

Parents' Advice Centre (PAC) and Young People's Advice Centre (YPAC)

Annual Report 2017/2018

1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

PAC believes children thrive and achieve their full potential when all partners – parents, professionals and young people – work together, and that the involvement of parents and young people leads to better services for children and young people.

We aim to build confidence in parents to be able to be actively involved in their child's education and to participate in the development of local services. We believe in developing effective relationships based on the mutual respect of feelings, opinions and values.

We work in partnership with parents, schools, voluntary and statutory agencies, as well as young people themselves, to provide a flexible menu of services in order to empower parents and carers to play an active and informed role in their child's education, leading to higher achievement for all children.

We provide the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) for Tower Hamlets and City and offer expert advice, mediation, advocacy and support for parents/carers, children and young people 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).





The PAC/YPAC provides the following service

- **Telephone advice line**
Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:00pm
- **Drop-in service**
every Tuesday and Friday
9:30am-3:30pm
- **Evening Drop-in service**
every Wednesday 4.00pm-6.30pm
- Advice by email or letter
- Admissions and exclusions service for families of children with SEND
- Information leaflets for collection or post
- Mediation service for schools
- Annual transition event for parents/carers of Year 5 children with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Casework for more complex cases (cases are assessed at weekly meetings and allocated to a member of the team)
- Specialist Transition Service for parents of non-SEND children for admissions, exclusions, managed moves and bullying
- Co-production Pilot ensuring parents and young people are fully involved in EHCP processes

We run a variety of support/information groups and parenting programmes including a weekly SEND parent support group, weekly 'Our Kitchen' meetings for young people 16-25 and specialist programmes when there is demand e.g. Epilepsy Parenting Programme, sex and relationship training, twice-yearly ADHD Parenting Programme and Triple-P Specialist Parenting Programme.

The PAC works closely with a range of other providers, stakeholders and partners including Health, Social Care, Citizens Advice Bureau, NAS, National Epilepsy Society, TH Volunteer Bureau, Council for Disabled

Children, Contact a Family and Welfare Benefits Advice Services.

All PAC and YPAC staff receive 21 hours of legal training on Education Health and Social Care accredited by the Law Society and Bar Council as well as exclusions and admissions training from ACE, which is also legally accredited.

Service aims

- To empower parents/carers, children and young people with disabilities and difficulties in learning
- To value and respect the contribution of parents/carers, children and young people
- To provide information about Special Educational Needs (SEN) procedures and access to independent support and advocacy
- To promote and facilitate a positive and effective partnership between families and professionals
- To support the inclusion of all children and young people with additional needs in mainstream schools
- To help raise achievement and support the progress of pupils with SEN
- To contribute to parents' understanding of how best to help their child
- To support the parent and or young person in seeking the most appropriate placement
- To support parents/carers and young people to obtain the provision their child/they need across education, health and social care

1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018

1,192

parents/carers received **advice, information** or **ongoing support** about their child's Special Educational Needs.

Contact was initially made by phone, email or attendance at Drop-in (average of 15 parents a week)



76

young people received **advice, information** or **on-going support** from YPAC



26%

of the children and young people, whose **parents/carers** contacted the service, would be considered to have a **disability** as defined under the Equality Act 2010



48%

of the **young people** who contacted the service would be considered to have a **disability** as defined under Equality Act



518

families were allocated a **caseworker** to **support** and work with **complex issues** in relation to education, social care and health



63

young people were **allocated a caseworker** to support and work with complex issues



On average **240** families a month received casework service – interventions ranging from one month to over a year



Weekly Parents' Support Group

has covered topics in last year ranging from managing behaviour to sex and relationships to welfare rights. Average attendance has been 12

2 ADHD parenting programmes were run in this period with 18 parents attending



Transition Fair for parents of Year 5 pupils was attended by 71 parents



| Ethnicity | % |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Bengali | 37 |
| White UK | 22 |
| Somalian | 13 |
| Black African | 7 |
| Afro Caribbean | 5 |
| Mixed White & Black Afro Caribbean | 7 |
| Mixed White & Black African | 1 |
| White European | 3 |
| South American | 2 |
| Turkish | 2 |
| Other Asian | 1 |

Young Peoples' Advice Centre



The service offers confidential and impartial information, advice and support to young people, 16-25, with special educational needs and disabilities. Younger children can also request a service if they would like one. YPAC also runs a drop-in for young people on Wednesdays, 4-6pm.

There are 2,000+ children and young people in Tower Hamlets who have an Education, Health and Care plan, and a wider cohort of young people who have educational needs/medical needs that do not qualify for a plan, or who may need support applying for a plan.

Through an outreach programme, working with schools, colleges and other youth settings, the service aims to ensure that as many young people as possible know about the service and can access it. Tower Hamlets YPAC also leads on the National Young People's Network.

The service also helped to set up, and continues to support, Our Time, a youth forum run for, and by, young people. YPAC helps 'Our Time' to run and manage their monthly forum meetings.

The service and the forum work in partnership to deliver positive activities that support young people to build their confidence, skills and knowledge. This includes 'Our Kitchen' (Wednesdays 4pm-6pm) cooking sessions and Our Space to support young people to work on projects and develop their skills.



27 young people
attended the
forum between
2014-2017

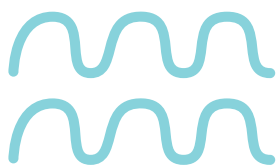
Young People's Advice Centre (YPAC)

Advice Line **020 7364 4982**

Email yp@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Drop-in every Wednesday 4pm-6pm





Our Time All Ability Youth Forum

Members of the youth forum attended the national 'Making Participation Work' conference in February and made contact with representatives from the Children's Commissioner. They have since worked with the Children's Commissioner and helped advise them on their projects.

The forum has also held a number of meetings to work on Tower Hamlets' new SEND strategy and have fed into this process. The young people met with Councillor Amy Whitlock-Gibbs and talked to her about what works well in the borough for them and what they would like to see developed or changed.

The forum began a journalism project called 'Our Stories'. One member is having his story published in Families Matter and another young person interviewed the Head of Participation at East London Foundation Trust and is working on a number of other pieces.

The forum was also commissioned by the Education Psychology (EP) service to make a short training film for education psychologists about young people's experiences. The film was well received by the EP service, who have since applied to the Tower Hamlets Ethics Committee to do a piece of research using the film.

It has really got me engaged in cooking and I now help out at home

Our Kitchen Member



Our Time All Ability Youth Forum

Advice Line **020 7364 4982**

Email **ourtime.yf@gmail.com**

Website **www.ourtimeyf.com**



Service evaluation 2017/18

| Service provided (please note parents access more than one service from PAC) | % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Support over the telephone | 47 |
| Advice at Drop-in session | 67 |
| Support at a meeting | 54 |
| Help with paperwork | 18 |
| Casework | 43 |

| Satisfaction with the service and staff | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Were you satisfied that the Parents' Advice Centre was neutral from the local authority, other professionals and school? | 90 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Were your concerns and queries dealt with promptly and considerately? | 84 | 14 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Was the member of staff dealing with your case polite and friendly? | 90 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Was the member of staff dealing with your case knowledgeable? | 87 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Was the member of staff dealing with your case easy to understand? | 89 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Were you satisfied that Parents' Advice Centre had done all they could? | 87 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| If you have a disability, were you satisfied with access to the service? | 93 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

Service evaluation 2017/18

Comments on any of the points on page 8

Very friendly, accessible and knowledgeable staff.

Keep getting people like member of staff 'A' to work for PAC. She is great and has changed my life.

The service received was very good. PAC is very helpful.

All the members of staff dealing with my case were very friendly and polite, also giving encouraging advice. They have interest in their work.

I would definitely recommend this service to anyone who needs support with SEN.

Very helpful, supportive, caring and excellent communicator. Member of staff 'A' was very empathetic.

Very happy with caseworker, keep up the good work.

Overall very happy with your service. No problem getting advice. This service is excellent. Advisor very helpful and understanding.



Got all the help we needed, very helpful with the service. Very easy to speak with her, 100% help from member of staff 'A'.

Excellent service. Member of staff 'A' was remarkable. PAC did so much for me, brilliant.

I would want just like to say that the advice worker that helped me was really good at her job, and also someone I could talk too easily.

The person was very helpful and has continued to support me. It is a wonderful service and the person was very good.

The service was okay but was not helpful in my case.

Service evaluation 2017/18

| Outcome for children and young people | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| I feel that the provision for my child in school is now at least adequate | 68 | 22 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| I feel that the information provided enabled me to pursue issues on my own | 72 | 19 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| I feel that the support provided enabled me to challenge the provision for my child | 74 | 15 | 10 | - | 1 |
| I feel that I now have a better understanding about SEN and the support that my child is entitled to | 75 | 19 | 5 | - | 1 |
| I feel that the adviser has helped me to build a better relationship with the school and/or the local authority | 79 | 18 | 2 | - | 1 |
| I feel as a result of the support my child is accessing school more frequently | 87 | 10 | 1 | - | 2 |
| The support provided enabled me to understand paperwork/reports | 94 | 5 | - | - | 1 |
| The support provided enabled me to understand and complete all relevant paperwork | 81 | 16 | 2 | - | 1 |
| I would recommend the service to other parents who are struggling with SEN issues | 91 | 7 | 1 | - | 1 |

Service evaluation 2017/18

Comments on any of the points on page 10



Very positive feeling, keep up the service.
Child 'A' is doing so much better at school now.

PAC is very useful and they do a really positive job. Always ready to help whether it's filling out a form or going to meetings with the parents. They are very considerate, friendly and knowledgeable.

Our relationship with the school has improved 100% thanks to work with member of staff 'A'.

Workers at PAC treat you and your child as individuals and my daughter has improved so much at school. Can't begin to thank you!

Staff made me feel my son's behaviour was not a problem, it's just the teachers needed to learn how to best work with him. I felt I could talk to them about anything and they would listen.

PAC helped me understand the statement and updating it. I am thankful for the support

The advice was extremely useful and the staff at PAC were very knowledgeable. Without their support at the meeting my children would not have their statements in place.

Member of staff 'A' made me see things differently and make changes which have been the making of my son. My whole family are very grateful.

PAC really helped me understand the process. Very helpful service.

My worker was extremely supportive to me in all areas. Helps me get the best support for my child and speaks for my child's best interests in all meetings. Things have really improved.

I think every case is different and different methods should be used to cater each individual. This needs workers at PAC do this!

The office was prompt to attend meetings and very informative in suggesting on future schools.

Without member of staff 'A' and her amazing help and knowledge my son would never have done so well in secondary.

Keep up all the good work.

Comments on any aspects which can be improved

Outreach at school and GPs.

More workers needed so to give more time and help in other areas i.e. admission, appeal, etc.

I would like to come to the parents' session more as it helped me a lot and I want more parents coming to the sessions.

More staff. I sometimes have to wait some time to see my caseworker as she is so busy and sometimes has to come and see me or email me in the evening. I am not complaining about her, she is a total professional with a wealth of knowledge.

Please don't cut this service anymore, it has been a lifeline for me and my children.



Parents' Advice Centre (PAC)

30 Greatorex Street
Whitechapel
London E1 5NP

Advice Line: **020 7364 6489**

Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:00pm

Wednesday Evening 4:30pm-6:30pm

Main Office/Admin: **020 7364 6481**

Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:00pm

✉ pac@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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30 Greatorex Street
Whitechapel
London E1 5NP

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