

Dear families,

I hope that this letter finds you well.

I wanted to reach out to you with some very important information and a plea for your support.

I am extremely proud to lead a Newham Children's Centre here at Rebecca Cheetham Children's Centre. I have seen first hand how the use of our services have a tremendous impact on our families. It is very humbling that a familiar piece of feedback that we regularly receive from our families over the years has been, "You have been a lifeline". Personally, I have been blessed to be able to utilise such services as a parent looking to build a support network and give my child a safe space to explore and take those first steps to becoming a social being, so necessary for their development.

Unfortunately, this wonderful resource is being threatened by budget cuts amidst Newham council's need to reduce spending, as outlined in the recent Cabinet Agenda on Tuesday 15th October 2024 (<https://mgov.newham.gov.uk/documents/b34711/Supplementary%20Agenda%20Finance%20Papers%2015th-Oct-2024%2010.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=9>) on page 102 and then more detail on pages 142-145:

***"Redesign and reconfigure Children's Centre provision in the borough to achieve scalable budget reductions of 33% to 75%."*** page 102

***"There are three different models proposed:***

***Proposal 1: is a reduction from 12 children's centres to 8. (Hosting one in each community neighbourhood and two per Family Hub locality)***

***Proposal 2: is a reduction from 12 children's centres to 4. (Hosting one in each Family Hub locality)***

***Proposal 3: is the closure of all 12 children's centres."*** page 143

Whilst we understand the need to consider the dire financial situation the council finds itself in, deep consideration needs to be made to slashing funds for Early Years services when research clearly informs us that to not invest in our youngest children means overspending as they move towards adulthood; "the Heckman Curve shows that the highest rate of economic returns comes from the earliest investments in children ... society invests too much money in later development when it is often too late to provide great value. It shows the economic benefits of investing early and building skill upon skill to provide greater success to more children and greater productivity and reduce social spending for society."

<https://heckmanequation.org/resource/the-heckman-curve/>



There are many significant things to consider if services are reduced or removed but I thought it useful to provide you with a few things to consider:

- Children's Centres are the necessary eyes on our under two year olds and those children that do not access nursery provision - our expert and experienced teams lead on early identification supporting those children with SEND and helping those children and their families get the support necessary in preparation for Primary School. Schemes like EPATs and Little Talkers are run in our children's centres currently with great success.
- Children's centre universal services also support families in relation to supporting play opportunities and helping parents understand children's development. They act as a support network for families to make connections with one another when there it can feel like there is so much disconnect in the borough and so many families that don't have family around to support them. Without these services, social care cases are likely to rise as will adult mental health concerns leading to increased pressure on other services in the borough.
- Our children's centres do a significant job in supporting families with a social care need. Our expert Family Support Workers and managers bridge the gap between universal services and social care and have a significant impact in ensuring that families do not move beyond Early Help.
- Children's Centres give children wonderful opportunities to grow their early development, opportunities to play and socialise and a safe space for parents to get practical and supportive guidance on parenting and childhood development.
- Our family support workers attend our stay and play services and become a familiar face for vulnerable families and someone to turn to in contrast to unknown outside agencies. This support is offered in a timely manner which is not afforded in Early Help. Our surveys tell us that many families say that children's centres have been a "lifeline". Moving family support workers away from the children's centres will result in a drop in the level of engagement and also suck family support workers into a social care void when they are not suitably qualified.
- Children's centres are also the hub for Oral Health, vitamin delivery, Bookstart, Learning Bags. Data will show you that Children's centres have the most success in the delivery of vitamins and oral health schemes."

This is where **your voice is crucial** and we urge you to share your thoughts, views and your valued personal experiences that have helped shape your families experience over the years. Thankfully the council have provided you with an opportunity to share your opinion on this and other council spending matters. This link will provide you with all the information you need to know about opportunities to share your concerns: <https://mailchi.mp/a2caafa2837c/the-big-vote-on-21-october-17986946?e=569cdb8463>



I have also provided you the table outlining when these sessions will take place for ease of reference. You can click on the underlined links (if viewing this online) in order to book your place on each event.

**Event details:**

Date/time	Location	Audience	Booking Link
Wednesday 23 October 1830-2030	Old Stratford Town Hall	Public	<a href="#"><u>Wednesday 23 October</u></a>
Thursday 24 October 1200-1400	Newham Dockside	Voluntary, Community, Faith Sector Organisations	<a href="#"><u>Thursday 24 October</u></a>
Wednesday 30 October 1000-1200	East Ham Town Hall	Public	<a href="#"><u>Wednesday 30 October</u></a>
Monday 11 November 1830-2030	Online	Business	<a href="#"><u>Monday 11 November</u></a>
Wednesday 13 November 1300-1500	Online	Public	<a href="#"><u>Wednesday 13 November</u></a>

If you have got this far in the letter, I am deeply grateful and hopeful that we and future children's centres users can count on your voice and support. Our children's centres are something too precious to just give up on and we have a rare chance to have our say.

Thanks in advance and please don't hesitate to speak to a myself or a member of our team for further information.

Kind regards,

Rohan Allen  
Headteacher

