Early Help: Making a Difference

The Parent and Family Support Service has had more than 22,000 contacts with parents and carers over the past year. The service’s role is to inform, empower, teach and provide early help to families in Tower Hamlets.

A broad range of services delivered in partnership with Schools, Early Years settings, voluntary sector and other local authority teams help to provide parents and carers with the support they need, when they need it.

Becoming a Parent Volunteer
Finding a Child Minder
MOVING SCHOOL
Keeping Children Safe On-Line
Managing Children’s Behaviour
Understanding the School Curriculum
ESTABLISHING ROUTINES
Accessing Holiday Childcare
Providing Independent Advice in Relation to SEND
Living Healthy Active Lives
Raising Family Aspirations
Supporting Steps to Employment

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Welcome to the autumn edition of Families Matter

As professionals, working in partnership with families really does matter! Effective engagement with parents and carers improves children’s life chances. Communication between schools and parents as partners in their children’s educational progress and wellbeing is vitally important in raising achievement and aspirations.

Two nursery schools in the borough have become the first schools in the country to achieve the Quality in Extended Services (QES) award at advanced level. This is a testament to the commitment our schools are making to improve children’s progress and attainment by supporting families in a holistic way. QES is a reflective process that can support school improvement.

Also in this edition are updates on the Jamie Oliver Ministry of Food project which will be rolled out to other schools to replicate the project’s success at Langdon Park, good news stories relating to the Troubled Families programme and information on the launch of the SEND Youth Forum.

Jill McGinley, Head of Parent and Family Support Service

This newsletter 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
Tel: 020 7364 6049
Email: fiona.stokes@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Parent and Family Support Service 2014-15

1474 parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities have received support, guidance, and advice from the Parents Advice Centre - a 20% increase in number of service users in the last year

2450 parents attended a course delivered by the Parental Engagement Team and reported an increased understanding of the school curriculum and confidence to support their child’s literacy, numeracy and social and emotional development

Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities Success...

Men who have restricted access to their children benefit from attending evidence-based parenting programmes:

**Father A**
One child aged 11 who lives with her mother. With 1:1 support from the Parental Engagement Team and following completion of the SFSC programme, the father was permitted to have the child visit and eventually stay overnight. The children’s school reported noticeable improvements in both children’s behaviour.

**Father B**
At the start of the SFSC course the father had only supervised access to his three year old daughter at a Contact Centre. By the end of the course and with support from Social Care, he had unsupervised contact and brought his daughter to Dads’ Play Day events.

The Family Information Service took 15,700 calls and provided a range of information, guidance and childcare brokerage services for Tower Hamlets parents and carers.
The Benefits of Early Help: The Difference We Make

More than 700 parents attended a parenting programme co-ordinated by the Parental Engagement Team and reported the following changes in parenting style:

- The proportion of parents feeling good or very good about their ability to manage their anger rose from 42% to 78%.
- In the pre-programme questionnaire, 27% of parents put themselves in the range of “always, usually or sometimes hitting or smacking their children”. At the end of the programme this had decreased to 11% with 0% in the category of “always”.

Fathers spending time with their children helps to build a child’s self-esteem. The more time that dads and male carers spend with their children, the better at fathering they become.

There are currently over 110 dads and male carers who are part of the Dads’ Network.

If you know a dad who would like to join contact: andy.simons@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Trained 27 Healthy Families Parent Ambassadors (HFPAs) who have:

- Delivered healthy eating sessions
- Facilitated and participated in consultation/research for Public Health and Queen Mary University oral health research
- Undertaken research for the National Child Weight Management Review
- Led consultation/focus groups for the Bangladeshi Boys Obesity Project

25 parents have been supported into sustained employment following completion of the Passport to Learning Volunteering in my Child’s School Course

180 parents are members of our Parent and Carer Council, the borough’s main family forum, contributing to the development of services for families through regular engagement and consultation

300 parents and carers have attended workshops to increase their awareness and confidence to keep their children safe from extremism
The kitchen at Langdon Park Secondary School is full of busy cooks who are making pizza from scratch and having lots of fun at the same time.

These cooks aren’t part of the school catering staff, nor are they young students learning how to cook – they are parents who have taken part in the council’s pilot Ministry of Food programme in partnership with the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation.

The 8 week programme was launched in March 2015 as part of the successful Healthy Families programme delivered by the Parental Engagement Team. It is part of a drive to improve families’ cooking skills and increase healthy eating in Tower Hamlets.

“For more information on the project, contact the Parental Engagement Team on 020 7364 6398 or email: parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk

“I decided that I wanted to eat healthier. You hear all these things nowadays about the sugar that’s in food.”
Julie Fuller, parent

“All the nutritional messages are embedded in the training – including how to demonstrate professional techniques.”
Sarah McSweeney, Parent Support Practitioner

“The programme was successful in focusing on a significant group of targeted parents by giving them a common purpose, providing them with new skills and most importantly, raising their confidence to try new things which will definitely have a very positive impact on them and their children.”
Claire Frost, Assistant Head, Langdon Park Secondary School
Project feedback

Hilary Cheyne and Sarah McSweeney are both Parent Support Practitioners in the Parental Engagement Team and delivered the programme. They both went on an intensive training course at the Jamie Oliver Foundation. Hilary shares feedback on the impact and success of the project.

Sarah and I did all the planning for the course. We have a set of Jamie’s recipes and we worked out which ones the group might like, talked about what they’ve tried before, and added in things that they wouldn’t previously have tried.

The parents would often start out by saying, I don’t eat that, I don’t like it but we’d get them to taste the foods, new vegetables, herbs. There was a bit of resistance to using spinach in the spinach and lentil soup. They began by saying I don’t like that much, I’m just going to use a couple of leaves and then they’d come back for big handfuls of the spinach.

The idea is that they know it well enough so they can teach the recipe and the methods to someone else.

It’s been an amazing journey.

Hilary Cheyne
Parent Support Practitioner

Parent feedback

Michelle Neagle did a cooking course when she was 21 and has worked as a school dinner lady. “Except for my cookery course, this is the only thing I’ve finished in years”, she said. Michelle said that she now feels much more confident using a variety of ingredients that she had never used before. She is not buying as much convenience food as she used to.

The group were awarded certificates and given a kitchen herb-growing kit to help them continue with their culinary progression.

Irene Benjamin and her son, Nathan Giraudelle, have both enjoyed taking part. Irene does most of the cooking at home but Nathan says that he will now do more himself. “I’ve enjoyed it immensely,” he said. “I liked learning all the techniques, and I’ve enjoyed the banter with all the mums.”
Parenting programmes in Tower Hamlets are delivered in partnership. Staff from the local authority, health service and voluntary sector work together to ensure parents and carers receive the support and information they need.

The following programmes are planned for the autumn term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parenting Programme</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
<th>Delivery Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities</td>
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<td>Programme delivered in Bengali</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Osmani Centre</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Birth - 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Change Programme</td>
<td>Birth - 18</td>
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<td>Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities</td>
<td>Birth - 18</td>
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<td>Emotional First Aid</td>
<td>Birth - 18</td>
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<td>Triple P - Teen</td>
<td>11 - 18</td>
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<td>Swanlea School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Change Programme</td>
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<td>Specialist referral required</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities</td>
<td>Birth - 18</td>
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<td>Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities</td>
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<td>Programme delivered in English</td>
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<td>Mile End Children’s Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities</td>
<td>Birth - 18</td>
<td>Evening programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triple P Discussion Group</td>
<td>1 -11</td>
<td>One-off introductory session</td>
<td>Saturday 10 October</td>
<td>LBTH Professional Development Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triple P Discussion Group</td>
<td>1 -11</td>
<td>One-off session Developing Bedtime Routines</td>
<td>Saturday 5 December</td>
<td>LBTH Professional Development Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) programme</td>
<td></td>
<td>For parents of a child with a diagnosis of ADHD</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For further information on or to refer a family on to parenting programme, please contact the Parental Engagement Team at: parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call 020 7364 6398
Supporting Parents to Counter Extremist Views: Conference

At the end of July the Parental Engagement Team successfully facilitated an interactive workshop at a one day conference organised by Parent Zone. The event brought together researchers, experts and practitioners to explore how front line professionals can effectively support parents to counter any religious and/or political extreme views their children may encounter both online and off.

The Parent Zone delivers services which are designed to help professionals and parents deal with the challenges of a digital age. www.theparentzone.co.uk

Speakeasy Success at Osmani

Speakeasy is a four week programme suitable for parents of children of all ages. The programme helps parents gain the confidence and skills needed to talk to their children in an age appropriate way about growing up and explores ways to keep them safe.

The sessions are informal and are based on discussion and practical tasks which cover the following:
- The physical and emotional changes taking place at puberty
- The influence on children from TV, media and peers
- How to keep children safe from sexual exploitation and other forms of online grooming
- Knowledge of how Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is taught in schools
- Information about how to access local support services for families

A course recently took place at Osmani Primary School. There was a lot of discussion, especially in relation to media, culture and stereotypes. Parents attending enjoyed the course and found it very useful. One mum commented: “I enjoyed the whole group experience, and the input, information and stories from everyone… I will be passing the information to others and encourage them to attend in future.”

Speakeasy can also be delivered to parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). To find out more about running a Speakeasy programme for parents in your school or setting email: parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Keeping Children and Young People Safe

Raising Awareness of Radicalisation and Extremism – a programme for all parents and carers

Parenting programmes are an integral element of early intervention and prevention in order to ensure children and young people get the best possible start in life to achieve their full potential.

The Parental Engagement Team has developed a ‘Keeping Children and Young People Safe’ workshop which aims to raise awareness of the PREVENT agenda and the importance of safeguarding children and young people, particularly in the context of those who may be vulnerable or at risk of becoming involved in extremist activity. This interactive two-hour session and can be adapted according to the target age group of children and young people.

For further information please email: parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk or contact Humayun Kabir, SFSC Parenting Manager on 020 7364 6214
The borough’s Public Health Team are increasingly realising the value of the Healthy Families Parent Ambassadors (HFPAs) and working in partnership with them to rethink and reshape services for parents and children.

This summer 11 HFPAs worked with Public Health colleagues to reshape the borough’s approach to the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP). Children are weighed and measured in reception and year 6 and parents are informed if their child is at risk of being obese or overweight.

It’s currently a relatively ‘cold’ process and the Public Health Team want to change things by engaging parents in conversations about living healthy lives and using the NCMP process as a call to action to parents. The goal is to empower all parents in the borough with the know-how and support to encourage children to live healthy lives.

If you would like more information about the Healthy Family Parent Ambassadors Programme please contact Hilary Cheyne in the Parental Engagement Team.

Email: hilary.cheyne@towerhamlets.gov.uk

There were three steps to the process:

1. The Public Health Team and HFPAs (co-ordinated by the Parental Engagement Team) came together for a workshop where they explored the current NCMP process, sought HFPAs’ views and then asked them to go out and collect the thoughts of other parents who had been through the NCMP process. Training was provided in what’s called ‘participatory appraisal’ processes where HFPAs were encouraged to engage a total of up to 100 parents in easy to understand meetings and focus groups.

2. The Public Health Team met with the HFPAs to review the evidence that the HFPAs had gathered and began to plan the NCMP change process.

3. Two further sessions explored a range of practical actions that the public health team will phase in over the course of the next year. All these steps are based around working with participating primary schools to dramatically improve communication-producing a kinder, more helpful approach for parents.

“The HFPAs were invaluable to us in rethinking how we talk with parents about issues around weight and healthy lives” said Phil Veasey (Interim Senior Public Health Strategist). “The HFPAs provided us with the unrivalled insight of 100 parents and we couldn’t have undertaken this process without them or the help of the Parental Engagement Team.”

Emotional First Aid at Wellington

Wellington Primary School hosted a six week Emotional First Aid programme which was also attended by parents from St John’s Primary School. All parents successfully completed the course and obtained a certificate. The parents were well engaged and there was a lot of discussion, especially in relation to mental health, wellbeing, culture and stereotypes.

Parent Quotes:
“I gained some helpful strategies on how to deal with my child, family and other daily situations.”

“I learnt that other people have the same feelings and stress (I am not alone).”

“It has given me the opportunity to reflect, look at how I am functioning, to find ways to protect myself from the risks of ill health. The social side of the course is having support, meeting other parents and developing my self-esteem.”
Health and Parent Support

Video Interaction to Support Families

Staff from a number of teams in Tower Hamlets recently attended Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) training to support and enhance their work with families.

VIG is an evidence-based intervention through which a practitioner uses video clips of parent/child interactions, often within the home, to improve communication within relationships. VIG is proven to improve bonding and secure attachment and is now included in National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines.

The process begins by helping the family to negotiate their own goals. Asking them what it is they want to change helps to ensure that they are engaged in the process. Parent/child interactions are then filmed and edited, to produce a short film that focuses on the positive. The videos are then shared with the family showing successful moments, particularly those when the adult has responded in an attuned way to their child. Using the videos as a tool for reflection the parents are able to see these successful moments to increase confidence about making changes and achieving their goals.

When people see what they are doing well, they usually try to do it more!

All staff trained are now working towards full accreditation by introducing VIG into their casework and will be supervised throughout the process by experienced staff at The Eva Armsby Family Centre.

Contact:
Sharon Sullivan, Parent Support Advisor
Email: sharon.sullivan@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Working Together!
SFSC for Fathers

Marner and Children’s House Nursery School came together to celebrate the completion of a successful fathers-only Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC) course.

Fathers participated in the sessions by sharing information about their family and home life and the difficulties they had in some areas of family relationships and parenting.

Fathers shared their life stories and also cultural history which helped them to bond with each other and develop a good support network. During the course fathers went out on two day trips which were funded by the DLR (Docklands Light Railway) and Marner School. They went on a boat trip from Greenwich to Westminster and the Royal Theatre Stratford.

Fathers shared their own hidden artistic talents during two extra activities organised during the course. They had a lot of fun making Valentine’s cards and key rings for their partners and taking part in Easter activities such as making and designing baskets for egg hunts or decorating candles.

Attending the programme allowed fathers the time to consider different aspects of family life and how fathers contribute to the community as whole. At the end of the programme five fathers joined Marner’s fathers’ football team, one father is now volunteering at both schools to run fathers’ ESOL classes and two fathers have applied for “Can Do” funding to run a fathers’ Health and Fitness project.

Fathers told us the programme helped them to:

- Give more time to their family
- Improve their parenting skills
- Understand how to be calm when children are angry and throwing tantrums
- Manage anger while dealing with children and adults
- Make good friends within the group

Contact:
Ahsana Choudhury
Home/School Liaison Officer
Marner Primary School

Contact:
Ahsana Choudhury, Home/School Liaison Officer
Marner Primary School
Parent Champions

Emdad Islam
is a Bow parent of three children aged 5, 9 and 11. His children currently attend Ben Jonson Primary School and Swanlea School. Emdad was a Parent Governor for Stewart Headlam Primary School and in previous years he was an active parent forum member for the East 1 Schools Partnership. He is very keen to be involved in community and child development issues.

Hanifa Said
is a Special Guardian to three children. She is a Parent Governor at Canon Barnett Primary School and her two older children attend Sir John Cass’s Foundation & Red Coat CoE School. She also acts as a St Joseph Hospice Compassionate Neighbour and has professional experience in a variety of caring roles. She regularly volunteers to support various local initiatives.

Jolanta Bujauskiene
has one 8 year old daughter, Laura. She is a Parent Governor and midday meals supervisor at school at Marion Richardson Primary School in Stepney. She completed a City and Guilds Level 3 qualification for Health Trainers which has increased her interest in healthy eating and healthy lifestyles.

“...I think that being a Health Trainer and a Parent Champion are related to each other because it’s all about people’s welfare and how you can access information and support.”

Lily Islam
has done lots of work to improve her local area, the Flower and Dean Estate in Aldgate, and has received a commendation from the Borough Commander for her efforts. She continues to work closely with partners in her local area, including the local housing association to build on this work. Lily has three children.

Lin Sanh
is a Wapping parent with a young daughter. She previously worked in a primary school in Poplar and is an experienced childcare practitioner, currently working for the borough’s holiday childcare scheme, taking on a lead responsibility to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in the SENCo role.

Introducing the Borough’s First Parent Champions!

The Parental Engagement Team is working closely with the Family and Childcare Trust to recruit and train Tower Hamlets parents to become Parent Champions – active volunteers who talk with other parents about childcare and other family services. Being parents, they can chat in a more informal way and share their own positive experiences of using local services. They meet parents in all sorts of places such as schools, children’s centres, playgrounds, markets, libraries and local play groups.

Parent Champions can be particularly helpful to encourage the engagement of parents and carers who may be hard to reach and those who do not access services but are eligible for support.

For more information on the nationally recognised model visit http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/parent-champions
Neherun Nessa Ali
is the PCC representative and lay member for the Tower Hamlets Local Safeguarding Children Board. She is also a Parent Representative and volunteer childcare practitioner at her local Children’s Centre, Marner CC in Bow.

Neherun has a professional background in dentistry and has supported local initiatives to promote good oral health. Her son Zakariyah attends Children’s House Nursery School.

Gulshana Kurshid
is a mother of three children and lives in Bow. She is also a Parent Governor at Old Palace Primary School and is involved in projects in Marner Children’s Centre.

Gulshana wanted to become a Parent Champion to raise awareness of the EL2 programme as her children took up their places when she realised she was eligible and she felt they benefitted greatly.

Rukshana Zahir
is a mother of five, who lives in Whitechapel. She has worked and volunteered in various community projects for over the last 20 years. One of her roles involved working with vulnerable pregnant women, giving antenatal and postnatal support. This role developed into working as a Health Visitor’s Support Worker with children under 5 and their families. Because of these experiences, Rukshana felt that there is a real need to help families access basic information and raise awareness of services.

Shazna Begum
has been living in Tower Hamlets for 18 years. She tries to be involved with the community as much as possible, because she feels this knowledge benefits her three children’s wellbeing.

Shazna actively promotes healthy eating in her children’s primary school and has also worked with the Women’s Health and Family Services, taking the role of a bilingual health advocate.

The Parent Champions programme in Tower Hamlets is linked to the existing Parent and Carer Council (PCC) www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentcouncil which is the borough’s main family forum and a key vehicle to support borough-wide consultation with parents and carers. All Parent Champions are also required to be active members of the PCC.

The Parental Engagement Team will be supporting schools to develop their own Parent Champions programme, using the national model to enthuse, recruit and train active parent volunteers. If your school is interested in taking part and would like to find out more, email: fiona.stokes@towerhamlets.gov.uk

The initial projects the Parent Champions will be supporting include promoting the free early education places for 2 year olds, raising awareness of the scheme amongst eligible families.
School News

Quality in Extended Services
QES Recognition Success

Two Tower Hamlets Nursery Schools become the first in the country to achieve the advanced award

Alice Model Nursery School in Stepney and Children’s House Nursery School in Bow have become the first stand-alone nursery schools in the country to achieve the Quality in Extended Services Award at advanced level – the highest accolade – under the nationally recognised quality assurance scheme.

The award is overseen by QiSS, a national organisation which is part of the Faculty of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University. Schools need to evidence best practice in terms of their wider support to children, families and the local community, demonstrating and officially recognising how this wider work and effort supports pupils’ progress and wellbeing.

Historically, it has been difficult for small schools – like nursery schools – to evidence this work across the extended services core offer without being part of a mini-cluster of schools, but the level of support offered to pupils, families and the wider community by the two respective nursery schools left the assessors with little doubt that they are delivering extended services at the highest level.

Marner Primary School also achieved the QES award at established status after a successful first recognition process. The school was encouraged to consider applying for the advanced level by assessors, impressed by the quality and breadth of their extended services core offer.

The Parent and Family Support Service would like to congratulate the schools for achieving their awards.

If your school is interested in working towards the Quality in Extended Services award, please contact Fiona Stokes, Parent Support Advisor at fiona.stokes@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Alice Model QES Advanced: Our Experience

Passing the Importance of Parental Involvement onto PGCE Students

Working towards the Quality in Extended Services advanced award has been an opportunity to continue to develop the work of Alice Model, a pioneer campaigner for family welfare, which continues today at the nursery school.

The framework and audit tool helps as a guide throughout the assessment process to demonstrate how well you are doing and support you in moving forward and developing your practice. We found the support of Fiona Stokes as local authority Parent Support Advisor invaluable.

She supported the school as we evaluated our work with extended services. The critical friend, Linda Leith, gave clear and accurate feedback throughout the process.

The recognition day was a proud moment for all of the school community to demonstrate our parental involvement and the importance we place on this.

Parental involvement has always been at the centre of everything we do at Alice Model Nursery School. We believe that parents are co-educators of their children. Therefore it is vital that parents are fully involved and informed of their child’s education.

Lynn Cottle, Headteacher
Children’s House Nursery School is very much at the heart of the local community and we have always prided ourselves on the quality of our extended services. Over the years we have worked closely with the Parental Engagement Team who introduced us to the QES award back in 2011.

Through engaging with the QES process and working our way through the different levels from emerged to established to advanced we have been on a journey which has not only involved the staff but children, their parents and the wider community.

We feel it has made us a more reflective and responsive school and that we are now meeting the needs of everyone who accesses our services.

We offer a wide range of extended services including wrap around care, high quality early years education, a diverse programme of enrichment activities and a high quality programme of engagement opportunities for parents and carers. We are also able to signpost to other agencies as required.

Through careful succession planning and ensuring that we develop potential, our programme is sustainable for the long term.

We have invested in a Parent Support Partner and one of the Assistant Headteachers has overall responsibility for measuring the impact of our extended services agenda.

We now carefully monitor the impact of everything we offer to children and parents and over the years have established links with providers who can deliver the outstanding services which will directly impact on the life chances of children and their families.

Being involved with QES has helped us to maintain our provision as outstanding and has enabled us to be more analytical when measuring impact and it has also ensured that our extended services are quality assured.

We would strongly encourage other schools to get involved with the QES programme. It has been an enjoyable learning experience for our whole school with measurable results.

Chris Lewis, Headteacher
Marion Richardson – Supporting Homeless People

Over the last year parents from Marion Richardson Primary School have cooked food for homeless people in Tower Hamlets. In addition eight parents have been to a night shelter and helped serve food to vulnerable people on Friday evenings.

The homeless guests really appreciated the home cooked food! The school is also working closely with the local charity Growth who as well as giving the homeless guests a place to sleep have managed to find permanent accommodation for 62 of the 160 people who stayed with them.

"I think it is really important to get involved in helping people in our area. I was a bit worried at first but after I had talked with the homeless guests I realised that anyone who breaks up with a partner or loses their job can end up with nowhere to live. They are just like you and me. I would do it again next year. It can happen to anyone."

Jahanara, parent

Contact:
Alison Jones
Parent Support Worker
Marion Richardson Primary School

Cubitt Town Infant & Junior Schools Parent Celebration

Over 65 parents and their children from the Infant and Junior Schools celebrated the achievements of parents/carers who have accessed the schools’ extensive parents’ programme.

The Headteachers from both schools and partnership providers presented the parents with their certificates for completing courses which included ESOL (delivered by the Idea Store Learning Team) and the ‘Learn Some, Teach Some’ volunteer project and Emotional First Aid course delivered by the Parental Engagement Team.

Contact:
Jacqui Jenkins
Parent Liaison Coordinator
Cubitt Town Infant & Junior Schools

Promoting Family Aspirations at Raine’s Foundation School

As part of the Family Aspirations Programme, parents and pupils at Raine’s Foundation finished the third in a series of workshops supporting transition into year 7 and moving into year 8.

Workshops centred on supporting learning at Key Stage 3 and parents and pupils shared their experiences of this crucial transition stage, the strengths and also ideas for improvement.

Parent support, teaching and pastoral staff were involved in the sessions held throughout the year and sessions will start again with new 7 and 8 parents, plus pupils in September 2015.

Parents said that good communication, quick responses to their queries and opportunities to meet staff and other parents helped them in year 7, while pupils said that preparation in primary school, open days and reassurance from siblings helped them feel more prepared for year 7.

For more information on the Family Aspirations Programme email:
fiona.stokes@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Knit & Natter courses, English conversation courses and a Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities course was also successfully provided by Parent Ambassadors and school staff, Jacqui Jenkins and Karen Ward. The schools want to send a big thank you to all their families, Parent Ambassadors and partner providers.

Contact:
Jacqui Jenkins
Parent Liaison Coordinator
Cubitt Town Infant & Junior Schools

\[\text{Families Matter}\]
School News

Safeguarding Workshop at Mulberry School
Safeguarding Workshop at Mulberry School

Sabina Khan, Parent Liaison Officer at Mulberry School for Girls, collaborated with several school staff, including the school Social Worker to organise a workshop with the NSPCC entitled ‘Keeping Our Families Safe’. This took place in the Mulberry and Bigland Green Centre where 68 parents and members from the local community attended. The focus of the workshop was on the dangers of grooming and exploitation.

Parents learnt how to identify and respond to signs of concern. They left feeling empowered and said that they would like similar workshops to be delivered on a regular basis.

Visit www.nspcc.org.uk

Contact: Sabina Khan, Parent Liaison Officer, Mulberry School for Girls

Family Theatre Trip

Ten families from Marner Primary School were chosen to see a show called “The Princess and The Pea”.

Families met at the local Docklands Light Railway (DLR) station. Free travel was provided by the DLR. Some of the children had never been on a DLR train before so the children were very excited. One child asked “Where is the driver, mummy?”

We got off at Limehouse to visit the Half Moon Young People’s Theatre. The staff at the theatre were very helpful. Because we were the biggest group they let us settle in the theatre auditorium before others joined us.

All children enjoyed interacting with the performers throughout the show. We had a fabulous morning and left with smiles on our faces.

Thank you to Marner School and the DLR for funding this fun trip!

Contact: Daisy Clark, Parent Volunteer

Easter Egg Hunt Fun

The Easter egg hunt picnic took place during the summer term was a very successful event. The event at Three Mills Park was very well organised. There was an earlier parent workshop for making Easter baskets, hats, and candle decorations for all the children who participated.

Activities were designed for parents and children and written instructions were available. Eggs were hidden round the park.

There was laughter, cheers and happiness all around the field and the event built a stronger relationship between parents and the school.

Contact: Aaisha Faisal, Parent Volunteer
Mulberry Mums visit the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

A group of adult learners visited the London Aquatic Centre at the Olympic Park. While there, they spent the day looking around at the different areas of the park, they swam for an hour and then had lunch together. They had a great time together sharing their experiences of being parents and promised to visit again with their families.

Another group of parents visited the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park where the group had tickets to visit the distinctive looping structure of the ArcelorMittal Orbit, which became a symbol of the brilliance and originality of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The parents and adult learners had a fun day out and were impressed at how easy it was to get there.

Contact:
Sabina Khan, Parent Liaison Officer, Mulberry School for Girls

Moving Up Transition Support for 2016

Tower Hamlets Transition Support Programme is a comprehensive service for parents and carers offering independent and impartial advice. Services include information on all key points of transition, applications for school reception places, secondary transfer for Year 5 and Year 6, in-year applications as well as Admission and Exclusion Appeals.

Two new Transition Support Officers - Aleha Khanam and Altafur Rahman - have joined the Parent and Family Support Service to give particular support to vulnerable families or those who may find navigating through transitional periods a challenge, working borough-wide on mainstream and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) transition.

For more information about the Tower Hamlets Transition Support Programme or the Parent Transition Meeting contact Bernadette Ogazi, Parent Support Advisor on 020 7364 1533 or email: bernadette.ogazi@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Special Guardians

Special Guardianship provides legal parental responsibility for children who cannot grow up with their birth families.

In Tower Hamlets, Special Guardians are from diverse backgrounds. They are grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers or sisters of the children they are caring for and have responsibility for all day-to-day decisions about caring for the child or young person.

There is a range of support available and Special Guardians are entitled to:

- Financial Support
- Assistance and Advice
- Services for children and parents of children and Guardians to discuss matters of Special Guardianship
- Therapeutic Services for Children
- Mediation Services
- Counselling Information and Advice

For more information or support contact:
The Permanency, Adoption and Support Team, Town Hall, Mulberry Place
Tel: 020 7364 5431

Useful Contact:
Grandparents Association Advice and Support to Grandparents and Families.
Helpline: 0845 434 9585.
Email: info@grandparents-association.org.uk
Platform for Change Conference in July 2014 - Update

We are thrilled to begin this update by sharing the fantastic news that Claudia Constantine, the incredible person who stood up in front of you all at the Troubled Families Conference last year to share her story, has successfully completed her Psychology Honours Degree and gained a 2.2.

She graduates in November and we know that her family will be so proud to see her collect her degree.

One year on from the Platform for Change Conference at Canary Wharf, the Troubled Families (TF) scheme has helped 1,120 families in Tower Hamlets overcome difficulties.

Tower Hamlets Council introduced the national TF scheme locally in 2012 and as a result of excellent partnership working with families the TF programme has reached a 100 per cent success rate against tough government targets which included evidencing:

- A reduction in anti-social behaviour and crime
- Return to work and continuous employment
- Improved school attendance

The Council is now focussed on delivering phase 2 of the TF programme to work with an additional 3,980 families over a five year period with a broader remit to identify families against six criteria and evidence significant and sustained progress against the new outcomes within the LBTH Family Outcomes Plan.

We look forward to continuing to work in partnership to support families and provide a joined up effective response to the challenges many families continue to face, particularly under the welfare reforms and austerity measures.

Nikki Bradley MBE
Troubled Families Coordinator/Service Area Manager

The Council addresses the problems faced by families in the TF programme by assigning a lead professional to work closely with that family taking a whole family approach.

A worker may, for example, liaise with partners who are also involved with the family and work with the family to accompany adults to meetings at school about truancy or poor school attendance. They will offer support to help families understand the importance of school and education and can also help parents to produce CVs and search for work.

Mayor of Tower Hamlets, John Biggs said: “The Troubled Families programme is an excellent initiative which has made a real difference to families who are the most vulnerable and feel they have no one to turn to. “Our committed staff and partners have done an amazing job to give families a better chance in life than they had before.”

To find out more about the Troubled Families scheme in Phase 2 please email: nikki.bradley@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Tower Hamlets
SEND Youth Forum

A group of young people from Tower Hamlets with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are making an exciting series of short films for a national charity.

“I feel the experience I gained attending the film club will greatly help me with my media course and help me with my self-confidence. I enjoyed using the camera because it helped me by knowing the different parts of the camera and how the camera worked,” said Patrice Gaillard, 17, who is one of the film makers.

The SEND Youth Forum started making the films in June for the National Council for Disabled Children to inform other children and young people about their rights and the new Education, Health and Care plans.

The films will be completed this summer and screened at the launch party for the new SEND Young People’s Information, Advice and Support Service on Saturday 3rd October 2015. They will also be shared on the National Council for Disabled Children’s website and watched by children and young people across the country.

If any young people would like to find out more about the youth forum they can come along on the 3rd October and find out what the forum have planned for the future.

For more information please contact Charlotte Latimer.

Contact: Charlotte Latimer
Tel: 020 7364 4982
Mobile: 07939 984 795
Email: charlotte.latimer@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Promoting Better Beginnings for New Mums

Support for parent and infant emotional health and wellbeing during pregnancy and the first year of life are priorities for the borough’s Health and Wellbeing strategy. This has been in response to growing evidence that a child’s resilience, ability to regulate their emotions and long term risk of mental illness is strongly influenced by their parent or primary carer’s emotional health and wellbeing and the quality of early attachment to their parents and primary carers.

“A child’s first relationship, the one with his mother acts as a template that permanently moulds the individual’s capacity to enter into all later emotional relationships.” (Schore, 2002).

The Better Beginnings Programme is an opportunity for volunteers to make a positive difference to families’ lives by supporting them in the antenatal and postnatal period until their child is one year old. Better Beginnings is a whole borough project in partnership with:

- Social Action for Health
- Toyhouse
- The Parental Engagement Team
- Island House Community Centre

There is a training commitment of nine weeks after which volunteers are assigned families to work alongside and supported by a coordinator. Volunteer hours vary and there is an initial assessment before training starts.

For more information on the Better Beginnings Programme and the opportunities available for parents to volunteer on the programme contact: Bernadette Ogazi, Parent Support Advisor on 020 7364 1533
“Let’s Talk…”
Feedback from the Latest PCC Meeting (June 2015)

Parents and carers from across the borough gathered at the recent Parent and Carer Council meeting at the Professional Development Centre in Bethnal Green in June to share knowledge and positive experiences in bringing up children.

The Saturday morning session provided mums, dads and carers with a platform to discuss the challenges parents face. The parents were also given the opportunity to attend taster workshops to support parenting and raise awareness of online safety for families.

Seven year old Laura and her mother Jolanta attended Saturday’s session where they both had the chance to meet other families.

Jolanta, said: “The session was very helpful and I was very excited about attending. I learnt so much from the trainers and the video clips we watched showed us real life situations that I can really relate to.

“We all had the chance to speak to other parents and the session answered a lot of my questions. I will definitely be enrolling onto future parental engagement courses to find out more.”

The Parent and Carer Council meet three times a year to discuss issues and services that may have an impact on local families.

For further information on how parents and carers can join the PCC and participate in future meetings, please visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentcouncil email parentcouncil@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call the Family Information Service on 020 7364 6495

Calling all Parent Forums in schools and other settings: Join the PCC as an associate member to ensure your parents are feeding into the PCC and being kept updated on the latest PCC developments.
Email: parentcouncil@towerhamlets.gov.uk for more information

Supporting Divorced and Separated Parents

Splitting Up? Put Kids First is a free online service from UK research charity OnePlusOne. The charity has developed a parenting plan that can help parents record and monitor how to share the care of children. This may be particularly helpful over the festive period. While not a legally binding document, the plan can be as simple or detailed as appropriate.

Their website also features several short videos with suggestions of how parents can communicate, negotiate and solve problems, finding compromise when agreeing on how to share caring responsibilities of children.

For more details, visit www.splittingup-putkidsfirst.org.uk

Listening Books - Free Memberships

Children who have difficulty reading printed books can find themselves missing out on all the enjoyment a great story can bring. Audiobooks are a brilliant alternative!

The national charity Listening Books runs an audiobook library service for people who find it difficult to read or hold a book due to an illness, disability, mental health issue or learning difficulty such as dyslexia, giving members access to thousands of audiobooks on MP3 CD, as downloads from the website and through online streaming. The library boasts fiction, non-fiction and educational titles (from Key Stage 2 to A Level) in many popular genres.

Listening Books is currently able to offer a number of free memberships to children and adults who would find the usual membership fees a barrier to joining.

To apply for a membership, please contact Jo Cord on 020 7407 9417 or jcord@listening-books.org.uk

You can also apply online by visiting https://www.listening-books.org.uk/join-us.aspx
## Training & Events: Supporting Your Work with Families

### Parent and Family Support Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 6 October 2015</td>
<td>Parenting Network</td>
<td>A session for staff who want to improve their skills in delivery of parenting programmes and an opportunity to network with other parenting practitioners to share best practice</td>
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<td>Monday 9 November 2015</td>
<td>Working With Families Seminar</td>
<td>This multi-agency forum aims to improve the exchange of information and increase links between organisations and practitioners working with parents and families in Tower Hamlets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date to be confirmed</td>
<td>Working with Resistant and Reluctant Parents and Carers</td>
<td>This session explores factors that contribute to a resistance or reluctance to engage and provides opportunities to develop and practise strategies for effective engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 10 October 2015</td>
<td>Governor Conference</td>
<td>This conference’s theme is Safeguarding and Governance. To find out more contact Hania Franek, Head of School Governance &amp; Information. Email: <a href="mailto:hania.franek@towerhamlets.gov.uk">hania.franek@towerhamlets.gov.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 20 October 2015</td>
<td>The Role of Parent Governors in Keeping Children and Young People Safe from Radicalisation and Extremism</td>
<td>These workshops for Parent Governors aim to increase awareness of issues associated with radicalisation and extremism and explore the role Parent Governors play in supporting schools to keep children safe</td>
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For more information, charges or to book a place, contact:
Husna Begum  Telephone: 020 7364 1952 Email: husna.begum@towerhamlets.gov.uk

No course charge applies to schools/settings that have a Service Level Agreement with the Parent and Family Support Service for 2015-2016.

All places will be confirmed one week before the course/session.

Late or no notice of cancellation may result in a charge to your school or setting.