

The London Assembly is elected to hold the Mayor to account and investigate issues that matter to Londoners. An important part of its work is assessing the impact of the Mayor's policies on particular groups. Much of its work is carried out by Committees and below are some examples of how the Committees' work has considered equalities issues in 2014/15.

Safety and policing

Diversity in the Met Police¹ was a key focus for the Police and Crime Committee in 2014/15. In 2013, 11 per cent of the Met's officers were from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background, compared with around 40 per cent of the population. The Committee found that BAME women were particularly under-represented accounting for fewer than three per cent of the Met's police officers: out of 1,868 officers, only 14 were BAME women. The report recognised that the Met had made some progress, but said that more needed to be done to further increase the Met's diversity. The recommendations included: targeting BAME women as a specific group for recruitment, creating 'diversity champions' and supporting flexible working to address the rising number of female officers leaving the force. The Committee also recommended that the Met consider the legal implications of introducing schemes like those used in New York and Northern Ireland to increase diversity, if in the next two years other efforts to increase diversity prove unsuccessful.

That investigation also considered some of the issues LGBT police officers face and recommended that The Met should consider commissioning a survey. This survey should be similar to the one carried out by the Police Superintendent's Association of England and Wales that found four out of 10 LGBT senior officers had "experienced discrimination in the policing workplace." The survey also found that some senior police officers feel homophobia still exists in police forces, and coming out can impact on career prospects. The Superintendent's Association has developed an action plan in response to the survey's findings and the Committee felt this approach would be appropriate for the Met.

The Police and Crime Committee followed up its February 2014 report on **stop and search** – an issue that overwhelmingly affects young people and black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. The Committee held a meeting to explore the role of Community Monitoring Groups and the progress made in involving young people in improving how stop and search is carried out.

The Committee also published its report on **child sexual exploitation in London**.² It explored London's approach to protecting children and young people from sexual exploitation. The report recommended that MOPAC set out a clear performance monitoring framework for child sexual exploitation. The report also proposed that every London borough should establish a forum to engage with children and young people affected by sexual exploitation, including looked-after children and those who have previously gone missing. Since then, several London boroughs have used this work to further develop their approaches.

Housing, planning and environment

The provision of sites is a key issue affecting the **gypsy and traveller community** in London. The Housing Committee took evidence about the detrimental impacts on that community of a

¹ Police and Crime Committee, Diversity in the Met, December 2014

² Police and Crime Committee, Confronting Child exploitation in London, March 2015

lack of sites and the use of temporary and unauthorised sites. Subsequently, the Committee wrote to the Mayor highlighting examples of innovative practices elsewhere in the country on waiting list handling and temporary sites. The Mayor responded positively to the Committee, agreeing that the boroughs should be sharing and learning from such good practice and noting that his Traveller Pitch Funding would be open to applications to develop the 'toleration sites' discussed by the investigation.

The Housing Committee published its report on **rough sleeping and single homelessness**.³ The report focused on why one third of the rough sleepers who have been picked up by the Mayor's No Second Night Out programme still find themselves back on the streets. The report highlights how appropriate support to rough sleepers can be impeded by the fragmentation of provision, both geographic and functional, and made recommendations to the Mayor, the Government and the London Health Commission on how to rectify this. The Committee's health-related recommendations have been taken forward in the London Health Commission's recent report. In line with the Committee's observations regarding the quality of preventive work, the Mayor has now announced a No First Night Out pilot, which aims to prevent homelessness.

In September 2014, the Planning Committee wrote to the Mayor following his proposals to establish a **development corporation at Old Oak and Park Royal**. The Committee highlighted the importance of ensuring that all local residents and the local business community (and in particular the small and medium sized businesses) have mechanisms by which their views can be canvassed and heard. Members suggested scope for a Communities Committee to be created and to have formal status within the governance structure of the Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) to ensure local representation, transparency and accountability for all groups living in the area. When the MDC was established in April 2015 the governing Board included two representatives from the local business community and local residents. The Mayor has also left the door open to establishing other committees in due course.

Older people and those with longstanding conditions such as asthma are more sensitive to the effects of air pollution. The Environment Committee investigated **how to reduce emissions from diesel vehicles**. The Committee also investigated how London can adapt to **the risks posed by severe weather**.⁴ Some risks, particularly the risk of mortality due to heat wave or cold weather, affect particular groups, for example, the over-75s, but also others with longstanding illnesses or disabilities, and those in poorly-insulated housing. The Committee's recommendations aim to prevent or mitigate these impacts, thereby positively benefiting these groups.

Transport

The Budget and Performance Committee welcomed the introduction of the lower daily **pay as you go (PAYG) cap** for peak time travel. This was a long-standing recommendation by the Committee and the Assembly. The Committee noted that lowering the daily PAYG cap would make travel cheaper for the part-time workers who are becoming an increasingly important part of London's labour force. Transport for London estimated that the cap will benefit 600,000 part-time workers every week. Evidence shows that part-time workers are statistically more likely to be women and less well-paid than full-time workers.

³ Housing Committee, No Going Back, July 2014

⁴ Environment Committee, Come Rain or Shine, March 2015

The Transport Committee published a report on **door-to-door transport services**.⁵ These are specialist services for disabled Londoners and include Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, Capital Call and NHS Patient Transport. The Committee met the organisations responsible for commissioning or delivering services, other experts and a large group of service users. One older service user was invited to join the panel for a formal Committee meeting to share her experiences. The Committee recommended a number of steps toward the greater integration of door-to-door services. The report is being considered as part of the evidence base for Transport for London's ongoing Social Needs Transport Review.



Door-to-door transport services users at a Transport Committee meeting

The Transport Committee's made a number of recommendations for improvements in its report on **Transport for London's customer services**. TfL responded to the Committee's concerns during the investigation by simplifying the menu options on its customer service helpline, which had been confusing for some callers, especially people with communication difficulties. The report also addressed the importance of clear signage to indicate the rights of disabled passengers to use the priority space on buses. The Committee should receive the Mayor's response by the end of May 2015.

A key focus for the Transport Committee in 2014/15 **taxi and private hire services**.⁶ Its report made recommendations for improving the accessibility of London's taxi and private hire services, for instance on the use of wheelchair accessible vehicles by private hire operators. In its response, TfL set out the work it was undertaking with taxi manufacturers and private hire operators to improve accessibility.

The Transport Committee scrutinised the progress of the **Crossrail** scheme. In June the Committee received confirmation that all Crossrail stations would be step-free, having written to the Secretary of State for Transport to urge this move earlier in 2014. This will ensure that the line will be accessible to many passengers with mobility problems.

⁵ Transport Committee, Improving Door-to-door Transport in London: Next Steps, January 2015

⁶ Transport Committee, Future Proof – Taxi and Private Hire Services in London, December 2014

Education, skills, employment and income

The Education Panel continued its work reviewing the role of the Mayor in supporting education opportunities for young people from more **disadvantaged backgrounds**. Annually, between 3,000 and 5,000 young people in London receive specialist support. The Panel heard from a range of experts about the challenges facing alternative provision (education provided outside of the mainstream classroom) and pupil referral units. Despite the input from dedicated professionals, educational outcomes for many of these young people fall well behind their peers in mainstream education. The Panel explored whether the GLA could include the outcomes for post-16 children who leave pupil referral units and alternative provision within a more strategic examination of the wider post-16 field. The Panel also suggested that further work should be carried out to explore a pan-London kite mark for AP quality assurance.

The Economy Committee published a summary of findings from its surveys on **internships** in the capital.⁷ Of those who responded to the surveys, fewer than four in ten were paid the National Minimum Wage or above. Furthermore, five times as many young people told us that they would be able to do an internship if they were paid the London Living Wage. The Mayor responded to the Committee by offering to support good quality paid internships and to commission research into the role of internships in London.

The Economy Committee published its report on **personal problem debt** in the capital.⁸ In particular the report highlighted the marked shift from consumer debt to essential living costs debt for a significant number of lower-income Londoners. The Committee's recommendations included proposals for increased monitoring of problem debt in the capital, developing communication techniques to reach young people and harder-to-reach groups and increase awareness of illegal money lending.

The Assembly unanimously agreed a motion calling for the Government to prioritise **better enforcement of the National Minimum Wage** and for the Mayor to support this.

London has seen several redevelopment schemes around existing or new football stadia and the Regeneration Committee was interested to establish who benefits from such regeneration. It published its report on **the impact of football stadia development on local regeneration**⁹ in March 2015. The Committee examined examples of clubs and London boroughs working to improve access to employment for long-term unemployed people and residents living in deprived areas. The reports' recommendations included the development of a charter for stadium developments which would include football clubs committing to paying the London Living Wage and consulting with a diverse range of local community and stakeholder groups.

Health and wellbeing

Andrew Boff AM is leading a review of **access to health services for d/Deaf people** on behalf of the Health Committee. This included a half-day event to discuss a range of access issues with health care providers and d/Deaf service users and the levers open to the Mayor to promote and support improved access. Further stakeholder engagement took place during early 2015 and the Committee is due to publish its findings shortly.

⁷ Economy Committee, Internships in London, December 2014

⁸ Economy Committee, Final Demand, March 2015

⁹ Regeneration Committee, The Regeneration Game, March 2015



Attendees at the Health Committee's event with d/Deaf service users and healthcare providers

The Health Committee published its report on **access to GP care**.¹⁰ The Committee hosted two public meetings to discuss the challenges facing primary care and general practice within the context of wider pressures on the healthcare system in the capital. The Committee also explored alternative approaches to improving access to GP services, including alternative service models, technology and patient involvement and how these alternatives might improve access for groups who currently have disproportionately poorer access.

The Health Committee discussed access to mental health support at two committee meetings, set aside for its **review of mental health services** in London (September 2014, and January 2015). The review focussed on the experiences of two specific user groups - young people black, Asian, and minority ethnic individuals. The Committee is due to publish its findings shortly.

Ageing and older people

A cross-party panel of Assembly Members spoke at the GLA's *Successful Cities, Positive Ageing* conference in March 2015. The conference explored how London and other cities should respond to the challenges of an ageing society.



¹⁰ Health Committee, Access to GP Care, March 2015

Victoria Borwick AM, Darren Johnson AM, Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM and Jennette Arnold OBE AM at the *Successful Cities, Positive Ageing* conference

The panel highlighted a number of issues including: the high numbers of people over 65 who experience food poverty and malnutrition, drawing on findings from the Assembly's previous report into food poverty in the capital; the Transport Committee's work on improving accessibility to London's transport system; the Housing Committee's previous report identifying the challenges ahead in providing housing that meets the needs of older people; and the Assembly's previous work on tackling fuel poverty in London and the barriers which older people face in insulating and otherwise improving their properties.

In March 2015 a cross-party group of Assembly Members became *dementia friends* at a session led by the Alzheimer's Society. A *dementia friend* learns about what it's like to live with dementia and how to help people with dementia feel understood and included in their community.



Diversity of guests at Committee meetings

Assembly Committees aim to attract a diverse range of guests to appear at formal meetings, in order to ensure that a variety of perspectives inform investigations and that our work reflects the diversity of Londoners. Committees also strive to ensure that guests have a positive experience of the Assembly and are able to contribute fully to its work. This year, the Assembly piloted a new survey of Committee guests to collect information on diversity characteristics and to invite feedback on the experience of appearing at a Committee meeting. From May 2015, the survey will be sent to guests appearing before all Assembly Committees.

Assembly events

The London Assembly jointly hosted an annual Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony in partnership with the Mayor, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Holocaust Educational Trust.

The Chair of the Assembly also hosted an evening reception to celebrate the work and commitments of London's diverse police volunteers. Police Volunteers act as advocates for the police, increasing understanding and building relationships in the communities they live and work in. The reception brought together over 200 police volunteers from across the whole of London.