

# Children's health: holistic approaches to mental health and healthy lifestyles

Children's & Education Scrutiny Sub-  
Committee

8<sup>th</sup> February 2024



# Purpose & scope

“Consider how to embed a holistic approach to health into our work -focused on mental health and preventative healthy lifestyles for example nutrition, therapy and exercise. Including focus on unhealthy consumption, education on the risks and minimising the appeal e.g. energy drinks and vapes”

There have been related CESSC sessions on:

Addressing child unhealthy weight in Tower Hamlets (21<sup>st</sup> Nov 23)

Health and Wellbeing of Children and Adolescents in Tower Hamlets (Jan 23)

## Health in All Policies



# Session approach

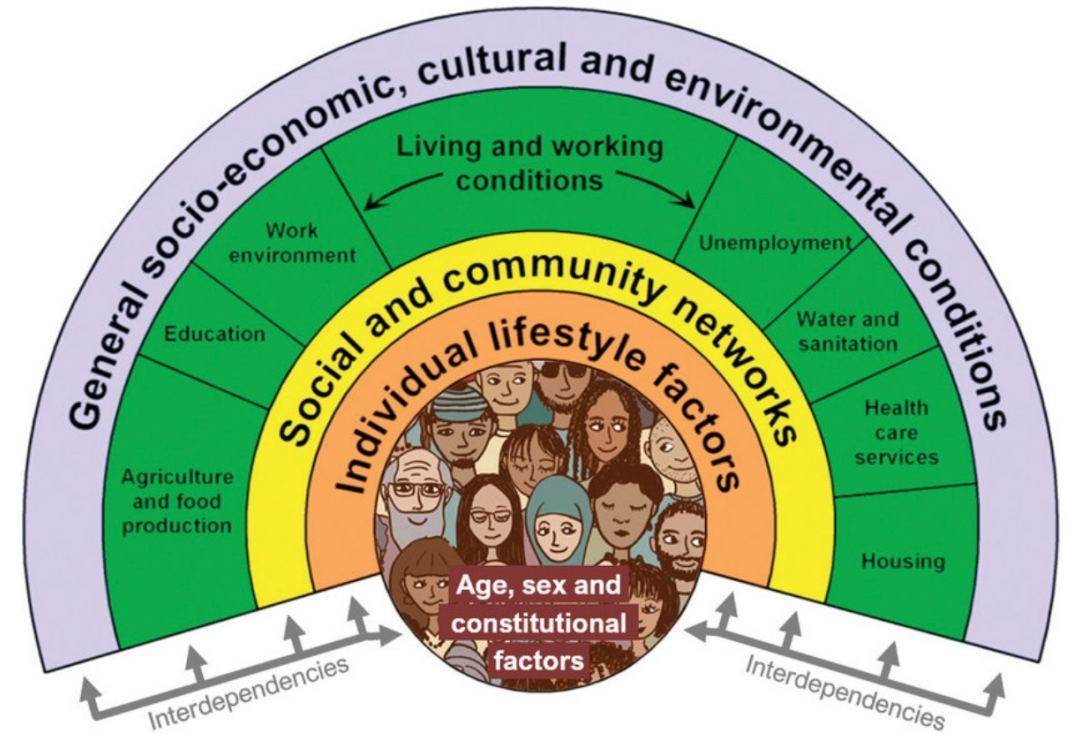


- Why is this important
- Services that do health promotion as core business
- Embedding holistic approaches into other services
- Health in all policies /strategy
- Mental health
- Vaping & high energy drinks



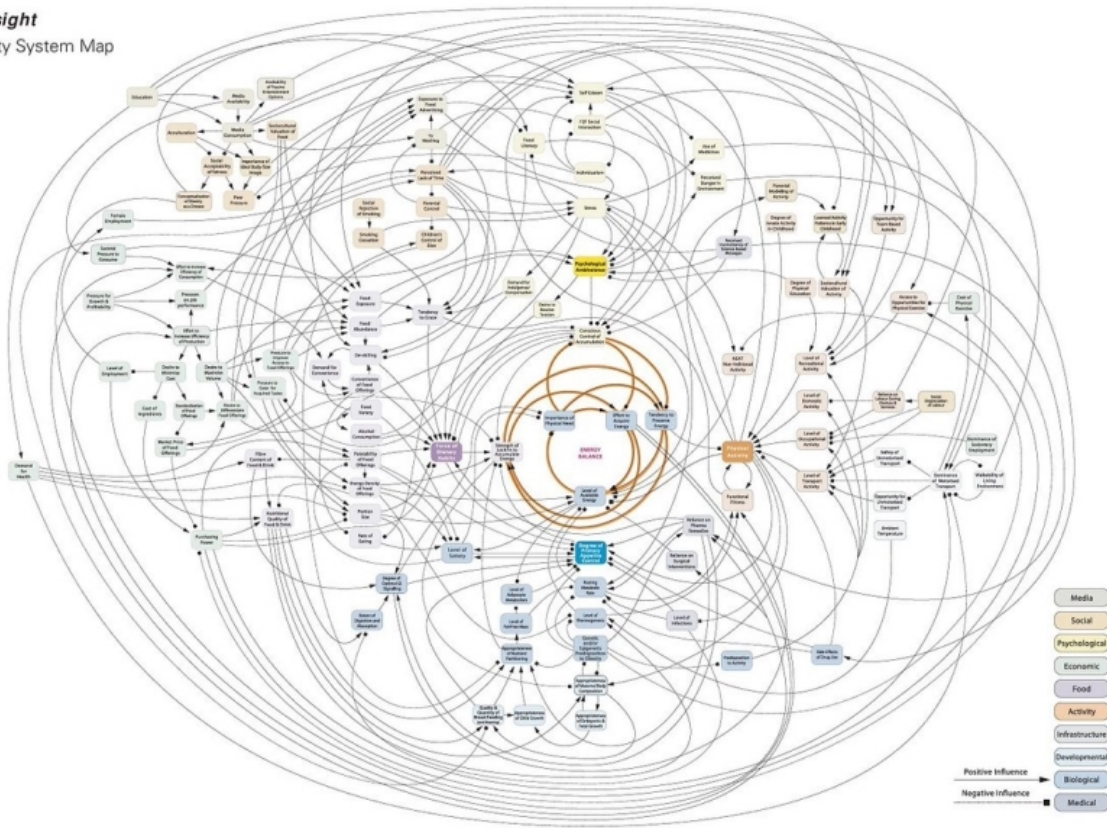
# Holistic approaches

- Our health and wellbeing is affected by a wide range of factors
- These factors are closely connected creating a complex system
- Action to tackle health issues needs to understand and work within this complex system
- Taking a holistic approach (by understanding how an individual's health is influenced by a range of factors) is critical to supporting them to have good health and wellbeing



# Complex systems drive health and wellbeing

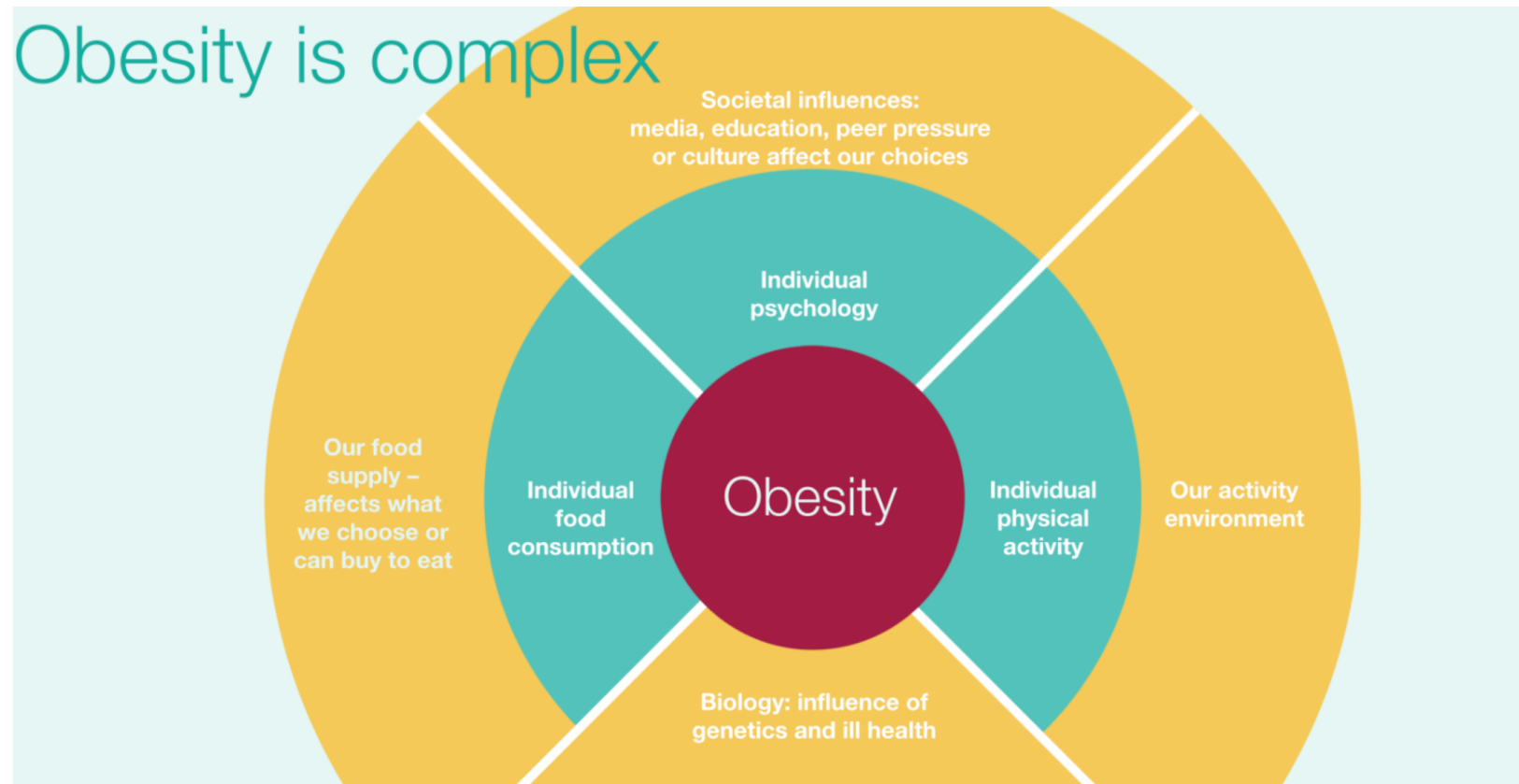
Foresight  
Obesity System Map



- This system map shows the many inter-related factors that influence healthy weight
- Work to tackle unhealthy weight at a national or local level should address all these factors to be most effective

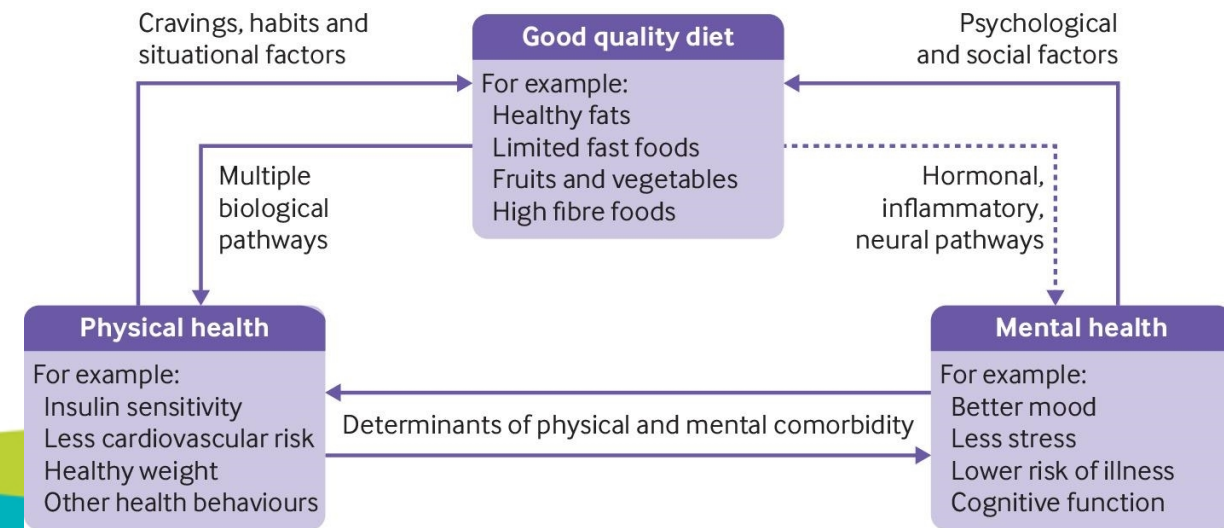
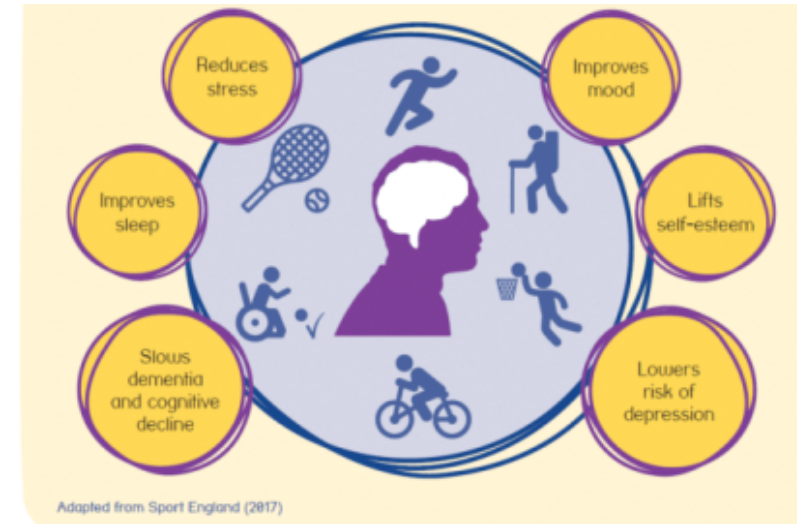


# Obesity is the outcome of a complex set of factors acting across many areas of our lives



# Many health issues are inter-related too

- For example:
  - Good levels of physical activity improves mental health
  - Good mental health improves diet
  - Good diet improves mental health
  - Good diet improves physical health



# Role of local government



- Local authorities have, since 1 April 2013, been responsible for improving the health of their local population and for public health services including most sexual health services and services aimed at reducing drug and alcohol misuse. The Secretary of State continues to have overall responsibility for improving health.





# Embedding holistic approaches

## Health in All Policies



- There are many opportunities to improve health and wellbeing through local government policies



# Strategic Plan – improving health and wellbeing of children in Tower Hamlets



1. **Tackling the cost-of-living crisis:** supporting people to afford healthy food and leisure activities, reducing stress, improving mental and physical health.
2. **Homes for the future:** tackling overcrowding will make it easier for people to cook at home, having happier relationships, reduce accidental injury, improve mental health, be more active at home
3. **Accelerating education:** free school meals and breakfast clubs will provide healthy food for children. Investing in youth centres can improve life skills, provide physical activity opportunities, reduce loneliness, improve mental health
4. **Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure:** opening up sporting opportunities, ensuring parks and other council facilities to help people to be more active, connect with others, improve employment prospects for intergenerational change
5. **Invest in public services:** insourcing the leisure contract brings new opportunities to support physical activity, with the overall plan of implementing a borough-wide healthy child weight programme bringing all the actions together.
6. **Empower communities and fight crime:** families will feel safer to walk and cycle, and use public spaces.
7. **A clean and green future:** improving air quality standards will encourage residents to be more active outside, including using sustainable travel modes.
8. **A council that listens and works for everyone:** using our insight and research capabilities will inform decisions on how best to support residents to be a healthy weight.



# Health promoting services



# Marmot Review – life course approach



- Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course. The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood. What happens during these early years (starting in the womb) has lifelong effects on many aspects of health and well-being– from obesity, heart disease and mental health, to educational achievement and economic status.
- To have an impact on health inequalities we need to address the social gradient in children’s access to positive early experiences. Later interventions, although important, are considerably less effective where good early foundations are lacking.



# 0-19 Public Health services



- The primary purpose of 0-19 public health services is to improve health and wellbeing of children and families in Tower Hamlets.

Service	About
Health visiting service	Antenatal and early years health and wellbeing support
Family Nurse Partnership	Enhanced support from pregnancy to age 2 for parents aged 21 years
Baby feeding service	Supporting baby feeding at RLH and in the community. LBTH service
Healthy Start vitamins	Extending the national targeted programme to a universal local offer
School health & wellbeing service	School nursing services
Safe East	Sexual health & substance misuse prevention and support for CYP
Healthy Teeth in Schools	Universal fluoride varnish programme for 3-6 year-olds in schools.



# Highest impact areas for local maternity systems, health visitors and school nurses



## Healthy maternity & healthy birth

- Improving planning and preparation for pregnancy
- Supporting good parental mental health
- Supporting healthy weight before and between pregnancies
- Reducing harms caused by alcohol
- Supporting parents to have a smokefree pregnancy
- Reducing the inequality of outcomes for women & babies from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities

## Healthy early years

- Supporting the transition to parenthood
- Supporting maternal and family mental health
- Supporting breastfeeding
- Supporting healthy weight and nutrition
- Improving health literacy, managing minor illnesses and reducing accidents
- Ready to learn and narrowing the word gap

## School aged-years

- Supporting resilience and wellbeing
- Improving health behaviours and reducing risk
- Supporting healthy lifestyles
- Reducing vulnerabilities and improving life changes
- Supporting additional and complex health needs
- Supporting self-care and improving health literacy



# What health education do our commissioned services offer



**School Health** work in all primary and secondary schools offering:

- support for health lifestyle/eating and weight management - promoting a school culture, environment and policies that promote healthy eating and the maintenance of a health weight
- the provision of weight management advice and support for children and young people identified as overweight or obese via a national screening programme training in weight management for frontline staff working with 5-19 year olds and support for service development.



# What health education do our commissioned services offer



**Safe East** is an integrated sexual health and substance misuse service offering:

- Outreach sessions, brief interventions and workshops on sexual health, SRE, D&A, tobacco cessation in youth centres, schools and other settings
- Targeted support to children in the Youth Justice Service
- Professional training on sexual health & substance misuse
- Contraception, chlamydia screening, STI testing, TOP referrals
- Tier 3 substance misuse treatment
- Smoking cessation support





# Health promotion in maternity services



- Public health commissions a specialist role to support the maternity service to attain/maintain [UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation](#)
- The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative enables public services to better support families with feeding and developing close and loving relationships so that all babies get the best possible start in life
- Barts also fund a public health specialist midwife



# Healthy Early Years



- Healthy Early Years London scheme
  - Funding a 0.6WTE role in children's services to support early years settings to be health promoting environments via the London accreditation programme
- Family Hubs
  - New posts to lead on Health and Wellbeing in Early Help services including attaining UNICEF BFI accreditation
  - Public health funding for health promotion activities



# Health promotion in schools: Health Lives service



The Healthy Lives service is commissioned to engage all local schools in health and wellbeing initiatives, including the Healthy Schools London (HSL) award programme and the Daily Mile, to improve child health in the borough. Key themes for school engagement include healthy eating, physical activity, emotional wellbeing, oral health and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. Thanks to our Healthy Lives team, we have the highest proportion of schools with HSL awards than any other borough in London.

The Healthy Lives team are working in partnership with Public Health and our Contract Catering Services to deliver the Fantastic Food in Schools programme which aims to support healthy eating and increase food education for children in schools.

The remit of the Healthy Lives team includes delivering health education workshops for school and council staff, developing health-promoting resources and guidance for school communities, supporting breakfast club provision in the borough, and providing ongoing Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) support to schools.

Public health are commissioning an external evaluation of the Healthy Lives service in 2024 to build a more comprehensive understanding of the quality of the service and its impact.



# Health promotion for families: Healthy Families



Public Health commissioned the Parental Engagement Team to deliver the Healthy Families programme: a holistic, accessible, and de-stigmatising healthy weight support offer for parents in Tower Hamlets. The programme is delivered by a team of practitioners in partnership with family support staff from partner organisations. Key deliverables include: a 5-week parent engagement programme focused on promoting healthy eating, emotional wellbeing, oral health and physical activity; cooking classes; and bespoke one-to-one support for parents and families who require additional support.

The programme promotes clear and accessible routes by which parents and families can access other forms of support including mental health and financial support and provides participating parents and families with a social support network in the form of Parent Ambassadors. These are parents who volunteer to play an active role in supporting the delivery of the programme. This peer-led feature of the programme is in line with best practice guidance on how to deliver effective and impactful healthy lifestyle interventions and offers a progression pathway for local parents to further volunteering and employment opportunities.

In 2023, Public Health undertook an evaluation of Healthy Families to build a more comprehensive understanding of the quality of the service and its impact. A review of the findings is underway.



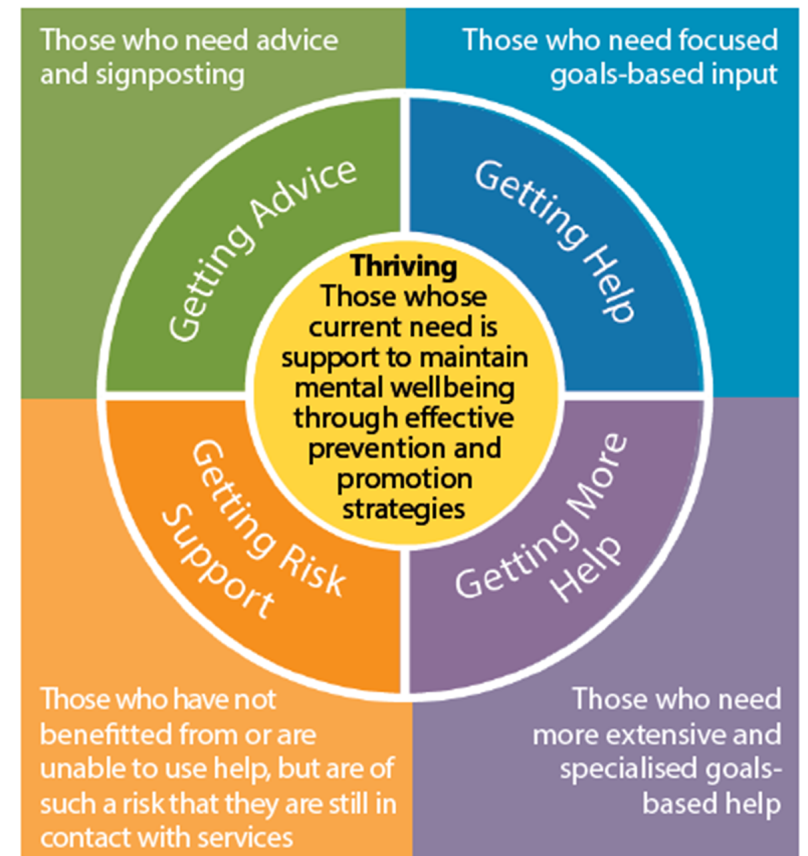
# Strategy

- [Tower Hamlets Transformation Plan for mental health and wellbeing](#) (2016-2021)

- [THRIVE Framework](#) for system change

Thrive has 8 key principles:

- Common Language
- Needs-Led
- Shared Decision Making
- Proactive Prevention and Promotion
- Partnership Working
- Outcomes-Informed
- Reducing Stigma
- Accessibility



- Thrive communicates an integrated, person centred and needs led approach to delivering mental health services for children, young people and their families.
- Emphasis is placed on prevention and also the promotion of mental health and wellbeing across the whole population. Children, young people and their families are empowered through active involvement in decisions about their care through shared decision making, which is fundamental to the approach.
- Tower Hamlets Children and Families Executive and partners in the system have renewed their commitment to implement the Thrive model of service delivery to reach beyond mental health providers. Through Thrive we want to create a system that is resilient and flexible to respond to the evolving needs of the local young population so that children and families no longer experience barriers or confusion about the help that is available in the area.
- The approach in Future in Mind means that the terminology of a 'four-tier CAMHS' service is now superseded. Tower Hamlets is committed to change how care is delivered, moving away from a system defined in terms of organisational boundaries in a 'tiered model' towards services built around the need of children, young people and families.

# Pupil Attitude Survey


The 2022 Tower Hamlets Pupil Attitudes Survey (PAS) focused on pupils' views and experiences on health and well-being, staying safe, the use of technology, local community and plans for the future. Over 1,500 pupils aged 9, 10 and 11 years from 21 primary schools responded to the survey.

## Biggest worries for 9–11-year-olds:



- 56% worry about school-work and exams
- 37% worry about their parent and family
- 35% worry about friendships

## What 9–11-year-olds told us would make their life better:



More places where I can go to spend time with my friends

More help to plan my future

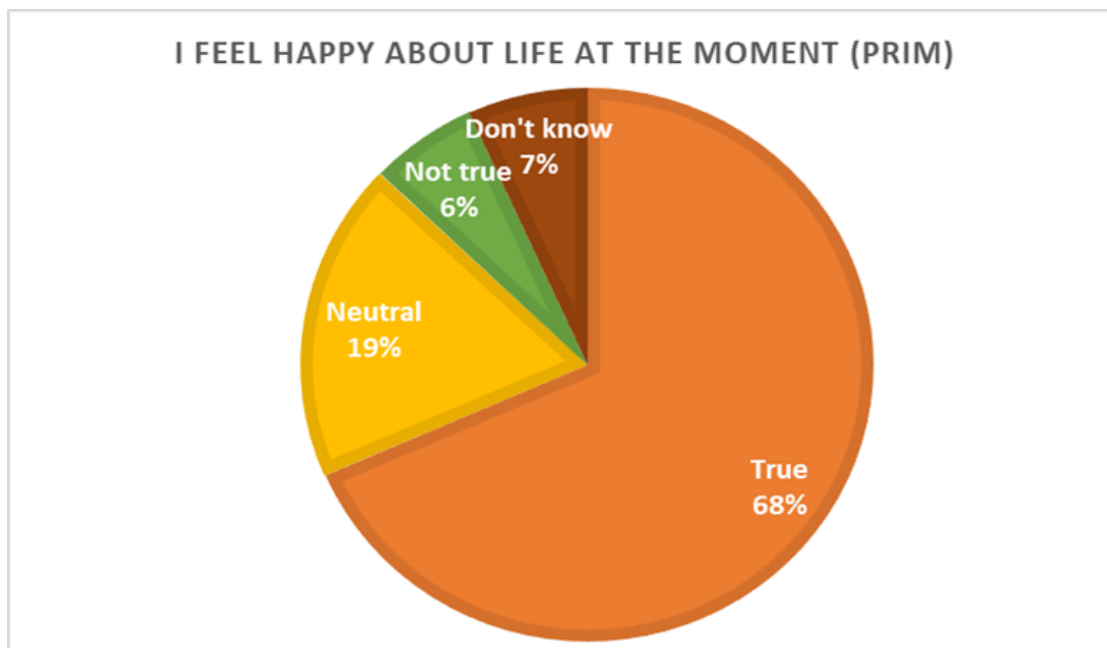
More interesting school lessons

More organised activities and things to do

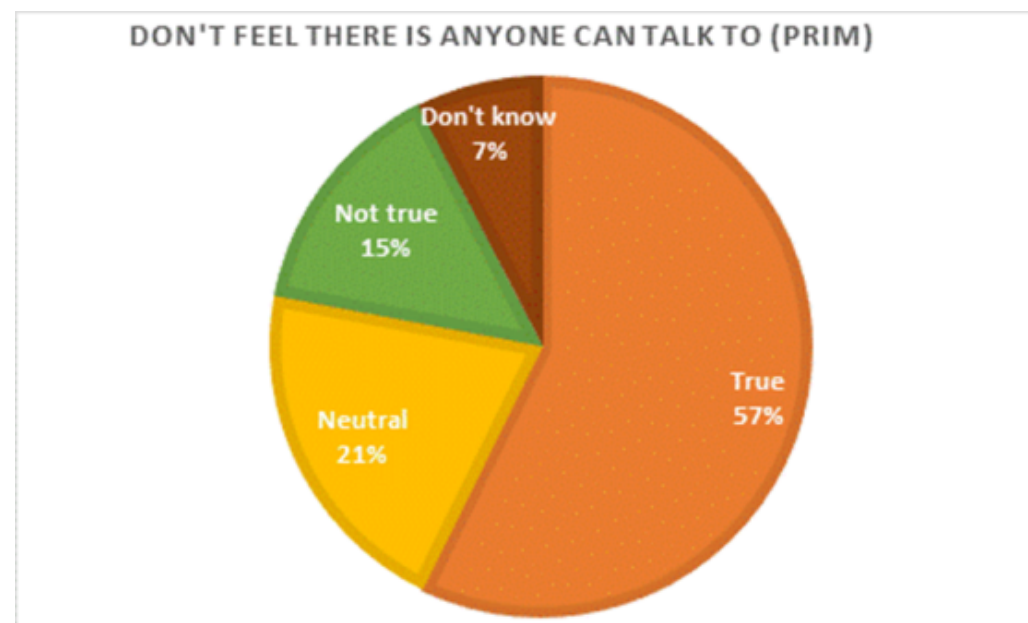
# Pupil Attitude Survey

68% of primary pupils (aged 9-11 years) agreed that they felt happy about life at the moment. There has been a decline in the percentage stating they feel happy with 75% of primary pupils stating this in the 2017 and 68% in 2015.

57% of primary pupil respondents stayed that they don't feel there is anyone they can talk to when they are worried.



Pie chart showing pupil responses to feeling happy about life at the moment.



Pie chart showing pupil responses to feeling they have someone to talk to when worried.



# CYP Mental Health Strategic Health Needs Assessment



NCEL Provider Collaborative produced a CAMHS SNHA to help understand the needs of this population and plan services.

## Summary of key population and mental health issues:

- There is expected to be a 5% increase in 11-17year olds with mental health issues over the next 10 years
- NCEL communities are particularly deprived, with Tower Hamlets being in the top 5 in London
- 60% of CYP are from ethnically diverse communities. Amongst other boroughs Tower Hamlets have particularly high proportion of CYP from Asian communities (50 – 60%)
- 18% of 11-17yr old in NCEL are likely to have a diagnosable mental health disorder, an increase of 23% since 2017. Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets have higher than London rates for psychosis.

## Key findings:

- There is a significant over-representation of female CYP admitted to inpatient CAMHS than compared with the population, but an equal sex split in community CAMHS caseloads.
- There are significantly more White and less Asian CYP accessing CAMHS inpatient services than would be expected given the demographic profile in NEL and NCEL.
- There is higher proportion of people from the most deprived areas in inpatient CAMHS.
- There is a higher proportion of children and young people with ASD/LD in CAMHS inpatient services than there is in the wider population. However, the proportion of CAMHS inpatients with one or both of these diagnoses has significantly decreased over time. This is particularly relevant for Tower Hamlets as one of the areas with the highest prevalence of SEND and SEMH.
- 30% of all NCEL CAMHS admissions were under a Mental Health Act detention. Detentions significantly more common among males, non-white CYP and among those with a diagnosis of a learning disability and/or autism.





# Tower Hamlets Education Wellbeing Service (THEWS)



- THEWS offers individual work directly with young people in secondary school/college and parents/carers of children in primary school who present with the mild to moderate mental health needs listed on our referral form.
- THEWS is in 60 Tower Hamlets schools (41 primary schools and 19 secondary schools and colleges).

## THEWS clinical offer

- Online universal offer:
  - Open to everyone (including young people, parents and carers, school staff in Tower Hamlets (and can attend anonymously). Workshops can also be requested in person/F2F by THEWS schools.
- Primary school offer:
  - Individual interventions for parents of Primary School Children and interventions for children in Primary school.
- Secondary school offer:
  - Individual interventions, small group interventions, workshops for young people in secondary schools/colleges.

## THEWS Partnerships

- THEWS partners with Docklands Outreach and Step Forward



# THEWS Clinical Offer



## THEWS individual interventions for young people in primary school

- Anxiety
- Friendship problems and bullying
- Emotional regulation (Brain Buddies)
- Sleep and wellbeing
- Body image
- Low mood
- Self-esteem and self-compassion

## THEWS individual interventions for young people in secondary schools/colleges

- General anxiety/worry
- Low mood/depression
- Mixed anxiety and depression/low mood
- Social anxiety
- Interpersonal/peer relationship difficulties
- Obsessions and compulsions/obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Phobias
- Panic
- Low self esteem
- Emotion regulation difficulties
- Eating difficulties
- Body image
- Sleep and wellbeing
- Exam stress
- Self esteem and self compassion
- Social media
- Self care



# Local mental health support



- **CAMHS** offers assessment, help and support to children, young people, and their families who are experiencing emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.
- **Barnardo's** offer a range of therapeutic support for CYP with mild to moderate needs. This service supports children aged 10 – 25 years.
- **Dockland's Outreach** is an emotional wellbeing and mental health service, offering evidenced based parenting interventions for parents with children aged 3 12 years old. Counselling, psychotherapy, CBT for children and young people aged 12 to 21 years old, and advocacy and community connector support to children and young people 12 25 years old.
- **Step Forward** provide support to young people who are facing disadvantage and enables them to thrive, develop, grow, and reach their full potential in life. They do this by offering personalised packages of support for each individual young person. They support personal development, provide LGBTQ+ young people support, and counselling, CBT, and workshops that build resilience and improves wellbeing.
- **Spotlight** runs a Mental Health Ambassadors programme to support young people's mental health.
- **Healthy Lives** delivers mental health promotion work in schools by embedding a whole schools approach (WSA) to mental health.
- **Kooth**, commissioned by NEL ICB, is an Online Mental Health Support app for young people aged 11-15 years.
- **Lumi Nova**, commissioned by ELFT, provides a fun, self-guided, interactive game experience to effectively overcome childhood anxiety. It equips young minds with life-long skills to deal with worries and stresses.
- **Early Help Hub** acts as a single point of access and works with families or young people who need extra support to deal with a difficult situation. Getting help early can stop things from getting worse and becoming harder to manage.
- **Family Hubs**



# ACEs and trauma-informed practice



- Five to Thrive
- ACEs group
- Perinatal Mental Health and Parent Infant Relationships
  - Aimed at improving parental mental health during the perinatal period via strengthening the mild moderate service offer and enhancing existing support available locally as well as building capacity for trauma informed practice.



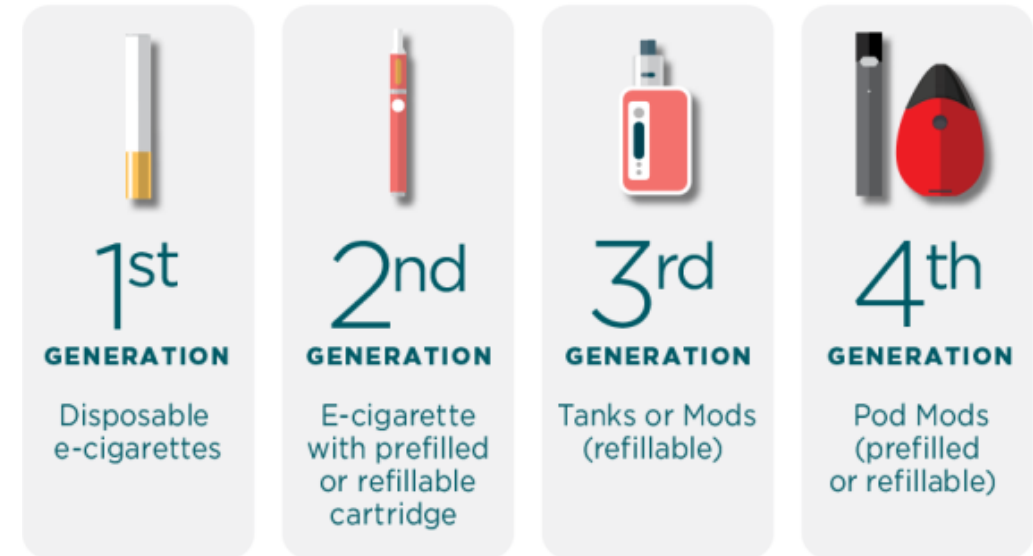
# Vaping by children



# Vaping

- **What are vapes?:** An electronic device that heats a liquid (called e-liquid or vape juice) to create an aerosol that the user inhales. This aerosol typically contains nicotine, flavourings, and more than 30 other chemicals. Nicotine-free options are also available.
- Despite potential harm reduction compared to smoking, **for adults**, vaping poses significant health risks for young people and can act as a gateway to smoking and other substance use.
- Youth vaping, has become a growing concern in Tower Hamlets.

## The Evolution of E-Cigarette, or Vaping, Products



# Vaping Trends in under 18s



- **Nationally:** Recent surveys (ASH, 2023) indicate that over 20% of 11-18 year olds have tried vaping, with regular use (weekly or daily) rising in recent years.
- **Locally:** Data on youth vaping specific to Tower Hamlets is limited. However, national trends suggest a similar or potentially higher prevalence in the borough due to factors like socioeconomic deprivation and peer pressure.
- **Age groups:** Experimentation with vaping is highest among older teenagers (15-18 years old). However, concerns are growing about increasing rates among younger adolescents (11-14 years old).
- **Motivations:** Reasons for vaping among young people include peer pressure, curiosity, experimentation, perceived coolness, and marketing tactics targeting minors with enticing flavours and imagery.



# Vaping Health Risks



- **Nicotine addiction:** Although nicotine content varies, many vapes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive, especially for young developing brains.
- **Lung damage:** E-cigarettes contain harmful chemicals and metals, even if marketed as nicotine-free, which can damage lung tissue and contribute to respiratory problems.
- **Mental health:** Nicotine exposure can impact brain development and increase the risk of mental health issues like anxiety and depression, particularly in vulnerable adolescents.
- **Gateway effect:** Youth vaping is associated with an increased risk of smoking cigarettes and using other drugs in the future, raising concerns about potential long-term consequences.





# What We Are Doing



- **Legislation:** The minimum age of sale for e-cigarettes is 18. This is enforced locally by the Trading Standards Team.
- **Support services:** Access to drug and substance misuse support through Safe East (integrated substance misuse and sexual health young people's service).
- **Government consultation December 2023:** Creating a smoke-free generation and tackling youth vaping.
  - LBTH stakeholder event held in December 2023 to respond to the consultation and commence development of an action plan that seeks to reduce the appeal and availability of vapes to children.



# Stakeholder Workshop: Key Themes on Youth Vaping



## 1. Education and prevention

Educate staff, young people and parents

**Vaping specific campaign**

Joint working with schools and youth service

Close focus on peer pressure/ trends among young people measures to make it less attractive prospect

## 2. Enforcement

Trading standards - fines for illicit vapes in shops

Discourage shops from selling sweet tasting vapes

Vapes advertising aimed young people (flavours, packaging)

**Lack of regulation re vaping**

## 3. Communication

Change young people's perceptions around vaping, involving young people

Clear direct messages - adult vs children use of vapes

PH (Barts Health, TH) collaborate with CYP services in hospital - early age preventative measures / messages

What can we do about peer influence

## 4. Service provision

Support service available e.g. Safe East, Health Spot

Spaces CYP are meant to be safe are not free of harmful substances

Better connection with mental health support

Closer partnership working (schools, young people services, health services)



# High energy, high caffeine drinks



- Education:
  - Included within health promotion sessions offered by Healthy Lives team
- Businesses:
  - Food for health awards – encourage swaps around diet drinks, placing water more prominently.
- Schools:
  - Could consider encouraging bans in schools
  - Opportunity to use the FSM funding to enforce compliance with school food standards. An audit is planned for 2024.
  - Healthy Lives Team supporting whole-school healthy eating



# Research to improve the lives of children and families



- LBTH have partnered with Bradford Council, QMUL, UCL and York Universities in [Act Early](#) (a unique preventive research collaboration) for the last four years.
- The partnership has delivered a wide range of research to help us understand what early life changes can be delivered to improve the health and opportunities for children living in areas with high levels of child poverty.
- To date, ActEarly research in Tower Hamlets and Bradford has supported LBTH to deliver evidence-informed policy and service delivery in a range of ways, including:
  - Providing subject matter expertise and research input for council officers working to address damp and mould in borough housing.
  - Delivering research to understand why uptake of the national Government's free early childhood education and care offer for 2-year-olds was so low in Tower Hamlets.
  - Strengthening our understanding of family needs e.g. the need to prioritise family mental wellbeing and address material deprivation, which has informed the design or reshaping of new and existing services for residents e.g. the LBTH Family Hub programme.
  - Providing the links to bring academic experts in to plan and deliver the evaluation of free school meals to secondary schools from the very start of the project.
  - Providing access to ActEarly FSM auto-enrolment project - registered 850 children eligible for, but not claiming FSMs, plus the associated additional funding this brings to Tower Hamlets schools (approx. £1.5m each year).
  - Providing insight about the material and environmental impact of Covid-19 lockdowns on expectant and new mothers and young families – research findings were used to inform our Covid recovery policies.
  - Providing our research foundations to support our successful HDRC bid – LBTH is one of 10 LAs nationally to receive £5m funding from NIHR over 5 years to build research infrastructure

