

## London Assembly Plenary Meeting: Monday 3 September 2018

### Transcript of Item 4 - Mayor's Opening Statement

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Good afternoon. I am delighted to launch the London Health Inequalities Strategy today and to have this opportunity to answer your questions, along with Professor Doyle and Dr Coffey.

London is the greatest city in the world, yet like other global cities we face some big challenges. One of the most pressing is the stark health inequalities that prevent many Londoners from fulfilling their potential. We know that far too many Londoners are still suffering ill health because of social and economic exclusion, and that good health can vary massively from borough to borough and postcode to postcode. Evidence shows that people in low-income households are two to three times more likely to develop mental health problems than those in the highest-income households. We know that the most deprived children in London are more than twice as likely to be obese compared to the least deprived. Studies have shown that boys born in Kingston-upon-Thames can expect to live around 13 years of their lives in poor health, whilst girls born in Tower Hamlets can expect to live 27 years, a third of their lives, in poor health. This is simply not good enough, so at the heart of this new Strategy and as part of what we are doing at City Hall, we are working to create a healthier, fairer city where nobody suffers because of who they are or where they live.

We have received, Chairman, a fantastic response to the consultation from Londoners, businesses, local councils and community organisations from across our city. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Assembly's Health Committee for their valuable scrutiny and input, which has improved our Strategy, and to Dr Onkar Sahota [AM], the Chair of the Committee, in particular.

This Health Inequalities Strategy sets out some big and bold ambitions for our city. This includes helping families ensure a healthy start in life for their children, particularly in the most deprived communities, tackling the stigma people still face around mental health and providing more support, ensuring greater access to green spaces and tackling air pollution so all Londoners can benefit from a healthier environment, empowering Londoners to act on the things that affect their own communities' health and wellbeing, and making sure the healthy choice is the easy choice for Londoners, whether it is healthy food or cycling across our city. Crucially, this Strategy has been developed in tandem with our other Strategies, including Transport, Environment and Housing, because we must always remember that health is part of a much wider picture. We still have a long way to go but we have already made some good progress, from the Healthy Early Years London programme to rolling out mental health training to all schools. I am confident that this Strategy lays out deliverable plans to make London a healthier and fairer city and will help us to improve the lives of Londoners both now and in the future.

But I am afraid, Chairman, I cannot finish without highlighting the enormous and unsustainable pressures currently facing the National Health Service (NHS), council services and public health provision, [who are] crucial partners in reducing health inequalities. Services are massively stretched, waiting times are on the rise and cuts to local government funding, including the Public Health Grant, threaten to undermine the success of our programmes in London, putting people's health at risk. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to everyone who works in the health and care sector but the truth is that without the Government stepping up to the plate and providing the funding our city needs, tackling London's health inequalities is going to be much harder. That is

why I am calling on the Government to use the upcoming Spending Review to reverse its cuts to the Public Health Grant and publish the Green Paper on Adult Social Care so that we have the resources and powers we need to improve the health of our city.

I look forward to answering the Assembly's questions.

**Tony Arbour AM (Chairman):** Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.