

**Tower Hamlets
Corporate Equalities Plan
2024 – 2026**



Contents

1. Introduction
2. Development of the Plan
3. Our Key Equality Priorities
4. Measuring Success – Monitoring
5. Priority 1: Work with communities across the borough to bring people together from different backgrounds and promote understanding
6. Priority 2: Uphold and protect equality and diversity in all circumstances
7. Priority 3: Address inequalities particularly those faced by Bangladeshi and Somali communities
8. Priority 4: Improve safety and opportunities for women
9. Priority 5 – Ensure our workforce reflects the community
10. Governance and Influence
11. Consultation and Further Information

1. Introduction

We are proud to present our Corporate Equalities Plan 2024-26. Tower Hamlets is one of the most diverse and vibrant places in the country, with people from different backgrounds, cultures, faiths and identities living and working together. This plan sets out work to achieve our ambitious vision for equality which is **to build a strong, inclusive and fair borough addressing inequalities through our work and ensuring that our workforce reflects the community**. It also sets out our commitment to promote and celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do as a council, from the money we spend and the people we employ, the community we serve and services we provide. In delivering this plan, the council commits to celebrate our diverse communities as a key asset, reduce inequality in all areas, and collaborate with our partners to positively impact our residents and support them to reach their potential.

This Corporate Equalities Plan sets out our priorities to deliver the key corporate equality objectives as set out in our Strategic Plan 2022-26. It also brings together in one document the work underway to meet our Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. In the exercise of our functions, this requires us to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster and encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Equality is at the heart of everything we do. In one of the most deprived and diverse parts of London our equalities work really matters to our residents and staff. We will have an unrelenting focus on equality and continue to research a range of issues that could affect opportunity, such as socio-economic and educational backgrounds and financial circumstances. Where these factors contribute to lack of equal opportunity for our residents, visitors, and workforce, we shall take measures to address them. This will involve refreshing our policies on groups of people who face discrimination and developing policies where we do not have them – such as policies that address the inequality encountered by people who are non-binary and transgender. Also, we are aware of the special circumstances of care-leavers and will take measures where appropriate to redress the disadvantage that may arise. We will also seek to support and promote the invaluable work and the huge contribution of the faith communities in Tower Hamlets and ensure they are protected and encouraged by the council.

In delivering this programme we will focus on:

- Achieving outcomes to improve the lives of our residents.
- Aligning our equality work with the objectives in the Strategic Plan 2022-26.

- Ensuring that we achieve a workforce that reflects the community.

The range of equalities work at both a strategic and operational level is substantial, and our plan provides a summary of key activities we are undertaking to address inequality in the borough.

We will use the lived experience of our residents to address inequalities faced by our communities and ensure we monitor progress through data and feedback from stakeholders.

As the Mayor and Cabinet Member, we will set priorities for the council’s work in tackling inequality and promoting equality – as set out in our Equality Policy. We shall be assisted by the Corporate Equalities Board and by all officers and elected members of the Council.

Mayor Lutfur Rahman and Cllr Suluk Ahmed – Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion



2. Development of the Corporate Equalities Plan 2024-26

This Equality Plan aims to systematically address inequality, discrimination and disadvantage for Tower Hamlets residents and our own workforce. There are three key drivers which create the need for a comprehensive and strategic Equality Plan:

1. To ensure our ambitious vision for equality is successfully delivered for all our residents;
2. To fulfil our duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010;
3. To build and support a diverse, included and engaged workforce and meet our responsibilities as an employer.



In developing our Corporate Equalities Plan 2024-26, we used information from the [Borough Equality Assessment](#) and our [Borough Profile](#) which includes an analysis of Census 2021 data.

The Borough Equality Assessment (BEA) is an assessment of inequality in Tower Hamlets and uses intelligence from national, regional and local data; engagement with local people through our equality forums; and engagement with council and partner services to identify inequality and performance challenges.

The BEA is supplemented by our borough profile which provides data to enable us to understand our progress and areas of continuous challenges. The borough profile brings together the key facts and figures about Tower Hamlets into one consolidated report and presents the challenges and opportunities that make up the fabric of the borough.

We conducted an analysis of Census 2021 data and have used this to update the Borough Equalities Assessment in 2024. Some key highlights from the 2021 Census data includes:

- We have the **fastest growing population** of any local authority area across England and Wales. Between 2011 and 2021 the local population has grown by 56,200 (22.1%) to 310,300.
- We are the **most densely populated borough in England** with 15,695 residents per square kilometre compared to an average of 424 per square kilometre in England.
- The Median Age in Tower Hamlets is 30 – the **youngest of any area in England and Wales**. The borough has the **smallest proportion of older people aged 65+** in England and Wales.
- The most common countries of birth other than the UK are Bangladesh, Italy, India, China and France. 14% of residents were born in a current European Union country.
- Population Turnover is high compared to elsewhere, with **more than a fifth (20.8%) of residents having lived somewhere else a year prior to the census**.
- At 34.6%, we have the **largest Bangladeshi population in England and Wales** and the **largest Muslim population** (39.9%) in England and Wales. We have the fourth smallest White British population and the smallest Christian population in England and Wales.
- **7.2% of adult residents consider themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other (which is the 9th highest percentage in England and Wales) and 1% have a gender identity different to their sex registered at birth (the 9th highest percentage in England and Wales).**
- 62.7% of all residents in employment are in managerial, professional, or associate professional occupations but **46,000 adults have never worked**.

- We have a high proportion of households who rent, both from social landlords and from private landlords, whereas the **proportion of owner occupiers is the lowest in England and Wales**.
- **15.8% of households are overcrowded** (had too few bedrooms for their needs).
- **12.9% of residents identified as having a disability** and 25.7% of households had at least one disabled person living within them.
- **6.4% of residents aged 5+ are providing unpaid care** to someone else.
- The ethnic employment gap among women is **twice as wide in the borough** (41%) than in London (13.9%) – 2019-21.

3. Our Key Equality Priorities

The council adopted a Strategic Plan 2022-26, which sets out our priorities, ambitions, and actions. Specifically, the Strategic Plan outlines our commitment to equality and community cohesion and sets the following equality objectives:

- Work with communities across the borough to bring people together from different backgrounds and promote understanding.
- Uphold and protect equality and diversity in all circumstances.
- Address inequalities particularly those faced by Bangladeshi and Somali communities.
- Improve safety and opportunities for women.
- Ensure our workforce reflects the community.

The priorities and actions which will achieve the ambitions of our Corporate Equalities Plan 204-26 are set out over the next few pages. These directly reflect the equality objectives we have set in our Strategic Plan, and by delivering against these we are confident we will achieve our ambition to ensure that Tower Hamlets is a great place for all of our residents; that we deliver best practice in terms of fulfilling our duties under the Equality Act; and that we will be a great employer that has a workforce that reflects our community.

4. Measuring Success

A delivery plan will be developed which will set out key milestones against each action. The actions will also be incorporated into the Strategic Plan Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan is monitored on a quarterly basis and performance is reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. In addition to

this, the Corporate Equalities Board will monitor delivery in key areas of the plan and assess success against performance data and data from other sources, such as the Annual Residents Survey’, engagement with marginalised groups in the borough and residents lived experiences, and other national, regional, and local data sets.

We will use the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) to benchmark our performance. The framework has 4 elements:

1. Understanding and working with your communities.
2. Leadership and organisational commitment.
3. Responsive services and customer care.
4. Diverse and engaged workforce.

As we implement this plan, we will undertake a self-assessment against the EFLG Framework and invite peer challenge and support to ensure that our performance and progress is credible and robust.

As set out in our Equality Policy, we have a specific duty to publish equality information about our employees and residents who share a protected characteristic as part of the public sector equality duty. We will continue publishing information that is accessible and helps us to shape interventions and meet the needs of our service users and community.

5. Equality Objective 1: Work with communities across the borough to bring people together from different backgrounds and promote understanding

No	Action	Strategic Plan Priority	Division Lead (s)	Cabinet Portfolio (s)
1.1	We will bring communities together and celebrate the diversity of our borough by raising awareness, promoting equality, and organising events and activities across the borough. This will include highlighting activities organised by others that share our equalities principles.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation / Culture	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion/ Cabinet Member Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation
1.2	We will strengthen our community equality networks and the Equalities Hub to enable it to better influence policy and decision making	Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation/ Supporting Families	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living/ Cabinet

				Member for Education and Lifelong Learning
1.3	We will engage and communicate with our residents to encourage participation, learn and adapt so that we build trust, strengthen collaboration in delivery, and generate insight and learning to continually strengthen and improve our services.	Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone	Communication in partnership with all council Divisions	Executive Mayor
1.4	We will ensure cohesion principles are incorporated in regeneration projects and programmes and facilitate development of positive relationships between people of different backgrounds.	Priority 2: Homes for the Future	Planning & Building Control / Housing	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding
1.5	We shall refresh our No Place for Hate in Tower Hamlets strategy, moving away from an individual pledge-based approach and towards a strategy based on actions which tackle hate crime.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Community Safety	Cabinet Member for Community Safety
1.6	We will, through Idea Stores, ensure that the visual and creative industries courses more closely meet the needs of male learners and learners from ethnic minority backgrounds.	Priority 3: Accelerate Education	Customer Services	Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning
1.7	We will, through our Adult Day Care Services, consistently celebrate a range of occasions such as faith festivals.	Priority 5: Invest in Public Services	Adult Social Care	Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care
1.8	We will develop opportunities to raise awareness and tackle discrimination through training and guidance offerings.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	HR/ All Council Divisions	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion

Performance measures for Objective 1

Note: The measures provide an overall indication of the direction of travel of the Equality Objective. They do not correspond to each action.

No	Measure	Source	Direction of travel
1A	Percentage of adult residents agreeing that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	LBTH Annual Residents Survey Local Government Association Resident Satisfaction Survey	Up
1B	Number of male and multi-ethnic background participants on idea store creative industry courses	Idea Store learners data	Up
1C	A reduction in all forms of hate crime across the borough across all protected characteristics.	London Hate Crime data	Down
1D	Residents' views on ability to influence decisions in their area.	LBTH Annual Residents Survey	Up

6. Equality Objective 2: Uphold and protect equality and diversity in all circumstances

No	Action	Strategic Plan Priority	Division Lead (s)	Cabinet Portfolio (s)
2.1	We will refresh our Borough Equalities Assessment and improve the collection of data about our communities. This will help enable us to target our interventions and ensure we make the greatest possible impact on tackling inequality.	Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion
2.2	We will work with our partners to ensure diversity and equality is at heart of our borough priorities.	Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion
2.3	We will work with partners to support more disabled residents into work.	Priority 4: Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure	Growth & Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Growth
2.4	We will work to ensure that the commitment to equality of our new youth service is honoured and that groups which have traditionally been under-	Priority 3: Accelerate Education	Youth Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning

	represented (such as girls and young Somali people) have fair access to these services.			
2.5	We will deliver projects and activities that reduce loneliness among older people and disabled residents.	Priority 5: Invest in public services	Public Health	Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care
2.6	We will strengthen our analysis of impact from changes through supporting our Members and Officers to undertake and review Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA). We will also engage the community and explore how they will help shape EIAs.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion
2.7	We will deliver a Tackling Poverty Programme which is aimed at providing a safety net for those most in need and tackles the root causes of financial insecurity. This Programme will address our high level of child poverty.	Priority 1: Tackling the Cost of Living Crisis	Growth & Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Resources & Cost of Living
2.8	We will develop policies and interventions that address inequalities encountered by people who are non-binary and transgender. This will begin by conducting a needs assessment to inform our approach and interventions.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation / Community Safety /Public Health	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion / Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care
2.9	We will work with LGBT groups and stakeholders to address the needs of this community. A priority will be to address the decrease in provision of LGBT community spaces.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation /Public Health/ Property and Major Programmes	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion / Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care/Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development & Housebuilding

2.10	We will adopt 'Care Experienced' as a protected characteristic and take measures where appropriate to redress the disadvantage that may arise. We are committed to being a good corporate parent to care leavers; we will work to increase the job opportunities for young people in and leaving care.	Priority 3: Accelerate Education	Supporting Families	Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning
2.11	We will work with communities to ensure that barriers to participation affecting historically marginalised groups are removed and that Services are inclusive, safe, and open.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation / Community Safety /Public Health	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion / Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

Performance measures for Objective 2

Note: The measures provide an overall indication of the direction of travel of the Equality Objective. They do not correspond to each action.

No	Measure	Source	Direction of travel
2A	Job starts among residents with disabilities	LBTH Performance Measure	Up
2B	Gross disposable household income per head	ONS, Annual estimates of UK regional gross disposable household income)	Up
2C	Percentage of children in relative low-income families, aged 0-15 years	DWP; Children in low income families, local area statistics	Down
2D	Residents' perception of being involved in decision-making	LBTH Performance Measure	Up
2E	Percentage of residents who feel loneliness all or some of the time	Annual Residents Survey	Down
2F	% of Care Leavers aged 17-25 who are in education, employment or training (EET)	LBTH Performance Measure	Up
2G	Number of LGBT venues in the borough	GLA Cultural Infrastructure Map	Maintain / Up

7. Equalities Objective 3: Address inequalities particularly those faced by Bangladeshi and Somali communities

No	Action	Strategic Plan Priority	Division Lead (s)	Cabinet Portfolio (s)
3.1	We will refresh and extend our partnership on race inequalities and ensure it is having a sustainable impact. We will also respond to regional best practice- advocated by London Councils - to ensure we are at the forefront of tackling race inequality.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion
3.2	We will support a dedicated resource centre for the Somali community, which is underrepresented in employment and local institutions, run by community members and open to the public.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Property and Major Programmes	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development & Housebuilding / Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion
3.3	We will work with the Somali community to identify, understand, and address the needs of the community.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion
3.4	We will provide specific refuges for women from Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic backgrounds who flee domestic abuse, and assess the needs of the queer community in relation to domestic violence.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Integrated Commissioning	Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

Performance measures for Objective 3

Note: The measures provide an overall indication of the direction of travel of the Equality Objective. They do not correspond to each action.

No	Measure	Source	Direction of travel
3A	Number of Black, Asian and Multi Ethnic Women accessing refuge provision	LBTH Performance Measure	Up
3B	Number and percentage of members of council leisure centres who are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds	LBTH Performance Measures	Up

3C	Reduce the ethnic (White and BAME) gap in employment rate	Borough Equality Assessment	Down
3D	Number of Somali Groups delivering activities from the Somali Hub	LBTH Performance Measures	Up

8. Strategic Plan Objective 4: Improve safety and opportunities for women.

No	Action	Strategic Plan Priority	Division Lead (s)	Cabinet Portfolio (s)
4.1	We will deliver the final year of our 5-year Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Community Safety	Cabinet Member for Safer Communities
4.2	We will refresh the current VAWG strategy and include women's safety as a key theme. This will include work with directorates and departments such as Parks and Leisure, Highways, Licensing, Planning etc to improve safety and security.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Community Safety	Cabinet Member for Safer Communities
4.3	We will work with partners to improve outcomes for women in the criminal justice system.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Community Safety	Cabinet Member for Safer Communities
4.4	We will develop dedicated programmes and spaces for women from ethnic minority backgrounds. In particular, we will support the establishment of a dedicated resource centre for women with a focus on Bangladeshi community.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Property and Major Programmes / Strategy, Improvement & Transformation	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development & Housebuilding / Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion
4.5	We will support and empower women, particularly ethnic minority women, with dedicated projects and programmes, and dedicated community facilities.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion

4.6	We will seek to improve equality of access to sports, gyms and swimming. We will deliver targeted women and girls sports, including women only gym and swimming sessions.	Priority 4: Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure	Sports & Physical Activity	Cabinet Member for Culture & Recreation
4.7	We will deliver employment and training schemes to reduce the employment gap for women in our borough in particular for Black, Asian and multi ethnic women.	Priority 4: Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure	Growth & Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills & Growth
4.8	We will deliver a Women's Commission to improve outcomes for women. We will work as a partnership to identify the key issues for women in the borough and to produce an agreed Women's Strategy for Tower Hamlets, with a specific, time limited and practical action plan for its delivery which will ensure women feel empowered to fulfil their potential.	Priority 6: Empower Communities and Fight Crime	Strategy, Improvement & Transformation	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion

Performance measures for Objective 4

Note: The measures provide an overall indication of the direction of travel of the Equality Objective. They do not correspond to each action.

No	Measure	Source	Direction of travel
4A	Number and percentage of members of council leisure centres who are female	LBTH Performance Measures	Up
4B	Victims of violence against women and girls who feel safer after engaging with commissioned provider	LBTH Performance Measure	Up
4C	Job starts for Women & Black, Asian and Multi Ethnic residents	LBTH Performance Measure	Up

9. Strategic Plan Objective 5: Ensure our workforce reflects the community

No	Action	Strategic Plan Priority	Division Lead (s)	Cabinet Portfolio (s)
5.1	We will develop and deliver our Workforce to Reflect the Community Strategy and action plan.	Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone	HR	Cabinet Member for Resources & Cost of Living
5.2	We will address Pay Gaps at the council in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation.	Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone	HR	Cabinet Member for Resources & Cost of Living
5.3	We will deliver against our Stonewall improvement plan to improve our ranking in the workplace equality index. We will strive to create a safer and more inclusive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Council staff.	Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone	HR	Cabinet Member for Resources & Cost of Living
5.4	We will increase the representation of Black, Asian, multi-ethnic and female staff at senior levels within the council.	Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone	HR	Cabinet Member for Resources & Cost of Living
5.5	We will address the under representation of any group of staff as necessary across the council's workforce.	Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone	HR	Cabinet Member for Resources & Cost of Living
5.6	We will deliver employment focused actions from the Tackling Race Inequality Action Plan.	Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone	HR	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion
5.7	We will identify opportunities to provide specialised equality, diversity, and/or awareness training for Council employees.	Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone	HR	Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion

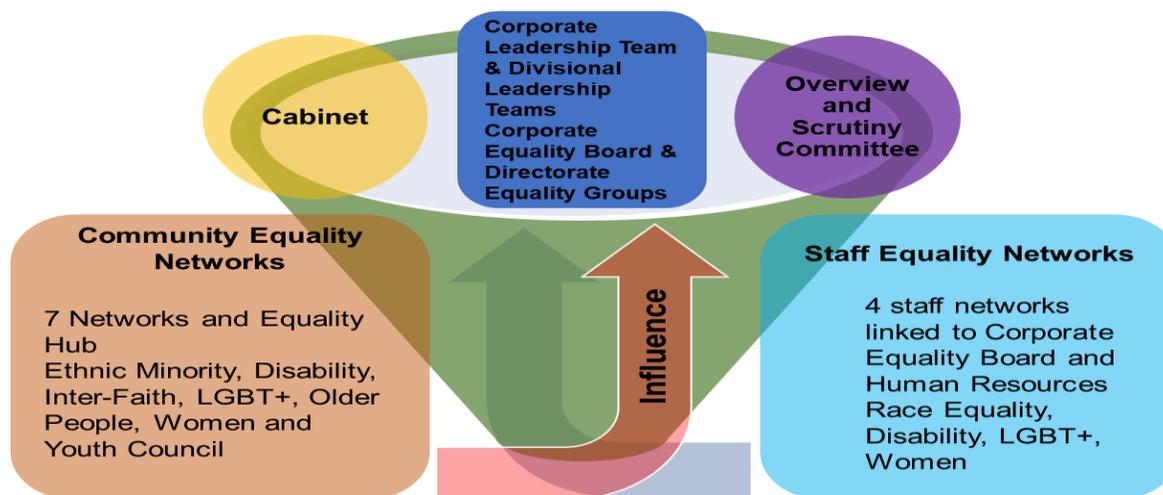
Performance measures for Objective 5

Note: The measures provide an overall indication of the direction of travel of the Equality Objective. They do not correspond to each action.

No	Measure	Source	Direction of travel
5A	Percentage of Black, Asian and multi-ethnic staff over £60,000 (top 5% of earners)	LBTH Performance Measure / Organisational Health Dashboard	Up
5B	Percentage of Female staff over £60,000 (top 5% of earners)	Organisational Health Dashboard	Up
5C	Percentage of Disabled staff over £60,000 (top 5% of earners)	Organisational Health Dashboard	Up

10. Governance and Influence

The various groups involved in the governance of the plan will help to monitor progress and ensure that our delivery is having the intended impact on equality outcomes. This will be supported by intelligence from various data sources and feedback from the community and our staff networks.



11. How to get involved and further information

Find out about the latest council news and events by visiting our website: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

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

We regularly consult our residents and local businesses about proposals that are likely to impact them: talk.towerhamlets.gov.uk

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

12. Equality Policy

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

13. Publication of equality information

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

Facebook towerhamletscouncil

Twitter @towerhamletsnow

Youtube towerhamletscouncil

Instagram @towerhamletsnow