

# Our Time All Ability Youth Forum Newsletter

## Introduction to Our Time

If you are bored and stuck, not knowing what to do during term time, come and join Our Time, the forum for all young people in Tower Hamlets, 14-25.

We meet regularly to play games, have trips and do arts and crafts. We also have the voice to speak to leaders about what you want to see happening to make changes for young people in Tower Hamlets.

**"I love it when we play board games". Sornnaly**

**"I enjoy it when we go and play bowling and I want to win". Shahid**

**"Football is my main sport and sometimes enjoy playing games especially Roblox and rocket league". Luca**

**"We stay united to work together, no matter who we are, to make a difference by supporting others in today's society". Yaomin Ali**



# SEND Hackathon

On November 2023, the forum members went to the SEND Hackathon which took place at Tower Hamlets Town Hall. They got along with other young people. The aim of the Hackathon was to design a youth service of what it would look like in future youth services.

Also, we met with the Deputy Head of Youth Services to discuss the type of youth provision for all young people with SEND.



## Let's Talk SEND Year 9

The Tower Hamlets SEND department and Tower Hamlets and City SENDIASS hosted a Let's Talk SEND Year 9 event on a Saturday in December at the Brady Centre.

Parents, carers, and young people with SEND came to meet senior leaders in Tower Hamlets and to hear from different professionals and services about the future possible options for young people with EHC plans.

Our Time came along to talk to young people and their parents about opportunities for young people to get their voice heard.

## Every Chance for Every Child Forum – Bullying and Mental Health

Every Chance for Every Child is the name of the Tower Hamlets Children and Families Strategy 2019 – 2024. This is a plan to help improve lives for children and families.

This forum is a chance for different leaders, professionals and community representatives to see how well the plan is going.

Members from Our Time did a presentation about what are some of the issues young people with SEND face when it comes to bullying and ideas for how this can be improved.

# What did we do in the Winter/Spring Term?



We hold Our Time Forum meetings on a regular basis. This includes meetings being SEND Superheroes at Spotlight, the Young People's Advice Centre and weekend pizza days as we always do!

We participated in different types of activities such as bowling, board games, drawing and having discussions with each other.

## Our Time monthly sessions at Spotlight

We run sessions at Spotlight once a month as we are working on reaching out to young people with SEND across Tower Hamlets.

## Our Time at Haileybury Youth Centre

Haileybury Youth Centre is a new youth provision that was launched on 9th January 2024 providing weekly evening sessions for those aged 11-25 with mild to moderate SEND.

Our Time attends every session to support the staff and young people who participates in the youth club.

It will be starting again in May, we will be doing various activities such as drawing, painting, playing board games, sports, making music in the studio, doing stuff as a group.

We as young people with SEND want to involve other young people in Our Time by attending sessions at this youth centre on a regular basis.





# Youth Voice Matters Conference in Birmingham



We attended The Youth Voice Matters Conference to represent young people with SEND from Tower Hamlets. This opportunity enables young people to develop their participation skills, give an opportunity for young people to speak up and to recognise the impact that they can have when taking part in local and national decision-making about Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

Our Time had a wonderful time while we stayed over a night in Birmingham for the Youth Voice Matters Conference.

Our Time members, Luca, Shahid and Sornnaly went to some workshops about accessibility within communities and a second workshop based on transitions to secondary schools and colleges.



# Annual SEND Summit and the SEND Alternative Provision Improvement Plan

Sornnaly Hossain, Chair of Our Time and other Our Time Forum members attended the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) Annual SEND Summit at City Guildhall in March.

The summit was for SEND managers and directors in London to hear from the Department for Education on how some possible changes to the SEND system will be implemented.

Before the presentation, members of Our Time looked at the government's SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan. We talked about what we thought, what we liked and our concerns.

Sornnaly delivered a presentation to over 100 senior managers, which was praised for its honest appraisal of the plan.

Here is a quote from Frank Offer, SEND and Commissioning lead in the LIIA: **"We greatly appreciated Sornnaly's open views on the plan. The challenge on the lack of detail on how it will be delivered was spot on."**





# International Women's Day

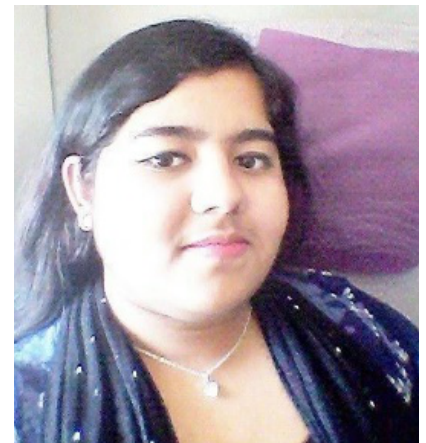
Sornnaly attended the International Women's Day event at the Tower Hamlets Town Hall to celebrate the achievements of women, as well as represent the Our Time Forum and the Youth Council. Sornnaly highlighted the importance of inclusion, participation and encouragement for people with SEND. Ways on how to get help and support was also mentioned in her speech.



## Sornnaly Hossain - Chair of Our Time SEND Forum

"I am Sornnaly Hossain, Chair of Our Time SEND forum, Youth Cabinet Member for Equalities & Social Inclusion and the overall voice of young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets."

"My role requires me to raise SEND awareness, increase inclusion, participation, encouragement and acceptance as I want to see more inclusive Tower Hamlets."



"I support children and young people with SEND by making sure their voices are being heard. I must work with higher and senior professionals for making changes to the SEND support and I am also a member of the SEND Improvement Board. From time to time, I must deliver presentations to professionals and young people."

"Being a young person with SEND, I am very keen to continue to create more opportunities for young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets so that everyone feels included and are able to access the right support for their needs."

I will try my best to reach out and want to say to all young people, feel free to get in touch with me for any support you may need."

The best way to reach out to me is by writing an email to Our Time at:  
**[ourtime.yf@gmail.com](mailto:ourtime.yf@gmail.com)**

## Sornnaly and Sarah, Youth Council Representatives for SEND



Sornnaly Hossain, Chair of Our Time and Sarah Khanom, member of Our Time are part of the Youth Council to make sure that young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets are being heard. We aim to bring a greater awareness of disability in our borough, specialising in unifying us all together through the lense of diversity, inclusion but most importantly, EQUALITY by focusing on making participation of those with SEND work within different environments that are understanding and accommodating of their individual needs.

At the Youth Council, we talk about creating more opportunities for young people by being involved for arranging any social events and developing the support system for young people in Tower Hamlets which includes making services accessible to all.

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## Sarah Kahnom – Standing for the Young Mayor Election

She was hesitant to apply but she is glad that she did as numerous skills were acquired during the campaign that she did. Some of these skills include self-confidence to participate in public speaking, debating, planning and team management.

Most importantly, there were people who share the same visions to Sarah. The process itself is lengthy, which each of them spurred each other on. Now she is part of the Youth Council, working with young people to draw attention to issues that concern the youth in our borough to try and offer solutions.

"Personally, I am to bring greater awareness of disability in our borough, specialising in unifying us all together through the lense of diversity, inclusion but most importantly EQUALITY by focusing on the participation of SEND within environments that are understanding and accommodating of their individual needs."

Sarah Khanom, Member of Youth Council/Our Time



## SEND Improvement Board

The SEND Improvement Board is a group of leaders in Tower Hamlets and community representatives who work together to improve life for people with SEND and their families.

At the Board, Our Time shared updates about the work we did in the last year (April 2022 – April 2023) and our views about how things are for young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets.

Sornnaly and Yaomin represent Our Time at SIB meetings to get young people's voices heard.

## Making films

We have written outlines, storyboards, and script for three films we have been funded to make. We came up with three ideas for films.

- All about Our Time.
- Advice to parents to help young people be independent.
- What it's like to have SEND.

We have contacted film making organisations to see if they can help us and hope to film in the autumn.

## Being part of National Council for Disabled Children

We are working closely with National Council for Disabled Children to share the views of young people with SEND from Tower Hamlets to make developments to the SEND support system nationally.

## What do we want to do in the summer term?

We have started a project with FLARE (Department for Education's national young SEND advisory group) where we share our views about SEND topics for the Department for Education. At our first session, we talked about mediation. We will have 4 more sessions about different topics.

We are going to work with an organisation who can help us make the films we have planned.

## Thank you for reading our newsletter!

If you would like to find out more, join and be part of our Youth Forum, then call **020 7364 7127** or email [ourtime.yf@gmail.com](mailto:ourtime.yf@gmail.com)

If you are interested to see any of the Our Time presentations, please email us so we can send the PowerPoint to you.

If you are a school or other organisation and would like to get involved with Our Time, we can come to you! Contact us so we can get started.

You can find details of upcoming meetings on the Local Offer Events Section. You can also follow us on Instagram and Twitter at [@ourtimeyf](https://www.instagram.com/ourtimeyf)