

# FamiliesMatter

Issue 48 February 2019

News, information and training to support your work with families

## The Parental Engagement Team Supporting Families

### 2018-19 Satisfaction Survey Feedback

**92%** of parents agreed that accessing the service or course had helped them to understand their child's development and improve their relationship.



“ For any parent who faces difficulties with their children's behaviour, this course would definitely make a difference in a positive way.”

Parent, Triple P Group parenting course

**99%** of parents agreed that the service or course had increased their confidence and awareness which supported their own learning and development.



“ The Parental Engagement Team provides practical activities that can be easily replicated at home and further both a child's, and in some cases, adult's learning.”

Parental Engagement Worker

**99%** of parents and partners agreed that the staff delivering the service or course had been knowledgeable and professional.



“ The facilitator running the session was really supportive and encouraged us to overcome our fears of telling stories.”

Parent, Every Parent a Storyteller course

**100%** of parents and partners had said that they would recommend the service or course to another parent/carer or setting.



“ The course was excellent, more families should do it.”

Parent, Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities parenting course

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# Welcome to the spring edition of Families Matter

As we head into 2019, another busy year is starting to take shape. Last year saw many changes to council services and to provision delivered by our partners across the borough.

As services continue to reorganise and develop, listening to the experiences and views of parents and carers is a key priority for Children's Services and with more than 200 active members, the Parent and Carer Council (PCC) will have a key role to play.

Many schools and settings have lively forums where parents can meet, contribute their ideas and volunteer to support day to day activities. Parents have helped to develop breakfast clubs, campaigned for a school crossing and supported reading and classroom activities.

PCC members recently met with the United Nations Special Rapporteur to participate in discussions on the impact of austerity and poverty in the UK. They were also invited to be part of the Intergenerational Fairness Committee at the House of Lords.

Why not make it your New Year's resolution to get involved and attend a school/setting meeting or join the PCC? You can find out more about the most recent PCC meeting attended by Cllr Hassell on page 6. For more information on the PCC, visit [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentcouncil](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentcouncil).

This edition is packed with information to support your work with families. It includes news, training, best practice examples from practitioners, updates from health services and the positive impact parent volunteers are having across the borough.

We look forward to working with you in 2019.

Best wishes,  
**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 and Culture Directorate. To share news in future editions of Families Matter, please contact

**Fiona Stokes**

Tel: **020 7364 6049**

Email: [fiona.stokes@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.stokes@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

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# Survey feedback

During the autumn term, we ask parents who have accessed workshops and support, as well as schools and partners who work with the Parental Engagement Team (PET), to complete an anonymous survey adding any comments and/or suggestions they may have.

This year, over 200 parents (attending PET courses/sessions or receiving one-to-one support) and 20 colleagues from partner organisations and services responded.

Programmes which were commented upon include:

- Parenting courses
- Online safety workshops
- Curriculum and creative workshops (from early years to secondary school)
- Transition support
- Passport to Learning courses (to support parents into employment)
- Healthy Families programmes
- Emotional First Aid courses for parents
- Targeted individual parent and family support work

**94%**  
of parents agreed that accessing the service or course had increased their knowledge and understanding and had enabled them to learn something new.

“ I learnt new ways of learning and having fun with my son.”

Dad, Maths with Dads course

**84%**  
of parents agreed that going into a school/setting regularly had improved their relationships with school/setting staff.

“ I would like to say a big thank you; it has helped my confidence to work with my child's school.”

Parent, Transition Support Programme

# New 'Ready to Learn' resources

Starting school is a big step for both children and parents. The Ready to Learn programme, delivered by the Parental Engagement Team (PET), aims to prepare families and help children get off to the best possible start at school.

To support this programme, the PET has produced a series of innovative resources covering key elements of early learning and development. The resources were developed to support practitioners in delivering early learning workshops as well as being a useful take home reference for parents.

The fold-out, mini-booklets, which have been illustrated by Cheryl Westmacott, designer from the Tower Hamlets Communications Team, feature key concepts of early learning, inspirational quotes as well as practical tips.

Written in accessible, jargon-free language, the new resources are already proving to be very popular with both parents and practitioners.



**"I love these little booklets – they are packed full of inspiring ideas and have really helped the parents I work with to understand early learning."**

Rashina Begum  
PET practitioner

To use these new resources, book one of the PET's early learning workshops for your school or setting by calling **020 7364 1952**.



# The Schools and Families Parental Engagement Team Offer

The Parental Engagement Team (PET) has been supporting families on their learning journeys for many years. Here's a closer look at the offer.

Parental engagement requires the engagement of all parents... collaboration should be proactive rather than reactive, sensitive to the circumstances of all families, recognise the contributions parents can make, and aim to empower parents.

Staff should have a good understanding of parents' needs, backgrounds and cultural norms and expectations.

Review of Best Practice in Parental Engagement  
Department for Education

## Parents as adult learners

Parents inspire children when they have high aspirations for themselves and their families, but parents may need some support in their learning journey too. PET's learning programmes have been carefully devised to meet the unique needs of adult learners with different abilities and educational experiences. Through collaborative learning, peer support and coaching, parents are encouraged to grow as learners, reach their learning goals and pursue volunteering/employment opportunities.

## Supporting children's learning

As parents play a pivotal role in children's learning, the Parental Engagement Team have developed a comprehensive portfolio of workshops on what and how children learn in key subject areas. Through group discussion, practical activities and collaborative family learning, parents explore ways that they can create rich learning experiences and environments at home.

Delivered by experienced practitioners and building on the very latest research into learning, parents gain an insight into the characteristics of good learning and discover how to cultivate resilience in children so that they become curious learners that love challenges and are intrigued by mistakes.

A photograph showing a woman with blonde hair, wearing a green patterned top, sitting and reading a large book to a young child with blonde hair. They are positioned in front of a large window with a view of a stone building. The book being read is titled 'The Bestselling Creator of Five Minutes' Peace' and 'The Tale of Cake'.

To book a learning workshop or programme or for further information, call the Parental Engagement Team on 020 7364 1952.



## Health and wellbeing

Children learn better and families can flourish when they are active, eat nourishing food and have opportunities to talk about their worries. PET's workshops take a holistic approach to wellbeing, exploring aspects of physical, emotional and mental health. Through hands-on learning experiences, activities and group discussions, parents discover the benefits of healthy living.

The workshops aim to equip parents with knowledge to inspire them to make positive changes to improve their family's health and mental wellbeing and using behavioral change components to promote self-efficacy.

## Digital parenting

The internet is amazing. Children and young people can play, learn, create and connect – opening up a world of possibilities. While new technologies may provide new opportunities, they can also present potential risks including online grooming, cyber-bullying and radicalisation.

These sensitively delivered workshops keep parents up to date with the very latest developments on social media/messaging sites as well as provide them with practical steps they can take to safeguard their children and build resilience in a changing world.

## Targeted Support

A whole school approach is key to providing consistent messages and promoting positive home-school relationships. This may include working with leadership teams and governors to audit provision for parents and carers, developing a whole school approach to engagement, developing school policies and managing parental complaints.

Targeted support may also include coordinating a programme of targeted interventions for families to improve outcomes for children and young people.

## Creative engagement

Creative activity has been shown to promote well-being and positive mental health, but is also a useful tool in initial engagement, particularly effective for engaging vulnerable groups or parents who may find a formal learning environment or working with schools/ settings difficult.

Workshops are delivered by specialist practitioners who understand the barriers some families face accessing school activities. Offering an alternative to curriculum and more formal courses, learners have the opportunity to explore art and design skills in a social and informal format.

Delivered as parent only or after school family learning sessions, activities promote community cohesion and celebrate diversity. They also provide an opportunity for parents to build relationships and expand networks of support.

## The IMPACT of the Parental Engagement Team's work

- Increased family skills, confidence and resilience
- Strengthened relationships between parents, school and the wider community
- Established partnerships which support leadership and contribute to Ofsted safeguarding requirements of early help to protect children and young people
- The early identification and referral to specialist services
- Improved communication between parents and school
- Increased support for vulnerable families
- Improved learning outcomes and attainment for children and young people
- Increased parent/family aspirations
- Improved life chances for children and young people

# A message from Councillor Danny Hassell



Last autumn saw the culmination of a large amount of work that has been undertaken in order to improve life chances for children. Our relaunched Early Help offer is designed to make sure that families can get the right help at the right time to prevent needs escalating. It is vital that we have

an effective and joined up offer for families who need that additional help so that we can tackle problems and difficulties early.

Together with the roll out of a restorative approach to working with families through social care and children's centres, we will ensure that services meet the needs of families and professionals work 'with' families and build up their resilience; rather than do 'to' or 'for' them.

It was a pleasure to speak at two of the three events held to launch the new SEND strategy. This sets out the work we will be undertaking over the next five years to improve access to information and advice to parents and carers; ensure we have early identification and assessment of need; and improve the offer for young people as they move into adulthood.

The Mayor also held an Early Years summit which brought together a range of services, providers and parents to consider how we can improve childcare and early years education in the borough. These will now be taken forward as part of the budget proposals with additional investment and to develop the early years strategy.

Finally, work is underway on a new 3-year partnership plan with the ambition of supporting all families so that Tower Hamlets is a place where children thrive. This will require all partners – health, schools, the council and also the voluntary sector and businesses – to work together in order to achieve our ambitions. I look forward, with you all, in rising to this challenge!

**Cllr Danny Hassell**  
**Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People**



## Reading with older children

We know that reading with young children is so important, but children in Key Stage 2 also benefit. Unfortunately many parents ditch the daily reading habit with older children according to research from Oxford University Press.

Parents attending a Key Stage 2 reading workshop at **Marnier Primary School** have been exploring these issues, as well as discovering the benefits of reading with older children. These include facilitating enriched language exposure, fostering the development of listening skills, spelling, reading comprehension and vocabulary. Reading aloud is also beneficial to a child's cognitive development as parent-child reading activates areas of the brain related to narrative comprehension and mental imagery.

The research suggests that we should not stop reading with children just because they have learned to read independently. We should continue reading with them, ensuring that these experiences are enjoyable, as they can influence children's future attitudes toward reading, as well as building their confidence and competence as readers.

To find out more about enriching the home learning environment or to book one of the Parental Engagement Team's creative, curriculum or early learning workshops, call **020 7364 1952**.

# International Women's Day at Mulberry

**Mulberry School for Girls** will be hosting an International Women's Day event for the third year in a row.



The event aims to encourage, empower and educate women in Tower Hamlets and beyond. Featuring inspirational workshops, from confidence building with the English National Opera to practical advice and guidance, the event promises to leave participants feeling motivated and energised.

**The event will be held on Wednesday 13 March 2019, at the Mulberry and Bigland Green Centre, from 9.30am-5pm.** Attendees will be able to access all parts of the day for free, but will need to book places to attend specific workshops.

The afternoon will showcase up and coming local musicians and artists.

For more information and to book your place on a workshop, contact Muslima, Administrator at the Mulberry and Bigland Green Centre on **020 7790 6327 ext. 329.**

**Sabina Khan**  
Parent Liaison Worker  
Mulberry School for Girls  
Email: [skhan@mulberry.towerhamlets.sch.uk](mailto:skhan@mulberry.towerhamlets.sch.uk)

### QES Success for Alice Model and Columbia Market

Congratulations to **Alice Model Nursery School** for revalidating their Quality in Extended Services (QES) 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 Christchurch University. Schools need to evidence innovative and committed practice in terms of their wider support to children, families and the local community, demonstrating and officially recognising how this wider work supports pupils' progress and wellbeing.

Christine McInnes, Divisional Director for Education and Partnerships, presented the school with their certificate in front of parents during a workshop on keeping children safe, delivered by the Parental Engagement Team.

**Columbia Market Nursery School** also achieved the QES award at established status after a successful first recognition process which took place towards the end of the autumn term.

For more information contact the Parental Engagement Team on **020 7364 1952.**



# Governors' Conference: Developing a real partnership with parents and carers

At the recent governors' conference, the Parental Engagement Team invited governors to consider school relationships with parents and families and discuss why parents matter to the work of the governing body.

The workshop highlighted a broad range of activities taking place in schools to promote parental engagement and to provide opportunities for parents to make decisions that impact on school policies and procedures.

Discussions explored the challenges and barriers that had been experienced as well as areas of good practice and new initiatives being developed within primary and secondary schools to support parental engagement.



### Questions governors should ask

- 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 work with parents (particularly the most vulnerable groups) to help them support their child's learning?
- How effective is school engagement and how can this be evidenced?
- What is the impact of engagement with parents?
- How can parents access information regarding parental support?
- Does the school have a parent support worker or a similar role and a budget allocated to develop work with parents?
- 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?

**Do parents and other stakeholders agree with the responses?**





Governors should be aware of Ofsted's Parent View, an online questionnaire that gives parents and carers the opportunity to tell Ofsted about their child's school.



Ofsted will use this information to help make decisions about which schools to inspect and when. It will also be available to inspectors at the point of inspection.

Parent View asks parents and carers to give their opinions on 12 aspects of their child's school, from the quality of teaching to dealing with bullying and poor behaviour.

Ofsted then publishes data from the submissions made to Parent View, broken down by type of school, phase, local authority and question.

The annual data extract from Parent View was released last September and contains submissions received between 4 September 2017 and 3 September 2018.

Responses for Tower Hamlets schools vary from 2% to 51% of the school population.

To see parent responses from your school visit:

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/parent-view-results>

To find out about the support available to governors, leadership teams, teachers and parent support partners to develop and embed work with parents and carers, contact the Parental Engagement Team on **020 7364 1952**

### Phoenix School wins award

**Phoenix School** has won a prestigious award for their 'exceptional parental engagement'. The special school for students who have autism received the award from the National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) in recognition of their innovative approaches to parental engagement. The award was sponsored by the National Network of Parent Carer Forums.

The award was made at a special ceremony held at the Waldorf Hilton Hotel and hosted by Vanessa Feltz. The school was commended on their 'Early Bird Course', which aims to engage with parents from the outset and build their confidence as a parent of a child with autism. The school also holds a parent support group that meets monthly with a regular attendance of over 60 parents and carers.

For more information about the award, please visit <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/revealed-the-winners-of-the-nasen-awards-2018/>

### Anyone for tennis?

Parents from **Cubitt Town Infants' and Junior Schools** have been trying their hand at 'cardio tennis' in an effort to get fit.

This unique method combines tennis with fitness training and has been very popular with parents who have been attending the classes at the newly refurbished tennis courts in St John's Park. With initial funding provided by London Sport and My Time Active, the school has been working in partnership with Tower Hamlets Tennis with the aim of increasing access to tennis in East London.

The project has been so successful that Tower Hamlets Tennis has now offered to fund further tennis lessons for the parents. Their children are also getting involved with many of them attending drop-in sessions after school and on Saturdays.

To get inspired, read Salma's tennis story at

<https://londonsport.org/one-million-stories-salma>

For further information email [info@towerhamletstennis.org.uk](mailto:info@towerhamletstennis.org.uk)

**Jacqui Jenkins, Parent Liaison Co-ordinator  
Cubitt Town Infants' and Junior Schools**



# Mayor's Early Years Summit harnesses parent power



Parent and Carer Council Members Samantha and Fathimah at summit

Tower Hamlets Mayor, John Biggs, hosted an Early Years Summit on 30 November to hear from parents, partners and professionals to help shape future services.

Held at the Professional Development Centre in Bethnal Green, the summit set challenging targets for how the council's range of early childhood services will ensure children and families have the best outcomes for life.

Parents, education, childcare, health and social care professionals, local policy leaders and the voluntary and community sector came together

### What parents want

- High quality birth-five services
- A better health and well-being offer
- Children's centres as family health hubs
- Continued availability of health checks
- Support from training/employment advisors
- Useful and accessible information
- Greater focus on early language development
- Pre-natal and maternity services run by hospitals through children's centres
- Better childcare for children with additional needs

to plan how services can be more effective in areas such as health and employment.

Feedback will be used to develop a new early years strategy and provide the support parents and families need from early childhood, education, health and social care services.

“ The science is clear - adversity in a child's early years dramatically affects health and education outcomes for life. Our task is to disrupt those adverse childhood experiences, encourage learning from an early age and give our children and their families the best possible start in life. ”

John Biggs  
Mayor of Tower Hamlets



“ The summit has been an opportunity to look at building employment opportunities and developing early education to support all parents to get the best outcomes for their children. ”

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



# Transition support for parents

The transition support programme is delivered by the Parent and Family Support Service. It provides independent and impartial information and advice about all aspects of transition within education to parents and carers, including those who are:

- new to the borough
- living with a disability
- finding the school system difficult to navigate.

Parents and carers can get advice and information at key points of transition with applications for nursery and reception places, secondary transfer for Years 5 and 6, as well as in-year applications which take part at certain points in the school year.

In addition, the programme supports families at times of change or difficulty, providing information and guidance on a range of issues including admissions and appeals, home-school communication as well as permanent and fixed-term exclusions, bullying and children missing education. The service supports the Fair Access Protocol (FAP).

Parents and carers can self-refer to this programme or can be referred with their consent by a professional.

**Transition drop-in sessions**  
Tuesdays, 9.30am-4pm

Parents Advice Centre  
30 Greatorex Street  
Whitechapel E1 5NP

Email: [transitions@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:transitions@towerhamlets.gov.uk)  
Tel: 020 7364 1533

# Outdoor learning boosts development

Outdoor learning can have a positive impact on a child's development, according to a report published by the University of Plymouth.

Busier family lives combined with an increased sense of fear in society means that children have fewer opportunities to explore their surrounding natural environment. The report suggests that this may be hampering children's social skills as well as stifling their long-term physical and emotional development and wellbeing.

The report concludes that it is, therefore, important that schools do not overlook the opportunities that outdoor learning can provide to bridge this gap.

Parents and children from **St Mary and St Michael Primary School** have been discovering the benefits of outdoor learning for themselves as well as exploring ways they can use the natural environment to enhance learning.

During a three-week workshop, parents gained an insight into learning in the early years and became more confident in exploiting everyday outdoor experiences as learning opportunities.

**"I picked up so many great ideas. I never realised there were so many things I could do outside to help my child to learn."** Parent

To read the research visit  
[www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/oelres-net/resources](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/oelres-net/resources)



# Early intervention needs long-term strategy

## THE COST OF INTERVENING LATE

<b>Local government</b> £6,431m (39%)	<b>NHS</b> £3,697m (22%)	<b>Police</b> £1,624m (10%)
		<b>Justice</b> £1,510m (9%)
	<b>Welfare</b> £2,667m (16%)	<b>Education</b> £655m (4%)

Source: EIF (2016) *The cost of late intervention: EIF analysis 2016*

A long-term strategy must be drawn up by government if early intervention services for vulnerable families are going to be successfully established across the country. That's according to a report by the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF).

The report calls for a 25-year plan for early intervention. The EIF wants the government to introduce a long-term investment fund for five local areas to establish early help programmes. These would be monitored and evaluated with the results used to help understand how a long-term approach to funding early help can improve the lives of vulnerable families.

For more information and to read the report visit [www.eif.org.uk/files/pdf/realising-the-potential-of-early-intervention.pdf](http://www.eif.org.uk/files/pdf/realising-the-potential-of-early-intervention.pdf)

## Tower Hamlets community intervention service

The Tower Hamlets community intervention service offers support across a broad range of needs, in particular to those at risk of eviction, in unsafe accommodation, with substance misuse or mental health needs or who are subject to serious safeguarding concerns.

There is a focus on intensive short-term support with priority given to those most at risk. The service has a dedicated assessment worker who links those with lower support needs with appropriate services.

Tel: **020 3222 4027**

Email: [communityintervention@lookahead.org.uk](mailto:communityintervention@lookahead.org.uk)

## Parent Gym at Arnhem Wharf



The phrase 'parent gym' conjures up

images of parents dusting off their trainers and undergoing gruelling work-out sessions in an effort to get fit. But Parent Gym is not about physical exercise rather it's a unique learning opportunity for parents.

**Arnhem Wharf Primary School** has recently launched Parent Gym and it has been very popular. It aims to give parents an opportunity to come together, share ideas and learn from one another.

Through weekly themed sessions, parents have been developing their communication skills, learning how to build successful routines and create strong family relationships as well as becoming inspired to create nurturing home environments.

The school plans to run another block of sessions for interested parents over the next two terms.

**Sade Stephens**  
Deputy Inclusion Leader  
Arnhem Wharf Primary School

# Parenting programmes timetable – Spring Term 2019

Parenting programmes 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. They 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 Somali	Monday	Malmesbury Primary School
SFSC	Birth-18 years	Delivered in Bengali	Monday	Osmani Centre
Triple P Teen Discussion Group Series	11-18 years	Delivered in English	Dates TBC (one-off sessions)	Venues TBC
SFSC	Birth-18 years	Delivered in English Evening programme	Tuesday	Professional Development Centre
Triple P Group programme	18 months-11 years	Delivered in English Crèche available	Tuesday	Isle of Dogs Children's Centre
Triple P Group Programme	18 months-11 years	Delivered in English Crèche available	Tuesday	City Gateway Women's Project
ADHD Parenting Programme	2-11 years	For parents of a child with a diagnosis of ADHD Delivered in English	Tuesday	Parents Advice Centre
SFSC	Birth-18 years	Delivered in English	Wednesday	Woolmore Primary School
SFSC	Birth-18 years	Delivered in Bengali Crèche available	Wednesday	Wapping and Bigland Children's Centre
Triple P Group programme	18 months-11 years	Delivered in English	Friday	Seven Mills Primary School
Triple P Teen Programme	11-18 years	Delivered in English	Friday	Haileybury Youth Centre
Triple P Group programme	18 months-11 years	Delivered in English Crèche available	Friday	Overland Children's Centre

\* *Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities*

## Parent and Family Support Service

Email: [parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk) Telephone: 020 7364 6398

## Internet safety week

Internet Safety Day took place on 5 February 2019. During the same week, the Parental Engagement Team and Idea Stores worked in partnership to deliver a range of activities and workshops to promote internet safety across the borough. Workshops were also delivered in other partner schools and settings. For more information, email

[parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk)



# Family Nurse Partnership

The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) is a public health, home-visiting programme for first time young mothers. It has been running in Tower Hamlets for over 11 years and is one of only a handful of early years programmes to be awarded a 4+ evidence rating by the Early Intervention Foundation.

### How does it work?

Young parents are paired with an expert family nurse who visits them regularly from the early stages of pregnancy until their child is two years old. Through focusing on their strengths and positive behaviour change, the FNP enables young parents to:

- Develop positive relationships with their baby and understand their baby's needs
- Make lifestyle choices that will give their child the best start in life
- Believe in themselves and their ability to succeed
- Build positive relationships with others.

### How has it helped?



**60%**  
reduction in  
smoking during  
pregnancy



**14%**  
more young  
mothers are  
in education  
training or  
employment



**93%**  
of the mums  
initiate  
breastfeeding



**25%**  
are still  
breastfeeding at  
12 months

### What the young parents say

"Having my family nurse support me through pregnancy was absolutely great. Having her tell me how my baby will be developing and learning new things helped me and my partner understand our baby and her needs."

Mum and Dad, both aged 17

"My family nurse gave me tips on the best way to look after my baby, help with finances, was someone I could talk to about my problems, told me the places I could take my baby. She helped me to understand my baby."

Mum, aged 19

To find out more and meet the team, visit

<http://compasswellbeing.co.uk/family-nurse-partnership>



# Speakeasy success at CFGS



Seventeen mums and dads from **Central Foundation Girls' School (CFGS)** attended a four week Speakeasy programme during the autumn term.

Speakeasy provides an opportunity for parents to gain the confidence and skills needed to talk to their children in an age appropriate way about growing up and the importance of developing healthy and safe relationships with their friends and peers.

The programme is designed to be fun and informal, providing an environment where parents can learn together, build upon what they already know and share any concerns about safeguarding their children. It also covers what is taught in Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) in schools.

All the parents gave positive feedback and said that they felt more confident in speaking to their teenager about puberty and growing up as a result of attending the programme.

Parent quotes:

**"Sharing stories with the other parents and their experiences of how they have managed to talk with their children was really helpful."**

**"Spotting the signs of cyberbullying and knowing how to get help was covered really well."**

During the last session Aysha Begum, Parent Outreach Worker at CFGS talked to parents about what the curriculum lessons cover in school and offered another session for parents to find out more.

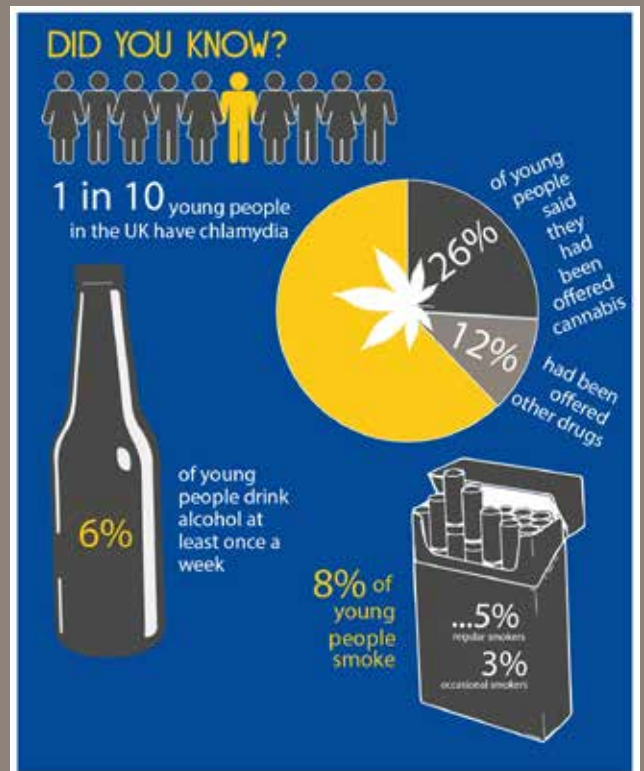
**Did you know...**  
parents who have attended a Speakeasy programme are less likely to withdraw their children from SRE in school.

### Safe East

Safe East is a health and wellbeing service which provides free, friendly and confidential substance misuse and sexual health/contraceptive support to young people aged under 19 years, or up to 25 years if the young person is a Looked After Child (LAC) or has Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).

They run drop-in sessions across the borough at different times throughout the week.

For more information or to make a referral, call **020 3954 0091** or visit [www.compass-uk.org](http://www.compass-uk.org).



# Early Help update

Early Help means providing support to children and their families at any point in a child's life, from the prenatal stages up to the age of 25 (for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). Early Help should be provided as soon as needs emerge that do not meet the threshold for specialist, statutory services, such as those provided by Children's Social Care.

Most children do very well in the borough, however, too many experience significant disadvantages which creates issues that are not always immediately addressed. Instead these problems are all too often left until they become more serious.

Some adults within the family may have their own needs e.g. substance abuse, mental health needs, parental learning disabilities and/or domestic violence, which may impair their parenting capacity. It therefore makes sense to assess the needs faced by the whole family and to provide them with targeted support using a multi-agency approach.

Early Help is not a single service or agency responsibility or activity. It is most effective when delivered in collaboration with partners who have an interest in providing early support to vulnerable children and families. It is the responsibility of everyone that works with children and families to support the identification of emergent problems and potential unmet needs so that Early Help can be provided at the earliest opportunity.

Partners already put in a huge amount of support to pupils. Early Help might include support to improve attendance, or behaviour, or to increase engagement with families with the aim of improving life chances. It could involve nurture groups, social skills groups or family learning opportunities.

The ultimate goal is to ensure all children, young people and families receive the right support, at the right time, so that they get the best possible experience and reduce the need for referral to statutory services.





## The Early Help Hub

The primary role of the Hub is to provide a single point of access for the public and all those working with children, young people and their families within the local community and across the borough. The Hub has four main functions:

1. Provide information, advice and guidance to the public and professionals who have queries about children and young people who may need an Early Help response.
2. Screen Early Help enquiries to ensure that there is an appropriate level of response for children, young people and their families; this could also include those cases referred across or redirected from Children's Social Care.
3. In exceptional cases, undertake direct work with families in order to assess need before identifying the most appropriate Lead Professional to carry out an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and co-ordinate the family action plan.
4. Provide support to practitioners (school staff) to complete enquiries or assessments and to convene Team Around the Family (TAF).

The Early Help Hub Manager is Rachael Phillips  
**Tel: 020 7364 3447**  
**Email: rachael.phillips@towerhamlets.gov.uk**

## How to access information

You can now access information about the Early Help Service on a newly launched website [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/earlyhelp).

You can also make Early Help enquiries through a new online portal for children and families, instead of calling the Early Help Hub (the 'Hub') at <https://forms.towerhamlets.gov.uk/service/enquiries>.



## Early Help Coordinators

Early Help Coordinators will support the development of our borough-wide Early Help offer by providing advice and guidance to schools around good practice in the delivery of Early Help services. They will offer support for the assessment process, multi-agency meetings and will aim to develop with schools consistent processes and a robust quality assurance framework.

The Early Help Coordinators are:

**Tanya Rajfeld, East of the Borough**  
**Tel: 020 7364 0544**  
**Email: tanya.rajfeld@towerhamlets.gov.uk**

**Karen Simson, West of the Borough**  
**Tel: 020 7364 3939**  
**Email: karen.simpson@towerhamlets.gov.uk**

The coordinators would welcome the opportunity to visit schools in order to explain more about their role and some of the developments that will be taking place in the future. They will be in touch to arrange a visit or schools can arrange a visit using the contact details above. Early Help leaflets and posters are also available.



Debbie Jones  
 Director, Children and Culture



Steve Ashley  
 Chair of Tower Hamlets  
 Safeguarding Children Board

**The Early Help re-launch to share the work and purpose of the new service took place on 4 October 2018 at the Brady Centre.**

**Over 160 participants attended the event.**

# Olga gets SUGAR SMART!

Healthy families has been on the curriculum for **Olga Primary School** this term. Not only have the children been learning about the importance of eating healthily and being more active, the school has also signed up to the Tower Hamlets SUGAR SMART campaign.

The school held a healthy breakfast morning, attended by 49 parents, carers and family members, and led by the Early Years Assistant Head and other school staff. Children made a variety of healthy taster breakfasts for their families to share.

Whilst the children were busy rustling up avocado on toast, overnight oats, porridge, fruit, brown toast, yoghurt and lots of other interesting breakfasts, parents were attending a SUGAR SMART information session facilitated by the Parental Engagement Team.

The session covered the dangers of too much sugar consumption, including issues around childhood obesity and oral health. Hidden sugars, misleading product



information and ways to cut down sugar were also discussed.

Parents then downloaded the Change for Life food scanner (to help them make informed choices), made their SUGAR SMART pledges, then joined their children for a healthy breakfast in the hall. It was a great morning enjoyed by all.

Has your school joined the SUGAR SMART campaign yet?

**Email:** [denise.degoze@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:denise.degoze@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

For more information on the SUGAR SMART campaign, visit [www.sugarsmartuk.org](http://www.sugarsmartuk.org)

## National School Breakfast Programme



Research has shown a direct link between the breakfast habits of children and their educational attainment, with children in primary schools where breakfast is provided achieving on average up to two months' additional academic progress over the course of a year.

Schools that have disadvantaged pupils and currently no breakfast provision or those with scope to improve existing provision may be eligible for support under the National School Breakfast Programme. The programme is co-ordinated by Family Action and Magic Breakfast.

For more information visit [www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/breakfast](http://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/breakfast)





## Jamie Oliver Ministry of Food training success

Well done to Parental Engagement Team Practitioners and a parent from Swanlea Secondary School who all attended the Jamie Oliver Ministry of Food (JOMoF) training in December and are now accredited to deliver Ministry of Food courses to Tower Hamlets' families.

*PET Practitioners with the JOMoF team and celebrity chef Ginarro Contaldo*

## Ministry of Food at Swanlea

Swanlea Secondary School recently ran a Jamie Oliver Ministry of Food Cooking programme in the school cookery room. Ten parents took part – they did not have to have any professional cookery skills to participate, just plenty of enthusiasm!

It was an enjoyable learning experience for the parents. They learned how to make healthy and nutritious snacks, such as the perfect the poached egg; how to cook healthy low salt, high flavour meals; and what meals can be made involving their children at home.

At the end of the session, the parents tasted what they had cooked and then took the meals home to their children.

Not only did the parents gain great cooking skills, but they also learned about nutrition, the best way to cook certain foods, how to handle a knife, food hygiene and much more.

Shahin Chowdhury, Parental Engagement Co-ordinator at Swanlea said **"It's been a fantastic programme and one of the most successful in terms of learning and then cooking at home with your children."**

**Contact:**  
**Shahin Chowdhury**  
**Parental Engagement**  
**Co-ordinator**  
**Swanlea Secondary School**



The Jamie Oliver Ministry of Food course teaches practical cooking skills that inspire, educate and empower individuals, families and communities to cook healthy, balanced meals on a budget. To book a course in your school (for parents only or for parents and children), call the Parental Engagement Team on **020 7364 1952**.



### A message from Richard Baldwin, Divisional Director, Children's Social Care



I have now been in Tower Hamlets for over 100 days, so thought it would be important to share some initial views and impressions. Firstly I feel I have been warmly welcomed by all I have met and I am very much enjoying my role and the challenges we face in our ambition to improve the

quality of our services. I have been very impressed by the commitment of all staff to be the best we possibly can be and with the desire of each staff member to ensure that we continue to make progress and improve.

It is clear that in order to reach our goals we need to focus on strengthening the quality of our planning and our analysis. We need to ensure that even from the first days of our contact with families, we must look carefully at what the overall plan for the family is. This means we must clarify:

- a. our goals and the timescales for advising those goals
- b. how our partners might assist us
- c. do the family understand the plan and do they agree with it?

Having spoken to many staff and seen many files it is clear we have a very good and detailed knowledge of the families that we support. We have a good grip on the issues that challenge our communities and we are actively seeking to improve and tackle these issues. First and foremost is the challenge of young people that are at risk of criminal sexual exploitation.

The work that we are undertaking with Police and Health colleagues in our Exploitation Team has been particularly impressive, with a number of other local authorities already showing an interest in how we are progressing.

I know that together we can ensure that our progress will continue. I look forward to continuing to work hard alongside you.

**Richard Baldwin, Divisional Director  
Children's Social Care**

# MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

## Help improve life with cancer in Tower Hamlets

Macmillan is looking for people with personal experience of cancer who would like to help improve quality of life for those affected by cancer in Tower Hamlets.

### Come to a focus group

This is an opportunity for residents to tell us about their experiences of being supported after a cancer diagnosis, through treatment, and life after cancer.

**Wednesday 13 February 2019**

Teviot Community Centre,  
Wyvis Street, Poplar E14 6QD

If you would like to come or find out about alternative events and different ways to contribute, please contact:

**Becky Driscoll**

Macmillan Local Authority Partnership  
Programme

**Tel: 020 7364 3397 or  
07956 360 510**

**Email: [becky.driscoll@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:becky.driscoll@towerhamlets.gov.uk)**

Macmillan would like to hear from everyone, including those who've recently had cancer, had cancer years ago, as well as carers and family members. If you work with people affected by cancer, please publicise the programme.

There are also opportunities to join a co-production group which will meet regularly to help design better services and support for people in the borough.

For information on the support provided by Macmillan call **0808 808 00 00** or visit **[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)**.

# Volunteering in my child's school... Pole's volunteer journey



“ I originally worked as a civil servant but after having my children I wanted to change my career path. I was always interested in working with children and decided that I would do courses that would help me make up my mind.

When the opportunity to do 'Volunteering in Your Child's School' came up at **Columbia Primary School**, I was very keen and I enrolled as I saw it as a stepping stone to achieve my goal.

When I started the course I was pleasantly surprised. I was expecting to do a lot of writing, but it was a mix of practical ideas, learning technical terminology and legal requirements and restrictions.

Our facilitator, Peter from the Parental Engagement Team, was very professional and at the same time friendly and patient. He explained any issues when we had difficulty understanding. Alongside the Headteacher Oliver, Peter explained what was expected of us and what we can expect from our experience as volunteers.

After doing the volunteering course, I did other courses to increase my skills including first aid. I am proud to say I have now gained my Teaching Assistant Level 2 Certificate. I am currently studying for my Level 3 Teaching Assistant Diploma, and doing a counselling skills course.

I am still volunteering at Columbia. My time there has been informative, enjoyable and rewarding.

I am very glad that I chose to do the 'Volunteering in Your Child's School' course as it gave me the confidence to approach schools to ask for placements; it gave me the opportunity to find out what it is like to work with children; and helped me to decide if this is the correct career path for me.

Thank you to the Parental Engagement Team and the staff at Columbia Primary School for making the programme available and allowing us to volunteer as well as for making us feel valued and welcome.

**Pole Begum**

For more details about the Volunteering in Your Child's School course, contact the Parental Engagement Team on **020 7364 1952**.

## Community parents project – volunteers wanted!

Pregnancy and early parenthood can be challenging at the best of times. Many parents are left feeling isolated and in



need of support. That's where Community Parents comes in – it's an innovative local project which trains local parents to support families through their pregnancy and into their child's first year.

Isabel White waited for years to conceive. She was a high-powered business woman when daughter Elizabeth was born in 2013.

**“Having been a very confident businesswoman for years, it completely knocked me when I got the baby blues. I felt really isolated. I had a nightmare with breastfeeding and wished there was someone to point me in the direction of advice. I just didn't have that local support network I now realise is so important for any new mum”** says Isabel.

She came across the Community Parents project by chance when her daughter was 18 months old and signed up as a volunteer.

Community Parents volunteers offer a listening ear, time, attention and respect. They help expectant and new parents in Poplar, Limehouse and the Isle of Dogs to navigate their way through pregnancy and early parenthood. Volunteers receive free training that leads to a Level 3 City & Guilds in "Working with Parents".

If you are interested in becoming a Community Parent volunteer, the next course begins **Tuesday 26 February 2019**.

For more information, contact:

**Annemarie Ibbotson**

Email:

[annemarie.ibbotson@island-house.org](mailto:annemarie.ibbotson@island-house.org)

Tel: **020 7531 0314**

## Safer Families Champions

At a recent Safer Families network meeting, trained Safer Families Champions met to review their delivery of workshops, feedback on the resources they received in the training and received updated resources for the Prevent workshops.



Schools are certainly seeing the benefit. Parent Volunteers Nurj, Afshan and Kadeja from **Cubitt Town infants' and Junior Schools** were trained by the Parental Engagement Team as part of a Home Office funded programme to deliver workshops on various safeguarding topics including:

- Internet safety
- Prevent and radicalisation
- Child exploitation

They will be delivering workshops into 2019. The schools would like to thank their Safer Families Champions for helping to support families. More information about the programme at Cubitt Town can be found at:

[www.cubittown-jun.towerhamlets.sch.uk/community-house/safer-families-champions](http://www.cubittown-jun.towerhamlets.sch.uk/community-house/safer-families-champions).

## New training

14 peer to peer Prevent sessions have taken place this term in schools with a trained Safer Families Champion. The Parental Engagement Team will be training new Safer Families Champions in 2019. If your school is interested in training parent support staff and parent volunteers to deliver workshops in school that tackle safeguarding issues, email [parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk).

# Volunteering at Marner Children's Centre

Councillor Rachel Blake



Rachel Blake

@RBlake

Follow

has been visiting **Marner Children's Centre** to hear firsthand accounts from parents about the benefits they have been experiencing as a direct result of

Thanks so much to parents and staff at marner children's centre for talking to me today about the impact volunteering is having - inspiring to hear your stories



9:12 am - 9 Oct 2018

volunteering. Increased confidence, enhanced communication skills as well as invaluable 'real life' work experience were the key points the parent volunteers were keen to emphasise.

One parent explained how she has flourished in the supportive environment at the children's centre, "The team has given me the confidence to give back to the community. Step by step, my confidence has increased because of the volunteering experience I've had at Marner Children's Centre."

## Interested in volunteering in children's centres?

Many parents start by taking up classes in basic skills such as ESOL, move into volunteering, and for some, eventually employment. Children's centres can support volunteers on their journey and have a variety of volunteering opportunities available, including supporting play sessions and business administration.

To find out more, contact the children's centres volunteering project workers

East Cluster  
**Tasneem Miah**  
Tel: **020 7364 7742**

West Cluster  
**Rajia Khan**  
Tel: **020 7364 4625**

# Mental Health Champion honoured

Parent and Carer Council Member and Mental Health Parent Champion, Marie McLeod, has been honoured with a mural of her commissioned by local artists collective 'Trapped in Zone One'. This is for all her community work to help young people and their families cope with depression.

Marie has been one of the lead Mental Health Parent Champions, delivering workshops that raise the importance of mental health to local parents in schools across the borough.

Marie also started Depression Changes Minds four years ago after her son was diagnosed with depression. She struggled to find the resources to cope with it and the toll it took on her and her family.



Depression Changes Minds supports parents whose children have mental health illnesses through one-to-ones, peer support groups and family retreats.

This is not the first time Marie's efforts have been recognised. She is also the current joint National Parent Champion Volunteer of

the Year for the support she has given to other parents through her mental health campaigning.

Marie's mural can be seen at the Jealous Gallery in Whitechapel.

[www.eastlondonlines.co.uk/2018/12/artists-commission-mural-to-honour-east-end-mental-health-campaigner/](http://www.eastlondonlines.co.uk/2018/12/artists-commission-mural-to-honour-east-end-mental-health-campaigner/)

## The impact of austerity PCC members meet the UN Rapporteur

Last November, the United Nations sent Professor Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur, on a fact finding visit to the UK investigating extreme poverty and human rights. He was tasked with looking at the government's efforts to eradicate poverty, including examining the effects of austerity measures that have been brought in since 2010.

Members of the Tower Hamlets Parent and Carer Council attended a meeting hosted by Community Links in Newham to share their views and testimonies on welfare insecurity with Professor Alston.

Following his visit, Professor Alston produced a report which concluded that large numbers of people in the UK were living in extreme poverty and facing hardship.

To find out more visit

[www.community-links.org/news-item/community-links-takes-part-in-un-investigation-into-poverty-in-the-uk](http://www.community-links.org/news-item/community-links-takes-part-in-un-investigation-into-poverty-in-the-uk)

Tower Hamlets, along with Manchester and Newham, has the highest levels of child poverty in the UK. In 2018, the Mayor of Tower Hamlets launched a programme of support to tackle child poverty. [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/News\\_events/2018/October\\_2018/Mayor\\_announces\\_new\\_programmes\\_to\\_tackle\\_poverty.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/News_events/2018/October_2018/Mayor_announces_new_programmes_to_tackle_poverty.aspx)



## PCC members at parliament!

Parent and Carer Council (PCC) members and Parent Champions, Neherun Nessa Ali and Samantha Gager, have been invited to be parent representatives at a parliamentary commission exploring intergenerational fairness and what life is like for today's families compared to the past.

The Parent Champions spoke to the PCC at the December meeting to gain parents' views as well as to explore the idea of what intergenerational fairness means to them. They explored the effect it had on:

- Jobs
- Housing
- Communities
- Taxation

Both Parent Champions were then invited to share the wider PCC feedback with government ministers responsible for the above areas at a second meeting late in 2018.

The commission will be reporting on its findings and further actions later this year.

For more information visit [www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/intergenerational-fairness/](http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/intergenerational-fairness/)

## Parent and Carer Council Let's Talk... Our changing borough

The last Parent and Carer Council meeting explored the theme of 'our changing borough'.

Discussions and activities took place looking at how the demographics of the borough have changed over the past decade and whether it matched local residents' perceptions. Some of the main changes can be seen on page 25.

This linked well to the next item – Parent Champions (on behalf of a national government commission) led on an activity to get views on the meaning of 'intergenerational fairness'. It explored whether families feel they have more opportunities or difficulties compared to previous generations, concentrating on key areas such as jobs, housing, communities and taxation. This feedback will be shared with government ministers at the House of Lords.

PCC members were also given feedback on recent consultations including the annual parent survey and pupil attitude survey (results detailed in the last edition of Families Matter).

Local parents, Tracy Hanley and Ayesha Khatun, won the prize draw for completing the parent survey and collected their vouchers at the meeting.



Councillor Danny Hassell shared information about the development of services and provision for families in the borough. More information about this can be found in his message on page 6.

The PCC was also delighted to welcome Councillor Julianne Marriott, Cabinet Member for Education in the London Borough of Newham, who was keen to see how the PCC runs in Tower Hamlets.

**The next PCC meeting will be held on Saturday 23 March 2019.**

For more information visit [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentcouncil](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentcouncil)



# Our changing borough

The Council is committed to continuing to provide families with the best services and opportunities during this time of significant change.



The population of Tower Hamlets has **more than doubled** in the past 30 years, making it the **fastest growing** population in the UK.



Tower Hamlets is now the **second most densely populated** local authority area in the UK, next to Islington.



**Over 40,000 new homes** are expected to be built in Tower Hamlets in the next 10 years, largely concentrated in the **East of the borough**.



The borough population is expected to increase from 308,000 in 2017 to 365,200 in 2027 - **equivalent to 15 additional residents per day!**



Tower Hamlets has a high level of population 'churn' - around **37k people move in and 34k move out** of the borough each year.



Around **one in three** borough residents have lived in Tower Hamlets for **less than five years**.



The number of borough residents has increased by **37%** in the past ten years, but the number of births has only increased by **11%**.



In 2017, the average female resident was expected to have 1.39 children, down from 1.80 children in 2007. Fertility rates are now **below the London average**.



Since 2010, families with young children have been **increasingly moving out of Tower Hamlets**, likely driven by welfare reform and the cost of housing.



In 2017, the average house price in Tower Hamlets was £479,000 - around **13x the average household income**.

**Sources:** Office for National Statistics, 2017 mid-year population estimates; Tower Hamlets Local Plan and LLDC housing development trajectories; Tower Hamlets Council, Annual Residents Survey 2017; Office for National Statistics, Births in England and Wales via London Datastore; Office for National Statistics, Internal Migration Flows via London Datastore; Office for National Statistics, House price to residence-based earnings ratio.

# Partnership working to bring festive cheer

The Parental Engagement Team and Barclays Bank worked in partnership to help bring some Christmas cheer to children and young people across the

borough. Barclays' Internal Audit Team donated over 100 presents and the Parental Engagement Team distributed these to families.

Jill McGinley, Head of Parent and Family Support Service and Cllr Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People visited the Barclays Head Office in Canary Wharf to meet the staff who donated and share information on the work being done to support families all year round.

For more information, contact the Parental Engagement Team on **020 7364 1952**.



## Tower Hamlets Youth Service

The Tower Hamlets Youth Service provides support services to young people who live, work or study in the borough. All of their programmes are free and are offered to young people from 12 to 19 year olds, (up to 25 for young people with a learning difficulty/disability).

There are 18 youth hubs across the borough as well as provisions for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and young people who are LGBTQ+. The service delivers a comprehensive youth arts programme as well as opportunities for young people to share their ideas and experiences through a forum called 'Youth Voice'.

For the latest youth hubs timetable and other Youth Service information visit [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/youth](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/youth)



# Our Health, Our Lives

By Lydia Anderson, aged 20

Our Time All Ability Youth Forum Member

It was food, glorious food when Our Time hosted their much awaited award ceremony to celebrate the end of the Our Health, Our Lives cooking course in November. 14 young people took part over the course of six weeks where they learned how to cook healthy dishes, such as Aloo Ghobi and Healthy Berry Cake. This was an opportunity for them to improve their independent living skills, gain confidence and knowledge as well as to make new friends.

The event was attended by young people, parents and carers and began with the young people cooking their favourite dishes, which would be served at the ceremony. There were speeches, laughter and even a few tears as the participants received their certificates.

Members of the Our Time All Ability Youth Forum applied for money for the project from the Youth Innovation Fund granted by the Osmani Trust.

Now that the Our Health, Our Lives project has been completed, the members of the Our Time All Ability Youth Forum are planning to resume Our Kitchen, a cooking club that will run every Wednesday from 4.30-6pm. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Charlotte Latimer on **07939 984795** or email [charlotte.latimer@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:charlotte.latimer@towerhamlets.gov.uk).

## Community News



### Search for services for families

The Family Information Service runs a telephone helpline and drop in service from Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

30 Greatorex Street,  
London E14 5NP

Tel: 020 7364 6495

Email: [fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Web: [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/localoffer)



## Important dates and events for parents

Date	Venue
Thursdays 14 February and 21 March 2019	<b>SEND Parents Network</b> An opportunity for parent representatives of groups that support local parents who have children with a special educational need and/or disability to come together and discuss issues that may affect families locally.
Thursday 7 March 2019 9.15am-1.30pm	<b>Annual Parents Conference</b> The theme of this year's conference is 'Families Matter: Empowering and Supporting Our Children to Thrive'. Information on how to book places for parents has been sent to schools.
Saturday 23 March 2019 10am-1.30pm	<b>Parent and Carer Council Meeting</b> The borough's main family forum and key consultation vehicle to support borough-wide consultation with parents and carers.
Wednesday 8 May 2019 9.30am-2pm	<b>SEND Transition Event</b> <b>For parents of Year 4 and 5 children with Education and Health Care (EHC) plans</b> With talks from the Special Educational Needs section on the transition process and the Independent Travel Trainer. An opportunity to meet Secondary SENCOs and presentations from the SEND Parents Network, SEND Parent Ambassadors and Our Time All Ability Youth Forum. Venue TBC.

## Early Help Training Programme

DATE	DETAILS
Various Dates 9.30am-12pm	<b>LBTH eEarly Help Assessment (eEHA) System</b> The local authority switched over from the eCAF system to eEHA in November 2016. Users on the eCAF system were automatically transferred to eEHA, as part of the transition process. Training is NOT essential to access eEHA; however, sessions are available to introduce new users to the system. Team / service sessions can be provided on request. For the list of upcoming training dates visit <a href="http://www.childrenandfamiliestrust.co.uk/training-news">www.childrenandfamiliestrust.co.uk/training-news</a> . Please email <a href="mailto:EarlyHelpIT@towerhamlets.gov.uk">EarlyHelpIT@towerhamlets.gov.uk</a> for more information.
Monday 25 February 2019 9am-1pm	<p><b>LSCB Threshold Guidance Learning Seminar and Refresher</b></p> <p>The Tower Hamlets Multi-Agency Safeguarding Thresholds Guidance aims to encourage professionals to identify, assess, understand and meet needs as soon as they occur; responding to needs at the lowest level.</p> <p>The overriding aim is for fewer cases to reach the highest levels of need as help is successfully provided at level 1 (universal) and level 2 (targeted).</p> <p>This half day thresholds learning seminar has been developed for those with little knowledge of thresholds and anyone who has previously attended a thresholds training and wants a refresher.</p> <p>The session aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● raise awareness of the threshold guidance</li> <li>● provide an opportunity to explore practice implications through live case studies – Early Help and statutory</li> <li>● sign-post to supporting information: services, training and policies/guidance</li> </ul> <p>This is a multi-agency event for all practitioners, managers, trainers and safeguarding leads in statutory, voluntary, health, early years, schools, and children's centre settings who come into contact with families. Places are very limited. To book your place, email <a href="mailto:learninghub@towerhamlets.gov.uk">learninghub@towerhamlets.gov.uk</a></p>
Tuesday 12 March 2019 9am-4pm	<b>Early Help Practice and Assessment Skills Training</b> This one day introductory course promotes whole family integrated working and raises awareness of identified needs and local issues impacting families. This course will explore effective assessment, planning and review skills using the Early Help Assessment and provide an introduction to the role of Lead Practitioner, Team Around the Child/Family including 'step up' and 'step down' processes. Please email <a href="mailto:husna.begum@towerhamlets.gov.uk">husna.begum@towerhamlets.gov.uk</a> with your preferred date.

## Parent and Family Support Service

DATE	DETAILS
Tuesday 14 May 2019 1-4pm	<b>Working with Families: Multi-Agency Seminar</b> 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.
Wednesday 12 June 2019 1.30-4pm	<b>Parenting Practitioner Refresher Workshop: Update Your Skills and Practice</b> A session for staff who want to improve their skills in delivering parenting programmes and an opportunity to network with other parenting practitioners to share best practice.

For more information, charges or to book a place, contact Husna Begum  
Telephone: **020 7364 1952** Email: [husna.begum@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto: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 2018-19.**

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.