

FamiliesMatter

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

The power of creative engagement

Discover how the Parental Engagement Team's creative courses are transforming parental engagement, helping schools to connect with vulnerable families who thrive outside formal learning environments. For more details, see pages [10-11](#).



www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/familiesmatter

Tower Hamlets
**WRAPAROUND
CHILDCARE**
Programme

The Parent and Family Support Service have supported schools and providers to create 719 additional wraparound places in nine months, helping parents balance work, study or other commitments. For more information see [pages 4-7](#).

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FamiliesMatter



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Messages from the Parent and Family Support Service

Welcome to the autumn/winter 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

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

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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.

Parental Engagement Team Annual Parent Satisfaction Survey

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 2025. They reveal that parents and carers had a positive experience of using the services or attending courses or workshops that the Parental Engagement Team delivers in schools and settings across the borough.



93% agree or strongly agree

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



89% agree or strongly agree

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



89% agree or strongly agree

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



89% agree or strongly agree

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



95% 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.



100% agree or strongly agree

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



What parents have said

"Thank you for bringing parents together in school. I feel that there is now more interaction with parents and teachers."



Wraparound childcare supporting Tower Hamlets families

Wraparound childcare is term-time care for primary school-aged children, before and after the school day, usually from 8am-6pm.

It can help parents balance work, study or other commitments while knowing their child is well-cared for in a safe setting.

Wraparound childcare:

- Fits around parents' work, studies or other commitments
- Gives children time to play, relax and make friends
- Is convenient and local – no need for extra drop offs.

To find out more about wraparound childcare, scan the QR Code or click [here](#).
Email wraparound.childcare@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Paying for wraparound childcare

Parents can check if they are eligible to use wraparound childcare and if they can have help to pay for their child's place.

- Tax-Free Childcare – for every £8 you pay into your tax free childcare account, the government will pay in £2 to use to pay your childcare provider.
beststartinlife.gov.uk/childcare-early-years-education/tax-free-childcare
- Universal Credit Childcare – covers up to 85% of childcare costs.
beststartinlife.gov.uk/how-universal-credit-childcare-works



Check your eligibility at www.beststartinlife.gov.uk/eligibility-checker



Sarah dropping off her son, Zakariah, at Elizabeth Selby's wraparound childcare provision

How wraparound childcare has helped me to juggle work and family life

By Sarah Messari

I started using the wraparound childcare at **Elizabeth Selby Infants' School** because my working hours as a teacher are longer than the normal school day. Having the childcare close to my own place of work makes things so much easier for me and a lot less stressful. It means I can focus on my job while knowing my child is safe and happy nearby in a lovely community school.

It's been a huge help in juggling work and family life. I don't have to rush around or worry about pick-up times clashing with my work commitments. The convenience and peace of mind are invaluable.

The best thing about it is how familiar and comfortable the setting is for my son. He's already at the school, so he's in a place he knows well, surrounded by staff and friends he recognises. He really enjoys the activities they do and it's benefiting him socially and emotionally. He's become more independent and looks forward to the sessions, which shows how much he enjoys them.

To other parents considering using wraparound childcare, I'd say it's absolutely worth it. It provides reliable, high-quality care in a familiar environment, supports working parents and gives children a fun end to their school day.

Wraparound childcare – a Headteacher's perspective

We sit down with Shahi Ahmed, Headteacher at Elizabeth Selby Infants' School, to find out about the school's wraparound childcare provision and how it's supporting local families.

Tell us about your journey to providing wraparound childcare at your school.

We introduced wraparound childcare after recognising a growing need for flexible support for working families, and gradually built the provision by listening to parents, assessing demand and developing a model that fits our school community.

What have been your biggest challenges?

Our main challenges have been securing reliable staffing, managing the logistics of space and resources and ensuring the provision remained financially sustainable, while still affordable for families.

What have been your key successes?

A key success has been the consistently positive feedback from parents and children, along with strong attendance that shows the provision is valued and meeting real needs.

How has your before and after school childcare benefited the children who attend?

Children benefit from a safe, structured and familiar environment where they can socialise, complete homework and take part in enrichment activities that support their wellbeing.



Shahi Ahmed, Headteacher at Elizabeth Selby Infants' School

How has your wraparound childcare provision helped parents?

The extended hours gives them greater flexibility with work patterns, reduces daily stress and provides peace of mind for them because they know their children are well cared for.

What advice would you give to other schools considering providing wraparound childcare?

Start by consulting families to understand demand, begin small if needed and invest in a committed staff team – those three steps make the whole process much smoother.

“

As the Wraparound Lead, I'm proud that the programme has supported schools and providers to expand and create new wraparound childcare places. I am now supporting providers to apply for funding so we can develop even more places for families.

Selina Tamana, Wraparound Lead and Holiday Childcare Manager,
Parent and Family Support Service



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Be a wraparound childcare provider

Funding is available for a limited time. Don't miss out.

Wraparound childcare is term time care for primary school-aged children, before and after the school day, usually from 8am to 6pm. Providing wraparound childcare at your setting places you at the heart of the community. You will be providing a valuable service for families, helping them balance work or other commitments while knowing their child is well cared for in a safe, familiar setting.

What can the funding be used for?

- Creating new wraparound provision
- Extending or expanding the provision
- Start up and running costs
- Staff and staff training
- Transport, resources and equipment



Apply now

- Complete Expression of Interest [form](#) by **6 February 2026**
- For support with the application process, email wraparound.childcare@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Holiday Activities and Food programme

This Christmas holiday, children from low-income families or those on benefits may be entitled to attend a free holiday club through the government-funded Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. This programme provides fun activities, a free healthy meal and a safe space to socialise for children.

Last year, more than 3,500 children in Tower Hamlets took part, enjoying more than 50,000 meals across 61 venues.

For more details, visit
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/haf



Join Doris and Dave on a magical snowflake hunt

Follow the clues and track down the unique snowflakes at various DLR stations. Once you've found the snowflakes you can claim a special prize from the Information Centre at London City Airport or Tower Gateway stations.



The DLR Festive Hunt runs from Monday 15 December to Friday 2 January. Scan the QR code to download the Actionbound app to participate for free and search 'DLR Festive Hunt'. Or download the Actionbound app in the App store for iOS users and the Google Play store for Android users. Full terms and conditions available on the app.

MAYOR OF LONDON



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

Next scheme
February 2026





Columbia Primary School parent volunteers

Parents at **Columbia Primary School** recently completed a five-week introductory course, called Volunteering in Your Child's School, delivered by the Parental Engagement Team. Parents were so keen to have the course at their school that they fundraised themselves to make it happen, something they intend to do again in the future.

The course has a proven track record of boosting parental engagement and supporting parents' career progression. It prepares learners for working in schools, equipping them with practical skills and confidence to support learning. Past participants have secured paid roles in schools as teaching assistants and midday meal supervisors.

To find out more or to book the Volunteering in Your Child's School course for your setting, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Inspiring a love of reading at Harry Gosling

Parents at **Harry Gosling Primary School** recently took part in a three-part Reading for Pleasure workshop delivered by the Parental Engagement Team. The sessions highlighted a powerful message – children who enjoy reading do better in school and reading for pleasure is one of the most important factors for educational success.

The course focused on practical ways parents can bring stories to life and spark a love of reading at home, helping to turn everyday reading into an enjoyable, shared experience.

“

I learned so much from this course. It made me realise how important reading for pleasure is.

Sehrish Khan
Parent at Harry Gosling Primary School



”

To find out more or to book a Reading for Pleasure course for your setting, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Parents learn ceramic skills at Central Foundation

Parents from **Central Foundation Girls' School** developed their ceramic skills during a creative course delivered by the Parental Engagement Team.

Over five weeks, parents explored basic clay hand-

building techniques, such as pinch potting and slab work. These methods were then used to craft functional and ornamental items, including elegant fruit bowls and decorative tiles. The creations drew inspiration from the natural world.

“

The workshop was a chance to let creativity flow, interact with other parents and create a moment of escape.

Parent

”



Bags of creativity at Bow School

Parents at **Bow School** completed a six-week sewing course delivered by the Parental Engagement Team. The introductory course taught parents the basics of setting up and operating a sewing machine safely.

By the end of the course, parents became more confident with their newly-learned skills. They made a range of practical items, including drawstring bags, zip pouches and make-up bags, which showcased their creativity.



Creative connections at Bishop Challoner



Creativity and conversation were flowing at **Bishop Challoner Catholic School** during a recent three-week workshop. Parents came together to explore the art of fabric painting, transforming canvas bags into personal works of art.

But the workshop was more than just a creative outlet, it helped build a stronger sense

of community. The welcoming atmosphere created a space for parents to connect, share ideas and engage in meaningful conversations about school life.

The success of the sessions proved that creativity is a powerful tool for fostering engagement and building strong partnerships between parents and schools.

The importance of creative courses

Initial engagement creative courses are an effective way to engage vulnerable groups and parents who may find a formal learning environment and/or working with schools difficult. These courses promote effective school/parent relationships, community cohesion and celebrate family diversity.

To find out more or to book a creative course for your school or setting, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Harry Gosling Primary School lights up Aldgate

Pupils from **Harry Gosling Primary School** are taking part in an inspiring project to light up Aldgate and bring local communities together. The Aldgate Lantern Parade and Winter Fete, which takes place in December, is a celebration of the cultural richness of the area.

The project began with children creating beautiful lanterns using willow and tissue paper. Starting with just a few slender pieces of willow, they worked together to build the frames, helping

each other along the way. Once the structure was complete, layers of glue and tissue were added before decorating each lantern with unique designs. The finished lanterns look amazing – each one being a reflection of the children's creativity and teamwork.

The children and their parents will join other school communities to parade through Aldgate, lighting up the streets and taking part in this year's celebration.



London Enterprise Academy's commitment to sustainable travel recognised

London Enterprise Academy has been awarded the prestigious Gold Level Accreditation by Transport for London (TfL) through its Travel for Life programme. The award recognises the school's commitment to promoting safe, sustainable travel in the community.

Over the past three years, the school has introduced initiatives to encourage walking, cycling and greater use of public transport. They have also run campaigns on travel awareness, road safety and eco-friendly practices within the school community. These efforts have not only supported TfL's vision but also help improve air quality, reduce congestion and improve the quality of life for residents in Tower Hamlets.

“

I am very proud of our school community for their commitment to sustainable travel. Achieving this award reflects our shared efforts to make a positive impact on the environment.

Muhi Mikdad
School Travel for Life programme lead

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School admissions drop-in sessions for parents

The School Admissions Service is holding drop-in sessions for parents who may have questions about school admissions. The knowledgeable staff will be on hand to provide information and advice about the process. There is no need to pre book, just come along to the Town Hall and sign up for a ten-minute slot on the day.

For more details, visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/schooladmissions

A goodbye tribute to Ahsana Chowdhury

For more than 20 years, Ahsana has stood at the very heart of parental engagement at **Marner Primary School**.

Working closely with the Parental Engagement Team and the then Headteacher, Mary Todd, Ahsana helped shape a vision that placed families at the centre of children's learning.

She understood, long before it was widely recognised in Tower Hamlets, that when parents are engaged and empowered, children thrive. Better outcomes and a more connected school community have all grown from her unwavering belief in the power of partnerships.

Ahsana's contribution has been extraordinary – she developed a parent fundraising committee which raised thousands of pounds to enhance the educational experiences of children at Marner. Her work supported parents into employment and also helped those families facing personal challenges.

Through her commitment, a model of best practice has been built and taken in by many others schools in Tower Hamlets.

Her partnership with the Parental Engagement Team has been one of warmth, trust and a shared purpose. Ahsana has been fantastic to work with.

She leaves behind her a legacy that will continue to shape Marner for many years to come.

Her presence and dedication to families and children will be missed by colleagues, families, children and the wider Tower Hamlets community.

We thank her for everything she has given and wish her well for the future.



Supporting families through parenting programmes

All parents and carers face challenges from time to time and having the right support can make a big difference. The Parental Engagement Team offers a range of programmes and information to help families as their children grow and develop.

Parenting programmes provide a space for parents to share experiences, learn new strategies and build confidence. They focus on practical skills, such as managing conflict, responding to challenging behaviour positively and adapting approaches as children become more independent.

This term, the team has delivered 17 parenting programmes, attended by 201 parents. Courses have included Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities, Emotional First Aid, Speakeasy, Triple P Group and Teen and Parent Plus. There has also been an increase in sessions delivered in Bengali, ensuring support is accessible to more families.

See [page 15](#) for details of upcoming parenting programmes.

New Parenting Programme Hub School Partnership

Cubitt Town Primary has become the latest school to join the Parental Engagement Team's Parenting Partnership School Hub.

They join **Mulberry Bigland Green Centre** and **Central Foundation Girls' School** and will host a range of parenting programmes delivered by the Parental Engagement Team for families living on the Isle of Dogs.

For more information or to make a parenting referral, email parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentingprogrammes

Tower Hamlets Parent and Family Support Service

Parenting programmes

At times, all parents and carers need help and advice to deal with the everyday challenges of family life. The Parental Engagement Team offer a range of support, information and programmes to support families as their children develop and grow.

Parenting programmes allow parents to share their parenting experiences, learn new skills to deal with challenging behaviour and manage conflict in a positive way.

PROGRAMME	ELIGIBILITY	INFORMATION
Early Repair	All fathers and male carers	Early repair is a brief awareness raising, two-day 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.
Parent Plus ADHD Programme	5-16 years	A programme for parents with children awaiting a diagnosis or 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

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

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentfamilysupport





New parents wanted for financial wellbeing research project

Financial stress affects every aspect of family life – from housing and nutrition to parents' relationships, mental health and even child development. Yet many families are unsure how to access financial advice or may not be receiving the support they are entitled to.

The Healthier Wealthier Families in East London project, led by University College London, is testing a new model that embeds financial wellbeing into early years care. By focusing on early intervention, the project aims to reduce child poverty and improve long-term outcomes for parents and children.

Researchers are working in partnership with health visitors in Tower Hamlets, the Mary Ward Legal Centre, local Children and Family Centres and parents. The study is inviting new parents to take part to help answer two key questions:

- Does giving money advice really help?
- How can we make it even better?

Recruitment is now open for the project, running until November 2026. To take part, you need to be a parent aged 16 or over, with a new baby (0-3 months old), living in Tower Hamlets and experiencing financial worries.

For more information please visit:
www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/healthier-wealthier-families-east-london

Parenting support workshops for parents of children aged 0-2

The Parental Engagement Team is delivering parenting support workshops for schools and early years settings aimed at parents with children aged 0-2 years.

These sessions are fully funded under the Department for Education's parenting support strand under the Family Hubs programme and come with all required resources.

The workshops help meet priorities of the Best Start in Life government initiative:

www.beststartinlife.gov.uk.

Topics include:

- Child development for parents
- Establishing good sleep routines
- Healthy families/active families
- Little voices/big feelings
- Oral health
- SENSory explorers.

If your school or early years setting would be interested in hosting a workshop for the families you support, please email

fiona.stokes@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Congratulations Nazia!

Nazia Ahmed will be leaving the Parental Engagement Team in January after nearly a decade of service.

She has been accepted onto the Step Up To Social Work programme and is preparing to begin an exciting new chapter as a social worker.

We wish Nazia every success on her new journey.



Understanding Family Hubs: online sessions

Professionals and parents are invited to further their understanding of Family Hubs – an initiative that brings together local services and support for children, young people and their families.

With the successful launch of Family Hub sites across the borough, this free, informative online session offers a guided introduction to how Family Hubs operate, the support they offer, and how they are helping to build stronger communities through collaboration and shared values.

Participants will explore:

- The purpose, vision and principles behind Family Hubs
- How families can access Family Hub services
- The growing network of Family Hub partners
- The Shared Behaviours Framework that underpins Family Hubs
- A spotlight on a current Family Hub partner's work



Sessions take place online on alternate months, first Wednesday of the month, 2.30pm-4pm

To find out more or to book your place, email nasima.rahman@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Family Hubs parenting support offer

Tower Hamlets Family Hubs, in partnership with local stakeholders, offer easy-to-access support for the whole family to help children thrive and stay safe.

Their parenting programme offers a range of support from pregnancy onwards, enabling families to choose a programme based on their individual needs.

The parenting programme helps parents:

- through pregnancy and beyond
- understand their child's behaviour
- support their child's health and wellbeing
- understand and respond to their child's needs
- build positive relationships
- with domestic or family abuse
- with their personal development.

To find out more, visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parenteducation

Supporting emotional wellbeing from birth to adulthood

Raising children can be one of life's most rewarding and challenging journeys. To support families every step of the way, free online courses are being offered to residents of Tower Hamlets.

These evidence-based courses are designed to support the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people aged 0–19. Whether you are a parent, carer, grandparent or teen, there's something for everyone.

The online courses have been developed by clinical psychologists in collaboration with practitioners and parents. They cover a wide range of topics including:

- Antenatal and postnatal baby bonding
- Understanding your child or young person
- Supporting children with additional needs
- Teenage brain development and emotional wellbeing.



To get started, visit www.inourplace.co.uk and enter the code LBTHFH.

Helping parents communicate better this holiday season



The cost-of-living crisis, together with the added pressure of the holiday season, can make family life feel more stressful than usual.

Tower Hamlets has a free online learning programme to help parents manage stress, argue less and get along better this festive period.

The OnePlus One learning programme includes courses such as 'Arguing Better', which gives parents the tools to better communicate and prevent small frustrations leading to bigger conflicts.



For more details, click [here](#) or scan the QR code.
To register for the programme, visit www.oneplusone.org.uk/parents

Children's Interfaith Safeguarding Co-ordinator as part of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

*Supporting Faith settings to understand best practice
and the statutory expectations of safeguarding children*

- Support Faith settings to ensure safeguarding policies are in place
- Consultation
- Specialise in Faith Based abuse
- Specific Awareness Workshops, Safeguarding training, Webinars and Coffee mornings as well as bespoke training on request
- Share learning from Child Practice Safeguarding Reviews, Local Reviews and Multi-agency audits

Contact: rajna.choudhury@towerhamlets.gov.uk or **0207 364 2818**

Prevent, Respond and Protect



Baby Feeding and Wellbeing Service celebrates milestone anniversary

This year, the Baby Feeding and Wellbeing Service in Tower Hamlets is celebrating its 25th anniversary of supporting families. For a quarter of a century, the service has provided expert advice, encouragement and a listening ear to thousands of parents.

This achievement is thanks to its dedicated staff and volunteers, as well as the families who have trusted them. As one of the country's longest-running feeding support services, the organisation is continuing its mission to help every family 'Feed Your Way.'

The Feed Your Way hub

Tower Hamlets has launched a new online hub designed to support families on their baby feeding journeys. The Feed Your Way hub brings together local information and support services in one online space. It aims to help all parents feel confident and supported in their feeding choices.

The hub was created in collaboration with local parents, community groups and health professionals to ensure it reflects the diverse feeding experiences of families in Tower Hamlets.

What the hub offers:

- An advice section with baby feeding guidance
- Information on local support services, including the Tower Hamlets Baby Feeding and Wellbeing Service.
- An interactive map showing local baby-friendly places.



To find out more, visit www.feedyourwayth.co.uk

Breastfeeding when out and about

Mothers have the right to breastfeed anywhere their babies are allowed, and it is illegal for anyone to stop them from doing so in public.

If you prefer privacy, Tower Hamlets Children and Family Centres welcome mothers to drop in and breastfeed in a private space. Many local pharmacists, Idea Stores and One Stop Shops also offer private areas.

Inspiring breakfasts at Harry Gosling

Families from **Harry Gosling Primary School** recently took part in a hands-on session exploring the impact of food on health and wellbeing. The event was supported by the Women's Environmental Network, a charity that champions environmental issues and works to empower communities to make sustainable lifestyle choices.

The session featured a demonstration based on Jamie Oliver's Ministry of Food, a campaign that encourages cooking from scratch. Parents learned how to prepare three nutritious breakfast recipes designed to give children the best start to their day.

After enjoying the demonstration and tasting, parents left with a goody bag with all the ingredients needed to recreate the meals at home. The session was an opportunity to learn new skills and highlight the importance of starting the day with a nutritious breakfast.



Children's catch-up vaccination clinics



Ensuring children are up to date with their vaccinations is an important part of safeguarding their health. Children can sometimes miss school-based vaccination programmes, so Vaccination UK is running catch-up clinics in Tower Hamlets. Vaccines offered at these clinics include:

- Flu
- DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus & Polio)
- Meningitis ACWY
- MMR
- HPV (check with the local team for details)

For details of local catch-up clinics and how to book, visit
www.schoolvaccination.uk/catch-up-clinics/tower-hamlets

Calling parents – help improve children's dental health

Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) is looking for Bengali/Bangladeshi parents and carers living in the UK to help design a new project that supports children's oral health.

This research is part of a PhD project called 'Keeping it in the Family: Co-designing a family-based, culturally appropriate oral health intervention for children'.

What is the project about?

Children in Tower Hamlets, especially those from Bengali/Bangladeshi families, face higher rates of tooth decay. QMUL want to change this by creating an intervention made with the community and for the community. This might be a video, leaflet, workshop or something else – parents can help shape it.

Who can take part?

QMUL want to form a partnership group of parents/carers who:

- Are of Bengali/Bangladeshi heritage
- Have a child who has experienced dental decay
- Want to share their views and help guide the project
- Can join three online meetings per year.

What will parents do?

Partnership group members will:

- Give feedback on ideas
- Make sure our language is respectful, clear and culturally appropriate
- Help ensure the project is useful, inclusive and relevant to local families



What do parents receive?

Parents will receive a £75 voucher for each meeting they attend and contribute to.

What if you cannot commit to the group?

Interested parents can still take part. There will be four in-person co-design workshops in Tower Hamlets next year. Please share your details if you are interested.

Who is running the project?

The project is run by Paediatric Dentist, Julia Hurry, and funded by Barts Charity with links to QMUL and the Royal London Hospital.

How to get involved

Please contact Katharine Julia Hurry, QMUL, at k.j.hurry@qmul.ac.uk.

Supporting good parental mental health in the early years

There is a wide range of support for parents, carers and families to have good mental health and bonding during pregnancy and the early years in Tower Hamlets.

For more information visit www.thfamilyhubs.co.uk/Page/30527. Parents can also get advice from their health visitor. Professionals can view the [full system pathway](#) for support for mental health and parent-infant relationships during the perinatal period. It can also be found by scanning the QR code.



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



The Tower Hamlets Local Area SEND inspection

The Tower Hamlets Local Area SEND Inspection took place in June. Inspectors found that children and young people with SEND are valued and recognised that weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The report highlighted key areas for improvement, which matched issues already identified in the Local Area Partnership's self-assessment published [here](#).

Following the inspection, the partnership updated its SEND delivery plan. The revised plan, which has been approved by the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England, sets out how it will address the report's recommendations. The proposed actions will be integrated across the existing priorities of the plan.

The plan is monitored by the SEND Improvement Board, which includes representatives from the Tower Hamlets Independent SEND Parent Forum and the DfE. They will oversee a review of the plan in December to ensure that all the actions remain relevant and fit for purpose.

Read the Local Area SEND Inspection Report [here](#). Read the updated SEND Delivery Plan [here](#).

For more information, visit www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk/blog_articles/5376-responding-to-the-local-area-send-inspection



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.

Let's Talk SEND Post-16 event

The Let's Talk SEND Post-16 event, organised by SEN Preparing for Adulthood Team and SENDIASS, was held at the Brady Arts and Community Centre in October.

The event for Year 11 students with Education, Health and Care Plans and their parents gave an overview of the range of options and support available at this crucial stage in their learning journey. From supported internships and apprenticeships to college placements and other pathways, the event helped families understand what's out there and how to access it.

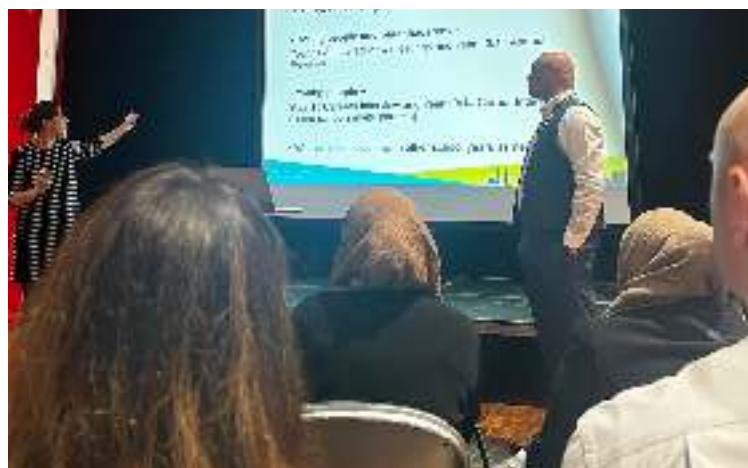
“

The event inspired families and helped young people take confident steps towards independence, employment and further education.



Mark Penn, SENDIASS Participation and Co-production Officer

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Unreasonable Adjustments project to reduce social isolation

The SEND Parent Ambassadors have won yet another Communities Keeping Well grant for a new project called Unreasonable Adjustments. This new project aims to reduce social isolation of SEND families in Tower Hamlets.

Led by new ambassadors, Shuzina Bilkis and Salma Begum, the project is offering a tour of some of London's most iconic sites. The trip begins at the Tower of London, then on to the cable cars at the Royal Docks and ending at the London Aquarium.

The project will also assist families applying for carers/access cards and inform families about relevant schemes, such as Carers go Free.



For more details, email sendparentambassadors@gmail.com

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.

It has been set up so that young people can:

- Get their voices heard
- Gain new experiences and skills
- Meet new people and build confidence
- Find out about their rights
- Raise awareness and campaign for change.

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



Updates from Our Time Youth Forum

Ofsted SEND Inspection

SEND Inspectors found that children and young people with SEND are valued in Tower Hamlets. We gave young people with SEND a chance to have their voice heard by the head inspector during the inspection.

Welcoming new members

We have some new members who have recently joined Our Time at the café. They had a meal and played games and socialised with forum members.

Let's Talk SEND Post-16

We had a stall at Let's Talk SEND Post-16. We promoted Our Time to encourage more young people to get involved with the forum.

National Youth Conference 2026

We are excited about attending the Youth Voice Matters Conference in Birmingham in February. We are looking forward to going to the different workshops – we may even give a presentation on Our Time at the conference!

For more details or to join the forum, email ourtimeyf@gmail.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, call 07498 573872 or email thesendforum@gmail.com
www.thesendforum.co.uk

Let's Talk SEND co-production event success

More than 100 parents, carers and professionals came together for an event to help further develop the Tower Hamlets SEND Co-Production Charter – a shared commitment to working together to shape future services.

Held at the Town Hall, the event was opened by Steve Reddy, Corporate Director of Children's Services, and included presentations from various services, including:

- SENDIASS
- The Family Information Participation Service with parent experts
- Phoenix Outreach Service
- The Learning Academy (Better Together Framework)
- SEN Preparing for Adulthood Team.

Education consultant, Helen Jenner, also spoke with parents and presentations were given by the Our Time Youth Forum and SEND Parent Ambassadors.



There was also an interactive information marketplace for parents to learn about different services of support. Refreshments and lunch were provided by interns from the Tower Project.

To share your views on the development of the Co-production Charter, email Mark Penn, SENDIASS Participation and Co-production Officer: mark.penn@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Let's Talk SEND transition event

For parents of Year 4 and 5 children with education, health and care (EHC) plans

Parents of children in Years 4 and 5 with 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.

Tuesday 24 March 2026, 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.



Fun family activities at Tower Bridge

Tower Bridge offers family activities on the second Saturday of each month. These sessions, included in the standard entry price, are also available on Tuesdays during school holidays.

Families can explore the landmark's history, engineering, and stories through engaging, hands-on crafts and activities. These drop-in sessions don't require advance booking and are suitable for children of all ages, with a focus on those aged six to ten.

A £1 community ticket is available for residents of Tower Hamlets, Southwark and the City of London. Families who take part in an activity day receive a pass allowing free return entry within the following six months.

For more details, visit

www.towerbridge.org.uk/events/family-activities

Working with Families seminar event

Tower Hamlets staff who work with families recently had the opportunity to be trained as community group leaders to take families to visit Tower Bridge.

The Tower Bridge Learning and Community Engagement Team will be running additional training sessions for school staff so more local families can benefit from their community offer.



For more information or to register interest in future sessions, email learning@towerbridge.org.uk

Local families benefit from clothes bank at the Parents Advice Centre (PAC)

In November, the Parental Engagement Team hosted a two-day clothes bank event at the PAC, where vulnerable families were offered the chance to collect new clothing and shoes, which were generously donated by Children's Salon Boutique and their partners. More than 46 families from Tower Hamlets schools benefited from this initiative.

“

We are grateful for the partnership

with Children's Salon Boutique who have been supporting Tower Hamlets families since Covid. The clothes and shoes they donate make such a difference to local families.



Denise De-Goze,
Head of the Parent and Family Support Service

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Engagement events for home educating families relaunched

Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service (THESS) has relaunched its engagement events for home educating families with a vibrant science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) morning at the world-renowned Centre of the Cell.

Back in 2019, Ofsted praised these events as “going the extra mile” for families who are home educating. After a pause during the Covid years, THESS has brought these engagement events back and they’ve had a really good response.

In partnership with the Centre of the Cell, the Parental Engagement Team and medical students from Queen Mary University, THESS welcomed parents and children to a special STEM morning in September.

Children immersed themselves in interactive workshops while parents took part in practical sessions on creative writing, marking children’s work and internet safety.

The relaunch was a great success, reaffirming what makes these events so special – families and professionals coming together to enrich the learning journeys of home-educated children.



“

Events like this are practical and inspiring. The work put in by the team to arrange this for families is great, with high quality workshops for the children and useful sessions for parents on topics like creative writing. We will be doing a creative writing project on what the children have experienced today. Thank you, it's been amazing. More please!

Suhura, parent

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Next event: Discover the chemical sciences – pathways to A-levels and beyond.
Wednesday, 21 January 2026, 11am-1pm (followed by lunch).

at Queen Mary University of London, Queens' Building, 327 Mile End Road, E1 4NS.

For more details and to register, visit forms.office.com/e/Jf90xwZtjC

For information on elective home education, scan the QR code or click [here](#)





Family Information Service and Local Offer open day

The Family Information Service and Local Offer team hosted an open day at Tower Hamlets Town Hall in October. The market-style event was attended by families, professionals and community members.

Those who attended enjoyed having the chance to chat with stallholders and find out about the range of local support services available. Professionals from childcare, education and health were present, providing free resources and helpful guidance.

Attendees reported that the atmosphere at the Town Hall was vibrant and welcoming, with plenty of networking opportunities and information-sharing happening throughout the day. Organisers commented that it was great to see so many parents and carers meeting with stallholders and engaging with services.

The Family Information Service and Local Offer team are already planning their next event for spring/summer 2026.

To find out more or to get involved, email fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Family Information Service outreach sessions

The Family Information Service is offering outreach sessions. Schools, children's centres and community groups are invited to host the Family Information Service at events, such as parent evenings, fun days or coffee mornings.

Having the service present at these events is a great way for parents and carers to learn more about local services including the Family Information Service, the Local Offer and SENDIASS.

To arrange a visit or discuss your event, email fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Information sessions and events for parents

DATE/TIME	DESCRIPTION
Thursdays, Fortnightly Term time only 10am-12pm	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
Wednesday 21 January 2026 10am-1pm	Home Education Information Event A workshop with a topical theme in a community venue for parents and carers who electively home educate their children. Delivered by the Education Safeguarding Service in partnership with Queen Mary University of London. For more information see page 28 . Email: jeasmin.begum@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Thursday 22 January 2026 10am-2pm	Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Champions Celebration and Learning Event A celebration event for volunteers who improve health with free lunch, certificates and the chance to share useful information and network with passionate locals and senior leaders who care about health and wellbeing. This event is organised by Tower Hamlets Public Health. Residents who have volunteered to support health-related programmes in the community can book their place for the event at www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1974313841848
Tuesday 24 March 2026 9.30am-2pm	Let's Talk SEND transition event For parents of Year 4 and 5 children with an education health and care (EHC) plan. See page 26 for more details. Email: fs@towerhamlets.gov.uk Tel: 020 7364 6489

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
- Shoreditch (Calvert Avenue)

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