



TOWER HAMLETS

Issue 50 September 2019

FamiliesMatter

News and information to support your work with families

Tower Hamlets children's services rated 'good' by Ofsted



Celebrating
50
editions of
Families Matter!

Over the past 12 years, the newsletter has provided information and key contacts to help professionals and families tackle the challenges that often arise as children grow.

INSIDE

2-7

Children and Culture Directorate

8-12

Early Years and School News

13-16

Parent Support

17

Health

18-19

Volunteer News

20-22

Local Offer and SEND News

23-27

Community News

28

Training

Celebrating 50 editions

Parents Matter!

for staff in schools and
early years settings

Issue 3 - September 2006

Welcome to Parents Matter!

With the summer holidays over and a busy autumn term ahead there is just time to reflect upon some of the fantastic activities which took place in schools/settings last term, before starting to plan work with parents for the coming year.

Christchurch Primary School: Summer Fair!

Card-making, glass-painting, plant-growing, Treasure Island, Splat the Rat, City football club, delicious food and refreshments and space for socialising... Weeks of planning paid off, a fantastic time was had by all, and parents are already talking about next year!



Woolmore Primary School: Parents 4 Achievement

Supporting Parent Governors

Woolmore Primary School recently took part in the Extended Schools Parents 4 Achievement pilot project. Parents 4 Achievement is designed to help parents develop networks of peer support which enable them to participate more fully in school life and their child's education. Woolmore School decided to promote the role of the governing body and parent governors, with the aim of encouraging more parents to become involved.

During a parent meeting with Frank Solars from the Local Authority Governor Services and Woolmore school governors, parents were able to ask questions about school governance and find out how they could be involved in supporting its work.

Parents keen to find out more then formed an informal mentor/mentor partnership with a parent governor and met regularly with the support of the Parents 4 Achievement Co-ordinator.

I enjoy being a governor & come to meetings, take an interest in school life, I tap into the 'parent pulse' to find out what other parents are thinking about school so I can share ideas and issues and everyone feels happy. (Parent Governor)

I now feel confident enough to go for a parent governor role or get more involved in the school through volunteering. (Parent)

I want to thank Frank Solars for coming. I was approached to be a governor once and said 'no'! If I had known what I have just learned I would have said 'yes'! (Parent)



Parents Matter!

for staff in schools and
early years settings

Issue 5 - January 2007

Welcome to Parents Matter! This new year edition includes articles and photos celebrating family learning events held in schools & settings last term - see the centre pages for more!

Family residential weekend at Gorsefield Study Centre

(NRF funded project - part of the Family Support and Parenting Strategy)

Parents from the Tower Hamlets Deaf Children's Society, a group which provides a network of support for families with children who are deaf, recently enjoyed a weekend residential break at Gorsefield Rural Studies Centre. Five parents and their children, 21 in total, took part in a range of activities including nature rambles, bike riding, story telling and glass painting. Children and their parents enjoyed spending time in the grounds, exploring the maze and taking an adventurous stream walk, even though it was the wettest weekend in months! If you would like to find out more please contact us (details on back page).



This weekend was a fantastic opportunity for both the parents and children. Parents shared experiences and witnessed the interaction between the deaf child and siblings of other families. It was a learning experience for all and such an immensely enjoyable one! (Lynn Stone, Parent Information Point Co-ordinator)

I haven't been on a bike for 16 years! I don't think the children knew I could ride one! (parent)

There was a relaxed timetable of activities, we could negotiate what we wanted to do and (Carmen Manager) was fantastic! (parent)

Sport for all

Nine Tower Hamlets schools recently took part in the Festival of Disability sport event at Marlon Richardson School. Year 5 and 6 children from the school volunteered to be hosts for the day and helped ensure everything ran smoothly. Children with a range of disabilities were accompanied by their siblings (56 in all) and their parents for an action-packed day. Activities and sporting events included cricket, judo, 'goal-ball', and bocce (an adapted version of boules).

For more information please contact Alison Jones, School Home Support Worker, Marlon Richardson Primary School on 020 7780 1441.



See www.parentsmatter.tower-hamlets.lfpl.net for our latest news and resources

Parents Matter!

Staff edition for schools
& early years settings

Issue 8 - June 2007

St John's Primary School: residential!

Parents who helped organise a fundraising week for charity were rewarded with the opportunity to go away together for some fun team-building activities at Farley House in Essex. Parents enjoyed a well-paced, action-packed weekend, and started to plan their next project - setting up an EPAs action group! Alison Fisher, Home-School Liaison.



Parents were crucial in creating a very well attended and successful celebration which included food (brought solely by parents), music, displays from around the world, dance and merriment (henna painting). Some of the displays included items from Somalia, South Africa, Bangladesh, China, Russia and our local community, the Isle of Dogs. Danielle Hanway, School-Home Support.

Eva Armsby Centre: Bengali New Year celebrations!

More than 100 parents, children and staff came along. Staff wore traditional red and white (white symbolises peace and red symbolises joy). Bengali food, fruit, sweets, henna painting, tattoos, making party hats and dancing to traditional music were enjoyed by all. Guests from Rajlax Green School and John Smith Children's Centre also joined in the fun.



See www.parentsmatter.tower-hamlets.lfpl.net for our latest news and resources

Parents Matter!

for staff in schools and
early years settings

Issue 4 - November 2006

Welcome to Parents Matter!

Did you see the first Parents Matter East End Life supplement?

East End Life is delivered free to every home in Tower Hamlets. The Parents Matter supplement will be included every term and provide information about services, support and family learning activities available across the borough.

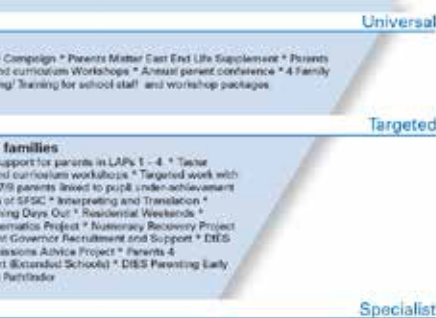


Good news for Tower Hamlets schools and early years settings!

The local authority has recently secured Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) to support a range of initiatives spanning the three strands of the Family Support and Parenting Plan. Projects will ensure all parents have an opportunity to receive the support they need through universal, targeted and specialist services.

Over the next two years schools and settings will have an exciting opportunity to develop programmes which will enable parents and carers to become more involved with their child's learning, the life of the school and local community and return to learning for themselves!

How to find out more:
An information session is being held on November 2nd at the Professional Development Centre in English Street, E3 4TA from 10.30am to 12.30pm. To book a place or for more information, call Simon Pedley on 020 7364 4127 or email simon.pedley@towerhamlets.gov.uk



A full size version of this diagram is available on our website



Parents Matter!

for staff in schools and
early years settings

Issue 9 - September 2007

Graduation Ceremony at the Ecology Pavilion!



Don't forget to get ready for **family learning week** 6th-14th October 2007

A planning guide is included with this edition of Parents Matter, and funding grants of £20 are available. Contact us (details on back page) if you would like any further advice, or an application form.

See www.parentsmatter.tower-hamlets.lfpl.net for our latest news and resources



ParentsMatter

Issue 11 | January 2008

Staff edition for schools & early years settings

Annual Parent Conference

The Ecology Pavilion at Mile End was filled with parents, carers and school staff attending the Annual Parents Conference in November last year. The event provided an opportunity for parents to share their experiences and to celebrate the achievements of parents who had successfully completed the Strengthening Families programme. Counsellor Claire Hawkins presented certificates to 70 parents who had successfully completed the course.

Parents took part in a number of workshops and everyone one left with plenty of ideas to take back to school.



- 02 Strengthening Families
- 03 Good news about schools
- 05 Working with fathers
- 07 Dates and training



For previous editions search the Local Offer: www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk

ParentsMatter

Issue 13 | June 2008

Family Learning Festival 2008

National Family Learning Week (FLW) is an annual awareness campaign which highlights the importance of family learning.

Tower Hamlets schools and settings have been involved with the national campaign for many years and, to celebrate 10 years of celebrations, FLW becomes a whole month with the Family Learning Festival 2008 in October.

What are the benefits to families?

Family Learning events offer the opportunity for parents and carers to get involved in the relaxed and informal atmosphere, picking up ideas for supporting and organising learning activities at home. These events not only reinforce the importance of learning through family participation but they also offer a social chance for parents, carers, and other family members to think about returning to learning.

What are the benefits to your school/settings? National Family Learning Week offers you a chance to do something different and make a difference in your community. By holding a Family Learning Week event you could:

- attract new and existing parents/carers to come into your school, setting or venue
- build new partnerships or strengthen existing ones
- promote and signpost wider opportunities for learning in your school/settings and local area
- try out innovative new ideas
- contribute to the Every Child Matters agenda.

It's never too early to start planning!

More information will be available in the next edition of Parents Matter but if you would like to find out more, please contact:

Shelly Rahman, Family Events Co-ordinator
Parental Engagement Team on 020 7364 0972 or email shelly.rahman@towerhamlets.gov.uk

- 02 School/setting activities with parents and carers
- 04 Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities
- 09 Extended Service News
- 10-12 Information and Training

ParentsMatter

Issue 14 | September 2008

Families take centre stage in October!

Family Learning Festival October 2008

National Family Learning Week (FLW) is an annual awareness campaign which aims to highlight the importance that families can have in supporting each other's learning.

To celebrate 10 years of celebrations, FLW becomes a whole month with the Family Learning Festival 2008.

This year in Tower Hamlets we would like to encourage schools / settings to organise activities and events which encourage families to share and celebrate their skills and experiences.

If you would like to apply for £200 to support your Parent's Week / Family Learning event / session, please contact Shelly Rahman on 020 7364 0972 shelly.rahman@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Deadline for applications: Friday 26th September 2008

- 02 School/setting activities with parents and carers
- 04 Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities
- 09 Extended Service News
- 10-12 Information and Training

ParentsMatter

Issue 15 | November 2008

For staff in schools and Early Years settings

Marion Richardson Primary – Family Voice Launch

Parents of children from Marion Richardson primary were given the chance to have their say on the issues that matter to them most at the launch of a new online group called Family Voice, on Monday 20 October 2008 by the Family and Parenting Institute to mark the start of Parents Week 2008.

Family Voice will act as a megaphone for what families really say. Sally Gimson, Director of Communications at the Family and Parenting Institute said: "Parents and grandparents are all too well aware of what is best for their families. They are eager to have their say and make their voice heard on what will make a difference to their family."

"We want to take the voice of families to policy makers and politicians so that they are in touch with what is happening in families and how policies affect their everyday lives."

Members of Family Voice will get to speak up on the issues that matter most to them by responding to surveys and writing on the blog spot. And what is said will be used in Family Voice campaigns and to challenge government to make sure the voices of families are truly heard.

Family voice - taking the voice of families to policy makers, politicians and the media. www.familyandparenting.org/registerfamilyvoice

Parent Voice events are taking place in schools across the borough. If you would like to organise a Parent Voice event in your school / setting please contact sours.farnog@towerhamlets.gov.uk 020 7364 4284

- 02 School/setting activities with parents and carers
- 06 Extended Service News
- 07 Passport to Learning
- 08 Parenting Programmes
- 09 School/setting activities with parents and carers
- 10 Information and Training

ParentsMatter

Issue 18 | May 2009

For staff in schools and early years settings

Annual Parent Conference 2009

This year's conference was as popular as ever with 120 parents, carers and school staff from 25 schools attending. Many more schools and parents were disappointed as places at the Ecology Pavilion in Mile End Park were quickly filled. The conference was opened by Councillor Clare Hawkes and Helen Jenner, Head of Early Years Children and Learning, both praised the work of schools and the commitment of Tower Hamlets parents to support their children's learning.

Presentations from parents and carers who attend Parent Groups at Marion Richardson and St Mary and St Michael Primary Schools were very well received. They described just some of their exciting work and provided plenty of ideas for others to take back to their schools.

Feedback from the Parent Voice activity can be found on page 3.

Parents said:
"Networking, meeting other parents and hearing what's going on in other schools was fantastic."
"The conference should be bigger so that more parents can come along."
"We are forming a PTA and now have loads more ideas to help get parents involved."
"It was good to be able to voice my opinion as a parent."

Information stalls were provided by Parent Information Point, Ocean School Community Organisation, Governor Services, School Home Support, Rich Mix, the Parents Advice Centre and the Parental Engagement team, offering lots of information for parents to take away.

The conference closed with a raffle and prizes included a residential break for a school parent group, family tickets to the Genesis Cinema, the Hackney Empire, Rich Mix, the Docklands museum and a family tour of West Ham football club.



- 02 Annual Parent Conference
- 03 School/setting activities with parents and carers
- 08 Parenting
- 09 Healthy Borough
- 10 Family Learning
- 12 Training

ParentsMatter

Issue 21 | January 2010

For staff in schools and early years settings

Working Neighbourhood Fund Supporting Parents into Work

The Parental Engagement team has been delivering a number of employment focused programmes in schools and settings around the borough. Courses have been developed to support parents into further learning, training and employment.

Early in December, the Passport to Learning programme held another 'Back to Work Event' at the Parent Centre, Spitalman Street. These events aim to support local parents and residents into employment and training. The latest event welcomed 45 parents, 5 staff members and a number of local residents who gained information and advice on training and employment opportunities. 13 local events were represented by parents at the event.

Course information from the Idea Stores and Tower Hamlets College was available, as well as information about childcare and childminding in the borough. Advice workers from Career Advice Bureau (CAB) and the Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets were present to give 1-1 advice and information about benefits and volunteering opportunities available locally.

A job preparation workshop also took place throughout the morning where parents sought advice and practised completing application forms and compiling CVs.

"This workshop has been so helpful for me - I feel more confident about my CV now and know what it should look like" (Parent from Virginia Primary School)

Many schools around Tower Hamlets are celebrating supporting parents back to work this academic year. Bigland Green and St John's Primary schools are very proud about the employment of some of their parents as a direct result of engagement with different programmes in school.

- 02 Supporting Parents into Work
- 03 School/Setting Activity
- 05 Secondary School Transition
- 06 Family Learning
- 08 Find Your Talent
- 09 Parenting
- 10 Community News
- 12 Training Programme

parentsMatter

Issue 23 Sept 2010

Fathers' Story Week 2010

Fathers' Story Week launched this year and was a fantastic opportunity to get fathers and children to spend time together, supporting their child's learning and development. It also provided an excellent focus for schools to consider how parents are involved in their children's learning, and explore other opportunities for more dads, granddads, brothers and uncles to be involved with children in school - and for whole families to spend quality time together.

Timed to coincide with Fathers' Day, the week ran from 14 - 20 June, with a special 'Bring your Dad to School Day' that took place on Friday 18 June.

This kind of targeted activity is a valuable way to highlight the importance of dads and male carers spending time with their children. It enables schools/settings to encourage more male involvement in school with a view to dads, granddads and all other carers being involved in school life together with their children.



"High levels of interest by a father in his child's schooling and greater direct involvement in their learning, education and schools leads to higher educational qualifications, greater progress and more enjoyment of school" (Goldman, 2005)

26 schools signed up to be part of this week in Tower Hamlets and organised a whole range of valuable opportunities for dads, other male carers, mums, female carers and children to be together. Stepney Partnership and Parental Engagement Team staff worked particularly closely with Rob Williams from the Fatherhood Institute to develop some of the ideas and resources featured on the Fathers' Story Week website. Some Tower Hamlets schools will also be involved in evaluating the week in preparation for this to become an annual event in the future.



Huge 'dads and kids' activities

Inside

- Engaging Fathers in Schools and Settings 2
- Working with Parents Seminar May 2010 5
- Passport to Learning 6
- Parental Engagement 7
- Parenting 8
- Professional Development 9
- Community News 10
- Training 12

parentsMatter

Issue 26 September 2011



Nahar Begum tells Government Minister how Tower Hamlets Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities parenting programme supported her in her role as a parent.

INSIDE

- Parenting - Early Intervention Project (page 2)
- Working Together/Canadian Minister visit (page 3)
- Community News (page 5) • Employment (page 5)
- Working with Parents Seminar (page 6) • Parents Advice Centre (page 7)
- Sharing Best Practice (pages 8-10)
- Professional Development (page 11)

parentsMatter

Issue 27 January 2012



Parental Involvement in Children's Learning

Parents attend early years foundation stage workshops and celebrate their success at Blue Gate Infant School

INSIDE

- Parental Involvement in Children's Learning (page 2)
- Parenting (page 3) • Community News (page 4)
- Advice and Information for Parents (page 5)
- Sharing Best Practice (pages 6-9)
- Professional Development/Training (pages 10-11)

parentsMatter

Issue 28 April 2012



Annual Parent Conference

The fifth Tower Hamlets Parent Conference was recently attended by over 100 parents from across the borough, who highlighted the big issues that are impacting on families and households in the local community.

Mary Durkin, Head of Youth and Community Learning said, "The Parent Conference provides an important platform for parents to tell us what we can do to improve the education, health and wellbeing of our families. The fantastic turnout again this year demonstrates how important the continued provision of high quality services is to families."

INSIDE

- Annual Parent Conference (pages 2 and 3)
- Supporting children's learning and development (pages 4, 5 and 6)
- Parenting (page 7) • Healthy Families (pages 8 and 9)
- Parents Advice Centre (PAC) (page 10)
- Community News (page 11)
- Professional Development/Training (page 12)

Celebrating 50 editions

ParentsMatter Issue 29 Sept 2012

Success at Clara Grant! (page 3)

During the 13 week Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities parenting programme parents at Clara Grant learned skills to deal with challenging behaviour and manage conflict positively and shared ideas to improve relationships and support their child's learning in and out of school.



INSIDE

- 2 Family Intervention
- 3-4 Parenting Support
- 5 Working with Parents in the Early Years
- 6-9 School News
- 10 Community News
- 11 Parents Advice Centre
- 12 Professional Development/Training

Science Week (page 6)

Children at Anthon Wharf do better in school when parents are involved!



Growing for Gold (page 7)

Parent volunteers put Chislehurst gardening club on the map and win first prize for their Learning Garden.



ParentsMatter Issue 30 Jan 2013

Parent/Carer Council Meeting (pages 2-3)

Parents hear about the recently launched Parent and Carer Council, the Borough's new family forum set up to increase the opportunities parents have to discuss and contribute to the decision-making process on issues affecting families in Tower Hamlets.



INSIDE

- 2-3 Parent and Carer Council Launched in Tower Hamlets
- 4 Working with Parents in the Early Years
- 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 School News
- 10-11 Parenting Support
- 12, 13, 14, 15 Community News
- 16 Professional Development / Training

Families Visit Farm (page 9)

Manner families enjoy a day trip to Hewitts Farm in Kent as part of the school's Healthy Families Parent Ambassador programme.



Parent Power! (page 15)

Parents win Borough Commander's Commendation for taking active steps to improve their local community.



ParentsMatter Issue 32 September 2013

News, training and information to support your work with parents and carers

Parenting Graduation (pages 2-3)

Parenting programmes play an important role in improving outcomes for Tower Hamlets' children and families.



INSIDE

- 2-3 Tower Hamlets Parenting Graduation
- 4-5 Working with Fathers
- 6-7 Supporting Children's Learning
- 8 Working with Parents in the Early Years
- 9-11 School News
- 12-14 Parenting Support
- 15-19 Community News
- 20 Professional Development/Training

Parent and Carer Council Meeting (pages 16-17)

Parents discussed school admissions, transition experiences and expectations at the most recent PCC meeting, held at the Museum of London Docklands.



Parent Commended! (page 17)

Parent and Carer Council member Munas Mohamed (centre of photo) has been named national Tenant of the Year.



ParentsMatter Issue 33 January 2014

News, training and information to support your work with parents and carers

Tower Hamlets Dads' Network

Tower Hamlets Dads' Network supports and encourages dads and male carers to strengthen relationships with their children through positive parenting and play (pages 2 & 4).



INSIDE

- 2-4 Working with Fathers
- 5-7 Welfare Into Work
- 7-8 Working with Parents in the Early Years
- 9-11 School News
- 12-14 Parenting Support
- 15-19 Community News
- 20 Professional Development/Training

Parents Matter Issue 35 September 2014

News, information and training to support your work with families

Platform for Change

The aim of the conference was to share best practice, encourage practitioners to use a whole family approach and explore how services and organisations can improve the support they provide to vulnerable families.



INSIDE

- 2-3 Platform for Change Conference
- 4-6 Family Support
- 7-9 Health
- 10-13 School News
- 14-15 Community News
- 16 Professional Development/Training

FamiliesMatter Issue 36 January 2015

News, information and training to support your work with families

Parenting Graduation

Another fabulous parenting graduation event in Tower Hamlets!

Almost 100 mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles and foster carers came together in December to celebrate successfully completing a parenting programme.

The event, held at the Professional Development Centre, Bethnal Green, was organised by the Parental Engagement Team.

Parenting programmes are part of the Parent and Family Support Service early intervention and prevention programme. They are aimed at ensuring Tower Hamlets' parents and carers have access to the information, support and help they need.



INSIDE

- 2-3 Parenting Graduation
- 4-7 Parent Support & Health
- 8 Employment
- 9-15 Early Years & School News
- 16-20 Community News
- 21-23 Platform for Change
- 24 Professional Development & Training

FamiliesMatter Issue 37 April 2015

News, information and training to support your work with families

Raising Achievement and Realising Aspirations in Tower Hamlets

A record number of parents have attended the annual Tower Hamlets Council Parent Conference. More than 160 local parents and carers attended the event, which was the ninth annual parent conference.

Held on Wednesday 11th March at the CCT Venues Plus building at Canary Wharf, it celebrated the crucial role parents and carers play in supporting children's learning and achievement, and sought to encourage even further improvements.



INSIDE

- 2-5 Parent Conference
- 6-7 Home Education
- 8-14 Parent Support & Health
- 15-17 SEND News
- 17-19 Community News
- 20 Professional Development & Training

FamiliesMatter Issue 38 September 2015

News, information and training to support your work with families

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



INSIDE

- 2-3 The Impact of Working in Partnership with Families
- 4-9 Health & Parent Support
- 10-11 Parent Champions
- 12-16 School News
- 16-19 Community News
- 20 Professional Development & Training

FamiliesMatter Issue 40 May 2016

News, information and training to support your work with families

Celebrating Tower Hamlets 10th Annual Parent Conference

More than 200 parents gathered on the Isle of Dogs on Tuesday 8 March for 'The future starts now', Tower Hamlets Council's 10th annual Parent Conference.



INSIDE

- 2-5 Celebrating Parental Engagement
- 6-7 Safeguarding Children
- 8-12 Parent Support & Health
- 13-18 Early Years & School News
- 19-22 Community News
- 22-23 Parent & Carer Council
- 24 Professional Development, Training & Events

For previous editions search the Local Offer: www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk



FamiliesMatter

Issue 41 September 2016

News, information and training to support your work with families



Search the Local Offer for information about services available to children, young people and families in Tower Hamlets (Pages 10-11)

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/localoffer



Outdoor Learning at the Sky Garden!

Families from St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School receiving their certificates at the Sky Garden after completing a successful and enjoyable Outdoor Learning course (page 6).



Let's Talk ... Housing!

Parent and Carer Council members hear about the borough's vision for housing over the next five years and give their views to help shape it (pages 2-3).

INSIDE

2-4 Parent & Carer Council/ Parent Champions 5-6 Early Years & School News 7 Working with Fathers	8-9 Children and Families Plan 10-11 Local Offer 12-16 Parent Support & Health	17 SEND News 18-19 Community News 20 Professional Development & Training
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



FamiliesMatter

Issue 43 April 2017

News, information and training to support your work with families

Parent Conference

Informed and Empowered! Keeping our Children Safe and Well

The 11th annual Parent Conference took place in March 2017. Parents from across the borough came together to hear and share key messages around keeping children safe and healthy.



Parent & Carer Survey 2017

Almost 200 parents and carers in Tower Hamlets shared their thoughts and experiences for the second annual parent and carer survey. Summaries of the views of those who took part in the survey can be found on page 19.

INSIDE

2-3 Parent Conference 4-5 Early Help 6-7 Safeguarding Children: E-safety 8-11 Parent Support & Health	12-15 Early Years & School News 16-18 Local Offer & SEND News 19-23 Community News 24 Training & Events
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



FamiliesMatter

Issue 44 September 2017

News, information and training to support your work with families

The Local Offer is an online resource available to everyone. It provides information on services for children, young people and families in Tower Hamlets.

There are factsheets, useful links and videos as well as an online directory of services. There are inspirational videos made by young people with SEND about education, health and care plans and travelling independently.



020 7364 6495

fts@towerhamlets.gov.uk

The Local Offer is a useful tool to support work with families under the main theme areas:

Advice, Information and Support Services

Childcare

Education

Health

Leisure and Youth Services

16+ Moving on post-16

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Social Care

Looking for events?

INSIDE

2-8 Safeguarding & Health 8-9 Parent Support 10-11 Early Help 12-17 Early Years & School News	18-19 Local Offer & SEND News 20-21 Volunteer News 22-23 Community News 24 Professional Development & Training
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



FamiliesMatter

Issue 45 January 2018

News, information and training to support your work with families

The right help at the right time

Early Help services redesign

Early Help services provide advice, support and interventions to children and young people and their families or carers to prevent family breakdown, strengthen family relationships and help avoid the need for statutory interventions.



INSIDE

2 Early Help 3-6 Safeguarding 6-9 Parent Support & Health 10-11 Volunteer News	12-19 Early Years & School News 19-20 Local Offer & SEND News 21-22 Community News 23-24 Professional Development & Training
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



FamiliesMatter

Issue 46 May 2018

News, information and training to support your work with families

Parents as Partners

Helping Children to Reach their Potential

Parent Conference 2018

The annual event in its 12th year is organised by the Parental Engagement Team (PET), part of the Parent and Family Support Service.

The PET's work is in response to the overwhelming evidence of the impact of parental engagement in children's learning. Parents and carers have a crucial part to play to improve the life chances and wellbeing of children and young people across the borough.

Mayor John Biggs and Lizzy Hodgkins from the Family and Childcare Trust presented local Parent Champions volunteers Marie McLeod and Lisa Cassidy with their award for winning the national 'Parent Champions volunteer of the year'. Information on their project and achievement can be found on page 19.





INSIDE

2-4 Parent Conference 5-7 Safeguarding 8-13 Parent Support & Health 14-17 Early Years & School News 18 Working with Fathers	19-21 Volunteer News 21-22 Local Offer & SEND News 23 Community News 24 Professional Development & Training
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



FamiliesMatter

Issue 47 September 2018

News, information and training to support your work with families

The Tower Hamlets Holiday Childcare Scheme



Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People and Mayor of Tower Hamlets John Biggs visited the Tower Hamlets Holiday Childcare Scheme (HCS) during the summer break, meeting staff, children and families who use the scheme.

The HCS offers high quality childcare for children aged 5-13 years. Provision is aimed at supporting parents and carers to continue to work by providing an affordable childcare option during the school holidays.

@dannyhassell Excellent visit to the @TowerHamletsNow holiday play scheme earlier today. Great initiative with committed staff going the extra mile to make it a success for so many children, supporting many families over the summer period.

INSIDE

2-3 Parent & Family Support Services 4-5 Family Voice 6-7 Parent and Carer Council 8-10 Safeguarding	11-16 Parent Support & Health 17-18 Early Years & School News 19-21 Local Offer & SEND News 22-23 Community News 24 Professional Development & Training
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Celebrating 50 editions of the Families Matter newsletter!

Back in 2006, I was inspired by Tower Hamlets schools that were sharing information with families (and staff) via a weekly school bulletin or newsletter. I thought I would like to try something similar, sharing information from the Parental Engagement Team alongside news from schools across the borough, not once a week but termly.

What started out as the four page publication 'Parents Matter' has transformed over the years to become the termly publication 'Families Matter'. Year by year this has been greatly improved by the vision and creativity of others joining the Parental Engagement Team.

Each edition now fills up to 28 pages packed with news and information not only from schools and settings but also from the many local and national organisations providing services for families in Tower Hamlets.

The newsletter has also celebrated key events with parents and carers, most recently celebrating the fantastic work of our Parent Champions, Volunteers and Ambassadors with an afternoon tea hosted by Mayor John Biggs, Councillor Danny Hassell and Speaker Victoria Obaze (see page 18).

I am incredibly proud of the newsletter and would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the publication over the years.

We hope you like it and welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Best wishes,

Jill McGinley
Head of Parent and Family Support Service

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, sibling or other family members.

References to 'SEND' as used in some articles is the abbreviation of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Message from Councillor Danny Hassell



'Remarkable progress' was how Ofsted described improvements to children's services at the council. Two years ago when these services were found to be 'inadequate' we set the ambitious goal to get to 'good'. Plenty of people told us it was too ambitious and we might be setting ourselves up for failure; that no other council had made such a jump in such a short period. But Mayor John Biggs was clear – that this was the least children and families in Tower Hamlets deserve – and a huge amount of work was undertaken to transform services. I am so grateful to the work of staff across the council and our partners in achieving 'good' overall and on every sub judgement too!

As a council we recognise the pressures facing families as a result of government cuts and rising hardship. That's why over the summer we delivered our expanded Holiday Childcare Scheme. In addition, we also provided a range of activities to tackle the issue of holiday hunger. Although we were forced to scale back our plans after the Government refused our bid for funding we were still able to provide 21,000 free meals to children.

As we look forward to the autumn, we will be launching our new plans to take forward work the early years (following the successful Mayor's Early Years Summit last year) and a new strategy to map out our work to support young people aged 14-25 to get the skills and information they need to make decisions about their futures. We are determined that every child should have the chance to be successful.

Finally Mayor John Biggs, the Speaker and I were delighted to host an afternoon tea for our Parent and Carer Champions, to thank them for their contribution to making our borough a place where families can thrive.

CLlr Danny Hassell
Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People

Tower Hamlets judged 'good' by Ofsted

Ofsted has rated Tower Hamlets Council's Children's Services department as 'good', just two years after it was given an 'inadequate' rating. Inspectors said the achievement represented 'remarkable progress'.

Since then, leaders, managers and staff have worked to deliver good experiences and progress for children and their families.

The inspectors found that there is effective management oversight and improved frontline practice.

A well-coordinated universal and early help provision means that children and families now receive good help when they need it. Children in need benefit from good assessments that inform plans to reduce risk and improve children's circumstances, the report found.

For more information and to view a film of young people sharing what the transformation means for the borough visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ofsted

This newsletter is produced by the Parental Engagement Team within the Parent and Family Support Service, Children and Culture 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 praised by Ofsted

The work of the Parent and Family Support Service has been commended by inspectors in the recent Ofsted report.

'The Parent and Family Support Service builds resilience, independence and sustainability in local communities to support early help and is highly valued by the parents involved. They feel empowered as parents and take great pride in the work they are doing to support other parents to engage with critical universal and targeted services at an early stage.'

Tower Hamlets Inspection of Children's Social Care Ofsted Report 2019, point 43

Holiday Childcare Scheme also rated 'good' by Ofsted

For more information on the recent Holiday Childcare Scheme, including the 'good' outcome of the recent unannounced Ofsted inspection, see page 26.

Every Chance for Every Child

The new Children and Families Strategy has been finalised and will launch in the autumn term. The strategy contains three priorities:

- Aspiration to Action
- Healthy Families
- Being Safe and Secure

In October, the Children and Culture Strategy, Policy and Performance Team (SPP Team) will launch the 14-25 Learning and Achievement Strategy, followed early next year by the Education Improvement Strategy. The SPP Team hope both of these will help the borough's young people fulfil their potential by giving 'every chance to every child'.

In addition, exciting work is underway on producing a Physical Activity and Sports Strategy and an accompanying Play Charter. The council wants to ensure parents' and children's voices are heard in both, so keep an eye out for invitations to focus groups.

Finally, a new children and education scrutiny sub-committee has been set up. Led by Councillor Sufia Alam, it will look at issues affecting children in the borough.

For more details, email scrutiny2@towerhamlets.gov.uk

**EVERY
CHANCE
for EVERY
CHILD**

Making marks at Children's House

Parents from **Children's House Nursery School** have been learning that children begin their journey towards writing by making marks. They have been exploring experimental mark-making techniques with their children as part of a three part workshop called 'Get Mark-making'.

The workshop, delivered by specialist practitioners from the Parental Engagement Team, emphasises the value of mark-making not only for children's self-expression and well-being but also as an important step in learning to write.

The Parental Engagement Team offers a range of writing workshops from mark-making/emergent writing to writing at Key Stage 1 and 2. For more details or to book a workshop for your school or setting call 020 7364 1952.



“Before the course, I didn't even know what mark-making was! I've loved trying out these new ideas- It's been so helpful.

Spini, parent

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The art of engagement

Creative activity has been shown to promote wellbeing, but it's also a useful tool in initial engagement with families. The Parental Engagement Team has developed a range of creative workshops aimed at engaging with parents as well as giving them a chance to explore a range of media and techniques.

In addition to well-established workshops (sewing, mosaics and ceramics), the team has enhanced their creative offer with an exciting new painting course exploring colour theory, composition and brush techniques. A distinctive feature of the course is that it gives parents the opportunity to work with artist quality materials like canvas and acrylic paint.

To find out more or to book a creative workshop for your school or setting email parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk



“This new painting course has been a great way to engage with even more parents. It's a course that encourages experimentation and self-expression.

Murude Mehmet, Family Support and Engagement Practitioner

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Hungry Little Minds

Hungry Little Minds is a new campaign from the Department for Education (DfE) in response to the Government's pledge to reduce the number of children who finish Reception without the communication, language and literacy skills they need to thrive.

The campaign is aimed at parents and carers and reinforces key messages from the Every Tower Hamlets Child a Talker (ETHCaT) programme, which has been delivered by the Integrated Early Years' Service since 2013.

Other local early intervention programmes that support the home learning environment are Bookstart Corner and Early Words Together. These evidence-based programmes aim to reduce the number of children still entering school below age related expectations for communication and language.

For more details, email charlotte.herxheimer@towerhamlets.gov.uk

For details about Early Words Together, email Guthsna Khan deputy@childrenshouse.towerhamlets.sch.uk

Outdoor learning at Old Church

Parents from **Old Church Nursery School** have been discovering the benefits of outdoor learning in a specialist workshop delivered by the Parental Engagement Team. Through group discussions, parents shared experiences and noted how children today have fewer opportunities to play and learn outside.

Busier family lives, combined with an increased sense of fear in society and accommodation with no outdoor space, means that families are spending more time inside. The three part course explored how this could be hampering children's social skills as well as risking stifling their long-term physical and emotional development and their wellbeing.

In an effort inspire the parents, local trips were an integral feature of the course with the families enjoying visits to St Dunstan's Church and Mudchute Farm.

To book an outdoor learning workshop for your school or setting email parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk

“

The course was truly inspiring. I will definitely be spending more time outside with my child as a result of this course.

Parent

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Celebrating Tower Hamlets parents in Children's Centres

More than 100 parents with children under five celebrated their achievements in Adult Education at a special event held at the Ecology Centre in July. At the event, which was organised by the Integrated Early Years Service, Jobcentre Plus and the Idea Store, parents were commended for their efforts to improve their job prospects through their achievements in education or through volunteering in children's centres.

Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People, was the lead Tower Hamlets Council representative. Awarding their certificates of achievement, he praised the parents for their efforts. Visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/childrenscentres

Bags of creativity at Harry Gosling

Parents from **Harry Gosling Primary School** have been discovering how to create home furnishings and bags of all shapes and sizes in a specialist workshop delivered by practitioners from the Parental Engagement Team.



The 'Basics of Sewing' course enabled parents to get to grips with using a sewing machine as well as learning key skills such as inserting a zip and interfacing. The parents were delighted with their finished pieces, which included cushion covers, make-up and tote bags. For more details email parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk.

“

I was so inspired by this course, I bought a sewing machine. Now I can continue with my learning and create at home.

Parent

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All Together anti-bullying schools

Throughout 2019-2020, the Parental Engagement Team, in partnership with the Anti-Bullying Alliance, is offering schools the opportunity to take part in the All Together Programme, a unique anti-bullying training programme. On completion, schools are awarded 'All Together School' status which recognises their work in anti-bullying practice and their efforts to improve the wellbeing of pupils.

During the summer term, 15 schools attended the training, funded by the Department for Education. The course explored the impact of bullying and also provided practical strategies on how to prevent as well as respond to incidents of bullying. 100% of those attending the training stated that it was good/excellent and that they would recommend it to a colleague.

“

There was lots of practical information that can be used in school straight away, with no jargon.

Participant, All Together Programme

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For information on support available in Tower Hamlets email the Parental Engagement Team parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call **020 7364 1952**

For more details about the Anti-Bullying Alliance and the All Together Programme visit www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk



See page 28 for details on the next All Together Programme – Train the Trainer workshops. Workshops are for school staff and partners able to support schools to develop a whole school/cluster/partnership approach to anti-bullying.

Parental engagement and stakeholder involvement

During the autumn and spring term, the Parental Engagement Team will be working with school leadership teams, governing bodies, school staff and parents/carers to audit and develop effective home-school communication, engagement and consultation processes.

The team will help explore partnerships with parents/families, the impact on pupil outcomes and evidence to meet Ofsted requirements considering the following:

- How does the school work with parents (particularly the most vulnerable groups) to help them support their child's learning?
- Does the school have a link governor for parental engagement?
- How effective is school engagement and how can this be evidenced?
- Does the school regularly consult with parents? If so, how and when? How does this information feed into the School Development Plan?
- How does the school communicate key information about children's learning to parents? What about those parents who may not read well or do not have close contact with the school?
- How does the school share information/policy regarding the safety and wellbeing of pupils and families?
- How does the school obtain feedback from parents and/or respond to complaints?

Please contact the Parental Engagement Team to find out more about the 2019-20 Tower Hamlets Schools Parental Engagement Audit.

Denise De-Goze

Schools and Families Team Manager

EMAIL: denise.de-goze@towerhamlets.gov.uk

TEL: **020 7364 0971**

Poverty proofing the school day

Poverty Proofing the School Day is an initiative that aims to remove the barriers to learning which exist because of the impact of living in poverty. The idea developed from a project run by Children North East in which children living in poverty said what they most wanted was an end to discrimination at school.

In practical terms, the project involves an audit which is based on a whole school consultation. A distinctive feature of this approach is that all pupils at a school are interviewed. In addition, parents, staff and governors also complete a questionnaire – all with the aim of uncovering institutional and cultural practices which stigmatise pupils who live in poverty.

The project, which has been successfully running in the North East of England since 2013, is now being piloted in a number of Tower Hamlets schools – **Cubitt Town Infants' School, Bonner, Malmesbury, St Paul with St Luke, Lansbury Lawrence and Harbinger** primary schools. To assist with the auditing process, professionals from these schools as well as the Tackling Poverty Programme Team and Parental Engagement Team undertook two days intensive training to prepare them for their roles as Lead and Support Researchers. Colleagues from Toynbee Hall will also be supporting the evaluation of the project.

For more details, visit povertyproofing.co.uk

For more information on the Poverty Proofing the School Day initiative in Tower Hamlets email dominic.hinde@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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No activity in schools should exclude or make assumptions about families whose income is lower than others.



Luke Bramhall
Delivery Lead
Poverty Proofing the
School Day
Children North East

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Children living in poverty

UK - 30%

London - 37%

Tower Hamlets - 57%



Family Support practitioners tackle inequality

Inequality starts early. Many disadvantaged children and parents are under-prepared for the transition from home or nursery to school, and this gap only widens as children move through school. Complex family life often leads to poor attendance for children which in turn greatly reduces their educational and life outcomes.

A Family Support Practitioner in school can be a very effective way to help tackle these inequalities. These highly skilled practitioners have direct experience of working with the most complex families and are motivated to maximise educational opportunities and improve life chances. They work closely with school staff and families to tackle challenges affecting children's learning using early help interventions to improve attendance, behaviour, engagement and parenting capacity.

A Family Support Practitioner can help:

- Build relationships with families
- Identify early and refer to specialist services
- Improve communication between parents and school
- Increase support for vulnerable families
- Improve attendance and attainment
- Contribute to Ofsted safeguarding requirements to protect children.

Vulnerable children are more likely to:

- Be affected by domestic violence
- Have special educational needs
- Have parents that need support with school engagement
- Have parents that need support with employment, training or education.

Meet Family Support Practitioner – Rashina Begum

Could you tell us a little about your role as a Family Support Practitioner?

It's such a varied role – one day I could be doing a home visit to a vulnerable family or delivering a parenting programme, the next day I could be making a Social Inclusion Panel referral or delivering a workshop to support parents help with their child's literacy. No two days are the same really.



How do you think a school might benefit from having a Family Support Practitioner?

I think it's such a crucial role for any school. Vulnerable families are sometimes suspicious of school staff and perhaps fearful of asking for help or admitting they are struggling. A Family Support Practitioner takes time to build relationships with these families so it's easier to support them.

What are the challenges you face in this role?

Sometimes I am asked to help deal with tricky issues like parent complaints – like bullying or even community cohesion. These can be challenging, but it's always rewarding when we've come to a solution.

What do you enjoy most about the role?

I love getting to know the different families. I often work with families who may be new to the school or even new to the UK. It's great to be part of their journey as they grow in confidence and settle into the school.

To find out how the Parental Engagement Team can support your school to develop a Family Support Practitioner role call 020 7364 1952.

Parenting programmes timetable autumn term 2019

Parenting programmes in Tower Hamlets are delivered in partnership – staff from the local authority and voluntary sector work together to ensure parents and carers receive the help and information they need. 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.

Programme	Age	Additional info	Day	Venue
SFSC*	Birth-18 years	Delivered in Bengali	Monday	Parents Advice Centre
Emotional First Aid	Birth-18 years	Delivered in English	Monday	Meath Gardens Children's Centre
Triple P Group Teen Programme	11 - 18 years	Delivered in English Crèche available	Tuesday	City Gateway Women's Project Stepney Life Centre
Triple P Group Programme	18 months-11 years	Delivered in English	Tuesday	Isle of Dogs Children's Centre
SFSC	Birth-18 years	Delivered in Bengali	Tuesday	Community Reach Hub (Swan Housing)
SFSC	Birth-18 years	Delivered in English Evening programme	Tuesday	Parents Advice Centre
Triple P Group Programme	18 months-11 years	Delivered in English Crèche available	Thursday	Mowlem Children's Centre
ADHD Parenting Programme	5 - 16 years	For parents of a child with a diagnosis of ADHD	Thursday	Parents Advice Centre
SFSC	Birth-18 years	Delivered in English Crèche available	Friday	Overland Children's Centre
Triple P Discussion Group Series	18 months-18 years	Delivered in English	TBC (one-off sessions)	Various locations in Tower Hamlets
Emotional First Aid	Birth-18 years	Delivered in English	TBC October	Parents Advice Centre

* *Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities*

Parent and Family Support Service EMAIL: parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk TEL: 020 7364 6398

Parenting support drop-in surgery

This is a new opportunity for professionals working with families to gain information on the range of evidence-based parenting programmes and support delivered in Tower Hamlets.

The sessions are open to any professional who is considering making a referral to the Parenting Team. A Parenting Team manager will be available to advise on the support most likely to suit the specific needs of families.

Wednesdays

18 September, 9 October, 6 November, 11 December

11.30am -12.30pm

Tower Hamlets Town Hall, Mulberry Place

No booking required but call **020 7364 6398** or email parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk for further details.

Supporting parents of teenagers

Group Teen Triple P is an evidence-based parenting programme suitable for parents with concerns about their teenager's behaviour or who wish to learn a variety of parenting skills that will promote their teenager's development and potential. It explores parents' wellbeing, positive relationship building and effective parenting strategies. It aims to equip parents with the skills and confidence they need to be self-sufficient and to be able to manage family issues without ongoing support.

Group Teen Triple P is delivered by experienced parenting practitioners over eight weeks to groups of up to 15 parents. Practitioners use a range of teaching resources including film clips and group discussions supported by a workbook. They also share tips for implementing strategies discussed in the group at home. There is support throughout the course by 1-1 telephone coaching.

The programme is offered at various venues across Tower Hamlets by the Parenting Team; they are also currently working in partnership with local Youth Hubs to widen access to parents of teenagers.

Many parents who attend the programme feel overwhelmed by some of the issues they are facing and initially may feel isolated. However, as parents get to know each other, they realise that they are not alone and that the majority of the group face similar degrees of challenge with their teens. Many parents feel more empowered by the end of the programme, saying that they have made progress in their relationships with their children. They also come to realise that during this transition period, effective communication is crucial.

To find out more about Triple P Teen programmes or to refer a parent contact parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Tower Hamlets launches online parenting support

Triple P Online is a web-based programme that promotes the use of positive parenting practices and offers parents practical approaches to specific situations.

It's for parents who have concerns about their child's behaviour but are more suited to completing a programme online because they may be working or unable to attend group parenting courses. Parents can complete the programme in their own time on a computer, tablet or smartphone.

Triple P Online will be piloted in the borough in the autumn term and made available to parents who have been referred for parenting support.

To find out more or to make a referral contact parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Reducing parental conflict training

Conflict is a normal part of relationships and family life. Not all conflict is damaging, but the way it manifests can negatively affect a child. For example, when conflict between parents is intense, frequent or poorly resolved, it can harm a child's outcomes regardless of whether the parents are together or separated.

Tower Hamlets Children Services have commissioned a number of training courses to raise awareness about parental conflict.

They will focus on the impact and triggers of conflict between parents and how professionals can support families to resolve conflict constructively.

The courses are aimed at staff who provide early help and prevention – schools, health, police, GPs and voluntary sector services. Schools and those services that see children on a daily basis are encouraged to attend.

Courses include:

- Half day awareness sessions
- One day workshops for frontline practitioners
- One day training for managers
- E-Learning.

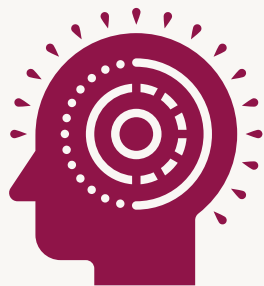
For more details, email professional.development@towerhamlets.gov.uk

World Mental Health Day

The World Health Organisation recognises World Mental Health Day on 10 October every year.

This year's theme set by the World Federation for Mental Health is 'Suicide Prevention'.

For more information visit www.mentalhealth.org.uk



Parent Champions mental health workshops

To book a mental health awareness workshop led by Parent Champion volunteers in your school or setting email parentcouncil@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Safe After School – free school workshops for parents

The Safe After School programme aims to raise awareness of the things parents should consider when selecting out of school activities for their children.



There is an information leaflet that has been shared with parents across the borough and over the autumn term the Parental Engagement Team will be delivering workshops to parents in schools.

Limited workshops are available. To book a workshop for your school or setting email fiona.stokes@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Time to re-think 'Stranger Danger'

We all want our children to be happy and confident. As they get older, we want them to be able to explore the outside and online worlds safely. One of the biggest challenges facing any parent is how to give your child enough freedom to learn for themselves, sometimes from their mistakes, whilst fulfilling that most basic parental duty to keep your children safe.

There's no escaping that worrying things do sometimes happen. Whether it's something suspicious in your local community or a huge national media story, there are times when we need to be able to pick up a conversation with our children, reassure them, and remind them how to stay safe.

The Clever Never Goes campaign states that unfortunately, too many parents and schools are all too often turning to 'stranger danger' to do this and it simply doesn't work. Most strangers would help rather than hurt a child and the people that do want to hurt children are often not strangers. Teaching children to stay safe by focusing on strangers is not helpful in these circumstances.

Clever Never Goes gives parents and teachers a tried and tested replacement for 'stranger danger.' Children are not told to fear the worst of everyone they don't know. They are supported to finely tune their instincts; to spot if someone (anyone) is asking them to go somewhere; and to know what action to take to stay safe. It's designed to be positive, practical, playful and, above all else, to keep things in perspective.

To take a look at the Clever Never Goes resources for both schools and parents visit <http://clevernevergoes.org>

Ministry of Food Cooking Sessions

Busier lives mean that fewer families are getting a chance to cook and eat together. Parents from **Marner** and **St Elizabeth primary schools** have been discovering how the simple act of preparing and sharing food together can enrich relationships and be a bonding experience.

Parents from both schools took part in a special cooking course called 'Ministry of Food' delivered by skilled practitioners from the Parental Engagement Team. During the course, the parents were encouraged as they made small changes to improve the health of their family.

Many of the parents reported a change in their cooking and eating habits as they discovered how easy it is to prepare cost-effective, home-cooked meals from scratch. The course introduced the parents to new ingredients and cooking methods while exploring issues such as portion size and mindful eating.

Healthy eating principles were a key feature of the course and parents enjoyed trying out recipes from around the world that were low in salt, sugar and fat.



“

We got to know each other better as we cooked together. It was such a special experience.

Parent
Marner Primary School

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“

I've reduced the amount of salt I use – I want to keep my family healthy.

Parent
St Elizabeth Primary School

”

Healthy Families

The Parental Engagement Team also delivers the Healthy Families programme. It is part of the borough's tackling obesity strategy and also supports parents to make small changes to improve their family's health.

To book the Ministry of Food or Healthy Families programme for your school or setting, email parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Healthy Start vouchers

Healthy Start is a scheme that helps local pregnant women, new mums and young children in low income families to buy some of the things essential for a healthy diet. The vouchers can be spent on milk, fruit and vegetables. Application forms for Healthy Start vouchers are available from GP surgeries,

Children's Centres, Idea Stores and all Early Years Settings.

What you get:

- £3.10 per week if you are pregnant
- £6.20 per week for each baby under 1
- £3.10 per week per child between 1 and 4



For more details, visit
www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Tower Hamlets parent volunteers – from great things to greater

The valuable contribution that volunteers are making within our communities was recognised at a very special event held at Tower Hamlets council chambers. Mayor John Biggs, Speaker of the Council Victoria Obaze and Councillor Danny Hassell invited 50 Parent and Carer Council Champions, Ambassadors and Volunteers to an afternoon tea to celebrate their achievements.

This was an opportunity for the parents to network with service managers as well as catch up with colleagues from the Parent and Family Support Service who have provided training and on-going support to the volunteers over the years. Recognising the volunteers' contribution in the borough's journey towards greater things, Councillor Hassell presented the parents with a Tower Hamlets pin badge inscribed with the words 'from great things to greater' – the Tower Hamlets motto.

The event corresponded with the recent Ofsted inspection, so lead inspectors were also present observing the proceedings. They took time to speak with some of the volunteers and were particularly impressed with the work of the Parent and Family Support Service.



“

The Parent and Family Support Service builds resilience, independence and sustainability in local communities to support early help and is highly valued by the parents involved. They feel empowered as parents and take great pride in the work they are doing.

Tower Hamlets Ofsted report 2019

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For more details about the Parent and Carer Council, the borough's main family forum, visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentcouncil

Tower Hamlets parent volunteers – making a difference

The Tower Hamlets Parent and Family Support Service co-ordinate, train and support a range of parent volunteering programmes, delivered in schools and other community settings.

Parent volunteers supported by the Parent and Family Support Service are members of the **Parent and Carer Council**, the borough's main universal family forum.



Parent Champions

support parents to access early learning places, raise awareness around mental health and promote key safeguarding messages as part of the Safer Families Champions programme.

Healthy Families Parent Ambassadors

help tackle the increasing levels of childhood obesity by supporting parents to encourage their children to eat more healthily and become more active.

SEND Parent Ambassadors

strengthen the voice of families who have children with special educational needs and disabilities.

School Parent Volunteers

complete training that gives them the skills and knowledge to volunteer in schools. This includes supporting teaching, learning and play, as well as providing an additional resource in school life. For many parents, this role is a step into further training and employment.

Make a difference, become a parent volunteer

EMAIL: parentcouncil@towerhamlets.gov.uk TEL: 020 7364 6398

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentcouncil

Community safety discussed at the PCC

The focus of the summer term Parent and Carer Council (PCC) meeting, which was held at the V&A Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green, was community safety.

Parents gave feedback to the Community Safety Team and PCC members heard how they can take part in some of the renewed community safety initiatives, including the 'neighbourhood walkabouts' as detailed on page 23.

There was also an opportunity for the PCC to take part in a consultation on the redesign of the Community Languages Services and Councillor Danny Hassell gave feedback on the recent Children's Services Ofsted inspection.



The next meeting is in November 2019.

For more information email
parentcouncil@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Local Offer evolves



The Local Offer provides information on the support available for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and their families. It provides information about education, health and social care provision as well as training, employment and independent living for young people with SEND.

The Local Offer continues to evolve - with the development of new areas and initiatives.

The Young People's Zone

This is currently being developed. Young people are being consulted about how the zone should look as well as what kind of information should be included. If you have a group of young people that would like to be part of the consultation process, contact the Family Information Service (FIS).

The Professionals Zone

This is where professionals can find useful information and resources including forms. Professionals interested in the development of this zone are encouraged to get in touch.

Consultation Group

The Local Offer is keen to ensure that the information on its site is relevant and accurate. A consultation group will be formed of young people and parents. They will meet on a termly basis so that they can analyse the Local Offer and provide suggestions

for improvement. If you are interested in being part of the consultation group, contact the FIS.

Consultations and Engagement Workshops

In response to the SEND funding cuts, the Local Offer has held public consultations as well as engagement workshops.

Outreach Work

If you would like the Local Offer to do some outreach session in your school, setting, community or health setting, email the FIS.

Family Information Service

Email: fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk Tel: **020 7364 6495**
www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk

Important dates and events for parents

Date/time	Event
Monday 9 September 2019 10am-2.30pm	Home Education Information Event at the V&A Museum of Childhood A workshop with a topical theme in a community venue for parents and carers who electively home educate their children. Delivered by the Parent and Family Support Service in partnership with the Education Safeguarding Service.
Autumn term TBC	Somali Parents Network The network meets monthly and provides opportunities for Somali parents and carers across the borough to discuss key issues around education, health and wellbeing, obtain information and hear from guest speakers.
Saturday 30 November 2019 10am-1.30pm	Parent and Carer Council Meeting The borough's main family forum and key consultation vehicle to support borough-wide consultation with parents and carers.
Wednesday 18 March 2020 9.15am-2pm	Annual Parent and Carer Conference Save the date – further information on how to book places for parents will be available shortly.

For more information contact the Parental Engagement Team on **020 7364 6398**.

Young People's SEND Ambassador Programme

Young People's (YP) SEND Ambassadors are young people with additional needs who want to keep all young people with SEND: Informed, Consulted and Included.

Sornnaly Hossain – an ambassador for change

Could you tell us a little about your role as a Tower Hamlets YP SEND Ambassador?

It's an amazing opportunity for me to work with my local authority as a YP SEND Ambassador because this is allowing me to develop my skills and confidence. I enjoy arranging events for 'Our Time Youth Forum' and working with other professionals and young people. It allows me to make improvements to the SEND support system by getting the points of young people across to professionals.

What are your aims as a YP SEND Ambassador?

Working with those who have special educational needs is my interest and I am keen to support young people with any challenges they may face. My aims for working as a YP SEND Ambassador are to represent young people with SEND and encourage them to participate fully.

This could include arranging activities at the Young People's Advice Centre as well as providing advice to young people. I also aim to work closely with the local community to spread SEND awareness as well as participate in meetings and workshops.

What do you think are the benefits of being a YP SEND Ambassador?

The experience I am getting in my role will be very beneficial for my future. I have been able to learn so many new things about SEND and I am keen to keep learning!

“

I am trying my best to ensure that by working as a YP SEND Ambassador, I can help make important changes happen.

Sornnaly Hossain
YP SEND Ambassador

”

For more information about the Young People's Advice Centre and Our Time All Ability Youth Forum email

yp@towerhamlets.gov.uk
ypambassadors@gmail.com

SEND roadshows for professionals

**Thursday 12 and Friday 13 September 2019
9.30am-12pm**

Do you work with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or their families?

Attend the upcoming SEND roadshows at the Professional Development Centre (PDC) in Bethnal Green to:

- Learn more about the SEND local area inspection process and what it means for you
- Meet colleagues involved in the preparation for the inspection and hear from young people with SEND and SEND Parent Ambassadors
- Hear about what the local authority is doing to improve services for children and young people with SEND.

Places are limited.

To book your place email
Children.andCultureSPP@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Film screening a hit with young people

Over 30 young people and family members braved the scorching summer heatwave to attend the Young People's Film Screening and Award Ceremony at Haileybury Youth Centre on 26 July.

The event was held to celebrate the achievements of young people who have completed ASDAN Leadership courses run by the Youth Service in partnership with Our Time All Ability Youth Forum and George Green's School.

The Our Time ASDAN Leadership project saw young people of all abilities and needs work in partnership to develop their leadership skills and create films about topics that were important to them.

The three films presented to the audience were produced over the six week project, exploring topics such as crime, employment and autism.

The judging panel comprised of Jill McGinley, Head of the Parent and Family Support Service, David Cregan, Head of the Virtual School, Geraldine Bone, Youth Arts Manager, and Jenny Miller, Manager, Family Information, Advice and Support Service.

After a tough round of judging and feedback, the winner was a short film with the aim to raise awareness around autism and how it affects people. All films will now be available to be shown in schools and colleges by Our Time Ambassadors.

“

The films were of a very high standard and dealt with such important issues.

Jill McGinley
Head of Parent and Family Support Service

”

The day ended with young people receiving their certificates and Our Time members being recognised for their contributions throughout the academic year.

Our Time is supported by the Young People's Advice Centre (YPAC). For more information please email: yp@towerhamlets.gov.uk

#TOWERHAMLETS
YOUTH

“Have your say, your voice counts”

LBTH Youth Service is seeking your views on how to improve outcomes for young people in Tower Hamlets.

Help us shape the way we deliver services for young people in the borough.

Complete a questionnaire today and enter into a prize draw to win up to **£50** in vouchers. Ask at your local Youth Hub or Youth Centres or visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/youth2019

For more information contact Faith Williams on: faith.williams@towerhamlets.gov.uk Tel: 020 7364 7106



Community safety update

Community safety is a top priority for both the council and local residents. People are often keen to give feedback about local issues to the Community Safety Team and to find out how they can get involved in working with the council and other key partners, such as the police, to address crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area.

The Community Safety Team has responded by re-launching the 'neighbourhood walkabouts' scheme. It brings together residents and their Safer Neighbourhood Officers, ward councillors, Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers and other council officers to discuss safety issues. The walkabouts result in an Action Day where residents can get involved in taking positive actions dealing with their concerns as well as helping to 'clean up' the area.

For more information and how to get involved visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/neighbourhoodwalkabouts2019



TOTAL POLICING

Anti-bullying week

Anti-bullying Week 2019 is happening from Monday 11 November - Friday 15 November 2019 and it has the theme 'Change Starts With Us'.



For more information visit www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week

Get ready for fireworks season!

With the fireworks season approaching, it's important to follow guidelines and stay safe.

The law says you must not set off or throw fireworks in public places. You can be fined up to £5,000 and imprisoned for up to 6 months for selling or using fireworks illegally.

It's against the law to sell fireworks to people under 18 and illegal to set off fireworks between 11pm and 7am, except on certain occasions like Bonfire Night, New Year's Eve, Diwali and Chinese New Year.

Buying fireworks

You should only buy fireworks from registered sellers on these dates:

15 October to 10 November

26 to 31 December

3 days before Diwali and Chinese New Year

Stay Safe

- Light sparklers one at a time and wear gloves
- Never give a sparkler to a child under 5
- Keep fireworks in a closed box
- Follow the instructions on each firework
- Light them at arm's length using a taper
- Stand well back
- Never go back to a lit firework
- Never throw fireworks
- Keep pets indoors

Family Learning Festival 2019

This year's Family Learning Festival takes place from 19 October to 3 November.

For more information visit www.familylearningfestival.com

Summer Holiday Childcare Scheme 2019

The Tower Hamlets Holiday Childcare Scheme (HCS) is Ofsted registered and provides affordable childcare for children aged 3 to 13 years old. The holiday provision takes place in Tower Hamlets schools and operates during the school holidays (excluding the Christmas break).

The scheme also supports working parents who can book extended hours from 8am-6pm, as well as the standard 9am-5pm option.

This year, the summer holiday scheme took place at St Mary and St Michael Primary School and was expanded to provide more places than ever before.

A number of places were provided for a number of places booked for children with SEND and vulnerable referrals from Children's Social Care, schools and other partner agencies.



Early Years

The early years area has been very busy this summer with lots of fun filled activities and local trips. There have been lots of new children to the scheme who have been supported to settle in through our new keyworker animal groups.

Carnival costume making and baking have been popular amongst the children. Children in the early years attended trips to Mudchute Farm and the Peter Rabbit Trail at Basildon.

Staff also supported children who will be transitioning to the main scheme.

455

children attended



4,075

sessions booked





“
Staff are approachable, friendly and helpful.
Parent
”



“
The play scheme is very good; my son loves every moment he is there.
Parent
”

Main Scheme

Children in the main scheme have been on the highest number of local trips ever at the 2019 summer scheme. This was organised based on feedback received from parents and children at previous schemes.

Trips included:

- Essex Country Parks
- Poplar Family Festival
- Mile End Water Festival
- Victoria Park

Other activities at the scheme included cooking, arts and crafts and sewing.

Staff also supported children with bike training to increase their confidence and skills in cycling.

Teen Space

A new pilot initiative has taken place in the teen space whereby the HCS have partnered with Limehouse Youth Hub to support a transition project for children who will be leaving the scheme at the age of 13 so they have another service to access.

Children met with youth workers, have become familiar with the youth centre and took part in a number of activities.



319

families booked sessions



230

children attended daily



The Holiday Childcare Team is part of the Parent and Family Support Service.
For more information, to leave feedback or to book places visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/hcs
Parents who use the scheme are encouraged to give ongoing feedback.



Holiday Childcare Scheme – Good Ofsted inspection!

The Tower Hamlets Holiday Childcare Scheme (HCS) had an unannounced Ofsted inspection visit over the summer. This was on one of the busiest days of the summer with 230 children booked to attend. The scheme also had two trips taking place at Mile End Water Festival and King Edward Memorial Park. Alongside this, children in the teen space were visiting Limehouse Youth Hub.

Ofsted rated the Holiday Childcare Scheme as 'good' following the inspection.

The scheme will be reviewing the recommendations from the report and will begin implementing these for the October holiday scheme.

The HCS would like to thank all the parents and carers who took the time to speak with the inspector on the day.

To view the full copy of the Ofsted report, visit the website below and don't forget to include the scheme's unique reference number (URN).

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>
URN: EY349265

Highlights of the report

- Staff provide a range of interesting and exciting activities, which means that children behave well and are fully engaged.
- Staff are warm and caring; they take great efforts to form good attachments with children in each key group. Children settle well and feel confident to make friends and are helpful to each other.
- The setting is highly inclusive, and leaders work extensively to provide additional support to families who have children with special educational needs (SEN).
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders have robust systems in place, which means that staff know how to identify children who may be at risk of harm or abuse.
- Children share their ideas and suggestions to help staff plan daily activities and make changes to the learning environment.
- Staff have high expectations for behaviour and model good behaviour well. Therefore children show kindness and respect to each other and are able to manage their own emotions.



RESIDENTS' SUPPORT SCHEME

Are you working with a family in crisis who need short term support with food, energy bills, white goods and other urgent needs?

The council may be able to help.

Residents can self-refer to the scheme, however those who are supported by a professional or referral partner organisation are more likely to get their application approved first time round. This limits any delays in getting the support to families in need who meet the criteria.

To support the families you work with to access the Residents' Support Scheme, visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/RSS or call 020 7520 7217 for more information.



Early Help

Our vision for Early Help is that every family should get the right support at the right time to ensure that needs are addressed quickly thus preventing further escalation or crises and ensuring that resources are put to the best possible use. Training is available to all professionals across the children and families partnership including:

- Local Safeguarding Children's Board
- Schools
- Children's centres and day care providers
- GPs/health visitors and other health professionals
- Employment agencies
- Housing providers
- Police, probation and fire services
- Early Help Services
- Private and voluntary sector organisations
- Lead workers and staff involved in 'Team around the Family' meetings
- Other staff who come into contact with families.

The training programme includes the following topics:

- Early Help practice and assessment skills training
- Early Help assessment technical/systems training
- Effective multi-agency working – role of the lead professional
- Integrated working for Early Help managers
- Restorative practice training
- Reducing parental conflict training programme
- Trauma based training.

E-learning

E-learning and awareness modules being developed include:

- Early Help e-awareness
- Whole family working
- Role of the lead professional.

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

Tel: **020 7364 2154**
Email: **kobita.begum@towerhamlets.gov.uk**

Health

Introduction to STI's and HIV for non-clinical staff working in Tower Hamlets

Friday 31 January 2020
12.30-4.30pm

All staff have an important role to play in Making Every Contact Count and are often in key positions to respond to concerns about sexual health.

This course is designed for non-clinical and front facing staff who work with adults and young people to raise awareness of sexual health and knowledge to signpost and act on concerns about their client's sexual health needs.

Suitable for youth workers, teachers and school staff, social workers, the police, voluntary sector organisations, and anyone who works with vulnerable young people and adults.

Limited places available.
To register your place, email **samantha.gilliam@nhs.net**

Parent and Family Support Service

Wednesday
6 November
2019
5-7.30pm

For School Governors

Meaningful Engagement with Parents, Carers and Families

This session explores school relationships with parents and families; why parents matter to the work of the Governing Body; and considers the challenges and barriers experienced. It also looks at areas of good practice being developed within primary and secondary schools.

Wednesday
20 November
2019

The Anti-Bullying All Together Programme: Train the Trainer

A workshop for school staff and partners able to support schools to work together to develop and embed a whole school/cluster/partnership approach to anti-bullying

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 & Family Support Service for 2019-20.

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.