MAYOR OF LONDON

Bassam Mahfouz AM
Chair of the London Assembly Economy, Culture and Skills Committee
C/o Maurice.Robering@london.gov.uk

Our ref: MGLA260326-6938

Date: 20 August 2026

Dear Bassam,

Thank you to the London Assembly's Economy, Culture and Skills Committee for sharing with me its report on London's unpaid carers. I am sorry for the delay in responding.

My reply to each Recommendation is set out in the annex below.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

MAYOR OF LONDON

Mayor of London's response to the recommendations of the Economy, Culture and Skills Committee on London's unpaid carers - Caring for the carers

Recommendation 1

The Mayor should instruct TfL to carry out an assessment to identify options for reducing the cost of transport for unpaid carers in London and quantify the impact of these options on TfL's financial position. This should assess the practicability, benefits and difficulties of targeted concessions for London's unpaid carers. The assessment should start before the end of 2026 and conclude by June 2027.

The Mayor recognises that the current cost-of-living crisis is having a huge impact on many Londoners and remains committed to keeping the city affordable for everyone. In partnership with Transport for London (TfL), the Mayor has been able to freeze fares, introduce the bus Hopper fare and protect existing concessions covering the cost of travel for many of the most vulnerable in society. These include young people in education, older Londoners, apprentices and those seeking employment.

TfL offers a wide range of free and discounted travel schemes. The 60+ London Oyster photocard gives unlimited free travel in London (except on weekday mornings). The Bus & Tram Discount gives 50% off bus and tram travel to those on selected benefits, and the Railcard discount on Oyster gives one-third off off-peak pay-as-you-go fares and daily caps. Customers with a 16-25, 26-30, Senior Railcard, or 18-25 Care Leaver Oyster photocard can also benefit from discounted travel.

Both the Mayor and TfL are proud to offer these concessions, but they do, of course, cost a substantial amount of money. In light of current financial constraints and given that TfL is not currently expanding concessions, this is not something the Mayor will be asking TfL to pursue at present. However, the Mayor remains committed to keeping London's public transport as affordable as possible for everyone.

Recommendation 2

The Government should conduct a comprehensive review of Carer's Allowance with a view to increasing the amount carers are entitled to, introduce a London weighting and replace the earnings limit with a gradual taper. The Mayor should lobby on behalf of London's carers for the Government to do this. We ask that the Department for Work and Pensions responds to this report setting out any plans it has to introduce a London weighting by the end of 2026.

Unpaid carers do essential work caring for family and friends, and the Mayor recognises the significant contribution they make to London's health and care system.

The Mayor welcomes the Committee's work to highlight the financial hardship faced by many of London's unpaid carers. Being a carer often makes it hard to take on paid work, and this contributes to higher rates of poverty for unpaid carers in London. Poverty itself then creates a barrier to work – and this cycle can make it difficult for unpaid carers to escape financial hardship. We also know that unpaid carers are more likely to be disabled, increasing the barriers to work they face.

The safety net must be protected for disabled people and those who cannot work, and vulnerable Londoners should not be pushed into poverty. The Mayor will continue to work towards a fairer London, increasing the incomes of the lowest-earning 20% of Londoners as set out in the London Growth Plan.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor should initiate a project with the GLA's Communities and Skills directorate to establish and implement a unified protocol for carer identification in London, building on the Carers and Hospital Discharge Toolkit and the Carers' Clinical Liaison Service. The protocol should be aimed at enabling healthcare staff who come into contact with unpaid carers to identify them, inform their local authority of their status and put in place a support plan if required. The project should involve close partnership working with London's Integrated Care Boards, London's local authorities and local carer organisations. All organisations involved should commit to adopting the new protocol once it has been agreed. The project should aim to be completed within 2026-27, with necessary funding provided from GLA reserves, underspends or contributions from partner organisations.

The Mayor agrees that timely and consistent identification of unpaid carers is essential to ensuring they can access the support they are entitled to, and recognises the significant contribution they make to London's health and care system.

The Mayor welcomes the Committee's focus on building on existing initiatives, such as the Carers and Hospital Discharge Toolkit and the Carers' Clinical Liaison Service, which have demonstrated that earlier identification in healthcare settings can improve outcomes for carers.

Given the scale of ongoing change across London's health and care system, the Mayor considers it important that any work to improve carer identification builds on existing activity and is aligned with broader system priorities. Therefore, the Greater London Authority (GLA) will continue to engage with partners across health, local government and the voluntary sector to encourage shared learning and more consistent approaches where appropriate, rather than establishing a standalone new programme.

The Mayor will continue to support collaboration across the system to improve recognition and support for unpaid carers in London. Given that young carers are often hidden, the Mayor's support includes building on existing GLA work that improves the opportunities of young Londoners most in need, including young carers.

Therefore, the GLA will continue to target sport-specific programmes, including Sports Internships, and the Employability Events Pilot, to support under-represented young Londoners and those who are most likely to miss out on career progression opportunities.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should convene multi-academy trusts and schools in London and encourage them to join the Young Carers in Schools programme. He should work with the Carers Trust and the Children's Society to set a clear target of 100 schools by the end of 2026 and 300 schools over the coming five years, and then convene schools to achieve this target.

The Mayor recognises the important contribution that young carers make to London and the challenges they can face in balancing their caring responsibilities with education and wider opportunities.

While the Mayor does not have formal powers over schools, multi-academy trusts or education policy, he supports efforts to improve the sense of inclusion, belonging and safety of all children through commitments like London's Inclusion Charter, including the identification of and support for young carers across London.

The Mayor welcomes the important work of organisations such as the Carers Trust, The Children's Society and the Young Carers in Schools programme in raising awareness and promoting good practice. Although participation in the programme is a matter for boroughs and their individual schools and academy trusts, the GLA, in partnership with the Violence Reduction Unit, will continue to use its convening role and existing networks, like Inclusive London borough-sharing events, and communication channels, such as the termly newsletter to schools, to share learning and encourage greater awareness of the needs of young carers where appropriate.

The Mayor remains committed to working with partners across London to support access to opportunities and improve outcomes for children and young people most in need, including young carers.

Recommendation 5

The Government should put in a place ring-fenced and multi-year funding settlement for carer support services in London within the Better Care Fund or any successor fund by the end of this Parliament. We ask that the Department of Health and Social Care responds to this report setting out any plans it has in this area by the end of 2026.

This recommendation to the Government has been noted.

Recommendation 6

The GLA should become a member of Employers for Carers as soon as possible and commit to achieving Carer Confident accreditation. It should inform the Committee by the end of 2026-27 in writing what steps it is taking to achieve the accreditation and set out a timeline for completion.

The GLA is committed to ensuring that working carers have equal opportunities in the workplace. We have a funded Carers and Parents Staff Network to support staff in reaching their full potential, regardless of personal circumstances or caring responsibilities. We have a Carers and Dependency Leave policy that offers 10 days' paid leave in one leave year to eligible staff. We also have robust policies on Smart Working, Flexible Working and Sabbatical Leave to support our staff.

The GLA is a member of a number of equality and diversity networks to ensure we are aligned with best practice. We are currently exploring joining Employers for Carers as a member.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should consult London's unpaid carers, groups representing unpaid carers and current signatories to the Good Work Standard on strengthening the Good Work Standard to include a minimum of five days paid carers' leave per year, flexible working as default and staff carers networks within the next six months. We ask the Mayor to update the Committee by the end of this year on the results of the consultation.

As a voluntary accreditation programme, the Good Work Standard does not typically set compulsory criteria for employers, other than the statutory minimum practices all employers must meet, plus a requirement that employers first accredit with the Living Wage Foundation. Good Work Standard employers are instead recognised based on meeting a minimum threshold across the full criteria of the Standard. The Standard's criteria and guidance were refreshed following a comprehensive consultation with employers, Unions and employment practice expert organisations in 2025, including resources around carers in the workforce.

Achievement and Excellence-level criteria provide guidance to employers to implement

above-statutory minimum paid leave for carers; encourage the establishment of staff networks for carers; support flexible working arrangements; improve any gradual 'return to work' processes for carers on long-term leave; and provide links to practical tools from expert external organisations.

Definitions and resources for employers are also reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. The Good Work Standard team welcomes engagement with any groups and organisations that represent carers and looks forward to working with them to ensure that the Standard supports employers to meet the highest standards. The team has met with Carers UK to discuss measures in the coming months to encourage employers to better support carers in their workforce.