

Let's Talk SEND updates and information

Information on previous and upcoming Let's Talk SEND events and updates on the borough's SEND improvement journey can be found at

www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk/pages/local-offer/send/let-s-talk-send



Tower Hamlets' new SEND and Inclusion Strategy

The new Tower Hamlets SEND and Inclusion Strategy sets out the priorities the Local Area SEND Partnership will work towards over the next five years. These priorities were developed in discussion with young people, parents, carers and the professionals who make up the SEND Local Area workforce.

The improvements

- Clearer emphasis of the role of the SEND partnership
- Better sharing of outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- More commitment to alternative provision for children and young people with SEND
- More effective performance measures

The priorities

- Timely, effective and well-coordinated support
- User-friendly services
- Early identification and support for the under-fives
- Effective education and support for school-age children with SEND
- Opportunities and support for young adults with SEND
- Children and young people with SEND are celebrated, valued and supported to thrive



Read the full strategy [here](#) or scan the QR code.

Let us know what you would like to see in the next termly Let's Talk SEND supplement.

Email:

parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

More information on the support available to families can be found at

www.towerhamletsandcitysendiass.com



www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk/pages/local-offer/send/let-s-talk-send

TERMS

SENCOs are also referred to as SENDCOs (Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinators) in some schools.

SENDIASS refers to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service.

Parents – references to 'parents' describes any caregiver responsible for the care, protection and upbringing of a child or young person, including foster parents or connected persons, grandparents, siblings or other family members living in Tower Hamlets.

Update from Our Time Inclusive Youth Forum

Our Time is an all-ability youth forum, run for and by young people between the ages of 14-25 with special educational needs and disabilities.

Recent activities:

● **London SEND Leadership programme**

– attended a conference and workshop; presented to senior SEND leaders across London on young people's participation, Our Time's work and co-production

● **Youth provision for young people with SEND**

– continuing to work with the Youth Service to develop more inclusive provision for children and young people so that everyone has access to sports and leisure activities

● **Limited company** – has been successful in its bid to become a community limited company. It hopes this will attract more funding to develop its work

● **Let's Talk SEND Transition and Let's Talk SEND Year 9 events** – supported two Let's Talk SEND events at the Brady Arts Centre, providing families with information about the support available to them. Yaomin and Sornnaly made a presentation on the Our Time Youth Forum. They talked about the benefits of being part of the forum people and encouraged more young people to join.



● **Tower Hamlets Parent SEND Conference** – had a stall at the Parent SEND Conference to promote the forum and to distribute information about other relevant services

● **New SEND strategy** – was involved in developing the new SEND strategy (made suggestions and represented young people with SEND to ensure that their voices were being heard)

● **FLARE – Council for Disabled Children & Special Education Consortium** – did three sessions for the Flare Project, which were recognised as very comprehensive by the Council for Disabled Children. This will give the Department for Education an insight into the views of young people in relation to proposed changes, including:

- Curriculum and assessment review
- Improving SEND practices in local authorities
- Advanced British Studies Post-16 qualifications

● **Youth Voice Matters Conference 2025** – forum members will be participating in the upcoming Youth Voice Matters Conference in Manchester, representing young people with SEND from Tower Hamlets. They have been asked by the CDC to do a presentation and run a workshop

● **Tower Hamlets Youth Careers Fair and SEND Jobs Fair** – the forum had stalls at both the Tower Hamlets Youth Careers Fair and the SEND Jobs Fair. Both events generated a huge amount of interest.

For more details or to join the forum, email ourtimeyf@gmail.com



Tower Project interns providing lunch for the recent SEND Providers Event

SEND Preparing for Adulthood Providers Event

In January, the Tower Hamlets SEND Preparing for Adulthood Team held their first ever 'Providers Event' at the Town Hall. The event provided the opportunity for post-16 providers to showcase their education/training offers to young people in the borough. These were aimed at students in Year 10 upwards, who hold an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

The event was well received, with over 80 young people in attendance. There were representatives from Careers Young Workpath (who offered career guidance), The Family Information Service as well as Our Time (the Tower Hamlets youth forum).

Refreshments were prepared and provided by interns from the Tower Project.

Providers in attendance:

- New City College Group
- ONELAB College
- ELATT
- Phoenix College
- Big Creative Education
- Links Media College

For supported internships:

- MENCAP
- Project Search
- The Autism Project
- Tower Project
- National Star College – for steps into work supported internships

The next event will be held in **November 2025**.
For more information, email 14-25SEND@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Young people at their internships

DFN Foundation Project SEARCH supports internships

David Forbes-Nixon Family Charitable Foundation (DFN Foundation) Project SEARCH is a supported internship programme. Its aim is to support young people with an education, health and care (EHC) plan into paid employment.

First established in the USA during the 1990s, DFN Project SEARCH opened its first site in the UK 15 years ago; this has since increased to nearly 200 sites.

Tower Hamlets now has three Project SEARCH sites that offer young people a variety of work opportunities, including with Queen Mary University of London, Clyde & Co law firm and a facilities management company in Liverpool Street.

Young people who join the programme are supported by full time, on-site job coaches who help to train them in various job roles throughout their year on the programme.

Work opportunities across the sites include administration, retail, catering, information technology and engineering.

At the end of the course, interns are assisted in applying for jobs, attending interviews and integrating into their new employer.

Project SEARCH Tower Hamlets has an employment success rate of 80%, with 80% job retention – some of the highest figures in the country.

For more information visit www.phoenixcollege.london/project-search

Sensory sessions for children with SEND

Free sensory room and stay and play sessions are being offered on Monday mornings at **St Hilda's East Community Centre**. The new service is for families with children aged 0-5 who have special educational needs or disabilities.



To refer a family you work with or to become a partner with St Hilda's
Email: anastasia@sthildas.org Tel: 020 3475 7917

Mothers create and connect sessions

Connect and create is a free, inclusive and creative monthly workshop, devised for mothers and female carers of children with SEND.

Self-expression and creativity are encouraged during the sessions, which concludes with a sharing event to celebrate with family and friends.

Upcoming sessions:

4 April, 2 May, 13 June, 18 July

9.30am - 12noon

Chisenhale Art Place,

64-84 Chisenhale Road, E3 5QZ

For more details and to book your place email
connectandcreating@gmail.com

Stay and play for children with Down syndrome

New stay and play sessions for children aged 0-5 years with Down syndrome and their families are being held at **John Smith Family Hub**. The sessions are led by speech and language therapists using a total communication approach, which includes talking, signing key words, gesturing and using facial expressions.

The group provides a relaxed space to meet other families who have children with Down syndrome, as well as opportunities to speak with professionals and to find out about the services and support available to them.

For more details, email
felicity.hastie@nhs.net

Let's Talk SEND transition event

For parents of Year 4 and 5 children with EHC plans

Parents of children in Years 4 and 5 with education health and care (EHC) plans are invited to attend a Let's Talk SEND transition event to support their children with the secondary school transfer process.

There will be a presentation from the SEN department on secondary transfer and information on independent travel training, plus the opportunity to meet with secondary school SENCos.

The Family Information Service will also be on hand to provide information on services to support families and what is available through the Local Offer website.

Thursday 1 May 2025

9.30am-2pm

Brady Arts and Community Centre

192-196 Hanbury Street, E1 5HU

Lunch will be provided.

For more information or to book your place, email: fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call 020 7364 6489

Healthwatch survey – preparing SEND young people for adulthood

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets is conducting a research project looking at social care services that support young people (who are deaf, blind, hard of hearing or have low vision or have special educational needs and disabilities) being transitioned to adult services, as well as how young people are preparing for adulthood.

The project will collect feedback from young people aged 14-25 and their parents and carers, about:

- Planning for adulthood
- Accessing further education opportunities of their choice
- Transitioning from children to adult services
- Finding and accessing employment opportunities
- Preparing to live independently



The survey is online at <https://bit.ly/3OXkEjn>

To find out how to give feedback in person, email info@healthwatchtowerhamlets.co.uk

Sensory experiences at the Young V&A

Young V&A in Bethnal Green offer rich sensory experiences for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.

Over the winter, the museum welcomed families to a creative play session with Chickenshed Theatre Company and hosted a family design workshop with designer Max Lamb, where families had the opportunity to explore his library of sensory objects.

In January, the museum introduced a new learning programme for families with children with SEND. The monthly sessions will allow families to explore the sensory rich museum in a relaxed and inclusive environment.



Photo © Hannah Davis

To find out more or to discuss your child's needs before visiting email yvalearningevent@vam.ac.uk

Research survey for parents and carers

Dingley's Promise is a charity that provides education to children under five with SEND and support to their families. They work to ensure the voices of children and families are heard and to push for policy change which improves lives.

If you have a child aged 0-5 years with SEND, please complete the short research survey below to share feedback with Dingley's Promise.

www.dingley.org.uk/family-experiences-research

SEN family swimming sessions at Tiller Leisure Centre

Special educational needs (SEN) family swimming sessions are now available at Tiller Leisure Centre, Saturdays and Sundays from 12noon-12.45pm and 1-1.45pm.

With lots of swimming toys and floats to play with and accessible facilities on site, these sessions are aimed at families with children up to 16 years of age who have additional needs.

Parking available at weekends. Booking required.

www.be-well.org.uk/family-sen-swimming-sessions

Let's Talk SEND Information event

Friday, 4 April, 10am-4pm
 Grocer's Wing, Tower Hamlets Town Hall
 160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ

Join us for an information session to support parents and carers in understanding key areas of SEND.

- Specialist classrooms
- Part-time timetables
- Personal budgets
- Short breaks
- EOTAS (Education Other Than At School)
- Annual reviews

This is the first in a series of termly events on different SEN topics. Don't miss this chance to gain valuable insights and ask questions.

For further information, contact the Family Information Service on 020 7364 6495

fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk

www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk/pages/local-offer/send/let-s-talk-send



SEND Support Group

- Come and meet other parents
- Share information
- Younger children welcome
- Monthly guest speakers
- No diagnosis needed

For more information contact:

Tower Hamlets & City SEND IASS, 30 Greatorex Street,
 Whitechapel, London E1 5NP

☎ 020 7364 6489

✉ TowerHamlets&City.SENDIASS@towerhamlets.gov.uk

🐦 @TH_IASS

🌐 www.towerhamletsandcitysendiass.com



Tower Hamlets Independent SEND Parent Forum

The Tower Hamlets Independent SEND Parent Forum is pan-disability. Members work with families and professionals from the council and health services to



ensure the views of parents, carers and young people contribute to the design and delivery of services.

Join other parents and carers of children and young people with SEND (0-25 years) for coffee and talk about the issues that are important to you.

For more information, email thesendforum@gmail.com or call 07498 573872
www.thesendforum.co.uk