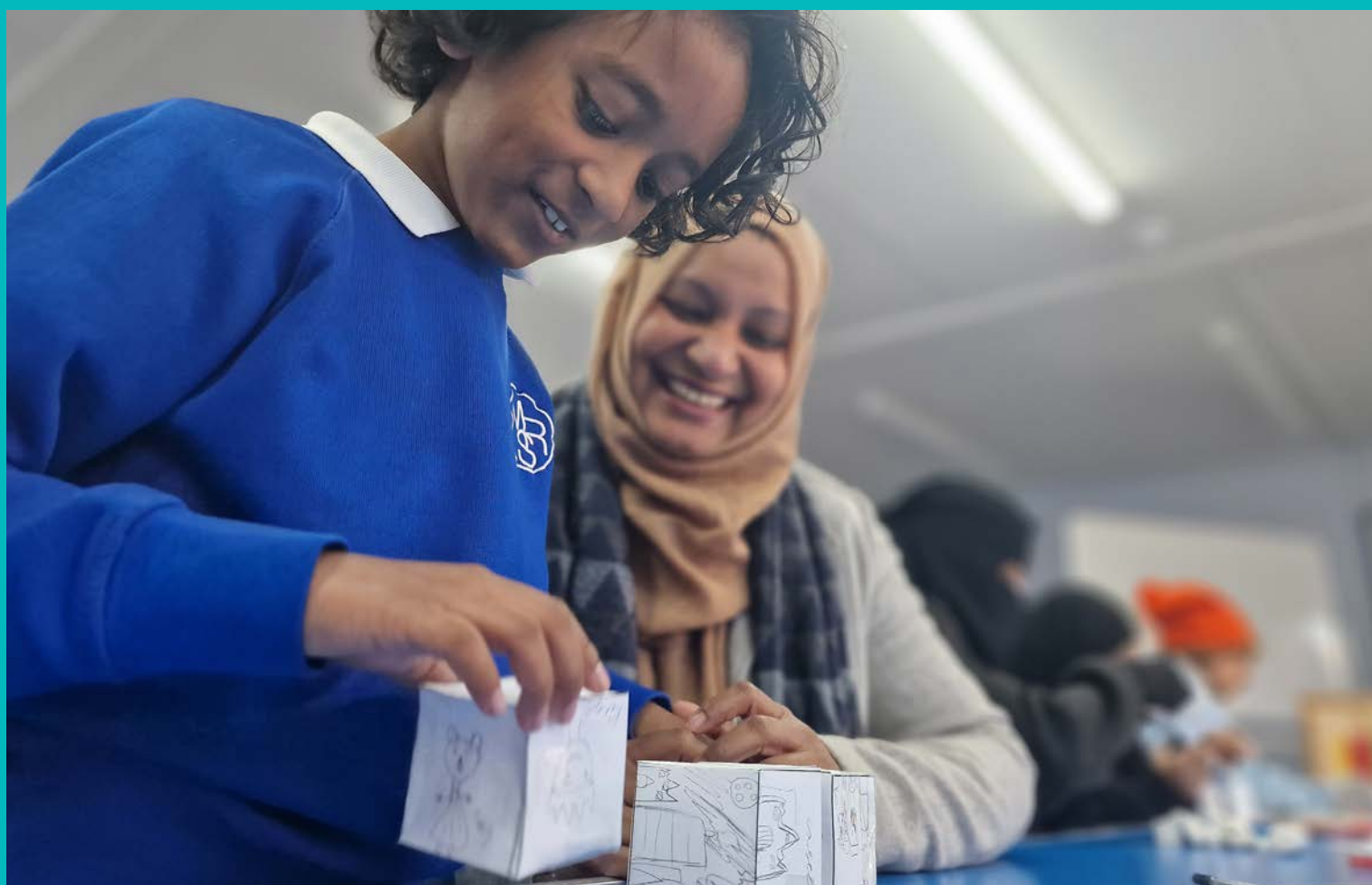


FamiliesMatter

A magazine full of news and information to support families
Featuring the Let's Talk SEND Information Supplement

The power of collaborative learning



Read all about the Parental Engagement Team's learning offer – from newly developed, specialised sessions for parents of children aged 0-2 years, to collaborative family learning workshops, including Get Talking, Fun with Maths and the Power of Stories. For more details, see [pages 5-8](#).

Read the latest edition of the Families Matter magazine and bitesize e-bulletin online at
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/familiesmatter

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Welcome to the spring edition of Families Matter

This edition is packed with information and updates to inform and support parents and carers and to guide practitioners in their work with Tower Hamlets families.

We hope you find the Families Matter magazine useful and welcome your feedback and contributions. Please email us at parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk and tell us what else you would like to see in future editions.

Best wishes,

Parental Engagement Team, Parent and Family Support Service

Working with families?

Sign up to the Parental Engagement Team's network mailing list

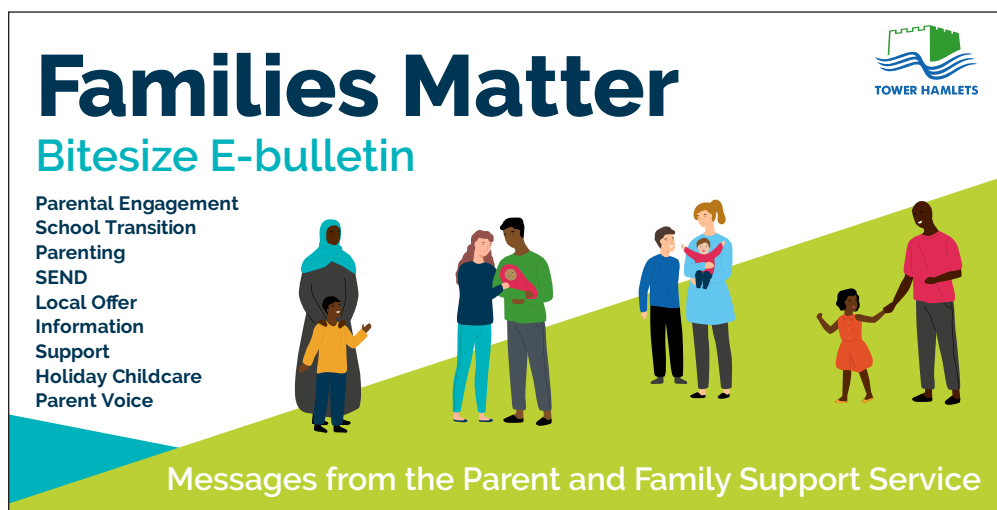
If you are working with families in the borough, sign up to the Parental Engagement Team's network mailing list to be emailed the latest news and information to support your work. Encourage your colleagues to sign up too.

Email: parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Families Matter: Bitesize E-bulletin

In addition to the regular termly Families Matter magazine, we publish an e-bulletin. It provides regular updates, information, advice and support for all parents in Tower Hamlets.

Parents can sign up via the council's resident subscriber list, choosing 'children and education' as their preferred topic after closing the initial pop-up box and completing the one on the main webpage.



Visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/signup

This magazine is produced by the Parental Engagement Team within the Parent and Family Support Service, Children's Services Directorate. To share news in future editions of Families Matter contact

Fiona Stokes, Parental Engagement Advisor

Tel: **020 7364 6049**

Email: fiona.stokes@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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.

References to 'SEND' is used in some articles as the abbreviation of special educational needs and disabilities.

Survey reveals high levels of parent satisfaction

Every year the Parental Engagement Team asks parents and carers who have accessed their services, courses or workshops to answer some questions about their experience and if they would recommend them to other parents.

Below are the results of the survey which took place in November 2024. They reveal that parents and carers had a positive experience of using the services or attending courses or workshops.



91% agree or strongly agree

that accessing the service/course has helped me to understand my child's development and improve our relationship.



97% agree or strongly agree

that the service/course has increased my confidence and awareness which will support my own learning and development.



97% agree or strongly agree

that accessing the course/service has increased my knowledge and understanding and has enabled me to learn something new.



87% agree or strongly agree

that coming into the school or setting has significantly improved my relationship with the staff.



97% agree or strongly agree

that the service/course has provided me with information and/or support which helps me in my role as parent.



99% agree or strongly agree

that the Parental Engagement Team staff delivering the service or course were professional.



98% agree or strongly agree

that they would recommend the course or service to other parents or carers.



What parents have said

"The sessions really helped me to understand the support that's available to me and my children."



Parent volunteers receiving their certificates

New parent volunteers for Marion Richardson

Parents from **Marion Richardson Primary School** have successfully completed the Volunteering in Your Child's School course.

The Open College Network accredited course, which was delivered by the Parental Engagement Team during the autumn term, has been helping the parents prepare for their roles as volunteers by giving them valuable insights into teaching and learning in school.

“

The course was excellent. I learned so much that will help me as a volunteer.

Lailun Nahar, parent volunteer
(second from left in the photo above)

”

Volunteers help the homeless have a happy Christmas



Graduates from recent and past Volunteering in Your Child School courses at **Marion Richardson Primary School** collaborated with the Whitechapel Mission to help local homeless or vulnerable people to have a memorable Christmas.

The school community (staff, pupils and parents) collected colourful and various sized socks and over 400 chocolate bars, which the volunteers carefully wrapped, to create a special 'choc in a sock' Christmas gift. These were then given out during the Christmas day lunch at the Mission.

The Parental Engagement Team's new offer for parents of children aged 0-2 years

The first 1,001 days of a child's life is such a crucial time in their development. It's a unique period for a baby that sets the foundations for lifelong emotional and physical wellbeing. To support parents to understand the importance of learning, connection and attachment at this early stage, the Parental Engagement Team have developed a range of programmes under the government's Start for Life Family Hubs programme. The sessions give parents an insight into key developmental milestones and help them to support their child's learning and development.

“

We had some great discussions during the sessions. It was good to be able to share experiences with other parents.

Parent who attended the sessions at the Marion Richardson Early Years Foundation Stage site

”



Get Talking

Parents learn the importance of communicating with their baby or toddler even before they can speak. They discover playful ways to encourage communication including interaction, babbling and words.



Outdoor Learning

Babies and toddlers have fewer opportunities to explore the outdoors these days. This workshop promotes the benefits of screen-free learning and inspires parents to use the outdoors to enrich both their and their toddler's wellbeing.



Get Mark-making

Parents learn how mark-making is a crucial phase in their toddler's journey to write. They find out how to help their toddler develop the strength in their hands, fingers and wrists required for mark-making and eventually letter formation.



Child Development for Parents

All children are unique and develop in their own time, but it can be useful for parents to have an awareness of key milestones in their child's development. This workshop provides an overview of child development, focusing on 0-2-year-olds. Read about the delivery of these child development workshops for parents on [page 14](#).



The Power of Storytelling

Parents learn about the benefits of starting early when it comes to reading books and storytelling. These interactive sessions incorporate singing, sound and other sensory experiences to help stories come alive and support early learning.



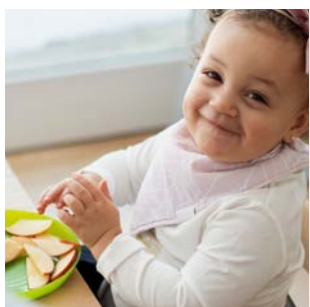
Establishing Good Sleep Routines

These sessions help babies and toddlers to develop healthy sleep habits. Common sleep issues and possible solutions are explored as well as the importance of establishing good routines from the start.



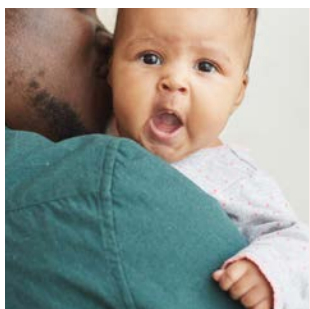
Healthy Families Buggy Walk

Finding time to keep fit with a new-born can be difficult. These relaxed sessions give parents the chance to meet each other and be physically active outdoors, which supports their physical and mental health.



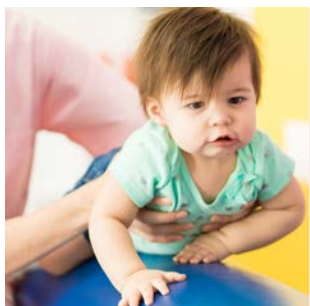
Healthy Families

These sessions cover short key health messages, such as the importance of oral health, eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, keeping active and how to support emotional wellbeing.



Building Strong Foundations

This workshop focuses on the prime areas of early childhood development – communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. Parents learn how they can build strong foundations for development.



SENsory Explorers

These parent and child sensory play sessions enhance the way in which a child reacts to their environment through their physical and emotional desires to see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. The sessions are open to all abilities and those with undiagnosed SEND needs.

To find out more or to host a session at your setting, email
parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Schools 'Get Talking'

Many children in Tower Hamlets start school below the expected level with their language and communication. To tackle this, the Parental Engagement Team have developed a new course called Get Talking.

It was devised for parents with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and places emphasis on communication and language, which is crucial for all learning. It explores how parents can use play to nurture their child's language skills.

Parents from schools across the borough, including **Old Palace** and **Harry Gosling**, who have taken the course have found it very beneficial.

“

I learned that by getting down to my child's level, tuning into his interests, and playing with him, he was a lot more talkative.

Parent from the Get Talking workshop,
Harry Gosling Primary School

”

Fun with Maths at Marion Richardson

Parents from **Marion Richardson Primary School** have been exploring the power of games to stimulate mathematical thinking and develop higher level thinking skills, such as problem solving and reasoning.

The Fun with Maths course introduces them to interactive games and practical activities that reinforce key mathematical concepts. This three part workshop, delivered by the Parental Engagement Team, also emphasises the importance of language in early mathematical learning.

By the end of the course, the parents were more confident in using mathematical vocabulary and visual resources such as number-lines and hundred squares.



“

I had seen a number-line before but I wasn't sure how to use it. The session gave me the confidence to use it in fun ways with my child.

Parent

”

For more details or to book one of these courses for your school or setting, email
parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

The Power of Stories at Harry Gosling

Parents from **Harry Gosling Primary School** have been learning how stories can help introduce children to new words as well as nurture their language skills.

The three-part Power of Stories workshop, delivered by the Parental Engagement Team, builds on current research that shows that children who listen to stories regularly have richer vocabularies.

The workshop also demonstrates how toys and props can be used to enhance the storytelling experience.



“

The parents and children really got involved, using toys and props to bring their stories to life.



Janice Hill Kocoglu, Parental Engagement Lead, Harry Gosling Primary School

”

For more details and to book a session, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Easter Holiday Activities at Idea Store

idea
Adult & Community Learning

Celebrate Easter with us! Take part in free family-friendly activities, including crafts, storytelling, and egg hunts. There's something for everyone to enjoy this holiday.

www.ideastore.co.uk/our-services/children-and-families



Elizabeth Selby pantomime trip

By Mark Penn, Parental Engagement Team Family Support Partner, who works with the school on a weekly basis to support their families.

On a crisp January day families from **Elizabeth Selby Infant School** embarked on an adventure to the Peacock Theatre in London. The trip, organised as part of the school's commitment to enriching pupils' cultural experiences, brought the school community together for an afternoon of pantomime magic.

The excitement was palpable as the families gathered early at the school gates, bundled up against the winter chill but brimming with anticipation. For many of the children, this was their first-ever pantomime, and the promise of vibrant costumes, catchy songs and comedic antics had everyone buzzing.

Upon arrival, the families were greeted by the atmosphere of the venue, its festive decorations adding to the occasion's charm. The pantomime, a classic tale with a modern twist, featured a talented cast who kept the audience enthralled from start to finish. The show was packed with laughter and just the right amount of mischief to keep everyone entertained.

As the curtains closed and the applause echoed through the theatre, it was clear that the trip had been a resounding success. Back on the coach ride home, the children excitedly recounted their favourite moments, from the hilarious antics of the pantomime dame to the dazzling special effects.

The day served as a reminder of the importance of cultural outings in fostering creativity, broadening horizons, and bringing communities together. Elizabeth Selby Infant School's dedication to providing such opportunities is a testament to its commitment to its pupils' development.

“

The children were absolutely mesmerised. Seeing their faces light up during the performance was such a joy.

Year 2 parent

”

Supporting students with exams and revision



The Parental Engagement Team delivers the following workshops to schools or settings to support families.

Supporting children through SATS

Children need to feel well to perform at their best during SATs. In this session, parents are taught ways to help boost their child's wellbeing and manage the stress of SATs. They also find out how they can support their child to develop good learning habits, such as revision, and learn how good exam technique can make all the difference during the tests.

Revise wise

Revision is key to making learning stick, yet so many students don't know how to do this well. In this one-off session, parents will find out how they can support their child to develop good learning habits, including revision.

Based on the very latest research, they will learn about the most effective revision methods and exam techniques to ensure their child can perform at their best during exams.

Understanding stress and anxiety

Parents will explore the importance of looking after their emotional wellbeing. They will discover the signs to look out for when worried about stress and what small changes can be made to nurture good mental health.

To find out more or to book one of these workshops for your school, email
parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Top tips



Reward effort rather than results

What matters is that your young person is achieving their personal potential.



Don't pressure them

If you have high expectations of your child, they will know that and probably have high expectations of themselves. You don't need to tell them. Putting on extra pressure is most likely to increase stress, which in turn will detract from their work.



Give them balanced meals

Skipping meals or snacking constantly is common but not helpful. A proper meal forces them to take a real break, even if only for half an hour.



Help them to create a timetable

Divide your timetable into three segments (morning, afternoon, evening). No more than two of the three segments should be taken by work each day.



Just be there for your child

Just being there should your child need you is enough. They'll come to you if they need you.



Recognise if they are really struggling

If your child is really struggling, they may need additional help. This could mean a trip to the GP or help finding someone to assist them with topics for which they are struggling.

Parent and Carer Council focus group event on free school meals

Over 50 parents and carers joined the council's Strategy and Communities Service and Parental Engagement Team to share feedback on the borough's free school meals programme with local councillors and members of the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee. This took place at the Grocer's Wing of the Town Hall in February.

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning, attended the special Parent and Carer Council focus group.

Feedback from parents and carers who attended the event is being shared with the wider Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee who are reviewing the borough's current universal free school meal provision in primary and



secondary schools. They are keen to explore how to increase uptake and improve satisfaction levels.

Final recommendations from the sub-committee will be shared in a future Families Matter magazine.

This Parent and Carer Council parent voice event was organised by the Parental Engagement Team in partnership with the Strategy and Communities Service.

For more information email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Thomas Buxton's trip to Kew Gardens

Thomas Buxton Primary School hosted a trip to Kew Gardens for mums. It was a fantastic day, offering an opportunity to meet new people, explore the stunning gardens, and discover a great spot for the parents to visit with their children. The school has plans to organise many more family trips and events. To keep up-to-date, visit the links below.

www.thomasbuxton.towerhamlets.sch.uk
www.instagram.com/thomasbuxtonprimary



Tower Hamlets Parent and Family Support Service

Parenting programmes

Parenting programmes are a source of support for all parents and offer an opportunity to share experiences, develop an understanding of child development, build positive relationships and learn to deal with challenging behaviour.

PROGRAMME	ELIGIBILITY	INFORMATION
Early Repair	All fathers and male carers	Early repair is a brief awareness two-day group programme for fathers identified as using abuse (physical and/or emotional and/or coercive control). It is for fathers who are assessed as being a lower risk in accordance with the Tower Hamlets risk matrix. Professional referrals only.
Emotional First Aid	All parents	Offers an overview of mental health and wellbeing in relation to parenting. Learn strategies to manage anxieties, identify stress factors, gain a better understanding of ourselves and promote a healthier sense of wellbeing.
Family Transitions	All parents	For parents who have experienced separation or divorce to learn how to co-parent effectively and to learn strategies for how to deal with the loss of their relationship with their ex-partner.
Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities	2-18 years	Aims to increase parental self-esteem and confidence and reduce child behavioural difficulties.
Speakeasy	5-18 years	For parents to develop the skills and confidence to talk to their children about growing up, relationships and keeping safe. Explores how relationship and sex education (RSE) is taught in schools and the influence on children from media and peers. Four weekly sessions.
Triple P for Baby	0-12 months	To prepare parents for a positive transition into parenthood and the first year with baby promoting sensitive and responsive care.
Triple P Group	2-11 years	For parents who wish to build positive relationships with their child, increase self-confidence and develop their skills and techniques for dealing with difficult behaviour.
Triple P Teen	12-18 years	For parents who wish to build positive relationships with their teens, increase self-confidence and develop their skills to communicate more effectively with their teens.
The Parent Factor in ADHD	5-16 years	A programme for parents with children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The course will cover information to help understand the diagnosis and treatment, strategies to support your child and manage difficult behaviour and how to advocate on your child's behalf within the education system. Nine weekly sessions.

Triple P discussion groups

For parents of children aged 2-11 years

- Encouraging positive behaviour
- Managing fighting and aggression
- Developing good bedtime routines
- Hassle-free mealtimes with children

For parents of children aged 12-18 years

- Coping with teenagers' emotions
- Reducing family conflict
- Getting teenagers to co-operate
- Building teenagers' survival skills

Get in touch

Email: parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk Tel: 020 7364 6398

To book a place or to make a referral download a referral form, scan the QR code or visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentingprogrammes





Children's Services rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted

An Ofsted report, published in January, found that children in Tower Hamlets receive effective help and that staff are ambitious for children, encouraging them to reach their full potential.

Inspectors noted outstanding support for children leaving care, with care-experienced children and young people benefiting from high-quality support, tailored to their needs. The report also praised the Children's Services leadership team and noted that families benefit from being supported by a stable and skilled workforce.

“

This achievement is a testament to the compassion and hard work of our staff, who go above and beyond every day to support children and families in our community.



Lutfur Rahman,
Executive Mayor of Tower Hamlets

”

Read the full Ofsted report at: files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50266090

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/News_events/2025/January/Outstanding-Ofsted-rating-excellent-for-Tower-Hamlets.aspx

New child development session for parents of children aged 0-2 years



Parents from Marion Richardson Primary School

All children are unique and develop in their own time, but it can be useful for parents to have an awareness of key milestones in their child's development. This new workshop gives parents an overview of child development, with a focus on the years from birth to two.

The sessions, delivered by the Parental Engagement Team, support priorities under the government's national Start for Life programme. They have been delivered across the borough, including at **Blue Gate Fields Infant School, Marion Richardson Primary** and **Alice Model Nursery School**.

The session explores the stages of early childhood, developmental milestones and what parents can do to support their child's development.

First Steps into Fostering course delivered

In December, 16 prospective foster carers completed the first ever Tower Hamlets Steps into Fostering course.

The newly created course, which is accredited by the Open College Network and delivered by the Parental Engagement Team, aims to support those interested in fostering by giving them an overview of the role, as well as an understanding of how to support a child's development and wellbeing.

It is hoped that the course will help address the shortage of foster carers in the borough and provide an access route into fostering.



To find out more or to express an interest in attending the next course, email fostering.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Access to Fostering scheme

Are you curious about becoming a Foster Carer, but need support with the process?

Join the Open College Network accredited course

You will learn about:

- The role of the Foster Carer
- The skills needed to become a Foster Carer
- Child development and attachment
- Supporting children's learning
- Supporting children's health and wellbeing
- Keeping children safe from harm

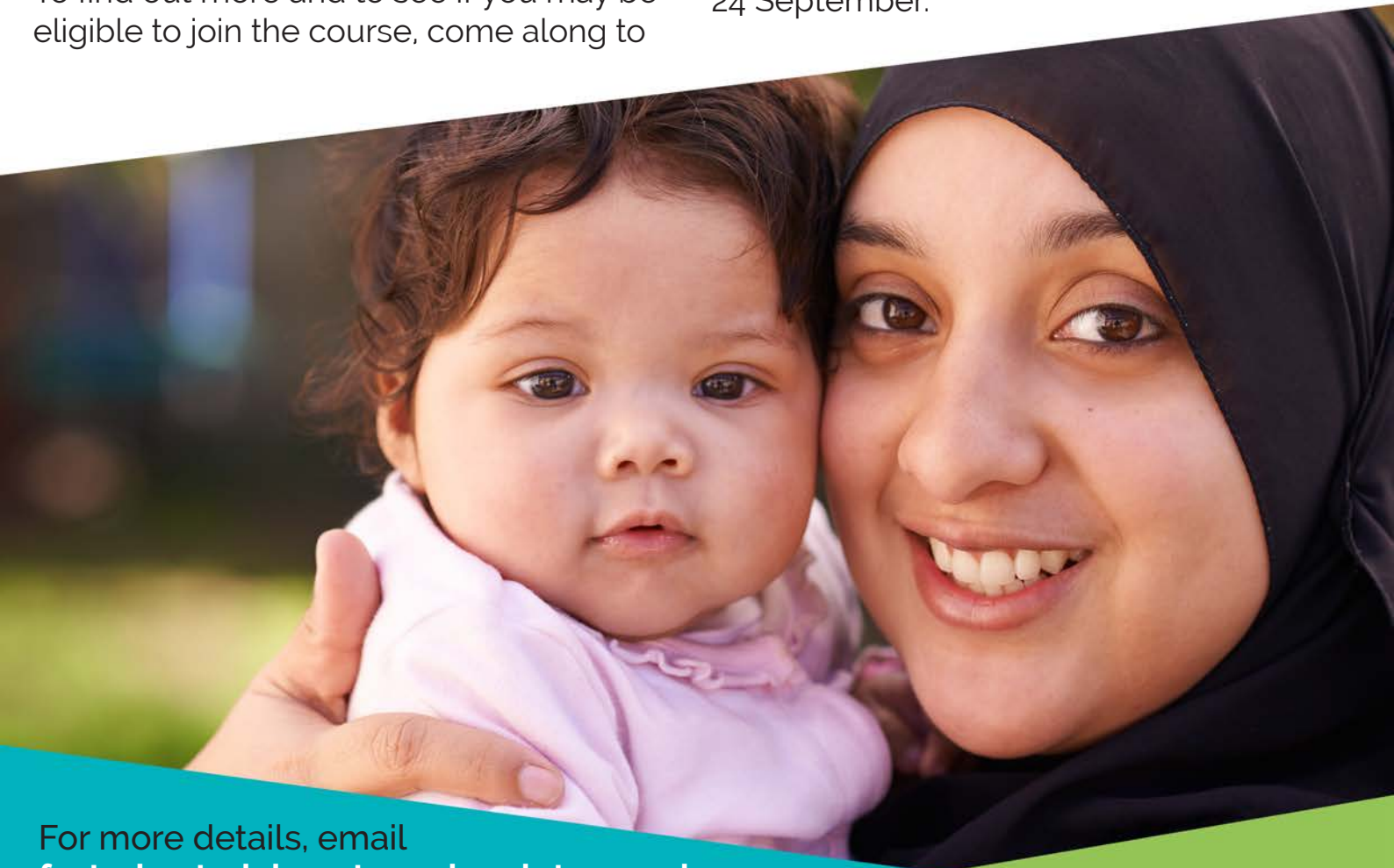
To find out more and to see if you may be eligible to join the course, come along to

one of the fostering team's information sessions from 10-11am on:

- Tuesday 9 September
- Tuesday 16 September
- Tuesday 23 September

The Parents Advice Centre
30 Greatorex Street, E1 5NP

The 11-week course starts on 24 September.



For more details, email
fostering.training@towerhamlets.gov.uk
leaving your name and number and we will call you back

This course is a co-production between the Parent & Family Support Service and Fostering

Eight-week Triple P for Baby course

The Parental Engagement Team have added a new course to their parenting programme called Triple P for Baby.

The course is for parents-to-be or new parents with a baby up to 12 months old.

The eight-week programme helps parents adjust to life with their new baby, build a close relationship with them and support their development.

Programme structure

- Four classroom-based group sessions with other new parents
- Four individual consultations with a trained practitioner to reflect on progress

Programme content

- Creating the best environment for new babies
- Responding to babies' cues
- Handling crying and comforting babies
- Promoting good sleep habits for babies
- Helping babies learn and develop
- Self-care for new parents

For more details and to secure a place on the next course email

PAE@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Dad's Triple P for Baby

The Parental Engagement Team would like to run a Triple P for Baby exclusively for dads and male carers. If you are or know of dads/male carers who would be interested in attending, please get in touch.

Email: parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Triple P for Baby at Wapping and Bigland CFC

Practitioners from the Parental Engagement Team have successfully delivered the Triple P for Baby programme at **Wapping and Bigland Children and Family Centre**.

Parents-to-be as well as new parents (with a baby aged up to 12 months) participated in the eight-week programme. They learned some useful tips to help them adjust to life with their new baby, as well as discovered ways to build a closer relationship. They also

had the opportunity to share their experiences with other new parents.

“

I've gained a lot of insight and perspective about the journey of parenthood. The course felt like therapy.

Triple P for Baby participant

”



Parenting practitioner, Hussein Hussein, with parents who attended Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities, delivered in Somali

Culturally sensitive parenting programme

Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities is a culturally sensitive parenting programme for parents with children aged 2-18. The 12-week programme, delivered by the Parental Engagement Team, covers a range of topics including positive parenting strategies, the parent-child relationship, as well as community-specific issues relating to parenting.

It is delivered in community languages including English, Somali and Bengali. Cultural and generational differences are often discussed during the sessions. This helps parents understand why some of their parenting challenges may have occurred. The weekly sessions allow parents to talk openly about sensitive subjects in a safe and confidential environment.

To find out more or to join the next course, email parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Essential services with Family Hubs

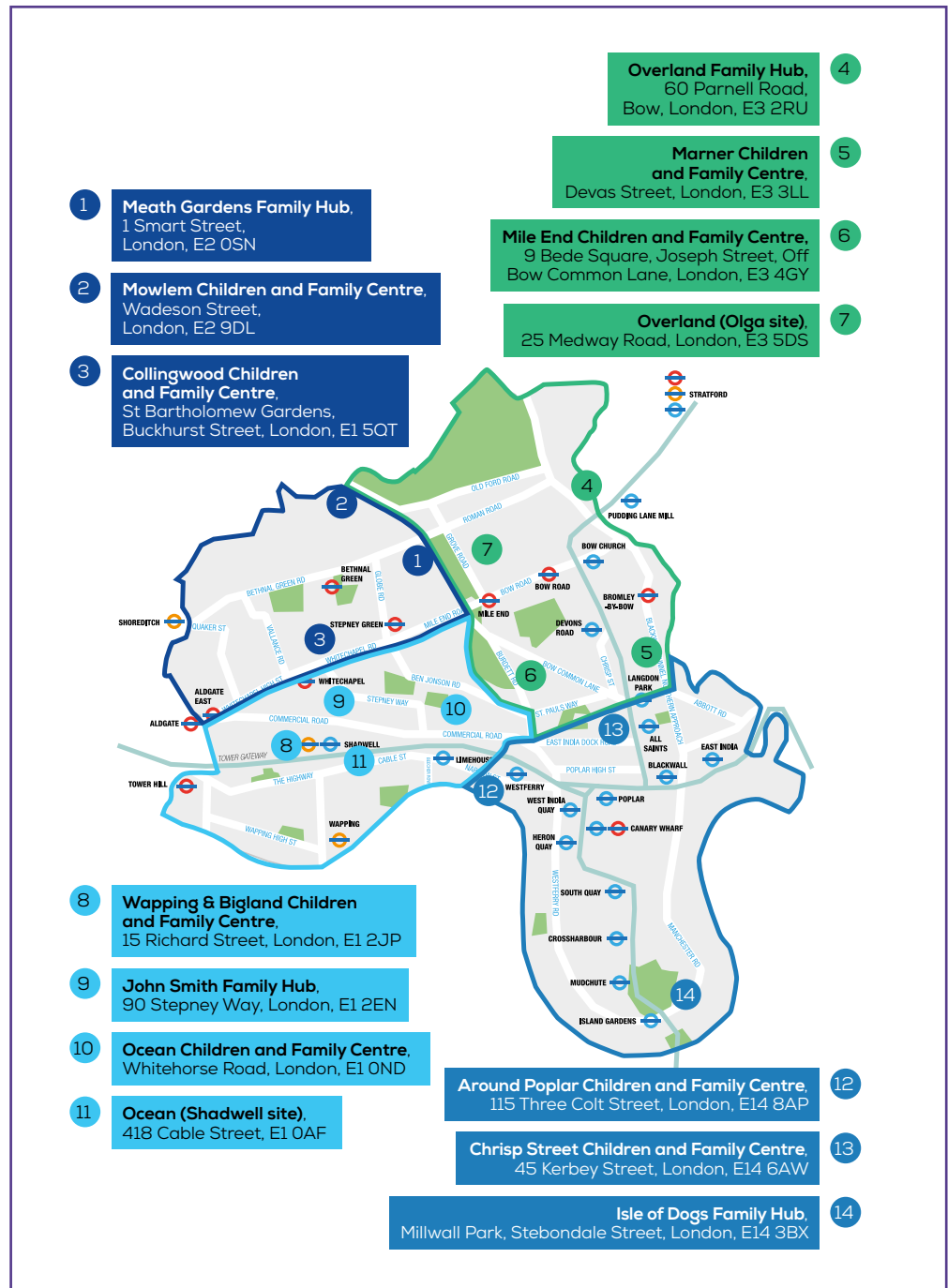
The Early Help & Children and Families Service has announced the availability of a comprehensive list of 24 essential services provided through the four Family Hubs and ten Children and Family Centres in the borough.

Family Hubs bring together local services and advice for children, young people, and their families, including Start for Life services for children up to the age of two.

The services are designed to support families at every stage of their journey, offering expert help and practical advice in a welcoming and supportive environment. From parenting guidance to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support, the range of services available ensures that every family receives the assistance they need to thrive.

What's available

- Activities for 0-5-year-olds
- Parenting and mental health support
- Youth services and SEND support
- Housing and debt advice
- Domestic abuse support
- And more.



To access and download the full list of Family Hub services, visit:

www.thfamilyhubs.co.uk

Family Hubs parenting support offer

Family Hubs offer parenting support in partnership with local partners and stakeholders. Its parenting programme offers a range of support from pregnancy onwards, giving families a choice based on their individual needs.

The offer aims to support parents with the following:

- Pregnancy and preparing to become a parent
- Babies/toddlers
- Understanding their child's/teenager's behaviour
- Child's health and wellbeing
- Additional needs
- Relationships
- Domestic or family abuse
- Personal development.

To find out more, the current Parenting Adult Education Directory is available at:

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parenteducation



Parents from the Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities programme receiving their certificates at the Town Hall

Empowering Parents Empowering Communities

Empowering Parents Empowering Communities is a peer supported parenting programme delivered by Family Hubs. It has been developed for parents of children aged 0-3 years and is led by local facilitators with personal experience of parenting.

There are two courses within the programme:

- Being a Parent – for parents of children aged 1-3 years
- Baby and Us – for parents of children aged 0-3 years

These courses aim to enhance child development, parenting skills and family resilience. Participants from either course have a chance to support peer learning and develop their facilitation skills by becoming parent group leaders on future courses.

For more details, email zubair.ahmed@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Your guide to information and services for families in Tower Hamlets

LOCAL OFFER

@thlocaloffer

localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk

Guide to information and services in Tower Hamlets for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and **all** families in the borough



Levels of need training for professionals

The thresholds (levels of need) document provides a framework for professionals who work with children, young people and families. It helps identify when a child may need additional support by providing examples of some of the factors that may indicate a child or young person needs more help.

The Tower Hamlets Children Safeguarding Partnership are organising a thresholds - levels of need training session, open to partners in Tower Hamlets who work with children and young people. The training, led by Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Early Help, will explore how the levels of need document can be used effectively by professionals.

Thresholds – levels of need training

Thursday 17 April, 2-3.30pm

Delivered online

For more details and to book your place, click [here](#) or scan QR code.



Toileting sessions

Children's Services are offering toileting troubleshooting sessions for parents of children with additional needs. The sessions give parents practical strategies and advice to help children develop more independence with toileting.

Upcoming sessions:

- **2 April, 1-3pm**
Isle of Dogs Family Hub
- **7 May, 1-3pm**
Overland Family Hub
- **4 June, 1-3pm**
Chris Street Children and Family Centre

For more information, visit:
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/childrenandfamilycentres

Safe East offering free drug awareness training

Safe East are offering free training for those who work with children, young people and their families.

The training will help professionals to distinguish between problematic drug use and experimentation. They will learn how to help reduce harm and support young people who misuse drugs and other substances.

The training is open to individual employees or teams within the council, voluntary services and third sector services.

For more details on upcoming courses, email:
compass.towerhamletsyphws@nhs.net





An online course to help parents communicate better with each other

Arguing better

Disagreements are a normal part of life, and most couples argue from time to time. The way you approach these conversations can make a big difference to you, your partner, and your children.

Arguing better is a free online course to help you manage difficult conversations, avoid conflict, and improve things for your whole family.

You will learn:

- Where stress comes from and how it can affect you.
- Ways to recognise stress and talk about it.
- How to support each other through difficult times.
- What causes arguments and how to stop them.

To access the course, you will need a smartphone, tablet, or computer, and a good internet connection. It's FREE to use, so you'll just need to create an account with a username and password.



Register at this address
www.oneplusone.org.uk/parents
or scan the QR code

- *Arguing better* is designed for parents who want to learn healthy ways to deal with stress and conflict.
- The course is online so you can go through it at your own pace.
- You can do it all in one go or save your progress and come back to it later.
- The course will take about 40 minutes to complete, so it's best to give yourself enough time and space to reflect.



For more information on the support available for families to reduce conflict, contact Caroline Morgan, Reducing Parental Conflict Outreach Worker
Email: caroline.morgan2@towerhamlets.gov.uk Tel: 07960 478 667

Ministry of Food at Central Foundation

Parents from **Central Foundation School for Girls** in Bow have been developing their cooking skills on the Ministry of Food course devised by Jamie Oliver and delivered by the Parental Engagement Team.

The course introduced the parents to new ingredients and cooking methods while exploring portion size and ideas like mindful eating.

Healthy eating principles were a key feature of the course - the parents were supported as they made small but significant changes to improve the health and wellbeing of their family. They enjoyed creating flavoursome dishes from around the world that were low in sugar, salt and fat.



Sarah McSweeney, facilitator from the Parental Engagement Team (left) and Amina, Central Foundation parent (right)

To find out more about Ministry of Food or to book a course for your setting, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Women-only walk and talk sessions

Nour hosts a women only walk and talk group. It provides a safe space for survivors of abuse to reconnect with nature in a safe environment, supported by Nour's therapeutic team.

"My mind feels fresher to be outside and with others who can relate to and have been through the same things as me."

Nour provides culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, support for minoritised survivors of abuse. The support they provide focuses on healing and empowerment, so that survivors can create lasting change and lead meaningful lives.

**Walk and Talk with Nour
Fortnightly on Tuesdays**



For more details and to register, [email support@nour-dv.org.uk](mailto:email.support@nour-dv.org.uk) or text 07918 104 985

Support for parents' mental health during pregnancy and early years

Becoming a parent is a big life change, and it's normal to struggle with your mental health during pregnancy and the early years. Changes in your body, routine, and sleep, as well as shifts in your sense of self, can all affect how you feel. Experiences like birth trauma or pregnancy loss can also have a significant impact.

If you're finding things tough, support is available. You can:

- Join support groups or access one-to-one therapy
- Speak to your GP or health visitor for advice
- Call 111 and select the 'mental health' option, for 24/7 crisis support

Find out about the child development courses being delivered to parents of children aged 0-2 to support parent-infant relationships on [page 14](#).



For local services in Tower Hamlets, including mental health support and parent-infant relationship services, visit www.thfamilyhubs.co.uk/Page/30527

School staff needed to help with research

The University of Leicester is interested in speaking with school staff to help with their research on Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). HPV is a common sexually transmitted infection that usually shows no symptoms but can cause serious illness.

Researchers from the university are keen to speak to teachers and support staff who work directly with young people to determine how confident they are speaking about sexually transmitted infections like HPV.



To find out more and to help with the research, scan the QR code or visit app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/leicester/comprehensive-hpv-literacy-and-communication-model-teachers

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





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.

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

We meet fortnightly,
 Thursday, Term time only
 10am-12noon
 at Tower Hamlets &
 City SEND IASS



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

Family friendly money tips to develop financial literacy

Made of Money

Made of Money has created a new family-friendly money Facebook page, where it shares two money-related tips each week.

Follow their page to discover how to make your money go further and how to help children build strong money habits.

Fuel your Finances

Family Action have launched a new project called Fuel your Finances. Through one-to-one support and drop-in sessions, the project aims to help families maximise their income by cooking, eating and heating their homes in energy efficient ways. It is hoped that this will help ease financial pressures during the cost-of-living crisis, while saving on energy bills.



To find out more or to book a free Made of Money workshop for your school or setting, email madeofmoney@qsa.org.uk. Sign up to their mailing list at qsa.typeform.com/to/rkCEbfpO

For more information about the Fuel your Finances project, email FuelYourFinances@family-action.org.uk



TOWER HAMLETS

Holiday Childcare Scheme

Ages
3-13
years old

The Tower Hamlets Childcare Scheme offers Ofsted registered childcare.
020 7364 0523

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/hcs

Easter scheme
Monday 7 to
Thursday
17 April 2025
(9 days)

Bookings
now open



Free tuition support for primary school pupils with Tutors United

Tutors United offer free, community-based tutoring programmes for primary school pupils from low-income, migrant, and refugee backgrounds living in social housing.

It aims to help children improve their academic performance in maths and English, while also building confidence, resilience, and independence in learning. Children entering secondary school with strong literacy, numeracy, and soft skills are more likely to gain long-term success.



“

Without Tutors United, I don't think my daughter would have achieved what she achieved.

Malik, Poplar HARCA parent

”

The programmes are delivered by university students, many from similar backgrounds to their pupils. They are employed and trained to teach small group sessions using an engaging curriculum designed by expert teachers.

In addition to providing meaningful, paid work experience, Tutors United supports the university students with ongoing training, career development opportunities, and networking to help them gain employment after graduation.

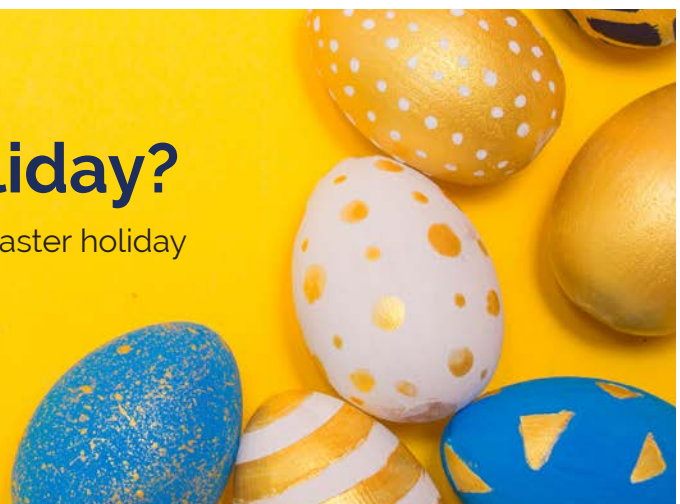
Tutoring is available at The Feldy Community Centre, E14 0XA.
Parents of eligible children who would benefit from extra academic support can register at www.tutorsunited.org/parents-families/register-your-child

Contact: Salma Begum, Programme Co-ordinator
Email: salma.begum@tutorsunited.org Tel: 07341 913 199

Looking for things to do over the Easter holiday?

For information on support for your family during the Easter holiday period, visit the Tower Hamlets Local Offer.

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/localoffer



Information and training for parents

DATE/TIME	DESCRIPTION
Thursdays, Fortnightly Term time only 10am-12noon	SEND parent support group This group offers parents and carers of children or young people with SEND, support and information around key themes/relevant issues and an opportunity to meet other parents and carers of children with SEND. Email: towerhamlets&city.sendiass@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Friday 4 April 2025 10am-1pm	Let's Talk SEND information event for parents and carers An information session to support parents and carers to understand key areas of SEND. Please see page 31 for more information. Email: fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Thursday 1 May 2025 9.30am-2pm	Let's Talk SEND transition event for parents of Year 4 and 5 children with an education health and care plan (EHCP) See page 30 for more details. Email: fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk Tel: 020 7364 6489
Tuesday 17 June 9.15am-1pm	Annual parent conference Save the date – further information on how to book places for parents will be available to schools shortly. For more information, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Information and training for professionals

DESCRIPTION
Working with families: multi-agency seminar This multi-agency forum aims to improve the exchange of information and increase links between organisations and practitioners working with parents/ families in Tower Hamlets. Information to be shared with colleagues shortly. For more information, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Residents' Hubs open across the borough

Residents' Hubs allow residents who cannot use online services to access face-to-face advice and support for things such as housing, council tax, benefits, domestic abuse, health, employment and debt management.

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/residentshub

There are five hubs located at:

- Town Hall in Whitechapel
- Idea Store Bow
- Idea Store Chrisp Street in Poplar
- Cubitt Town Library on the Isle of Dogs
- Professional Development Centre in Bethnal Green

Useful contacts

For details of local services providing free information for Tower Hamlets residents on welfare benefits, debt, housing and other matters, visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/advice