



# Victoria Park

North East Locality GP Network 5

9 August 2017

11 am-3:30 PM



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Healthwatch Tower Hamlets would like to thank all of the Healthwatch volunteers who helped to promote, organise and manage this event and all of the local residents who gave up their valuable time to participate.



## Glossary

**Tower Hamlets Together (THT)** is a partnership of local health and social care service providers that aim to provide more joined up, person centred services. It includes Tower Hamlets GP Care Group, Barts Health Trust, East London Foundation Trust, the local authority and the voluntary sector.

**NHS Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)** plan and fund (commission) most local health services.

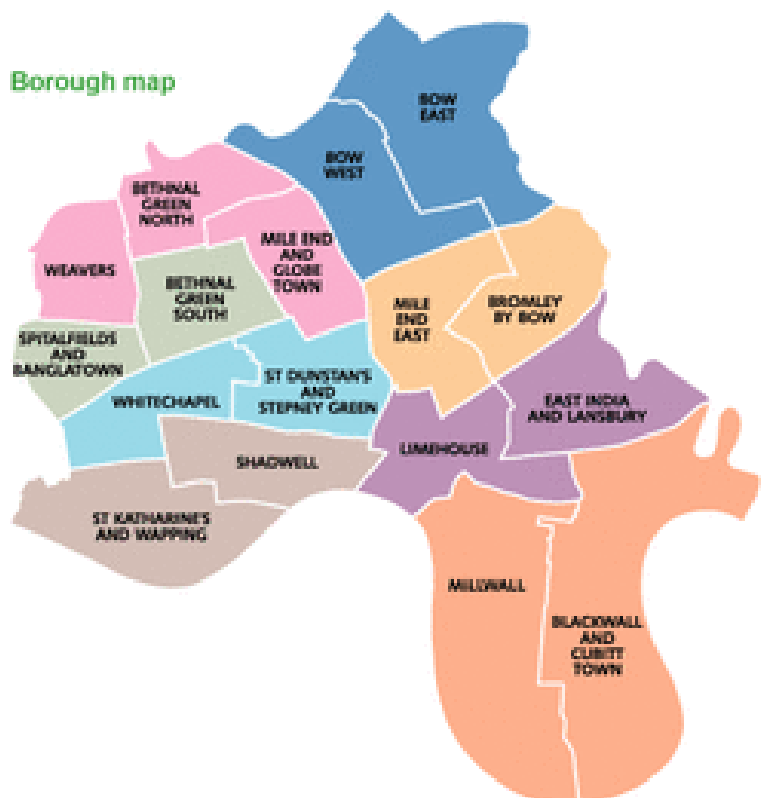
**The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities strategy** is developed by Tower Hamlets Council and Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group for children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities.

**The New Economics Foundation (NEF)** is a British think-tank that aims to help build a "new economy where people are really in control". The Foundation works in the areas of community development, democracy, and economics.

**Birthing centres and midwife-led units (MLU)** are run by midwives without the medical facilities of a hospital. They can be next to a main hospital maternity unit ('alongside') or completely separate from a hospital ('freestanding'). Tower Hamlets has a birthing centre alongside the maternity at the Royal London Hospital and a freestanding midwife-led unit at the Barkantine Practice.

**GP Networks** The GP Surgeries in Tower Hamlets and many local services are grouped into eight geographical network that then come together in pairs to form four Localities. Healthwatch Tower Hamlets aim to hold a Your Voice Counts event in each locality over the course of the year.

*This event was held in Network 5 which is Bow East and West.*



## About the event

### Aims

This event was part of a regular series of Your Voice Counts events managed by Healthwatch Tower Hamlets in partnership with the Health and Wellbeing Board. The aim of the events is to allow local people to:

- give their views on health and social care services in Tower Hamlets and how they could be improved;
- talk to a wide range of health and social care providers in one place and get involved in shaping local services;
- think about how they could improve their own health and that of their local community;

The events also aim to allow local organisations who provide health and wellbeing services to:

- work in partnership to engage with a wide range of local people across a range of issues and to share the intelligence they gather to improve services and respond to residents
- support community leadership to take joint actions on issues that affect their health and wellbeing;

Partners involved in the event at Victoria Park included:

- Tower Hamlets Together
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- Barts Health- Royal London Hospital maternity services
- Social Action for Health
- Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group

This is the fourth Your Voice Count Event with the previous three taking place at:

1. Harford Centre in Network 3 Whitechapel, St Dunstan's and Stepney Green;
2. Whitechapel Idea Store in Network 2 Spitalfields and Banglatown, Bethnal Green South.
3. Barkantine practice in Network 8 Millwall, Blackwall and Cubit town

### Location

The event took place on Wednesday 9 August April 2017 from 11:00 am - 3:30 pm in the Hub located near the play area of Victoria Park. This is in of the GP Network 5 Bow East and Bow West.

### Structure

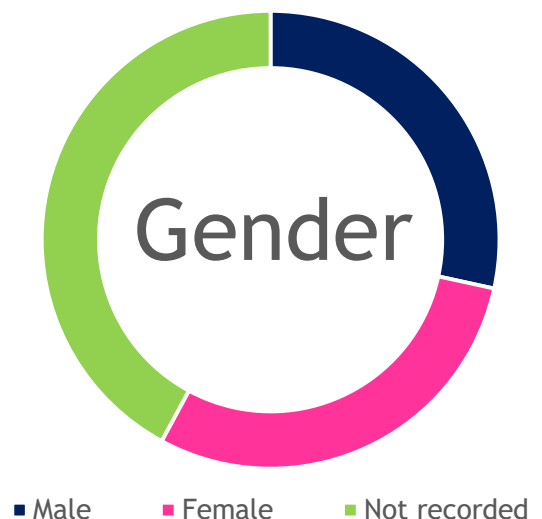
The event layout was designed to take participants on a journey around the room providing both adults and children with creative space to provide their thoughts and ideas in an as interactive manner as possible.

People were given a loyalty style card and given a short explanation on how to collect stamps by taking part in the various feedback stations around the room. When they had collected at least four stamps they were able to redeem their card for a goodie bag and an icecream.

### Participants

**97 people** took part in the event, including key stakeholders, children and adults from the community.

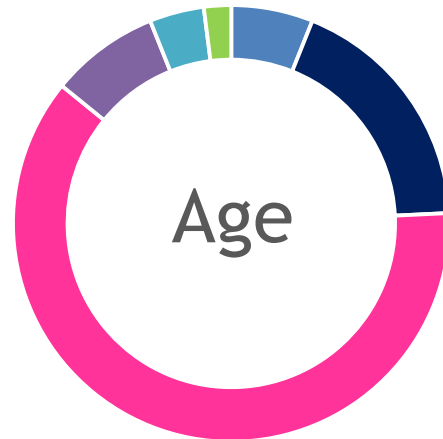
#### Demographics of participants







- White British
- Other White Background
- Asian: Indian
- Asian: Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Black: African
- Black: Carribean
- Mixed
- Any Other
- Not Stated



- Under 17
- 18-24
- 25-49
- 50-64
- 65-79
- Not Stated

## Public engagement activities

A series of activities were set with the aim of understanding more about how communities could drive change including more people:

- feeling in control of their health and informed to make positive changes
- supporting each other around their health and wellbeing
- taking joint action on issues that affect their health and wellbeing
- getting involved in shaping local services.



## Prioritising spending in the Borough

People were given a fake coin, £5, £10, and £20 and asked “if you were in charge of the health and social care budget in Tower Hamlets how would you spend it.” They fed the money through 12 labelled option slots in a box. They were not able to see where other people had spent their money.



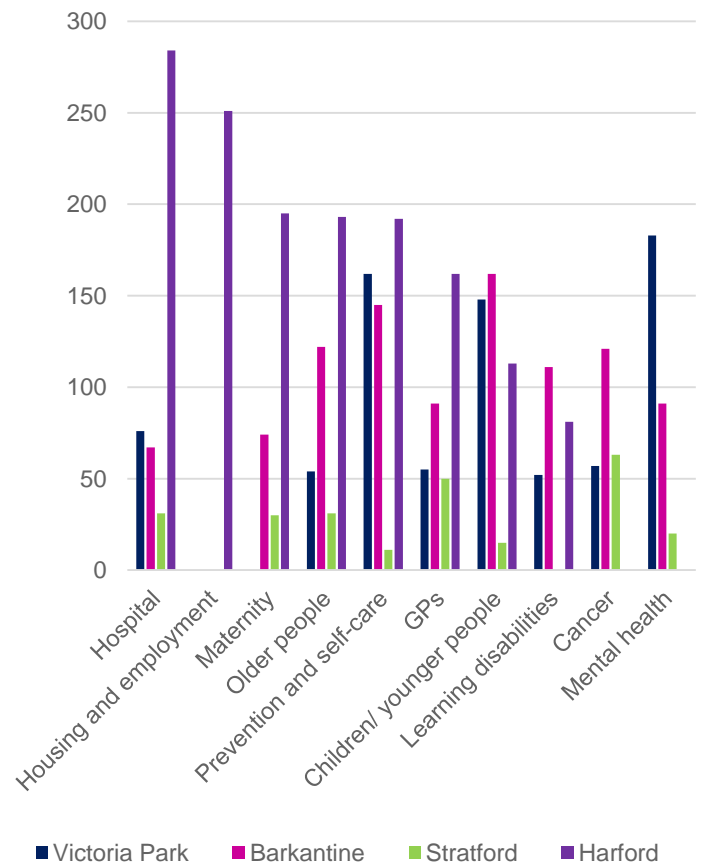
Mental health was of primary concern to participants, followed closely by prevention and self-care. In contrast, a “stronger community” was seen as less important, possibly because it has been perceived as a more abstract concept, not easily improved merely with financial contributions.

The same question has previously been asked at the Barkantine community event in April 2017 as well as at a Stratford based public meeting organised by Healthwatch Tower Hamlets to inform and gather the views of local people about the draft North East London



Sustainability and Transformation Plan (NEL STP). The same activity, with different categories, has been featured in the August 2016 Hartford Centre event.

Prevention and self-care, A&E and children/young people are overall the most prioritised areas of spending across the 4 events, although results vary significantly between events.



## Improving services for families and children

### Maternity and new parents services awareness

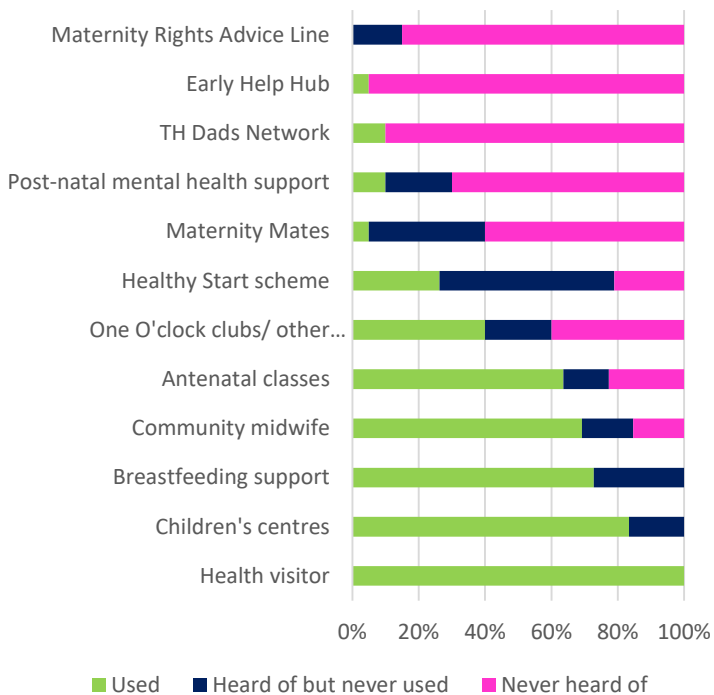
New parents were asked whether and where they have heard about a variety of health and social care services available to new and expecting parents in Tower Hamlets.

They were also asked if they have used any of those services and invited to give feedback on their experience.

They received information about services they did not know about.

In order to obtain more data, the same questionnaire has been circulated online to parents' groups in Tower hamlets. A total of **30 respondents** (28 mothers and 2 fathers) have answered it.

### Awareness and use of services



All respondents received visits from health visitors. All were aware of breastfeeding support services and children's centres in their area, and most of them used them.

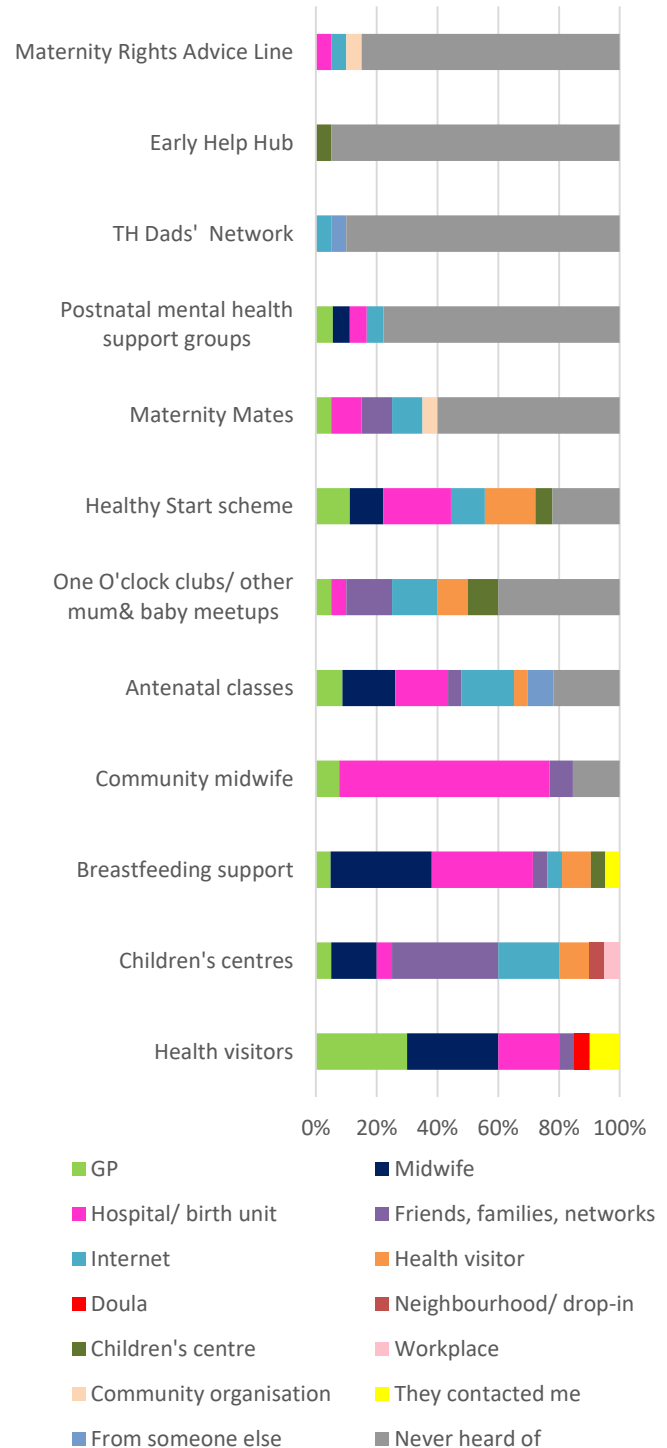
Most respondents were also aware of community midwives, antenatal classes offered by the Royal London Hospital or by community centres; and of meetups such as 1 o'clock clubs for mothers and babies.

Most respondents knew about the Healthy Start Scheme, but only five respondents used it

(possibly because only families under a certain income threshold qualify for it).

On the other hand, most respondents had never heard about post-natal mental health support groups in the borough, about the Early Help Hub, Tower Hamlets Dads' Network or Maternity Action's Maternity Rights Advice Line.

### Where respondents found out about services





Most respondents find out about postnatal community midwifery services upon discharge from hospital or birth unit. They are told about expecting health visitors either by their GP, their midwife or the hospital.

They typically learn about breastfeeding support services in their area either from their postnatal midwife or upon discharge from hospital or birth unit.

Health visitors also play a part in raising awareness of support schemes available to new parents on low incomes, such as the Healthy Start Scheme, and of local services such as children's centres, meetups, playgroups and breastfeeding support.

According to NHS Choices, postnatal depression is affecting more than 1 in every 10 women within a year of giving birth.

Experiencing postnatal depression can be an isolating experience, especially given the stigma against experiencing mental health issues in some communities. Post-natal mental health support groups have the potential of alleviating loneliness by offering mothers a safe, non-judgemental space to express and explore their feelings.

Many health visitors have been trained to recognise postnatal depression and have techniques that can help. They would be ideally placed to signpost women who show possible signs of depression to mental health support groups.

The Early Help Hub is a new children's and families service working closely with the Tower Hamlets Troubled Families programme, known as Strengthening Stronger Families. It provides a single point of reference for members of the public and professionals in need of advice, support or intervention. It is particularly useful to support vulnerable children and young people who do not reach the threshold for statutory services.

Health visitors, children's centres and GP's could identify relevant service users to promote the Hub to.

Tower Hamlets Dads' Network supports and encourages dads and male carers to strengthen relationships with their children through positive parenting and play.

The Network provides opportunities for dads and other male carers to join their children in free activities and have fun and learn together.

Children's centre could advertise Tower Hamlets Dads' Network more or host and promote the Network's events and activities. An online campaign targeting fathers of young children could also significantly increase awareness.

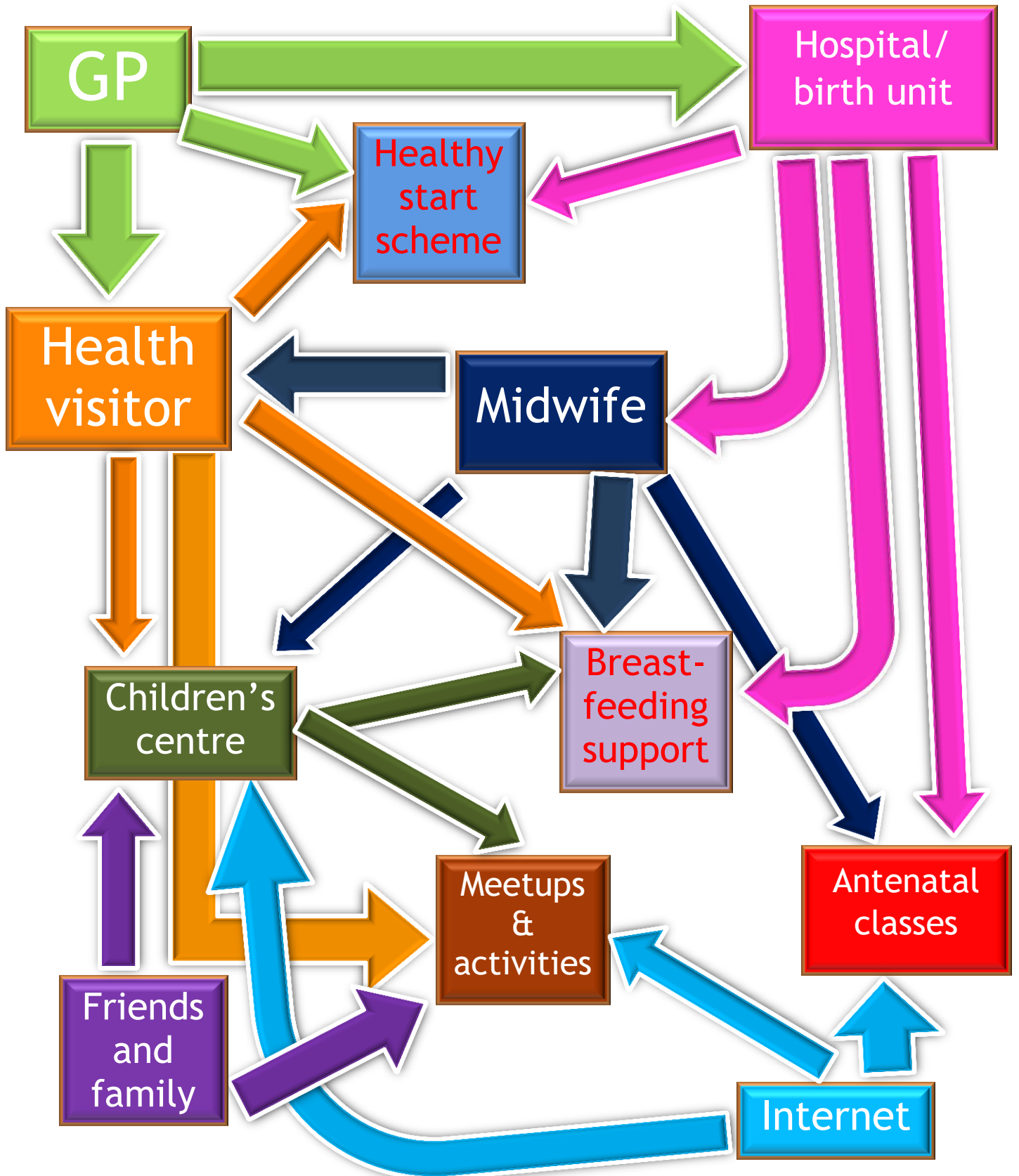
The Maternity Rights Advice Line, provided by the charity Maternity Action, offers advice and signposting to mothers about their rights in the workplace, maternity leave entitlements and returning to work after parental leave.

Such a service could be promoted by children's centres, community organisations and online parents' groups.





Information mindmap: how do Tower Hamlets parents find out about relevant services?



## Respondents' experience of services for new and expectant parents

### Children's centres

Service users are generally happy with children's centres, and see them as a valuable community resource.

Recent service cuts have put some pressure on the service provision, which is noticed and

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● Liked: friendly staff, good place to meet other parents. Baby massage class.  
Dislike: timetables are confusing.

● Some of the staff are great, others not so much.... activities for babies. Music and singing are fab

● They're fantastic, I just wish they hadn't cut all of the stay and plays. These were a lifeline for me with 6-month-old twins and a 2-year-old daughter.

● Children services are really good they need to have different activities  
midwives at centre have not helped me

● I went along to a number of the local centres (ocean/john smith and Wapping). We received excellent post birth care from the local midwives and breastfeeding support team and some great recommendations for classes such as baby sensory and baby massage. The staff in the centres are excellent, as a first-time mum new(ish) to the area I felt welcomed and supported. Sad to see the effect funding cuts have had on many of the classes we enjoy. They provide an invaluable service to families in this area.

● We enjoyed selection of toys but disliked that the services were recently cut down

● Learn a lot as a first-time mum from classes and baby loved baby rhyme time. It's a shame Wapping children centre is now closed

● Family feel, felt connected and encouraged.

● Absolutely loved our cc. A lifeline as a new parent for meeting other parents and hence making friends for our children as we all attended regularly and spent time together over many years both at cc and outside. Only negative is the reduction in sessions. My second son will miss out so much!

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commented upon by some respondents.

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● The materials and variety of activities are great. The timings and organisation is poor. Many times I went to a scheduled activity and it was cancelled.

● Fab! Lots of space, lovely workers, able to do bigger/messier activities than possible at home, nice to meet other mums particularly from different social groups

● They are great. I have two babies 18 months apart and found some staff weren't very helpful when I was struggling with both of them. The other mums were much more helpful. It would be great if they could offer a hand if they see you struggling.

● Children's centre- very good

● Love the children's centres - it's a shame a lot of the classes have been cut or are very oversubscribed

● I love the children's centres, helped us with our child's speech delay, and just supported us when we were new parents in terms of answering everyday 'is this normal' type questions especially around play and development.

### Antenatal classes

Service users generally comment positively on antenatal classes, but have limited knowledge of their availability. Not all classes are convenient for parents who work or have multiple caring responsibilities.

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● Class was ok but I was unable to bring older children so actually not very convenient

● NHS ante natal class and breast-feeding support very useful. Other classes - yoga etc not easy to find out about and mostly during standard working hours so not useful.

● I only go to private antenatal classes, so the drawback is the price. It's also hard to find out about other antenatal classes

● Breastfeeding support was great- free Pilates class is brilliant

## Breastfeeding support

Most respondents highly praise Tower Hamlets breastfeeding support services. Breastfeeding support workers often offer valuable childcare advice beyond their basic remit.

- Breastfeeding support was very helpful.
- Wonderful breastfeeding support. Someone even called me up and offered to show me how to bathe my first son. Just amazing we are so lucky to have these services
- Only used breastfeeding support group which was great
- Breastfeeding support was fantastic and saved me from giving up
- Fantastic! the lady come out to my house within 48 hours and offered lots of practice support and assistance
- Home visits in early weeks very vital. Breast feeding support groups are useful place to meet other new mums
- Jaundiced sleepy baby who I struggled to feed for the first few days, going along to the group led to me successfully breastfeeding my son for over a year. Their support was incredible.
- Loved it!
- Great! I had a really bad start with breastfeeding so the help I got was extremely helpful
- Very patient worker who stayed beyond her timetabled hours to help me.
- When it was just breastfeeding support it was great and much needed with my first, now it is just feeding, with my second it doesnt feel as helpful
- The breastfeeding support is excellent, I had help when I started feeding all 3 of my babies and when my youngest had a tongue-tie.
- 5 days after leaving hospital, breastfeeding not working out so well i went along to the local breastfeeding group. I would have in all likelihood given up at that point had it not been for tgeir support and advice. Followed up by a phone call from their team and a friendly chat

## Community midwives

Community midwives receive generally positive comments, being seen as competent and supportive.

- My community midwife Mavis was amazing (both times). Antenatally I had a hit and miss experience at clinic at RLH, some rude and patronising, some lovely and couldn't do enough for you .For my planned c section all the midwives were great, especially the supervisor of midwives who was very supportive post my first birth. Best of all was my student midwife Hannah, who was amazing start to finish!
- We had a visit from the local midwife (Grace from the ocean centre, wonderful lady) a few days after getting home. She answered all of my questions and reccomended lots of local services.
- Good service
- Well organised, came to my home.
- Great- good to have a home visit in the v early days when hard to get out
- It took our newborn twins a long time to get up to our birth weight so we had to go back to the barkantine a lot. If they could have visited us at home this would have been much easier. Also they kept sending us to a&e where we waited around a lot and the doctors there clearly weren't worried. Otherwise the support was great.

## Health visitors

Most comments about health visitors are positive and the service is seen as highly valuable. A minority of service users feel dissatisfied with advice received from their health visitors.

- Useful place to get information and ask about any concerns
- Amazing, wouldn't have got through early days without her
- The main HV at our surgery is excellent. I have been given some questionable advice by some of the others, one told me to stop breastfeeding my daughter at 4 months for no reason (I ignored her). Another gave me a lecture about letting my daughter eat the pips in watermelons.
- Still waiting for my health visitor to get back to me she always put me off
- Fantastic service, the health visitors were amazing and answered loads of questions we had.
- Local health visitors (Wapping) have been excellent, friendly and approachable
- My health visitor is amazing and always available and very supportive
- Love my Wapping health visitors always



there to help me

- Very helpful and well organised
- Love our hv! So much advice and supporter given they are a blessing
- They have always been late to get to me (after two weeks with both babies) some are great, others only know what's in the text book and have given me information I know is incorrect hence me not trusting their services
- The health visitor never seems to know how to help me out and the advice is dubious at times. She doesn't seem to have good knowledge.

### Mental health support groups

- Used counselling services. Another brilliant service which has been invaluable.
- very good and helpful service

### One O' clock clubs/ parents & babies meetups

- Nice relaxing place to meet other mums. Stimulating environment for my baby. Lovely toys
- Great activities
- Enjoy it regularly
- Stops feelings of loneliness or isolation or frustration at being inside.
- As I said before these are a real like line to new parents. The cuts to the sessions are so disappointing

### Healthy Start Scheme

- Ok, I got free vitamin drops
- Helpful to get free vitamins and really liked the cook for life course
- I used it to get vitamins for myself and my child. Getting them is a pain as the health visitor often runs out
- Thanks for the vitamins! Can be hard to find places that stock them though



## Maternity Information

Royal London Hospital midwives teamed up with representatives of Social Action for Health, Maternity Mates, Community Parents and Healthwatch Tower Hamlets to promote services for expectant and new parents available in Tower Hamlets; including maternity, birthing centres, breastfeeding support, peer support groups, antenatal and postnatal classes and social activities.

The midwives from Royal London Maternity also displayed information about recent changes and improvements that had been made at the service recently. These include opening the new Lotus Birth Centre which is an co-located midwifery led unit aimed at low-risk mothers, situated in the 8th floor of Royal London.

Here is a recent comment from a mother who used the new birth centre:'

- *Was amazed with the level of care and attention provided by the unit nurses and midwives. The midwives and nurses were my support throughout the birth and postnatal care. I cannot fault a single midwife/nurse, every single one had provided an excellent level service, no question or request from myself was disregarded by any member of staff. all members of staff were always happy to help whatever the time of day. My family and friends had been present at various different points of birth and afterbirth and identified the same quality within the members of staff. I felt like I had received private care. Not the usual 'NHS' service, as some may say. A huge thank you to all staff including maintenance and dinner service staff.'*

Other changes in the unit include a new pathway of outpatient induction of labour for low-risk women at Lotus Birth Centre instead of the obstetric unit, and a new dedicated caesarean section team aimed at minimising delays and improving the care experience for families.

Partners are now welcome to stay overnight on the postnatal ward to provide more support for women and enable closer bonding as a family, and staff wellbeing is being supported by Wellbeing Works Initiative.

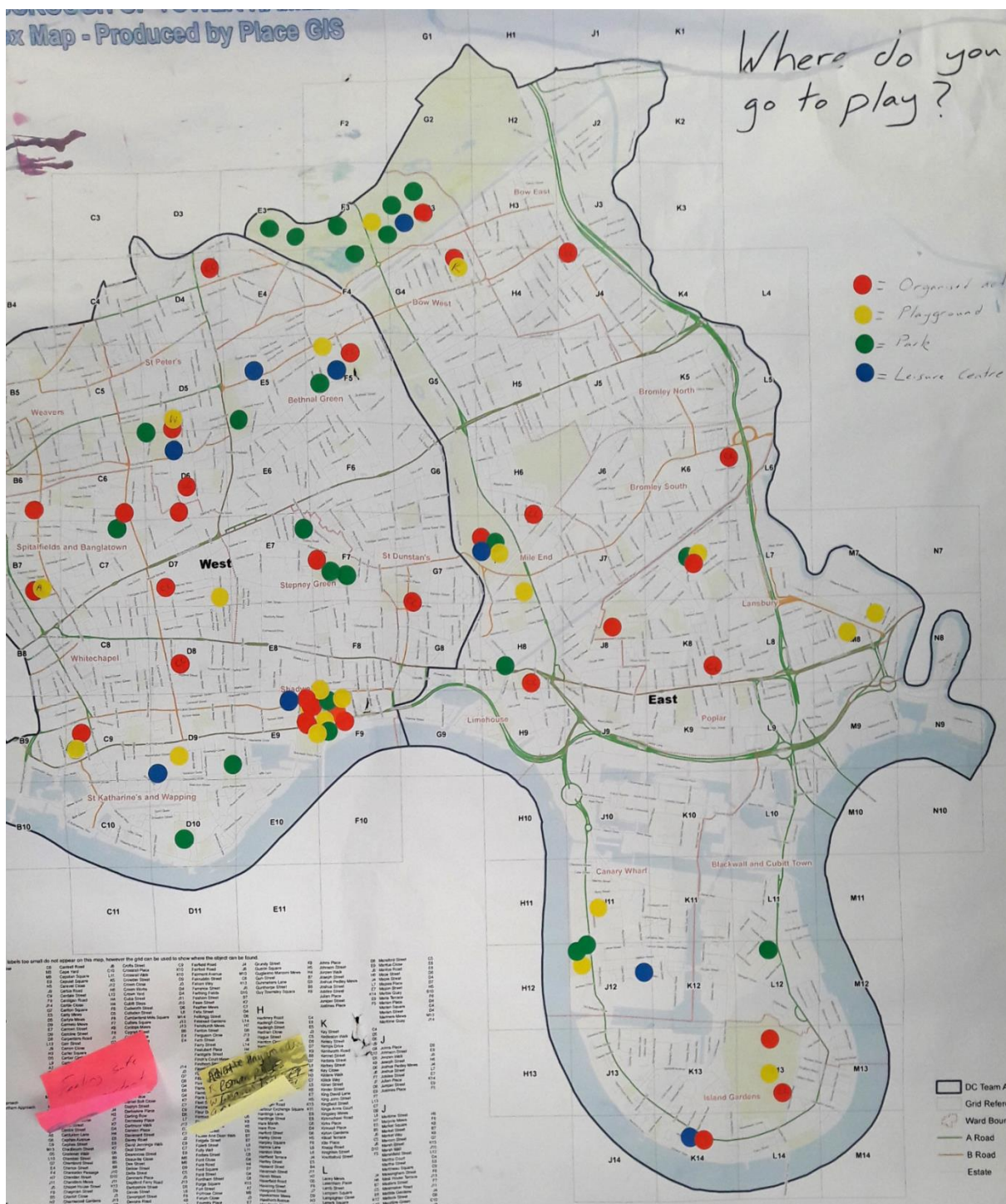
These and many other changes are a result of 'Listening into Action' Improvement conversations that have taken place for the postnatal ward and labour ward, as well as responding to feedback from families gathered

through 'iWantGreat Care' feedback system that enables families to provide comments about their care at all stages of their maternity journey from antenatal clinic to postnatal visits. The aim was to create more awareness of the 'iWGC' system and actively encourage more users to give regular feedback.

The midwives also showcased information about the Barkantine Birth Centre situated on the Isle of Dogs, and plans to build a new dedicated homebirth team which is currently recruiting



## Play Strategy - Where do you like to play?



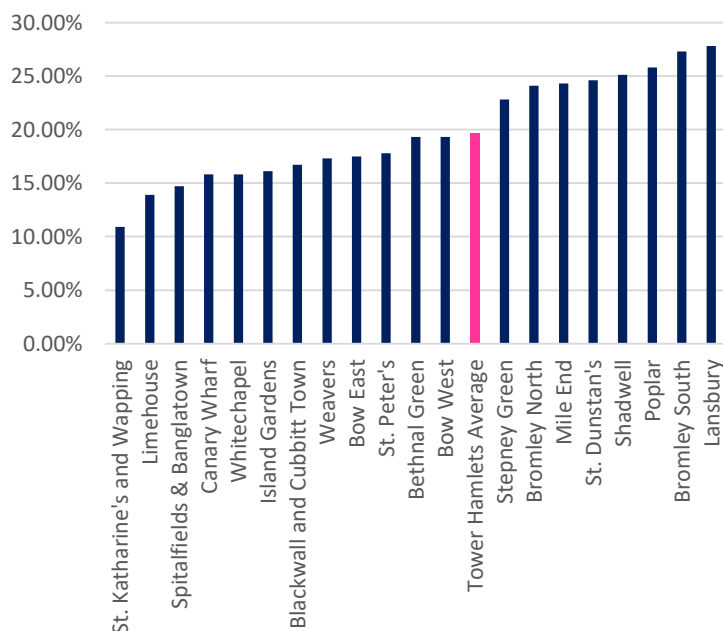


Play areas used by the children who attended were clustered around the *King Edward Memorial Park/ Shadwell Basin, Victoria Park, Stepney Green and Mile End Park.*

The neighbourhoods on the West of the borough (particularly the areas of *Bethnal Green, Spitalfields& Banglatown, St Katherine’s and Wapping*) are better-served by playgrounds, leisure centres and green spaces. On the other hand, the East of the borough appears to have less play spaces, particularly the areas around Bromley-by-Bow, Poplar and Blackwall.

Examining 2014 census data, we can see that the wards with the highest concentration of play areas are not necessarily the ones where the most children live.

% of the population aged 0-15



Wards such as *St Katharine’s and Wapping or Spitalfields and Banglatown* have a large number of play areas despite housing a relatively small number of children. On the other hand, wards such as Bromley North, Bromley South, Poplar and Lansbury have a higher concentration of children but less play areas. It is also noteworthy that the same wards are among the most deprived in the borough. This highlights the inequality of public resources between families in the borough.

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets has suggested to the Health and Well-being Board the possibility of a **borough-wide walking campaign.**

In April 2017, as part of our Barkantine Practice locality event, we have asked people “**What would get you walking in Tower Hamlets?**”.

As a result of this activity, we found that:

- ❖ Tower Hamlets residents think of walking as a leisure activity. They are unlikely to walk to work or appointments, but more likely to walk for pleasure- either for the enjoyment of walking/ being outdoors in green space itself, or in order to visit local attractions and amenities such as museums, shopping malls, cafes/ restaurants or community events.
- ❖ Respondents did not think of walking as a solitary activity; they prefer walking with family members, children or friends.
- ❖ Especially for families with children, a weekly family outing travelling by foot to local amenities or community events can be a good occasion to walk.





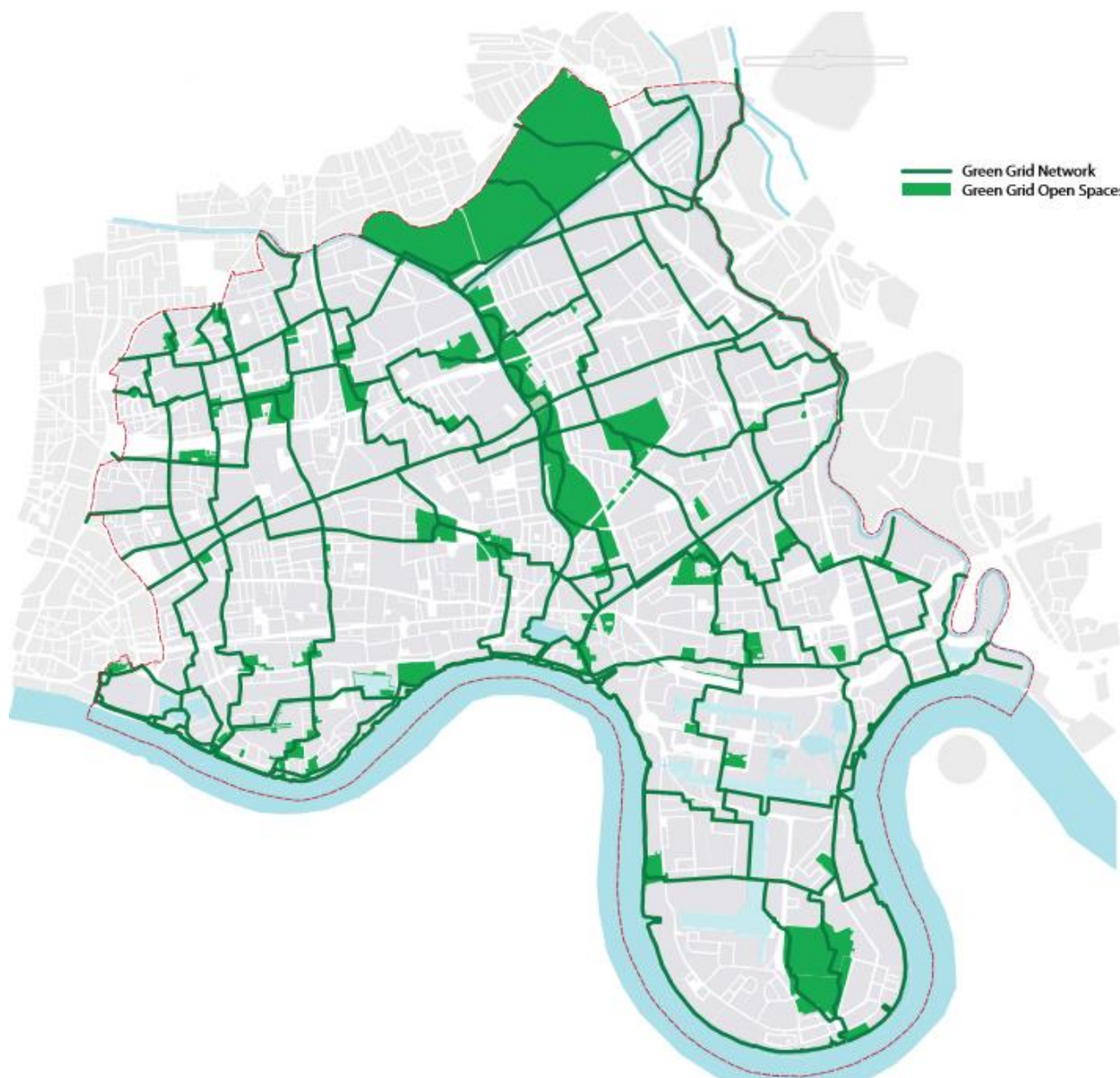
The present activity offers further insight into how residents, including children and their parents, could be motivated to walk.

Parks, natural areas and the canal/ waterfront were the top locations mentioned by Barkantine respondents as good places for walking. The present play map shows clusters of play areas connected through easy and pleasant walking paths:

- ❖ Victoria Park and Mile End park are connected through their green spaces. Between the Wick Road entrance to Victoria Park and the Burdett Road corner of Mile End Park, up to 2.4 miles could be walked using only footpaths within the parks; along which many playgrounds and children's attractions could be found.

- ❖ Bethnal Green, where the York Hall leisure centre is located, is a 10 minutes' walk from Victoria Park, using Green Grid paths.
- ❖ Stepney Green is within easy walking distance to mile End Park.
- ❖ Green Grid Paths (including near the canalside) connect Mile Ed Park and Victoria Park to the Thames bank and the Shadwell area.

There are walking paths all along the Thames Bank; playgrounds and other play areas can also be found along the bank between St Katharine and Blackwall.



## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy

Key headlines from the recent SEND consultation were shown to participants; who were then asked for their opinion on what they believe works well and what could be improved. They were also encouraged to give general feedback on SEND services.



### What respondents think works well

It is important for children with SEND to spend time with children who do not have SEND. At school, children with SEND spend half the day with full class and then go into specialised send SEND sessions

### Diagnosis and provision

Earlier diagnosis is needed as when children are diagnosed late, they are even further behind

Need more support for families and carers during the transition period

Families and children/YP with SEND need support and advice around sexual health and sexuality

### Flexibility of services

Services should listen to parents more as they know what is best for their child

People have to fit into services, services do not seem to fit around people

### Information

It is hard to get clear information about all of the different services and assessments and you often just get passed from one person to the next. It can be very confusing

It would be good to know how all of the feedback we give to SEND services is being used

## What could be improved

### Avoiding segregation

There needs to be more of a focus on integrating SEND children with the mainstream population

### GP surgeries

GP's need to be more accommodating of children and parents with SEND as the waiting room and appointment process can be inflexible and difficult for children with special needs

Extra support for parents of children with SEND to go to the GP, as often their caring responsibilities can prevent them from looking after their own health

### Prevention

Need to raise awareness among local people of what factors might contribute to having a child with SEND. Ask patient panels for advice on how best to do this

Utilise mosques and other cultural community groups to raise awareness of some of the risk factors and potentials causes of SEND

## Conclusions and recommendations

Schools are praised by respondents for supporting children with SEND to integrate and avoiding segregation. The rest of public services don't necessarily have the same level of awareness or policies in place. Services (including GPs) need to be more flexible around the needs of children with SEND.

Better support is needed for carers of children with SEND, who may neglect their own health and well-being because of their caring responsibilities.

There is interest among Tower Hamlets residents for a public health campaign for the prevention and early diagnosis of SEND.

There is interest in better information on sexual health and sexuality for young people with SEND. It could be the case that public health campaigns neglect to engage with them because they are assumed to not be sexually active, based on broad generalisations and stereotypes.

## Building a holistic approach to health and social services in Tower Hamlets

### Activity 6: Understanding what a good Tower Hamlets Together (THT) partnership means to local people

Tower Hamlets Together asked event participants the question:

**If all of the partners worked better together, what would it mean to you?**

People were provided with post-it notes to attach to a large piece of flipchart paper.



*Respondents expected that better working together would lead to:*

Improved quality of services (3 mentions)

Greater continuity between services (1 mention)

Greater accountability (2 mentions)

Better outcomes for families (1 mention)

Happier parents and kids (1 mention)

More accessible services (1 mention)

**Better and more accountable services**

**Better communications and improved**

Better communication between services (3 mentions)

Sharing of information, knowledge, data and best practice between services (2 mentions)

Staff will be more aware of other services' existence, how to get in touch & any changes to them (3 mentions)

Easier for public to access information / better communication with residents / less confusion (3 mentions)

access to information

**Improved efficiency and streamlining**

Less duplication of service (3 mentions)

Better use of funds (2 mentions)

Multiple services having access to patient information- patient only needs to submit the same information once (5 mentions)

Less bureaucracy (1 mention)

More integrated services (2 mentions)

Faster, smoother referrals (2 mentions)

**Improved sense of community**

Stronger community (2 mentions)

Services would be more inclusive and diverse (2 mentions)

Shared goals (1 mention)

Joint vision (1 mention)

**Empowerment**

People feeling more empowered to make decisions (2 mentions)

Confident service users (1 mention)

## Conclusions and recommendations

Service users' vision of a well-functioning partnership entails an **efficient, easy to use and inclusive service**.

Respondents are in favour of a **hub model**, where their information and records are shared between service providers, without them having to provide the information more than once.

According to respondents, this type of streamlined hub mode; would lead to better services with improved continuity, to better communications between the public and service providers as well as among providers; and to easier, faster referrals.





## Activity 7: What matters to you in your community? New Economics Foundation and Tower Hamlets Together

**How do we know we are doing the right thing?**

**Developing outcomes that mean something to local people**

Tower Hamlets Together (THT), the local partnership working to improve the integration of health and social care, is keen to establish better ways of checking services are delivering the things residents want. Local people have been asked ‘how do we know health and social care is working well?’ This has resulted in the development of a set of outcomes which outlines what people would say after they have used THT services:

<b>Around me</b>	I feel safe from harm in my community
	I play an active part in my community
	I am able to breathe cleaner air in the place where I live
	I am able to support myself and my family financially
	I am supported to make healthy choices
	I am satisfied with my home and where I live
	My children get the best possible start in life
<b>My doctors, nurses, social workers and other staff</b>	I am confident that those providing my care are competent, happy and kind
	I am able to access the services I need, to a safe and high quality
	I want to see money is being spent in the best way to deliver local services
	I feel like services work together to provide me with good care

<b>Me</b>	It is likely I will live a long, healthy life
	I have a good level of happiness and wellbeing
	Regardless of who I am, I am able to access care services for my physical and mental health
	Regardless of who I am, I am able to access care services for my physical and mental health
	I am supported to live the life I want

At the ‘Your Voice Counts’ event on 9 August, on behalf of THT, the New Economics Foundation interviewed the people attending about what mattered to them and what they value in Tower Hamlets.

The following key messages emerged:

- Residents stated there is a strong **community spirit** in Tower Hamlets where people look out for each other.
- Many mentioned **diversity** as something that mattered to them and enriched their lives through learning about new cultures and new ideas.
- Almost all see the **parks, leisure activities and children's services, where free activities are offered to children, as important**. Affordable or free activities help build the confidence of their children. They also felt that having the opportunity to get out of the house and go to the parks, on their own or with others, improved their mental health and strengthened their relationships with family and friends.

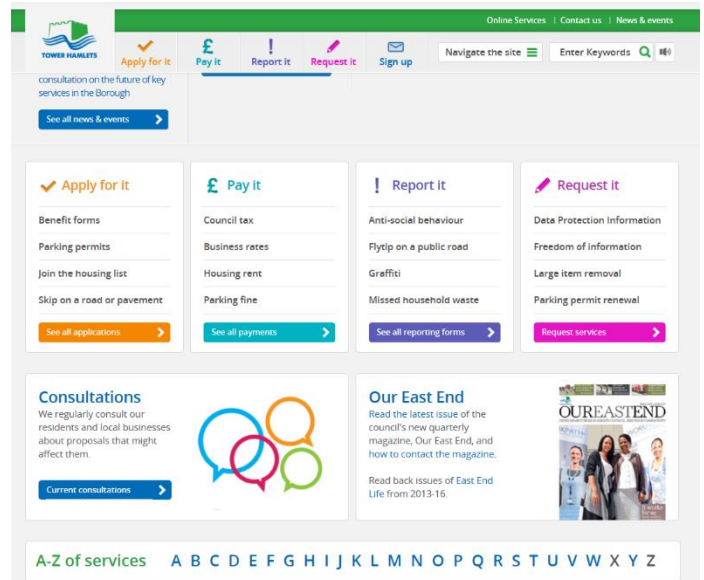
This feedback will help drive the next stage of the outcomes development under the banner of ‘measuring what matters’. THT will therefore continue to work with Healthwatch to get this right by listening to what residents have to say.

## Public facing portal, Looking Local and Community Health Services

'How can we find out about the right services and best support?' or 'If only I'd known about that before now I would have been able to help myself' are only two of the most frequent comments made by local people. The search for the right information therefore unites both staff and residents – but is often easier 'to say' than 'to do'.

Tower Hamlets Together is keen to develop an effective 'public-facing portal' for the use of both professionals and the public. The August 'Your Voice Counts' event was a great opportunity to meet local residents and get their views about the best ways to design a 'Single Point of Access' portal. Looking Local is working on the model and showcased several options, asking residents to fill out a quick online survey to gauge their opinions around the layout, content and functionality of the forthcoming web portal. A range of design ideas have been floated but the public feedback has helped shaped the most effective.

There will be further news about the next steps in the coming months – not least a more friendly name – but being part of 'Your Voice Counts' proved important in getting them right.





## General feedback on Health and Social Care Services

Our volunteers have engaged with attendees on their experience with health and social care.

### Royal London Hospital

- Good experience in A&E, good care.
- I was admitted to the Royal London (by ambulance) after breaking my leg. 3 days later I was fitted with a frame on my leg, stayed in for 5 days following the op, and regularly attend the fracture clinic since. The treatment on the ward was good, attentive but on many occasions the nurses seem too busy to respond.

### St. Bartholomew's hospital

- I attended the chest pain clinic after experiencing severe breathlessness, and despite my G.P asking for an "urgent" appointment it was 5 weeks before I was given one! The service was excellent in general, eventually in August I went into hospital to have a pacemaker fitted. My experience on the ward was generally good, but it was impossible to get speedy attention. One occasion when I was experiencing severe discomfort, a nurse said she'd deal with it, but I had to remind her twice before she attended to my need over an hour later!

There's clearly a major shortage of staff (which healthwatch cannot do anything about!) but the motivation of existing staff can be poor, and I often see nurses chatting and laughing with each other when they could (and should) have been attending to, or chatting to patients.



### The Barkantine Birthing Unit

- My daughter went to Barkantine practice to give birth:
  - fantastic receptionist, we thought she was the midwife at first- she was very supportive throughout.
  - The rooms were very good; my daughter would recommend it.
  - She has a bit of meconium and we were worried- so she got transferred at the Royal London. Wish we had had the Lotus Birthing Centre available- maybe there she could have had someone check on her without moving her.

## General Feedback on Event

Here is what members of the community have said about our event

- It's a very good opportunity event for networking with the local in health services. [ You should have a bigger] venue as it's getting crowded easily. Excellent!

