

Health and Social Care

The Mayor published his Health Inequality Strategy in April 2010. Different dimensions of inequality were considered against a range of health-related domains, including socio-economic and environmental factors. This framework was then used to develop policies. Disabled people were involved in the development of the strategy.

Many policies aimed at reducing health inequalities and social exclusion pay insufficient regard to the specific situations faced by disabled people. The Mayor's approach aims to be different, and commits to appropriately targeting programmes, based on the best evidence and experience, to make sure they narrow the gap between groups with better and worse health outcomes. There is a need to monitor the progress toward reducing health inequalities in such a manner that data can be disaggregated by disability status and sub-categories of disability, and the strategy also commits to ongoing work to measure, evaluate, and learn from progress over time

Consultation with disabled people has also highlighted a number of specific issues of concern: These include:

- a lack of transparency and understanding about services and entitlements, and differing eligibility criteria for support services between local authorities.
- the cost of providing care in London is higher than in the rest of the country, and London boroughs also have some of the most diverse communities in the country as well as some of the highest levels of need. This need is not fully recognised in the current social care funding formula.
- increasing pressure on services in London means that only those deemed in the highest category of need are likely to get services.
- physical and attitudinal barriers to services and opportunities, including employment

What we have done

We have developed the London Health Inequalities Strategy (HIS), working closely with a wide range of partner agencies to identify priorities and shape commitments to action. The final strategy was published in April 2010. It is a comprehensive strategy that aims to tackle health inequalities across London and promote well-being.

It will address many of the issues identified by disabled people. In particular the strategy will take forward actions around: empowering individuals and communities; equitable access to high quality health and social care services; income inequality; work and well-being; and healthy places. To read the full Strategy go to <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/health>

We have also established Community Voices for Health, in conjunction with the London Health Commission, to support ongoing dialogue with the voluntary and community sector. This programme is aimed at facilitating engagement with smaller community groups to influence health issues, including the Health Inequalities Strategy (HIS). Membership includes a wide range of equalities groups.

The Mayor's Health Programme includes ongoing work to influence the regional Mental Health and Employment Strategy (led by Department for Work and Pensions), and Mental Health Pathways in Healthcare for London (led by NHS London). In addition, the Health Team continues to engage NHS and borough partners to influence and

support programmes to improve the accessibility of health and social care to diverse groups, including disabled Londoners.

The London Health Commission is a strategic partnership established by the Mayor to generate commitment and coordinated delivery of action on health. They lead Well London which is an alliance of organisations funded by the Big Lottery to deliver a portfolio of projects in twenty of London's most deprived neighbourhoods. The partnership secured £9.46 million to use community development approaches to determine local priorities and deliver action to increase physical activity and healthy eating, promote mental well-being, and improve open spaces. They also lead the London Works for Better Health programme which seeks to influence employers to improve the availability of quality of jobs to groups currently excluded from work.

What we plan to do

We will publish the Delivery Plan for the Health Inequalities Strategy in autumn 2010, including more detailed performance indicators, investment plans and initiatives as well as information about targeting programmes to areas or groups with highest need. This will be subjected to an Equalities Impact Assessment to assess its impact on disabled people and other equalities groups to ensure it addresses their needs.

Targeted action on health and well being will also continue to be developed with and for equalities groups. This will primarily be delivered through the Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy and the London Health Commission Programme, and will include action to:

- Support the development of local leadership expertise and capacity to influence and ensure effective action to reduce health inequalities.
- Build a stronger evidence base on effective interventions and the economic case for action on health inequalities
- Working with partners to improve the accessibility and affordability of opportunities that promote health and well being
- Improve accessibility and quality of health and social care services through increased provision of advocacy, information, advice and language support to enable excluded groups to make effective use of relevant services
- Tackling barriers to employment and promoting access to work
- Promote effective ways to improve retention and in-work support for carers and people living with illness or impairments
- Invest in health at work, promoting equalities and building both organisational and employee capacity for mental and physical well-being
- Ensure new homes and neighbourhoods are planned and designed to promote health and reduce health inequalities
- Tackle stigma and raise awareness of mental health issues, HIV, and other health and well being issues.