other partnerships, will be informed by the need to address the ongoing challenge of Covid 19. Inevitably, the pandemic has impacted on the delivery of services and this is reflected in the detail of this annual report. However, recovery plans are in place and we are seeking to harness the lessons learnt and benefits from some of the new ways of working that have been used throughout this period.

## Priority One: Leading SEND

### Progress and impact in 2020

#### Governance

The SEND Improvement Board has been strengthened with the Director of Integrated Commissioning taking on the role of Deputy Chair for a more joined up approach between the council and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and the addition of several new board members to ensure all parts of the SEND system are represented and can input to the work of the board.

The SEND Improvement Plan has been reviewed and refreshed with workshops taking place with board members and parents, carers and young people in late 2020. The ongoing impact of the pandemic has been reflected, and a more streamlined and focused workplan of strategic activities has been produced which will be more effective in driving progress.

#### Improving use of data

The SEND Dashboard was redesigned in 2020 to align with the SEND Strategy, but it was recognised that further work was needed to ensure that decision makers were being provided with regular, good quality data focused on the right areas.

A Data Working Group was been established which has been working on redeveloping the SEND Scorecard and creating a one-page dashboard of key indicators.

Work is also underway to strengthen the quality assurance programme with a separate sub-group taking on responsibility for this area to agree quality standards and reporting arrangements.

#### Managing SEND Funding (Dedicated Schools Grant)

The majority of SEND budgets are funded by the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Over the last three years the Council has overspent on this block accruing a funding deficit of £12m which is required to be addressed and repaid.

An initial High Needs Recovery Plan was agreed in February 2020 (a DfE requirement). Since then additional funding has been allocated and the budget has reached a more sustainable in-year position. However, the deficit position will also need to be repaid in the longer term.

Many of the actions identified in this report will contribute to a more sustainable position, offering both better value and better outcomes for our young people.

Monitoring and reviewing expenditure on high needs remains a priority and the Council's Financial Management Plan for recovery will continue to be reviewed and monitored by the DfE.

#### Engagement and involvement of parents and carers, children and young people

Opportunities for engagement and participation for parents and carers, children and young people have increased over the last year with further involvement in SEND related groups and boards across education, health and social care. This has seen a growing role within the local area's governance for SEND and the groups that support this governance structure. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) is instrumental in supporting this work and delivers key activities such as training for both the SEND Ambassadors and Young People's SEND Ambassadors schemes.

#### Tower Hamlets Independent Send Parent Forum

The forum now operates as a pan disability umbrella organisation for SEND parents groups in the borough in order to help deliver a more joined up approach. The group has also been working with Parent and Carer Forums from Newham and City of London to share ideas, information and best practice.

## Priority One: Leading SEND

### Progress and impact in 2020

Although the pandemic has impacted the work of the forum it has continued to engage with parents and hold meetings virtually with the aim to return to face to face as soon as possible. The forum has been involved in a wide range of activities in 2020 including taking part in consultations, supporting parents with home schooling webinars, delivering workshops, running surveys and providing information about Covid 19.

### 'Our Time' SEND Young People's Forum

The forum has continued to meet remotely on a monthly basis and this has offered essential support for young people with managing the impact of the pandemic. The group has produced several videos to promote their activities and encourage more young people to join and will be making a bid for funding to create more. The Young SEND Ambassadors are also part of the forum and have been working to ensure all young people with SEND are kept well informed, consulted and included and that the community in Tower Hamlets accepts and welcomes all young people with SEND.

### The Local Offer

There have been a range of improvements made to the Tower Hamlets Local Offer over the last year and although the pandemic has impacted on some planned activities it has been an invaluable tool in providing information and responding to the needs of those who use it during this period. The levels of use and satisfaction have increased in the last 12 months.

The front page has been redesigned, more videos uploaded, a 'carousel' feature has been added to improve access to information and work has been done to ensure that the site meets new Public Sector Accessibility Regulations. Since the beginning of the pandemic the website has been updated on a daily basis to respond as the situation has evolved and changed. Despite restrictions 15 outreach events were delivered in 2020 with a total attendance of 403 parents and young people.

Training sessions have been delivered to the Youth Justice Team and Early Help Team by the Head of SEND and Head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).

The focus of training and support varies depending on the audience but it is aimed at ensuring we continuously improve knowledge and understanding and meet the needs of children, young people and families in the most effective way possible.

### Workforce capacity and development

There is a broad range of training and support provided across the local SEND system including through the Support for Learning Service, Behaviour and Attendance Support Service, Council for Disabled Children, Area Inclusion Coordinators and Health Visiting Trainers.

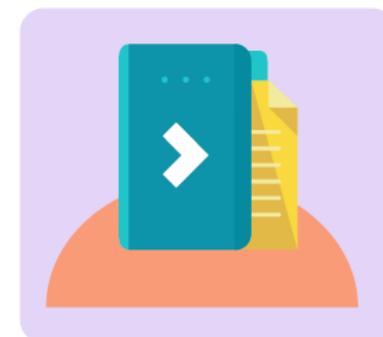
### Inclusive Play Programme

The main aim of the Inclusive Play Programme is to introduce inclusive play equipment to as many of the council's 64 play areas as possible. Ten sites have now been updated with inclusive equipment and with extra funding from Thames Water and the SEND Programme the number of sites has been increased to include all three adventure playgrounds (Glamis, Weaver's and Whitehorse playgrounds). Work in 2021/22 includes major refurbishments to playgrounds at Weaver's Fields and Milwall Park.

## Priority One: Leading SEND

### Priorities for 2021/22

- **Tower Hamlets Local Offer** – launch of a Young People’s Zone and development of a Professional’s Zone
- **Young People and Parent SEND Ambassadors** – further recruitment to meet growing demand
- **Delivering ‘Our Time’ SEND Young People’s Forum priorities, including:**
  - Visits to talk to people about SEND and the experiences of young people to take place in schools and colleges, and team meetings for various services.
  - ‘Mystery shopping’ of services for young people with SEND.
  - Working with GPS and other Health professionals to help them understand and respond to the health needs of young people with SEND
- **Delivering Independent Send Parent Forum priorities, including:**
  - Hold workshops focused on priorities identified by the steering group including transitions through life stages and family mental health.
  - Deliver first SEND Parent Conference in Autumn 2020 in partnership with SENDIASS.
- **SEND Training & Professional Development Programme** – training needs analysis and development of a comprehensive Training Plan and Professional Development Offer for the local SEND workforce underpinned by the requirements of the Code of Practice.
- **Actively promoting and championing inclusion** through all partner services so that the needs of children, young people, and families with SEND are considered alongside, not separate from, the needs of all children.



## Priority Two: Early identification and assessment

### Progress and impact in 2020

#### Support for 0-5 year olds

After initially closing during the first national lockdown all early education and childcare settings remained open from July 2020 and continued to provide the support and early identification usually offered to vulnerable and newly vulnerable children. Where families were unable to attend they remained in regular virtual contact with Children and Family Centres and all eligible families have been invited to attend regular stay and play sessions in our Children and Family Centres. All Children and Family Centres have been open for face-to-face support for vulnerable and newly vulnerable families since September 2020. Families are contacted regularly by Children and Family Centre staff and are invited to attend a wide range of virtual sessions.

#### Reviews at 2 – 2½ years old

Despite the redeployment of health visitors during the pandemic 2 to 2½ year reviews have continued to take place in Children and Family Centres, with infection control measures limiting adults to the parents and the health visitor.

Prior to the pandemic approximately half of all reviews were fully integrated, being jointly delivered by practitioners across the Health Visiting Service and Integrated Early Years' Service (IEYS), with the child and their family in Children and Family Centres. The plan is to return to fully integrated approaches as soon as possible.

An audit of the 2 – 2½ year review process was carried out in 2019/20 and an action plan has been developed to set out what improvements are needed to strengthen the process further.

#### Early identification review of children in nursery and reception

This multi-agency review was carried out to explore potential previously unidentified needs for children starting at nursery and in reception. Results from the review found that whilst all children identified by the schools for the study were in fact known to an agency there is work to be done around sharing information to ensure that professionals and families can work together to effectively meet the needs of children in the most effective way possible. The review delivered a clear set of recommendations and these are now the focus for work during 2021/22.

#### Identification of sensory impairment

There are high levels of engagement for screening at 4 to 5 years old with 98% of pupils being screened for hearing and 94% of pupils aged being screened for vision in 2018/19. Many areas do not commission vision screening at this age and the high levels of screening minimises the risk of unidentified need.

Quality assurance of both screening processes is robust and is provided by Barts Health NHS Trust and at the point of the first lockdown in March 2020 (when NHS England directed hearing and vision screening to be halted) 49% of 4–5-year-olds had received vision and hearing screening.

#### Timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP needs assessment)

There are a number of issues which have contributed to the poor timeliness of assessments for EHCP's in Tower Hamlets. These include the high number of plans in the borough, pressure on resources and the impact of the pandemic. Furthermore, demand has remained high as services were further stretched by Covid 19 related re-deployment and absences.

## Priority Two: Early identification and assessment

### Progress and impact in 2020

Plans are in place to address these issues including a recovery plan which focuses on addressing the backlog of cases. Additional management and casework capacity has also been created and this has helped to reduce the backlog and improve timeliness.

A restructure of the SEND Service commenced in 2020 and is due to be implemented in Spring 2021. The new service structure will be supported by benchmarking to understand future needs and an annual review of service needs against core tasks.

### Quality of Education Health Care Needs Assessments

Actions have been undertaken to further scrutinise EHCPs to fully reflect the needs of children and young people. This has included joint training sessions for the local area workforce (delivered by the Council for Disabled Children) and further training for EHCP caseworkers and Parent Advice Centre.

The SEND Quality Assurance Group is working with all services involved in the assessment process to co-produce clear quality assurance guidelines for assessment advice from professionals.

### Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

During the Pandemic CAMHS have continued to provide one-to-one assessment and intervention to children and young people and their families in an online format or face to face in the clinic depending on needs and accessibility.

Tower Hamlets CAMHS have continued to offer the Neurodevelopmental Team group programmes during the Pandemic by facilitating the groups on an online format. There have been several changes which have been made to the group formats to accommodate facilitating them in this new way and these changes have been based on the feedback from parents and service users.

This has included offering two separate groups with one for English speaking families and another that was supported by a cultural advocate (with interpretation support) as well as calls to families needing to practise accessing the IT software 'Microsoft Teams' ahead of the group and shortening the length of the session in consideration of childcare arrangements.

## Priority Two: Early identification and assessment

### Priorities for 2021/22

- **Early identification review of children in nursery and reception:**
  - Implementation of recommendations to improve sharing of information
  - Undertake survey in Autumn 2021 to continue to identify trends, actions needed and support individual cases.
- **Transition all Children's Centres into Multi-Agency Start for Life Family Hubs** (following the successful pilot in 2018/19) increasing our reach with local families
- **Integrated Reviews at 2 – 2/ ½ years old** – implementation of audit recommendations.
- **3 to 4 years olds universal review** - to identify children whose needs may have changed since the 2 – 2 ½ years old review and to reduce the risk of children starting school with unidentified and unmet needs.
- **Improved timeliness for assessment of EHCPs' with work to include:**
  - Implementation of the SEND Service re-structure
  - Analysis of future need including benchmarking with statistical neighbours and other local authorities.
  - Review of processes and procedures.
  - Training programme for casework team to ensure compliance and timeliness at all stages.



### Parents Advice Centre (PAC) & Young People's Advice Centre (YPAC)

**From a parent about their experiences following their pre-school child starting to have speech and language difficulties** – *I couldn't have done all this without information, advice and support through the journey from PAC. My family and I have been supported by our amazing schools, the amazing SLT Team and the PAC has been wonderful I will forever feel indebted to all the professionals who supported us. I am now a SEN Parent Ambassador and really enjoying helping other parents who have newly diagnosed children and are going through I went through.*

**From a young person after deciding to seek help from the YPAC** - *I have found it very useful to work with YPAC because my caseworker is always willing to help me with any of my needs which is amazing for me. When I first became a service user I was very impressed about the customer service as I found it very welcoming when it was my first visit to sign up. The difference is measurable as I am doing a lot better in terms of how I am getting on, what I am doing and how I am dealing with things.*

### Personal Travel Budgets

**When approached by a family who were having difficulties managing different pick up and drop off times for two children the council children's commissioning team undertook a review of the travel assistance offer.**

**The option of a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) was discussed which would give the family control and allow them to arrange travel in a way that suited their needs. Each payment was made before the start of term and a PTB Officer kept in touch with the family and schools to ensure the arrangements were working smoothly.**

**The family reported that – 'Using the PTB has made the school runs so much easier. I no longer have to worry about being at 2 different locations at the same time. The morning routine is a lot smoother now as we all leave the house at the same time and just get into one cab in the morning. This means my children are less stressed and have a better day at school and in turn are in a better mood when they arrive home after school.'**

## Priority Three: Commissioning effective services to respond to local needs

### Progress and impact in 2020

#### Commissioning SEND Services

The joint Integrated SEND Commissioning Plan is now in place and sets out each programme of work in alignment to priorities in the SEND Strategy and SEND Improvement Plan. Implementation of the commissioning plan is underway and some particular areas of progress are highlighted below.

A key element of effective commissioning of SEND services in the borough is the strength of partnerships with robust arrangements in place through a set of steering and operational groups and commissioning representation at Born Well Growing Well (the Tower Hamlets Together workstream focused on children and young people including the SEND system).

#### Co-production

Tower Hamlets recognises that it is vital that parents, carers, children and young people become an integral part of all aspects on the commissioning process in order to achieve better outcomes.

The SEND Integrated Commissioning Plan aims to embed co-production within each part of the commissioning function so that we strengthen our local understanding of 'lived experiences' and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Examples of where we have taken a co-production approach during 2020/21 include:

- Children's Integrated Therapies Steering Group - membership includes parents, working with the group to develop what will be the strategic vehicle for future commissioning of therapies across the local area.

- This will complement and support existing integrated ways of working such as the Primary Service Provider Model.
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Pathway Review Group – four engagement sessions have been held with parents and families (alongside review group meetings) to gain a better understanding of the key issues. Parents will then join the group to continue work in partnership.

#### Integrated therapies

The aim is to produce a model and pathways that constitute a whole-system, needs-led and outcomes-focused approach to commissioning and delivering training, interventions and a family support offer in home, Early Years, school and other settings as a tiered framework.

## Priority Three: Commissioning effective services to respond to local needs

### Progress and impact in 2020

A cross organisational steering group was set up in 2020 with representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Group, service providers, the council, schools and parents and carer representatives.

A mapping exercise of all existing therapies being delivered across the borough has been successfully completed and work is now underway to carry out a needs analysis identifying gaps and benchmarking against geographical neighbours to better understand the position for Tower Hamlets.

### ASD Pathway Review

The central aim of the work around the ASD pathway is to ensure there is a collective understanding of the journey for a family from pre-diagnosis, through children's services, and finally transitioning into Adult services.

During 2020 work was underway to review provision, streamline the diagnostic ASD pathway and map different transition pathways. These activities were delayed by the impact of the pandemic but after taking stock of the position in late 2020 a new ASD Pathway Review Group was set up and will now commence on a refreshed programme of work.

There is a commitment from all partners to focus on the child or young person's needs, to work together on delivering the overarching objectives required to establish a new ASD pathway, and to work with families, children and young people as equal partners throughout the review.

## Priority Three: Commissioning effective services to respond to local needs

### Priorities for 2021/22

- **Developing of a strategic, whole-system, joined-up and needs-led approach to commissioning and delivering children and young people’s therapy services in Tower Hamlets** – work to be led by the Children’s Integrated Therapies Steering Group.
- **Pooled budgets and joint funding** – identifying further opportunities through the Better Care Fund review, which will enhance integration and improve outcomes.
- **Embedding co-production within the SEND Integrated Commissioning Plan to ensure:**
  - All new SEND service commissioning includes involvement of parent and carer, children and young people representatives.
  - Explore the development of further person-centred outcomes which more fully capture the experiences of service users.
- **Placement sufficiency** – development of an SEND Placement Framework with agreed priority areas.
- **ASD Pathway Review** – the review group to agree a vision, strategic objectives, set of outcomes and workplan to deliver.
- **Improving ASD Assessment waiting times** – – consideration of proposals which seek to address waiting times and create a sustainable delivery model that works towards NICE guidance for assessment timeliness.



## Priority Four: Good quality education provision for all children

### Progress and impact in 2020

#### Education support during the pandemic

The support provided to pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) through online and remote learning has been carefully monitored throughout the pandemic via information sent to the Department for Education (DfE) from schools and regular contact from the Attendance Welfare Service. There has been a high level of engagement with online learning. Extensive work has been done to close the digital poverty gap including the provision of laptops for particularly vulnerable children and families.

The local authority has also invested resources in this area and has supported schools to apply for more devices through the DfE. Overall, these actions have had a positive impact on narrowing the digital poverty gap.

Children and young people in schools outside of Tower Hamlets had their attendance monitored and any issues were followed up by an attendance and welfare advisor from the Behaviour and Attendance Support Service (BASS).

The Support for Learning Service (SLS) and the BASS aim to improve the attainment of children and young people by supporting schools in their inclusion of pupils with SEND, including social, emotional and behaviour difficulties, through offering bespoke advice, training and learning support, improving attendance and reducing the risk of exclusion

The services work in partnership with parents and carers and works alongside schools to ensure that they are confident and skilled in meeting the needs of pupils with a range of needs. The services were redesigned for a hybrid of face-to-face and remote delivery in early 2020 to ensure a continuity of service offer for all the children the service helps to support.

During the pandemic the Virtual School has linked with all its physical schools and settings who have Children Looked After (CLA) on an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to oversee their safeguarding arrangements and support carers requirements for home educating children due to the Pandemic.

This has included supporting bids to the DfE for increased IT provision in all our specialist education providers to meet need and promote education continuity and engagement.

#### Inclusive practice in schools

With the focus on achieving routinely consistent inclusive practice across all mainstream schools a benchmarking tool for inclusivity is being produced with council service leads and discussed with Headteachers via the Schools Forum. An initial tool has been developed looking at criteria that will enable a transparent and more rigorous method of assessing the inclusiveness of schools and which will assist in identifying gaps in provision, training and resource.

Draft Local area guidance on inclusive education is also being developed with Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs). This outlines expectations on Quality First Teaching, support that is ordinarily available within schools, SEN Support and support for children with EHCPs. The draft guidance has been shared at the SENCO Conference and is being further scrutinised by Headteachers through forums and groups.

## Priority Four: Good quality education provision for all children

### Progress and impact in 2020

#### Special School Places

Responding to projected increased demand for special school places plans have been implemented to ensure there is sufficient education provision by extending existing, highly regarded specialist provision to create more places by 2023. The expansion of Phoenix School has increased the number specialist ASD places to 450 and capacity has been increased at Stephen Hawking School and at Beatrice Tate School for primary and secondary age pupils who have Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD).

#### The Tower Hamlets Education Wellbeing Service

This service is delivered by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and has now been fully operational with 23 schools since February 2020.

The service focuses on the social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of all children and young people and the work it undertakes helps to support and develop a school culture and ethos that benefits pupils with SEN and SEMH needs. Schools receive support and advice in relation to any pupil of concern including those with special educational needs.

#### Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENco) Conference and Forums

Although it wasn't possible to hold the normal termly SENco conferences during the pandemic an online conference was held in Autumn 2020.

The event focused on the pandemic recovery curriculum, mental health issues and a speech from a representative of 'Young Minds' the children and young people's mental health charity. Alongside this work has taken place to inform SENcos about the best online professional content and an online forum has been used to keep them up to date on local issues.

The SENco forum has continued meeting online during the pandemic providing a vital opportunity for sharing updates, exchanging information and hearing from colleagues from a range of other services.

A leadership programme has been established for SENcos via the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP).

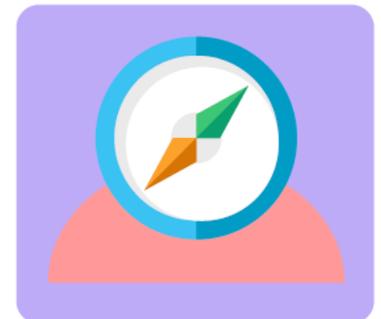
#### Post-16 provision at London East Alternative Provision

Post 16 provision for pupils with SEMH needs has been opened at London East Alternative Provision. This is aimed at ensuring that vulnerable young people remain engaged in their education and are supported to greater independence in their learning. The provision includes a sensory hub and two posts have been added to the sensory team under the council's Support for Learning restructure to work at New City College. The service is also in talks with South Quay College to provide a broader vocational offer.

## Priority Four: Good quality education provision for all children

### Priorities for 2021/22

- **Expand Tower Hamlets Education Wellbeing Service** – take forward proposals to provide this service to a further 21 primary and secondary schools.
- **Introduce Virtual School Education Champions** - to work alongside virtual school staff providing additional support to young people who are at risk of being absent from school.
- **Improve understanding of projected future demand for SEND** – work has been commissioned to refresh special school pupil projections.
- **Inclusivity Benchmarking Tool** - a training programme on implementation will be rolled out through the SENco conferences in the summer term 2021.
- **Continue to deliver expansion programme for additional special school places including -**
  - Capital works for increased capacity at Beatrice Tate School for primary and secondary age pupils who have Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)
  - Planned opening in Sep 2021 of a 24-place resource provision for primary aged boys and girls with SEMH needs (hosted at Ben Jonson school in partnership with Bowden House School)
  - ASD Resource Base at Hermitage Primary School for children whose primary ASD needs are social and emotional (proposal currently under statutory consultation with planned implementation for Sept 2021).
- **Develop and improve Post 16 options for pupils in mainstream schools** – with support through the Learning and Achievement for 14 to 25 Strategy Steering Group.



## Priority Five: Supporting successful transitions and promoting independence

### Progress and impact in 2020

#### Community Learning Disability Service (CLDS) and accommodation for young people

The CLDS has well established links in place to deliver a joined-up approach to transitions. The service works closely with key stakeholders and partners to deliver good outcomes for young people aged 19-25 with a learning disability.

The CLDS has been helping to plan and influence the local accommodation offer in Tower Hamlets by gathering information about future accommodation needs for young people. This work includes young people who are currently within residential school placements so that planning can take place to offer a return to living in the borough as part of the local community.

More local accommodation is being developed through the Supporting Independence Project and there has been a move towards local supported living opportunities rather than residential care options which are frequently outside the borough.

As part of the local accommodation offer, Shared Lives is being developed within Tower Hamlets to support people who may wish to develop their independence but within a family setting. The service has successfully worked with young people who wish to stay with foster caring and staying put arrangements which have been converted to a shared lives placement. This enables young people to remain within the local community with support from carers that know them well and with whom relationships have been developed.

#### Year 4 and 5 Transition Events

The SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) have established an annual transition event for all parents of Year 4 and 5 children with EHCPs, which is currently being delivered virtually. The sessions provide information about the transition process, the Local Offer, the work of SEND Parent Ambassadors, independent travel training and a slot for questions and answers.

#### Support transition from Year 6 to Year 7 and in Year 11

The Behaviour and Attendance Support Service provide a comprehensive package of support for pupils on SEN Support transitioning from Year 6 to Year 7 who have a range of needs. During the Pandemic this support was extended to pupils with EHCPs as well, in recognition of the fact that many pupils were unable to attend school regularly due to the lockdown in the Spring and Summer 1 terms. Last year the service received 245 referrals.

Information is circulated to pupils with EHCPs in Year 11 to initiate consultation for post-16 provision, including a timeline providing a reminder to carry out annual reviews between April and December. This is to ensure the consultation process for post-16 education can begin in January. Students with the most challenging needs are prioritised by schools. All post-16 providers receive copies of prospective students' EHCPs and latest annual reviews before offering a place. SEN Support pupils also visit potential provision before accepting a place and very vulnerable young people are escorted by SEN specialists from the careers team.

## Priority Five: Supporting successful transitions and promoting independence

### Progress and impact in 2020

#### Post-16 transitions into training and employment

The Tower Project Job Enterprise and Training Service provides support around progression to employment and employer engagement activities such as the annual Job Information Day for children and young people with learning disabilities and ASD. Over the last 18 months there has been a 50% increase in the number of young people progressing to employment.

There has also been an increase in supported internship opportunities and opportunities for young people to have tasters and into-work conversations with corporate employers. Tower Hamlets ranks 14<sup>th</sup> nationally for the proportion of young people participating in supported internship programmes, traineeships, and apprenticeship programmes.

The offer in the borough includes the supported internship programme at New City College, the supported internship programme delivered by Tower Project Job Enterprise and Training Service and a unique and innovative supported internship programme for young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder from Queen Mary University of London and Phoenix College which provides young people with opportunities for training and employment within hospitality, cleaning, administration, maintenance and portering.

#### Transition from Children's to Adult Services

A Strategic Transitions Working Group has been established with a focus on how to improve the transition experience for young people with SEND moving from Children's to Adult Services. Work has been undertaken throughout 2020 to bring together key practitioners and officers from across the local area (including representatives from Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Education, the NHS and CCG) to identify the work which is ongoing and planned to help clarify pathways.

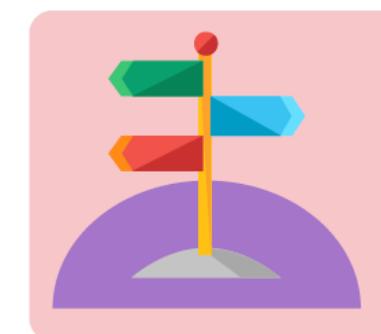
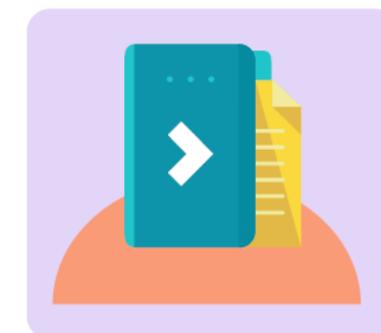
#### SEND Home to School Travel Assistance

Following consultation in 2020 a refreshed Travel Assistance Policy was introduced with a key focus on offering travel assistance that promoted greater independence over time for children and families. Since the policy was introduced the travel assistance offer has diversified to include the option of a Personal Travel Budget, where appropriate, and in place of Local Authority delivered travel through buses and taxis. As of March 2021, over 70 families are utilising a Personal Travel Budget to facilitate their child's journey to and from school.

## Priority Five: Supporting successful transitions and promoting independence

### Priorities for 2021/22

- **Transition from Children's to Adults Services** - develop a set of options to explore the most effective way of improving the transition experience. Analysis of options will include consideration of strengths and weaknesses and implementation models.
- **Co-production approach for EHCP Annual Review process at key transition points** – with support from the SEND Information Advice and Support Service, SEND Independent Parent Carer Forum and SEND Ambassadors work to improve co-production will include mystery shopping, surveys and outreach activities.
- **Strengthen transition processes** by establishing an Adult and Paediatric Consultant Lead for Transition and plan to recruit Nurse Specialist for Complex Needs / Learning Disabilities within Bart's Health.
- **Identify ways to increase employer engagement** to secure a more substantial into-work offer for young people with SEND



## CASE STUDIES

### Supported Internships

The new Phoenix College and Tower Hamlets council set up the Queen Mary University based supported internship programme in 2029/20. This was the first 'DFN Project Search' supported internship to be delivered at a university in London.

The programme started with six interns who worked in different departments across the QMUL Mile End campus. The interns rotated in the portering, hospitality, maintenance, gardening and residential cleaning teams.

The rotations and the coaching provided by Kaleidoscope Sabre provided experience and employability skills which resulted in all six interns securing employment in sustainable jobs including positions as an Environmental Technician at the Royal Free Hospital, Activities Assistance at Urban Adventure and a Hospitality Assistant at Phoenix School.

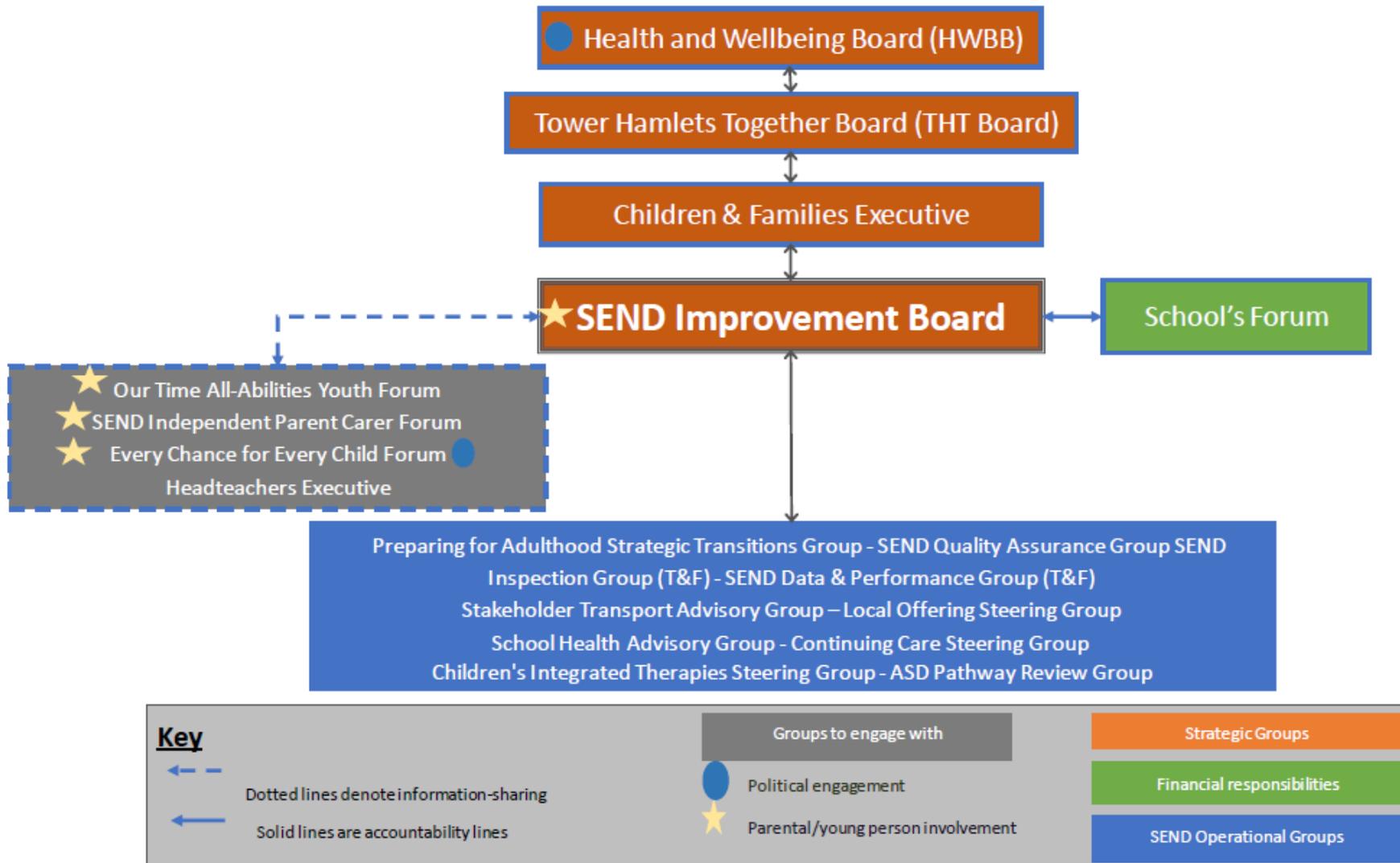
### Elective Home Education (EHE)

Support from a Specialist Advisory Teacher for EHE and collaborative working between a range of professionals and support services assisted a family experiencing some pressures and challenges, including a young person with an EHCP who was electively home educated.

When a change in family living arrangements took place communication between the family and the Specialist Advisory Teacher for EHE resulted in a good relationship being developed. This led to the identification of needs and support required with referrals being made for support around emotional wellbeing and financial & educational support. Alongside this the Specialist Advisory Teacher for EHE helped to secure cooking facilities for the family and a laptop for the young person's education needs.

A review and joint working between specialist advisors and the appropriate panels led to changes in educational provision for the young person who was then able to access suitable provision in a short time frame.

# Appendix One: Governance



## Appendix Two: Performance Report

Please note: we have not included performance measures where the latest available figures only go up to 2018/19 due to the impact of Covid 19. This mainly affects education measures.

Number of 'hits' on the Local Offer website	230,000 in 2019/20
Parents or carers reached by or attending Parent Ambassador sessions (during 2020)	501
Young people reached by or attending Young People Ambassador sessions (during 2020)	101
Children aged 2-2.5 years old receiving Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) 3 as part of the Healthy Child Programme or an integrated health review (Quarter 4 2020/21 in Tower Hamlets)	86%

Percentage of 2 year olds attending Early Years settings (2020)	Tower Hamlets	London	England
All children	44%	59%	69%
Children with SEN	3.3%	3.8%	3.5%

Children and young people seen by CAMHS within 5 weeks (Nov 20220)	100%
EHC Plans receiving health input within 6 weeks – percentage of advice sent (at March 2021)	70%

Education, Health & Care Plans completed within statutory timescales (2020) <i>will add definition</i>	Tower Hamlets	London	England
Excluding exceptions	6%	62%	58%
Including exceptions	7%	57%	56%

Mediation cases and tribunals for Education, Health & Care Plans (2020)	Tower Hamlets	London	England
Total number of mediation cases	6	478	4,135
Mediations vases that went to tribunal	0	155	1,104

<b>Children's Social Care – assessment timeliness</b>	
All Tower Hamlets assessments (Dec 2020)	85%
Assessments for children with disabilities (Dec 2020)	100%
<b>Repeat referrals to Children's Social Care – assessment timeliness</b>	
All Tower Hamlets assessments (Dec 2020)	85%
Assessments for children with disabilities (Dec 2020)	100%
<b>Number of short break placements (2019/20)</b>	414
<b>Number of care packages for children with disabilities (Dec 2020)</b>	279
<b>Families receiving a personal budget – EHC Plans with budget (2020)</b>	147
<b>Children and young people waiting less than 13 weeks for their 1st Child Development Team outpatient appointment (April 2021)</b>	67%
<b>Children and young people waiting less than 13 weeks for their 1st Occupational Therapy outpatient appointment (April 2021)</b>	100%
<b>Children and young people waiting less than 13 weeks for their 1st Paediatric Physiotherapy outpatient appointment (April 2021)</b>	100%
<b>Children and young people waiting less than 13 weeks for their 1st Speech and Language Therapy outpatient appointment (April 2020)</b>	90%
<b>Children and young people attending out of borough provision (with EHCP)</b>	17% as at May 2021
<b>Under 5's accessing Early Years services – percentage take up (Spring Term 2021)</b>	33%
<b>Patients with Learning Disabilities receiving an annual health check in the last 12 months (aged 14-17) (Feb 2021)</b>	75%
<b>Young people receiving Independent Travel Training (2019/20)</b>	
Number of young people worked with	39
Number who are independent following training	21
<b>Number of young people on supported internships (2020)</b>	35

## Appendix Four: Glossary

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