

# Tower Hamlets Annual Equality Report

April 2020 – November 2021





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## Annual Equality Report

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**John Biggs** Mayor of Tower Hamlets



**Cllr Asma Begum** Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities

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## Foreword

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We are proud to introduce the Tower Hamlets Annual Equality Report April 2020 – November 2021 which provides a summary of key activities the council has undertaken to address inequality in the borough in this period.

The council addresses inequality in the borough 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.

Our borough's diversity is one of its greatest strengths and promoting this along with equality is at the forefront of everything we 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 this embedded in them.

We recognise Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on everyone's everyday lives from work, school, health, to the way we interact with each other.

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

residents going forward. We have been working with our Partners to deal with these impacts while also focussing on recovery through the delivery of our services and by introducing new initiatives such as the £3 million Mayor's Covid Recovery Fund.

Studies have highlighted a disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the Black, Asian and minority ethnic population which has served to expose the consequences of the structural disadvantage and discrimination faced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. Also, the public death of George Floyd, and subsequent Black Lives Matter demonstrations, has brought race to the forefront of an international conversation.

Furthermore, high-profile

incidents, such as the murders of Sarah Everard, Sabina Nessa and Ranjit "Roy" Kankanamalge, also highlight women and LGBT safety as big concerns. With our Partners we have delivered programmes of work to address these.

We will continue to work to ensure these issues as well as other inequalities remain at the forefront of the council's recovery agenda. We will use the lived experience of our residents to address inequalities faced by our communities.



## Introduction

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.

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.

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.

In addition, the council’s commitment to fostering good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not is set out under outcome 8 of the Strategic Plan which contains our key actions to strengthen social cohesion in the borough.

To identify equality issues in Tower Hamlets the council undertakes the Borough Equality Assessment (BEA) which is informed by the council’s bi-annual Borough Profile. These data help us to understand our

progress and areas of continuous challenge so that we provide accessible and responsive services to improve outcomes for local people. The BEA is incorporated into our strategic plan as well as business planning and is available on our website.

This report provides some examples of our work from April 2020 to November 2021 (arranged according to our Strategic Plan priority areas) 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.

This includes some of our activities in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to support

different equality groups as well as our wider work to tackle inequalities, for example our work to deliver on the recommendations made by the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission.

Pages 5-7 of this report highlights key data on the population in the borough and a summary of the key equality challenges we face. We know these through our analyses of local data, reviews and wider engagement with the local community; this includes our work on the Borough Profile, Borough Equality Assessment, Poverty Review, Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequality Commission, Covid-19 Impact Assessment and digital inclusion.

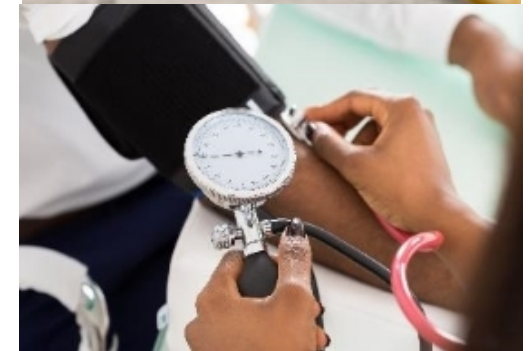
# About Tower Hamlets



<p>Fastest growing populations nationally and has an estimated population of 331,969 (ONS mid-year estimate 2020).</p>	<p>Around 17,000 more male residents than female residents in the borough. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> highest ratio of males to females in the country and is higher than the ratio in both London and UK (ONS mid-year estimate 2020)</p>	<p>4 in 10 residents were born outside of the UK (Census 2011)</p>
<p>Population turnover ranks as the 12<sup>th</sup> highest local authority area in the UK. (ONS mid-year estimate 2020).</p>	<p>Significantly higher proportion of residents who are single (55.3%) compared to London (44.1%) and England (34.6%) - Census 2011</p>	<p>Residents born in Bangladesh are the biggest migrant group. Most significant population growth in recent years was among EU nationals.</p>
<p>The largest age group is the 20-39 year olds (44%). Percentage is higher than London (32%) and England (26%) – ONS Mid Year Estimate 2020</p>	<p>4.3% of the population identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual (Local authority level sexual identify experimental estimates 2013-15)</p>	<p>38% of the residents are Muslim, compared with 5% in England and 13% in London. Lowest number of Christian residents (30%) compared with England (59%) and London (49%) – Census 2011.</p>
<p>Only 7% of the borough’s population are aged 65+ compared to 12% in London and 19% in England (ONS Mid-year estimate 2020).</p>	<p>More than two-thirds (69%) of the population belong to a minority ethnic group. Tower Hamlets is ranked as the 16<sup>th</sup> most ethnically diverse local authority in England out of 325 local authorities (Census 2011).</p>	<p>Higher proportion of mothers who were born outside of the UK (59.4%) compared to the UK (30.2%) and London (57.9%) – ONS Parents Country of Birth Statistics 2020.</p>



Poverty and Work	Crime, Safety and Cohesion	Health and Social Care
44% of older people live in income deprived households, the highest proportion in England and more than double the average (IMD 2019)	4,067 domestic abuse crimes recorded in 2020-21 – a 12.4% increase compared to 2019-20 where 3,610 offences were recorded	2,928 Children in need (2021). The rate in Tower Hamlets is higher than the London average (395.4 in Tower Hamlets compared to 338.9 in London)
Highest child poverty rates in England (32.5%) – IMD 2019. A growing number of working families are on a low income; more than 3 in 4 children in poverty are in a family where at least one person works (Poverty Review 2021)	4% increase in the youth reoffending rate when compared to the previous year (2020-21)	41.48% of Year 6 pupils are overweight or obese (2021)
The ethnic employment gap amongst women is twice as wide in the borough (41%) than in London (13.9%) – 2019-21	1,108 racist and religious offences (second highest in London) and 185 homophobic offences (5 <sup>th</sup> highest in London) – January-December 2021	Since the pandemic began women have been disproportionately impacted by mental health disorders (Covid-19 Impact Assessment follow-up report)
In the council women earn 7.17% less than men (mean difference) and 6.52% less than men (median difference) – Gender Pay Gap Report 2021		Increase in demand seen from spring 2021 onwards across services for young people and adults, exceeding pre-pandemic levels in a number of areas (Covid-19 Impact Assessment follow-up report)
Less than half (46.8%) of all disabled people aged 16-64 were in employment compared with nearly three quarters (72.1%) of the non-disabled population – 2019-21	83% of young offenders in 2020-21 were from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic ethnic group, 17 % were from a white ethnic group.	3 <sup>rd</sup> lowest disability-free life expectancy for men and 2 <sup>nd</sup> for women In London (60.3 Men, 59.3 Female (2017-19)
The ethnic (White and BME) gap in employment rate in Tower Hamlets is twice as wide as the gap observed in London (ethnic gap in the borough- 14%, ethnic gap in London- 6.7%) – 2019-21	57% residents said most friends (all or more than half) are with similar education level while 76% said that at least some of their friends are from a different ethnicity (Mid-pandemic Residents Survey 2021)	In 2018-19, 22.8% of 16+ year olds were estimated to have a common mental health disorder, well above the England average of 16.9%.



Key equality challenges (continued)

Education	Housing	Digital Exclusion
There are 162 languages spoken by pupils in our schools. 61% of pupils do not speak English as a first language, Bengali is the main language spoken.	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic households make up 72.4% of households on the housing register which includes 60.2% on the housing register record as Asian, predominately of Bangladeshi heritage (2021)	A 2020 survey by Tower Hamlets Healthwatch about residents accessing health services found that compared to other respondents, the digitally excluded were more likely to be residents from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds
Girls have higher educational attainment than boys at all stages (78% v 62%) – 2018-19	Homelessness disproportionately affects younger age groups with 76% of residents who are homeless or at risk of becoming so are aged 16-44 (2019-20)	Only 83% of disabled residents have access to the internet at home compared to 94% of non-disabled residents (Tower Hamlets Resident Survey 2021).
Non-White British pupils have higher educational attainment than White British pupils at all stages (71% vs 66%). However, this does not translate into high levels at good employment (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission 2021)	9 <sup>th</sup> highest number of rough sleepers in London. Rough sleepers are mainly male, 83% and UK nationals (60%). Just under four in ten (36.5%) were White British, 21% were from the White 'Other' group, 8% were Bangladeshi and 8.8% were Black African (2020-21)	Only 69% of Tower Hamlets' residents aged 60+ have access to the internet at home compared to 96% of residents aged 18-34 years old (Tower Hamlets Resident Survey 2021).
General consensus is that a loss in learning time in the classroom due to lockdowns since pandemic began has impacted academic progress and potentially widened the attainment gap (Covid-19 Impact Assessment follow-up report 2021)	There are 20,293 households that contain at least one household member with a disability or limiting long term illness (2009 Strategic Housing Market Assessment)	1-in-4 children in Tower Hamlets are digitally disadvantaged with no access to online learning (2021)







# **Our key equality activities and achievements**

**April 2020 – November 2021**

## Priority 1

### People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities



Workpath supported **252** women, **468** Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents and **74** disabled residents into employment (Apr 20-Sep 21)



**1271** clients aged 65+ and **6089** disabled clients supported by social welfare advice consortium (Oct 20-Sep 21)



**645** residents completed ESOL courses with Idea Store Learning with **98%** pass rate – second highest in London (Sep 20 - Jul 21)



**27** Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women supported into Health and Social Care roles (1 Apr 20 – 12 Nov 21)



**209** residents aged 65+ were supported by our Reablement service (Apr 20-Nov 21)



**12,265** clinically extremely vulnerable residents supported since the start of Covid-19 pandemic to March 2021



**75,944** meals provided to children and young people during school holidays between March 2020 and May 2021



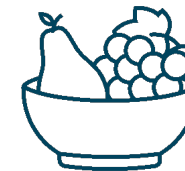
March 2021: **207** more young people in education, employment or training compared to same period in the previous year (**5997** in total) and in the top quartile of performance in London



Attendance at pregnancy and maternity-related sessions to support health and wellbeing of mothers and babies was recorded as **29,048** (March 2020-November 2021)



Supported **497 (42.6%)** White and **469 (40%)** Asian or Asian British residents with smoking cessation



Achieved the highest number of Healthy School London awards by borough in every category — Gold (**58**) Silver (**97**) and Bronze (**84**)

## Priority 2

### A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in



Removed statue of slave trader **Robert Milligan** and engaged with residents to develop an action plan to improve diversity



**5,610** primary school aged children (**21.8%** of the primary school pupil population) benefitting from healthier and safer environment around their schools through School Streets at **15** schools (2020-21)



Introduced an **Assisted Waste Collection** service to support elderly and disabled residents with mobility issues remove their household waste and as at November 2021 **7** households have signed up to this service



**£10 million** invested to improve over **60** of the borough's parks and open spaces, and seven playgrounds with play facilities were made accessible to all children including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)



**1978** residents engaged to raise awareness of hate crime and improve reporting and **10** new hate crime champions recruited (2020-21)



Engaged **1,204** people to raise awareness of and combat prejudice against the LGBT community while celebrating their achievements and diversity



**Over 650** new migrants participated in our specialist integration programme. This includes **290** passing an ESOL course; **288** attending social mixing activities; and **70** completing accredited employability training



Delivered **146** wheelchair accessible homes and **21** applicants rehoused to wheelchair accessible properties (Apr 20-Oct 2021)



**749 (77.3%)** of social/affordable housing lets were made to households from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and we have second highest number of social housing properties let by registered providers in London (2020-21)



We held **commemorative events** with our Partners and residents to remember lives lost during the Covid-19 pandemic and to say thank you to the community for coming together to support one another



**283 (97%)** victims of violence against women and girls felt safer after engaging with our victim support services (Apr 20-Sep 21). Satisfaction has risen by 2.1% between 2019/20 and 2020/21

### Priority 3

A dynamic, outcomes-based council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of the borough



In 2020 more than half of top 5% earners in the council were women (**52.4%**) and almost a third (**30.1%**) were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.



Commissioned **6** equality networks and an Equalities Hub including new Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and Women's networks



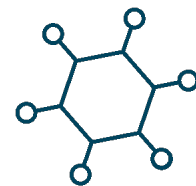
Distributed **10,383** and donated **250** laptops to children and young people and pledged a further **£50,000** toward **£1 million** crowdfunding target to get 'Every Child Online'



Introduced a module on 'Equality and Diversity in the Workplace' into our Corporate Mandatory Learning programme and as at May 2021 **1577** (47.8%) staff have completed the course



**£1.5 million** funding allocated to drive forward inclusion work with our Partners of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities focusing on health, education, employment and community leadership



Provided **£338k** funding to community groups to engage with, disseminate messages to and gather insights from different communities on Covid-19 and its impact (Apr 20-Sep 21)



In April 2021 our staff Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Empower Network engaged with just under **100** staff on dealing with 'microaggression'



Improved the health of communities in the **12** most deprived neighbourhoods where most participants were Asian-Bangladeshi women, aged 25-45, unwaged and with caring responsibilities



Through the social value element of our procurement process our contractors have committed to spending **£23,700** to support schools and young people and **£7,200** towards work experience placements for Tower Hamlets residents with learning difficulties



With our Partners we delivered **168** Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) activities, engaged **472** people with the White Ribbon campaign and recruited **94** VAWG Champions (Apr 20-Sep 21)





### Equality Policy

Our Equality Policy sets out a clear commitment to ensure equality is at the heart of everything we do from the money we spend and the people we employ, to the services we provide. You can read the full policy [here](#).

### Publication of equality information

The council is committed to publishing equalities information that is accessible and helps us to shape interventions and meet the needs of our service users and community. Our published information is available [here](#).

### Consultation





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)

### Document accessibility

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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