



North East London  
Clinical Commissioning Group



**Tower Hamlets**

**SEND Improvement Board**

**Annual Report 2022 / 23**

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## Introductions from the Chairs

Welcome to the Tower Hamlets SEND Improvement Board Annual Report 2022-23. This report outlines the progress that has been made in delivering improvement for our children and young people across the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system in the borough during the last year and sets out priorities for 2023-24. The report is organised around the five priorities of the [SEND Strategy](#) (2020-24).

Tower Hamlets has a unique and culturally diverse population, and we are determined to serve our community in a way that works in co-production with children, young people and families. In Tower Hamlets our vision for all children and young people with SEND is for them to be able to lead fulfilling lives, be as independent as possible, and supported by their families, services and the local community to learn, thrive and achieve.

Working collaboratively with our key stakeholders and partners we aim to identify children with additional needs and ensure that we deliver the right services at the right time in the right place in order to meet the needs of our young people across Education, Social Care and Health.

Wherever possible we strive to meet those needs locally, to ensure our young people can benefit from their local community and in turn are able to contribute positively to that community as adult citizens in the future. In the past year the council has approved funding which demonstrates our commitment to additional investment including £1.1m for children with SEND and similarly the NHS has approved additional funding of £870,000.

## Introductions from the Chairs

We are keen to ensure that the lived experience of our children and young people with SEND and their families is a positive one and that outcomes for those youngsters continue to be at least in line with national expectations, and to ensure that our children and young people reach their true potential.

We currently provide a range of services that can be accessed via our Local Offer [website](#) and we regularly provide parents with support through our rapidly growing Parent Carer Forum. Members of the forum provide experiential peer support and advice. The Local Authority and NHS are together hosting regular informative and interactive events such as Let's talk SEND that have been received very positively by our parents and carers. It has given them an opportunity to meet officers from the various services and understand what is available in Tower Hamlets.

In 2021 we were inspected as a Local area by OFSTED and we were asked to produce a [Written Statement of Action](#) to address the areas we knew needed improvement. We are pleased to say that we have made significant progress in all areas and that has been recognised in our regular meetings with the DfE and NHS-England.

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



**James Thomas, Chair  
of Tower Hamlets  
SEND Improvement  
Board. Corporate  
Director of Children  
& Culture.**



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

# Introductions from the Chairs



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

- Secured funding to a bigger variety of engagement activities and to do film making to spread SEND awareness.
- Visited schools to do Our Time presentations, anti-bullying workshops and recruiting more young people.
- Promoted SEND and spread awareness at different events and places, including the Youth Achievement Awards.
- Worked closely with the Spotlight Youth Centre and with Spotlight SEND Superheroes, taking part in Youth Empowerment Board at Spotlight, attended a new launch for Spotlight and representing Our Time.
- We met the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to promote inclusion and implement changes in the community.
- Our Time members have been part of various interview panels.
- Participated in the National Council for Disabled Children 'Making Participation Work' and 'Youth Voice Matters' Conferences.
- Attended the Every Chance for Every Child Forum.
- Delivered a presentation at the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
- Doing ongoing co-production work with the SEND professionals at the SEND Improvement Board.
- Working closely with the London Strategic Managers Group to improve the SEND Support System, giving feedback on the Department for Education's SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan.

## Priorities for 23/24

- Giving ongoing advice on the Local Offer
- Making changes to the Young People's Zone
- Working to support and encourage other boroughs to consult and develop their own SEND Forums for young people in partnership with London Innovation & Improvement Alliance (LIIA), including a Pan-London SEND Forum.
- Make films based on advice for parents to help young people be independent, the Young Person's Advice Centre, Our Time and Living with SEND.
- Recruit more members, including younger members.
- Run boys' and girls' groups for Our Time



**Sornnaly Hossain, Our Time Forum Member, Young Person Ambassador and Member of SEND Improvement Board**



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

### **What went well**

Let's Talk SEND events for Young people with SEND and their parents and carers hosted by the Local Authority (LA) every half term - representation from local area Education, Social Care and Health partners.

Events themed to ensure targeted support and information to the right audience at the right time.

Topics included Early Years, transition, speak your language and Post-16 options. There has been improved attendance at recent events (May 2023) and an increase in membership of the Parent Carer Forum (PCF), which has met six times a year.

Introduction of a social media officer to ensure communication happens in a user- friendly manner.

Representatives of the PCF attend and participate in regular meetings and forums with the LA and Health.

Children's Mental Health Matters Forum was successful and will become a standing item.

Partnering with health on key areas such as Sports London disability sports & Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL).

PCF have signed up for Autism in Schools' program.

Health Spot GP services for 11-25 with Speech and Language provision.

Networking with other parent carer forums such as Bristol has been very successful

A variety of well -attended workshops have been held, including Autism, diet and eating habits and Early Years

Overall feedback received has been very positive and includes recent feedback form surveys and Let's Talk SEND events.

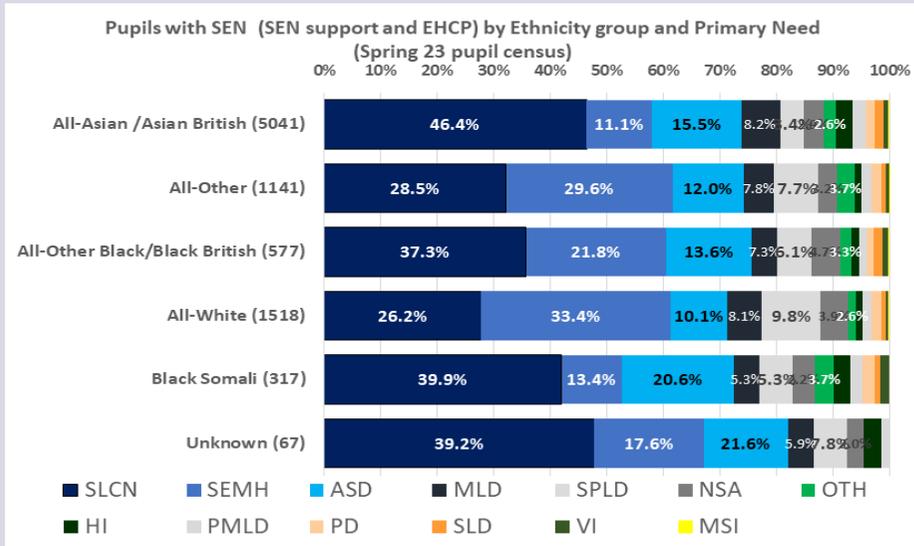
### **Moving forward**

The PCF will focus on increasing partnership working, co-production and peer to peer support.



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

# Tower Hamlets Contextual Picture



**4224**

**Active EHCPS – ranked in the top quartile for England (Jun 2023)**

**33%**

**pupils with SEND have speech, language and communication needs**

**(Jun 2023) decreased from 40.3% in 2022 as a result of quicker diagnoses of Autism**

The spring 2023 census reveals boys are much more likely to have an EHCP (26% female vs 74% male). Boys are 4 times more likely to have ASD as their primary need and just over 5.5 times more likely to have Social, Emotional & Mental Health as their primary need compared with girls in this group.

While EHCP cohorts for most ethnicities are in line with the total pupil population, White British pupils are overrepresented. This group makes up 8% of the total pupil population, but 12% of the total EHCP cohort. Breakdown of need for this group reveals Social Emotional and Mental Health as the most common primary need (29%), which is 3 times higher than the average for other ethnicities in the total EHCP cohort (10%).

Although the number of Bangladeshi pupils with an EHCP is proportionate to the total pupil population, Bangladeshi boys are overrepresented, being 2.5 times more likely to have an EHCP compared with Bangladeshi girls.

**7.9%**

**of secondary school pupils with an EHCP (Jun 2023) above England average for 2022 (2.2%)**

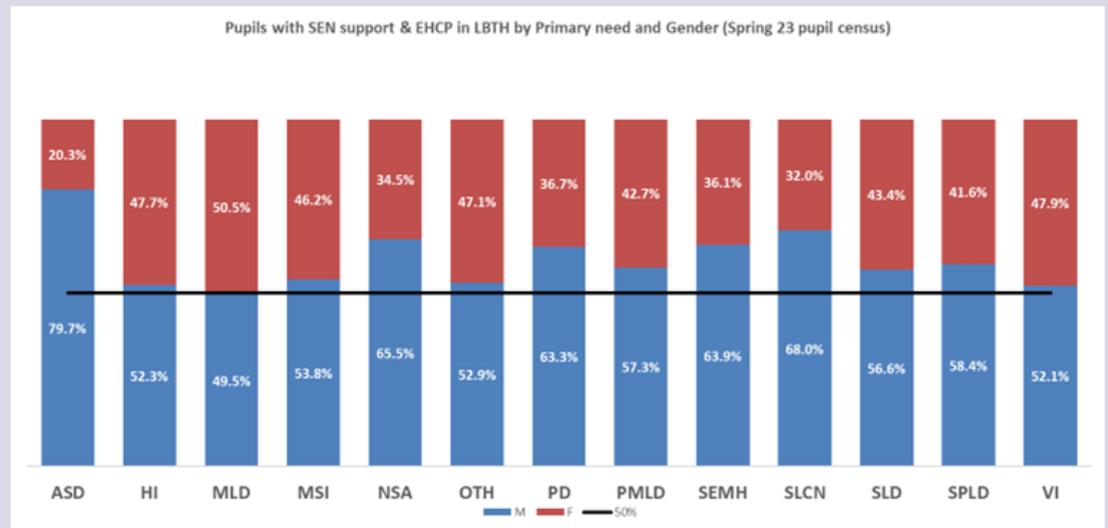
**4.4%**

**of EHCP cohort aged under five – above England average (4.1%) (Jun 2023)**

**3.8%**

**with Hearing Impairment ranked in the top quartile for England (Jun 2023)**

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



# Priority One: Leading SEND

## Key achievements in 2022/23

'You Said, We Did' reporting has embedded across the local area, with a mechanism of quarterly feedback established. This information is publicly disseminated to young people, parents and carers via the [local offer](#) and communications channels, as well as with the SEND Board. It draws on feedback received from across the SEND system, including the young person and parent / carer issues tracker maintained by the SEND Improvement Board.

Termly Let's Talk SEND [e-bulletins](#) continue to be well-received and are sent to all Tower Hamlets schools and settings to be shared with parents and professionals. There has been an increase in requests to distribute printed copies for public areas and buildings, and as a result the Spring 2023 edition was printed & paper copies distributed.

We are proud of the positive outcome of the OFSTED focused visit in July 22 looking at arrangements for children in care. Inspectors found - *Social workers .. are effective advocates for disabled children. This practice ensures that children's needs are prioritised, and the quality of their lives improved.*

A SEND communications strategy has been developed with support from the corporate communication team and aligned with key objectives set out in the Parental Engagement Strategy and Action Plan to deliver in 2023.

Work to enhance the Local offer website and increase awareness has continued via co-production work with parents and young people, including input from the local offer focus groups - as a result total page views have increased from 198.6k in 2021 to 210.6k in 2022.

A new toddler and junior playground at Ravenscroft Park in Bethnal Green opened, featuring inclusive play equipment enabling children of all abilities to play together, the playground, inspired by the nearby Columbia Road Market, has flower and plant themed equipment and floor markings.

Termly Let's Talk SEND [events](#) continue to build momentum, providing an opportunity for parents to feedback to senior leaders directly on the pace of improvement. The event in November co-produced with the SEND Independent Parent Carer Forum, was the most successful yet, with over 80 parents and 30+ professionals in attendance.

Parental engagement via social media continues to be an important channel of communication, with a 16% increase in use in 2022 compared to 2021 (across Whats App groups, Instagram, and Twitter)

SEND Parent Ambassadors attended 48 events and coffee mornings in 2022 reaching 642 parents and carers.

The annual [Down Syndrome Day](#) celebration which took place at Marner Primary School was the best attended event yet, with over 20 children and young people across mainstream settings participating in a show with Half Moon Theatre. Families valued coming together and having a peer group to build connections.

## Priority One: Leading SEND

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

### YOU SAID

Need better systems so parents do not need to keep repeating their story.

Increase budget for SEN.

### WE DID

With changes to our Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) template, there is a tell-us-once approach to SEN in assessment and Plans. There is now a 90% satisfaction and audit marking in newly issued EHCPs.

Successful growth bid submitted to retain our SEN staff working on Annual Reviews and Phase Transfer, with a further SEN team and a Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) service, to meet the demand of new Education Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCA) requests, and the corresponding rise of EHCPs in the borough.

### Other feedback received

*I feel very happy and empowered .. To give my opinion as a parent of a young SEND child and I was listened to and appreciated for my time. (Parent involved with Co-production of Family Hubs approach).*

*The SEND ambassador programme has enabled me to become more confident that x's future will be more inclusive, & he will have the same opportunities as his older siblings .. I am proud to be part of it. (Parent Ambassador)*

## Priority One: Leading SEND

### What next?

### Priorities for improvement in 2023/24

Feedback from the Our Time Forum highlighted the need for more accessible mainstream sessions for young people – plans to improve our current offer will be spearheaded by:

- Insourcing the management of seven leisure centres from April 2024, with a focus on providing a service that benefits hard-to-reach communities, such as Black Asian and Multi-Ethnic (BAME) women and SEND children.
- £13.7m investment to transform youth services – Consultation on the development of a new service offer - *Young Tower Hamlets* - will begin, including engagement with young people with SEND on providing a diverse programme of opportunities and support across the borough.

Work to refresh the SEND Strategy which runs until 2024, will begin.

Our improvement journey will focus on the lived experience of children, young people & their families - hearing what the impact of our work is and using that feedback to make improvements will take our services to the next level. This will be supported by:

- More Let's Talk SEND events planned linking into diarised events such as the Parent Conference and a Year 5 Transitions event to widen our potential audience.
- Our Time Forum to work with professionals to develop a Co-production Charter for Young People with SEND – including a survey of young people with SEND to find out about their experiences of Youth Service Providers.
- Public re-launch of the Local Offer website planned for early summer, following funded improvement work to enhance the intuitive functionality of the site using feedback from young people, parents, & carers from a termly focus group.
- Launch SEND communications strategy, with the following aims:
  - Increase awareness and understanding of what it means to have a child with SEND, and the support available to families in the borough.
  - Demonstrate the council's continuous improvements to SEND services.
  - Celebrate SEND-inclusive organisations and environments in the borough.

## Priority Two: Early Identification and Assessment

### Key achievements in 2022 / 23

Revision of EHCP templates has greatly improved the quality of content: individual feedback from parents and schools, as well as external review and continued audits confirms this. The Quality Assurance Matrix and Framework introduced in Sep 22 continues to show impact - 90% of new plans sampled accurately reflect advice received.

Our EHCP timeliness has increased and improved from years before. Our cumulative timeliness is now around National Average (50%), and our month-by-month timeliness is in excess of this, around 70% on-time.

The Inclusion Team worked in partnership with Phoenix Outreach Service to deliver Autism Education Trust courses for the Early Education and Childcare sector to enhance understanding and awareness of autism and how autism can affect children in the Early Years.

Family Hubs and Early Help Strategy launch was well-attended (150 parents and professionals). New approach features explicit focus upon SEND. Tower Hamlets Council is one of the first 75 local authorities to pilot the government's Family Hubs model and has kick-started in the South-West Locality of the borough covering Stepney, Wapping, Whitechapel, Limehouse, and Shadwell.

Early Help Service worked with Anna Freud Centre and the Early Intervention Foundation to produce developmental toolkit which could be used by other Local Authorities.

With the introduction of additional staffing into the SEN Service, we have been able to complete all phase transfer Annual Reviews for those moving between Nursery and Primary school, and KS2 to 3, whilst we move to completing KS3-4 and KS4-5 Annual Reviews. The LA is now processing around 75% of Annual Reviews received within 12 weeks.



Advice and guidance have been developed for parents, young people and settings, through co-production, in partnership with the SEND Information Advice and Support Service. All new paperwork and new guidance places co-production and a focus on the lives of our children and young people at its heart.

Take up of Early learning placements has increased to 68% (Jan 23) – the highest ever recorded in Tower Hamlets.

## Priority Two: Early Identification and Assessment

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

### YOU SAID

More speech and language training for schools and parents. (Parent @ Let's Talk SEND Event Nov 22)

### Other feedback received

**Feedback from parents on EHCP co-production process:**

*Co-production meeting was invaluable .. it provided a "face" & humanised the whole process. We felt "included" and "listened to".*

### WE DID

Speech and Language Therapy and the Learning Advisory Service (LAS) are piloting the "Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) Together" course for parents of children with DLD in Tower Hamlets. This intervention helps parents understand what DLD is, how it affects their children and how they can help, including advocating for their children. If the pilot is successful, we want this group to be available regularly.

Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists are training staff in Children and Family Centres as we roll out the 'Play and Connect' group for children identified with social communication difficulties, including suspected autism. This support and training will be on-going as the Children and Family Centre staff require. We are discussing ways of delivering the Elklan 'Let's Talk' courses for parents alongside partners in the Learning Advisory Service.

A session on supporting language development for all Children and Family Centre staff in to help support staff delivering 'Little Talkers' groups in Family Hubs.

## Priority Two: Early Identification and Assessment

### What next?

### Priorities for improvement in 2023/24

We have made significant progress in reducing the time it takes for an EHCP assessment, but more work is needed to increase our timeliness further and maintain a performance figure of above national averages, month-by-month, of 70%.

We need to continue to embed co-production to ensure we capture the lived experience of children, young people and their families, supported by plans to:

- Continue bringing EHC plan writing in-house embedding co-production meetings as an integral part of our working.
- Develop ways for parents and young people to provide digital feedback on EHCPs and services, with QR codes on plans to be explored.

Recruitment to the role of Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) to commence in July 2023 to ensure high quality social care input and engagement with the EHC needs assessment and planning process.

Some parents have told us that the consistency of SEN support varies across different settings in the borough. Early identification of need (including change of need) and intervention will continue to a top priority. We will be working with settings and partners to:

- Co-produce a LBTH Inclusion Framework document with stakeholders that sets out the provision that must be made ordinarily available for children and young people with SEN in mainstream schools. To launch in 2025.
- Deliver a comprehensive training programme for Early Education and Childcare providers which includes building skills in meeting needs, speech and language development, autism and social, emotional and mental health.
- Roll out a full Family Hubs network across the borough by March 2024 (following the pilot's completion in May 2023) to provide joined-up support across a network of services.
- SEN Service will work with schools to ensure all Annual Reviews are completed within settings and returned to the LA for processing, as well as completing every Annual Review within Phase Transfer at all age ranges.

## Priority Three: Commissioning Effective Services to Respond to Local Need

### Key achievements in 2022/23

Average Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) assessment waiting time has reduced to 80 weeks from a high of 144 weeks last year- a reduction of 45%.

London Autism Clinic commissioned to deliver additional diagnostic assessments; 33 assessments have been completed since Nov 2022 (start of contract). ASD Assessment Service waiting list patients prioritised for referral to this new service based on length of wait. Positive feedback from families, with 97% reporting a Good or Excellent service from the London Autism Clinic.

Improved ASD discharge/diagnostic decision rate of 45 per month for the last six months. More than 200 patients received a positive diagnosis in the last six months.

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

102 families were consulted and inputted into the proposed model, raising what support is most important to them. This has helped to shape the Social Communication Difference/Autism Navigation Model.

Autism cards designed by young people have had positive impact since launch in Nov 2021, with 1500 issued.

Autism page landing [page](#) developed on local offer website and has been publicised with parents, carers and professionals.

[Play and Connect](#) sessions supporting social communication difference now running in 3 Children and Family Centres - 88 families have received support from the model to date. 100% of parents attending Play & Connect sessions have reported *significant* uplift in confidence supporting their child using therapy techniques.

Social Communication Difference and Autism [Directory](#) has been developed which explains our local service offer. A Supporting Social Communication Difference and Autism [Leaflet](#) also developed which focuses on being accessible. Resources are published on the local offer and promoted via comms channels.

Progress on development of a Speech and Language Treatment Pathway for age 3-5s has been delayed due to issues with workforce recruitment. Recurrent funding has now been secured to address and progress this work.

## Priority Three: Commissioning Effective Services to Respond to Local Need

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

### YOU SAID

Need more Therapies  
(Parent @ Let's Talk SEND Event Nov 22)

### Other feedback received

Of the 100+ professionals & parents who attended a Universal ASD Training Session, 98% rated it good or better, with most attendees more confident in supporting a child with autism post-session.

### WE DID

Barts Health Community Therapies have been given money for two years to reduce waiting times for therapies (speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy). Recruitment has begun and we can expect more staff in post from February 2023 with an increase in appointments available and then a gradual reduction in waiting times over the next two years. The contract to fund intervention for children aged between 3 and 5 is almost finalised and will allow Barts Health NHS Trust to recruit more therapists to extend their intervention to children in this age group.

Part of the discussion in the Therapies Review has been to move our therapy staff more into community settings working alongside other professionals as we are doing in the Play and Connect groups in Children and Family Centres. This does not result in more therapists but should help make us more accessible and visible and allow other professionals to feel more confident and skilled at supporting children with developmental difficulties.

# Priority Three: Commissioning Effective Services to Respond to Local Need

## What next?

### Priorities for improvement in 2023/24

Good progress has been to reduce address ASD waiting times, but high numbers of referrals present an ongoing challenge. Some families have told us that they need a better understanding of the support available to them whilst awaiting ASD assessment, and whilst good local support is now available, the proposed ASD and Social Communication Difficulty Navigation Model will raise awareness and provide an ongoing point of contact for families to support with general queries and issues about their child's needs.

- Launch of ASD and Social Communication Difficulty Navigation Model in South-West Locality by September 2023; across whole Local Area by January 2024.
- Specialist Health Visitor recruitment underway to support development of ASD and Social Communication Difficulty navigation model.

Roll out of an integrated therapies model for early years and school age children will continue, supported by:

- Roll out of Connect sessions for Social Communication Difference across all four localities in 2023.
- Launch of Stephen Hawking Stay and Play sessions in June 2023.
- Development of a digital platform with resources for schools which delivers interventions and tracks progress of young people – to be launched in September 2023.

We recognise there are still gaps in our Speech and Language Treatment pathway for age 3-5s. Progress has been delayed due to workforce recruitment issues, but plans are in place to launch a treatment service in 2023; supported by:

- Implementation of a new recruitment plan, supported by recurrent funding.

## Priority Four: Good Quality Education Provision for All Children

### Key achievements in 2022/23

Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP) continues to build on its leadership network for SENCOs and Inclusion Leads, with a programme of well-attended meetings throughout 2022/2023 reaching 136 professionals across nursery, primary, secondary and special school provision.

A multi-agency group has been developed to look at ways in which we can further develop in-house opportunities for vulnerable children and young people.

Post-16 Educational and Training [Directory](#) developed for young people with Preparing for Adulthood section – co-produced by Young Work Path and SEN Team.

£9,000 has also been awarded to Keynote Music, a partner of The Tower Hamlets Arts & Music Education Service (THAMES), by Foundation for Future London.

The funding will support a project called Around the World which will see new music created by young people from Soundbox, an inclusive music collective that brings together disabled and non-disabled musicians, part of THAMES. Additionally, it will fund two Tower Hamlets community performances with Keynote Music/Docklands Sinfonia musicians and singers.

The Early Education and Childcare Service Inclusion Team has developed information tools and formats to support Early Education and Childcare providers in implementing the Graduated Approach through a person-centred planning cycle.

SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) and Inclusion Co-ordinator (INCo) training needs survey completed, and work commenced to enhance the training, support and development offer available. Termly SENCO Conferences established to support staff with high-quality continuous professional development. Spring Term conference was focused on Dyslexia, with positive feedback received: 79% SENCOs/INCOs fed back that conference was good or excellent. SENCO Forums continue to be well-received and have increased to half-termly (online) with good attendance from different stakeholders.

Mayflower Primary School ranked as the best primary school in the country in The Sunday Times Parent Power League Tables 2023.

Inclusion is central to the ethos of the school, which takes a whole-school approach to ensuring good provision for children with SEND.

## Priority Four: Good Quality Education Provision for All Children

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

### YOU SAID

Young people with SEND experience difficulties attaining English and maths skills.

Parents told us that there is some inconsistency with SEN support levels varying from school to school

### WE DID

Study groups sessions to be piloted in two Ideas Stores to be held after school/college, including peer support from Sep 2023.

The new SEND Inclusion Advisor is continuing to address consistency with schools. They are looking at producing a document about what is 'ordinarily available' which would help establish what is expected at the SEN Support level and create dialogue on more consistent practice across schools.

The scope of Integrated therapies will include SEN support with a proposed minimum offer. This will provide a standard all parents can expect for their children.

## Priority Four: Good Quality Education Provision for All Children

### What next?

#### Priorities for improvement in 2023/24

A strong culture of inclusion already exists across many education settings, but more can be done to strengthen existing arrangements through partnership working to improve support and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Plans for improvement include:

- Implementation of a two-year pilot project with the Phoenix outreach service, which aims to improve the inclusion of high-needs autistic students in ten mainstream settings through the development of flexible specialist classroom provisions - 19 schools currently set to benefit from the project. Set to begin in Sep 2023.
- Co-production of a LBTH Inclusion Framework document with stakeholders that sets out the provision that must be made ordinarily available for children and young people with SEN in mainstream schools to help improve consistency and accountability. Set to officially launch in 2025.

SEN Service to undertake a wholesale review of its SEND Sufficiency, both specialist provision and placement numbers. This work will factor in analysis of the numerical growth in demand and growth in type of need from recent years, as well as projections for the years ahead and consideration of need within each setting and age range now. This work will take input from LA colleagues, schools, parents and carers, health and social care into consideration to reach a valid projection of SEN need for years to come. A comprehensive plan for how to address each area of need, again through a combination of provision and placements will be made.

Tower Hamlets Council will become the first in England to offer free school meals to all school pupils up to the age of 16 from Sep 2023. The funding is part of the council's effort to improve the life chances of all young people in the borough, including children and young people with SEND.

## Priority Five: Supporting successful transitions and supporting independence

### Key achievements in 2022 / 23

Expansion and development of the annual 'information sharing day' where Education, Health and Care Plans are reviewed. Special Educational Needs, EH and other service areas within adult services now attend or have access to the outcomes from this exercise. This is helping to improve how we plan transitions from the age of 14.

The Tower Hamlets Transitions Board has been strengthened during the last year, to continue improving the experience of transitions between services for children, young people and families. There is key representation in place across health, education and social care (adults and children's)

Preparing for Adulthood transition booklet updated and will inform young people's awareness of the support available in the local area as they progress into adulthood. The booklet was co-developed between health, education and social care to ensure information provided is comprehensive.

An internal apprenticeship programme at Tower Hamlets Council was launched in January 2023. Part of the Local Supported Employment (LSE) initiative, the programme will provide 8 internal apprenticeships for young people with SEND. A successful LSE funding bid means the Supported Employment Team will be able to support 60 residents with learning disabilities, autism or both to move into employment and provide the help they need to maintain that employment.



Shakil (pictured above), was one of the eight apprentices appointed and will be based in the Living Well team, he is pictured above with his new manager, Natasha Sutton.

*I am very excited to start my first job and to learn new skills. Keep always trying because if you give up now you won't see the blessings ahead of you.*

Work has been underway to plan out what is needed on the Tower Hamlets Local Offer website in relation to transitions. The focus is on providing details of pathways to adulthood as well as what services are available across all levels of needs.

## Priority Five: Supporting successful transitions and supporting independence

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

#### YOU SAID

There is a need to teach more life skills and more support is needed for young people to develop social skills to help with steps towards employment.

#### WE DID

Some Post-16 providers are embedding personal care, cooking, household chores, shopping and healthy living skills into their programmes of study

Travel training is more readily available to provide the confidence to travel safely and independently

Ahead of employment opportunities, we are providing access to extracurricular activities to help with socialising, developing relationships and becoming involved in the wider community

Young people on internship & apprenticeship programmes are developing social skills by actively participating in council events.

### Other feedback received

#### Project Search Programme

*We are delighted and feel extraordinarily lucky to have stumbled across this life changing programme 2 years ago. I wanted to write and thank you because last weekend my son went to Nando's with his friend, who also graduated project search. He sent me a picture of them both in the sunshine eating and later they spent the afternoon in the park These two young men are living purposeful independent lives. It is so much more than work and a place in society, my son struggled all his life to make friends - more than anything he wanted to be like everyone else... Thank you so much, the project is phenomenal and hopefully is part of a societal shift in how we view difference.*

**Supported Internship Programme at Tower Project**  
*Matt has given far more than any professional I have ever met and with his care and guidance my son has blossomed. (From a parent of a young man who completed the supported internship programme at Queen Mary University London)*

# Priority Five: Supporting successful transitions and supporting independence

## What next?

### Priorities for improvement in 2023/24

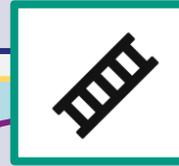
We recognise that there are some gaps in sustainable post-16 education and employment opportunities for young people with SEN. Development and sourcing of new opportunities is an ongoing activity. This will be supported by:

- Analysis of learning from a Preparing for Adulthood audit will be carried out to inform service improvements and opportunities available.
- Delivery of 'Let's Work' SEND employment event in May 2023, designed, developed and operated by young people with SEND, focusing on stimulating greater engagement between employers and young people.

The Transitions Board will continue to work with partners to improve the process of transition from children's to adult services for young people with EHCPs and expand co-production with young people and parents to ensure a consistent and accessible approach is developed. This will be supported by:

- Inviting young people and parents to become members of the Transitions Board.
- Launch of pathways document (known as the 'Tube Map') for those who have an EHCP but will be experiencing transition to adulthood without children's social care services. The map will provide information to make all aspects of the pathway to adulthood clearer, including employment, independent living, community inclusion and health pathways.
- Launch of the re-developed Local Offer 'Pathways to Adulthood' site.
- Work with adult social care to clarify assessments for transition, specifically for children who may be outside the scope of Children Living with Disabilities services but with a requirement for adult services.
- Developing a business case to explore the possibility of 'Pathway Finders' to support those undertaking EHCPs, to confirm what transition information should be within annual reviews and to support parents and professionals with pathways to adulthood.

## Case Study: Sensory Support Service



### Background

A baby was referred to Sensory Support Service less than one month old via the newborn hearing programme, with successful follow up and contact within 48 hours of referral. Further clinical based testing was to follow, but the audiologist felt referral for Early Intervention Support (Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (QToD) input was appropriate at this stage. Baby, one of non-identical IVF twins, was presenting with evidence of severe hearing loss, thresholds in low frequencies near criteria for cochlear implantation. Further testing was completed, and hearing aids were first fitted at 7 weeks old.

### Early Support included:

Family supported at audiology appointments and QToD provided fortnightly home visits - focus on establishing good hearing aid use and support the understanding of hearing loss.

Hearing aid training provided to extended family members and a variety of childminders (both parents in full time jobs).

Invitation to weekly parents' stay and play sessions for deaf children (offered extended to both twins). Multiagency staffed sessions lead by QToDs, with Speech and Language Therapist and some Audiology Outreach. Sessions when Audiology Outreach were present to take further new ear mould impressions were very popular.

QToD referred family to specialist Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) Team & joint working/objectives agreed.

Assessment centre was convened in nursery setting for a small group of children with similar conditions which allowed for enhanced QToD and SaLT input, supporting and empowering nursery staff. This approach allowed for increased frequency of support.

Collaborative working with key stakeholders ensured consistency of approach and provision of specialist training for mainstream staff, building capacity in the settings and enabling effective inclusion.

### Outcomes

Parents felt supported by a Service that can flex around their needs, collaborate with other agencies to provide coordinated support and respond quickly to change such as, remote working during the Covid pandemic, to ensure a consistency of offer to the family to meet needs.

The family appreciated the recordings of the weekly classes being made available for download and review so the whole family could practice together throughout the week. They valued the question & answer time at the end of other remote delivery sessions and felt informed about future choices for their child.

Intensive early intervention support, following diagnosis, has enabled this child to be a consistent hearing aid wearer, who is making good progress. Due to early intervention, gap closed and universal offer can be accessed and mainstream primary provision to be sought. The family are in agreement that an EHC needs assessment is not required

*I have had expert tuition based on our baby's immediate needs. Child's name attempts at signing have improved and we are much more consistent with our signing.*

*We appreciate that not all areas have such a team working together to support children with hearing needs and feel it is an important reason to stay in LBTH.*

## Case Study: Pupil at Secondary Special School



### Background

A secondary student with severe learning difficulties (SLD), epilepsy, cerebral palsy and antenatal brain injury, fully dependent on a wheelchair for mobility. Often finds self-regulation difficult when routines altered, leading to periods of emotional anxiety and, at times, self-harming.

Shielding through pandemic had an extremely negative impact as result of changes to this student's routine. This affected attendance and engagement in learning. Student began to refuse to get out of bed, change clothes, engage in family or school activities and began losing weight, refusing to leave bedroom.

### Support provided

During this time a multi-disciplinary team around the family (TAF) meeting was convened to determine the issues being faced by the student and family and to develop an action plan. Although the family was supported by Social Care and Health services, the school intervened through the development of an individualised home communication system and behaviour support plan that could be followed by the family. Through a system of positive reinforcers for changes in behaviour and the ongoing support of the school, the student slowly started to leave his bedroom and re-engage in family life, including eating meals with family.

The quality of engagement and relationships were paramount, close working relationships with families were embedded in this schools' approach, with skilful child centred practice at the heart, including making interventions which were appropriate for the individual.

The school has initiated an Outreach and Community Engagement Provision working with other schools to provide support and advice, including coffee mornings and working with families to help tackle barriers to attendance by addressing them in the home.

### Outcomes

The student returned to school with an amended timetable, with favourite blanket and in casual clothes as wearing a uniform was a trigger for anxiety. Within a period of 3 weeks the student was happily attending school regularly, engaging in lessons and making positive progress.

From a period of deteriorating attendance to a period of school refusal, the student's attendance returned to 91% as a result of the intervention by school. The family report positive engagement at home and that the student now looks forward to getting ready for school.

# Appendix One: SEND Governance Structure

## Appendix 2: SEND System Governance



**Key**

- ← - - Dotted lines denote information-sharing
- ← Solid lines are accountability lines
- Groups to engage with
- Political engagement
- ★ Parental/young person involvement
- Strategic Groups
- Financial responsibilities
- SEND Operational Groups

## Appendix Two: Performance

**51.2%**

EHCP pupils attending state-funded mainstream school - 5th highest in England. (Jun 2022)

**3.5%**

16/17-year-olds with an EHCP were NEET in 2022 – 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest amongst statistical neighbours (Jun 2022)

**7.3%**

Lowest overall absence for SEN Support pupils amongst statistical neighbours (Jun 2022)

**20.7%**

EHCP pupils educated at a state-funded special school, placing Tower Hamlets in the lowest quartile of all local authorities in England (Jun 2022)

**50%**

EHCPs issued within 20 weeks (cumulative timeliness) in line with England average (2023)

**£477**

Top up funding for maintained providers – highest in England (2023)

**7.3%**

16–25-year-olds with an EHCP undertaking a supported internship - highest in England. Represents 81 supported internships (Jun 2022)

**73%**

Children receiving a 2 – 2.5-year-old health visitor check – above London average (63%) (2022)

<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>