

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Susan Hall AM**

Chairman of the Police and Crime Committee  
C/o [lauren.harvey@london.gov.uk](mailto:lauren.harvey@london.gov.uk)

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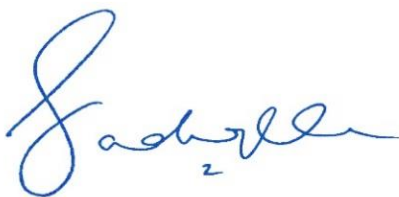
**Date:** 7 March 2025

Dear Susan,

I thank the Police and Crime Committee for producing the preventing violence and protecting young people report. I am clear that we must do all we can to ensure that London becomes the byword for opportunity. In practice, this means all young Londoners having the ability to fulfil their potential and realise their ambitions. To achieve this, children and young people must be able to grow up without fear for their safety or of crime in their communities, which is why addressing violence affecting children and young adults remains a top priority for me as Mayor.

Please find responses to the recommendations that relate to the work of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), and the Greater London Authority (GLA) below.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

**Sir Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London

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## Annex

### **Mayor of London's response to the recommendations of the London Assembly report on preventing violence and protecting young people 14 March 2024**

#### **Recommendation 1**

The Mayor should work with voluntary and community organisations to increase investment in community-based non-policing solutions to tackle the root causes of violence affecting children and young people. He should provide details of this work to the Committee by 31 August 2024.

Between 2021 and 2024, the Mayor allocated £9m to the VRU's flagship MyEnds programme. This initiative focuses on community-led solutions to address violence in the capital's most affected neighbourhoods. The Mayor recently committed an additional £14.5m to extend this neighbourhood-focused approach to every borough in London for the first time.

The core model of MyEnds is based on the empowerment of communities, recognising the critical role and collective impact that community stakeholders have in local violence reduction initiatives. Underpinned by a public health approach, the programme strongly emphasises tackling the root causes of violence at a hyper-local, neighbourhood level, with local people and communities driving prevention and diversionary work in the areas they live and know best.

MyEnds provides voluntary and community organisations with the tools and resources to implement their own prevention measures. These measures include support networks for parents and carers, after-school activities, youth work in neighbourhoods and youth clubs, activities in sport, music, arts, and drama, and targeted interventions for those in the criminal justice system.

#### **Recommendation 3**

The voices and experiences of young people must be at the heart of the delivery of the Met's Children and Young People's Strategy. The Met must engage with the VRU's Young People's Action Group (YPAG) to ensure the voices of children and young people in London are heard. The Met should establish its own diverse youth panel representative of London to support delivery of its strategy, drawing upon the expertise and experiences of the VRU's YPAG, amongst others. The YPAG should be consulted on the design of the panel

MOPAC has worked closely with the Met throughout the consultation and drafting phases of the development of the Children's Strategy and will continue to collaborate and challenge throughout the delivery of the developing implementation plan and beyond.

Children and young people were engaged and consulted as key stakeholders as the Children's Strategy was developed, and there is a stated commitment by the Met that this will continue. MOPAC will support this commitment with ongoing oversight and practical collaboration to ensure that young voices shape the next steps.

Alongside MOPAC, the VRU has a specific focus on championing the voices of Young Londoners through the YPAG and the Wider Voices network. MOPAC and the VRU are supportive of the Met establishing its own ways of hearing diverse lived experiences of children and young adults – one way could be through its youth panel – to ensure that those who have had direct experience with the Met, positively or negatively, can contribute to amplifying trust and confidence amongst young Londoners.

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Members of the YPAG attended the London Policing Board, where they also emphasised the importance of young Londoners being instrumental to the Board's strategy moving forward.

Furthermore, the VRU has commissioned an external provider as a Learning Partner for the YPAG model. This will specifically look at the process of implementing the YPAG model of youth participation and highlight key learnings to enable the VRU to share the learnings with the wider sector and organisations looking to develop similar models. We are happy to share this with the Met.

## **Recommendation 5**

The Committee welcomes the launch of the Mayor's London's Inclusion Charter, and recommends the Mayor sets out how its impact on keeping children in school will be measured and monitored.

Central to meeting the objectives of supporting and keeping children in school is buy-in from local authorities, schools, and voluntary community sector organisations. To date, 23 London boroughs of cross-party affiliation, plus the City of London, are publicly and politically committed to London's Inclusion Charter. This involved commitments from their Leaders and Directors of Children's Services. We continue to work with the remaining boroughs.

We have had more than 100 schools adopting children's rights through the Mayor's £1.4m investment into UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award. More than ten boroughs are in the process of setting up their Child Rights School Steering Groups either as a new group or as part of an existing group. They have considered how this can complement and add value to their existing priority on inclusion, and this is an effective way to ensure sustainability beyond the end of the four-year investment. This will also be the group that will provide the VRU with vital data to measure success.

We are also working with two of the largest London Multi-Academy Trusts which are interested in establishing their own Child Rights Steering Groups. We are using the Charter to build partnerships with education teams in boroughs and with Multi-Academy Trusts to influence and promote change – building on their priorities for inclusion. We are also building a broad coalition of support amongst the voluntary community sector.

London's Inclusion Charter is further backed up by a £12m investment in our education strategy under three foundations of support. Alongside building a coalition of support, we will be measuring a whole range of outcomes linked to this investment, including educational attendance, inclusive practice in educational settings, and mental health and wellbeing at school.

## **Recommendation 6**

The Mayor should explore the provision of a free school breakfast for all school children in London with delivery starting in academic year 2025-26.

The new Government committed in its manifesto to providing free breakfast for all primary school children, and we look forward to working with the Government to deliver these meals in London.

## **Recommendation 7**

The VRU should provide a forum for Met officers, schools and youth practitioners to come together to explore how they can strengthen the support they are providing to children and young people impacted by violence.

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The VRU has one embedded police officer working within the team and hopes this will increase to at least two senior police officers. The VRU also hosted a Police Now student and Safer Neighbourhoods Officer, which enables greater police understanding of children and young people impacted by violence.

The Met is also a key delivery partner in programmes like MyEnds and in developing strategic plans around violence with each of the boroughs. The VRU regularly invites the Met to events and conferences around education, health, and community safety. The VRU is keen to ensure even closer working with the Met and welcomes this recommendation.

In addition to the work of the VRU, MOPAC has a key role in bringing partners together in a range of forums, including the London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board (LASOB), the London Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Executive and the London Heads of Community Safety (LHoCS). These forums are important spaces to bring together partners from across the Met, local authorities including education, health and the voluntary and community sector at a strategic level.

MOPAC continues to work with the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA), London Councils, and safeguarding partners in the development of the Adolescent Safeguarding in London (ASiL) handbook. The revised edition will be an interactive online resource that aims to become the first document consulted by practitioners, managers and leaders in London who want to understand current best practice and improve their response when identifying and responding to adolescent safeguarding concerns (including child criminal exploitation, violence affecting young people, and gangs). Publication is expected in the spring of 2025 to ensure that it is aligned with and informed by emerging government policy and legislative initiatives related to adolescent safeguarding.

## **Recommendation 10**

The Mayor should work with the Met to prevent disproportionality in the use of stop and search; and continue to use his oversight powers to hold the Met to account for the use of stop and search.

Decreasing the disproportionality in the use of stop and search has been a priority for the Mayor as set out in his Action Plan for Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing published in 2020, and through the Disproportionality Board, convened by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, which continues to look at a whole systems approach to disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System and how to tackle it.

The Mayor has continued to tackle disproportionality and improve the confidence and trust of Black Londoners in their police service and the use of police powers, building on the good work we have achieved so far, including work to overhaul community monitoring structures to ensure that London's diverse communities are better represented and piloting a new model of community scrutiny in Hackney; stricter oversight and scrutiny of the 'smell of cannabis' used as the sole grounds for stop and search; and developing community-led training for police officers.

We will continue working closely with the Met on identifying the drivers of disproportionality, supported by new research from the Met and MOPAC Evidence and Insights teams.

## **Recommendation 12**

The Met should work with the VRU to identify opportunities to work in partnership with youth workers to prevent violence, support children and young people affected by violence and to improve police understanding of young people.

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The VRU strongly believes and supports the idea that youth workers should be in all spaces and places related to young people. Several programmes we invest in are particularly relevant to the Met. These include hospital-based youth work and youth workers in custody suites.

The VRU funds a youth work service in all four Major Trauma Centres in London and seven Accident and Emergency departments. The VRU also funds a Youth Domestic Abuse Service at the Major Trauma Centres. The project aims to support young people who attend hospital with an injury caused by violence, exploitation or domestic abuse.

Since April 2023, 2,854 young people have been identified as in need of specialist youth worker support due to potentially suffering violence or exploitation. Youth workers were able to help 1,092 young people this year, aiding them in moving away from violence in their lives and assisting with education, relationships, and/or housing. Demonstrating that having support available at key moments can reach some of the most at-risk young Londoners and successfully support them.

In Royal London Hospital, the youth work team works in partnership with an embedded police trauma team, which is a dedicated resource on site, to improve the quality of engagement with victims of violent crime. We would welcome greater alignment with the Met.

Our Custody Based Interventions provide vital support to children and young people within police custody through dedicated youth workers. The DIVERT programme works with young people between the ages of 18 and 25 and the ENGAGE programme with children aged 11 to 17. Both programmes are now operational in all 12 BCUs. Both these schemes have Met support, but we will continue to maximise Met engagement.

## **Recommendation 13**

The VRU should strengthen the support it provides to develop and further professionalise the work of youth practitioners in London.

Established in 2020, the Rise Up leadership programme focuses on helping frontline youth practitioners with significant lived experience and commitment to their roles to develop leadership skills further and feel supported in putting them into practice.

Over the three years of delivery from 2020-2023, Rise Up delivered a package of training and leadership support to over 260 youth practitioners. The key achievements of the programme were:

- 96% of participants said their expectations had been met.
- 88% of participants were confident in their professional abilities.
- 91% of participants felt they were well-equipped to manage conflict.
- 96% said they had networks to approach for advice and support.
- Over 80% of managers surveyed agreed with the statement: 'our organisation is benefiting.'
- 89% of Rise Up alumni agreed that taking part 'positively impacted their job prospects.'

As a result of the success of this programme and the Mayor's continued investment in youth work, further funding has been secured to continue to run Rise Up until May 2026. By 2026, almost 500 youth practitioners will have completed the Rise Up Leadership and Development programme.