

FamiliesMatter

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

Dads make a difference

From sensory play to cooking and child development, discover how dads are getting involved, building confidence and strengthening family bonds. Find out more on pages [3-6](#).



www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/familiesmatter

INSIDE

2	Parental Engagement Team
3-6	Engagement with Fathers – Activities delivered by the Parental Engagement Team
7-11	Early Years and School
12-16	Parent Support and Safeguarding

17-18	Health and Wellbeing
19-24	Let's Talk SEND
25-29	Community, Childcare and Play
30	Training, Events and Useful Contacts

FamiliesMatter



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



Messages from the Parent and Family Support Service

Welcome to the spring edition of Families Matter

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

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

Best wishes,

Parental Engagement Team, Parent and Family Support Service

Working with families?

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

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

Email: parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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

Fiona Stokes, Parental Engagement Advisor

Tel: **020 7364 6049**

Email: fiona.stokes@towerhamlets.gov.uk

References to 'parents' describes any caregiver responsible for the care, protection and upbringing of a child or young person, including foster parents or connected persons, grandparents, siblings or other family members living in Tower Hamlets.

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

Everyday moments help fathers support child development

Research continues to show that when fathers are actively involved in family life, the benefits extend far beyond the present. Simple, everyday interactions, such as talking and playing, can have a meaningful impact on a child's development while also strengthening family relationships.

Children gain from these shared experiences. Routine conversations and playful moments help the brain grow and support the development of language, confidence and social skills. Playful connection also helps children feel secure and loved, laying foundations that support emotional wellbeing and positive behaviour.

Fathers benefit too. Regular involvement builds confidence in their role and deepens the parent-child relationship.

Shared play has been linked to reduced stress, improved mood and the natural release of oxytocin — the hormone that supports bonding and helps calm the nervous system.

As awareness grows about the important contributions fathers can make, it is clear that everyday interactions are a powerful tool for supporting children's learning, wellbeing and development.





Dads discover the value of sensory play

Parents from **Children's House Nursery School** have been taking part in Sensory Explorers, a three-part course designed to introduce families to the importance of sensory play and the role it plays in supporting children's development. The course is delivered by the Parental Engagement Team.

During the sessions, parents learn how activities involving touch, sight, sound and movement can support brain development, strengthen language and motor skills and help children regulate their emotions.

While the course was open to all parents, it was encouraging to see a strong turnout from dads. They enjoyed exploring the sensory materials with their child and seeing first-hand how sensory play encourages curiosity and confidence.

The sessions support children's learning while also strengthening family relationships, giving fathers practical ways to take an active role in their child's early development.

Sharing young fathers' voices on becoming a dad

Becoming a father at a young age can be exciting, challenging and life-changing. The University of Lincoln is carrying out research exploring young fathers' experiences of becoming a dad and their knowledge of safe sleep for babies.

The research team wants to speak with fathers aged 18–25 who are willing to take part in a one-hour online interview. The interview is informal and gives fathers the opportunity to share their experiences and views. Participants will receive a £15 Amazon voucher.

Professionals who work with families, such as midwives, family support workers and early years professionals, are also invited to take part in an online interview. Their perspectives are important in understanding how fathers are supported and how safe sleep messages are shared.

This research is being carried out under the supervision of Professor Anna Tarrant, a leading researcher in fatherhood. The study has full ethical approval and all information shared will be treated confidentially.

To take part, please contact the researchers by 30 June 2026.

For more details, email sarahandfathers@lincoln.ac.uk

Engaging dads through cooking at Stebon Primary School

Fathers at **Stebon Primary School** have been getting hands-on in the kitchen through a Ministry of Food cooking course designed to boost confidence and support healthier lifestyles. The programme, developed by Jamie Oliver, focuses on simple, affordable recipes that families can easily recreate at home.

During the session, practitioners from the Parental Engagement Team guided the dads through safe knife skills, basic food preparation and cooking techniques using fresh ingredients. The approach was straightforward — by helping fathers feel more comfortable in



the kitchen, the entire household benefits. The atmosphere was relaxed, giving fathers the space

to ask questions and build connections with one another while learning useful skills.

Healthy snack inspiration for dads at Children's House Nursery School



The Parental Engagement Team's Healthy Families workshop at **Children's House Nursery School** gave parents the opportunity to explore ways to make everyday snacks healthier — for example, wholemeal "sushi sandwiches" filled with vegetables — a quick and simple idea that families can easily try at home.

The session also introduced simple routines that support children's wellbeing, such as adding regular activity, reducing screen time and creating calmer, more enjoyable mealtimes.

The focus was on small adjustments that feel manageable for busy families and can make a big difference over time.

The dads who attended said they found the practical ideas useful. They appreciated the chance to try out the activities and left feeling more confident about introducing healthier habits at home.

Free workshops for dads and male carers of children under two

The Parental Engagement Team is delivering a range of workshops for dads and male carers of children from birth to two years.

Workshops cover a range of interactive and interesting topics including:

- Learning through play
- Sensory play
- Storytelling
- Child development for parents
- Establishing good sleep routines
- Pram walk and talks/"Buggy Buddies"

These workshops, which are funded by the Department for Education, aim to support perinatal mental health and raise awareness of the importance of the parent-infant relationship.

If your school, setting or organisation can arrange a group of dads and male carers to take part in these workshops, or if you are interested in hosting a session, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Dads learn about child development at Marion Richardson

Dads from **Marion Richardson Primary School** took part in a child development workshop held at the school's early years site. The session introduced them to how children grow and learn from birth to age five, highlighting the key milestones that typically develop during this period.

Practitioners explained how everyday interactions can help build communication, emotional wellbeing and early learning. Parents were shown practical ideas they can try at home, demonstrating how small moments of connection can make a real difference to a child's development.

The well attended workshop saw a strong engagement from dads. Many said they left with a clearer understanding of child development and felt more confident about supporting their children through play and connection.





Fun with Maths at Harry Gosling

Parents at **Harry Gosling Primary School** took part in a three-session course, Fun with Maths, designed and delivered by the Parental Engagement Team, to help them build confidence in supporting their children's learning in maths. The sessions introduced parents to the different strands of the maths curriculum and explained how these concepts are taught in school.

Across the sessions, families took part in a range of games, activities and puzzles. These hands-on activities helped parents understand how everyday play can support mathematical thinking, including skills such as problem-solving, reasoning, memory and pattern recognition.

The course also shared practical ideas for supporting learning at home, including number challenges, board games, puzzles and interactive activities that can easily fit into family routines.

Parents said that the sessions gave them an insight into the Key Stage 1 maths curriculum as well as some useful and creative ideas that they could build into everyday life.

“

I picked up so many ideas that make learning maths fun.

Parent

”

To find out more or to book a Fun with Maths workshop for your school, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Workshops to support with exams and revision

The Parental Engagement Team can deliver these workshops:

Supporting children through SATs

To perform at their best during Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), children need to feel well. In this session, parents will learn practical ways to support their child's wellbeing and help them manage the pressures that can come with SATs.

The session will also explore how parents can encourage positive learning habits, including effective revision strategies. In addition, it will look at how strong exam techniques can help children approach tests with greater confidence and achieve their best possible results.

Revise wise

Revision is key to making learning stick, yet many students do not know how to do this properly. In this one-off session, parents learn about the most effective revision methods and exam techniques to help students perform at their best during exams.

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



Embroidery basics at Swanlea

An embroidery course at **Swanlea Secondary School** offered parents the chance to learn practical stitching techniques and explore their own creative ideas. The sessions introduced a range of simple methods designed to build confidence and help participants get started with embroidery.

Parents tried out different types of stitches and discovered how changes in stitch size, type and weight can add detail

and texture. They also learned techniques for creating depth and three dimensional effects, helping their designs feel more expressive.

As the course progressed, parents planned their own embroidered images, often inspired by natural patterns and floral designs. The group also looked at embroidery examples to get ideas for different colour combinations and interesting compositions.

“

The sessions gave parents an understanding of embroidery basics and useful ideas they could build on at home.

Sarah McSweeney
Parental Engagement Team
Course facilitator

”

Supporting learning beyond the classroom

Thomas Buxton Primary School continues to build strong parental engagement by actively involving families in their children's learning. Every week, children take part in a variety of educational trips that allow them to discover new places and deepen their understanding of the world beyond the classroom.

To support this, the school offers termly trip training sessions for parents. These sessions build parents' confidence in assisting on trips, covering both safety procedures and ways to enhance children's learning during outings.

This approach has made a real difference. The school now has a reliable and growing group of trained parent volunteers who regularly take part.

Their involvement helps trips to run smoothly and ensures that pupils gain the full benefit of well-supported learning experiences.

If you are a parent from Thomas Buxton who would like to take part in the training, speak to the Assistant Headteacher, Amelia Chau, to express your interest or email admin@thomasbuxton.towerhamlets.sch.uk



Emotional literacy at Cubitt Town Primary

A course delivered by the Parental Engagement Team at **Cubitt Town Primary School** introduced parents to practical ways of supporting their children's emotional development and wellbeing.

The three-week course focused on the importance of emotional literacy as a foundation for resilience and positive learning habits.

Through group discussions and hands on activities, parents explored strategies to help children recognise and express emotions, build self esteem, and approach challenges with greater confidence. The sessions also highlighted how everyday

interactions at home shape a child's attitude towards learning and problem solving.

Each week, parents received a simple resource to use with their children at home, helping them continue developing these skills beyond the sessions.

“

The course gave parents some useful tools they could use to support their children's emotional literacy.

Jacqui Jenkins
Parental Engagement Lead
Cubitt Town Primary School

”



Bow School hosts its first ever community Iftar gathering

Bow School proudly hosted its first community Iftar gathering bringing together students, parents and staff for a special evening of reflection and community.

The event featured a Qur'an recitation by a student, a brief reflection on the significance of Ramadan, and concluded with breaking the fast together, sharing a meal and offering prayer.

The school organised the event with the support of Fahmida Begum, the school's Family Support Partner from the Parental Engagement Team, as part of its Bow Gives Back initiative. This programme brings students and parents together to support the wider community,

promoting the school's values through meaningful volunteering and charitable activities. The Iftar community event was one of several activities organised by the school this term.

Bow School are also planning to deliver an Eid brunch to raise funds for charity, which will be open to members of the community as well as neighbouring schools.

“

In March, we hosted our first community Iftar event at Bow School bringing people together to share a special moment during Ramadan. It gave students, families and teachers the chance to connect and learn about each other's cultures and traditions.

For us, the event embodied our value of mutual respect. It served as a reminder that our community becomes stronger and more supportive when we celebrate and learn from one another.

Anna Moyes, Assistant Headteacher, Bow School

”

Most Tower Hamlets pupils secure a place at one of their preferred schools

Families across Tower Hamlets have received their secondary school offers for September 2026, with 96.6% of pupils securing a place at one of their preferred schools — an increase from last year and above the London average.

A significant number of families (79.1%) were offered a place at their first-choice school, and a further 15.6% received an offer at their second or third preference.

Secondary transfer appeals

The Transition Support Service supports parents who need help submitting an appeal for their child's Year 7 school place. For more information, scan the QR code or click [here](#).



School admissions: Drop-in sessions for parents

The School Admissions Service are holding drop-in sessions for parents who may have questions about school admissions. The knowledgeable staff will be on hand to provide information and advice about the process.

There is no need to book, just come along to the Town Hall and sign up for a ten-minute slot on the day. Information can also be found at www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/schooladmissions

Parenting programmes to support families

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

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



Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC)

Fourteen parents took part in the 13-week SFSC parenting programme at the Parents Advice Centre in Whitechapel. Practitioners from the Parental Engagement Team created a supportive space where parents could reflect on family life, learn practical strategies and connect with others facing similar challenges.

Designed for parents of children aged 2-18, SFSC focuses on building positive relationships, encouraging healthy routines and supporting children's emotional and social development.

Throughout the course, parents explored approaches to managing behaviour and strengthening communication at home.

Discussions also touched on cultural and generational differences, helping parents understand how their own experiences shape their parenting. Many said it was reassuring to realise they were not alone in their challenges. By the end of the programme, parents described feeling more confident, more connected and better equipped to support their children's wellbeing.

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

Tower Hamlets Parent and Family Support Service

Parenting programmes

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

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

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

Triple P discussion groups

- For parents of children aged 2-11 years
- Encouraging positive behaviour
- Managing fighting and aggression
- Developing good bedtime routines
- Hassle-free mealtimes with children
- For parents of children aged 12-18 years
- Coping with teenagers' emotions
- Reducing family conflict
- Getting teenagers to co-operate
- Building teenagers' survival skills

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

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





New Mellow Parenting course for parents of toddlers

Toyhouse is launching a new Mellow Parenting course this spring for parents with babies and toddlers aged 6–24 months. Mellow Parenting is a trauma informed, evidence-based programme that helps parents build positive relationships with their children. The 12-week course provides a calm, supportive space for parents to reflect, learn and build confidence.

Sessions start and end with parents and children together; lunch is also provided. Mornings focus on parents' experiences and how these shape their approach to parenting. Afternoons look at

children's development using video feedback to support learning. While parents are in the group, babies and toddlers are cared for by qualified practitioners.

Professional and self referrals are welcome.

For more details, email:

pip.pinhorn@toyhouse.org.uk or

maria.improta@toyhouse.org.uk

or call 020 7987 7399.

www.toyhouse.org.uk

Parent Talk: Internet safety webinar



The charity, Everyone's Invited, and the Parental Engagement Team, are hosting a session to explore key online safety topics that many parents and carers are concerned about or wish they understood better. Topics will include social media platforms (TikTok and Snapchat), gaming, gendered pressures, pornography and the rise of AI, image-based abuse, sextortion and online misogyny.

Strategies to help support young people to navigate an increasingly complex digital world will also be shared.

Wednesday 25 March 2026, 9.30-10.45am

Join via Zoom: us06web.zoom.us/j/82465878983





Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop

A new support hub for women experiencing domestic abuse has opened in Tower Hamlets. Based at Vallance Road, the Nari Centre brings key services together in one place, offering a safe and accessible space for women seeking support.

The Tower Hamlets Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop provides a confidential and supportive space for anyone who is being controlled, threatened or harmed by a partner, ex-partner or family member.

The multi-agency service provides discreet specialist advisors, advocates, housing services, police representatives

and family law solicitors. Together, they offer information, practical advice, emotional support, risk assessment and safety planning for survivors of:

- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Sexual exploitation
- Survival sex
- 'Honour' based abuse
- Stalking and harassment
- Dowry related abuse
- Sexual abuse

Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop
Mondays, 10am–12pm
Women's Resource Centre,
Nari Centre, 61 Vallance Road,
E1 5AB

Restorative practice and the Better Together framework

The Supporting Families Division uses the Better Together framework, which sets out how staff work with children, their carers and people involved in the network of support. It is based on restorative practice as well as drawing on systemic and trauma-informed ideas. It also uses the C-Change approach:

- Connect
- Be Curious
- Build a Community around the child
- Co-produce plans with those who are most affected by them
- Collaborate to bring about change
- Check back to see if it is making a difference.

If you interact with workers in the Supporting Families Division and would like to find out more about the framework, you are welcome to join the upcoming Introduction to Better Together session on **Wednesday 13 May, 2-4pm.**

Council professionals can book their place — scan the QR code or click [here](#).



Everyone else, email Nasima.Rahman@towerhamlets.gov.uk to get the link.



New name, same Family Hub support

This year, Family Hubs across the country will be renamed **Best Start Family Hubs**. Over the coming months, you will start to see the new name and branding on leaflets, posters and online information as we prepare for this change.



Although the name is changing, the support families receive will remain much the same. Parents will still be able to access a wide range of help in one place making it easy for families to get the right support when needed.

Family Hubs services can also be accessed in your local Children and Family Centre. For more details, visit www.thfamilyhubs.co.uk or www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/childrenandfamilycentres

Family Hubs parenting support offer

Family Hubs offer parenting support in partnership with local partners and stakeholders. Its parenting programme offers a range of support from pregnancy onwards, enabling families to choose based on their individual 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
- with their personal development.

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

Understanding Family Hubs: online sessions

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

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

Participants will explore:

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

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

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



Healthy Tower Hamlets resources now available to support families

A collection of Healthy Tower Hamlets resources is now available to help promote healthier choices across the borough. The materials are designed for use in community settings and outreach events, offering practical tools to help raise awareness and support residents in making healthier choices.

The digital and print resources include guidance for staff and volunteers, campaign toolkits, posters, booklets, leaflets, videos

and case studies. All resource materials focus on helping families understand and adopt the Vital 5 — the key areas that support long-term health and wellbeing.

The Vital 5

- Quit smoking
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Cut down on alcohol
- Get your blood pressure checked and manage it
- Look after your mental health and wellbeing.



For more information and to explore the resource material, scan the QR code or click [here](#).

To request resources, email healthyTH@towerhamlets.gov.uk.

Become a community health and wellbeing champion

Tower Hamlets Public Health is recruiting local residents to become Community Health and Wellbeing Champions. Health champions play an important role in sharing key health information and helping residents access the services they need.

Health Champions help share health messages across their social networks and take part in community events. They also listen to what residents say and provide useful feedback that helps shape and improve local health programmes.

No previous experience is required to become a Health Champion. Volunteers receive accredited training and ongoing support to help them feel more confident in the role. The programme is open to all Tower Hamlets residents aged 18 or over who can offer 8-10 hours per month. Speaking a community language, such as Bengali or Somali, is an advantage but not essential.

For more information about the Health Champions programme or to apply, scan the QR code or click [here](#).



Protect children from measles with the MMR vaccine

Measles is currently circulating in parts of London and families are being encouraged to stay alert. It is a highly infectious illness — one in five children who catch measles will need hospital care.

The virus often begins like a common cold before a rash appears. Some children may also develop tiny white spots inside their mouth.

Measles can lead to serious long-term health complications so awareness is essential.

The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine offers safe, effective protection.

Parents and carers are encouraged to check their child's vaccination record and contact their GP if a dose is missing or if they are unsure. Staying up to date with routine vaccinations is one of the easiest ways to keep children safe.

For more information, visit
www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles

Join the fussy eating webinar for school staff and parents

If you are concerned about the eating behaviour of a child in your care, or feel like you have tried everything and need support, you are not alone.

Fear of new foods affects up to one in five children.

Join the upcoming webinar for strategies, understanding and support.

Wednesday 25 March 2026
1-2pm or 3.30-4.30pm
ONLINE

For more details or to book your place, email
claire.wallek@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Free oral health sessions for parents

Forty per cent of five-year-olds in Tower Hamlets have holes in their teeth. If you have a child in nursery, Reception or Year 1, you are invited to join the upcoming online parents' oral health sessions.

The sessions will be delivered by Kent Community Health Foundation Trust via Zoom.

Tuesday 21 April 2026, 10-10.30am
Meeting Link

Meeting ID: 371 680 550 883 41
Passcode: Kp3MC9EV



Tuesday 5 May 2026, 10-10.30am
Meeting Link

Meeting ID: 396 486 465 542 96
Passcode: Dt2SP7Pe



School fluoride varnish programme

The school fluoride varnish programme is still being promoted in the borough and parents are encouraged to read and complete consent forms distributed by their school.



For more information on the programme, view the resources [here](#) or email kentchft.dentaloutreachlondon@nhs.net

Let's Talk SEND updates and information

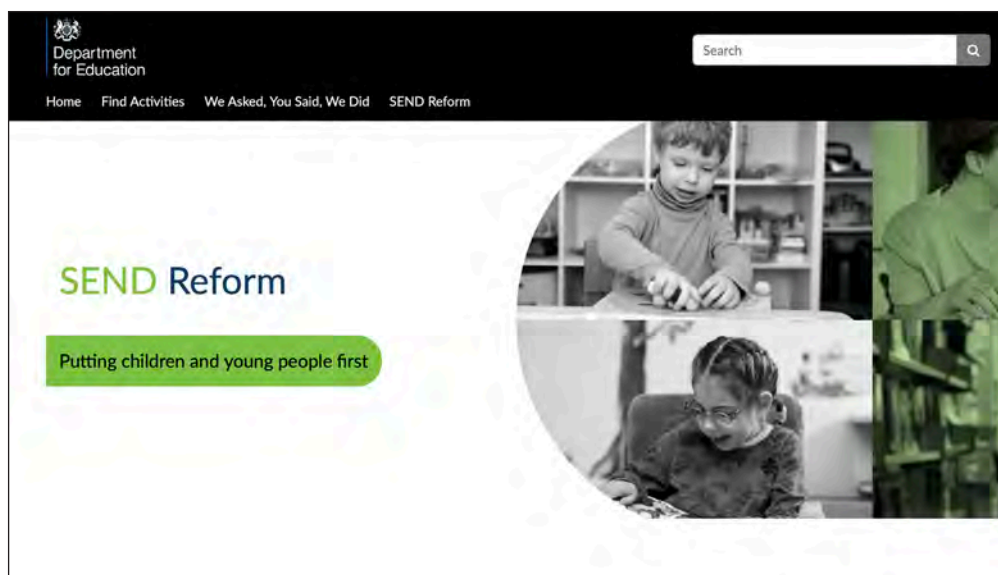
Information on previous and upcoming Let's Talk SEND events and updates on the borough's SEND improvement journey can be found at

www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk/pages/local-offer/send/let-s-talk-send



SEND Reform: Schools White Paper

The government is seeking views through a formal consultation on proposals for SEND reform, alongside publication of the Schools White Paper. The consultation document outlines proposals to improve children and young people's outcomes, make support more consistent, timely and accessible and explain what changes could mean for children and families and those working across education, health, care and local government.



For more information, visit www.gov.uk/dfe/send-reform
www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-send-reforms-sheets

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.

Progress on the Tower Hamlets SEND Co-production Charter

Work to shape the new Tower Hamlets SEND Co-production Charter is moving forward with energy and collaboration. Families, young people and professionals from across the borough have been coming together to help define a shared vision for how services should be designed and delivered — working as equal partners every step of the way.

Information event at the Town Hall

A key highlight was the Let's Talk SEND co-production information event held at Tower Hamlets Town Hall. The event brought together parents, carers, SEND professionals and community organisations for a day of learning and discussion. Attendees heard presentations from Children's Services, SENDIASS and education, health and social care teams, all focused on strengthening local co-production. Information stalls, refreshments and opportunities for conversation helped make the day welcoming and accessible for all families.

Listening to parents, carers and professionals

Co-production depends on meaningful engagement.



As such, the partnership has continued to expand its outreach with families and practitioners. The SEND Co-production Charter working group includes a diverse mix of parents and young people with different needs and experiences. Their insight is shaping key principles of the emerging charter.

Alongside this, SENDIASS has been running Let's Talk SEND co-production information sessions, designed particularly for parents and carers who want to understand co-production and contribute to the development of the borough-wide charter. These sessions provide an accessible

starting point for families to get involved and share their views.

What's next?

As development continues, the charter will move into wider consultation across education, health and social care, ensuring all voices — especially those with lived experience — shape the final version.

By embedding participation into every stage of the process, Tower Hamlets is strengthening its commitment to delivering SEND services that are inclusive, user friendly and built around the needs of local families.



To complete the SEND co-production survey, scan the QR code or click [here](#).
For more information, email mark.penn@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Our Time Youth Forum

Our Time is an all-ability youth forum run for, and by, young people between the ages of 14-25 with special educational needs and disabilities.

It has been set up so that young people can:

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

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

Let's Talk SEND transition event

Parents of children in Years 4 and 5 with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are invited to attend a Let's Talk SEND transition event designed to support families with the secondary school transfer process.

The event will include a presentation from the SEN Department on Secondary Transfer, information about independent travel training, and an opportunity to meet secondary school SENCOs.

The Family Information Service will also be available to share information about services that support families and to highlight what is available through the Local Offer website.

Tuesday 24 March 2026, 9.30am-2pm
Brady Arts and Community Centre, 192-196 Hanbury Street,
E1 5HU

Lunch will be provided.

For more information or to book your place,
email fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call 020 7364 6489.

Changes to speech and language therapy referrals

In 2025, the Early Years Speech and Language Therapy Service changed the way children and families access support for communication needs. These changes were introduced to help families receive the right support at the right time.

There is now a wider range of support available, from information and advice for families to group sessions and more tailored support for children who need additional help.

Support may be offered online or face-to-face and can be adapted for families who require an interpreter.

When considering a referral, a Single Point of Access (SPA) form may not always be necessary. Families may be able to sign up themselves using QR codes or online forms. However, professionals are encouraged to check whether families need any support to complete the sign-up process.

Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to see the updated pathway. For more information, email bartshealth.earlylanguage@nhs.net





Making reading more accessible for children with SEND

Listening Books is a national audiobook charity that helps children and young people with disabilities, illness or learning difficulties (such as dyslexia or ADHD) access reading. It offers over 10,000 audiobooks for adults, children and teens, including popular fiction, school texts, GCSE/A Level set books and titles to support wellbeing and relaxation.

Membership is open to anyone who lives in the UK with a print impairment. Audiobooks can be streamed or downloaded and can support comprehension, reduce anxiety around reading and help learners engage with school texts at their own pace. Families can join from £25 per year, and free memberships are available for those who need them.

For more details or to join, visit www.listening-books.org.uk/join

SEND Parent Ambassadors available to visit your school or setting

SEND Parent Ambassadors are volunteers who are passionate about inclusion and acceptance of SEND families. The group is pleased to welcome seven new ambassadors, which means there will be even more capacity for outreach work this year.

Ambassadors can visit schools or settings to share their experiences, offer valuable information and signpost families to relevant support organisations.



To request a visit, email sendparentambassadors@gmail.com
For more details, scan the QR code or click [here](#).

Make a difference: Become a Shared Lives carer

Shared Lives carers support adults with learning disabilities from their own homes, helping them to live more independently, take part in their community and manage their health and wellbeing.

Carers are carefully matched with people who share similar interests and values. The role is flexible — either full time or alongside work or other caring commitments. The Shared Lives team provides training and ongoing support.

Carers are paid for the support they offer. Day support is up to £88 for six hours per person. Respite or short-term arrangements pay £82–£106 per night per person. For long-



term placements, carers receive £600–£800 per person, per week, which includes care fees, a rent payment and a contribution towards utilities.

In these placements, the person lives with the carer and becomes part of the household network. Carers can support up to three adults at a time and may benefit from generous tax breaks.

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

Tower Hamlets Independent SEND Parent Forum



The Tower Hamlets Independent SEND Parent Forum is pan-disability. Members work with families and professionals from the council and health services to ensure the views of parents, carers and young people contribute to the design and delivery of services.

Join other parents and carers of children and young people with SEND (0-25 years) for coffee and talk about the issues that are important to you.

For more information, call 07498 573872 or email thesendforum@gmail.com
www.thesendforum.co.uk

SEND AID FAMILY HUB TOWER HAMLETS

JOIN OUR WEEKLY SEND AID FAMILY HUB SESSIONS IN TOWER HAMLETS

- Sensory and activity rooms for children with autism
- SEND advice clinic; support with SEND law, EHCP, Appeals etc.
- Mother's and Father's lounge
- Siblings activity spaces

FOR CHILDREN AGE 5-16

EVERY Saturday
10.00am – 1.30pm
10th January onwards

OVERLAND FAMILY HUB
60 Parnell road,
Bow, E3 2RU

Book your place by emailing
info@sendaaid.org

SUPPORTED BY

sendaid.org @_sendaid Charity Reg No: 1193154

New initiative to support neurodiverse children

The Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) programme is an initiative led by the Department for Education (DfE) that helps schools better understand and support neurodiverse children.

It promotes early identification, timely intervention and stronger collaboration between families and professionals.

PINS brings together the DfE, NHS England, Integrated Care Boards, schools, councils and parent carer forums.

This joined up approach ensures that professional expertise and family insight shape the support children receive.

Staff in participating schools receive specialist training from speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, educational psychologists, mental health support teams and specialist teachers.

During its first year, six Tower Hamlets primary schools took part in the pilot.

Early feedback has been positive and all six schools are continuing into year two, with three more schools joining.

So far, schools have taken part in over 73 hours of training — showing strong engagement from both staff and parents.

The programme supports the Tower Hamlets Strategic SEND Delivery Plan and strengthens the borough's commitment to early, inclusive support for every child.

For more details, email
mehbooba.begum@towerhamlets.gov.uk or
james.courtney1@nhs.net

New autism resource provision opens at Hermitage Primary School

A new, state-of-the-art provision for children with autism has officially opened at **Hermitage Primary School**.

The site, named 'Athena', has been developed following recognition of the need for high-quality, specialist places within the borough, and has been designed to provide tailored support for primary school-aged children with autism.

The facility has been equipped with the latest specialist resources, providing the ideal setting for children with sensory needs and giving teachers the tools to deliver personalised, impactful learning to help all children to thrive.



For more information, scan the QR code or click [here](#).



Tower Hamlets and City
SEND IASS



SEND Support Group

- Come and meet other parents
- Share information
- Younger children welcome
- Monthly guest speakers
- No diagnosis needed

For more information contact:

Tower Hamlets & City SEND IASS, 30 Greatorex Street, Whitechapel, London E1 5NP

☎ 020 7364 6489

✉ TowerHamlets&City.SENDIASS@towerhamlets.gov.uk

🐦 @TH_IASS

🌐 www.towerhamletsandcitysendiass.com

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



Home educating families event at Queen Mary University: Exploring chemistry

In January, Queen Mary University of London, in partnership with the Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service, hosted a fully booked science enrichment event for Electively Home Educated (EHE) children and their families. Funded by the Royal Society of Chemistry, the event welcomed 105 registered attendees who were eager to explore future pathways in the chemical sciences.

The morning began with an energetic lecture and demonstration, "The Air We Breathe", which captivated families with live chemistry experiments.

Parents and carers also learned about opportunities available through Queen Mary University, including university taster days, a summer science project and a developing mentorship scheme designed to support young people as they progress toward A-level science and beyond.

Sixty-three children then took part in hands-on laboratory taster sessions led by PhD demonstrators, gaining first-hand experience of scientific investigation.

Meanwhile, parents and carers joined discussions on mentorship plans, summer learning pathways, and the barriers that home-educated young people



may face when accessing university and how these can be overcome.

Lunch at The Curve provided time for families to connect. With thanks to the families, Queen Mary University staff and the Education Safeguarding Service for coming together to spark curiosity and open up exciting science opportunities for our young people.

“

The children were confident, engaged, and incredibly knowledgeable... It really highlighted the quality of EHE provision and the dedication of our families.

Parent

”

Home educating families event: Careers event

In November 2025, Tower Hamlets Electively Home Educated (EHE) children and their families took part in **Hello, Future You!** — a unique careers event hosted at the Allianz Stadium, in partnership with Allianz UK and Barnardo's. The event brought together more than 200 young people from across the community, offering an inspiring introduction to the world of work.

Participants enjoyed a behind-the-scenes stadium experience, including visits to the player changing rooms, the player tunnel, and the chance to take pitch-side photos. Alongside the tour, young people joined a series of interactive career development workshops covering CV essentials, interview techniques, networking skills, personal branding and insights into data, technology and transformation.

For Tower Hamlets EHE families, the visit was both memorable and motivating, offering valuable exposure to workplace expectations and helping young people build confidence as they move towards their first interviews and future career opportunities.

“

A heartfelt thank you to the Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service for organising this inspiring event in partnership with Allianz. The programme helped young people gain valuable insights into different careers while building confidence, resilience and employability skills.

One of the highlights was the full stadium tour and experiencing the behind-the-scenes areas of a world-famous sporting venue. The opportunity to take photos with the mascot added an extra touch of excitement and joy to the day.

Parent

”

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

Family Information Service outreach sessions

The Family Information Service (FIS) is offering outreach sessions at local settings, schools and Children and Family Centres.

Community groups are invited to host the FIS at events such as parent evenings, fun days, coffee mornings or any occasion where families are present.

Having the service at these events is a great way for parents to learn more about the FIS, the Local Offer and SENDIASS.



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

Community cupboards help with family essentials during challenging times

Families in Tower Hamlets who are finding it difficult to manage the rising cost of living can now access support through the borough's community cupboards.

These provide free household essentials to families with children who are registered with their local Family Hub or Children and Family Centre. Each family can use the service once a week.

The offer includes a range of everyday items, such as soap, toothpaste, shampoo, washing-up liquid and baby wipes — helping families meet basic needs during challenging times.

As availability is time-limited and dependent on funding, families are encouraged to speak with staff for the most up-to-date information.

For locations and opening times, visit www.thfamilyhubs.co.uk



Tower of London — Free visits for families

This Easter school holiday, families of all ages are welcome at the Tower of London to enjoy a free and memorable day out.

Advance booking is essential and spaces are limited. To book an available slot, scan the QR code or click [here](#). You will then receive full instructions via email.



Please note this offer is for general families, not large holiday or community groups. For group visit enquiries, email communities@hrp.org.uk.

For more details, visit www.thfamilyhubs.co.uk/Article/185012

Free Functional Skills English and Maths courses at Idea Store Learning

Idea Stores are offering a qualification equivalent to GCSE English or Maths in just 11 weeks, helping learners progress toward higher education or improve their job prospects.



English and maths assessment appointment times are below. To book an assessment appointment, visit www.ideastore.co.uk/learning/skills-for-life/english-and-maths

Date	Time	Venue	Room
Monday 13 April	9.30am-4pm	Idea Store Whitechapel	Conference Room
Tuesday 14 April	9.30am-4pm	Idea Store Watney Market	Lab 2
Wednesday 15 April	9.30am-4pm	Idea Store Whitechapel	Conference Room
Thursday 16 April	9.30am-4pm	Idea Store Watney Market	Lab 2

For more information and to join a course, email functionalskills@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.



The Holiday Activities and Food programme

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 Easter school holiday.

The programme offers a wide range of fun activity sessions to suit different ages and personalities, 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.

To prove your child's eligibility during registration either submit their HAF code or their name and date of birth.

Five steps to access a FREE place

1. Go to www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/haf
2. Follow the link to Plinth and create an account
3. Register your child(ren) and automatically check their eligibility
4. Find a club and sign up
5. Bring your child(ren) to join in the fun activities and enjoy delicious free food.

Bookings are now open.

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



Holiday Childcare Scheme

Ages
3-13
years old

The Tower Hamlets
Holiday Childcare Scheme
offers Ofsted registered
childcare.

020 7364 0523

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/hcs

Easter scheme
**Monday 30 March
to Friday 10 April
2026
(8 days)**

**Bookings
now open**



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
Tuesday 24 March 2026 9.30am-2pm	Let's Talk SEND transition event For parents of Year 4 and 5 children with an education health and care (EHC) plan. See page 21 for more details. Email: fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk Tel: 020 7364 6489
Wednesday 25 March 2026 9.30-10.45am	Parent Talk Webinar — Supporting children to navigate an increasingly complex digital world Join charity, Everyone Invited, and the Parental Engagement Team for this online internet safety session for parents. See page 14 for more details. Email: parentalengagement@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
<p>Working with families multi-agency seminar: Parenting Practitioner Network</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>For more information, email parentalengagement@towerhamlets.gov.uk</p>

Residents' Hubs open across the borough

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

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/residentshub

There are five hubs located at:

- Town Hall in Whitechapel
- Idea Store Bow
- Idea Store Chrisp Street in Poplar
- Cubitt Town Library on the Isle of Dogs
- Shoreditch (Calvert Avenue)

Useful contacts

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