

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3477

Title: Support for Young Londoners (SfYL) – NEET programme: Funding and Delivery for 2026-27 and 2027-28

Programme: Supporting and Inspiring Young Londoners

Executive Summary:

This decision seeks approval to utilise funding from the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) reserves to extend the Mayor's Support for Young Londoners (SfYL) NEET programme for a further two financial years (2026–27 and 2027–28). The SfYL programme operates pan-London, delivering support to young people not in education employment or training (NEET) using a mentor-led, personalised approach to support young people into education, employment or training (EET). The programme commenced in April 2024 and is nearing the end of its second year of delivery. In 2025-26, the programme has been funded predominantly via UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) with a top-up from ASF whilst the first year (2024-25) was only funded via the UKSPF.

This decision seeks approval to use ASF reserves over the next two financial years (2026–27 and 2027–28), with additional Department for Work and Pensions funding from the Get Britain Working (GBW) Trailblazer in 2026-27 only, to continue the successful SfYL NEET programme until March 2028. The programme is a key delivery component of the employment and training strand of the Supporting and Inspiring Young Londoners (SIYL) Mandate delivery plan and London's Youth Guarantee and aligns with the London Growth Plan and the Inclusive Talent Strategy.

Decision:

That the Mayor:

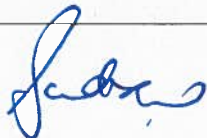
1. approves the extension of the Support for Young Londoners (SfYL) NEET programme under the Supporting and Inspiring Young Londoners (SIYL) mandate delivery plan (approved by MD3380) beyond 2025-26, enabling delivery in 2026-27 and 2027-28
2. approves expenditure of £9m from the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 financial years, funded from ASF reserves, for the delivery of the SfYL NEET programme
3. notes that £1.5m of Trailblazer funding from the Get Britain Working Youth Trailblazer, already approved under [Mayoral Decision \(DM\)3380](#), will contribute to delivery in 2026-27, and approves its application to part-fund the SfYL NEET programme in that year
4. approves the grant allocations to individual projects for 2026-27, as set out in **Appendix A**.

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

31/3/20

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. London faces a material and persistent Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) challenge. The NEET rate among 16–24 year-olds is high in London relative to other English regions. Risks are not evenly distributed: young people with SEND and low qualifications (particularly those formerly eligible for free school meals) are significantly more likely to be NEET; care-experienced young people face much higher NEET risks and poorer mental-health outcomes; and there are marked disparities by ethnicity. Health-related inactivity among young people has also risen since the pandemic. These issues are compounded by system fragmentation across data, careers advice, and entry-level employment routes.
- 1.2. Informed by lessons learnt from the London European Social Funds (ESF) Programme 2014-2020 (which ended in 2023), analysis of existing support available to young people NEET and extensive consultation, the GLA launched an open and competitive call for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Support for Young Londoners (SfYL) programme as approved by the Mayor under [Mayoral Decision \(MD\)3058](#) in January 2023. This included two core strands of activity for young people NEET:
 - Universal NEET (UNEET) workstream – a universal offer in each sub-regional partnership (SRP) area that any NEET young Londoner can access
 - Targeted NEET (TNEET) workstream – more intensive, wrap-around support for young people facing multiple and complex barriers.
- 1.3. The SfYL programme commenced delivery in April 2024, with £9m UK Shared Prosperity fund (UKSPF) funding awarded across four UNEET and 16 TNEET projects. Grants were awarded for an initial 12 months to March 2025, in line with UKSPF requirements. Flexibility was built into the published funding prospectus expressly to allow projects to be extended over multiple years, should additional funding become available.
- 1.4. In 2025–26, following the announcement by government of an extension to the UKSPF programme, the SfYL programme was extended for a further year under cover of [MD3364](#) signed in 2025. The GLA supplemented additional but much reduced UKSPF of £3.7m with £2m from the Adult Skills Fund (ASF), selecting 13 projects (four UNEET and nine TNEET) to continue delivering in 2025–26 based on need, performance and diversity of provision for the TNEET programme. This retained pan-London UNEET coverage and sustained TNEET intensity for priority cohorts.
- 1.5. In-year, the SfYL NEET programme also secured an additional £1.7m from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) GBW Trailblazer budget (approved under [MD3348 London Get Britain Working Trailblazers 2025-26](#)), formally integrating the NEET programme into the Mayor's Pan-London Youth Trailblazer. This investment planned to increase the number of young people supported by the programme in 2025-26 from 3,389 to 4,373, thereby expanding the reach of the Youth Guarantee in London by almost 1,000 young people.

Performance to date

- 1.6. In its first year, the SfYL NEET programme exceeded almost all targets, supporting just over 6,500¹ young people NEET, and achieving progression rates above expected levels (UNEET 53 per cent vs 40 per cent; TNEET 44 per cent vs 25 per cent), providing a strong value-for-money basis for continuation. Delivery also demonstrated strong reach into priority groups, including 71 per cent participation from ethnic minority groups and 21 per cent from young people with disabilities or long term-health conditions.
- 1.7. In 2025-26, performance continue to be strong, the programme has already supported over 3,300 young people NEET as of December 2025 and is on track to achieve its full-year targets for both starts and education, employment or training (EET) progression outcomes.
- 1.8. The Supporting and Inspiring Young London programme delivery plan (as approved under MD3380) identifies the SfYL NEET programme as Project 4.2 within the strand 'Enabling more young people to be equipped to gain good employment and career progression'. The delivery plan currently funds the NEET programme in 2025-26 only. This decision therefore seeks the additional funding required to continue delivery in 2026-27 and 2027-28, and approval to extend the programme under the mandate delivery plan for a further two years, to March 2028. This will ensure that the GLA can maintain a dedicated intervention for this priority group of young Londoners.
- 1.9. The GLA will continue to work with its established and high performing provider base, comprising 13 lead organisations from across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. This approach ensures programme stability, pan-London access, and the specialist expertise required to support those young people facing the most significant barriers to education, employment and training including looked after children and care leavers, young people who are homeless, those affected by substance misuse and/or involvement in criminal activity, young carers, and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- 1.10. It is proposed that any further programme level decisions will be completed in line with local governance processes in compliance with the obligations set out in The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 which describe when written records of decisions and their content need to be published.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The strategic objectives (2026-27 to 2027-28) are as follows:
 - Reduce NEET: decrease the number and duration of NEET among 16-24-year-olds, with a particular focus on young people at greatest risk, including those with SEND, care-experienced young people, young carers, young people with mental-health barriers, and under-represented ethnic groups.
 - Maintain access and depth: ensure pan-London UNEET coverage so that any NEET young Londoner can access support, and sustain TNEET intensity where specialist, wrap-around interventions add value.
 - Accelerate progression: strengthen employer-led pathways into education, employment, apprenticeships and further training, including work experience, bridges to Skills Bootcamps and Further Education (FE), in alignment with the London Growth Plan, the Inclusive Talent Strategy, and integration with the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer.

¹ The budget in year one was increased from £9.5m to £10.9m, using available funding from other strands of the UKSPF programme.

- Advance equity and maximise outcomes: use the unit cost model to tie funding to delivery and outcomes, supported by active performance monitoring and in year adjustments that ensure resources reach high performing providers and the young people with the most significant needs.

2.2. The expected outputs and outcomes are as follows:

- 2025-26 precedent: providers collectively committed to substantial starts, EET outcomes and (for TNEET) distance-travelled outcomes, with pan-London UNEET access retained and TNEET prioritised for the most disadvantaged cohorts. The model has proven effective, with the flexibility to address underperformance and scale high performing provision.
- For 2026-27, the GLA will broadly replicate the original 2025-26 provider allocations and targets (pre-growth). On this basis, we expect to deliver approximately:
 - 3,300 starts (NEETs starting on the project)
 - 1,500 progressions into EET
 - 1,000 distance travelled outcomes.
- For 2027-28, we expect to set targets proportionate to the funding available, however, 2027-28 figures will be confirmed in 2026-27 using up to date performance data and taking account of any changes needed e.g. to strand mix across the programme. For example, if a greater share of funding is allocated to TNEET (which has higher a unit cost) total starts may reduce for the same budget.
- Across the two additional years (2026-27 and 2027-28) we therefore expect the programme to support around 6,000 young people NEET, with about 40 per cent progressing into EET.

2.3. Delivery mechanics and funding profile:

- Funding: The programme will operate within a budget of £5.7m in 2026-27 (comprising £1.5m from the GBW Youth Trailblazer and £4.2m from ASF reserves) and £4.8m in 2027-28 (ASF only). NB ASF reserves include ESF funding. **Appendix A** sets out the proposed allocations for each project for 2026-27, which mirror the original 2025-26 provider allocations, and are subject to agreement of the final delivery volumes.
- Payment and performance: The unit-cost model will continue, with payments made for starts, progressions into EET, and for distance-travelled outcomes (TNEET only). Minor technical refinements may be introduced where appropriate. Performance will be monitored monthly, with scope to adjust allocations in-year to protect outcomes and value for money. Where providers over-deliver, recognition may be considered at year-end subject to budget availability.
- Pathway integration: Provision will remain aligned with the Careers Hubs, the Youth Guarantee, ASF and Skills Bootcamps, ensuring clear referral routes and progression into further training, apprenticeships and work.

3. Equality comments

3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the GLA (including the Mayor of London) must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when exercising its functions. The PSED is a duty to have due regard to:

- the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010

- advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a ‘protected characteristic’ as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and those who do not.
- 3.2. The protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status (but only in respect of the requirements to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
 - 3.3. Consideration of the PSED is not a one-off task. The duty must be fulfilled before taking a decision, at the time of taking a decision, and after the decision has been taken, to ensure that equalities impacts are kept under ongoing review.
 - 3.4. In accordance with these duties, and recognising the complex barriers faced by priority groups, the SfYL NEET programme is designed to reach young Londoners who experience the greatest disadvantage or are furthest from the labour market. The programme already incorporates Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) targets within its delivery and performance framework, and these will continue to be actively monitored and managed.
 - 3.5. The programme’s 2024–25 performance demonstrates strong reach into underrepresented groups, with 71 per cent of participants from ethnic minority backgrounds, 21 per cent reporting a disability or long-term health condition (rising to 38 per cent within TNEET), and 33 per cent of participants identifying as female. Targeted provision within TNEET also engages those facing the most acute barriers, including care experienced young people, young carers, those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and young people affected by substance misuse or involvement with the criminal justice system.
 - 3.6. The GLA will continue to actively performance manage providers against these EDI expectations throughout 2026–27 and 2027–28, ensuring that the programme maintains and strengthens its focus on equity of access, reach and outcomes.

4. Other considerations

Links to Mayoral strategies

- 4.1. The SfYL NEET programme sits within the Supporting and Inspiring Young Londoners (SIYL) Mandate. The SIYL delivery plan contributes to London-level outcomes that young Londoners have the positive opportunities they need to be succeed and that Londoners have the skills they need to improve their lives and includes the Mayor’s commitment to provide 250,000 positive opportunities for young Londoners over this Mayoral term. The SfYL programme directly supports delivery of this commitment and advances SIYL’s aim to “bridge the gap between opportunity and offer” by commissioning targeted support where need is highest and working with partners across London to open up routes into education, training and work.
- 4.2. The project also aligns with the Mayor’s Inclusive Talent Strategy (ITS), which sets out how London will grow a skilled workforce, help more Londoners into high-quality jobs, and make it easier for employers to access the talent they need, by creating a more employer-led and integrated skills, employment, health and careers system. By supporting NEET young people to re-engage, build skills and progress into education, employment, apprenticeships or further training, the project helps deliver the ITS ambition to connect Londoners to the right training and career path and supports the Growth Plan’s goals on jobs and productivity.

Risks arising and mitigation

- 4.3. The key risks and mitigation measures are outlined below:

Risk Description	Planned Mitigations	RAG Rating
Provider performance and continuity – delivery risks at provider level could affect local coverage or outcomes over a two-year period (noting no under-performance to date this year against original allocations).	Continue active performance management using the unit cost model and in year adjustments; continue with existing providers where performance is strong.	G
End of Trailblazer funding from March 2027 – reduced funding may limit scale and integration in 2027–28.	Profile 2027–28 as ASF only with proportionate targets; retain delegated authority to accept and deploy additional funding (within the approved envelope/ceiling) and vary existing agreements. Prioritise highest performing projects, if necessary to maximise reach. Continue to seek additional funding.	A
Referral flows and participant need – changes in referral volumes or increased complexity of need could affect starts and progression rates.	Maintain strong pathway integration (Youth Trailblazer routes, Jobcentre Plus, employer pathways); monitor monthly and quarterly; adjust allocations in-year where necessary to safeguard outcomes and focus on priority cohorts.	G
Strand mix and cost pressure (UNEET vs TNEET) – shifting toward higher-intensity, higher-cost TNEET could reduce total volumes within a fixed budget.	Set 2026–27 targets using the 2025–26 baseline; confirm 2027–28 targets in final quarter 2026–27 review using current demand and performance; adjust the strand mix under delegated authority to protect outcomes and value for money.	G
Funding source and eligibility – risk that ASF funding is used to support cohorts who are not eligible for ASF funding	ASF reserves being used include historic ESF underspends, which allowed support for under-19s; use existing provider reporting to monitor the age composition of participants (to date the majority of participants on the programme have been 19+); undertake regular review of the age split to ensure ASF is applied only to 19+; utilise Trailblazer funding for under-19 cohort.	G

Conflicts of interest

- 4.4. No one involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form has any conflict of interest.

Considerations for the provision of grant funding and subsidy control

- 4.5. It is proposed that the provision of additional sums to the 13 providers constitutes the award of grant funding, rather than payment for services, because:
- the sum is a contribution to the costs of existing third-party (and not GLA) projects that align with the Mayor's priorities, but are the initiatives of the third parties in question
 - the GLA will not receive any benefit as a result, with the benefits accruing instead to Londoners.
- 4.6. GLA officers have carried out an analysis of the proposed awards against the Statutory Guidance for the UK subsidy control regime. They have assessed that the subsidy control regime does not apply in

these circumstances because the proposed award of additional funding does not constitute a subsidy.

- 4.7. In particular, the grant award fails to satisfy Limb B of the four-limbed test set out in the Subsidy Control Act 2022, as none of the organisations to which funding would be awarded would be acting as an enterprise in undertaking the funded activity, as all lead organisations are local authorities and will not be engaging in economic activity to offer goods or services on a market. The funding will be used to enable the provision of activities such as one-to-ones and peer mentoring.

Other Consideration

- 4.8. The ASF under the delegation to the Mayor and under the new [Functional responsibilities for the Integrated Settlements 2026 to 2030](#) Skills and Employment pillar states that that funding should cover all non-apprenticeship adult skills funding and functions for residents aged 19 and over. It is recognised that a proportion of the young people supported by the projects are under 19 and therefore perceived as not eligible for ASF funding.
- 4.9. It is important to note, however, that the ASF reserves proposed to be utilised have been accumulated from previous underspend, a significant proportion of which, (over £18m) derives from European Social Funds (ESF) match funding, which ended in 2023. As set out in MD 2375, ESF allowed interventions to cover young people below age 19. In addition, the majority of participants supported by the SfYL NEET projects to date, have been 19 and above. Young people under 19 will be funded using Trailblazer funding.
- 4.10. Furthermore and importantly, another responsibility under the [Functional responsibilities for the Integrated Settlements 2026 to 2030](#) Skills and Employment pillar includes the “leadership and co-ordination and provision of services in the area to support young people (aged 19+) who are NEET, or who are at risk of becoming NEET, to access skills support which enables them to move into education, employment or training.” It is considered that spending ASF funding in this way helps London to meet this responsibility.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought for:

- expenditure of £9m from the ASF for the 2026-27 to 2028-29 financial years, to be funded from carried forward ASF underspend from 2025-26 and prior financial years, for the delivery of the SfYL NEET Programme
- expenditure of an initial £1.5m co-funding from the Get Britain Working (GBW) Trailblazer for the 2026-27 financial year as per approved in the SIYL delivery plan MD3380
- total expenditure of £10.5m for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 financial years.

- 5.2. Any budget commitments for future years are subject to the annual budget setting process and available funds.

- 5.3. Any contracts that commit the GLA in future years will be subject to appropriate break clauses.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that certain of the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the:

- GLA’s general powers, falling within the GLA’s statutory powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of economic

development and wealth creation, social development or the promotion of the improvement of the environment in Greater London and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the GLA's related statutory duties to:

- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
- consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom
- consult with appropriate bodies
- ministerial functions delegated by the Secretary of State for Education, to the Mayor pursuant to section 39A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999. The Secretary of State for Education (SSE) exercised the powers under section 39A of the GLA Act 1999 to delegate certain functions of the SSE under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Mayor approved the delegation of certain functions, and the terms of and conditions attached in MD2410 and MD3349.

6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty - namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section three of this report.

6.3 Subject to mayoral approval of this decision form, officers must ensure that:

- no reliance is placed, nor commitments made which rely upon funding (whether from third parties or GLA budgets) before legally binding commitments have been secured from such funders and the GLA budgets in question have been approved
- they are satisfied that the GLA's proposals comply with the terms attached to any third-party funding
- the proposed awards of additional funding align with those set out in all applicable funding rules
- be incorporated by variation into the agreements executed by the lead organisations providers and the GLA before any commitment is made to fund.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1. The next steps are set out below:

Activity	Timeline
ASF Mayoral Board	10 March 2026
Confirmation of 2026-27 Allocations	March 2026
Issuing of Variations to grant funding agreements	March 2026
Delivery Start Date for Year One (2026-27)	April 2026
Review of Year Two approach and allocations	Q3 2026-27
Approvals and confirmation of 2027-28 allocations	Q4 2026-27
Delivery Start Date for Year Two (2027-28)	April 2027

Appendices and supporting papers:

• **Appendix A** – Provisional Grant Award Recommendations for SfYL NEET projects 2026-27 growth funding

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Strategic Programmes

Does this decision seek approval for activity falling within the remit of a programme delivery plan? YES

If YES, which programme/s does this fall within: Supporting and Inspiring Young Londoners

Part 1 – Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Rita Chircop has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Tunde Olayinka has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Howard Dawber has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

This decision was agreed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 30 March 2026.

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Fay Hammond

Date 30 March 2026

Signature

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor

Richard Watts

Date 30 March 2026

Signature

pp on behalf of David Bellamy