

# Providing excellent community and primary care in partnership with others

## Tower Hamlets 0-19 Service - Health Visiting & Maternal Early Childhood Home-Visiting Programme (MECSH)

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The health visiting service in Tower Hamlets is a vital component of the universal 0-19 Service focusing on providing comprehensive support and care to families with young children from pre-birth to 5. The service offers a range of services and interventions aimed at ensuring that children have the best possible start in life and families receive the support they need.

While all families in Tower Hamlets receive health visiting services as set out in the Healthy Child Programme (2009/2021), the MECSH home visiting programme is offered to families who would benefit from extra support. The programme offers a series of structured home visits to mothers and their babies by a health visitor. The aim of this extra support is to promote maternal and child emotional and social wellbeing and to assist parents to interact in ways that support their children's development.

### How do we support primary care?

Collaboration and coordination to provide holistic care to families and children is central to the health visiting service in Tower Hamlets. Health visitors and primary care practitioners maintain regular communication and have good systems in place to facilitate referrals within each service. A new GP multidisciplinary team (MDT) process was recently implemented in Tower Hamlets to strengthen the communication systems already in place to ensure an improved, safer service for children and families.

MDT guidance co-produced between Locality Health Visiting teams, NEL-named GPs for Safeguarding Children, GP Care Group Safeguarding Children Team, Director of 0-19 Services and the Director of Operations 0-19 and the Named Midwife for Safeguarding Children at Royal London Hospital set out the minimum requirements of monthly MDT meetings with a standardised agenda and ensures that each practice has a link health visitor.

## What do our residents say?



## Innovative highlights from the service

### Specialist health visitor for refugees and asylum seekers

Since 2020 a dedicated health visitor has been supporting the under-5 refugee and asylum seeker population and their families in Tower Hamlets.

Refugees and asylum seekers, including many pregnant women and children are frequently placed by the Home Office in initial and dispersed accommodation across the borough. These families often have a variety of vulnerabilities and complex health needs.

The Health Visitor has established close working relationships with partners from Primary Care, the Home Office, the Community Voluntary Sector and the Early Help Team and regularly goes above and beyond to ensure that those families receive the support they need.

### Education and Development

The health visiting service in Tower Hamlets provides extensive opportunities for the growth and development of our staff, while also supporting student nurse placements and facilitating the training of new health visitors. We have a celebrated partnership with City University of London, which recognised our commitment to the future NHS workforce at an award ceremony in 2022.

## Digital Transformation

### The eRedbook

We are proud to endorse the digital upgrade of the traditional paper red book, given to parents following the birth of their child. Now known as an eRedbook, parents access and store antenatal information, their child's key health and development milestones as well as any identified health and care issues, via a couple of clicks.

Free to use, the eRedbook gives greater control to parents allowing them to receive timely information and work with health professionals in a collaborative partnership.

### Health for Under 5s

In April 2023, the Health Visiting services in Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest started a partnership with Health for Under 5s, a digital platform developed by professionals working for Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust. The partnership refers to a dedicated local area section on the website which includes Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest local information and a service finder by postcode.

This website has been produced specifically for prospective parents as well as parents and carers of children from 0-5 years. It contains information to support them during those initial formative years.

All content has been produced by health visitors and a range of other health and wellbeing experts. Parents, carers and families have been actively involved in developing all aspects of this website. Involving service users in campaigns, further development and content helps make sure it reflects what is important to them.

The content published on this website is evidence-based health information in line with NHS standards, including NICE Guidelines.

## Population served

Health Visiting is a universal service from pre-birth to age 5, all families with children under 5 living in Tower Hamlets are automatically referred to the service in pregnancy or when they move to the borough.

