

Mayoral Mandate

Supporting and Inspiring Young London

Introduction

Since becoming Mayor, I have been determined to make London the best city in the world to grow up in. Sadly, within the capital and beyond, too many of our children and young people face disadvantage, which can lead to them suffering violence and criminal exploitation, poor health and a lack of opportunities to fulfil their potential in the world of learning, work and broader adult life.

During my first two terms, I commissioned groundbreaking initiatives to address this. I set up the first Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in England and Wales to champion and lead prevention and early intervention for young people through partnership, policy and practice. City Hall subsequently delivered targeted and universal interventions like the London Inclusion Charter, the New Deal for Young People, my significant investment in sport and youth work, and Universal Free School Meals, which has made a tangible impact. All of these initiatives have been underpinned by the belief that young people of every background should help to shape City Hall's approach.

This mandate commissions my City Hall team to build on this legacy by defining what universal and targeted initiatives the GLA Group, working with an array of partners and the government, will deliver during my third Mayoral term to address the array of barriers that young people can face.

I expect this mandate to be read alongside the mandates for *Reducing Violence and Criminal Exploitation*, and *Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth*, which aims to ensure that young people, especially excluded groups (e.g. those from low-income and other disadvantaged backgrounds), can secure good work and career progression in a growing economy. I expect the delivery plans for these programmes to be developed in tandem.

Other important interactions should be with: *Reducing Inequalities* (ensuring that work in this area supports low-income families and communities that face disadvantage) and *Celebrating London* (to ensure that all children and young people can access the positive opportunities that London offers). I expect to see these connections come through in the delivery plan for this programme.

Strategic objectives

The GLA has defined a number of London-level, long-term outcomes which reflect Londoners' aspirations for the city and to which the GLA, in partnership with others, is working towards. The core outcomes to which this programme should contribute are: children and young Londoners achieve the health and learning outcomes they need to thrive at every stage of development; children and young Londoners have the positive opportunities needed to be successful; and Londoners have the skills they need to improve their lives.

However, I also expect this programme to contribute to ensuring that children and young Londoners are safe from harm, given the broad universal and specific needs of London's children and young people.

With this in mind, the core objectives of this programme are to support and inspire London's children and young people so that they: feel safe in order to thrive; are physically and mentally healthy; and are equipped with the knowledge, support and skills needed to have a good

career. I expect officers working to support young people and schools across the GLA Group to coordinate to ensure effective delivery.

Programme approaches and priorities

The delivery plan for this programme should focus on five areas of activity:

Continue Universal Free School Meals: I have committed to continue to fund my Universal Free School meals scheme for the rest of my time as Mayor and I expect my team to put the arrangements in place for this to happen.

Ensuring that children and young people are safe and thriving: We should continue to support preventative projects and interventions that will ensure vulnerable children and young people can thrive and stay safe. The delivery plan should lay out how the GLA and partners will provide meals and positive activities (such as sports, youth social action projects and mentoring) to children and young people during school holidays. It should also include detail on how the GLA will work with partners to provide 250,000 positive opportunities designed to enrich lives and support development.

Ensuring children and young people have good physical and mental health: The delivery plan should focus on interventions within schools and the wider community to help deliver positive physical and mental health outcomes for our children and young people. My pioneering Universal Free School Meals programme makes a significant contribution here. We should also work with partners to expand free access to sports facilities and work to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people in London. A key focus of this should be raising awareness within schools of the support available.

Ensuring young people are equipped to gain good employment and career progression: The delivery plan should link this work with the plan for supporting Londoners to benefit from growth, given the need for young people (particularly those from disadvantaged groups (e.g. low-income households) to access effective careers information and advice, skills provision and wrap-around employability and entrepreneurial support. One such opportunity, which young Londoners should not miss out on, is the chance to study abroad easily. The delivery plan should lay out how the GLA will work with partners to explore how we could create a scheme, similar to the old Erasmus programme, within the capital.

Young people's voices: We should also consider how we can embed the voices of children and young people, who are representative of the capital's diversity in policy design and decision-making. Key to this will be making sure that our engagements with them are meaningful and lead to change.

Contribution to cross-cutting priorities

The programme should identify where it can make a substantive positive contribution to the areas identified as cross-cutting priorities for the GLA. I expect that the key areas of focus for this programme will be around:

- Addressing structural inequalities – recognising and addressing structural inequalities, promoting a fairer, more inclusive London, and focusing on supporting the most vulnerable
- Health in all policies – developing plans and policy in a way that seeks health benefits, synergies and co-benefits with other policy areas
- Net-zero: developing the skilled workforce needed to support London's ambition to be net-zero by 2030.

Resources

The GLA's current activity contributing to this programme draws on a revenue budget (excluding staff costs) of circa £150m. This figure does not include the revenue budget of the VRU which is around £35m in 2024-25.

The GLA's budget includes the budget for Universal Free School Meals covering the academic year 2024-25. It also includes non-recurrent budgets for the New Deal for Young People programme, which are tapered over the coming three years, and one-off funding for providing mental health support in schools.

Recognising the significant current fiscal challenges both in London and at national level, I expect the delivery plan to be developed in this context, and to demonstrate what can be achieved within the current level of funding. This should include setting out how resources might be most effectively redeployed.

Senior Responsible Owner

I expect the Assistant Director for Civil Society and Sport to be the Senior Responsible Owner of this programme, with my Deputy Mayors for Children and Families; Communities and Social Justice; and Business and Growth, along with the Mayor's Senior Health Adviser and the Director of the VRU to provide ongoing oversight and political direction, along with other colleagues from my office.

Next steps

I expect the Mayoral Delivery Board to recommend a delivery plan for this programme to me in line with our governance and oversight arrangements.

January 2025