

This guide is also available and updated online



Welcome to **Tower Hamlets**



2019/20



Welcome to Tower Hamlets



I am delighted to introduce this guide to Tower Hamlets.

The East End has a long history of welcoming people and whether you have chosen to move to our borough to work, study or volunteer everyone is welcome and we want to ensure you get the best support possible.

We know that the circumstances and needs of people new to our borough can vary. This guide has been produced in partnership with the Bromley-by-Bow Centre and our residents.

I truly believe Tower Hamlets has the best of London in one borough. Together we can make it an even better place for all.

Yours Sincerely

John Biggs
Mayor of Tower Hamlets

Find out more

Want to find out about all the great things happening across Tower Hamlets, plus news, competitions, special offers and more? Sign up to our residents' e-newsletter: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/signup

Follow us on social media

-  **Twitter** @towerhamletsnow
-  **Facebook** towerhamletscouncil
-  **Instagram** @towerhamletsnow
-  **Youtube** towerhamletscouncil

For more information about the Welcome to Tower Hamlets programme or to find out about the borough go the council website

 www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/WTTHResources or

 **020 7364 5000**



Some of you chose to be in Tower Hamlets and some of you had to come here. No matter why you are here now, this is your home and Tower Hamlets Council welcomes you!

This guide was written for you and with your to help you understand our wonderful borough.

Being in a different city is a change, new neighbours, new job or even new culture.

Tower Hamlets is a young, vibrant, modern city, but our history comes from being the hamlets of the Tower of London.

This mix of old and new, combined with award winning parks, international cultural destinations, world class learning institutions (like QMUL) and one of the largest economies in the UK, makes Tower Hamlets one of the most popular places to live, work, study and play.

Some interesting fast facts:

- More than 137 languages are spoken here in Tower Hamlets – and 43 per cent of residents were born in over 200 different countries
- Our population has grown by almost 20 per cent since 2011 to 308,000 – it is expected to reach 365,200 by 2027 (19 per cent increase)

We hope that this guide will help you get involved in an activity, join a club, a class or even volunteer to help you make new friends. We hope this guide will help you feel part of the exciting community that is Tower Hamlets.

Thank you to everyone who helped us produce this guide, new migrants, our partner organisations.

Laila El-Metoui
Migrant Project Manager
cmf@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Contents



1. Getting around	05
2. Housing	11
3. Money	17
4. Health and wellbeing	26
5. Education	37
6. Work	45
7. Getting involved	49
8. Your community	51
9. Practical tips	60
10. Staying safe	62





Getting around

Public transport is one of the best ways to get around our wonderful borough.

The transport system includes:

- buses
- underground trains or tube,
- the London Overground
- Docklands Light Railway (DLR) and TfL rail trains

You can also walk or cycle which if you can is very good for you. More information in [Health and Wellbeing](#).

There are different ways to pay for your travel. For occasional trips "pay as you go" – paying for the trips you make – with a contactless payment card, an Oyster card or a Visitor Oyster card is a good option. You can also buy single or return paper tickets from stations for all services except buses.

However, buying paper tickets could to be more expensive than paying fares with an Oyster card or a contactless payment card.



Tower Hamlets is in the heart of London and the City

We have fantastic transport links – 26 London Underground and DLR stations serving seven lines including Crossrail – the second highest of any London borough.





Top tips for getting around

- Check information at stations and online, transport in London is 24 hours in many places! Download one of the travel app
- Check what discounts you could get if you are a child, over 60, a student
- Consider cycling or walking, Tower Hamlets is a lively borough

Getting an Oyster card

You can buy an Oyster card online from the TfL website, at an Oyster Ticket

Stop or at a station. They can be topped up with money, travelcards or bus passes online, at stations or at newsagents.



Using an Oyster card

Remember to touch in and out of stations to avoid paying too much money. You only need to touch in (not out) on buses.





To top up your Oyster card at a station:

1. First touch your Oyster card on the yellow reader.
2. Then choose the type of ticket you want or the amount of money you want to top up by.
3. Pay by putting money in the machine or with a bank or credit card.
4. Touch the card on the yellow reader again to add the money, tickets or travelcard to your Oyster card.

Ask someone at the station if you are not sure how to use your Oyster card.

Other types of travel passes include:

- 18+ Oyster card for students (30% off travelcards and bus or tram passes)
- 60+ Oyster card (for people over 60 years old to travel free after 9.30am)
- Freedom pass (if you are on a state pension, have a disability or learning difficulty)

- Travel discounts are available through your local Job centre Plus if you have been unemployed for over 13 weeks and are claiming benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance, Universal Credit, Incapacity Benefit, Income Support or Employment and Support Allowance.

Travel passes for children

All children under 5 travel free. Children aged 5-10 do not need a travelcard to travel free if they are with an adult and look under 10 years old.



Children aged between 5 and 17 can get free or cheaper travel by applying for a Zip Oyster card.

Planning a journey

You can plan a journey by visiting  the TfL website: www.tfl.gov.uk

You can use the tube/DLR map. Free copies of the tube map can be picked up in any station. The map includes all tube (Underground) lines, Overground lines, DLR stations and trams (which are only in south London). Each line has a different colour and interchanges are marked with a white dot. London is divided into different travel zones which are marked on the map. The more zones you travel through, the more expensive the fare. There is a separate map for TfL rail services.

 If you have a smart phone you can download an app (application) such as Citymapper for example.



Using buses

Bus drivers do not accept cash. To travel by bus you can use:

- an Oyster card
- or a paper travelcard
- or you can pay using a bank or credit card that has the contactless symbol: 

It is also possible to make contactless payments using a mobile phone.





Night Travel

The Night Tube runs on Fridays and Saturdays on the Victoria, Jubilee, and most of the Central, Northern and Piccadilly lines. Many buses also have a night service. More information about night travel can be found online

 <https://tfl.gov.uk/campaign/tube-improvements/what-we-are-doing/night-tube>

Transport for London (TFL)
 **0343 222 1234**

There is a charge to call this number (please check with your phone company).

Parking

The council website is the best place to find all the information you need about parking. You can apply for a new parking permit or renew one online. You can also



pay or challenge a parking fine and check parking zones around the borough.

 https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/transport_and_streets/Parking/Parking.aspx

Driving

Most roads have a 20mph (32kph) speed limit.

The Congestion Charge is an £11.50 daily charge for driving a vehicle within the charging zone **between 07:00 and 18:00, Monday to Friday.**

It is not implemented by the Council. Check the boundaries before travelling.

 <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/congestion-charge>



Cycling

There are cycle routes in Tower Hamlets that make it safer for cyclists. If you do not own a bicycle, you can easily hire a bike from Santander Cycles. You simply find a docking station, pay with your debit or credit card and use the printed release code to access a bike.



Anyone who lives, works or studies in Tower Hamlets is entitled to up to 4 hours free adult cycle training. To register for a session please visit:

 www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/cycling

 cycling@towerhamlets.gov.uk

 0207 364 6940

Walking

There are a range of walks available in Tower Hamlets, from shorter health walks to cultural walks and guided walks.

Check our website for more information

 <https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/walking>

(see **Let's go outside** in the **Local Community** section for information about parks and outdoor areas in Tower Hamlets)

Housing



Top tips for housing

- Check the property and stay safe when looking for a place to live
- Tenants have rights, read through this section to find out more
- If you are homeless or at risk call 📞 020 7364 7474

Finding a home

There are two main types of homes where you can rent, private or public. The private rental sector is called PRS and the 'public' is referred to as social council housing.

Private rented housing

Over 40% of people in Tower Hamlets rent from private landlords.

If you rent a room, a flat or a house from a private landlord in Tower Hamlets, the council wants to make sure that you live in a safe and secure home, and that you are treated fairly.

The Tower Hamlets Private Renters'

Charter explains what standards the law demands from all private landlords and agents. If you rent a room, a flat or a house in Tower Hamlets, the council and every organisation signed up to the charter aims to make sure that your landlord meets those standards.



Finding a place and moving in

From 1st June 2019, fees are banned including

- Viewing fees
- Referencing fees
- Check-in fees



- Tenancy set-up fees
- Tenancy check-out fees
- Third party fees
- any fee that is not listed as an exception – see the Tower Hamlets Private Renters' Charter (details opposite)

Many people find places to rent through letting agents. Letting agents **cannot charge you** for finding you somewhere to live, they can only charge you for:

- Rent
- Refundable tenancy deposit... *capped at five weeks' rent*
- Refundable holding deposit *capped at one week's rent*

Moving can still be expensive. Some places are rented with furniture and some without.

Second hand shop also known as charity shops can be a good place to look for what you need.

There are also some websites which offer free furniture such as freecycle or freewheely.

Stay safe when dealing with people online that you do not know. Many fraudsters target people looking for somewhere to live.

Make sure that you go and see the property you want to rent before you pay for it.

Make sure you check everything before moving in, including any unpaid bills by previous tenants. Register with your preferred gas and electricity provider.

Problems with landlords

Landlords and letting agents must obey the law. As a renter, you have rights. If you need help dealing with your landlord the council and other organisations can provide you with free help and advice.

Feel free to contact the Private Housing Advice Team

 https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/housing/Private_housing/Private_housing.aspx

Tower Hamlets Private Renters' Charter

This charter sets out standards the law demands from all private landlords and agents. If you rent a room, a flat, or a house in Tower Hamlets, the council and every partner organisation signed up to the charter aims to make sure that your landlord meets those standards. Visit our website for details. Please note that if you share your landlord's home with them, you will not have all of these rights.

YOU MUST BE TREATED FAIRLY

LETTING

No discrimination

It is against the law to discriminate against your nationality, race, religion, sexuality, disability or gender. However, you have to give your agent or landlord proof of your legal right to live in the UK.



Letting agency fees

Letting agencies may still charge you a fee. But if they do, their fees including VAT must be displayed clearly in their offices and on their website. You shouldn't need to ask to see them.



Money protection

Ask whether your letting agent belongs to a client money protection scheme. These schemes protect any money you pay to the agent as deposit and rent - even if the agent closes down.



Complaints

Agents must be registered with an independent organisation for dealing with complaints. The logo of the complaints redress scheme they belong to must be displayed.



OCCUPATION

Permission to rent

Your landlord must have the necessary permission to rent. You can check what permission they need on our website.

Legal Information

Your landlord or agent must give you the government's 'How to Rent' booklet when you move in.

Deposit protection

Within 30 days of taking your deposit, your landlord must prove to you that they have protected it with one of the three authorised schemes: DPS, TDS, or My Deposits.

Fair tenancy

Your tenancy must be fair and understandable. You shouldn't be hit with surprise fees.

Rent increases

Your rent should not go up during the fixed period of your tenancy.

Tenancy agreement

Good landlords and agents give you a written tenancy agreement. The law says they must put in writing the address of your room or flat, the length of the agreement, the rent, and the landlord's name and contact address.

Moving out

Landlords must follow a strict legal process if they want to force you to move out - and that process takes time. If your landlord or agent wants you to move out against your wishes, get immediate advice.

YOUR HOME MUST BE SAFE AND SECURE

It's your home!

Your landlord or agent must not disturb or harass you. Your landlord can only visit when it is convenient for you, unless it's an emergency. They must give you at least 24 hours' notice.



Reasonable repair

Your home must be safe, and your landlord must make repairs to its structure in reasonable time.



Damp and mould

Your home should be free from problems with damp and mould. See our website for tips on preventing it becoming a problem and what your landlord must do if that's not possible.



Alarms

Your home must have a working smoke alarm on every floor. If you have solid fuel heating, your landlord must also fit a carbon monoxide detector.



Electrical safety

The wiring and any electrical items supplied with your home must be safe.



Gas safety

If you have a gas supply, your landlord must give you a valid gas safety certificate when you move in. Every 12 months, a certified Gas Safe engineer must check your appliances.



Most private landlords and agents in Tower Hamlets already meet the charter's standards. If they do not, find the best way to improve your situation and the most effective action to take against them at:

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/privaterenterscharter



Tower Hamlets
**PRIVATE RENTERS'
CHARTER**





The council can fine and prosecute landlords who do not respect their tenants' rights – see The Tower Hamlets Private Renters' Charter for details.

Please see the Charter for a list of organisations, you can contact for free help and advice with housing problems.

Council Tax

Council Tax is a local tax collected by councils from all households to help pay for local services such as rubbish collection, libraries, leisure centres, parks, policing, fire brigade, maintaining roads etc. Local councils decide how much the council tax will be in their area. Your council tax payment depends on the value of the property and how many people live with you. You pay the full council tax if 2 adults live there. Some households get a discount for example if there is only 1 adult living in your home. Or if other if you live alone, are in full time education or disabled you

may qualify for a discount, go to the council website for more information

 <https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/counciltax>

You can apply for council tax benefit if you receive State benefits, check the council website for more information.

Paying bills

If you are unemployed or earning a low income, you can get help paying your rent.

If you already get Universal Credit, apply for housing payments through your online account. If not apply for universal credit on the gov.uk website.

For more information about benefits see **Money**.

If you rent a room, your rent may or may not include council tax, gas,





electricity, and water. Check with your agent or landlord what your rent includes.

There are lots of different ways you can pay bills. You can pay in advance for electricity and gas by using a 'key meter' – put credit on your payment card at a local shop with a PayPoint and then insert it into the meter.

Or you can make monthly payments for metered power online, by post, at a bank or post office, or by Direct Debit.

The electricity or gas company comes to your home to read your meter or you send in meter readings online.

If you have a smart phone, you can also download an app from your energy company and have instant access to your account.

Gas and electricity companies charge different rates. It is up to you to decide which company to use and how to pay.

Go paperless if you can!

See **Money** if you are having problems with your bills.

TV licence

Every household has to have a TV licence if they watch live TV or any content made by the BBC. This not only includes watching on a TV set, but also on a laptop, computer, tablet or mobile phone. It is illegal to not have one and you can be fined.



Social rented housing

Social housing is sometimes referred to as 'council flats or homes'. Social housing is either managed directly by the council or by housing associations. It is much cheaper than privately rented housing but harder to get to due to the very high demand.

The only way to get social housing is to put your name on the council's housing register (waiting



list). To join the housing register in Tower Hamlets you must:

- Be 18 years old
- Have recourse to public funds
- Have lived in the borough for the last three (3) years

 <https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/housing/>

There are around 19,000 households waiting for social housing in Tower Hamlets.

Find out about council housing, the housing list, council tax and home improvement grants on our website

 <https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/housing>

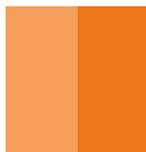
Help for the homeless

If you are homeless or at risk of being homeless, get help and advice from the council's Housing Options Service at:

 *Albert Jacob House*
62 Roman Road, Bethnal Green
E2 0PG. Tel:  **020 7364 7474**
Open: Monday, Tuesday,
Thursday, Friday 9:30am-4pm
Wednesday 1pm-4pm

You can also get free, independent advice and help from organisations listed on the Tower Hamlets Private Renters' Charter.

Food bank and other services for people with money problems (Please see **Money**).



Money

British currency

The currency in the UK is the pound sterling (£/GBP). There are 100 pence (p) to the pound (£). There are £5, £10, £20 and £50 notes. Coins come in 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2.



Opening a bank account

To open a bank account you need to be over the age of 18 and a UK resident. You need to choose if you want a high street bank or building society account, a post office account or an online bank account. You also need to decide which type of bank account you want.

There are different types of bank accounts: current, joint, savings, etc. You can apply to open a bank account by filling in a form either in a bank or building society or online. Most banks want to see two original documents, one as proof of ID with a photo like a passport and the other as proof of address like a gas or electricity bill.

Using a cash machine

Cash machines are also known as ATMs. Things to remember when using a cash machine

- not all of them are free so check before taking money out



- take another person with you, if at all possible.
- if the lights at the ATM are not working, don't use it
- check before using, if you are not sure or do not feel safe do not use it
- protect your information , don't share your PIN number or let someone see it
- keep your receipts

Saving money

Before thinking about saving money, it is best to pay off any debts first. There is a big difference between saving money and investing. When you save money you get it all back with interest. When you invest, there is a risk of losing the money.

Some savings accounts are 'easy access'. This means you can easily take money out. Some savings accounts ask you to keep the money in the account for a number of years. However you decide to save money, you need to think about it carefully first.

The tax system

The tax system in England is complicated and depends on your status (employed, self-employed, etc.). Everyone who is working has to pay income tax and National Insurance (NI) unless they are on a very low income. The tax year runs from 6 April to 5 April.

The HM Revenue & Customs website can provide you with the latest information.

 www.hmrc.gov.uk

The benefits system

A benefit is a payment made by the state to support people who are unemployed, on a low income or disadvantaged in some way. There are a number of different types of benefit, Universal Credit, Carer's and Disability Benefits, Carer's Allowance and Credit, Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Carer's Allowance  **0800 731 0297**

 www.gov.uk/carers-allowance



Adults or children with a disability can claim for a Personal Independence Payment (PIP). To make a claim for a PIP, Call **0800 917 2222**. Make sure you have your personal details ready before calling.

The council also offers a range of support to people living with disabilities, check the council website for the latest information

If you need support you can also contact Scope (an organisation that fights for equality for disabled people) call free on **0808 800 3333** or visit their website

 www.scope.org.uk

Residents' Support Scheme (LWA)

Tower Hamlets Council provides essential crisis help our most vulnerable residents through the new Residents' Support Scheme (LWA).

This is service is who are at risk of being in crisis, are in need of immediate help and have no source of financial support available to them. Support available includes



- help with short term living costs such as credit food and gas/ electric prepayment metres (no cash payments),
- help with white goods and furniture (e.g. washing machine or fridge).

To access this service you must be aged 16 years or over and must not be subject to any UK immigration control.

Please check the website below to see if you are eligible.

 www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/advice_and_benefits/Residents_Support_Scheme.aspx

ision Overview

Proposed gross expenditure	
(Actual minus estimated)	
Actual netted properties	
State pension	£8,000.00
Work pension	£4,215.00
Interest	£630.00
State pension	£8,000.00
Work pension	£4,215.00
Interest	£1,000.00

Resident Support Outreach Team – Universal Credit Support

The council has set a Resident Support Outreach team based in the community to help



Tower Hamlets residents with Universal Credit applications and other benefits including income maximisation and benefit take up.

The team also provide advice and assistance on other matters such as housing, and digital upskilling, opening bank account and identity verification.

How to access the service

Email the team directly on

✉ **LBTHResidentSupport@towerhamlets.gov.uk**

Benefits advice

You can get free independent help and support with benefit problems from local advice in Tower Hamlets. These services are based across the borough, provide out of office hours and home visits for vulnerable residents.

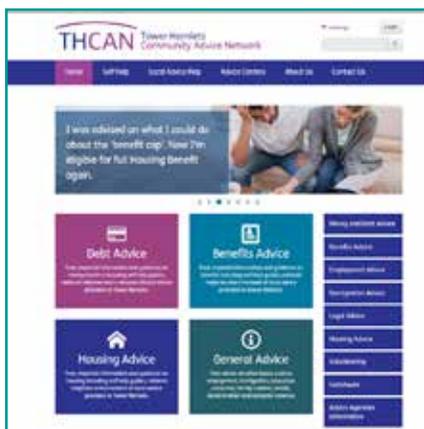
If you are struggling with benefits or tax credits applications, have questions about your rights/ entitlements to welfare benefits or need support to appeal benefits decisions, you can contact one of the organisations listed on the council's website, visit:

🌐 **www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/advice_and_benefits/community_legal_advice/welfare_benefits_advice.aspx**

You can also find information on the national websites and telephone helplines on the same link.

Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network – THCAN

Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network (THCAN) is a partnership of local advice centers that provide free advice and representation in areas of social welfare law. The advice centres work together through THCAN to ensure that residents of Tower Hamlets have access to free, high quality advice on welfare benefits, debt, housing and other areas of social welfare law.



The advice centres listed on this website are publicly funded, not-for-profit organisations offering

free advice, with many funded directly by the council.

All the centres meet the requirements of Advice Quality Standard (AQS) and are independently audited.

For details of service delivery and information on self-help, visit

<http://thcan.org.uk>

Emergency Provision for Tower Hamlets residents with no money for food

Benefit checks and debt problems should be referred to a local advice centre details:

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/advice_and_benefits/community_legal_advice/welfare_benefits_advice.aspx

Other benefits

Depending on your situation you could also get heating benefits, winter fuel payment, or other benefits for elderly and or families



such as Child Benefits or Maternity Benefits. If you are working you can also get statutory maternity pay or Maternity Allowance. Help with childcare may also be available. Visit this Government website for more information:

 www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/

You may also be able to apply for Healthy Start Vouchers from pregnancy until age 4

 <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

Free school meals

Please see **Education**

Pensions

A pension is an amount of money you get once you have stopped working. There are 3 main types of pension: a state pension, a workplace pension and a private pension. Check with your employer or visit the council's website for the latest information.

Debt

If you have debt problems or you need



help with your finances there are lots of free information and help available online, over the phone or face to face.

This includes online step by step guides to dealing with money and debt problems and sample letters you can use. You can also contact the free national helplines who provide confidential advice and information about money and debt problems. There are also a number of local advice agencies where you can make an appointment to see a specialist debt adviser.

Check Tower Hamlets council website for the latest information and the THACAN.

Credit Union

Credit unions are a form of financial co-operative. They are



democratic in their membership and in their board of directors, and they enable members to take advantage of certain financial products that they might not otherwise be able to benefit from. Credit unions are especially beneficial if you are looking to save or borrow money, but also if you want to bank more ethically than with high street lenders while helping their community.

Turn2us helps people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face through our partner organisations. For details please visit

 www.turn2us.org.uk/

Benefit advances, interim payments or crisis support

Tower Hamlets Resident Support Scheme may be available for residents who are either in or at risk of being in crisis, or who are in need of immediate help and have no source of financial support available to them. The

Residents' Support Scheme may help with short term living costs such as credit food and gas/ electric prepayment metres. Advice centres will assess and assist. Local advice centres can also advise on benefit advance entitlements

Foodbanks that provide free food packages

First Love Foundation – For clients experiencing crisis (no money and no food), have to be referred by an agency. Once a referral form has been sent, you receive an email reply with a voucher code. The client attends with the voucher code and proof of ID (Stepney on Tuesdays or Poplar on Fridays)

 **020 3069 9877**

 **distributor@firstlovefoundation.org.uk**

Bow Foodbank – just turn up any Monday from 9.30am to 12.30. The distribution point is at

 St Mary and Holy Trinity Church, 230 Bow Road, E3 3AH.

 **07930 527 167**



🏠 Christ Church, Manchester Rd, E14 3BN. Tuesdays 10.30am to 12.30pm. If in urgent need before this day email

✉ tom.pyke@parishiod.org.uk or
☎ **07753616499**

Free meals

Foodcycle – Bow Road

✉ bowroad@foodcycle.org.uk
☎ **02077292775**

The Methodist Church

🏠 Tower Hamlets, 1 Merchant Street, London, E3 4LY
Fridays from 6.30pm (Food is served from 7.00pm)
Free meal made in a friendly, community environment - open to anyone

Mudchute meals

🏠 Mudchute Park and Farm, Pier Street, E14 3HP
Wed & Thur 12.30 to 2pm (doors open 11.30am)
✉ events@mudchute.org or
phone
☎ **0207 538 8456**

Simple Gifts

🏠 117 Mansford Street, Basement Office, E2 6LX

✉ info@simplegiftsucsa.org.uk

☎ **0207 739 9930**

Lunch cooked every Thursday free, between 12.00 and 2.00pm
lunch is served at 12.30pm

Jesuit Refugee Service Day centre
for failed asylum seekers, receive a small 'care package' consisting of toiletries, a phone & travel card.
Referral only ☎ **020 7488 7310**.

🌐 www.jrsuk.net/get-help/

Tower Hamlets Community Church
hot free meal on Friday 1pm

✉ church@thcc.org.uk

🏠 Lansbury Lodge, 117 Ricardo Street, London E14 6EQ

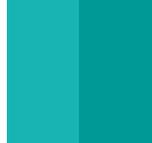
☎ **020 7515 7471**

🌐 www.thcc.org.uk/lunch/

Calvary Charismatic Baptist Church
at 🏠 119 East India Dock Road, E14 6DE. Friday 1-3pm

☎ **0207 515 1616**

✉ info@ccb.org.uk



Homelessness centres

Whitechapel Mission 212

🏠 Whitechapel Road, London, E1 1BJ 📞 **03000 111 400**

Breakfast (each morning two days a week) 8am from cereals to a full English. Charge of 50p for a standard breakfast and 20p for cereals.

✉ sue@whitechapel.org.uk

Providence Row

🏠 Dellow Centre, 82 Wentworth Street, London, E1 7SA

📞 **020 7375 0020**

✉ info@providencerow.org.uk

For rough sleepers in Tower Hamlets: breakfast, shower, care of address, access to internet and phone charging facilities. Also do referrals to food banks

Others for homeless people check

🌐 <https://www.the-pavement.org.uk/services?facility=17&city=1>

Other

School holidays food/fund Bow foodbank



should be contacted for information on eligibility and provision during school holidays for food distribution parcels by Monday between 9.30am and 12.30. St Marys Church, Bow.

Electricity/Gas top-up

🏠 Bromley by Bow Centre St Leonard's St, E3 3BT

📞 **020 8709 9700**

Can provide clients with pre-payment top up vouchers for gas or electricity for clients in emergency situations such as had their benefits stopped or without food/money

Attend Wednesday at gam (first come first served). May be eligible for £29 for clients who are single and £49 for those who live with family.

Health & Wellbeing



If someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk, call 999 or go to the Accident Emergency department of a hospital.

If you have access to the internet via a laptop or phone you can download the NHS App. The NHS App enables people to:

- check their symptoms using the health A-Z on the NHS website
- find out what to do when they need help urgently using NHS **111**

Call NHS **111** if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation. You can also call if you're not sure which NHS service you need. **111** can also arrange a GP appointment with your practice or one of the extended access hubs, but you will need to be registered with a Tower Hamlets GP.



Call **999** if someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk, or go to the Accident and Emergency department of a hospital.



Call **0207 771 5807** if someone is having a mental health crisis. You can get support and advice from staff available 24 hours a day.



Make an appointment with your **local doctor** or nurse if you are feeling unwell and it's not an emergency. These are often called "GPs", "GP Practices" or "Health Centres". More information on this is in the next section.



Go and see your local pharmacist for advice about common, minor illnesses such as a headache or sore throat. **Pharmacists** are also called "chemists". There are many pharmacies in Tower Hamlets.





The NHS (National Health Service)

The National Health Service (NHS) is the name of the Government-funded health system in the UK. The NHS can help with both physical health (your body) and mental health (your mind).

Some NHS services and treatments are free to all. Others are not. The cost can depend on the service, your age and your circumstances. More information on this is on the NHS website at

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/>

Registering with a doctor

Your local doctor is called a "GP", and they work at a "GP Practice" (also called "Health Centres"). You will need to register with a GP to be able to make an appointment to see them. You can register with any GP in your local area, close to where you live. If they are full they can tell you about another GP Practice to register with.

To register with a GP, staff at the GP Practice will ask you to fill in a form. You can do this at the reception or some surgeries offer online registration.

People who are visiting the UK for more than 24 hours, but less than 3 months can register with a GP as a temporary patient.

GP Practices are not open 24 hours a day. If you need a GP late at night or at the weekend, call  **111**.

Your GP can prescribe medicines if you need them, which you can then get from a pharmacy (also called a chemist). You may be able to get some medicines without seeing a GP, through 'NHS Pharmacy First'. Ask staff in your GP surgery about this.





NHS GP Tower Hamlets
Online Registration

**Register with our
GP Practice now***

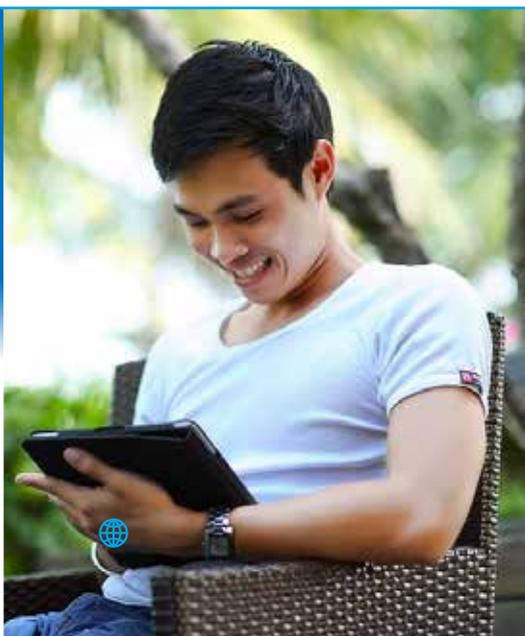
www.towerhamletsgpreg.nhs.uk

**We are testing online
patient registration**

*Eligibility applies to Tower Hamlets resident only



Scan this QR code with your
smart phone to register



To find a doctor, dentist or help to quit smoking call the Tower Hamlets health hotline on **020 7364 5016**, Monday to Friday 8am-8pm and Saturday 8am-4pm.

If you need an interpreter to help you speak to a doctor you can ring the Tower Hamlets Advocacy & Interpreting Service on **020 3950 5699**.

Staying healthy and well

Depending on your age and circumstances, you may be asked to meet with a doctor, nurse or other member of staff for things like:

- Vaccinations. These help keep people safe and well, and it is important that these are up-to-date.



- Health checks. These can help spot and treat things like high blood pressure or Type 2 Diabetes.
- Cancer screenings. These can check for cancer, helping to find any problems at an early stage so that they can be treated.
- If you are pregnant. You will be invited to meet with a midwife to make sure that you and baby are well.

Social Prescribing Service

It is a service based at your local doctor's surgery which can help you look after more than just your health. They work alongside medical staff to help you get the extra support you need to have better health and wellbeing.

They can give information about the free and low cost services around:

- Housing, benefits, financial support and advice
- Employment, training and volunteering
- Education and learning
- Healthy lifestyle advice and physical activity

- Arts, music, outdoors and creative activities
- Befriending, counselling and emotional support groups

To access support from the Social Prescribing service contact your GP practice and ask for an appointment with your local Social Prescriber.

Caring for your teeth and gums

Dentists care for your teeth and gums. You can register with



an NHS dentist to get cheaper treatment if they are taking on new patients. The NHS sets the prices dentists are allowed to charge for treatment. There are 4 price levels. You can check how much they can charge on the NHS.

 <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/dental-health/how-much-will-i-pay-for-nhs-dental-treatment/>



VISIT here to find out if you need to pay for your treatment

 <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/dental-health/who-is-entitled-to-free-nhs-dental-treatment-in-england/>

Getting glasses

You can get your eyesight tested with an optician or at some pharmacies. Only some people can get free



eye tests or optical vouchers (to get cheaper glasses or contact lenses) on the NHS. The rules are complicated, so it is best to check with the optician to see how much you will have to pay before getting your eyes tested. You can go to any optician in your local area for an eye test, there's usually a charge but good to watch out for special offers, as some big chains (Specsavers, Boots, etc.) sometimes have free

eye tests as a promotion. Look after your eyes:

 <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/look-after-your-eyes/>

Community Navigators

Wellbeing Hubs are based in Idea Stores (See **Education** for full list). Please see advert to the right for more detail on what they can offer you.

Community Navigators use their knowledge and experience and on line tool called the *Wellbeing Wheel* to help you find the support you need to deal with your health and wider wellbeing needs.

Idea Stores also have a *Health Zone* area dedicated to information on health and wellbeing. This area has books, videos, magazines on health issues. Contact a community navigator to find out more.

The Wellbeing Wheel – can be used by you or together with a community navigator to assess what

Community Navigators

Giving you access to information, signposting and support in one convenient place.

- Health and wellbeing
- Family and children
- Finance and money matters
- Things to do and social activities
- Employment, education and training
- Home and housing



Want to make positive changes in your life?
Our Wellbeing Wheel can help you plan your changes.

Our Community Navigators are skilled in finding the right information for you. Come and see us Monday-Friday and alternate Saturdays at:
Idea Store Whitechapel, 321 Whitechapel Road, E1 1BU

Email us in confidence at
navigators@towerhamlets.gov.uk

This service is provided by
Tower Hamlets Public Health and Idea Store





you need and to find out what is available and where. With the wheel you can set goals and produce a wellbeing plan tailored for you and your family. The Well Being Wheel searches the Tower Hamlets Community directory of services based on your priorities. You can do this by you or with a Community Navigator Idea Stores are public buildings that anyone can enter. Idea Store staff are very welcoming and this is a friendly environment to have a conversation with a Community Navigator.

 www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/wellbeingwheel.com

Keeping fit

A new chapter in your life can sometimes mean a big change in your routine. We want to you feel happy, fit and well in this exciting phase of life. Taking part in sport and leisure activities can be a great way to look after your health and wellbeing. There's an excellent range of things on offer in Tower Hamlets.

From rugby, netball, tennis and dance to cycling, swimming and volleyball, you can pick a sport or join a team.

We have seven leisure centres in the borough, so you can get active through many facilities and activities.

You can get your friends together and book a pitch or a court

To get fit for free look at

 <https://www.ourparks.org.uk/borough/tower-hamlets>

You can also get more information on the council website under Adults Health and Wellbeing

 https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/health__social_care/ASC/Adults_Health_and_Wellbeing/Adults_Health_and_Wellbeing.aspx

Drug and alcohol problems

If you or someone you know has a problem with drugs or alcohol, help is available. You can make an appointment to see a GP, or you can contact services for adults and young people in Tower Hamlets. Services include:

- advice and information
- alcohol detoxification and residential rehabilitation
- health tests and help
- counselling and more

Clients will have access to a wide range of additional support including support and advice on how to access education, training and employment (ETE), benefits, day programmes and aftercare.

For adults, please contact Reset

 **0203 889 9510**

 **towerhamlets.ifo@cgl.org.uk**

 **https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/health__social_care/health_and_medical_advice/drugs_and_alcohol_advice/where_to_get_help.aspx**

For children and young people, please contact Safe East on:

 **020 3954 0091**

 **compass.towerhamletsyphws@nhs.net**

 **<https://www.compass-uk.org/services/tower-hamlets-compass-safe-east/40>**

Stop smoking support

Why quit?

Using tobacco in any form is very harmful to your health. If you smoke tobacco through a cigarette or shisha, you are at increased risk of health problems such as cancer and heart and respiratory disease. Chewing paan/betel nuts can cause oral cancer and have a significant impact on your health.



To find out about different ways to quit smoking visit our stop smoking treatments page.

 [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/
lgnl/health__social_care/
public_health/tobacco_
control/stop_smoking_
support.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/health__social_care/public_health/tobacco_control/stop_smoking_support.aspx)

Are there any local stop smoking services?

You can either drop into your local pharmacy at any time or contact Quit Right Tower Hamlets for free support and advice.

 www.quitrightth.org

Quit Right Tower Hamlets

This service provides stop smoking services to all residents and people who work or study in Tower Hamlets. Quit Right also provide culturally sensitive services for people from the Somali, South Asian and migrant communities who chew tobacco or use paan. Female advisors are available and you can be seen one-to-one or in a group setting.

A specialist service is available for pregnant women and people with high levels of addiction who may need extra support to break habits. This can be provided in groups or individually.

Clients can self-refer or be referred through their GP practice.

 Quit Right Tower Hamlets
Health and Lifestyle Research Unit
2 Stayners Road
London
E1 4AH

Monday to Friday 9am-5pm
(weekday evening and Saturday morning appointments are also available)

 **020 7882 8230**

 [bhnt.quitrighttowerhamlets@
nhs.net](mailto:bhnt.quitrighttowerhamlets@nhs.net)

For more information please visit the NHS Choices stop smoking website.



Stop Smoking London

The Stop Smoking London helpline offers free support and advice to help people in London quit smoking. Lines are open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 8pm and Saturday to Sunday, from 11am to 4pm.

Call 📞 **0300 123 1044** at your local rate or visit the Stop Smoking London website.

🌐 <https://stopsmokinglondon.com/>

Sexual Health

There are a wide range of free and confidential sexual health services and free contraception available through your GP or at local specialist sexual health services provided by All East. The main clinic in Tower Hamlets is

🏠 Ambrose King Centre
The Royal London Hospital,
Mount Terrace, Whitechapel,
London E1 2BB

📞 **020 7377 7306/7307**

🌐 <https://booking.all-east.nhs.uk/>

- Monday: 8:30am - 6:30pm
- Tuesday: 8:30am - 6:30pm
- Wednesday: 11:30am - 6:30pm
- Thursday: 8:30am - 6:30pm
- Friday: 8:30am - 3:30pm
- Saturday: 8:30am - 12:30pm

Walk in clinic – 2:00pm- 4:00pm
(Booked appointments only)

All East provides free and confidential sexual health services at centres across East London, providing everything from sexual health screenings (including HIV testing) to contraception services. You don't need to book to be seen, but you can pre-book appointments.





Sexual health and substance misuse services for young people

Safe East

A team of professionals helping young people to take control of their health and make safer, healthier choices. They support to 10-19 year olds who live or study in Tower Hamlets. Also those aged up to 25 if in the care system, have special educational needs or have a disability.

Safe East provides help with:

- substance misuse: information, advice and support
- sex: issues around consent and relationships, contraception, testing and treatment for STIs

 <https://www.compass-uk.org/services/tower-hamlets-compass-safe-east/>

Service Hub:

 Safe East Clinical Hub, 59 Mile End Road, Mile End, E1 4TT





Education

Age	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Class	Nursery	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
Stage	Foundation stage		Key Stage 1			Key Stage 2			Key Stage 3			Key Stage 4		Key Stage 5	
	Nursery	Primary School						Secondary School with Sixth Form							
		Infant School			Junior School			Secondary School				Sixth Form/ College			

Children and Young People

Children's Centres

Children's Centres in Tower Hamlets want to give every child with the best possible start in life, by reducing inequality and helping them reach their full early years' learning potential. They are a good place to meet other parents and make friends, and gain support and advice from people having the same experiences.

Children's Centres support parents to get important skills and education that will help them prepare for voluntary roles and future jobs and careers.

The children's centres offer services including:

- A range of health services (including access to oral health, baby clinics)
- Family support (advice and guidance)
- Partnership with the community and stakeholders such as job centres

In Tower Hamlets, children's centres encourage child development and school readiness, which enables children to gain confidence and become curious learners. We provide early



learning opportunities through:

- Targeted stay and play sessions
- School nursery places for two and three year olds which helps them prepare for school
- Developing Communication - you can access tips and advice about how to support your baby and young children to learn to talk. Children's centres can also let you know how to get free books from the Bookstart scheme.

For more information about children's centres in Tower Hamlets visit

 www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/childrenscentres

Early Help Service

The Early Help Hub works with families or young people who would like some extra support to deal with a difficult situation. Getting help early can stop things from getting worse and becoming harder to manage.

The Hub is single point of access

for the public, and people working with children, young people and their families within the local community. They give advice and support for things like:

- Family breakdown
- Housing problems
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Money troubles
- Children's and young people's behaviour
- Parenting
- Drug or alcohol addiction

Calls to the Children Services Hotline ( **020 7364 5005**) and the online enquiry form are directed through to the Early Help Hub (EHH). Visit

 https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/health__social_care/children_and_family_care/Early_Help/Early_Help_Hub.aspx

Childcare

There are different childcare options depending on your child's age:

- Nurseries (0-5 years) – these





- usually open all year round
- Childminders (0-14 years) – may open term time only or all year round
 - School nurseries (2-5 years) – open term time only
 - Nursery Schools (2-5 years) – open term time only
 - Preschools (2-5 years) – open term time only

All childcare should be Ofsted registered.

Help with Childcare

Depending on your family situation you can get help with the cost of childcare. To get an idea how much you could get, go to the government's childcare calculator website:

 <https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>

All 3 and 4 years olds in Tower Hamlets get 15 hours of free childcare, during term time, from the term after they turn 3.

Working parents with 3 & 4 year olds can get an additional 15 hours, meaning 30 hours of free childcare

a week during term time.

40% of parents with a 2 year old will have 15 hours of free childcare a week during term time, from the term after their child turns 2 if they get certain benefits.

For help, go to the government's Childcare Choices website where you can also find out about tax-free childcare:

 <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

Parents Advice Centre

If you have a child or young person with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), you can contact the Parents Advice Centre for information, advice and support.

 Call **020 7364 6489**

Nursery school, school nursery and primary school admissions

To apply for a place for your child at a school nursery or nursery school, you should apply online via

 <https://www.eadmissions.org.uk/eAdmissions/app>

Your guide to information and services for families in Tower Hamlets



LOCAL OFFER

 @thlocaloffer  localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk

Guide to information and services in Tower Hamlets for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and **all** families in the borough.

Advice, Information and Support Services



To find out more please visit the Local Offer website www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk or call us on **020 7364 6495** or email fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk





You can apply for up to three Tower Hamlets nurseries.

Children must start school by the term after they turn 5. You can also apply for a school place via the portal. If you do not have internet access at home, you can visit one of Idea Stores where you use the internet service free of charge.

Secondary School

Each year the council publishes information on its website about starting secondary school which includes all you need to know about applying for a place including a step by step guide to making your online application.



You will also be able to access a booklet giving you information about all of the secondary schools in the borough which the council and Government have

responsibility for supporting, including contact details and maps showing where each school is located.

Waiting lists

If your child is not offered a place at your first choice school or you are offered one of your other choices schools, your child will be added to the waiting list of your first choice.

Appeals

If you are not offered a place at a school of your preference you can appeal that decision. The appeals panel is independent of the council and schools in the borough. If you wish to appeal, you can download an admissions appeal form or call pupil services for more advice. You may appeal for more than one school.

Need a school place today?

If your child is of secondary school age now and does not have a school place, please contact the



council's Pupil Services team or visit our in-year admissions page.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding in its simplest terms means protecting children from harm. Every childcare provider and school will have a Safeguarding Policy, which tells you how they keep children safe, what processes they follow and what happens if they have concerns about a child. These concerns may be related to physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or to neglect. For more information see **Staying Safe**.

University

Students apply for university places in year 13, and will be supported by their



school/college. All applications to UK universities for full-time undergraduate courses are made through UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Services).

Activities for children and young people

Most schools run after-school clubs every day. Check your school's website for details.

The Tower Hamlets Holiday Childcare Scheme is Ofsted registered and provides childcare for children aged 3 to 13 years old, including sport and play sessions. It takes place in Tower Hamlets schools and is open during 9 weeks of the school holidays, but not the Christmas break. There are options between 8am to 6pm (for working parents) or 9am to 5pm.

During the summer holidays, Tower Hamlets and its partners delivers hundreds of activities across the borough. The most recent booklet can be found here.

Youth Hubs

All activities are free and for young people aged 12 to 19 up to 25 with SEND. All our venues offer indoor games and activities and many have outdoor spaces and sporting



activities as well as opportunities to volunteer and gain additional skills and qualifications.

The hubs offer a timetable of games, sports, cookery and opportunities to meet friends as well as take part in healthy life styles programme such as healthy eating and sessions on relationships and sexual health.

Careers support

The Careers Service offers independent and free careers information, advice and guidance for young people who are:

- at risk of being 'not in education, employment or training' (aged 13 to 19 years old and up to 25 years old for those with an education, health and care plan (EHCP))
- 'not in education, employment or training' (aged 16-19 years old and up to 25 with an EHCP). This includes young people with special needs, children who are looked after, and young people known to the youth offending team.

If you are a young person in education and are looking for careers advice, you should speak to your school, college or university first. If you are not in education and are looking for careers advice you should contact Young Workpath

🏠 40-42 Watney Market,
London E1 2PR

☎ Tel: **020 7364 1401**

✉ **youngworkpath@towerhamlets.gov.uk**

Adult Education

You can study at any college that is best for you, check before applying. There are many places where you can learn as an adult either fulltime or part-time (evenings and weekends):

Our local college is

🏠 **New City College**

The main site is on Poplar High Street, London E14 0AF

☎ **020 7510 7510**



Idea Store Learning

Idea Stores are more than just a library or a place for learning. As well as library services, we offer a wide range of adult learning courses and a large activities and events program.

The Idea Stores runs over 900 classes such as fashion, art and design, photography, music, cookery, dance, health and fitness, languages and interpreting, DIY skills or family learning. You can learn English (or ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages), computer classes, there are lots of other classes you can go to.

Walk in or call

 **020 7364 5665**

Or visit our website

 **[www.ideastore.co.uk/
coursesearch](http://www.ideastore.co.uk/coursesearch)**

Learning English

If English is not your first language, there are many places where you can learn.



You can check where there are other English classes by visiting the ESOL Hub on the council website:

 **[www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/
ESOLClasses](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ESOLClasses)**

You can also email the ESOL Hub on

 **esolhub@towerhamlets.gov.uk**

Learning to use a computer

The Idea Stores offer a good range of Information Technology (IT) classes both for beginners and people who already know how to use a computer. Some local community centres also have IT classes.



Looking for work

Top tips when looking for a job

- Think about where you want to work and what you want to do
- Volunteering can be a useful way of getting work experience if you are new to the UK
- Ask for help – word of mouth is one of the best ways to get vacancies, or contact one of the organisations listed in this section

Qualified from another country?

If you got your qualification outside of the UK, you can contact UK NARIC to get your certificates and diplomas recognised and translated, so that you get a Statement of Comparability which compares them to UK qualifications and the UK education system.

It can take 10 to 15 working days and costs £59.40 for all the qualifications you submit. Go to their website for more information

 <https://www.naric.org.uk>

Or call  **0871 330 7033** (calls costs 11p per minute plus your phone company's access charge). Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm

National Insurance Number

To work in the UK, you need a national insurance number. You must have the right to study or work in the UK to get one. Call the Department for Work and Pensions

 **0800 169 0190**



Jobcentre Plus

Your local Jobcentre Plus can help you get a National insurance number. They will invite you for an interview as part of the application process. Take your passport and other forms of ID to prove who you are. If you have already started work, take your employment contract or a letter from your employer explaining about your job. The JobCentre can also help you find a job or apply for benefits (please see Money on page for more information on benefits).

 **0345 604 3719**

 *Jobcentre Plus*
13 Dod Street, E14 7EP
Open 9am-5pm



Tower Hamlets Workpath

Workpath is an employment service for Tower Hamlets residents, where you can get



employment support, opportunities for training, work experience or apprenticeships. You can also get help with writing CVs or interview preparation, as well as advice and guidance about other issues such as housing and debt, health problems and other specific needs.

 **020 7364 5000**

 **workpath@towerhamlets.gov.uk**

 *Tower Hamlets Skills and Employment Centre*
55 Upper Bank Street
Canary Wharf, London E14 5GR



Disabled

JET (Job, Enterprise & Training) is an award winning service that can help you progress into employment if you have a learning disability or autism

☎ 020 8980 3500

✉ info@towerproject.org.uk

Visit Tower Project between 9am-5pm

🏠 *Tower Project Job, Enterprise & Training service*
Disability Employment and Training Campus
Candy Wharf, Unit 2
22-23 Copperfield Road,
London E3 4RL



Idea Store Business & Employment Support

(see **Your Community** for more information about Idea Stores and the Education section for Idea Store Learning)



Self-employment

Self-employment means working for yourself. To get support with getting set up you need to be registered with HMRC

🌐 <https://www.gov.uk/working-for-yourself>



Volunteering

Volunteering is a good way to give back to the community, make new friends or gain new skills. It could also improve your confidence or help you practice English. It's a good thing to add to your CV.



The Volunteer Centre in Tower Hamlets is a good place to look for a placement.

 **020 7377 0956**

 **info@vcth.org.uk**

 *Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets*
First Floor, Norvin House
45-55 Commercial Street
London E1 6BD

Idea Stores also offers volunteering opportunities, see **Education**

Joining a trade union

A trade union is an organisation with members who are usually workers or employees. It looks after their interests at work by doing things like:

- negotiating agreements with employers on pay and conditions
- discussing big changes like large scale redundancy
- discussing members' concerns with employers
- going with members to disciplinary and grievance meetings

More information about trade unions or if you have a problem with your employer by visiting this website.

 **<https://www.gov.uk/join-trade-union>**



Getting involved



Local Councils are responsible for a range of vital services for people and businesses. Among them are well known functions such as social care, schools, housing and planning and waste collection, but also lesser known ones such as licensing, business support, registrar services and pest control.

Local councils, are made up of councillors (and



sometimes Mayors) who are elected by the public in local elections. They work with local people and partners, such as local businesses, the voluntary sector and other public sector organisations such as the police and health service to agree and deliver on local priorities.

The decisions are implemented by council officers who deliver services on a daily basis.

The Council will also work with the government, the London Mayor, MPs and similar democratic bodies as required.

Tower Hamlets Council

Tower Hamlets has an elected Mayor and 45 Councillors who decide on the budget, policies and priorities for the Council.

The council also regularly consults residents and local businesses about important issues, such as transport or planning.

Decision making

The Mayor and his Cabinet are responsible for most policy decisions but there are a number of public decision making meetings and bodies responsible for particular issues such as planning or licensing. Every council must publish:

- details of when key decisions will be taken (called the 'forthcoming decisions list' or 'Forward Plan')
- papers of meetings – at least 5 working days beforehand
- minutes of meetings – showing the decisions that were made

Information about all of this is available on the Council's website



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

Getting involved

You can:

- Contact your Councillor
- Ask the mayor
- Attend a Meeting including to ask a question or contribute.
- Submit a Petition.
- Participate in Scrutiny
- Vote in Elections.
- Take part in a consultation

The council's website is the best place to find out information about the latest decision of the Mayor's and cabinet members as well as other important dates and information



Contacting the Mayor or your local Councillor

The Mayor and Councillors are elected for 4-year terms by the local community to represent its views.

You can check who the councillors are in your local area by visiting:

 [democracy.towerhamlets.gov.
uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx](http://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx)

Like MPs, councillors also hold regular surgeries. The times can be checked on the same website.

Registering to vote

In Tower Hamlets, you can register to vote by post by calling Electoral Services on  **020 7364 5000** and asking to be sent a form or online:

 www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Community Forums

The council supports a number of forums to help local people to have an impact upon council policies and services in our work around equalities and diversity. These include the Tower Hamlets LGBT Community Forum, LGBT Practitioners Network Forum, Local Voices and Welcome to Tower Hamlets. Find out more on our website.



Your community

Tower Hamlets is a vibrant multi-cultural borough in the East End of London and has much to offer.

Here you can shop, work, study, be entertained and practice your faith. This section highlights some areas that may be of interest to you.

Shopping & Street Markets

Canary Wharf has several shopping malls with about 120 shops.

Old Spitalfields Market has a mix of shops, market stalls, restaurants and cafes. The large covered market area is open 7 days a week and there is a vintage and antiques market every Thursday.

The following street markets sell fresh fruit and vegetables and other household items:

Monday to Saturday

- Bethnal Green Market
- Crisp Street Market
- Whitechapel Market
- Watney Market
- Roman Road Square Market

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

- Roman Road Market

Specialist markets

- Brick Lane Market – Open on Sunday. Fashion, food and art.
- Petticoat Lane Market (based in Middlesex Street) – Open on Sunday. Fashion, textiles and leather goods.
- Columbia Road Flower Market– Open on Sunday. Plants, flowers and gardening related items.
- Petticoat Lane Weekday Street Food – Open Monday to Friday. Street food sellers

Idea Stores

Idea Stores are a safe, friendly place to visit to take part in activities, access the free WiFi and public PCs, meet-up with friends or to find a quiet place to read or study.

Regular activities include:

- Daily StoryTime sessions for Under 5s and their parents. Have fun with your child and meet other parents.
- Conversation Club – meet



new friends and practise your English at weekly free and friendly conversation clubs

- Dads' Club – time for dads to share books with their children.
- Family Reading Groups – read together and share stories. Meet new families and make new friends.



Idea Store membership is free and offers members free access to 20 online services including:

- PressReader national and international newspapers, with over 2,000 titles from 100 countries in 60 languages to download.
- RBdigital magazines service over 600 exciting magazine titles, for a range of interests for download.

- Free and legal music download service with hundreds of genres of music with thousands of artists, tens of thousands of albums and over 7 million songs.
- The British Way of Life – a program to help asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to get used to living in the UK as quickly as possible. It covers many essential topics and subjects, with links to government, NHS and other useful websites to find out invaluable information to succeed in 'The British Way of Life'.
- Theory Test Pro – a highly realistic online simulation of the UK's driving theory tests for all vehicle categories. Machine translation into over 40 different languages and speech-enabled tests so you can listen to questions.

Members can also:

- Borrow books, CDs & DVDs free of charge
- Visit the Tower of London for £1 (Tower Hamlets residents only)
- Get a 2 for 1 ticket offer for films at the Genesis Cinema in Mile End Road

Recycling

We can bring benefits to our community by recycling. The council provides residents with clear sacks or purple bins to collect recycling materials from properties.

You can find details of sacks and bin recycling at:

 www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/recycling

**PLEASE
RECYCLE
THESE:**



Give dirty items a rinse
and flatten boxes



Cans and tins



Paper and card



Glass bottles and jars



Plastic pots and trays



Plastic bottles



Aerosols

**KEEP
THESE
OUT**



Food waste



Clothes and textiles



Nappies



**Electrical items
and batteries**



**Polystyrene, plastic
film and wrap**



**General rubbish
and black sacks**



LOVE
YOUR
NEIGHBOUR
HOOD



TOWER HAMLETS

TOWER HAMLETS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

You have the power
to improve your
neighbourhood.

Report issues and
track the latest
air quality, waste
collections,
road closures,
consultations
and events.

Download it now



or find it here



MAYOR OF
TOWER HAMLETS





Exploring Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets has something for everyone. It has a rich history. Explore some of the places listed here and find out about the discounts available to Tower Hamlets residents.

Museums are free; here are a few you can visit:

- *The V&A Museum of Childhood* near Bethnal Green tube is open every day. There are free activities for children of all ages. Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9PA
- *The Ragged School Museum* in Mile End is open on Wednesday, Thursday and on the first Sunday of every month from 2-5pm. It runs free family activities during school holidays such as art and craft sessions. 46-50 Copperfield Road, London E3 4RR
- *The Museum of London Docklands* is open daily. It looks at the history of the river Thames and the Docklands area. 150 London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN
- *The Tower of London* is near Tower

Hill tube/Tower Gateway DLR station. It is open every day. If you take an Idea Store card and can show you live in Tower Hamlets with a utility bill or bank statement, you only pay £1 to get in.



Entertainments & Arts

- *The Whitechapel Gallery* near Aldgate East tube runs art exhibitions and events. It has a café and is open every day. 77-82 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
- *The Genesis Cinema* in Mile End Road, E1 offers 2 tickets for the price of 1 for Idea Store members. Just show your Idea Store card and a form of ID when buying tickets. 93-95 Mile End Rd,



London E1 4UJ

- *Wilton's Music Hall* is the world's oldest surviving Grand Music Hall. Over 300 years it's evolved from Victorian sailors' pub to music hall. 1 Graces Alley, London E1 8JB
- *Half Moon Theatre*. 43 White Horse Road, London E1 0ND. 020 7265 9133
- *Rich Mix* cinema and cross-arts centre. 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA

Look at the local attraction section of the council's website to discover more places to explore.

Inner city farms

Explore the countryside whilst staying in the city! From farm animals to farmer's market, plants and wildlife garden, inner city farms are fun for the whole family.

- *Mudchute City Farm*, Pier Street, Isle Of Dogs, London E14 3HP
- *Stepney City Farm*, Stepney Way, Whitechapel, London E1 3DG
- *Spitalfields City Farm*, Buxton Street, London E1 5AR. 020 7247 8762

Let's go outside!

Tower Hamlets has many diverse and award-winning parks, gardens and open spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy. Here are a few.

- Weaver's Fields
- Island Gardens
- King Edward Memorial Park
- Altab Ali Park
- St George's Gardens
- Mile End Park
- Victoria Park.



Find out more and discover the adventure playgrounds in the borough by visiting the council website:

 www.towerhamlets.gov.uk



Community Centres and Hubs

Most areas have a local community centre or new Community Hubs where you can attend events and classes and get advice and support. They can also be a good place to meet people and make new friends. Check the council website for details.

Celebrations and events

Tower Hamlets has many cultural and religious celebrations throughout the year. Check out the arts and events section of the council's website.

You can also get married or have a civil partnership, other major life events – including births, deaths, marriages and becoming a UK citizen are also dealt with by the council at Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road, London E3 3AA



Your community

The Council funds several projects which bring different people together, celebrate their diverse backgrounds, support everyone to get involved in their community and help them enjoy equal opportunities. Examples include



nature-based or community art projects, local history projects, migrant women's citizenship project, and firework night. Others are disabled people's forum, LGBT Community Forum, human rights festival, and many more. Please contact us to get involved or find out more:

✉ cohesion@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Inter Faith Forum

The council supports the Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum. On their website you can find the information you need to practice your faith, religion or beliefs.

🌐 <https://www.faithintowerhamlets.org/>

LGBT

Tower Hamlets has its own LGBT Community Forum, which brings together LGBT+ people (and allies) who live, work, study or socialise in our borough. The forum is coordinated by ELOP and provides a safe space to discuss issues that affect the local and national LGBT community, and meet other local LGBT people for both networking and socialising.

🌐 <https://thlgbtvoices.wordpress.com/>

Disability groups

Local Voices is a long term project delivered by disabled people, for disabled people within Tower Hamlets, that gives disabled residents and people with long-term health conditions a say in how the council and other local services support them. Local Voices is an independent group, funded by Tower Hamlets Council, made up of disabled people from across the borough and is coordinated by REAL.

 https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community_and_living/equality_and_diversity/equalities_projects.aspx

Join your local Timebank community

Time bank provides a way for you to help others in your community and be rewarded for it in time. For every hour of time you give helping your local community you receive 1 time credit.

You can spend your time credits when you need help from someone else. You can share them or pass on to another person who needs some help.

All of us have something to offer and skills to share!

For more information, contact thccg.equiptowerhamlets@nhs.net
To sign up, visit the local Timebank website:

 <https://tol2.timebanking.org/towerhamlets/>



Practical tips



Mobile phone

There are many mobile phone network service providers and calling plans to choose from in the UK. You should read contracts closely and take the time to investigate your options. Check the rates for both UK and international calls when purchasing a plan as these can vary substantially.



Types of contracts include:

- Pay as you go
- Rolling contracts
- Pay monthly

You can find out a range of valuable information about being new to the UK on this link

 <https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/your-first-weeks/new-to-the-uk>

Keeping in touch with friends and family

If you still have friends and family and news from your country, the Idea Store has PressReader national and international newspapers, with over 2,000 titles from 100 countries in 60 languages to download.

Culture

Cultures and traditions can be very different. There are many websites which help you understand London and Tower Hamlets better. Idea Store learning offers The British Way of Life – a program to help asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to get used to living in the UK as quickly as possible. It covers many essential topics and subjects, with links to government, NHS and other useful websites to find out invaluable information to succeed in 'The British Way of Life' There are six information packed chapters and here are just a few of the subjects included in the program: Customs, Currency, Public Transport, Staying Safe, Local Medical Services, Finding



Work and the Right to Vote.
You can find more information
about Idea Stores in the Education
/Your Community



Register of (births, marriages and deaths)

You can also get married or get a civil partnership,

Other major life events - like births, deaths, marriages and becoming a UK citizen are also dealt with by the council

🏠 *Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road, London E3 3AA*

Learning English

Please see **Education**

Interpreters and translation

Everyone dealing with one of the services at the council who has communication barriers can access interpreting and translation services. Book an appointment with the council's interpreting team on ✉ **interpreting@towerhamlets.gov.uk**
More information can be found on the Council's website



🌐 **www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/advice_and_benefits/translating_and_interpreting_s.aspx**



Staying safe

Data Protection

Data is the information that is collected by organisations about you. For example, when you fill in a form. There are strict rules about how this information can be used. All organisations must make sure personal information is:

- accurate
- only collected if needed
- used fairly and lawfully
- stored securely so that others cannot see it
- not kept for longer than is necessary.

You have the right to:

- be told about how your data is being used
- see your personal data
- have incorrect data updated
- have data erased
- stop the processing of your data.

Adult safeguarding

What it means to be at risk

An adult at risk may be a person who:

- is frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment

has a learning disability, physical disability and/or a sensory impairment

- has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- has a long-term illness/condition misuses substances or alcohol
- is a carer such as a family member/friend who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to abuse is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support.



If you want to raise a concern, report the abuse of a vulnerable adult or find out more information, you can call the Assessment and Intervention Team on **020 7364 5000** or email **adultcare@towerhamlets.gov.uk**.



You can visit a local Idea Store or leisure centre for support in helping you report abuse.

To report it to the police please contact the Tower Hamlets Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub on ☎ **020 3276 3501** or email ✉ **towerhamlets MASH@met.police.uk**

Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Report Concerns

Concerns about children and young people

If you are worried or have concerns about a child or a young

person, who you think may be abused, neglected or harmed, please contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) at ☎ **020 7364 5601, 020 7364 5606**. The email address is ✉ **MASH@towerhamlets.gov.uk**



Concerns about a member of staff or volunteer

If you are concerned about an adult who works with or has direct contact with children in their place of work, either as a paid staff member or volunteer, please contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on ✉ **LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk**. You can also call ☎ **020 7364 0677** or **020 7364 5290**.



Hate crime

A hate crime is when someone commits a crime against you because of your disability, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, religion, or any other actual or perceived difference.

It doesn't just mean physical violence. Someone using offensive language towards you, or harassing you because of who you are (or who they think you are), is also a crime. Another example is someone posting abusive or offensive messages about you online.

☎ 020 7364 6120 / 6105

Tower Hamlets Hate Crime Team

☎ 020 8555 8254

Tower Hamlets Victim Support

Things to remember when calling after a crime:

- where you are, including the area or postcode
- the phone number you are calling from
- exactly what has happened

If you need medical help, tell them:

- the patient's age, gender and any medical history
- whether the patient is conscious (awake), breathing and if there is any serious bleeding or chest pain
- details of any injury and how it happened



Domestic abuse

If your partner, ex-partner or family member is making you scared or threatening you, this could be domestic abuse.

You can speak to someone face to face through the 'Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop' every Thursday from 9.30am-12.30pm at Idea Store

Whitechapel. (321 Whitechapel Road, E1 1BU)

You can speak to someone on the phone for emotional support, 24 hours a day:

 **0808 2000 247**

If you identify as lesbian, gay, bi, transexual or queer you can access specialist support around domestic abuse through Galop:

 **0800 9995428**

If someone has forced you to do something sexually that you didn't want to do or you have experienced any form of sexual abuse, you can access help through the East London Rape Crisis Centre:  **0207 683 1210**

If someone is trying to force you to marry someone and you don't want to, you can access advice through the Forced Marriage Unit:

 **020 7008 0151**

If you are a female and have experienced 'female genital mutilation' / 'female cutting' you can access support through the Women's Health and Family Services:

 **020 7377 8725**



If someone is stalking you, you can speak to someone for advice at the National Stalking Helpline:

 **0808 802 0300**

If you want to exit prostitution, you can access support through Door of Hope:

 **0845 0044231**



Emergency Services

Call

111 If you need urgent medical advice but it is not an emergency.

999 for police and emergency services (fire, ambulance and coastguard).

101 If you want to report a crime to the police but it is not an emergency.

You can also go into your local police station.

More information about **Staying Safe** inside.

