

MAYOR OF LONDON

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Thank you for your letter of 12 November about the motions agreed at the London Assembly (Plenary) meeting on 31 October. My reply to motion 8 is set out below:

Motion 8 – Tackling Loneliness in London

Loneliness and social isolation are really important issues. I want Londoners to be able to build meaningful and lasting relationships with each other, as equals, and to be active in their communities. That is why my social integration approach has three core pillars – relationships, participation and tackling barriers – all of which are integral to tackling loneliness and social isolation. In 2018, my Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement, brought together over 100 academics, policy thinkers and Londoners to share their expertise on social isolation and loneliness to inform the work of City Hall.

We have already invested over £2m in projects tackling social isolation and loneliness through a number of programmes across City Hall, including

- Investing in projects that help to reduce parental isolation through the London Family Fund.
- Launching the London Together Fund within Sport Unites to invest in initiatives that bring Londoners together through sport. The fund totals £8.8m over three years. To date 23 of these projects totalling £1.2m explicitly tackle social isolation.
- Supporting local initiatives through my Stronger Communities Fund – enabling some of the most isolated groups to participate in physical activity.
- Establishing a match funded Young London Inspired grant fund, which uses social action to build young people's emotional resilience and good mental health.
- Investing in ESOL Plus programmes to pilot innovative approaches supporting Londoners learning English to overcome barriers they face in accessing provision, so that they can achieve their goals.

I am acutely aware of the impact of loneliness and social isolation on health. That is why making social prescribing a routine part of community support across London is one of five ambitions in my Health Inequalities Strategy. It is important to make sure that local communities benefit from social prescribing. And Team London's 2019 Small Grants programme will offer grants from £5,000

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to £10,000 for volunteering projects that help people who are experiencing loneliness and social isolation and who have been referred through social prescribing to small charities and voluntary sector organisations. These funds will also help to develop the capacity of organisations to engage sustainably with the social prescribing model.

Improving Londoners' mental health is also integral to the Health Inequality Strategy. Through Thrive LDN campaigns we maintain an open conversation with Londoners about mental health and wellbeing, as well as specific projects seeking to engage with certain populations – such as the Mental Health and Culture Festival, and the Right to Thrive programme on stigma, discrimination and mental health.

I have also committed to making London a dementia-friendly city and have signed up to the World Health Organization [WHO] Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

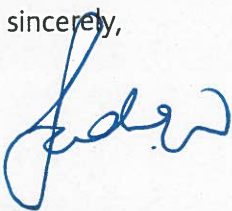
I am continuing to build a strong evidence base on social integration. My Survey of Londoners found that 8 per cent of Londoners often or always feel lonely, and that loneliness is more common amongst younger and single Londoners as well as Londoners with lower incomes and those who are social housing tenants. Over a quarter of Londoners are socially isolated (which means they do not have someone they can rely on a lot in an emergency) and this is more common among Black Londoners and those who do not speak English well. Both loneliness and social isolation are more common among LGBTQ+ Londoners.

The Survey of Londoners has not only been well received by partner organisations working to tackle loneliness and isolation but has helped City Hall understand the causes of isolation. It finds strong links between economic insecurity and social isolation, with food insecurity and fuel poverty significantly associated with a higher likelihood of social isolation. I am taking action on this through my work to support boroughs to produce food poverty action plans and commissioning further research on the food needs of older and disabled Londoners and low-paid night workers. I am also working through the Fuel Poverty Partnership to focus on my Warmer Homes Advice Service and the forthcoming launch of London Power – my new energy supply company which will have a strong offer for the fuel poor. Finally, on economic insecurity, my work on addressing rising levels of in-work poverty through my Good Work Standard will tackle low pay and help employees feel more financially secure.

My City Intelligence team is developing a social integration measurement toolkit to monitor and evaluate social integration interventions – social isolation and loneliness will be a core part of this. The team will continue to refresh and build on our data in order to respond to those who are most affected by these issues in London.

I welcome the support for more work in this area and believe this would be best achieved through continued work through my social integration framework.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London