



A TOWER HAMLETS FOR ALL

**Our New Partnership Plan
2023-2028**



**TOWER
HAMLETS**
PARTNERSHIP

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Foreword from Mayor Lutfur Rahman

Since autumn 2022, we have been working with residents, partners, and leaders from across the borough representing businesses, community, faith, voluntary and public service organisations including the Barts Health NHS, Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade, education institutions and housing providers to develop a new shared vision for the borough. Together, we are the Tower Hamlets Partnership. Our new Partnership Plan sets out our priorities to tackle complex cross-cutting issues to improve social, environmental, and economic outcomes for the people of Tower Hamlets.

Tower Hamlets is a special place to live, work, and visit. It is rich in culture, key attractions, opportunity, and aspirations. At the same time, it is a borough of contrasts where huge wealth, poverty, and inequality live side by side. We know that resources are stretched, and the challenges that our residents and organisations face are vast. Our borough has the fastest population growth and the highest population density in the country. In addition, the lasting impact of the pandemic, a housing crisis, climate emergency, and the cost-of-living crisis is having a huge impact on a population with high pre-existing health inequalities and poverty. Through partnership, we are determined to tackle this social injustice.

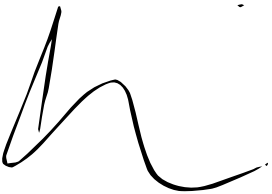


Foreword from **members of the Partnership Executive Group**

The Tower Hamlets Partnership and our residents agree that this new partnership plan should concentrate on a core set of priorities which matter most to residents, and where we can achieve most by working together. We have identified five key cross-cutting calls to action where we will create changes in systems to improve the lives of people in Tower Hamlets. This new Partnership Plan sets out how we intend to achieve our shared outcomes. Together we will address inequalities between residents from different backgrounds reducing gaps in health, earnings, education, housing, and opportunity. We will tackle environmental challenges and improve our neighbourhoods where communities feel safe and get on well together. We will create a child-friendly borough where children and young people have every chance to 'Accelerate' and be successful.

In partnership, we will empower our communities, advance opportunity, and create the changes needed to improve quality of life. We will invest in our communities, adopt a local community wealth-building approach, and increase social capital and social mobility among our residents.

This Partnership Plan is just the start of what we hope to accomplish together. We will deliver our new shared vision and address current and upcoming challenges. We will continue to aim high and seize opportunities to create better prosperity and growth for our local people. Watch this space.



Lutfur Rahman,
Executive Mayor of Tower Hamlets



We are proud to be members of Tower Hamlets Partnership and its Partnership Executive Group. As individual organisations, and by working together as a local strategic partnership, through collective action and accountability, we are determined to improve services and outcomes for residents.

Residents have told us that they love the borough's diversity, our location as an economic hub, and the arts, culture, and recreation offer which makes Tower Hamlets a special place to be.

We have achieved a great deal in partnership; however, we know that there is still much more to do, especially, to tackle the inequalities and injustices that our residents face. 'A Tower Hamlets for All' is driven by what matters most to residents and where we feel we can empower action to improve their lives.

Our residents tell us that they want a child-friendly borough. They want more action to improve people's mental health and well-being, tackle racism, the housing crisis, cost of living, crime and antisocial behaviour, and enhance access to economic opportunities.

The five priorities in 'A Tower Hamlets for All' set out how together we will respond to these challenges.

Our system-wide improvement principles include evidence-informed and better targeting, equality and anti-racism, community first and coproduction, stronger networks and place. They will guide the way we work. Working together and with our residents, we will deliver our vision for Tower Hamlets, and improve the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of the borough and our people.

Members of the Partnership Executive Group

A Tower Hamlets for All



Tower Hamlets is the best of London in one borough: rich in history and culture, and always changing.

The Tower Hamlets Partnership is a coalition of public services (including council, health, police, and education), voluntary, faith and community and business organisations committed to making Tower Hamlets a great place for all who live, work, visit and study here. Partners work together and with residents to improve services and outcomes and provide strategic leadership on complex cross-cutting issues through shared resources. With great opportunity and also unprecedented social, economic, and environmental challenges for our residents and public services, there has never been a more important time for the Partnership.

Over the last 50 years Tower Hamlets has been transformed. We are home to Canary Wharf and the City fringe, an emerging life sciences cluster, and many creative industries. But the borough is still one of extreme contrasts with

great wealth existing next to significant levels of poverty. It is a vibrant place, full of energy and ambition and is now one of the most popular places in the UK to live, work, study, and visit.

The borough is steeped in history, with tourist destinations that are the envy of any city. Tower Hamlets based commerce and businesses generate the UK's third largest economic output, with a diverse economy that includes small enterprises, world famous markets, and the international business districts. We are home to some of the best performing schools in the country and world-class learning institutions that generate opportunity. Tower Hamlets' diverse, creative and young population is the borough's greatest asset, and it is the fastest-growing and most densely populated place in the country. 137 languages are spoken here. We have the highest proportion of Muslim and Bangladeshi residents in the country, a growing Somali population, and we have a large LGBT+ population. Many of our 120 parks are award-winning including Victoria Park which has consistently been voted among the best parks in the country.



Tower Hamlets' popularity as a place to live and work brings both opportunities and pressures, and the challenges facing such a unique borough are immense and the contrasts are stark. We build more homes than any other London local authority, yet there are over 23,000 people on our housing waiting list, 70 per cent of those in the top two tiers live in overcrowded conditions, and housing and living costs risk our borough becoming unaffordable for many residents.

We have some of the best-performing schools in the country - with 97 per cent of schools judged good or outstanding. Most children do very well at school, and more young people than ever go on to further and higher education. However, the proportion of families with children and older people living in poverty is amongst the highest in London. There are nearly 300,000 jobs in Tower Hamlets, yet our young people can struggle to access further education, training and job opportunities to start their careers. Despite the borough's history of standing up for social justice, far too many people face discrimination or unequal life chances because of who they are.

Our location on the Thames and our densely populated landscape also means that the impacts of climate change and the risks of flooding and overheating are greater than in many other parts of London.

The local response to the coronavirus pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis showed our communities and public services at their best. However, the unequal impact of these crises has also had a lasting impact on the health and well-being of our residents and young people. Deprivation, overcrowding, poor quality housing and food poverty are taking their toll on residents' health. By age 11 over half of our children are overweight or obese, and at greater risk of long-term health conditions. There are persistent health inequalities in the borough and whilst life expectancy has improved, female healthy life expectancy is well below the London and England average.

We are delivering great outcomes and making Tower Hamlets a safer and more cohesive place to live. However, crime and antisocial behaviour remain among the top concerns for our residents.

We know that there is still much more to do and that our residents have high expectations of the council, and our Partnership. Through civic engagement and participation, we remain ambitious to improve the lives of our residents



and create a Tower Hamlets that delivers for everyone. We want a borough where everyone feels valued and included, where poverty does not dictate health or economic outcomes for residents. As a Partnership, we will seek to collaborate even more effectively to achieve excellence and our shared vision.

While developing this Partnership Plan over the last year, we've heard from residents about their aspirations for the borough and the biggest issues they face. This Partnership Plan focuses on what matters most to residents and on the practical difference public services, community, faith and voluntary groups and businesses can make when they work together.

Together we will build 'A Tower Hamlets for All' - where no one is left behind, and the wellbeing of our residents and borough is at the core of what we do. We will work together to deliver a new shared vision for the borough: 'Residents and partners working together to improve quality of life, promote equality, opportunity, and empowered communities.'

Our five calls to action for Partnership for the next five years will focus on fairness and anti-racism; good mental health and well-being; safe neighbourhoods with good quality housing; good work, skills, and incomes; and a child-friendly borough.

State of the borough

310,300

residents, the fastest growing population in England

22%

the population increase between 2011 - 2021

50th

the 50th most deprived local authority district (rank of score) in England (of 317)

16,855

number of businesses in Tower Hamlets

15,695

residents per square kilometre. Most densely populated area in England

30 years

the median age of our residents, the youngest of any area

291,000

employee jobs in 2021, but unemployment higher than the national average, and women are less likely to be employed

71%

of all residents aged 20-64, the borough is disproportionately comprised of working-age adults

34.6%

the proportion of residents of Bangladeshi origin, the highest in the country

46,000

the number of residents aged 16 and over who have never worked

96.8%

the proportion of schools and nursery rated 'good' or better in December 2022

2%

the proportion of residents from Somali and Somalilander communities

39.9%

the proportion of residents identifying as Muslim, the highest in the country

26.7%

of children in Tower Hamlets were living in relative low-income families before housing costs in 2022. The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation ranks Tower Hamlets as the 14th most deprived area in England for Income Deprivation Affecting Children

£37.4 billion

The Gross Value Added produced by Tower Hamlets economy in 2020. A larger economy than the cities of Birmingham, Manchester or Leeds, with more jobs (291,000) than working age residents

65

healthy life expectancy at birth for males in 2018-20

58

healthy life expectancy at birth for females in 2018-20

State of the borough

45%

proportion of children aged 10-11 (school year 6) who were overweight or obese in 2021/22

70%

of dwellings are rented, split roughly equally between social renters and private renters

38.2%

Proportion of households in private rented accommodation, 5th highest in England and Wales (2021)

15.8%

proportion of households with at least one fewer bedroom than they require, 4th highest in England and Wales (2021)

47%

proportion of residents citing crime and anti-social behaviour as a top concern (2021)

106.9
per 1,000
residents

crime rate for total notifiable offences, below some central London boroughs, but higher than most London boroughs

Read the full [State of the Borough](#) paper.



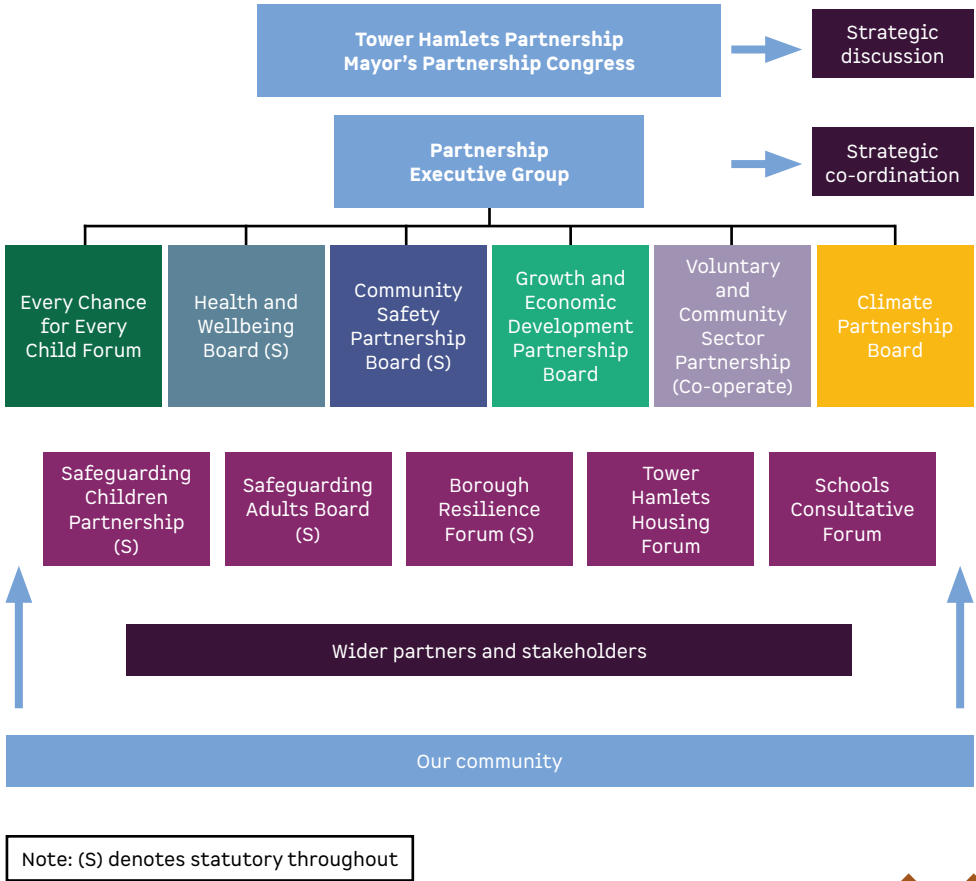
Working together: our Tower Hamlets Partnership

The Tower Hamlets Partnership is a broad coalition of local institutions, businesses, community and residents who are committed to working together for a better Tower Hamlets. At its heart is an Executive Group and Congress chaired by the Mayor, supported by six thematic boards, each working to agreed goals.



Tower Hamlets Partnership: overview

The Tower Hamlets Partnership promotes the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the borough and improves services and outcomes for residents. Taking a systems-first approach, co-ordinating and facilitating improvements and joining up work where needed.



Our journey so far

From 2018 to 2023 our Tower Hamlets Plan focused on tackling inequality by building a strong, inclusive and fair borough, with four themes: a better deal for children and young people; good jobs and employment; strong, resilient and safe communities; and better health and wellbeing.

The Partnership has made good progress in many areas, including: a new partnership between health and care; developing resident hubs and family hubs to bring joined-up services closer to residents; strengthening the equality hubs and networks which involve people from different backgrounds; and practical collaboration ranging from careers fairs and career opportunities in partnership with local businesses to joint work between schools, advice organisations and food poverty groups to support families.

During this time, Tower Hamlets faced unprecedented local and global events that shocked the community, brought us together, and demonstrated the power of community and resident action.

COVID-19 affected everyone and whilst it highlighted the inequality in our borough, it also showed what can be achieved when partners work together focused on a clear common goal.

Partners responded to the climate emergency with an action plan and pledge to be a net zero borough by 2045, supporting the Mayor's Greener Future agenda.

The killings of George Floyd and Sarah Everard were horrifying acts that had serious consequences for our community and prompted cries for action. The Partnership's plan to tackle discrimination and become a truly anti-racist borough came about because of partners' commitment to making Tower Hamlets a place of safety, tranquility and equality for everyone.

True to our proud history of welcoming migrants and refugees into the borough, we have worked together to resettle and support Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.

We also made good progress towards becoming a digitally inclusive borough

including our Every Child Online campaign.

Research partnerships such as ActEarly have generated impactful local evidence about how to support children and families. New health and life sciences initiatives are also harnessing the power of research to change lives. We will use this evaluation and research capacity to help achieve the aims of this new Partnership plan.

The Partnership's TH_IS campaign celebrates Tower Hamlets' extraordinary history, opportunity, culture, and community.

We are proud of the sense of community empowerment and partnership that exists in Tower Hamlets. We have achieved a lot, but there is still so much more to do, and our journey continues.

Read our [annual reports](#) and [information about the Partnership.](#)



How the Partnership will work in future

The Partnership is on a journey of improvement. A review of governance arrangements will improve the strategic approach and delivery of our shared vision, values, and outcomes for Tower Hamlets.

Each partnership board chair and co-chair is responsible for reviewing terms of references annually, and for making sure the partnership board is purposeful, effective, has the right membership, and strengthens engagement with community, voluntary and faith organisations, as well as co-production and engagement with the borough's diverse residents.



The priorities in this plan will be delivered by the borough's thematic partnership boards. They will provide an update at least annually to the Partnership Plan Executive Group, drawing out any opportunities or challenges which the wider partnership needs to come together to solve. Our success will be measured, and progress will be reported in an annual report. Guided by the annual reports and in discussion with partnership boards and the Partnership Executive Group, we will review strategy priorities as required.

Twice-yearly partnership congresses are planned to involve a wider range of residents and partners in finding solutions for the biggest issues that face Tower Hamlets.

Small sub-groups of the Partnership Executive Group will meet to progress cross-cutting commitments to research and evidence-based decision-making; our award-winning place campaign; and the progress of our partnership anti-racism commitments, and digital inclusion.

Supported by our new Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC), we will do even more to build new evidence and put it into practice so that all decisions are underpinned by knowledge of what matters to residents and what will make a difference. We will use the objectives of our Partnership Plan to define a research agenda and develop research questions linked to these objectives, and we will work with HDRC to support the development of new evidence where needed. This approach will assure us that everything we do in partnership improves outcomes and reduces inequalities.

We will communicate and challenge each other as organisations and partnership boards to raise standards and tackle the most difficult issues.

Every organisation in the partnership will contribute to delivering the calls to action through building partnership objectives into their own strategic and corporate plans.

We want our residents to play their part. We want them to be empowered, get involved, shape the services they want and need, and create powerful change to improve their lives, neighbourhood and the borough.

Our Partnership commitments and system-wide improvement principles

The Partnership has agreed a set of shared principles that will guide the way we work together:

- **Research-led and evidence-informed:** Strengthening our research and evidence-based approaches and collaborations to shape policy, address inequalities and improve outcomes with a focus on prevention.
- **Data sharing:** As part of the No Wrong Door agenda, to understand trends, needs, and how the system is working, supporting better targeting, closer partnerships, and better policy and outcomes.
- **Better targeting:** Identifying those at greatest risk and targeting support.
- **Stronger networks:** Supporting open information (for example, service directories) and networks to ensure collaboration amongst services to target support.
- **Equalities and anti-racism:** Putting equalities at the heart of everything we do. Members working towards a workforce to reflect the community.
- **Community first and coproduction:** Everything we do is driven by community needs and has coproduction and co-design at its core – supported by resources and built on trust, power sharing, and effective communications.
- **Open and transparent:** Sharing information about how we work, our decision-making processes, the services we provide, and our performance. We encourage active participation by residents in influencing decisions.
- **Best use of assets and resources:** Making the most of the assets we have (including our buildings and community spaces, leisure facilities, parks, and open spaces), sharing resources, and ensuring value for money and social value.
- **Celebrating place and promoting the borough (TH_IS):** To showcase and advocate the campaign and embed TH_IS as an umbrella campaign for anything that promotes or markets Tower Hamlets.
- **Sustainability and climate change:** Net zero 2045 - Reduce carbon emissions and ensure environmental protection, embedding environmental considerations (society and planet) in procurement, commissioning, and decision-making processes.

Developing our new plan: A Tower Hamlets for All



Following local elections in 2022, and a new Mayor, as chair of the Partnership with an ambitious agenda for the borough, the time was right for a fresh look at how the partnership could deliver real change for residents in the future. Work on 'A Tower Hamlets for All' was led by a group of partner representatives. The group reviewed the latest data about Tower Hamlets and its residents, and achievements of the Partnership so far.

In the autumn of 2022, the group started a conversation with residents and people that work, study and visit the borough. We invited people to tell us what they feel makes Tower Hamlets a special place to be, the challenges they face, what is most important for the partnership to do to achieve their aspirations for Tower Hamlets in 10 years' time, and ideas for how we could get there by working together.

We ran a 'Tower Hamlets for All' survey, visited community meetings and youth clubs, and held a series of open invitation workshops and stalls at events. The response was great! Over 700 people shared their ideas. Surveys such as the annual resident survey and the pupil attitude survey provided valuable additional information. These discussions helped to shape 'A Tower Hamlets for All' - this new Partnership Plan.

What residents told us

What people like most about Tower Hamlets

- The borough's diversity
- Arts, culture, shops, restaurants, and historical districts
- Tower Hamlets' location, transport connections to central London and proximity to the River Thames and the canal
- Public spaces such as local parks and green spaces.

The issues people would like action on

- Housing conditions and the need for more affordable and family-sized homes
- Public spaces, air quality and transport
- Crime, violence, and anti-social behaviour
- Poverty and the cost of living
- Access to health and GP services, better mental health and wellbeing, and reducing health inequalities
- More community spirit and neighbourliness
- Opportunities for young people in education, employment and careers
- Equal access to opportunities for young people, women and all our residents from Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic communities to learning, skills and job opportunities and career progression
- Celebrating the borough and its people
- Fairness, cohesion and opportunities for all
- Building personal and community responsibility
- Sharing the benefits from regeneration, growth and economic opportunities



Read our background paper
'What matters to residents'.



A new shared vision:

‘Residents and partners working together to improve quality of life, advance equality, opportunity, and empowered communities.’

Using the insights from data and research, and by listening to what residents, young people and partners have told us, we have created a new shared vision for Tower Hamlets – one that we all have a stake in, and we will achieve together. Over the next five years, we will work together to tackle inequalities and empower our communities to seize the opportunities that our great borough has to offer, and make Tower Hamlets a great place to live, work, study and visit.

Within Tower Hamlets we have strong and proud communities with a tradition of helping each other and themselves which was demonstrated through the Covid-19 pandemic. The role of communities and ‘One Tower Hamlets’ remains central to the achievement of our vision.

We know that our residents and partners are keen to work together to bring this vision to life by standing as one, through commitment, action and improving the way we work.

Inequality and poverty is at the heart of the challenges and social issues that our residents face, and as a partnership we are determined to tackle this head-on. We will continue to put our communities first and place equality, fairness, and justice at the heart of everything we do, and we will work together so that everyone can benefit from the social, cultural and economic wealth of the borough.

Our residents and partners agree that this new partnership plan should concentrate on a core set of priorities. Our five cross-cutting calls to action focus on the issues which matter most to residents and where we can achieve most by working together. Each can add value to current work and prepare us for the challenges and opportunities of the future, supported by a theory of change, and the strategic plans of thematic partnership boards.

We are ‘One Tower Hamlets’ – with the assistance of our residents, partners, and great energy we will work together to tackle systemic issues in order to raise the standard of living, and improve outcomes for everyone who calls Tower Hamlets home.

Our shared outcomes:

- Address inequalities between residents from different backgrounds reducing gaps in health, earnings, education, housing, and opportunity
- Improve our neighbourhoods, ensuring they are places for living, shopping and entertainment, where communities feel safe and get on well together, and climate change is tackled

Aim 1:

More people are able to live, work, learn and play in ways that meet their needs in the borough

Aim 2:

Tower Hamlets has better neighbourhoods which support good health and wellbeing, and where all people feel safe, belong and get on well

Call to action 1: Tower Hamlets will be a fair, inclusive and anti-racist borough

Call to action 2: Everyone in Tower Hamlets should be able to enjoy good mental health and wellbeing

Call to action 3: Everyone in Tower Hamlets should feel safe and live in good-quality homes and healthy, inviting neighbourhoods

Call to action 4: Everyone in Tower Hamlets should have access to good work and skills and an income that meets their needs

Call to action 5: A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, achieve their best, have opportunities, and are listened to

Tower Hamlets will be a fair, inclusive and anti-racist borough

We want a borough where everyone feels valued and included, and where poverty does not dictate health or economic outcomes. Tower Hamlets has a proud history of fighting racism and fascism, bringing our diverse communities together, and challenging prejudice. Any increase in hate crimes including against our LGBT+ communities concerns us.

87 per cent of our residents tell us that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (Annual Residents Survey, 2022), and this increase from 78 per cent (2019) is great news. However, our residents also tell us that they want greater equality in the borough with less segregation and equal opportunities for all through strong anti-discrimination policy and anti-racism work. They want us to work together to improve integration between residents from different faiths and backgrounds and to implement LGBT+ awareness training to increase understanding.

Empowered and thriving communities are the bedrock of our society. Our Equalities Hub, a partnership of community organisations, Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service, Healthwatch Tower Hamlets and the Council, is bringing groups together in a coordinated approach to equalities, representing protected characteristic groups and the voices of residents and voluntary and community sector organisations. Through the Mayor's Community Grants Programme and Small Grants Programme, the council is investing nearly £13million in the voluntary and community sector over the next three and a half years to support and address the needs of our diverse community. This investment, grants and support from public and private sector partners, and equitable partnership arrangements will develop the sector, and support residents to improve their life chances and outcomes.

The Black Lives Matter movement and the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis highlights the severe consequences of the structural disadvantages and discrimination for the health, finances and opportunities for many of our Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic residents. Partner



organisations are working together to implement the recommendations of the borough's 2021 Inequalities Commission, but there is much still to do. A particular priority is supporting more women from BAME communities into work and ensuring that young people from BAME backgrounds have the opportunity to get jobs and progress in our thriving economy.

The opportunity to enjoy the best possible health is a human right. However, COVID-19 hit our most deprived communities in Tower Hamlets the hardest and this reflects longstanding health inequalities in the borough. Tower Hamlets is leading the way in improving health outcomes for all residents, including through Covid vaccine uptake, prevention, research and early intervention, and tackling issues such as overcrowding, poverty, food insecurity and loneliness that contribute to poor health. We will continue to use our resources to address this injustice.

We know a food environment that promotes and facilitates unhealthy eating habits leads to an increased risk of physical and mental health. At the same time, the cost of living crisis means our residents. This type of environment is characterised by limited access to affordable, healthy food options, a proliferation of fast-food outlets, and the easy availability and marketing of energy dense, nutrient poor foods. This environment disproportionately affects people living in the most deprived parts of our borough and exacerbates health inequalities. At the same time, the cost of living crisis means our residents are struggling to afford to feed their families, leading them to skip meals. Food insecurity is one of the top health and nutrition

challenges we face, and the borough faces significant food-related health challenges such as diabetes, heart disease and poor mental health. We are committed to reducing food insecurity and improving access to affordable, healthy food and reaching those who need the most help.

Post-pandemic, the lifting of the ban on evictions, rising rents in the private rented sector, and a shortage of affordable homes combined with the cost-of-living crisis has seen unprecedented demand for housing options help and advice, with more residents threatened with or experiencing homelessness. We are seeing an increase in sofa surfing, overcrowding in homes, and an increase in demand for social housing among our low-income households.

Our ambition is that housing needs are met and that no one is left homeless. Through partnership, we are taking direct action to improve people's housing situation and support our vulnerable and homeless residents through prevention and early intervention, providing sustainable accommodation options and holistic support and services so that everyone has a place that they can truly call home.

The internet and digital technology have transformed the way we work, socialise, consume, learn, and access information and services. We are proud of what we have achieved through our Digital Inclusion partnership action plan (2021) so that our residents have the tools and skills they need to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from a digital world whilst keeping safe online. We are fortunate to have more than 30 different organisations and projects across the borough tackling various aspects of digital exclusion. As a partnership, we will work together to make sure that every resident is able to get the information and services they need.



What we will do together

1.1 Work in partnership to reduce unequal life chances

- We will implement our Health and Wellbeing Strategy to tackle health inequalities and promote a healthy borough for residents of all ages.
- We will support public service reform by aligning health and social care systems to wider public services such as education, skills, work and housing. Locality working and our family and residents' hubs will also help residents get the right support at the right time.
- We will develop priorities for a new research strategy and use our Health Determinants Research Collaboration and Act Early partnerships to accelerate our efforts to tackle the underlying causes of health inequalities.
- We will assess the health impacts and social value of new development in the borough, focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable to ensure health inequalities are addressed in the built environment.
- We will be ambitious in working together towards an end to homelessness and rough sleeping in our borough offering holistic services for residents affected.
- We will work with the equality hub and equality networks to maximise their impact and put residents' voices at the heart of our equality and cohesion work.
- Every partner will fulfil their duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We will advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics, foster good relations, and improve equality of access to services, outcomes, and resident satisfaction. We will work hard to address inequalities and particularly those faced by our Bangladeshi and Somali communities and our LGBT+ communities.
- We will raise awareness and support campaigns that tackle the discrimination that our LGBT+ communities face, we will accelerate their rights and help them live safe and fulfilling lives.
- We will build cohesive communities, bringing communities together to promote understanding, build a sense of community, friendships, neighbourliness and tackle hate crime.
- We will deliver the priorities of our digital inclusion action plan empowering our residents to access and experience the opportunities and benefits that the internet and digital technology offers to the daily lives and experiences of people, supporting their social inclusion and socio-economic development. We will maximise the impact of digital buddying (buddies, champions, ambassadors) programmes, and develop volunteering opportunities across sectors that work best for providing digital inclusion support.
- We will work with and empower our Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to ensure the Mayor's community and programmes are delivering better outcomes for our communities. This includes cost of living support, improving access to sports and culture, supporting children and young people's development and educational attainment and lifelong learning and employment prospects of adults, and tackling crime and improving cohesion. We will ensure transparency and accountability and report on impact.
- Every partner will strive to become an employer of choice for Tower Hamlets' diverse residents where local people choose to work and make good careers. We will sign up to the Mayor of London's [Good Work Standard](#), and open up progression and leadership opportunities so that our workforce reflects the community at every level. We will become genuinely inclusive employers where employees from all backgrounds can thrive.

What we will do together

- Together we will tackle food insecurity in the borough. We will improve people's access to affordable, healthy food, with a particular focus on households experiencing severe food insecurity, people with health conditions, and people living in the most deprived parts of the borough. We will tackle stigma and shame and empower people to reduce their reliance on food support and build resilience through evidence-based models that work.

1.2 Fulfil our partnership ambition to make Tower Hamlets an anti-racist borough

- As anchor institutions, we will implement our commitments under the Anti-Racist Pledge, including in employment and procurement.
- We will deliver our health anti-racism plan and implement the NHS England-funded Equity Programme to reduce health inequalities facing BAME residents.
- We will make sure young people from diverse backgrounds get their careers off to a good start, with careers information, a mentoring programme, a career pipeline through our Business Leaders Forum, and the "I Can Be..." leadership campaign.
- We will develop a Community Leadership programme so that residents from BAME backgrounds take up leadership positions in the community and institutions.

Performance Indicators – Making a difference.

- Percentage of adult residents agreeing that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (Annual Residents Survey)
- Outputs delivered through the Mayor's community grants programmes (reported annually, Tower Hamlets Council)
- Healthy life expectancy for men (at birth) compared to London and England (Fingertips, public health data)
- Healthy life expectancy for women (at birth) compared to London and England (Fingertips, public health data)
- Number of partner organisations that have achieved the Mayor of London's Good work Standard accreditation (local data)

CASE STUDY

The Holiday Activities and Food programme

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is a UK government funded initiative delivered in partnership with Councils. Targeted at low-income households, it aims to encourage young people to lead healthier and more active lifestyles during the holidays.

The HAF programme covers specific holiday periods when families who are eligible for free school meals during term time might face challenges accessing nutritious meals, engaging in activities and support from other services.

The diverse range of activities for Tower Hamlets have been shaped by local partners from across our communities.

Over our last 3 delivery periods (Christmas 2022, Easter 2023 and Summer 2023) around 100,000 free sessions have been delivered, creating opportunities for 12,000 children to access clubs that tackle food insecurity and bridge the experience gap faced by low-income households during the holidays.

Two sisters joined our summer holiday drama club, each with unique challenges. The older sister lives with selective mutism, while the younger sister was undergoing an assessment for autism at the point of application. Upon their initial arrival, the older sister began to withdraw from activities, hindering her engagement, which had a knock-on effect on her younger sibling's participation.

Recognising the need for tailored support, our dedicated facilitators stepped in to provide personalised exercises that met them at their comfort levels and improved engagement and participation from both. The parents of the two sisters commending our efforts to create an inclusive and supportive environment. Their praise highlighted our commitment to nurturing each child's unique needs.

2

Everyone in Tower Hamlets should be able to enjoy good mental health and wellbeing

Our mental health and wellbeing is influenced by a [wide range of factors](#) across the course of our lives – these include cultural norms; physical environments; exposure to positive or negative life events, physical health and access to services.

These experiences contribute to how we think and feel in the long-term – our coping mechanisms in response to stress; sense of safety and control; and connection to others. Currently, poor mental health and wellbeing is common among people living in the borough.

Our pupil attitude survey in 2022 showed that only two-thirds of primary school-aged pupils and under half of secondary students said they were happy with their life at the moment. More than 22,000 adults in Tower Hamlets live with a common mental illness (like depression or anxiety). Nearly 5,000 adults have a serious mental illness (like schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder or other psychoses), with the highest numbers among Bangladeshi residents and the highest rate among Black residents.

We want to increase the share of people in Tower Hamlets who have good wellbeing and reduced symptoms of poor mental health. Although there are services for mental health and emotional wellbeing available for Tower Hamlets children, young people and adults, there is more that can be done as a Partnership to ensure that people in the borough have the best mental health and wellbeing attainable.

We all have a role to play in continuing to increase understanding and reduce the stigma around mental health. We hear that more residents of all ages need to know what support can be accessed for different types and levels of mental health and wellbeing. Prevention involves people having access to [activities that improve wellbeing](#) as well as appropriate support and services. It's also important that we address risk factors of poor mental health like trauma, loneliness, substance misuse, and issues with physical health, housing, money



or work – especially given the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and increase in the cost of living.

We know that being physically active is good for long-term mental and physical health and can help people live longer, however, physical activity levels among adults are low. We have developed a ‘whole systems’ approach to addressing physical activity amongst our children and adults. This looks at environments that support physical activity and investments in a leisure service, which is accessible and affordable and helps local people live healthier and physically active lives. There is also a strong need to reach all residents including women from Black and Multi-Ethnic backgrounds and children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities. We will ensure our innovative work is evaluated.

For adults, work also has a significant influence on people’s mental health and wellbeing, due to the proportion of time most people spend working, the influence of financial circumstances, its impact on physical health, the sense of purpose employment can offer, as well as social interactions and relationships. Research conducted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has found that reducing workplace stress improves individual and team performance, lowers absenteeism, and reduces turnover intention. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) released new [guidance for mental wellbeing at work](#) in 2022. More than 90% of businesses in Tower Hamlets are micro, small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – these smaller organisations have unique challenges to supporting wellbeing due to their lower human resource capacity. Tower Hamlets Council has previously provided free training to over 1,800 people working in these smaller organisations and plans to provide further support with workplace wellbeing to this cohort in 2023-2024.

2

What we will do together

1.1 Promote good mental health for adults, children and young people and our staff

- We will become a signatory to the [Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health](#) and use it to inform an action plan to implement a prevention-based approach to improving mental health and wellbeing for all age groups.
- We will identify ways to apply and scale up the lessons from our borough-wide [trauma-informed programme of work and community of practice](#) to support residents and staff.
- We will encourage and support our partners, businesses, and supply chains to sign up to the Mayor of London’s [Good Work Standard](#). This accreditation scheme provides a framework for action to help employers build good practice in workplace wellbeing and work as a determinant of mental health.
- We will identify and apply the best evidence of what works to improve mental health and wellbeing and prevent mental ill-health throughout people’s lives.



Residents: What can you do?

- Take action to improve your mental health and well-being
- Access support early – learn about which services are best suited for your needs speaking to your GP or using [Tower Hamlets Connect](#), which has information about free services as well as self-help resources.
- Connect with the people around you like family, friends, colleagues and neighbours
- Get active by working out, dancing, gardening or going for a walk or run – and check out the [leisure and cultural offers](#) in the borough
- Keep learning – try a new recipe, learn a new language, set yourself a challenge
- Give to others by volunteering, listening, or helping out a neighbour
- Take notice of your thoughts, feelings, senses and surroundings through prayer, reflection, mindfulness or therapy
- Starting a supportive conversation with someone you care about, using the [SIGNSS tool](#) or [advice from the NHS](#) for parents.

Performance Indicators – Making a difference

- Residents' happiness rating compared to London and England (score 0 to 10)
- Residents' ratings for anxiety compared to London and England (score 0 to 10)
- Residents' life satisfaction ratings compared to London and England (score 0 to 10)

CASE STUDY

Improving Awareness and Reducing Stigma around Mental Health

Since 2021, with support from the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities' Better Mental Health Fund, Tower Hamlets Partnership has worked on improving awareness about how to take care of mental health and wellbeing and reducing stigma in the community and among professionals.

- 500+ residents who experience barriers to generic mental health awareness are engaged on the topic of how to improve their mental health and wellbeing
- 2,000 people working in SMEs have participated in training about workplace wellbeing and mental health awareness
- 1,800 public sector and VCS staff/volunteers participated in training about trauma and trauma-informed approaches
- 4 services for residents in different life course stages have delivered a pilot project to be more trauma-informed
- Over 20 learning events hosted by the Tower Hamlets Trauma-Informed Community of Practice across different topics including education, maternity care, and culturally appropriate communication

"I lost my husband of 40 years to Covid last year, which left me feeling lonely and isolated. I did not realize it at the time but my mental health was worsening as I started to develop depression...I realized that I was not alone, 4/5 of women in the peer support group had also lost their husbands during this same period.

Through our weekly...sessions, we found ourselves drawing on each others strengths, thanks to [the facilitator], who advocated for us to discuss and speak about our feelings since we shared the same pain of losing a loved one. I no longer found myself isolated, but part of a thriving group of women who cook, learn, and grow with one another. This project has been a huge blessing to us all."
(Resident)

Everyone in Tower Hamlets should feel safe and live in good-quality homes and healthy, inviting neighbourhoods

Everyone has the right to be safe and feel secure at home and in their local area. We want our residents to live in inviting and safe neighbourhoods that bring our new and existing communities together, help people to keep healthy and active, learn new things, and connect with neighbours.

Our ambition is to make Tower Hamlets one of the safest boroughs in London and our Community Safety Partnership (CSP) will lead the journey to achieving this with joint work to reduce violence against women and girls, tackle hate crime, prevent serious violence and exploitation, tackle anti-social behaviour and take a holistic approach to tackling substance misuse and drug-related offences. The CSP plays a key role in coordinating partners and directing our local priorities – a new strategic plan for the CSP will be produced in 2025 to reflect progress and changes to the strategic context.

Sitting under the CSP, the Combating Drugs Partnership has brought together local partners to produce a needs assessment for the borough and develop a strategy setting out our approach to tackling drug supply, creating a world-class treatment and recovery system and achieving a generation shift in demand. Within these areas the partnership will develop an action plan for tackling the significant challenges within Tower Hamlets around drug dealing and drug use. The focus will be particularly on where joined-up action in partnership can build on achievements through the 'end to end' approach taken by Project ADDER (Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery) and the Metropolitan Police's work of dismantling of London drug lines through Project Yamata.

We are building on and enhancing the council's work on violence and vulnerability through embedding a partnership approach under the CSP for the

new statutory Serious Violence Duty and a renewed Violence Against Women and Girls strategy under the CSP coproducing this with our communities.

In Tower Hamlets young boys aged 16-18 of mixed heritage or white backgrounds, and those likely to have experienced exploitation, trauma and abuse within their care histories are disproportionately represented in the youth justice service. Our Youth Justice Partnership is working hard to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour, reduce offending and reoffending by children and young people and address weaknesses identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons in 2022, by refocusing and redesigning systems



for improvement. This improvement is recognised in the peer challenge of 2023. Supported by a new strategic plan for 2023-2025, our youth justice work is empowering young people, promoting positive change and creating a safer community. The number of children as First Time Entrants is the lowest ever in Tower Hamlets and the City of London with our current rate being 192 per 100,000 or 59 individual children. We are proud of this achievement which is a positive reflection of our diversionary and triage work with young people. Our priorities for the future include a child-first approach tackling disproportionate outcomes, raising standards of practice, addressing holistic health and wellbeing needs, post 16 education and supporting children's aspirations, desistance and safety.

Following Baroness Casey's report into the Metropolitan Police's culture and standards, which described the police force as 'institutionally racist, misogynist and homophobic', the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Mark Rowley launched a Turnaround Plan – A New Met for London – covering 2023-25 to restore trust, reduce crime and embed the high standards that the public expects. There will be a role for the partnerships that work with and alongside the police to empower and enable the communities we serve through the lifetime of this plan as well as to support the specific actions that the Metropolitan Police take in their goals of upholding the highest standards and rebuilding trust in the community.

Working with business, partners and our communities we are creating environments where our Nighttime Economy is thriving, expanding and creating jobs and opportunities for our residents. We want to take a balanced approach that meets needs and keeps people safe and well, and tackles crime and anti-social behaviour issues.

We know that safe, affordable and high-quality housing is linked to better health and wellbeing, improved livelihoods, and greater resilience in the face of climate change.



The council is on an ambitious programme of increasing the number of affordable homes for rent. We know that no single organisation or local partnership can solve the housing crisis alone. However, by working in partnership with ambition and accountability we can deliver change and the affordable homes that our residents desperately need. This includes making a real and lasting difference to lives, housing standards, safety and the health issues associated with overcrowding and poor-quality housing and by cracking down on rogue landlords in the private rented sector.

Evidence suggests that Black and Minority Ethnic groups are disproportionately affected by overcrowding. We know that living in overcrowded homes has significant impacts on our residents' lives, from damp and mould, lack of privacy/sleep, and impact on physical and mental health. Lack of adequate space can also limit the space available for children to study or play as well as place strain on family relationships and violence and increase fire hazards. Through supporting research, partnership and collaboration, we are determined to tackle and minimise the impacts of overcrowding, improving people's housing and living conditions.

In a densely populated borough with high needs, our parks and green spaces are precious spaces to play, connect and enjoy. Green spaces close to home are related to higher reported levels of physical and mental health for all ages and socio-economic groups. They also contribute to lower hospitalisation rates and illness, and support environmental priorities. We will continue to ensure access and improvements to these spaces, and look to create new spaces wherever possible, with a particular focus on areas where there is an acute deficiency of open space.

We believe that everyone has the right to breathe clear air. Air quality affects health across the whole population but particularly impacts on children as their lungs develop. It has a significant impact on the health and quality of life of all and we know that air quality is a huge concern for our residents. There are stark differences in air quality between the most and least deprived areas in London. Whilst Tower Hamlets has poorer air quality than the London average, we have seen an improvement in air quality in the borough since 2017, and we are determined to reduce the exposure to poor air quality in order to improve health and wellbeing. Tower Hamlets strategic location in London, means that most pollution in our jurisdiction is from traffic travelling through the borough. Therefore, we will continue to work in partnership with the Greater London Authority and Transport for London, as well as lobby national government to improve air quality. At the same time, we are also implementing key strategies including our Air Quality Action Plan 2022-2027, Local Plan, Transport strategy, and Green Grid strategy. These strategies are creating the environments and infrastructure that support air quality improvements, enable people to feel safe when travelling, and empower people

to walk, cycle, and take public transport.

We recognise the urgent need to address climate change and are committed to taking action to mitigate its impact and build a more sustainable future. We know that our commercial, transport and domestic emissions contribute to Tower Hamlets emitting among the highest carbon emissions in London. However, we are committed to changing this. We have agreed a partnership-wide action plan to tackle climate change and reduce our carbon emissions on a journey to a net zero borough by 2045. In Tower Hamlets, we are well placed to show leadership, engage communities, and harness the opportunities of a greener economy – green skills, jobs and supply chains, greening the borough and enhancing biodiversity.

People have told us they are concerned about waste management and environmental cleanliness in the borough. Tower Hamlets' Mayor has already declared a waste emergency and we are working across the partnership, with residents and business to improve street cleaning, commercial waste, refuse collections and problems such as dumped rubbish. Working in partnership and with residents we will promote a circular economy – to reduce, reuse and recycle our waste in creating positive environmental quality, and supporting and upscaling local initiatives to do this.

The borough's evidence-based new Local Plan will help to ensure that our built environment and planning policies support partnership priorities and ensure the benefits from growth and regeneration are realised and benefit local people. It will support welcoming, child-friendly, green, safe and accessible and inclusive neighbourhoods, the delivery of new affordable homes for the future, and infrastructure such as schools, healthcare, workspaces and opportunities for employment. It will enhance our town centres and support our ambitions for a clean and green future and better air quality.

What we will do together

3.1 Support safer communities

- Through our Community Safety Partnership, we will work together with residents and the police to develop a new community safety partnership plan and deliver on partnership commitments to address the drivers of crime, tackle violence against women and girls, hate crime, drug use and anti-social behaviour, and serious violence and exploitation. We will co-produce a charter to tackle crime and improve safety in the borough.
- We will produce robust and community-centred partnership action plans that focus on how our partnerships can best work together to tackle the issues of drugs, violence and exploitation within the borough.
- We will work towards white ribbon accreditation as employers helping to end men's violence against women and girls, with a three-year Action Plan.
- We will strive to achieve the Borough of Sanctuary status to recognise our work to welcome those seeking a safe place to live, new migrants and those fleeing war, violence and persecution.
- We will work with the Metropolitan Police to find ways to build trust and confidence in the police within our community, encourage active citizen participation in priority setting, and strengthen accountability..
- We will improve fire safety across domestic and commercial sectors. We will promote the #ChargeSafe campaign raising awareness of e-bike and e-scooter safety. As a partnership, we will lobby for more support for residents affected by ongoing building safety issues such as unsafe cladding.
- We will implement the priorities of the Tower Hamlets & City of London Youth Justice Plan 2023-2025. We will seek positive experiences by creating opportunities to work together, to provide the right service at the right time, so all the children have equal access to support that will improve their life outcomes. We will invest in skills development and roll out the Child First Effective Practice Award into the way we work across the Youth Justice Service.

3.2 A Public Health approach using guidance and insight

- Working together across the partnership and with our health partners, police and residents we will explore the benefits of a public health approach tackling crime and violence in the borough. We will take an evidence-based approach to understand what wider factors put people at the greatest risk of poor outcomes and what works to support them.
- We will include a strong focus on prevention within our strategy work, such as within the Combating Drugs Partnership strategy and action plan to reduce future demand.
- We will develop a housing and health work programme to embed the role of housing in joined-up action on improving health, using evidence of what works. Through our Health Determinants Research Collaboration's thematic research priorities, we will work together to co-design research on tackling health inequalities and evaluating new interventions and improve the research capabilities of our Partnership.
- We will support residents and those working in the borough to be active. We will create opportunities to support active lifestyles including the promotion of walking and cycling, and ensure that our built environment is supportive of those using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and buggies.
- We will implement the council's Air Quality Action Plan and create a borough-wide approach to addressing poor air quality in the borough. This will also focus on the protection of vulnerable groups in the borough.

What we will do together

3.3 Address housing needs and improve our neighbourhoods

- We will work together as landlords and also as a planning and licensing authority (the council) to explore a range of housing options, deliver more social and affordable homes for rent, improve housing conditions and services provided to tenants.
- With our housing, health, community safety, children and families partnerships and through planning policy and supporting research, we will work together to develop a partnership action plan to tackle overcrowding and address the broader indicators and impacts of overcrowding – including health, wellbeing and studies.
- Each partner will embed climate change and sustainability considerations in decision-making. We will work together to implement our net zero carbon partnership action plan reducing both direct and indirect emissions and adapting to climate change impacts. We will tap into the opportunities that a greener economy offers, and we will work with our residents and business to reduce their carbon footprint and adopt greener behaviours.
- We will work as partners to continue to ensure access and improvements to the borough's green spaces and look to create new spaces wherever possible.
- We will work in partnership to listen to our residents' concerns, ideas and suggestions on how we can improve services and neighbourhoods and meet the needs of residents.
- We will explore new ways of reducing the waste that we produce and improve re-use and recycling, sharing learning and good practice. We will support the council in implementation of the Tower Hamlets reduction and recycling plan for 2023-2025 as part of a collective ambition for a clean and green future for Tower Hamlets.

Residents: What can you do?

- Complete the home fire safety [checker](#)
- Follow these tips to take action to keep our communities safe – prevent and report crime and anti-social behaviour, take care of your neighbourhood and get involved [Keeping your community safe | Tower Hamlets Connect](#)
- Make Tower Hamlets no place for hate – sign the pledge [Personal pledge against hate \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#)
- For housing related queries, please go to the council website or visit us at an idea store or a resident hub. [Home \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#)
- Learn more about what you can do to support a better environment, reduce your waste, improve reuse and recycling, climate change and sustainability [Environment & waste \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#)

Performance Indicators – making a difference

- Percentage of residents satisfied with their area as a place to live (LBTH - Annual Residents Survey, Great Britain - LGA Residents Satisfaction Survey)
- Number of affordable homes delivered (Local data, Tower Hamlets Council)
- Lets to overcrowded households (Local data, Tower Hamlets Council)
- Percentage of households on the common housing register that lack two or more bedrooms (local data, Tower Hamlets Council)
- Ratio of dwellings to child population (Dwelling stock data and mid-year population estimates, Office of National Statistics)
- Percentage of residents personally concerned about crime and anti-social behaviour (LBTH Annual Residents Survey)
- Percentage of adult residents feeling safe during the day and after dark in Tower Hamlets (LBTH - Annual Residents Survey Great Britain - LGA Residents Satisfaction Survey)
- Level of CO2 emissions in Tower Hamlets (London Energy and Greenhouse Gas Inventory (LEGGI))
- Percentage of population exposed to annual average NO2 concentration above the Air Quality Strategy objective of 40µg/m3 (London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (LAEI) 2019)
- PM2.5 concentration above the interim WHO Guideline of 10µg/m3 (London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (LAEI) 2019)

CASE STUDY

A systems-based approach to reducing crime

The Crime Reduction Team's objective is to bring statutory, non-statutory and voluntary community sector services together to target prolific and violent offenders through a whole-systems approach. It delivers a trauma-informed and culturally competent service response to victims of violence and drug related harms. The service model acknowledges a strong link between victimization and the perpetration of crime. The overall aim is to safeguard vulnerable victims of violence, reduce reoffending and costs to the public purse. Crucially the team safeguards young people, those aged 18-24 from violence, substance misuse and criminal exploitation.

Formed in November 2021, the team delivers four key programmes of work; Integrated Offender Management (IOM), Community Navigators, Hospital Navigators, and Community Engagement. The team is motivated by the belief that violence is preventable not inevitable.

Outcomes in the first year:

Community navigators supported 91 young adults. Numbers accessing drug treatment services increased from 58% to 73%, those engaging with education, training and employment services from 37% to 59%. 100% attendance at relevant appointments. 225 patients were engaged, 90 were misusing substances so provided guidance including signposting to services; 98 referrals to external services, and 20 taken on caseload for intensive work. 77 young people provided with intensive support and mentoring.

"Your service has helped us provide a patient with the aftercare she will benefit from. This supports us and the NHS as she won't be coming here for the same challenges" - **Hospital staff nurse**

"I am so thankful, my son would have never accepted support. I can see the change in him since you been working with him". - **Mother of a young stab victim**

4

Everyone in Tower Hamlets should have access to good work and skills and an income that meets their needs

We want our children to have a great start in life and our young people and families to thrive in a place of opportunity. To achieve this, we want a strong, dynamic and equitable local economy that creates opportunities. This would be supported by the training, skills, and sustainable employment pathways and transitions needed for our young people and residents to benefit.





We want Tower Hamlets to be a place where inequalities are reduced, and our economy works for everyone. We know that despite the prevalence of large multinational businesses in the borough, the economic benefits do not automatically flow down to residents. Our ambition is to adopt a local Community Wealth Building approach for Tower Hamlets, where we redirect wealth back into the local economy and create opportunities for local people, businesses, and communities.

More adults than ever in Tower Hamlets are in employment and incomes are increasing. However, many of our households are struggling with the cost of living and rising inflation, energy, food, and housing costs that are more than half of median household income. We know that more children and older people live in poverty here than elsewhere in the country, having a significant impact on health outcomes and life chances overall. A notable 40% of pupils surveyed in the 2022 Pupil Attitudes survey said they worry about money, and this concerns us. We are tackling poverty by working with families to access financial support and helping them to increase their incomes.

In Tower Hamlets, we face unique work and worklessness challenges and employment deprivation. A number of our residents have never worked or are long-term unemployed (13.7 per cent, census, 2021), some face several barriers to employment, our women are less likely to work than men, and others experience in-work poverty. We know that there is correlation between a higher employment rate and how long people are likely to live and in good health. We are concerned that there is a gender gap in both the employment rate and healthy life expectancy, with both being significantly lower for our women and those from the Bangladeshi community. We are determined to reduce this gap and tackle the barriers to employment, increasing opportunities and empowering our women, young people, vulnerable residents and those needing specific support into sustainable employment, with an aspiration to see improved health and wellbeing outcomes, economic success and social mobility.

More people are claiming out-of-work benefits than before the Covid-19 pandemic and unemployment has risen steeply amongst young adults and the over-50's. A large proportion of our young people do extremely well in education and achieve a level 4 or higher qualification which makes us proud. However, between 3,000 and 6,000 of our 18-24-year-olds may also be unemployed at any one time. An inclusive economy remains a top priority, and we are determined to connect our residents and young people to the current and emerging opportunities in the labour market and shaping of sustainable employment opportunities by influencing the occupational and sectoral make-up of the economy.

Many of the respondents to our 'Tower Hamlets For All' engagement have told us that they want to see more employment and professional job opportunities for local residents, training and careers advice and support for people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities to access further and higher education. We will address this through partnership.

We are proud of the scale of partnership that exists in the borough across all sectors and anchor institutions, and of the resilience, collaboration, creativity, and adaptability shown by our businesses. They have had to respond to Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and the rising cost of doing business, adapting and pivoting in an uncertain economic context. We also know that our small businesses, particularly in food, beverage and hospitality sectors have been hardest hit. We will continue to maximise collaboration with business and further education and higher education and civic providers, the voluntary and community sector and other partners to create the conditions for our residents, young people and businesses to thrive.

What we will do together

4.1 Promote inward investment and create wealth

- Together we will celebrate Tower Hamlets as a place and promote the borough through the TH_IS campaign, celebrating our history, culture, and communities and marketing the borough as a place to visit, study, work, do business and invest. This will include using the campaign to hear people's stories about the borough, in recruitment; for promoting partnership exhibitions, campaigns, events and places of interest; and demonstrating innovation and growth.
- We will adopt a local Community Wealth Building (CWB) approach for Tower Hamlets. We will invest in local people and make Tower Hamlets a great place to work by delivering employment, training, and skills opportunities, embedding best employment practices through the good work standard, championing London Living Wage, and working towards becoming a Living Wage Place.
- We will work towards a progressive procurement approach embedding social value in our procurement practices, strengthening local supply and promoting ethical and sustainable practices across our supply chains.
- We will ensure our land and assets work in the best interest of our communities and deliver wider social, economic and environmental benefits. We will enable the creation of affordable homes and workspaces and empower our communities to own and develop land for public benefit.
- We will develop a recovery plan to help our local economy through the next 2-3 years. We will also renew and re-imagine our high streets and town centres to ensure they are competitive and dynamic, and attract business, shoppers and visitors.

4.2 Support skills development, good work and financial security

- We will continue to influence national, regional and sub-regional skills policy, secure additional resources, and promote good work and pay.
- Together we will work with industry and growth sectors - including in life sciences, low carbon, and creative and digital - educational and cultural institutions, idea stores learning and the voluntary, faith and public sectors to coordinate effort to increase social capital and social mobility amongst our residents; supporting good careers through training and development and agile employment support for all our residents and young people.
- Together we will empower our most vulnerable residents and those in need of specific support. This includes those with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), young people, care experienced young people, the over 50s, women, and peoples of global majority. We will work with employers to address necessary changes in recruitment, retention and progression pathways.

What we will do together

- We will collaborate to create and deliver opportunities so that pathways are more visible and accessible. We will explore and maximise the local employment opportunities that insourcing projects offer, as contracts come to end.
- Our health and employment partnership will work together to fill local NHS workforce vacancies, through training, employment and apprenticeship pathways and through the Healthcare Horizons programme.
- Together we will continue the strong collaboration to deliver Queen Mary University of London's and other university partners civic agreement strategies, and innovations and opportunities; supporting our local communities economically, socially, culturally and environmentally.
- We will tackle poverty, low pay and poor employment prospects, and help people with early financial intervention and build financial resilience. We intend to address financial exclusion and help individuals amidst the increasing cost of living crisis, with the goal of preventing further hardship.
- We will continue our holistic and no-wrong-door approach to support people with early intervention and prevention including through Tower Hamlets Connect.
- We will build research skills and capacity in the Partnership and across the borough, including in our voluntary and community sector, aiming to make Tower Hamlets a 'go to' place for high quality, collaborative, applied and impactful research.



Residents: What can you do?

- Find out about the cost-of-living support, employment and training initiatives available, our WorkPath and business support offer on the council website [Home \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk) or at one of the council's resident hubs and idea stores; Go to the council's school finance and support page for information on grants and funding options available to support children and families. [School finance & support \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Performance Indicators – making a difference

- Employment rate and subcategories (including female, BAME (incl. Bangladeshi), disability, young people, over 50's), Labour Supply, ONS annual population Survey
- Total Employee jobs and subcategories (ONS Business Register and Employment Survey)
- Percentage of young people not in education, employment or training
- Residents with a Level 1 qualification (% with NVQ1 only - aged 16-64)
- Percentage of children in relative low-income families, aged 0-15 years (DWP; Children in low income families, local area statistics)
- Gross disposable household income per head (ONS, Annual estimates of UK regional gross disposable household income)

CASE STUDY

Getting careers off to a great start

The series, Careers Live, delivered five events between October 2022 and July 2023. Each event focused on a different industry and aimed to inform students on how they can kickstart their dream career. Over 1,268 pupils were introduced to a range of potential careers.

A total of 91 stalls were hosted by businesses and training providers from the construction, creative, health and social care, professional services and virtual reality and artificial intelligence, industries. Students were able to have face-to-face discussions with professionals about their career ambitions.

The Council hosted the events in partnership with the University of East London, Queen Mary University London, London Metropolitan University, New City College and Canary Wharf Group.

Kawtar El Ouaraini, Careers Education and Guidance Manager at St Paul's Way School, said:

"We chose to provide this opportunity to our Year 10 cohort of 240 students, taking up to 60 students to each Careers Live event. Our students chose the industry theme they were most intrigued to attend, making it a personalised and meaningful experience. The cohort saw this opportunity as a unique way to explore and understand the range of career pathways available to them at their own pace."

Rob McCargow, Technology Impact Leader at PwC UK hosted a stall at the series and said:

"It is vitally important for students to have access to inspiring role models; I recall from my own upbringing that I struggled to identify my career purpose because I never had the opportunity to meet anyone from the world of business."

A child-friendly borough where children and young people from all backgrounds thrive, achieve their best, have opportunities, and are listened to

In Tower Hamlets we believe our children and young people are our greatest asset. We have the youngest population in the country, and our borough is a special and exciting place for our children to grow up, full of opportunities to learn, play and thrive. We are home to world-leading educational institutions and fabulous schools that offer great learning experiences fit for the future.

We want Tower Hamlets to be a child-friendly borough where children and young people have every chance to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, and where they can influence and be part of leading change. We recognise that having a great start in life is crucial in supporting lifelong wellbeing.

The first 1001 days from conception to two years, are key for children's development. Our approach to giving children a great start in life will bring services together through family hubs to support maternal and infant health, feeding safety, and children's development in these earliest years. We will work with children of all ages and their families to support healthy childhoods, healthy environments and opportunities for play, to promote healthy weight and support the wellbeing and development of children who were affected by the pandemic and lockdowns.

Our children and young people have also told us that they are concerned about child poverty levels in the borough, safety and bullying online and in their schools and neighbourhoods, pollution, mental health and emotional wellbeing, the standard of social housing and cultural capital.

We know that a greater proportion of children and young people have additional needs in Tower Hamlets than elsewhere in the country. As a partnership, we are working to be SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) aware, to improve our collective support to children with SEND and their families, ensuring that issues identified in the 2021 area SEND inspection are addressed, and that every child with SEND and their family receives the right support at the right time. We want every child and young person with SEND to have opportunity to achieve their full potential.



We believe that only through investing in our young people, empowering and supporting them can they achieve their best in life. We are significantly investing in transforming our youth and leisure facilities and introducing community language services. Despite a reduction in funding to youth services both locally and nationally, Tower Hamlets Council is investing an additional £19m including £13.7m into a codesigned new youth service 'Young Tower Hamlets'. A youth space in each ward, free opportunities for young people to develop their abilities and express their creativity, and secure, easily accessible spaces for those in need are all part of Young Tower Hamlets' rebranding and expansion. Over 1,400 young people have so far helped shape the new youth service and its branding.



We are the first borough in the country to roll out universal free school meals to both primary and secondary school children. We want to foster an environment in which our children can achieve academic success, and we will ensure this pioneering policy is evaluated so we can share what we learn with others. We are determined to reduce that gap in attainment within our diverse communities to that our young people perform as well as their peers. We are supporting more young people to stay on in education. The Mayor launched the Education Maintenance Allowance and University Bursaries schemes to help young people with their studies, providing financial support to those eligible.

We will support young people to achieve their ambitions in education and the world of work. To achieve this, we will support them to make the most of all the opportunities in our borough and transitions to adulthood in a way that increases positive outcomes for our children and young people, encouraging them to see the psychological and social changes they experience as opportunities for personal growth and development.

We will ensure that children and young people's perspectives, needs and the rights are reflected in every aspect of the Partnership's work. This includes mental health and emotional wellbeing, addressing poverty and the cost-of-living crisis, keeping children safe, promoting equality and tackling racism: all of which are priorities for young people and the Children and Families partnership.

We recognise the value of involving young people in decisions that affect them and in shaping places and services. Our children and young people have also told us that they want more help planning their future. Our aim is to uplift the voices and experiences of children and young people and getting them involved in creating social change, influencing policy and decisions.

What we will do together

5.1 Improve the life chances and outcomes of our children and young people

- We will implement the priorities of the Children and Families Partnership Plan 2024-2029 which include tackling inequalities and supporting children's development and achievement, their mental health and emotional wellbeing, meeting the needs of our SEND and care experienced young people, keeping children safe and increasing family resilience in the cost of living and child poverty crisis.
- We will strive to achieve the ambitions of 'Young Tower Hamlets', enriching lives through collaborating and delivery. We will provide safe accessible spaces for young people and create positive activities that support developmental needs. We will work the council's Integrated Detached Team in their preventative and responsive work to create greater safety and support for young people at a neighbourhood and community level. In addition we will support implementation of the youth sports offer to keep people active and healthy working with services and third sector providers across the borough.
- We will embed child-friendly principles into our work to put children's rights and the rights of our care experienced young people into practice. Our Child-Friendly focus will also cover four key areas: education, safety, place and services.
- We will continue to support schools to deliver effective work around; anti-bullying; child protection and safeguarding; mental health and emotional wellbeing and inclusion.
- We will ensure that our built environment supports children and young people's physical and mental health, protecting them from poor air quality; ensuring that there are high-quality, safe and inclusive play spaces accessible to all children; and making it safe and easy for them to be active in their local areas and streets.

- We will develop a holistic approach to promote comprehensive well-being among young people, tackling social media usage and encompassing better physical and mental health promotion at the earliest stage and strengthening access to services for different needs. We will empower children and young people to develop strong physical and mental health and manage this effectively into adulthood.
- We will champion the needs of children and young people with SEND in all areas of their lives, rooted in an understanding of the link between poverty, SEND and ethnicity and its impact on progression and educational achievement. We will be SEND-aware in all our interactions with children and young people and ensure equity of provision.
- We will improve the employment and training offer for all young people including our care experienced and people with SEND, with holistic support packages for both young people and employers.



What we will do together

- We will do more to ensure all children and families' voices tangibly shape services in Tower Hamlets, and these are responsive to their diverse needs and contexts.
- We will double down on our efforts to raise young people's ambitions and give them tools to lift themselves out of poverty, through meaningful education, impactful careers guidance and high-quality employment opportunities.
- We will strive to be the best and lead attainment scoreboards, supporting and increasing our young people's opportunities to go on to Further and Higher Education and their entrance into Russell Group universities.
- We will collaborate to safeguard children and young people, educate young people and parents about, online safety and social media usage, and strengthen support systems for children and families affected by domestic abuse.
- We will implement the five priorities of the Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-2028 so that our care-experienced children and young people have every opportunity to develop, realise their aspirations and thrive. We will sign up to a new pledge and embed care experienced as a protected characteristic to make a real and lasting difference in improving their lives.
- We will evaluate new interventions and use the best evidence of what works to inform what we do. Our Health Determinants Research Collaboration will develop schools as 'research active settings' so we can involve children and young people in co-designing and evaluating intervention.

Children and Young People: What can you do?

- Visit the [Young Peoples Service on the Tower Hamlets Council Website](#) to find out about the activities and support on offer.
- Visit one of our Family Hubs or [find out more online](#) about our Family Hubs offer - a new way of bringing together all the support a family may need, from pregnancy through to young people turning 19 (or 25 if they SEND), and operating as a network of services

Performance indicators – making a difference.

- Overweight and Obese at year 6, National Child Measurement Programme
- Percentage of children that feel happy in their lives (Pupil Attitude Survey)
- Percentage of pupils achieving grades 9-5 or above in English and Mathematics GCSEs – all children; and Children eligible means tested Free School Meals (DfE: Key stage 4 performance)
- Percentage of ongoing education, health and care (EHC) assessments that are in timescales (council, cumulative)
- Reduced percentage of care experienced young people and young people with SEND who are not in education, employment or training.
- Improved key stage 5 outcomes

CASE STUDY

Accelerate Education - Young Tower Hamlets

A new youth service to help children reach their full potential will include a youth space in every ward.

The council has invested £13.7m to redesign the service in Tower Hamlets, which has the youngest population in the country and some of the highest child poverty rates. It forms part of a wider £19m council investment in young people. The investment in Young Tower Hamlets (YTH) will provide free opportunities for young people to improve their skills and unleash their creativity, alongside safe spaces for those who need it.

During May 2023, 400 young people took part in a series of four interactive 'Hackathon' events featuring workshops to design their future youth service, including the new YTH branding. There will be ongoing opportunities for young people to shape the new service.

Young Tower Hamlets kicked off with a packed, free summer programme as part of the council's Summer of Fun, which included careers workshops, performance arts, cooking classes, arts and crafts, sports, trips out and more.

"Young people have been part of this journey. This new youth service will be a legacy that will empower the youth and the upcoming generation. They are the ones that will benefit the most and will be building, shaping and structuring this new youth service." - **Tahmid Hussen, Young Mayor of Tower Hamlets**

"There is a correlation between education, schools, opportunities and youth services. Young Tower Hamlets will provide excellent opportunities alongside a safe space for every young person in the borough, to improve their life chances" - **Mayor of Tower Hamlets.**



If you have any questions about the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan or would like to find out more, please do not hesitate to contact us:

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www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgn1/community_and_living/community_plan/tower_hamlets_partnership.aspx



Tower
Hamlets Full
Headteachers
Consultative

