

Scrutiny Action Log

Name of Committee: **Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

Municipal Year: **2023-24**

Reference	Action	Assigned to	Scrutiny Lead	Due Date	Response
Insert date	Insert agenda item title and the action requested by the committee	Insert name of director	Insert scrutiny lead	Insert Date	Response provided by the service/ witness
11.07.23	Provide further data and information on Care Experience	James Thomas Corporate Director for Children & Culture	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	08.08.23	Email sent on 09.08.23 with links providing further information included in Appendix 1.
	The Chair requested details on all local universities' contributions to the borough in regard to the S106 Planning obligations and gave an open invitation to attend a sub-committee meeting to discuss	Anna Murphy Senior Strategy & Policy Officer	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair		I've run a quick search on both CIL and S106 records and it looks like there is only one development that shows up. Application PA/14/01852 relates to Queen Mary University and secured just over £38k in S106 financial contributions and several in-kind obligations relating to local employment opportunities. Unfortunately, we don't appear to have received the contributions and its unclear whether or not the planning permission was in fact implemented. My team is looking into this at the moment.
12.10.23	Clarify the timescales for the completion of the research report on free schools' meals carried out by Queen Mary University	Anna Murphy Senior Strategy & Policy Officer	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 2.
	Provide school attendance data for Tower Hamlets	Layla Richards	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 3.

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		Head of Strategy and Commissioning	CESSC Chair		
	Research and provide any available data on the link between overcrowding, mental health and attendance.	Layla Richards Head of Strategy and Commissioning	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 4.
	Provide further data on Youth Service uptake including: - Breakdown of new contacts - Gender split in participants	Kelly Duggan Head of Youth Justice Service	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 5.
	Provide a breakdown of the Equalities monitoring data for employees of the youth service, esp. gender	Kelly Duggan Head of Youth Justice Service	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	10.11.23	Further information included in Appendix 6.
07.12.23	A written brief on free school meal deals, including the type of options available and costs per meal to be brought to sub-committee members for review.	Jenny Pittam Head of Contract Services	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 7.
	Further details on young people with EHCP no longer studying BTEC Courses to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.	Tina Sode Head of Special Education Needs	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 8.
	Details on the numbers of young people who are NEET including those on remand to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.	Lisa Fraser Acting Corporate Director Childrens Services	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 9.
	A written brief on details and numbers on the Post 16 needs list to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.	Lisa Fraser Acting Corporate Director Childrens Services	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 10.

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	Details on speech and language therapy provision in conjunction with BARTS will be brought to the sub-committee for review.	Lisa Fraser Acting Corporate Director Childrens Services	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury CESSC Chair	30.01.24	Further information included in Appendix 11.

Appendix 1 – Care experience data and information

In response to the request for further data and information on care experience the service have provided the below links, the first two links will be particularly relevant for those of you who were not members of the sub-committee last year:

1. The independent review of children's social care
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230308122449/https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/final-report/>
2. Stable homes built on love consultation - the government response to independent review
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love>
3. Care experience matters
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-experience-matters>

Appendix 2 – Free School Meal Research Report

Fantastic Food in Schools (Primary School Programme) - Report to be shared in February 2024

Secondary school UFSM Programme – Timelines (tbc)

Appendix 3 – School Attendance Data

Absence rates - autumn term: England, Inner London and Tower Hamlets between 2018/19 Autumn term and 2022/23 Autumn term

Area	Measure	2018/19 Autumn term	2019/20 Autumn term	2020/21 Autumn term	2021/22 Autumn term	2022/23 Autumn term
England	Overall absence rate	4.3%	4.9%	4.7%	6.9%	7.5%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	10.9%	13.1%	13.0%	23.5%	24.2%
Inner London	Overall absence rate	4.0%	4.5%	5.0%	6.0%	7.2%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	10.1%	11.8%	14.4%	19.0%	23.8%
Tower Hamlets	Overall absence rate	4.0%	4.6%	4.9%	5.5%	7.4%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	9.8%	12.0%	14.5%	17.0%	26.5%

- (1) Total includes state-funded primary, secondary and special schools. Data for special schools is available from 2016/17 to present.
(2) The overall absence rate is the total number of sessions missed due to absence for all pupils as a percentage of the total number of possible sessions for all pupils. One session is equal to half a day.
(3) A pupil enrolment is identified as a persistent absentee if they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions.

Appendix 4 – Overcrowding affects children’s wellbeing, Finding solutions in Tower Hamlets



Overcrowding affects children's wellbeing

Finding solutions in Tower Hamlets



How many households are affected?

Commonly used indicators of overcrowding such as the 'bedroom standard' have various purposes, including to help prioritise and allocate housing for residents on the housing list. Using this criterion, **15.8%** of households in Tower Hamlets were estimated as living in overcrowded conditions in 2021 (see Figure 1).

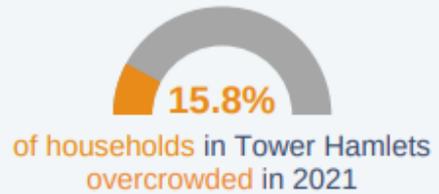


Figure 1: Percentage of households that met the overcrowding criteria as per 2021 census

About **half** of all responses to a survey of 620 families during the pandemic said they didn't have enough space. **Lack of space** is more prevalent for **low-income households** (see Figure 2).

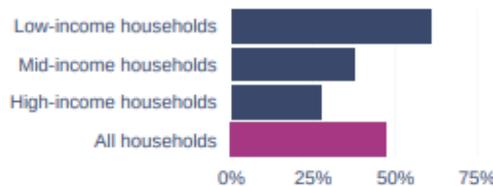


Figure 2: Percentage of households who reported not having enough space in their homes in a survey of 620 parents of children aged 0-4 and parents to be living in Tower Hamlets

"One of the biggest concerns in our area is overcrowding. And children just not having enough space for study, for play within their homes, that is a huge concern."
Tower Hamlets parent

Key research findings



The usual indicators of overcrowding miss many of the ways in which lack of space affects families and children.



Families experiencing overcrowding often face other issues with their homes.

Recommendations to improve residents' wellbeing



1
Policymakers could adopt **broader indicators** of overcrowding.



2
Landlords can provide space for **storage** and clothes drying, and **prioritise repairs**.



3
Planning rules can require child friendly, suitably sized **balconies** for new builds.

Underpinning evidence

The usual indicators of overcrowding miss many of the ways in which lack of space affects families and children

Overcrowding generates many impacts that are not accounted for with current indicators. The impacts mentioned by the participants in the survey are captured in Figure 3.

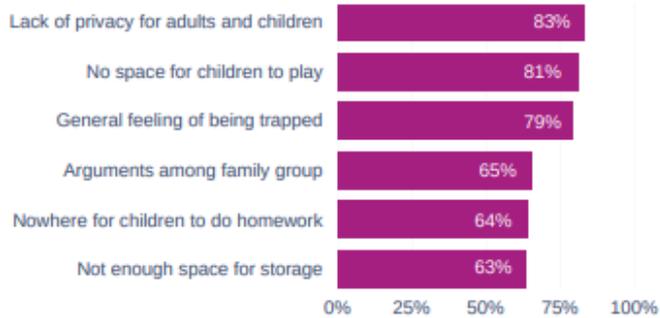


Figure 3: Impacts of lack of space, for respondents who reported this problem

Families experiencing overcrowding often face other issues with their homes

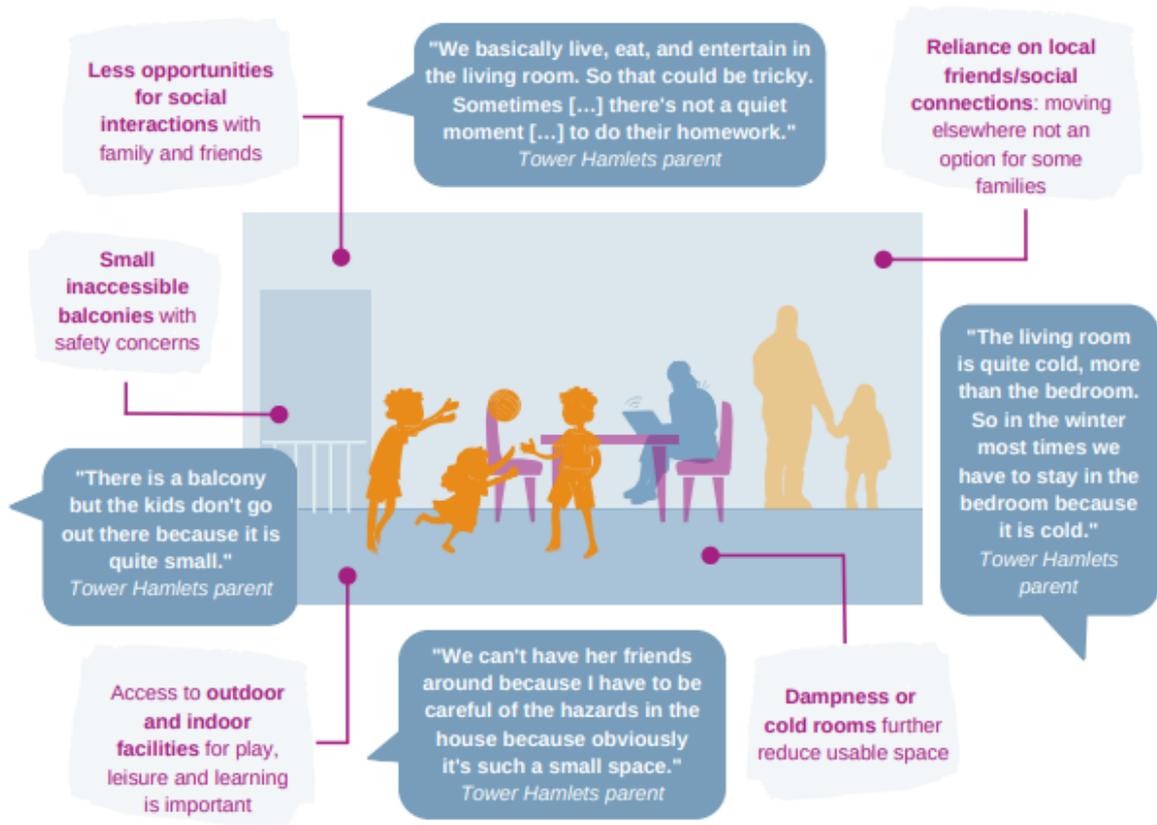


Figure 4: Overcrowding issues reported by parents

Associated Links (Appendix 4)

[IJERPH | Free Full-Text | Exploring the Interactions between Housing and Neighbourhood Environments for Enhanced Child Wellbeing: The Lived Experience of Parents Living in Areas of High Child Poverty in England, UK \(mdpi.com\)](#)

<https://actearly.org.uk/>

Appendix 5 – Breakdown of New Contacts with the Youth Service

That further data on Youth Service uptake, including a breakdown of new contacts and the gender split in participants, will be provided to the sub-committee for review.

	September	October	November	Total
Female	91	196	396	683
Male	131	302	1019	1452

The data above is in relation to the offer provided by Young Tower Hamlets

Appendix 6 – Breakdown of Gender Equalities Monitoring Data for Youth Service Employees

2. That a breakdown on equalities monitoring data for employees of the youth service, specifically gender to be provided to the sub-committee for review.

	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	White
Female	9	12	0	1	7
Male	12	8	0	0	1

The data above is in relation to the staff in Young Tower Hamlets. This includes the current permanent staff as well as the interim project team.

Appendix 7 – UFSM School lunch and “Meal Deal” offers in Tower Hamlets Secondary Schools

UFSM School lunch and “Meal Deal” offers in Tower Hamlets Secondary Schools



- The Mayor funds £2.90 per day for a Secondary School UFSM
- This can be spent on a 2 -course lunch or “Meal Deal” at midday to include a main or vegetarian choice and will also include vegetables, salad options, bread & a dessert option.
- In schools with limited dining facilities, the UFSM allowance can also be spent on a “Meal Deal” at morning break – samples provided.
- All schools will have 1, 2 or 3 week menu offer – samples provided.
- The price the Catering Contractor charges the school for the meals will vary depending on individual Contract Terms and Conditions.





**Sample of a “Meal Deal”
offered by Accent
Catering who provide
meals at the following
schools**

**Mulberry Girls School
Mulberry Shoreditch
Mulberry UTC Canary Wharf College 3
(Crossharbour)
Bishop Challoner
Mulberry Stepney Green**



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in one borough



Sample of a “Meal Deal” at CGFS, Bow & Morpeth Schools provided by Olive Dining Catering Services



Meal Deal

1

HOT MAIN **OR** SANDWICH **OR** WRAP **OR** BAGUETTE

2

HOT DESSERT **OR** SMALL FRUIT POT **OR** PIECE OF FRUIT

LOOK OUT FOR THE PURPLE LABELS

*2 items for
£2.61*

The best of London
in one borough



Contract Catering Services UFSM offer at Swanlea School (Week 1) £2.90



 SWANLEA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU OCTOBER 2023	SWANLEA SCHOOL WEEK ONE				
	MON (Planet Earth Day)	TUE (Street Food)	WED (Traditional Day)	THU (Favourites)	FRI (World Food Day)
Main	Beef Keema Curry with Rice	Chicken & Sweetcorn Pie with Mashed Potato	Roast Beef & Potatoes with Yorkshire Pudding & Gravy	Crispy Battered Fish with Homemade Tartar Sauce & Chips	Thai Red Chicken Curry with Rice
Vegetarian	Tomato & Basil Pasta Bake	Margherita Pizza with Baked Potato Wedges	Chickpea & Vegetable Tagine with Couscous	Italian Quorn Meatballs with Cheese Mega Sub with Potato Wedges	Thai Stir-Fried Vegetables with Noodles
Slides/Vegetables	Sweetcorn & Peas	Broccoli and Carrots	Roasted Root Vegetables	Peas & Baked Beans	Vegetable Medley and Sweetcorn
Salads	Crated Carrots & Sultanas Salad	Cauliflower & Coriander Salad	Chef's House Salad	New Potato Salad / Sweetcorn Salad	Sweet Chill, Tomato & Basil Salad
Dessert	Cheese and Crackers with Grapes & Apple Wedge	Fruity Yoghurt Bar	Homemade Cheese Twist	Fruit Salad with Vanilla Ice Cream	Thai Baked Pineapple with Yoghurt
Daily Options	Daily Salad / Fresh Bread / Seasonal Fresh Fruit Platter / Organic Yoghurts				

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Contract Catering Services UFSM offer at Swanlea School (Week 1) £2.90



 SWANLEA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU OCTOBER 2023	SWANLEA SCHOOL WEEK TWO				
	MON (Planet Earth Day)	TUE (Street Food)	WED (Traditional Day)	THU (Favourites)	FRI (World Food Day)
Main	Caribbean Brown Chicken Stew with Rice	Curried Beef Meatballs with Savoury Rice	Roast Chicken & Potatoes with Yorkshire Pudding & Gravy	Breaded Fish with Homemade Tartar Sauce & Chips or Teriyaki Salmon Wrap with Mixed Side Salad	Beef Bourguignon with Rice
Vegetarian	Macaroni Double Cheese with Fried Leeks	Vegan Spicy Chicken Style Strips & Sweet Chilli Sauce Wrap with Baked Potato Wedges	Chickpea & Mixed Vegetable Spicy Rice	Jack Sweet Potato, Bean and Vegetable Curry with Rice	Spinach, Pepper & Caramelized Onion Quiche with Provencal Potato
Slides/Vegetables	Sauteed Leeks and Sweetcorn	Curried Roasted Cauliflower and Peas	Broccoli and Carrots	Peas and Baked Beans	Ratatouille and French Beans
Salads	Carrots & Cucumber Ribbons	Asian Noodle Salad	Chef's House Salad	Crunchy Coleslaw	Macedoine of Vegetable Salad
Dessert	Cheese and Crackers with Grapes & Apple Wedge	Fruity Yoghurt Bar	Apple Crumble Style Yoghurt	Fruit Salad with Vanilla Ice Cream	Yoghurt with Cinnamon & Vanilla Pear
Daily Options	Daily Salad / Fresh Bread / Seasonal Fresh Fruit Platter / Organic Yoghurts				

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Accent Catering Sample Menu (Week 1)



Week 1

Spring Menu

Week Commencing:
08/01/2024,
05/02/2024
and
11/03/2024

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
 MAINS <i>Fresh Flavours</i>	Kung Pao Chicken Stir Fry with Peppers Served with Egg Noodles and Chinese Roasted Greens (G,So,E)	Chicken Tikka Masala Served with Turmeric Rice and Aromatic Cauliflower (None)	Mexican Chicken, Peppers and Beans Fajita Served with Mexican Wholegrain Rice and Sweetcorn (G,Mu,Mk,Ce)	Classic Italian Beef Lasagne Served with Garlic Bread and Green Beans (G,E,Mk,So)	Fish Finger Bap with Lemon Coleslaw (G,E,F,Mu) or Salmon Fishcakes with Lemon Mayo (G,E,F) Served with Beans and Peas
 VEGGIE <i>(Meat free)</i>	Kung Pao Quorn Stir Fry Served with Egg Noodles and Chinese Roasted Greens (G,Mu,So,Ce,E)	Veggie Chickpea Tikka Masala Served with Turmeric Rice and Aromatic Cauliflower (None)	Roast Veggie, Beans and Cheese Quesadilla Served with Mexican Wholegrain Rice and Sweetcorn (G,Mu,Mk,Ce)	Mediterranean Vegetables Lasagne Served with Garlic Bread and Green Beans (G,E,Mk,So)	Homemade Veggie Burger with Tomato Relish in a Toasted Bun (G,Su) Served with Beans and Peas

JACKET POTATOES

MONDAY
Cheese and Beans topped Jacket Potato
(Mk)

TUESDAY
Tuna Mayonnaise topped Jacket Potato
(E,F)

WEDNESDAY
Cheesy Coleslaw topped Jacket Potato
(E,Mu)

THURSDAY
Chilli con Carne topped Jacket Potato
(None)

FRIDAY
Cheese and Beans topped Jacket Potato
(Mk)

DESSERT

MONDAY
Apple Crumble with Custard
(G,Mk)

TUESDAY
Fruity Flapjack
(G,Su)

WEDNESDAY
Baked Citrus Pudding with Lemon Sauce
(G,Mk,E)

THURSDAY
Banana Tea Bread
(G,Mk,E)

FRIDAY
Winter Fruit Crumble with Custard
(G,Mk)

Mulberry
Academy Shoreditch

At the heart of everything we do is our love of good, fresh and healthy food, prepared by a team who cares!

every day!
Look out for our
Salad Bar

Fresh every day packed with tasty choices!

MEAL DEAL

Check out what's on offer today!

Also available for Free School Meals

ALLERGENS

Speak to one of our chefs if you have any allergies or check on the daily menu template.
we're allergy aware!

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Appendix 8 - Further details on young people with EHCP no longer studying BTEC Courses to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.

Data is not collected on the number of young people with EHC plans who initially enrolled on a BTEC course and later switched to another pathway due to the limited offer. However, we do know that BTECs often cater to diverse learning styles and abilities, providing a more practical and vocational approach for children and young people. By excluding BTEC qualifications (level 2 and below) from our 6th form offer, young people are limited in their educational choices, and their ability to thrive and excel in areas that align better with their individual strengths and preferences is hindered. A review of the current 6th form offer is in progress, and the outcome of this review will provide suggestions to address the concerns mentioned above.

Appendix 9 – Further details on young people with EHCP no longer studying BTEC Courses to be brought back to the sub-committee for review.

- At the start of the 23/24 academic year 130 young people (aged 17 to 25) fell under the NEET category. This has risen to 179 young people (January 2024).
- The NEET population is diverse in terms of age, with the following distribution:
 - 5 young people aged 17.
 - 15 young people aged 18.
 - 23 young people aged 19.
 - 42 young people aged 20.
 - 30 young people aged 21.
 - 26 young people aged 22.
 - 22 young people aged 23.
 - 14 young people aged 24.
 - 2 young people aged 25.
- 4 young people (aged 22-25) are currently servicing a custodial sentence.
- The highest number of NEET young people falls within the age group of 20.

- ASD is identified as the primary need for 22 young people who are NEET.
- SLCN is identified as the primary need for 37 young people who are NEET.
- The Preparing for Adulthood service team are:
 - further exploring targeted interventions for NEET young people with ASD and SLCN to address their unique needs and challenges.
 - working collaboratively with colleges and training providers to further develop and implement early intervention programs for younger NEET young people (17-18 years old) to prevent prolonged disengagement.
 - fostering collaboration between educational institutions, employers, and support services to create a seamless transition for NEET young people into education or employment.

Appendix 10 – Post 16 Needs

There are 1228 17- 25-year-olds with EHCPs in Tower Hamlets:

- **408** 17- and 18-year-olds
- **184** 19-year-olds
- **636** 20 – 25-year-olds

These young people attend a wide range of placements and access a variation of courses including A level qualifications and supported internships. However, only 79 are being educated in mainstream 6th forms in Tower Hamlets whilst 377 attend the local further education college (NCC). 156 young people are accessing the post 16 offer in our special schools (including Phoenix College) and 34 are educated out of borough. Work continues to reduce the number of young people being educated out of borough, but the needs of some young people are such that they need a level of care and education that cannot be provided in Tower Hamlets.

The needs of young people with SEN have been clearly articulated (via surveys, evaluation forms, face-to-face meetings, and presentations) by themselves and their parents and carers. A key area highlighted by young people and their families is communication. They want us to communicate better and have highlighted that accessibility to information about available services is crucial. They have expressed the desire to easily find information about what is on offer and gain a clear understanding of how the system operates. They feel that professionals should possess a comprehensive understanding of the system and the available support and be able to communicate this in a way that is

understandable for them. Young people were clear that they want to minimise the need to repeat their stories across different arenas. Parents and carers continue to request an increase in the availability of places for young people aged 16 and above, with a specific focus on Autism, Social, Emotional, and Mental Health, and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. Young people with SEN would like access to leisure opportunities and youth clubs tailored to their needs. Young people with SEN and their families expressed a need for more support to develop social skills in young adults to facilitate their transition into adulthood, further and higher education, and employment. Parents shared that some of their young people with SEN are at risk of exploitation and would like support in keeping them safe. Young people said they want to be heard and feel that the council listens but does not always act.

Services are collaboratively working to develop a 'tell-us-once approach to SEN,' enhance communication, and improve information sharing by updating and refining the local offer, alongside hosting regular Let's Talk SEND events. The post-19 specialist offer is currently under review with the aim of expanding services for young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder and considering post-19 developments for those with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. The Young People's Service and the Special Educational Needs Service are jointly developing youth sports and fitness sessions tailored for young people with SEN and exploring the introduction of Phab clubs in Tower Hamlets. New training providers, after assessment, have been added to the pool of organisations delivering life skills training to young people with SEN. There is an increased focus on creating new opportunities and providing additional support to ensure young people develop as much independence as possible, supporting their journey to adulthood.

Appendix 11 – Speech and Language Provision

- On average in Sep 2022 - Aug 2023, 92 referrals every month were received for children under 5 to SaLT, of which 58 were accepted on average each month.
- 2.0 FTE additional members of staff on fixed-term contracts and some temporary staff have been recruited to help reduce the waiting list for an initial contact with a therapist. The staffing has been in place since April 2023.
- There has been a reduction of numbers waiting from almost 500 in October 2022 down to 70 currently. The average wait time has reduced from a peak of 35 weeks to under 15 weeks.
- Bart's Health NHS are currently providing between 60 and 80 initial contacts every month which is enough to keep reducing the waiting list. Their current target is to reduce the average waiting time to below 10 weeks from referral.

- Referrals and Acceptances
 - On average, the Speech, and Language Therapy service received 92 referrals per month for children under 5 during Sep 2022 - Aug 2023,
 - Of these, an average of 58 referrals were accepted each month.
- Staffing Enhancement
 - To address the waiting list for initial therapist contact, 2.0 full-time equivalent additional staff on fixed-term contracts and temporary hires have been recruited.
 - The expanded staffing has been in operation since April 2023.
- Waiting List Reduction
 - There has been a significant reduction in the number of individuals on the waiting list, decreasing from nearly 500 in October 2022 to the current count of 70.
 - The average waiting time has also decreased substantially, dropping from a peak of 35 weeks to under 15 weeks.
- Bart's Health NHS Contributions
 - Bart's Health NHS is actively involved in providing between 60 and 80 initial contacts each month.
 - This level of service is instrumental in the continuous reduction of the waiting list.
 - The current target is to further reduce the average waiting time to below 10 weeks from the point of referral.

These developments indicate positive strides in addressing the demand for Speech and Language Therapy services, with a notable impact on reducing waiting times and enhancing accessibility for the referred children under the age of 5.