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**EVERY  
CHANCE  
for EVERY  
CHILD**

### Foreword

Welcome to our newly refreshed Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

*Our vision is that all children with special educational needs and disabilities have every chance to have a happy, healthy and safe childhood with access to opportunities that set them up for future success.*

We take our joint responsibility to coordinate support, care and learning for these children and young people seriously. As the local system leaders for SEND, we are proud of the journey we have started to improve and strengthen support, provision and outcomes in Tower Hamlets. Together we have established a new accountability structure to ensure there is systems leadership and accountability across education, social care and health that benefits from meaningful involvement and contributions from young people and their parents and carers.

We know, however, that there are still things that we need to do better which is why we are committing joint resources to a dedicated SEND improvement plan. This plan is driven by the SEND Improvement Board and overseen ultimately by the Health and Wellbeing Board. This strategy has been developed by engaging and seeking feedback from parents and carers, as well as professionals working with children and young people with SEND and with the children and young people themselves. Going forward, we are committed to working more closely with young

people and their families because we recognise that they are the experts about their own needs and are therefore a key part of the local leadership system.

Over the past year, the context has rapidly changed, and we have been taking the first steps in making these priorities a reality. Since the strategy was first developed, we have undertaken two external reviews which have helped us better understand the strengths and weaknesses in our local area and the steps we need to take to improve. This is why, one year on, we believe it is important to share with you a clearer and updated vision for children and young people with SEND.

We look forward to working with you to deliver the services and outcomes which children and young people in this borough deserve.

**Cllr Rachel Blake, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board**

**Dr Sam Everington, Chair of the Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Cllr Danny Hassell, Chair of the Children and Families Partnership Board**

### Introduction

This strategy sets out the local route map for services and support for children and young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets from 0 to 25 years old. The strategy includes children with complex medical need or disability who may not have learning difficulties but who can face considerable challenge in accessing education.

#### Legislative context

The current arrangements for the education and care of children and young people with SEND are largely governed by the Children and Families Act 2014. This requires partners to pay regard to the statutory Code of Practice for SEND. The Care Act 2014 sets out duties which the council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) must fulfil for children and young people with disabilities and their families, including making direct payments and supporting transitions to adult care services. We are held to account through Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) whose role it is to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the local SEND system.

#### Priorities

The CCG and the council will jointly focus on making improvements on these priorities, developed through consultations with parents and young people, over the next four years:

1. Leading SEND
2. Early identification and assessment

3. Commissioning effective services which respond to local needs
4. Good quality education provision for all children
5. Supporting successful transitions and promoting independence

Under each priority there are specific aspects of the local SEND system we will improve in order to deliver better outcomes for all children and young people with SEND.

#### Driving the vision forward, in partnership

We want every child or young person with SEND to have every chance to thrive. We have ensured that our system is driven by an understanding of local needs and a thorough understanding of our strengths and areas for development across different services and agencies, with the broad aim of tackling health inequalities for children and young people in the local population. At the heart of this system sits the SEND Improvement Board which interrogates the data and holds each part of the system accountable for how it is delivering on behalf of local residents.

In 2017-18, Tower Hamlets Together (THT), a sub-group of the local Health and Wellbeing Board, developed a set of 'I-Statements' which identify what matters most to the people of Tower Hamlets. This strategy adopts relevant 'I-Statements' to assess how the health and care system is progressing towards making positive outcomes a reality for local residents over the next 5-10 years.

## Context of SEND in Tower Hamlets

### Children in Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets has a young population. There are **112,900 0-25 year olds** in Tower Hamlets. There are also high levels of deprivation in the borough, with 32% of children growing up in poverty. Around 8% of the population was born outside the UK and 75% of primary school children speak a first language which is not English (compared to 54% in Inner London and 21% nationally).

### Children with special educational needs and disabilities

There are approximately 9,000 children and young people between 0 and 25 years with SEND resident in Tower Hamlets. The majority of these are supported by schools using their own budgets. Approximately 3,000 are given additional support (and resource) via an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan).

There are more children with a special need in Tower Hamlets than in other areas, 17% of pupils in our schools have a special need or disability, compared to a national average of 15%.

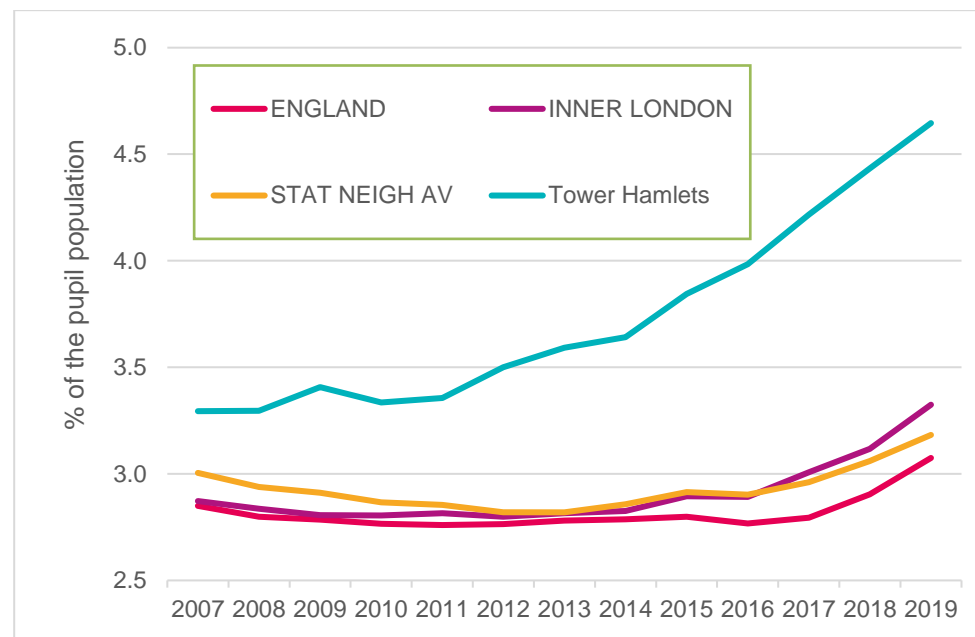
Within schools the percentage of children and young people receiving SEN Support is 12.4%. This is higher than the average for England (11.9%) but in line with London averages. For children and young people with EHC plans the figure is 4.6%. This is significantly higher than both London (3.3%) and England (3.1%).

### Increases in demand

Across the country the rate of EHC plans has increased since the introduction of the 2014 reforms. Historically Tower Hamlets has always had a higher proportion of children and young people with

statutory support, but the increase in Tower Hamlets since 2014 has been higher than national levels.

Figure 1 - EHC Plans as percentage of the pupil population over time, 2007-2019



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### Types of need

The four areas of need covered in the Code of Practice are:

- Cognition and learning - includes specific learning difficulties (SpLD), moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD)
- Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs
- Communication and interaction - including speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Sensory and/or physical needs - includes, hearing impairment (HI), visual impairment (VI), multi-sensory impairment (MSI) and physical disabilities (PD).

Speech, Language and Communication and Social, Emotional and Mental Health are the most prevalent needs for children and young people in Tower Hamlets.

### Social Care

Whilst large numbers of children and young people are learning well at school, the number of those with SEND who are in vulnerable families and subject to child protection plans (CPPs), is also relatively high. Table 5 shows that, although only 4.2 per cent of children in the borough have an EHC plan, 21.3 per cent of those with a CPP had one. Children with a CPP are five times more likely to also have high levels of SEND than those in the general population. This means that ensuring a strong working relationship between SEND and social care services is particularly important.

Figure 2 – Breakdown of primary need type

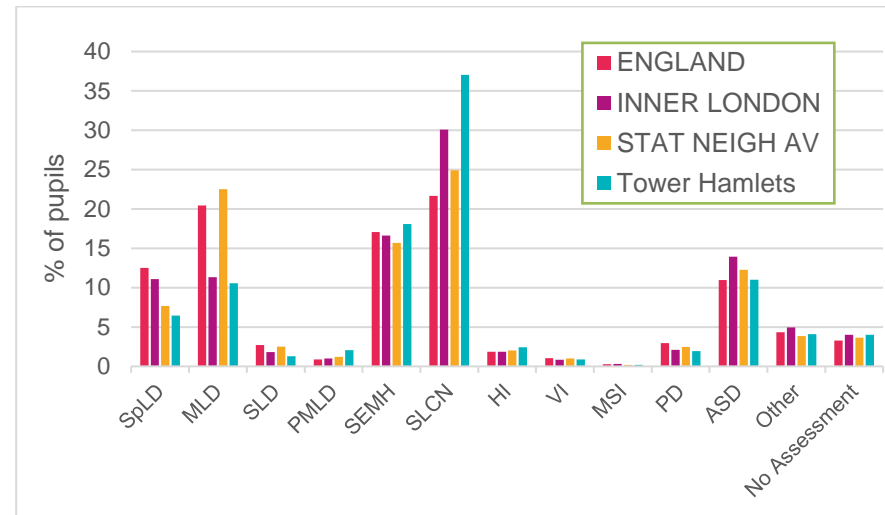


Table 5: Child protection plans (CPPs) issued for children with and those without EHC plans, Tower Hamlets (March 2017)

Category of CPP	With EHC plan number (%)	With no EHC plan number (%)	Total
Neglect	35 (43%)	67 (22%)	102
Physical abuse	8 (10%)	63 (21%)	71
Sexual abuse	4 (5%)	11 (4%)	15
Emotional abuse	31 (38%)	149 (50%)	180
Multiple	3 (4%)	10 (3%)	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>381</b>
<b>(% of total with CPP)</b>	<b>(21.3%)</b>	<b>(78.7%)</b>	

Source: Tower Hamlets SEND JSNA (2018a)

## SEND Charter

The SEND Charter replicates the Charter of the Children and Families Strategy 2019-2024: because inclusion is a fundamental principle in how we support and engage children and young people with SEND. When the Children and Families Partnership Board developed the Children and Families Charter, it was developed with SEND in mind.

**Working restoratively with children, young people and families** so that together we build relationships between professionals and families, prevent harm and resolve conflict where it arises.

**Developing and championing engagement with children and young people** so that they can help shape priorities and the development of services to meet their needs. We will do this through our youth forums, including the All Ability Youth Forum, Youth Empowerment Squad and our new Young People SEND Ambassadors.

**Committing to consistent and sustained focus on achieving better outcomes** through better understanding the impact of commissioned services in meeting children's needs.

**Ensuring all children, young people and families are supported to access the right help at the right time** through a range of universal and targeted services, with good quality information, advice and guidance and a comprehensive and accessible local offer.

**Ensuring a strong offer for all families**, with clearly defined pathways to enhanced services for those that need it

**Sharing data in a safe but timely way** to enable better service planning and interventions to take place and break down the barriers across health, social care and education.

**Sharing positive stories of children and young people in Tower Hamlets** with special educational needs and disabilities, to celebrate their achievements, promote opportunities and make them feel a valued part of our community.

**Ensuring every child and young person will have a trustworthy adult to confide in** - be it parent, teacher, teaching assistant, youth worker or social worker - who can support them with their needs, especially if they are concerned about their safety or wellbeing

**Ensuring every child should have access to a safe space** - either at home, in a school, youth hub, leisure centre or Idea Store.

The actions within this strategy form part of a local multi-agency campaign over the life of the Children and Families Strategy which will see us put children and young people at the heart of everything we do in Tower Hamlets.

## Priority 1: Leading SEND

For children and young people with SEND to thrive and achieve requires strong strategic leadership. This leadership will set the vision, drive improvement and ensure accountability for delivery. Effective leadership also helps to ensure that services are designed to meet the needs of children, young people and their families at the earliest opportunity; reducing duplication, fragmentation and silo working. Effective leadership also means delivering within the available resources and this is a key priority for all partners.

### Clear governance

Various stakeholders have previously expressed concern that whilst there is good practice within the system, challenges remain around ensuring services are joined up and co-ordinated. Our governance and accountability mechanisms have been streamlined and clarified. The development of a more joined up approach and a shared direction between the council and the CCG, both at a strategic and operational level remains a priority. **We will produce and share an annual report for each year of the strategy to document our progress and increase our public accountability.**

**We will develop an effective monitoring, evaluation and review cycle so leaders know what is working and where remedial**

**action is needed.** This information will be reflected in service plans and used to hold leaders to account.

### Improving use of data

Effective evidence based decision-making needs good quality data. A wealth of information is gathered about children and young people with SEND and this must be used in a way which informs and drives the development of services and the school estate. There have been improvements to the collection, collation and analysis of data but more work remains to be done to maximize use of this information in decision making. **We will work together using quality data, to enable the collation and sharing of key data to improve evidence-based decisions in service planning, joint commissioning and capital projects.** This information will also help us to make judgements about the effectiveness of services.

### Workforce capacity and development

The systems and processes we adopt can only be as effective as those who are delivering these on the front line. There are national and regional shortages of some types of expertise in the SEND system. **We will work as a system to understand and address pressures across the local workforce which supports children and young people with SEND.** This will inform an integrated professional development offer for the workforce to address local needs and disseminate effective practice, promoting better partnership working

### Involvement of parents, carers, children and young people



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The active involvement of children, young people and parents in SEND decision making is a key theme in the SEND Code of Practice and a local priority in Tower Hamlets. Parents are a key stakeholder and must be given a clear voice in shaping and influencing these decisions at individual and system wide levels. **We will ensure representation of parents and young people on all key decision-making bodies across the SEND system and continue to engage positively with the independent SEND Forum.**

The development of the SEND Ambassadors programme has been very well received, offering advice, support and information for parents, by parents. **We will continue to support the SEND Ambassadors programme and work to extend this to a Young People Ambassadors equivalent.**

### Advice, support and information

The council has a long history of working with parents and carers through the Parent Advice Centre, supported by impartial advice and advocacy provided through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). **The council will work with the Engagement subgroup of Tower Hamlets Together which is working towards a vision whereby patients and the public become equal partners in the entire cycle of service planning and delivery.**

In response to feedback from parents and carers we have refreshed the Local Offer website. The website includes a wide range of information about local services for families. We have taken action to improve the promotion and awareness of the local offer and make it more accessible. **We will continue to refresh and update the local offer website in response to feedback.**

### SEND: Everybody's business

As leaders across the SEND system we believe that all services, including non-specialist and universal services, should be considering the needs of children and young people with SEND. Our holiday childcare scheme which fully integrates children with SEND is a good example of this. We believe that it is our role to champion this so more services and places across our borough are fully inclusive, as well as ensuring sufficient specialist capacity. **We will promote and champion inclusion through all our services, including through our capital programmes.**

### Key performance indicators

- The number of hits on the Local Offer website.
- The number of parents and carers attending Parent Ambassador sessions.
- The number of children and young people attending Young People Ambassador sessions.
- Number of capital projects delivered which are designed to provide school and community access to children and young people with SEND.

### Key outcomes: 'I statements'

- I believe the trust, confidence and relationships are in place to work together with services to decide the right next steps for us as a whole community.
- I want to see money being spent in the best way to deliver local services.



## Priority 2: Early identification and assessment

Early identification and assessment lay the foundations to improve the life chances and opportunities for children. This requires a focus across universal settings in health, education and care services to understand and identify special needs and disabilities.

### A shared understanding in the early years

The earliest opportunity for identification is through health services, including midwives and health visitors. Health services will notify the council of any child who is identified at birth as having a special need or disability, for example through the New Born Hearing Screening Programme or when visual impairment is detected. Health are the universal services in contact with under 5s and will notify the council of those who may develop special needs or a disability. This could be through a section 23 notification or as a consequence of development checks. **We will evaluate all our developmental screening programmes** to make sure that our coverage levels remain high and that this information is shared to plan future services. In order to improve effective identification, **we will provide joint training across relevant universal services** on special educational needs and disabilities.

Once additional needs are identified, there are a range of services across early years and support within settings that can be accessed. However, there are still a significant minority of children who do not access support in the early years. As a result,

these children are at risk of falling behind their peers. **We will complete an audit of children in Reception classes with previously unidentified needs** and use the learning to develop necessary actions. **We will also continue to increase take up of early learning places for 2 year olds** so that more children can benefit from good or outstanding early years education.

The 2 to 2 and a half year old development check is vital for identifying developmental needs. **We will continue to deliver this fully integrated review** with both health visitors and children's centres, sharing this information to provide the right support.

### Clear pathways

We have produced a universal pathway which provides clear opportunities for identification and referral from birth and through the early years. **We will develop clear pathways for a range of needs**, with a priority for: speech and language, autism and social, emotional and mental health needs.

In order to build on our improvements, such as the work we have done to streamline the process for referrals from health agencies, **we will work to establish a clear and common understanding of different types of need across the local area, including descriptors for special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs).**

### Diagnosis and assessment

Too many parents and education settings tell us that some assessments take too long to complete. Waiting times for an ASD

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diagnostic assessment are an ongoing concern. **Whilst waiting times are well reported, and a service improvement plan is in place to reduce the waiting times,** further action is required to ensure the timeliness of assessment meets National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. Using our pathways, **we will seek to identify areas where processes need to be improved so that assessment times can be reduced.**

Whilst there have been improvements to EHC plan assessment timescales, for too many parents and children these are not being issued as quickly as they should be. **We will continue our work to reduce the timescales for issuing plans.**

Assessments should be done in a way that is open, transparent and outcomes focused. In order for plans to be effective a range of different services, including health and social care, must be involved in drawing up plans and making contributions to care packages. These should be co-produced with parents. **We will ensure all relevant partners are involved in developing plans** with parents, and that their respective contributions to those plans are clear.

**Where assessments do not result in a plan being issued, we will analyse this information for trends and learning** which will inform earlier support and improved information and guidance.

**We will create a transparent system for allocation of resources** to meet the needs of children and young people across all services, and parents and young people will be fully informed about the use of personal budgets at the point of assessment and review.

### Key Performance Indicators

- The proportion of children receiving an integrated health review at 2 to 2 and half years of age.
- The proportion of 2 year olds attending early education settings.
- The percentage of pupils with identified special educational needs who are achieving a good level of development at the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The percentage of children and young people assessed by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) within five weeks.
- The proportion of EHC plans completed within statutory timescales and in line with national and regional averages.
- The proportion of plans receiving Health input within six weeks.
- The number of mediation cases and tribunals for EHC plans.

### Key outcomes: 'I statements'

- I am able to access safe and high-quality services (when I need them).
- My children get the best possible start in life.
- I am supported to live the life I want.

### Priority 3: Commissioning effective services to respond to local needs

Ensuring that needs are met requires effective and mature partnership working at both a strategic level and at the level of individual support. In order to make best use of resources we need to further improve our understanding of both demand and the impact of commissioned services in improving outcomes.

#### Using data for planning

In order to effectively plan and commission services there must be a shared and robust set of data on different types of need across the borough. **We will use the joint strategic needs assessment to identify gaps in provision** and extend the analysis to project future demand for services across the local area.

In order to ensure that commissioning continues to meet the needs of children and families, it should also reflect what has been identified at the level of individual plans. **We will better link commissioning decisions with care packages and ensure they support objectives set out in EHC plans.**

#### Development of joint commissioning

We are developing our joint commissioning arrangements across the local area. We have already established a joint children's commissioning team across the council and the CCG and have

developed a new commissioning plan (2019-2023). This commissioning plan 2019- 2023 sets out:

- The SEND commissioning priorities for this period.
- How demand will be effectively planned and managed.
- How data will inform commissioning activity.
- How partners, specifically parents and carers, will be engaged throughout the commissioning cycle.
- The individual programmes of work over the period.

**We will formalise joint commissioning arrangements between the council and the CCG, with timeframes for specific areas mapped against future commissioning cycles.**

There is a shared commitment to joint funding of packages of support and an agreement on how this will work has been agreed. **We will establish clear processes for professionals from key agencies to work together to assess and decide on support, and to use joint funding** for individual young people who need support from more than one agency.

Children and young people, together with their parents and carers, have an important role to play in shaping our local approach to commissioning. **We will actively work with them at each stage of the commissioning cycle.** Alongside this, we need to do better at communicating the range of services that are available to meet their needs so that they can be involved in shaping the services that matter to them.

Accessing high quality sustainable independent placements is critical to ensure all children receive the appropriate support in a timely manner. **We will develop a commissioning framework for**

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### independent placements for children and young people with SEND.

In order for Tower Hamlets to access a broad range of SEND placements Commissioning will seek to access existing successful placement frameworks commissioned at a regional or sub-regional level. Where existing partnership arrangements do not meet local need, the commissioning activity will focus on the specific gaps.

The primary health provider for therapies across the local area has an integrated therapies department and has led on piloting practise models which integrate the delivery of therapies for children with multiple and complex needs. Learning from the pilot will inform and guide the integration and future delivery of therapies across all settings. **We will work to integrate therapies across the local area, with a drive to ensure children are 'school ready', and that there is a continuity of service throughout a child's treatment, irrespective of the setting.**

In order to assess the effectiveness of services we need to be better informed and clear about the impact that they are having for children, young people and their parents. **We will take steps to improve how we can measure the impact of our commissioned services** on the lives of children and young people with SEND.

There needs to be further clarity for parents and schools about how to access different services and what they can expect from that offer. There will be a focus on large, strategically important services such as CAMHS, to ensure parents, schools and other stakeholders are able to easily navigate the diverse pathways within the service. **We will make clear the different levels of service offer available to different groups of young people.**

### Personal budgets

Very few children, young people and parents have personal budgets in Tower Hamlets. Personal budgets offer great choice, flexibility and independence which can be empowering. **We will support the take up of personal budgets and direct payments** by first ensuring that all EHC plans include a resource breakdown against the provision and outcomes.

### Key performance indicators

- The proportion of plans with integrated packages of care.
- The percentage of EHC plans with Health input within the 6 week timeframe.
- The percentage of children and young people waiting less than 13 weeks for the first outpatient appointment for therapies.
- The number of CAMHS cases being discharged due to non-attendance or engagement.
- The number of families receiving a personal budget.

### Key outcomes: 'I statements'

- I feel like services work together to provide me with good care.
- I am able to access safe and high quality services (when I need them).
- I have a positive experience of the services I access, overall.

## Priority 4: Good quality education provision for all children

We are committed to maintaining a continuum of education provision and ensuring every school in the borough can play its part in supporting children and young people with special needs and disabilities. Currently schools receive a high level of funding from the High Needs Funding Block in comparison with other boroughs and a key challenge will be maintaining the positive outcomes for pupils whilst reviewing the funding levels in order to meet demand within the available budget.

All our schools should be schools for children with SEND and all our teachers should be equipped and supported to be teachers of children with SEND. Educational outcomes are strong and we remain committed to building on the current good practice.

### **Inclusion in mainstream schools**

The majority of children with SEND are educated within mainstream settings within the borough. We are proud of how inclusive our schools are and want to build on this. **We will develop a clear inclusion benchmarking tool for mainstream schools**, which recognises strengths and areas for development, **as well as supporting schools to gain 'autism aware' accreditation. We will develop a high-quality professional development offer to further build capacity in schools so that staff can translate this expectation into practice.**

Our ambition is to achieve more consistency in inclusive practice across all mainstream schools. As we achieve a greater level of

consistency, our expectation is that the demand for EHC Plans will reduce.

As a result of financial pressures and feedback we receive from schools, we are progressing changes to central services. Through this work **we will ensure clarity over the statutory, core and traded offer to schools.**

There are significant pressures on budgets for all providers, but the impact of education funding changes could impact further on school budgets. **We will work with the Schools Forum and other stakeholders to review and monitor high needs funding** and ensure best use is made of resources

In order to be more responsive to the needs of schools **we will develop mechanisms to systematically gather feedback on their experiences of the SEND system.**

### **Specialist educational provision**

Nearly all our special schools are either good or outstanding. **We will work with our special schools to share best practice**, continue outreach work where it demonstrates impact and an effective investment and consider further opportunities to utilise the pedagogical knowledge and experience through training and other programmes of support across the borough.

We have reviewed the current resource base provision to inform the LA's future commissioning intentions of this provision, ensuring it is relevant to and meets the needs of children and young people in the borough. There are some gaps in more specialist provision for children with particular needs and we will use the development of resource bases within mainstream schools

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to address this. **We will develop resource base provision/s for children with high functioning autism (ASD).**

### Social, Emotional and Mental Health provision

Work has been undertaken to review SEMH needs and provision, together with a review of alternative provision. This has helped to identify what steps are needed to promote mental health and wellbeing across the borough, as well as addressing gaps in specialist SEMH provision. **We will take forward the actions from the SEMH review** to ensure we develop specialist provision for girls and a form of respite provision with a clear focus on reintegration into mainstream education.

### Post-16 provision

For many young people with SEND, remaining in their school or specialist provision is their preferred option. For others it is a transition to college, where they can work towards academic or work-related qualifications, including supported internships and apprenticeships. **We will work with all post-16 providers to ensure that Tower Hamlets offers a variety of post-16 options to meet the needs of all.**

### Pupil place planning

We have improved our understanding of current and future demand for mainstream and special school places, better aligning the work of the SEND and Pupil Place Planning Services. This has improved estate planning and informed appropriate capital programmes for special schools in order to ensure the borough has appropriate and best value educational provision for young people

with SEND up to the age of 25. **Informed by reviews, a successful bid for £6m from the DfE's Capital Fund and internal capital investment, we will expand Phoenix and Beatrice Tate schools, as well as London East Alternative Provision. We will develop our mainstream school provision, including the five nursery schools, to provide a more inclusive offer particularly with regard to Sensory Impairment, ASD and SEMH. We will invest in our leisure centres and recreation grounds to make them more accessible and to extend opportunities for children with SEND to socialise with their peers.**

### Key performance indicators

- The percentage of pupils with identified special educational needs who are achieving a good level of development at the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Number of children with SEND passing the phonics screening test.
- Attainment 8 score at GCSE for children with SEND.
- Number of children attending educational provision outside of the borough.
- Attendance of children and young people with SEND.
- Number of fixed term exclusions among children and young people with SEND.

### Key outcomes: 'I statements'

- My children get the best possible start in life.
- I am supported to live the life I want.
- I have a positive experience of the services I access, overall.



## Priority 5: Supporting successful transitions and promoting independence

Any transition in the life of a child or young person needs careful support and consideration. Transition is a process, not an event and its success is dependent on communicating information to secure continuity of experience through key points of development. We also want promotion of independence to be at the heart of our system so that young people are supported into and prepared for adult life.

### Planning for transitions

During the early years of a child's life, there is an opportunity to identify and provide interventions for children who have additional needs. We know that families who access local early years services can soon access additional help, for example through Children's Centres and/or have their child assessed for an EHC Plan if necessary. A partnership between parent, health providers and childcare or education providers is particularly important at this time.

In order to help effectively plan for transitions, local agencies should work in partnership so that needs are accurately reflected in EHC Plans and new settings are provided with the right information. The key transition points are:

- Accessing early years provision
- Moving into Primary School
- Transitions to Secondary School
- Year 9, to start preparing for adulthood
- Post -16 provision and beyond.

Early years has developed a strong universal and targeted offer working in partnership with a range of agencies. This enables a prompt identification of any additional needs and, when necessary, provision of early help and or intervention at the earliest opportunity.

Children's centres provide families with access to a range of services and opportunities for early learning for their children. Families are supported in accessing free early learning childcare places for their children which supports children's learning, development and readiness for school. All childcare providers have a trained Inclusion Co-ordinator, supported by the Local Authority's Inclusion Team, who is responsible for working with parents to identify and plan for children with SEND.

Partnership working between childcare providers, parents and schools enables information sharing and planning for the children's needs, thus supporting a successful transition. Children's centres staff link with their local schools, working together on school readiness and to prepare families plan for the changes that going to school will bring.



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**We will ensure schools are provided with the right information to support children as they start school. We will ensure young people and parents and carers are routinely consulted** about the support and advice they need from Year 9, as they prepare for their child becoming an adult.

**We will use information from settings and annual reviews to gain a clearer understanding of the progress of children and young people who have SEND as they progress through school and college.**

To facilitate a smooth transition between the ages of 14 to 19, we need to focus on our joint working across agencies from Year 9, so that by the time a young person leaves secondary school or children's social care support there is a clear progression for them from children's to adult services and into the world of further education, or employment. This is supported through one of the priorities in the recently launched 14-25 learning and achievement strategy. **We will clarify pathways into training and work experience and towards independent adulthood, for young people with SEND from age 14.**

Being able to travel independently is an important life skill. **We will provide every opportunity to support young people who are able to learn the skills to travel independently and safely.**

### **Training opportunities**

We know that most post-16 education for young people with SEND is provided at school sixth forms and further education (FE)

colleges and there are a limited number of supported employment and internship opportunities available. Through this strategy **we will focus on broadening the range of post-16 work and education opportunities for those with SEND, whilst continuing to support those that can access Higher Education to have the opportunity to do this.**

We will increase the number of supported internships, apprenticeships and work experience places offered by employers in Tower Hamlets to young people with SEND.

### **Moving to adult services**

We will review current systems for carrying out assessments for adult health and social care services and set out plans to ensure all these take place early enough and are linked to the young person's ambitions and outcomes as set out in their EHC Plan.

We will ensure all young adults with SEND are invited to attend their annual health check with their GP and all those with complex needs have an up-to-date healthcare plan.

### **Key performance indicators**

- More under 5s are accessing early years services.
- More young people with SEND are on supported internships.
- The percentage of patients with learning disabilities receiving an annual health check in the last 12 months has increased.
- Measure on reviews at year 9 e.g. percentage of cases adult social care are engaging with.

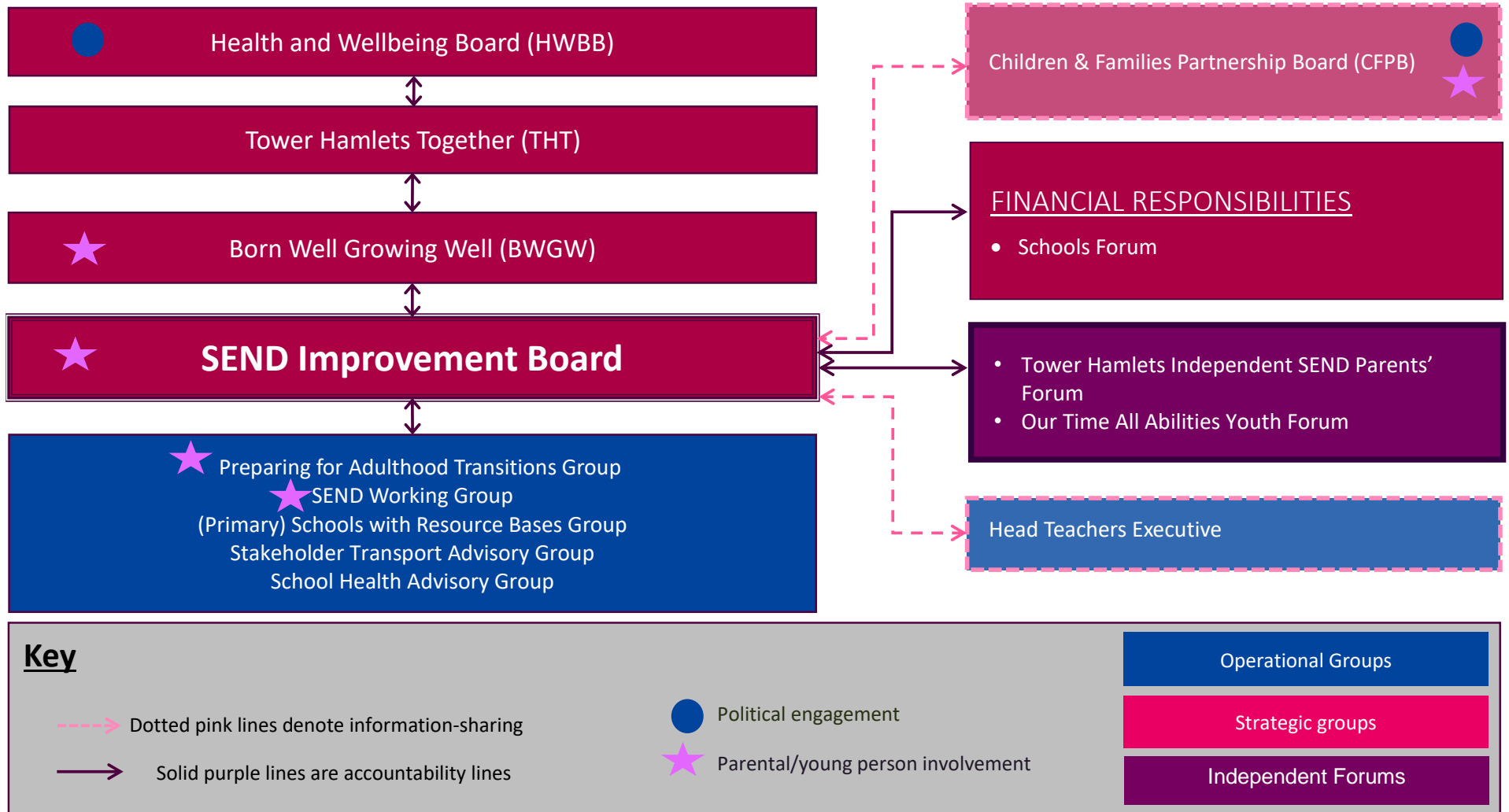
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- Increase in the number of young people receiving independent travel training.

### Key outcomes: 'I statements'

- I am supported to live the life I want
- I am supported to make healthy choices

## Appendix 1: Governance



## Appendix 2: Glossary

ASD	Autistic spectrum disorder	SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication needs
BWGW	Born Well Growing Well	SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	SPLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group	THT	Tower Hamlets Together
EHC plan or EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan. EHC plans replaced Statements of SEN.	VI	Visual Impairment
HI	Hearing Impairment		
HNFB	High Needs Funding Block		
HWBB	Health and Wellbeing Board		
JCE	Joint Commissioning Executive		
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties		
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment		
PD	Physical Disability		
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties		
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health		
SEN	Special Educational Need		
SEN Support	Most children and young people with SEND will be helped by their early years setting or school or college at SEN support, by implementing reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to learning and through putting evaluated, SEN provision in place.		
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator		
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability		

## Appendix 3: Stakeholder consultation

### Stakeholder comments from early engagement events in 2017 which informed the strategy

- There should be strong and visible leadership of the SEND system in Tower Hamlets. The commitments in the strategy require effective leadership to ensure they are implemented.
- “A clear strategic vision is required in order to ensure all children with SEND in Tower Hamlets receive equal support.”
- “For me it comes down to communication: who do I talk to about my child, who is in charge?”
- The strategy “... seems positive and aspirational. There is much to be done to establish genuine joined up working across services.”
- Parents and carers want to be involved. They want to build on their involvement in decisions about their own children and have their views sought and to be represented on decision-making groups.
- “Young people should be involved in any strategy group and both parents and young people should have support in understanding how things 'work'.”
- “Parents involvement in what they can use funding for and what their child should automatically be entitled to within the education system.”
- Good information that is easily available. An easy to access 'Local Offer' site is an important element, as is transparency by professionals supporting children and young people with SEND, including on budgets.
- “There needs to be more information regarding the SEND 'pathways' through the education system.”
- “More parent groups and clearer information on things available for specific children.”
- Better planning for the future. To make the most of the resources available and to ensure there are school and college places and the staff to provide the education and care.
- “How will we ensure that there are staff in place to support the increasing number of children with SEND and EHC plans?”
- “We welcome more systematic assessment of SEND need and planning in advance for sufficient special school places.”
- “More should be done to create partnership with business to create opportunities for young people with SEND.”
- “We need to have high expectations, but also realistic expectations.”

Since the Strategy was completed, we have continued to maintain a dialogue with residents to improve services and support for children and young people with SEND, and their families. More recent engagement event focused on resources.

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### Stakeholder comments from SEND Capital Fund Consultation (February-March 2019)

In total 49 responses were received to the online survey, 60% of which were from young people, parents and carers, and a further 50 parents and carers engaged through consultative meetings.

Over 95% of responses to the online survey were in favour of funds being committed to increase places at Beatrice Tate School and Phoenix School. In the online survey, respondents were offered possible uses of the capital funding and invited to choose those they supported most. All six possible projects received support but the most popular three were:

- new specialist resource bases in schools
- sensory spaces in nursery schools
- expansion and improvement of facilities for 16-20 year olds to learn independence and work-place skills.

### High Needs Funding Block Consultation (May-June 2019)

Outreach and engagement workshops during May and June 2019 were focused on the financial pressures and challenges. Twelve engagement workshops were attended by over 160 people, primarily parents of children with SEND. They aimed to explain the specifics of local SEND arrangements and their funding, as well as to work together to find possible solutions to problems.

The formal consultation looked into proposals that could help to reduce the overspend on the high needs funding block (HNFB). A total of 296 responses to the formal consultation survey were received. Of the total individual responses (269), 40 per cent were

from parents or carers and 37 per cent from practitioners in schools or early years' settings and 15 per cent from those working for council services. Other organisations included a joint union response, health providers and two voluntary sector disabilities groups who responded either via the survey or through separate, written submissions. The consultation found that:

- 59% of respondents strongly disagreed with a proposal to align payment bands for pupils with SEND more closely with other inner London Boroughs.
- Responses to a proposal to pay similar amounts to schools which are alike were fairly evenly split, with a slight majority of respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this proposal (36%), 32% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 33% were neutral or unsure about it.
- 69% of respondents preferred to reduce top up payments for EHC plans by 2 per cent (as opposed to 5 or 7 per cent reductions).

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