London Borough of Tower Hamlets

"Tower Hamlets" redirects here. For other uses, see Tower Hamlets (disambiguation).

**London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

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**Coat of arms**

**Tower Hamlets shown within Greater London**

**Sovereign state** United Kingdom

**Constituent country** England

**Region** London

**Ceremonial county** Greater London

**Status** London borough

**Admin HQ** Clove Crescent, Blackwall

**Incorporated** 1 April 1965

**Government**
- **Type** London borough council
- **Body** Tower Hamlets London Borough Council
- **Leadership** Mayor & Cabinet (Labour)
- **Executive mayor** Lutfur Rahman

**MPs**
- Rushanara Ali
- Jim Fitzpatrick

**London Assembly**
John Biggs AM for City and East

**EU Parliament** London

**Area**
- **Total** 7.6 sq mi (19.77 km²)
- **Rank** 320th (of 326)

**Population (2010 est.)**
- **Total** 237,900
- **Rank** 58th (of 326)
- **Density** 31,166.3/sq mi (12,033.4/km²)
The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is a London borough to the east of the City of London and north of the River Thames. It is in the eastern part of London and covers much of the traditional East End. It also includes much of the redeveloped Docklands region of London, including West India Docks and Canary Wharf. Many of the tallest buildings in London are located on the Isle of Dogs in the south of the borough.

The borough has a population of 220,000, which includes one of the highest ethnic minority populations in the capital, consisting mainly of Bangladeshis. The local authority is Tower Hamlets London Borough Council.
The name "Tower Hamlets" was historically applied to the Tower division of the county of Middlesex, covering not only the present borough, but also part of the present-day London Borough of Hackney. The Constable of the Tower of London had special jurisdiction over the area from the 16th century until 1889. Inhabitants of Tower Hamlets were originally required to provide yeomen for the Tower of London. Later the Constable became Lord Lieutenant of the area, raising and organising the local militia. Under the Reform Act 1832 the area became a parliamentary borough. The name continued to be used for constituencies until 1918.

The borough was formed in 1965 and took this historic name through amalgamation of the former metropolitan boroughs of Bethnal Green, Poplar and Stepney. These boroughs were the heart of the East End of London.

Tower Hamlets Council is one of a number of local authorities who have submitted a bid for the grant of city status as part of the celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee of Elizabeth II in 2012.

Politics

See also: Tower Hamlets local elections

Parliament

For the 2010 general election, the borough was split into two constituencies:

- Bethnal Green & Bow, represented by Rushanara Ali (Labour)
Poplar & Limehouse, represented by Jim Fitzpatrick (Labour)

The borough is a part of the London constituency for election to the European Parliament. Labour has dominated national and local elections in Tower Hamlets, although other left-wing parties have won seats including Communists and more recently the Respect Unity coalition. The British National Party won its first council seat in 1993, when Derek Beackon was elected as a Millwall councillor.[5]

London Assembly
The borough lies within the City and East constituency, one of fourteen constituencies which make up the London Assembly, and is represented by John Biggs of the Labour Party.

London Borough Council
In May 2010 a local referendum was held to decide whether to create a directly elected executive Mayor for the Borough. Following a campaign led from within the Bangladeshi community, the referendum was won and at the ensuing Mayoral election in October 2010, Lutfur Rahman was elected Mayor.

Rahman had been selected as the Labour candidate for Mayor, and was a former Leader of the Council. However allegations were made against him and his supporters and he was suspended from the Labour Party before nominations closed. By deciding to run as an independent he was deemed to have resigned from the Labour Party. He then proceeded to create a cabinet of defectors from Labour.

At the May 2010 election, the composition of the Council was 41 Labour, 8 Conservative, 1 Respect and 1 Liberal Democrat councillor. Since then Respect gained a seat from Labour at a by-election, and in three separate groups a total of 8 Labour Councillors and one Conservative defected to Lutfur Rahman’s independent group.

This shifting of political allegiances is normal for Tower Hamlets. Between the 2006 and 2010 elections five Respect councillors defected to Labour; one Respect and one Labour councillor defected to the Conservatives; one Liberal Democrat defected to Labour; and one Labour councillor was gained through a by-election at the expense of the Liberal Democrats.[6]

Geography

Physical geography
Tower Hamlets is located to east of the City of London and north of the River Thames in east London. The London Borough of Hackney lies to the north of the borough while the River Lea forms the boundary with the London Borough of Newham in the east. The River Lea also forms the boundary between those parts of London historically in Middlesex, with those formerly in Essex.

The Isle of Dogs is formed from the lock entrances to the former West India Docks and the largest current meander of the River Thames, and the southern part of the borough forms a part of the historic flood plain of the River Thames[7] and but for the Thames Barrier and other flood prevention works would be vulnerable to flooding.

The Regent's Canal enters the borough from Hackney to meet the River Thames at Limehouse Basin. A stretch of the Hertford Union Canal leads from the Regent's canal, at a basin in the north of Mile End to join the River Lea at Old Ford. A further canal, Limehouse Cut, London's oldest, leads from locks at Bromley-by-Bow to Limehouse Basin. Most of the canal tow-paths are open to both pedestrians and cyclists.

Victoria Park was formed by Act of Parliament, and administered by the LCC and its successor authority the GLC. Since the latter authority's abolition, the park has been administered by Tower Hamlets.

Part of the borough is within the boundary of the Thames Gateway development area.

Areas within the borough
Areas included in the borough:

- Bethnal Green (also partly within the London Borough of Hackney)
- Blackwall
- Bow
- Bow Common
- Bromley-by-Bow
- Cambridge Heath
- Canary Wharf
- Cubitt Town
- Docklands
- East Smithfield
- Fish Island
- Globe Town
- Isle of Dogs
- Leamouth
- Limehouse
Local landmarks

that angered several of the councillors.

Islamist literature.

the stickers in June 2011.

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Tower Hamlets forms the main area of the East End of London. More detailed local histories may be available for each of the districts (above) within Tower Hamlets.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets forms the core of the East End. It lies east of the medieval walled City of London and north of the River Thames.

Use of the term “East End” in a pejorative sense began in the late 19th century, as the expansion of the population of London led to extreme overcrowding throughout the area and a concentration of poor people and immigrants in the districts that made it up. These problems were exacerbated with the construction of St Katharine Docks (1827) and the central London railway termini (1840–1875) that caused the clearance of former slums and rookeries, with many of the displaced people moving into the area. Over the course of a century, the East End became synonymous with poverty, overcrowding, disease and criminality.

The East End developed rapidly during the 19th century. Originally it was an area characterised by villages clustered around the City walls or along the main roads, surrounded by farmland, with marshes and small communities by the River, serving the needs of shipping and the

and, in the 20th century, Bangladeshis. Many of these immigrants worked in the clothing industry. The abundance of semi- and unskilled labour led to low wages and poor conditions throughout the East End. This brought the attentions of social reformers during the mid-18th century and led to the formation of unions and workers associations at the end of the century. The radicalism of the East End contributed to the

The closure of the last of the East End docks in the

mean that the East End is undergoing further change, but some of its districts continue to

devastated much of the East End, with its docks, railways and industry forming a continual target, leading to dispersal of the population to new suburbs, and new housing being built in the 1950s. During the war, in the Boroughs making up Tower Hamlets a total of 2,221 civilians were killed and 7,472 were injured, with 46,482 houses destroyed and 47,574 damaged. The closure of the last of the East End docks in the

in 1980 created development, improved infrastructure, and the

Olympic Park mean that the East End is undergoing further change, but some of its districts continue to contain some of the worst poverty in Britain.

Media reports in the 2000s and 2010s suggested that the area was becoming Islamised, and that residents were threatened for behaviour not in accordance with what called "fundamentalist Islamic norms". The Telegraph reported in 2011 that since 2007/2008 there had been an 80 percent increase in homophobic crimes in the area, while The Guardian said there had been a 33 percent increase in homophobic incidents between April 2009 – March 2010 and April 2010 – March 2011. Delwar Hussain, writing in The Guardian, suggests that the perpetrators of such crimes are usually Bangladeshi, a group that faced hostility and violence when they first settled in the area. In February 2011 stickers appeared in the area with the message: "Arise and warn. Gay free zone. Verily Allah is severe in punishment." A man was fined for a public order offence in relation to the stickers in June 2011. In 2007 the Centre for Social Cohesion issued a report saying that libraries in the area contained a large amount of extremist Islamist literature. In 2008 councillors were asked by the council's head of democratic services to observe the Ramadan fast during meetings, a request that angered several of the councillors.

History

Main article: East End of London

Tower Hamlets forms the main area of the East End of London. More detailed local histories may be available for each of the districts (above) within Tower Hamlets.

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The East End developed rapidly during the 19th century. Originally it was an area characterised by villages clustered around the City walls or along the main roads, surrounded by farmland, with marshes and small communities by the River, serving the needs of shipping and the

flourished in the area from Tudor times. The area attracted large numbers of rural people looking for employment. Successive waves of foreign immigration began with Huguenot refugees creating a new extramural suburb in Spitalfields in the 17th century. They were followed by Irish weavers, and, in the 20th century, Bangladeshis. Many of these immigrants worked in the clothing industry. The abundance of semi- and unskilled labour led to low wages and poor conditions throughout the East End. This brought the attentions of social reformers during the mid-18th century and led to the formation of unions and workers associations at the end of the century. The radicalism of the East End contributed to the

enfranchisement of women.

Official attempts to address the overcrowded housing began at the beginning of the 20th century under the London County Council, World War II devastated much of the East End, with its docks, railways and industry forming a continual target, leading to dispersal of the population to new suburbs, and new housing being built in the 1950s. During the war, in the Boroughs making up Tower Hamlets a total of 2,221 civilians were killed and 7,472 were injured, with 46,482 houses destroyed and 47,574 damaged. The closure of the last of the East End docks in the

Port of London in 1980 created

Canary Wharf development, improved infrastructure, and the Olympic Park mean that the East End is undergoing further change, but some of its districts continue to contain some of the worst poverty in Britain.

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Local landmarks
According to the Abercrombie Plan for London (1944) began an exodus from London towards the new towns. [30] This decline began to reverse, with the establishment of the London Docklands Development Corporation bringing new industries and housing to the brownfield sites along the river. Also contributing was new immigration from Asia beginning in the 1970s. According to the ONS estimate, the population is 237,900, as of 2010. [31]
Population since 1801 - Source: A Vision of Britain through Time

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<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tower Hamlets</td>
<td>130,871</td>
<td>330,548</td>
<td>578,143</td>
<td>571,438</td>
<td>529,114</td>
<td>489,956</td>
<td>337,774</td>
<td>232,860</td>
<td>195,833</td>
<td>164,699</td>
<td>139,989</td>
<td>167,985</td>
<td>196,121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crime in the borough increased by 3.5 percent from 2009 to 2010, according to figures from the Metropolitan Police, having decreased by 24 percent between 2003/2004 and 2007/2008.

### Ethnicity

Tower Hamlets is one of the ethnically diverse boroughs in London. Tower Hamlets has one of the smallest indigenous populations of the boroughs of Britain. Majority of the residents in the borough are of White ethnicity, with a large Asian community. Bangladeshis (20.6%) are the largest ethnic minority in the borough. Somalis represent the second largest minority ethnic group. There are also a number of Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, Pakistani, and Black African/Caribbean residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>2009 Office of National Statistics estimates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tower Hamlets %</td>
<td>London %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or Black British</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese or Other Ethnic Group</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bangladeshis are more likely to have large families living together. The number of Bangladeshis aged under 18 is almost double the proportion for all other Londoners. Most Bangladeshi children in London were born in the UK, while most adults were born in Bangladesh. 70% of the Bangladeshi community are below the age of 30, where 40% of these are aged 0–15 and 9% are aged 16–19. The Bangladeshi population was 33 per cent during the 2001 census, but has since dropped significantly to 21 per cent in based on the 2009 estimate, reflecting a movement to better economic circumstances and the larger houses available in the eastern suburbs.

### Religion

The main religions practised in the borough are Christianity and Islam. Those identified as Christians are mostly White British and Black African, and Muslims are mainly of the Bangladeshi and Somali communities, including other ethnic groups. The Muslim proportion of the borough's population is the largest out of all local authorities in England and Wales. There are 21 active churches in Tower Hamlets affiliated with the Church of England, which include Christ Church of Spitalfields, St Paul's Church of Shadwell and St Dunstan's of Stepney and also churches of many other Christian denominations. There are around 40 mosques, including Islamic centres. The largest are the East London Mosque, the Brick Lane Mosque and the

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[32]: Source: A Vision of Britain through Time
[33]: Metropolitan Police
[34]: Crime in the borough increased by 3.5 percent from 2009 to 2010, according to figures from the Metropolitan Police, having decreased by 24 percent between 2003/2004 and 2007/2008.
[35]: There are also a number of Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, Pakistani, and Black African/Caribbean residents.
[36]: [35][36]
[38]: Bangladeshis are more likely to have large families living together. The number of Bangladeshis aged under 18 is almost double the proportion for all other Londoners. Most Bangladeshi children in London were born in the UK, while most adults were born in Bangladesh. 70% of the Bangladeshi community are below the age of 30, where 40% of these are aged 0–15 and 9% are aged 16–19. The Bangladeshi population was 33 per cent during the 2001 census, but has since dropped significantly to 21 per cent in based on the 2009 estimate, reflecting a movement to better economic circumstances and the larger houses available in the eastern suburbs.
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[41]: [St. John on Bethnal Green]
Other notable religious buildings include the Fieldgate Street Great Synagogue, the Congregation of Jacob Synagogue, the London Buddhist Centre, the Hindu Pragati Sangha Temple, and the Gurdwara Sikh Sangat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Tower Hamlets %</th>
<th>National %</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion not stated</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Economic profile**

The market area in **Whitechapel**

The borough is one of the most deprived in the country, although there are small pockets of wealthy areas. Levels of unemployment are high.

[HSBC](#) has its head office in **8 Canada Square, Canary Wharf**, Tower Hamlets. Barclays has its head office in **One Churchill Place**, Canary Wharf.

According to Ellie Rose of EastLondonLines, the area is notorious for deprivation, joblessness, and child poverty.[44] The borough has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the country; in 2010 57 percent of children were living in poverty, as defined by the Campaign to End Child Poverty in their review covering England, compared to a figure of 46 percent in the **London Borough of Islington**, which had the second highest rate.[45] A similar study, covering the whole of the UK, by **Save the Children** gave a figure of 27 percent, which was joint highest with Manchester.[46]

**Education**

See also: **List of schools in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is the local education authority for state schools within the borough.[47] As of January 2008 there are 19,890 primary-school pupils and 15,262 secondary-school pupils attending state schools in Tower Hamlets.[48] Independent-school pupils account for 2.4 percent of schoolchildren in the borough.[49] In 2010 51.8 percent of pupils achieved 5 A*–C GCSEs including Mathematics and English—the highest results in the borough's history—compared to the national average of 53.4 percent.[50] Seventy-four percent achieved 5 A*–C GCSEs for all subjects (the same as the English average).[51] The figure in 1997 was 26 percent.[52] The percentage of pupils on free school meals in the borough is the highest in **England and Wales**.[53] In 2007 the council rejected proposals to build a Goldman Sachs-sponsored academy.[54]

Schools in the borough have high levels of racial segregation. *The Times* reported in 2006 that 47 percent of secondary schools were exclusively non-white, and that 33 percent had a white majority.[55] About 60 percent of pupils entering primary and secondary school are Bangladeshi.[56] The percentage of primary-school pupils who speak English as a second language is 78.[57]
The council runs several Idea Stores in the borough, which combine traditional library services with other resources, and are designed to attract more diverse members. The flagship Whitechapel store was designed by David Adjaye[58] and cost £16 million to build.[59]

Further education colleges
- College of Technology London
- Tower Hamlets College

Universities
- Queen Mary, a constituent college of the University of London which includes Barts and The London, Queen Mary’s School of Medicine and Dentistry
- London Metropolitan University

Volunteering
- Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets helps residents find volunteering work and provides support to organisations involving volunteers. [60]

Sports and leisure
See also: Tower Hamlets parks and open spaces
Mile End Stadium within Mile End Park hosts an athletics stadium and facilities for football and basketball. Two football clubs, Bethnal Green United F.C. and Sporting Bengal United F.C., are based there. The borough also has its own football club named Tower Hamlets FC, formed in 2009. [61]

A leisure centre including a swimming pool at Mile End Stadium was completed in 2006. Other pools are located at St Georges, Limehouse and York Hall, in Bethnal Green. York Hall is also a regular venue for boxing tournaments, and in May 2007 a public spa was opened in the building’s renovated Turkish baths. [62]

The unusual Green Bridge, opened in 2000, links sections of Mile End Park that would otherwise be divided by Mile End Road. The bridge contains gardens, water features and trees around the path. [63]

The Olympics
Tower Hamlets is one of five host boroughs for the 2012 Summer Olympics [64] the Olympic Park is currently being constructed in the Lea Valley.

Parks in Tower Hamlets
Main article: Tower Hamlets parks and open spaces

Museums
- Island History Trust
- Museum in Docklands
- Ragged School Museum
- V&A Museum of Childhood

Transport
Transport radiates across the borough from the City of London, with the A13 starting at Aldgate and heading east passing the entrance to the Blackwall Tunnel towards Newham, and south-east Essex. The A12 also starts at Aldgate, crosses the Lea at Bow, towards Colchester and Great Yarmouth. Roads are busy at all times, particular during the rush hours; and much of the borough is a controlled parking zone, to prevent commuter parking.

The principal rail services commence in the City at Fenchurch Street, with one stop at Limehouse; and Liverpool Street, with stops at Bethnal Green and Cambridge Heath.

The Docklands Light Railway was built to serve the docklands areas of the borough, with a principle terminus at Bank and Tower Gateway. An interchange at Poplar allows trains to proceed north to Stratford and south via Canary Wharf towards Lewisham.

Three London Underground services cross the district: the District and Hammersmith and City lines share track between Aldgate East and Barking. The Central Line has stations at Bethnal Green and Mile End - where there is an interchange to the District Line. The Jubilee Line has one stop at Canary Wharf.


International relations
Twin Towns - Sister Cities

International relations

References
1. [^ Data Management and Analysis Group, Greater London Authority, Demography Update October 2007, (2007)]
6. LBTH ward details accessed 21 May 2010
9. From 1801 to 1821, the population of Bethnal Green more than doubled, and by 1831 had trebled (see table in population section). These incomers were principally weavers. For further details, see Andrew August Poor Women’s Lives: Gender, Work, and Poverty in Late-Victorian London pp 35-6 (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999) ISBN 0-8386-3807-4
10. By the early 19th century, over 11,000 people were crammed into insanitary slums in an area, which took its name from the former Hospital of St Catherine that had stood on the site since the 12th century.
13. Irish in Britain John A. Jackson, p. 137–9, 150 (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964)
15. The Spatial Form of Bangladeshi Community in London's East End Iza Aftab (UCL) (particularly background of Bangladeshi immigration to the East End). Date accessed: 17 April 2007
19. Gilligan, Andrew, "Police 'covered up' violent campaign to turn London area 'Islamic'," The Daily Telegraph, 12 June 2011, accessed 27 June 2011. See also:
32. Resident Population Estimates, All Persons - Tower Hamlets ONS.
1965 establishments in the United Kingdom

UK locations with ethnic minority-majority populations

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Local authorities adjoining the River Thames

London boroughs

Categories:

Coordinates:

Wikimedia Foundation. 2010.
Facts and Figures: The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has 196,000 residents within its 20km. It is said to be London's fastest growing borough with a 33% increase in population predicted by 2020. By area it is the 6th smallest of the London boroughs. Tower Hamlets is roughly 51% White and 49% Black and Mixed Ethnicity, particularly Bangladeshis. Tower Hamlets is home to the London Metropolitan University, some of the colleges of the University of London including Barts and the Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry; One Canada Square, Canary Wharf and other famous landmarks. Description: Tower Hamlets got its name originally as being the area where yeoman at the Tower of London lived, in the surrounding hamlets.