

FamiliesMatter

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

Holiday Childcare Scheme Ofsted success!



The Tower Hamlets Holiday Childcare Team is celebrating a strong result from its latest Ofsted inspection, achieving a 'Strong Standard' rating.

Bookings are now open for the summer holidays. See page [3](#).

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/familiesmatter

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Welcome to the summer 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.

FamiliesMatter



Parental Engagement
School Transition
Parenting
SEND
Local Offer
Information
Support
Holiday Childcare
Parent Voice



Messages from the Parent and Family Support Service



Holiday Childcare Scheme celebrates Ofsted success

The Tower Hamlets Holiday Childcare Team is celebrating a strong result from its latest Ofsted inspection, achieving a 'Strong Standard' rating following a visit in February. The rating reflects provision that goes beyond expected standards, with staff delivering consistently high-quality support for children and families.

One of the key strengths highlighted by inspectors was the experienced sessional staff team. Many of them also work in local schools during term time, bringing valuable knowledge of the community and established relationships with children. This helps create a familiar, supportive and consistent environment throughout the school holidays.

Inclusion was a clear strength highlighted in the report. The service demonstrates a strong commitment to meeting the needs of children with SEND through tailored planning, one-to-one support where required, and regular staff training to respond effectively to more complex needs, including medical conditions.

Parents also described the setting as a safe and reliable childcare option that supports working families.

Inspectors noted that children arrived enthusiastic and ready to participate in activities, supported by warm and responsive staff who encourage learning through play while maintaining a safe, respectful and nurturing environment.

Leadership was also recognised as a key strength, with inspectors praising the team's commitment to continuous improvement through actively seeking and responding to feedback from children, families and staff.

“

Achieving a 'Strong Standard' is a testament to our staff's commitment to children and families in Tower Hamlets. Their passion and professionalism shine through in everything they do.

Selina Tamana
Holiday Childcare Team Manager



”



Join the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme this summer

Bookings open in early July.

Children and young people aged 4 to 16 years who are eligible for and/or claiming benefits-related free school meals can access free places at holiday activity clubs over the summer school holiday.

The programme offers a wide range of fun activity sessions to suit different age groups, personalities and interests, as well as providing free, nutritious and tasty food.

If you have signed up for HAF before, the process to register is now slightly different — an online booking system is now being used.

You will no longer require a HAF code to confirm your eligibility, but instead use your child's name and date of birth.

If you registered with Plinth for the Easter HAF programme, then you can just login to your Plinth page when bookings go live and find the club your child would like to attend.

If you haven't registered on Plinth before, follow these five steps to access a free place:

1. Click [here](#)
2. Select 'Sign Up'
3. Register your child and automatically check their eligibility
4. Check back in early July to find a club and sign up your child
5. Bring your child to join in the fun and exciting activities and enjoy delicious free food.

“

My child seems to be more relaxed, confident and focused during club sessions, playing indoor and outdoor sports. It's so nice to see how proud he is of his achievements.

Parent

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For more information about the HAF programme, visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/HAF



Training success for wraparound childcare providers

Childcare professionals from across Tower Hamlets came together for a one day Quality Practice in Wraparound Childcare training.

This hands-on session explored the power of play, children's rights, brain development and how to create inclusive, child-led environments where children truly thrive.

The day offered practical guidance on supporting transitions, welcoming children effectively, setting up high-quality play spaces and promoting physical activity and wellbeing.

Participants also had the opportunity to compare their own settings with examples of strong practice, sparking thoughtful reflection and new ideas.

Networking was a highlight too, with space to discuss play and swap ideas – practical tips around transitions, food prep and activity setup were particularly helpful.

The session closed with an introduction to the Quality Development Tool, supporting leaders and practitioners to strengthen provision, develop reflective practice and align confidently with Ofsted expectations.

“

Thinking about how we set up our environment and hearing how others do it was incredibly helpful.

Practitioner

All the activities and information were relevant and helpful and kept the focus on the child, which can sometimes get lost in the logistics of wraparound care.

Practitioner

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For more information on developing wraparound childcare for your school or setting, email wraparound.childcare@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Need help with before and after school childcare?

Ask your school about wraparound childcare

What is wraparound childcare?

Wraparound childcare is term time care for primary school-aged children, before and after the school day, usually from 8am to 6pm. It can help you balance work, study or other commitments while knowing your child is well-cared for in a safe, familiar setting.

Why use wraparound childcare?

- Fits around your work, studies or other commitments
- Gives your child time to play, relax and make friends
- Convenient and local – no need for extra drop-offs
- Financial help is available for many families



What to do next?

- Ask your school what wraparound childcare they offer
- No provision yet? You have the right to request it
- Let your school know you are interested

To find out more, click [here](#) or scan the QR code.



Talking Tips from the Idea Store

Sharing picture books with young children is one of the best ways to support their development. Reading together from an early age helps build vocabulary, strengthens communication skills and improves concentration. It also helps children make connections between new words and their meanings, laying strong foundations for learning.

Idea Store has proudly partnered with speech and language practitioners in Tower Hamlets to create a set of practical tips. They are designed to help families get even more from reading together, enhancing children's learning while keeping the experience fun and enjoyable.



To find out more, visit www.ideastore.co.uk/our-services/children-and-families/talking-tips

Share your views: Demand for Early Education and Childcare Survey 2026

If you are a parent, carer, or guardian of a child(ren) aged from birth to nursery stage in Tower Hamlets, the Early Education and Childcare Service would love to hear from you.

The team is gathering feedback on early education and childcare provision, both current and future use, including arrangements during term time and school holidays.

The survey should take ten minutes to complete. The closing date is **Friday 31 July 2026**.

www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/LBTH-CSA-2026-Parents

Your feedback is really important and will help shape future services and support for families across Tower Hamlets.

School clothing grant for families this September



A school clothing grant is available to Tower Hamlets families with children starting primary and secondary schools this September.

The scheme allows families with a household income of up to £50,350 per year to claim £50 per child starting in Reception class at primary school and £150 per child entering Year 7 at secondary school.

Parents can apply for the grant from when they are notified of their school placement up until 30 September.

For more details on the application process, visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/SCG



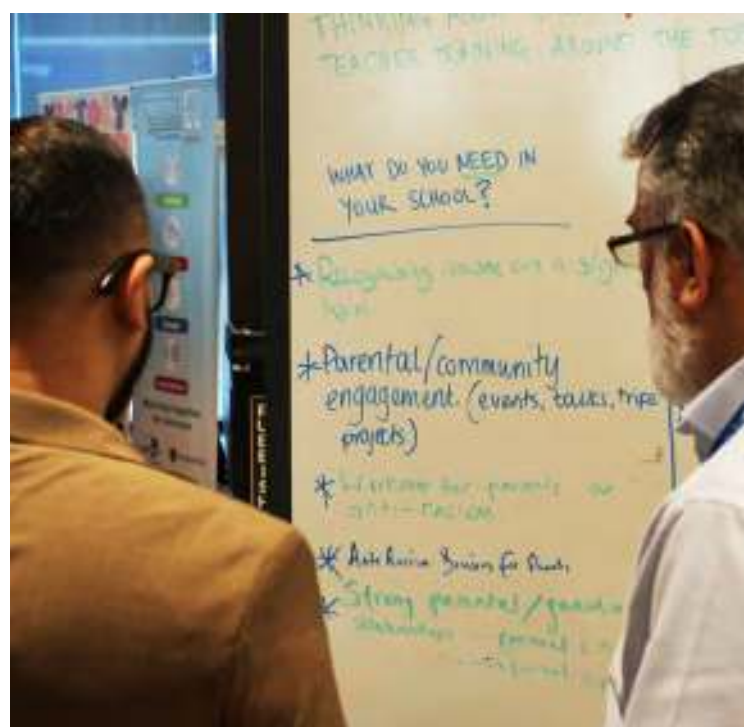
A message from Governor Services

Thank you to all the parents and carers who joined the directors' meeting with governors in April. It was valuable to come together to discuss community safety and explore what identity and belonging means to our children and families.

We were grateful to hear from Musa Noor, our Young Mayor, and Amaira Katyal, our Deputy Young Mayor for Education. They shared a clear view of young people's experiences.

We would also like to thank our council colleagues for supporting the session and sharing information.

If you would like to play a more active role in your child's school, consider becoming a school governor. Governors make an important contribution to school improvement and help ensure the best outcomes for all children.



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



Creative ways to connect at Central Foundation

In February, parents from **Central Foundation Girls' School** took part in a five-week ceramics course delivered by the Parental Engagement Team. The course gave parents the opportunity to try something different, develop new skills and connect with one another in a relaxed environment.

Throughout the course, participants explored hand-building and relief techniques, creating a range of pieces including bowls, tiles and decorative plaques. Many chose to make gifts for loved ones,

adding personal designs, names and patterns into their work.

By the end of the course, parents had produced unique ceramic pieces they were proud of, while also building their confidence along the way.

“

I always wanted to try working with clay and I am really pleased with my finished piece.

Parent

”

For information on how the Parental Engagement Team can support your school to positively engage with families, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Support for exam day results

Young WorkPath is a council service that works with young people aged 13 to 19 years (up to 25 with SEND).

The service provides careers information, advice and guidance about next steps available to young people to help them reach their goals and the options available to them.

Students receiving their GCSE, A-level, BTEC or T-level results this August can access advice, support and guidance from Young Workpath. The team will be on hand to help students understand their options, whether that involves further education or training, an apprenticeship or moving directly into employment.

Drop-in sessions

Thursdays

13 and 20 August 2026

2-4.30pm

**Young Workpath Centre
Idea Store Watney Market
Commercial Road, E1 2FB**

In-school support will also be available on the mornings of results days.

Careers interviews are also available by phone or video call. For more information, call 0800 3581 2410.

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/youngworkpath

The Parental Engagement Team's parenting programmes

The Parental Engagement Team delivers a wide range of evidence-based, universal parenting programmes that provide practical support to help parents and carers build positive relationships with their children. These programmes strengthen family communication and share strategies for managing everyday challenges as children develop and grow.

Designed for parents and carers of children of all ages, the programmes offer opportunities to build confidence, enhance family relationships and improve overall wellbeing. They also support children's emotional, social and educational development, helping to improve outcomes and strengthen family resilience.



For more information, visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentingprogrammes

If you would like the Parental Engagement Team to deliver a parenting programme for the families at your school or setting, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Parenting course helps Fahima through challenging times

Fahima joined the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities parenting course at a time when things felt challenging at home. Her child has additional learning needs and toilet training had become a particular source of stress, leaving her unsure how best to support him.

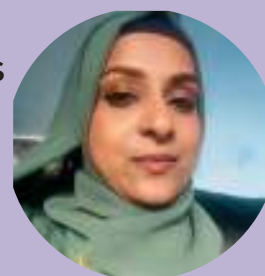
Delivered in Bengali by practitioners from the Parental Engagement Team, the course offered a space where Fahima could learn in a way that felt comfortable. Across the sessions, she was introduced to strategies to try at home. She found the sessions about praise and using reward charts particularly helpful.

Gradually, Fahima began to feel more confident in her approach. With small changes, she started to see progress, both in her child's development and in her own sense of calm as a parent.

“

I used the reward charts we learned about in class and found ways to praise him so he could build his confidence.

Fahima



”

For Fahima, the parenting course gave her useful tools that made day-to-day challenges feel more manageable. Her experience reflects how with the right support, at the right time, parents can build confidence in their parenting and make positive changes at home.

Helping parents navigate the teenage years

Supporting teenagers can be one of the most challenging yet rewarding parts of family life. The Triple P Teen Parenting Programme aims to help parents build the skills and confidence to navigate this important stage.

Recently delivered by the Parental Engagement Team at **Cubitt Town Primary School**, the course brought together parents to explore ways to improve communication, manage behaviour and strengthen relationships with their teenagers.

Parents valued the opportunity to share their experiences, recognising they were not alone in facing challenging behaviour. For many, it was reassuring to understand that some behaviours are a normal part of



growing up, and that there are effective ways to respond as a parent.

Sessions focused on staying calm, setting boundaries and being consistent. Parents also explored the importance of giving teenagers independence and responsibility, helping them develop confidence.

There was also space to reflect on how reactions can influence outcomes, and how small changes in approach can make a real difference to family life.

By the end of the programme, parents felt more confident and better equipped to support their teenagers through the ups and downs of adolescence.

Course leads to a better understanding of ADHD for Belal and Tamanna

Belal and his wife, Tamanna, came to the Parent Plus ADHD course looking for a better understanding of their child's behaviour and to build more confidence in how to respond at home. Like many parents, they had been trying different approaches but weren't always sure what was working.

As the course progressed, they began to see ADHD differently. Understanding the reasons behind their child's behaviour helped them respond more calmly and consistently, rather than becoming frustrated.

They found the practical elements useful. Visual charts, clear routines and a focus on positive reinforcement gave their child more structure and

clearer expectations. These strategies made daily life more manageable and helped ease pressure at home. For Belal and Tamanna, the course provided simple, workable approaches they could stick to, leaving them feeling more confident in supporting their child day to day.

“

The course was well designed and helped us understand ADHD better.

Belal and Tamanna



”



Emotional literacy workshop for dads

Dads from **Mayflower Primary School** attended an emotional literacy workshop, Little Voices, Big Feelings. The sessions focused on the importance of the parent-infant relationship, helping dads to recognise, understand and respond to their children's emotions, with strategies that can be used at home.

Discussion-led and grounded in real-life situations, the interactive workshop created a safe space for dads to reflect, share their experiences and build confidence in emotional literacy. Feedback was very positive, with dads describing the sessions as useful, relatable and easy to put into practice.

Preparing Susan for her kinship carer role

At 65, Susan is preparing to take on something she never expected – becoming a kinship carer to her 12-year-old granddaughter following the loss of her mother last year. She knew stepping back into a parenting role after so many years would be a big change.

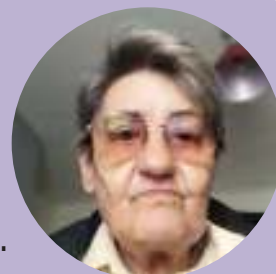
To help her prepare, Susan joined the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities programme at **Olga Children and Family Centre**. The 12-week course focuses on building confidence and offering practical ways to manage day-to-day challenges, giving parents and carers space to reflect and learn from each other.

Returning to parenting later in life can feel unfamiliar. It had been many years since Susan last parented, and the course gave her time to think about how she wants to support her granddaughter, while also helping her feel more prepared for what lies ahead.

Susan is clear about the difference the course has made. She now moves forward more prepared and confident in the role she is about to take on, focusing on creating a safe and loving home for her granddaughter.

“

I was acutely aware I needed to update my parenting skills so I could be the best grandmother I could be.



I now feel confident to deal with any challenging situation I may face in the future in a safe, stable, loving and considerate manner.

Susan

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Supporting dads in the early stages of parenthood

Dads and children came together for a lively creative play and storytelling session at **John Smith Family Hub** in June, as part of the centre's Saturday stay and play offer.

Practitioners from the Parental Engagement Team joined the session to support dads in the early stages of parenthood and to provide creative opportunities to engage with their children. The session was part of a special Department for Education (DfE)-funded project that focuses on fathers of children under two.

The creative activity celebrated colour, playfulness and imagination. Families worked together to make and decorate their own frisbees, before heading outside to put them to the test. The activity encouraged shared play while supporting early development and giving families practical ideas to take home.

The practitioners spent time chatting to the families, listening to experiences and signposting to further support where needed. Each dad also received a DadPad book, designed to support them through the early stages of parenting with practical advice (www.thedadpad.co.uk).

The session concluded with a storytelling activity that drew a packed audience, bringing everyone together for an end to a busy morning.



Sessions will take place until the end of July. To find out more, email parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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





Support hub for women affected by domestic abuse

Women who have been affected by domestic abuse can access a support hub at the Nari Centre on Vallance Road in Whitechapel. The hub provides confidential advice from the council, police, legal specialists and organisations such as Solace Women's Aid, Hopscotch, MIND and Shewise.

The centre runs a weekly drop-in every Monday, 10am-12pm, no appointment needed. Interpreting is available, including Sylheti.

For more information, visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/nari

Incidents of domestic abuse increase during the World Cup

Research from Lancaster University found that incidents of domestic abuse rise during England matches – up 38% after a loss and 26% after a win. Football does not cause abuse, but it can sometimes be used to excuse it.

Domestic abuse can include controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional or psychological

harm, physical or sexual violence, financial control, harassment or stalking or online abuse.

These behaviours often build over time and can sometimes be difficult to spot. Big public events, such as the World Cup, together with alcohol and heightened emotions, can increase tension but they should not justify abuse.

Support and advice

Organisation	Tel	Web
Emergency	999	
Solace Women's Aid	020 3795 5064	www.solacewomensaid.org
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247	www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
Crimestoppers (anonymous)	0800 555 111	crimestoppers-uk.org

Celebrating the life and legacy of Sue Braniff

It is with great sadness that we remember and celebrate the life of Sue Braniff, whose dedication, compassion and commitment to the children and families of St Elizabeth Catholic Primary School left a lasting impact.

Sue began her journey at St Elizabeth as a teaching assistant, supporting children in their learning and helping them to thrive in the classroom. Her passion for supporting families led her to become a Parent Support Partner, becoming a trusted source of guidance and practical help for countless parents and carers.

Over many years, Sue worked tirelessly to strengthen the partnership between home and school. She coordinated parent volunteers alongside the borough's Parental Engagement Team, creating opportunities for parents to become involved in school life. Many of those volunteers went on to gain employment and continue to contribute to the St Elizabeth community today – a testament to Sue's belief in people and her ability to inspire confidence in others.

Recognising the value of parental involvement, Sue was instrumental in establishing the school's Parent Teacher Association. Through her determination and enthusiasm, thousands of pounds was raised to enrich the educational experiences of children at the school. Her efforts helped fund educational and cultural visits, including trips to theatres, museums and residential experiences, as well as improvements to playground facilities.

Sue was passionate about helping families support their children's learning. She organised curriculum workshops, coordinated services to help parents access training and employment opportunities, and provided support to families facing challenges such as housing difficulties, financial worries and family breakdowns.



As one of the early pioneers of family support in the borough, Sue helped shape and develop the role, sharing her expertise with colleagues and supporting others to take on this important work.

Sue's kindness, dedication and commitment to families have left a legacy that will continue to be felt for many years to come. She touched the lives of so many and made a huge difference to the school and wider community.

She will be greatly missed, fondly remembered, and forever appreciated.

"Sue had a gift for making every family feel valued and supported. She was always ready to listen and help, no matter what the challenge.

Her dedication set an example for us all, and the difference she made will be remembered by so many in our community."

Denise De-Goze
Parent and Family Support Service

Family Information Hub launched

More than 250 professionals and families from across Tower Hamlets came together to celebrate the launch of the new Family Information Hub website, marking an important step forward in improving how residents access support across the borough.

The launch follows months of collaboration between council teams, digital specialists and community partners, all working towards a shared goal—making services easier for families to find, access and use.

Held at the Town Hall, the event brought together representatives from more than 35 partner organisations. Attendees had the opportunity to explore the new platform, connect with local services and watch live demonstrations from BeebotAI, the organisation behind the website.

The Family Information Hub brings together hundreds of services and activities in one place, replacing information that was previously spread

across multiple websites, including Family Hubs and the SEND Local Offer. By consolidating these resources into a single platform, families can now find the information they need more quickly and easily.

Designed with accessibility in mind, the site includes translation tools, a mobile-friendly layout with speech-to-search functionality, and improved search features to help users quickly find relevant services.

Mohammed Jolil, Head of Early Help and Children and Families Services, opened the event, followed by speeches from a range of senior leaders across Children's Services, Public Health and SEND.

Looking ahead, the Family Information Hub will continue to grow, with plans to introduce more personalised features, strengthen digital tools and expand the use of chatbot technology. Ongoing feedback from families, professionals and partners will help shape its future development.



To explore the new website, visit www.thfamilyinformationhub.co.uk

New guidance on screen time for under 5s

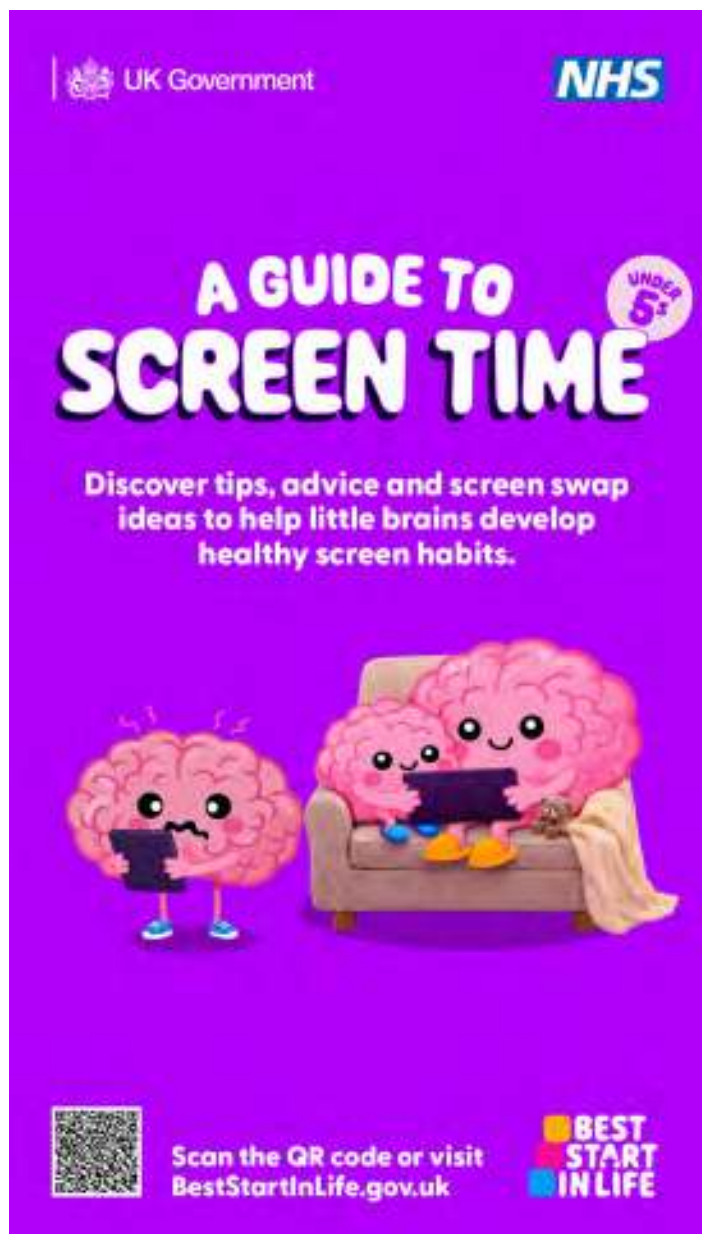
New government guidance has been released to help parents and carers of children under five years old manage screen time and support healthy early development.

While digital screens are part of everyday family life, the early years are a critical time for growth—around 90% of brain development happens before the age of five. This makes it especially important to build strong social, emotional and communication skills.

The guidance, developed with experts and parents, offers clear, practical advice to help families make informed choices about screen time during these crucial early years.

Top tips for parents

- **Limit screen time:** Avoid screens for under 2s. For ages 2–5, aim for no more than one hour a day.
- **Choose content carefully:** Slow-paced, simple programmes are best for young children.
- **Watch together:** Co-viewing helps children learn and keeps them safe.
- **Create screen-free moments:** Swap screens at mealtimes and bedtime for stories or play.
- **Lead by example:** Children copy adults, so be mindful of your own screen use.



For more details, visit www.beststartinlife.gov.uk/screen-time-under-5s
Schools and early years settings can download campaign resources [here](#)

Family Hubs offer a range of parenting support for local families

Best Start Family Hubs offer parenting support in partnership with local partners and stakeholders. Its parenting programme offers a wide range of support from pregnancy onwards, enabling local families to choose based on their individual circumstances or needs. It 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.

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

Parent talk webinars: Internet safety resources for parents

The Parental Engagement Team has been working with **Everyone's Invited**, a charity established in 2022 that runs education programmes in schools.

In the past year, they have delivered their prevention education sessions to Year 8 students across six Tower Hamlets secondary schools.

They recently delivered two webinars for parents interested in learning more about the challenges and pressures children and young people face online.

Practical strategies were shared to help parents support their child with confidence as they navigate an increasingly complex digital world.

The sessions explored key topics that many parents are concerned about or wish they



understood better, including:

- Social media platforms (TikTok and Snapchat)
- Gendered pressures
- Consent
- Rise of AI (Artificial Intelligence)
- Image-based abuse
- Sextortion
- Online misogyny

The webinars were very well received by the parents who attended.

“

Thank you for empowering me with knowledge of the dangers lurking within the world of social media. You helped me to understand the challenges and safety issues.

Parent

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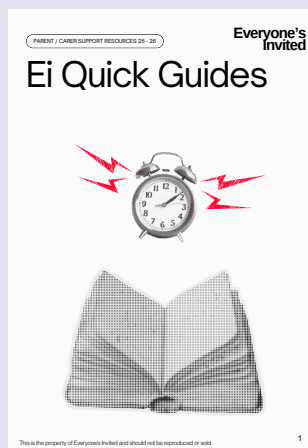
For more information about workshops to keep children safe online, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Everyone's Invited parent resources available

Everyone's Invited have shared their **parent resources**, including guides and a glossary of current terms for anyone who would like more information.

They have also set up a national **WhatsApp group** for parents and carers to receive information on the key messages.

For more information on the free training sessions Everyone's Invited offer, click [here](#) or visit www.everyonesinvited.uk



Building healthy habits at St Saviour's

Healthy habits were brought to life at **St Saviour's Church of England Primary School**, where practitioners from the Parental Engagement Team delivered three interactive assemblies for Early Years and Key Stage 1 pupils.

During the sessions, children, parents and staff explored oral health, hidden sugars, healthier choices and simple snack swaps. Using the traffic light food labelling system, they quickly spotted sugars in everyday foods and drinks, with many surprised by what they discovered.

A key message throughout was the importance of a balanced approach when building healthy habits. No foods are 'good' or 'bad', but some are better enjoyed more often than others to help us stay healthy and well.

There was plenty of hands-on learning as well. Children practised their toothbrushing technique during demonstrations, helping them with the skills needed to develop good oral health habits at home. Parents were actively involved, asking thoughtful questions, particularly about the sugar content in popular drinks, such as flavoured water.



By the end of the sessions, families were left feeling inspired to make small changes so as to build lifelong healthy habits.

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

Become a Healthy Families Parent Ambassador

The Healthy Families Parent Ambassador (HFPA) programme empowers parents to help families lead healthier, more active lives. With low physical activity, poor diet and rising childhood obesity in Tower Hamlets, parents and carers have a vital role to play in shaping healthier habits.

Delivered by the Parental Engagement Team, the programme offers community-based training for parents who want to make a difference. Once trained, parent ambassadors work with schools and community settings to run workshops, signpost families to local health services,

encourage use of parks and leisure spaces and support families who may be less engaged. They also help promote health initiatives within their school or setting.

For many, the experience has been transformative. One parent described becoming an ambassador as a turning point—helping build confidence, leading to volunteering in school, and later moving into employment as a teaching assistant.

Parents and carers interested in making a difference are encouraged to get involved.

To find out more, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Healthy Families at Marion Richardson

Parents from **Marion Richardson Primary School's** early years site took part in a Healthy Families, Active Families workshop, delivered by the Parental Engagement team through a DfE-funded project.

The session focused on practical ways to support healthier lifestyles at home. Parents looked at how to swap less healthy snacks for healthier alternatives and shared ideas for building more physical activity into everyday family routines.

A highlight was the hands-on activity, where parents made 'sushi sandwiches' using wholemeal bread and fresh vegetables.

The session gave the parents some simple ideas they could try at home to make healthier snacks more appealing for their children.



Healthy Families programme recognised nationally

Celebrating outstanding initiatives across the UK, the Campaign for Learning Awards recognise projects that make a real difference through learning. This year, the Parental Engagement Team's Healthy Families Programme was shortlisted in the Family Learning Health and Wellbeing category and named as runner-up.

This achievement reflects the programme's impact in supporting families in Tower Hamlets to build healthier habits. Focusing on topics such as nutrition, oral health and physical activity, the programme helps families make small, sustainable changes that can contribute to better health and wellbeing.

Following this success, practitioner, Hamida Begum, was invited to showcase the programme at the national Power of Story conference of good practice, which included a live Q&A session.

“

It's good to see the Healthy Families Programme recognised nationally and the difference it's making for families in Tower Hamlets.

Hamida Begum
Parental Engagement Team

”

Ministry of Food helps builds connection

A Ministry of Food cooking course, delivered at the Wellbeing Hub at **Ocean Children and Family Centre** site in Shadwell, supported people seeking asylum and those from refugee backgrounds.

Developed by Jamie Oliver and delivered by the Parental Engagement Team, the course focuses on preparing healthy meals on a budget. Participants develop practical cooking skills, gain confidence in using fresh ingredients and learn how to create nutritious meals that can be easily made at home.

Each session provided a welcoming space for refugees and asylum seekers to connect with others facing similar circumstances. This helped reduce isolation, foster a sense of belonging, and supported participants in feeling more settled and connected within their new community.



To book a course at your school or setting, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Become a Children's Food Ambassador with Sustain

The voices of parents and carers are crucial to policy making on the future of children's health. Sustain's Children's Food Ambassador Programme is looking for parents with children under 18 to share their experiences and help influence the policies, campaigns and decisions that affect what our children eat.

Ambassadors take part in focus groups, workshops and consultations, develop new skills and join a supportive group of parents and

carers passionate about creating healthier food environments for children.

Parents don't need any previous campaigning experience—just a commitment of around 3–5 hours a month and a desire to make a difference.

Sustain are particularly interested in applications from dads and male carers, parents of secondary-aged children, families receiving benefits and those from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Find out more and apply at www.sustainweb.org/childrens-food-campaign/ambassadors

Hot Weather Baby Safety

Keep your baby cool and safe this summer



Clothing & Sleep

- Dress baby in light, breathable clothes
- Baby may be comfiest in just a nappy
- If using a sleep bag, check the tog rating (Max 1.0 in warm weather and 0.5 in hot weather)
- Keep room temperature between 16–20°C



Airflow & Shade

- Open windows and doors for airflow (if safe)
- Close curtains during the day to keep rooms cool
- Use a fan – don't point it directly at baby



Hydration & Safety

- Offer extra feeds to keep baby hydrated
- Never cover prams with blankets – it traps heat!

MORE
INFO



Scan to
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video



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more
tips



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



SEND Co-production Charter update

The draft SEND Co-production Charter has now been shared widely with partners, parents, and stakeholders, and has received positive and constructive feedback. Contributors welcomed the clear commitment to strengthening meaningful participation and ensuring that children, young people, and families are at the heart of decision-making.

Feedback has helped to shape several refinements, with suggested amendments incorporated to improve clarity, accessibility and practical application.

Another key development is a co-production workshop that the SEND Parent Ambassadors and SENDIASS will be co-designing and delivering to professionals, families and young people, which will play a central role in bringing the charter to life.

This collaborative approach marks an important step forward in embedding co-production as standard practice across the local area.

If you would like the workshop delivered at your setting, email Mark Penn, Participation and Co-production Officer at mark.penn@towerhamlets.gov.uk or email sendparentambassadors@gmail.com

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.

SEND Parent Ambassadors at Queen Mary University

SEND Parent Ambassadors were commissioned by Queen Mary University of London to create a dedicated sensory space for children attending the Moon Palace & STEAM Activity Fair in March.

The ambassadors created a space themed sensory room featuring a range of interactive elements, including sensory boards, 3D printed fidgets, a plasma ball and sounds.

The space provided a calm, engaging environment for children to explore and enjoy the event.

Feedback from the university, schools and parents was positive, with praise for how the theme was thoughtfully incorporated throughout. The ambassadors look forward to future opportunities to work in partnership with the university.



SEND support group for parents

SEND Parent Ambassadors run a weekly SEND support group every Thursday during term time at the Parents Advice Centre.

The drop-in session offers a chance for parents and carers to connect with others, share experiences and access support.

It can be a helpful way to feel less isolated and learn from families in similar situations. Younger children are welcome, and a diagnosis is not required.

Thursdays
Term time only
10am-12pm
Parents Advice Centre
30 Greatorex Street
E1 5NP

Waiting Well: SEND Parent Ambassadors collaborate for new project

The SEND Parent Ambassadors are working in collaboration with the Autism Diagnostic Assessment Service (ASDAS) to support families awaiting autism assessments.

As part of this work, parent-led workshops are being co-produced and delivered for families on the waiting list. Inspired by Emily Perl Kingsley's poem 'Welcome to Holland', the sessions will offer support and opportunities to connect with others in similar situations.

The workshops aim to create a supportive space where families can share experiences, learn from one another and feel less alone during what can often be an uncertain time. The focus will be on lived experiences, peer support and building better links between families and services.

The first workshop is planned for September 2026, with sessions delivered in English, Bengali and Somali. During the pilot phase, places will be offered to families referred through ASDAS.

For more information on the SEND Parent Ambassadors or to book them for your event, email sendparentambassadors@gmail.com



Understanding Education Health Care (EHC) Plans workshop

Over 50 parents attended an Understanding EHC Plans workshop at the Linc Centre in May, delivered by SENDIASS.

The session brought together parents who were considering applying for an EHC Plan, as well as those reflecting on past experiences. Jenny Miller, Manager, SENDIASS, FIS and Transitions, gave an overview of the process, including eligibility, key steps and appeals, helping to make a complex system easier to understand.

Many parents arrived with little knowledge but left feeling more informed and confident. Those who had been through the process before said the session refreshed their understanding and added new insight.

There was plenty of time for questions, with space to explore general concerns as well as individual situations. SENDIASS staff shared details on how to access further support, which a number of parents followed up on after the session.

Feedback was very positive, with parents appreciating the clear jargon-free explanations and open discussions.

For more information email
TowerHamlets&City.SENDIASS@towerhamlets.gov.uk

New mentoring programme for young people with SEND

SENDIASS are developing a mentoring programme for young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets. The aim is to match mentees with mentors who can provide tailored advice on education, careers and navigating challenges in life, while supporting young people to build self-confidence and self-esteem. The programme will offer flexible and accessible one-to-one support from qualified mentors throughout the year.

It is designed as a dynamic and engaging programme, creating a framework for mentors and mentees to get to know one another and identify areas where support or signposting to partner organisations may be needed.

Mentees will have opportunities to build friendships, expand their networks and discover new hobbies and interests. Mentors will offer experienced and trusted advice as young people explore new opportunities and develop confidence through positive engagement.

For more information contact
Alison McCloskey,
SEND Young People's Development Officer
Email: alison.mccloskey@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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.thsendforum.co.uk

Children processing grief and loss



Local parent Rizia wanted to share a moving poem by her son Sulaiman written after the sad passing of his grandmother.

Grief and loss is a very difficult concept to understand and internalise for all children, but especially for SEND / neurodiverse children.

I wanted to share the thoughts and feelings of my ten-year-old son, Sulaiman, which have been put together as a poem. I hope this can be a precious voice and an advocate for children with SEND.

Rizia

Sulaiman's Poem

Dear Nanu,

I miss you in the apartment.
It feels a little too quiet without your smile in the rooms.
I don't want you to go to heaven now.

I remember in Saudi Arabia,
Your lungs were stronger, your breathing was brave, like a superhero getting better.

When will you come back home? I miss you Nanu. I don't want you to die. I don't want you to go back to Allah. Where are you Nanu? Why did your lungs get weak?

I keep looking at the door, waiting for your footsteps, waiting for your hug.

Until then, I keep you in my heart,
like a warm little light that never goes out.

From your grandson,
Sulaiman Usaid Miah

Supporting children with SEND to travel independently

Supporting children with SEND to travel independently is a key step towards building confidence, safety and everyday life skills.

Tower Hamlets Council's Independent Travel Team recently delivered a series of practical training sessions to help children with SEND feel more confident getting to and from school.

Working alongside Transport for London (TfL) and the police, the sessions focused on real situations children face every day. From learning how to cross the road safely to recognising and boarding a bus, each step was broken down into clear actions.

For many families, travel can be a source of worry. These sessions aim to ease that pressure, helping children build confidence while giving parents reassurance that they are developing the skills to navigate their local area independently. It's part of the council's wider work to support children and young people with SEND to develop the skills they need for everyday life.

To find out more, scan the QR code or click [here](#).





The Executive Mayor Lutfur Rahman (centre) with the Fostering Recruitment and Assessment Team

Foster carers to get free council tax

Foster carers in Tower Hamlets will benefit from free council tax as a thank you to them for helping change the life of a young person.

The announcement came at the start of Foster Care Fortnight, a national awareness campaign which aims to show how important fostering is and to encourage more people to become foster carers.

As a thank you to those who register as foster carers, they will receive a 100 per cent tax reduction from the 2026–27 financial year. Foster carers will be reimbursed retrospectively at the end of their first year of approval. The council tax reduction is in addition to the allowances that foster carers are paid. Tower Hamlets offers foster carers generous financial support and training opportunities to

support parenting skills which includes therapeutic support.

The council also held two weeks of activities to highlight the important role of foster carers within the community. This included a launch event with stalls throughout the borough that gave information about how to sign up to be a foster carer, a fostering walk, leafleting and a community event.

“

Our foster carers are heroes and vital pillars of our community and the least we can do is to thank them by giving them free council tax.

Executive Mayor
Lutfur Rahman

”

Fostering information sessions

Residents interested in making a difference in a child's life are invited to attend upcoming fostering information sessions which will be held at community settings throughout Tower Hamlets.

Fostering offers a vital opportunity to support children and young people who need a safe and stable home. It can be a rewarding way to give back to the community, helping children thrive while making a lasting impact on their future.

The fostering team will be hosting relaxed information sessions, offering a chance to find out more about becoming a foster carer.

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn all about fostering, ask questions and speak with the fostering team. Light refreshments will be provided.



For more information, email
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/fostering

**LOVE
TOWER
HAMLETS**



LOVE YOUR TOWER HAMLETS **SUMMER** **OF FUN 2026**

**Come together and enjoy
hundreds of fantastic, FREE
activities for the whole community.**

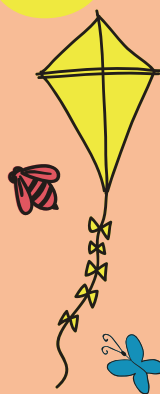
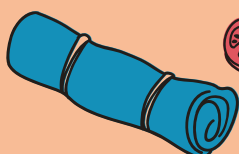
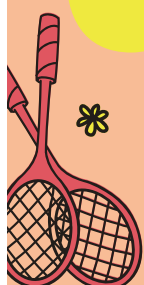
**Family fun days, heritage hunt, outdoor theatre,
gardening, crafts, cooking, sports, music making,
nature walks and much more.**

**Join thousands of people celebrating what there is
to Love about Tower Hamlets**

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/summerevents

Call 0207 364 6495, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Scan the QR code for more information



London's first Young Futures Hub



London's first Young Futures Hub is now open at Haileybury Youth Centre.

Part of a UK government initiative, the hubs aim to give young people access to a wide range of opportunities and support in one place.

Open to young people aged 10–19 (up to 25 with SEND), the hub brings together local partners and specialist organisations in Tower Hamlets to offer support,

activities and new opportunities under one roof. The hub focuses on three key areas:

- Employability
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Reducing crime and violence

The aim is to improve access to support and opportunities at a community level, helping young people to thrive.

The hub is open Wednesdays to Fridays, 12-8.30pm.

www.youngtowerhamlets.org.uk/about-us/young-future-hubs-opening-this-march

Bromley by Bow Youth Centre

Bromley by Bow Youth Centre is a free, open-access provision, welcoming young people aged 10–19 years (up to 25 with SEND). Its mission is to support young people by offering opportunities, practical guidance and a safe, inclusive space where they can relax, socialise and try something new.

The centre delivers a broad programme of activities, including pool, arts, boxing and gaming. During school holidays, the offer is extended through organised trips. Snacks and refreshments are provided during sessions.

In addition to the social activities, the youth centre places a strong emphasis on personal development. Study clubs, employability sessions, workshops, and accredited courses are all part of the programme. As a result, young people who attend gain valuable skills that can support their future pathways.

Bromley by Bow Youth Centre

**Bow Community Hub,
Jefferson Plaza
Bow, E3 3QE**

**Wednesdays, Thursdays and
Fridays
3.30-8.30pm**

For more details,
email haleema.miah@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Young Health Hub information event at the Town Hall

Young Health Hub is the new name for the partnership between Compass and Barnardo's, previously known as the Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Service.

The hub is holding an event to share more information about what it will offer to families on:

Friday 24 July 2026, 2-5pm

Drop-in, no booking required

**Grocers Wing, Tower Hamlets Town Hall,
160 Whitechapel Road, E1 1BJ**

It will be open to parents, children and young people and professionals.

Families will be able to access information on how to get support and what to expect. There will be fun and interactive activities for everyone.

The hub will also be holding regular online drop-in sessions, featuring a short overview of the Tower Hamlets model, followed by a Q&A session.



For more details, email stephanie.hall@barnardos.org.uk
www.younghealthhubtowerhamlets.org.uk

Update on Universal Credit two child limit

The government has removed the two child limit for Universal Credit. Previously, families only received the Child Element for their first two children. They can now receive the Child Element for every child, not just the first two.

For families already receiving Universal Credit, payments should have been updated automatically from April. If this has not happened, parents should contact the Universal Credit helpline or check online.

For more information, visit
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/cost-of-living

In the Neighbourhood festival returns

Tower Hamlets Council and All Points East will host In the Neighbourhood, the popular four day free-to-enter community programme of activities for the whole family. It will feature arts and crafts workshops, children and family theatre, live music, DJs, cinema, sports activities and much more.

In the Neighbourhood
Monday 24 -Thursday 27 August 2026
Victoria Park

www.allpointseastfestival.com/in-the-neighbourhood

Free language classes for children aged 6 to 16 years



Young Community Languages Tower Hamlets are offering young people in the borough the chance to learn their heritage languages and explore new languages.

They have partnered with schools, Idea Stores and voluntary organisations to provide language classes in Arabic, Bangla, Mandarin/ Cantonese and Somali.

Who can apply?

Learners must be aged between 6 and 16 years.

Learners can sign up for classes if they meet any one of these three conditions. They must:

- Live in the borough
- Attend a school in the borough
- Have a parent or guardian who works in the borough.

Classes are held after school and on weekends.

Spaces are limited.

For more information and to sign up, visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ycl or email ycl@towerhamlets.gov.uk

YOUNG COMMUNITY LANGUAGES

FREE GCSE LANGUAGE COURSES

Exciting opportunity for the borough's young people aged 11-16. Starts from 13 September 2026.

Class times: Sunday 11:00am – 2:00pm

Learning Locations

- Arabic: Idea Store Whitechapel, E1 1BU
- Bangla: Idea Store Whitechapel and Chrisp Street, E14 6BT
- Mandarin: Idea Store Watney Market, E1 2FB

ENROL NOW • LIMITED SPACE

To register or find out more, please contact ycl@towerhamlets.gov.uk

BOOST YOUR
GCSE GRADES

普通话
MANDARIN

বাংলা
BANGLA

العربية
ARABIC



Free family activities at the Tower of London

Families with children of all ages are welcome at the Tower of London to enjoy a free and memorable day out over the summer holiday break.

Families will be greeted by friendly staff upon arrival at the Welcome Centre, where they can take a rest, break away from the crowds, enjoy light refreshments and do simple family-friendly activities.

Families can also simply collect free admission tickets and enter the Tower immediately.

This offer is for families and not large holiday or community groups. Advanced booking is essential and places are limited. Register your details [here](#).



For more information, email communities@hrp.org.uk

CONNECT TO WORK
Funded by UK Government

TOWER HAMLETS
WORKPATH+
BRIDGING THE PEOPLE TO POTENTIAL



Connect to Work – Celebrating one year in Tower Hamlets

Offering free, personalised employment support for residents aged 18+ who are unemployed and experiencing barriers to work, such as disability, health conditions, or mental health challenges.

Join our one year celebration event to:

- Meet employers, partners and community organisations
- Discover your next step into employment

23 July 2026

10am – 2pm

Tower Hamlets Council, Grocers Wing 1

Scan the QR
code to reserve
your place



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
Date to be confirmed	Annual Parent Conference Further information on how to book places for parents will be available to schools shortly. Email: parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Information and training for professionals

DESCRIPTION
Working with families multi-agency seminar: Parenting Practitioner Network 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. The Parental Engagement Team will be using the next seminar to relaunch the Parenting Practitioner Network, an opportunity for professionals who deliver parenting and family programmes to come together, discuss challenges and share best practice. 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
- Shoreditch (Calvert Avenue)

TOWER HAMLETS

Holiday Childcare Scheme

The Tower Hamlets Childcare Scheme offers Ofsted registered childcare.

020 7364 0523
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/hcs

Ages 3-13 years old

Bookings now open

Summer scheme Monday 27 July to Friday 21 August 2026 (20 days)