

Community Conversations Discussion Guide

Future of employment and skills

Key information

Publication type: General

Publication status: Adopted

Publication date: Monday 21 June 2021

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1. Introduction

London is facing a historically high unemployment rate at a time of great uncertainty, with communities across the capital deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In his manifesto the Mayor committed to making jobs, jobs, jobs his top priority; helping Londoners to get the right skills to find employment has never been more important. As well as helping people to get the job they want, learning at any age gives people confidence, helps them be more active in their communities, and lets them lead happier and healthier lives. London has been a city of learning for over 100 years, and colleges, councils, learning providers and voluntary/community organisations have helped millions of people to learn, gain new skills and to fulfil their potential.

At this critical time in London's history, we want to hear directly from Londoners.

We are inviting all our partners who work directly with Londoners to host a community conversation. Your community conversation can involve video calls, telephone outreach, a conversation on your Facebook group or a session within a community space in accordance with public health guidance.

We understand that access to participating in community conversations is not equal for all Londoners. The GLA is offering Consultation Access Grants of up to £500 for organisations that need support to facilitate a

community conversation. Please visit [this link](#) if you'd like more details about the grant.

To support you in hosting a community conversation we have created this discussion guide setting out the key questions and themes we'd like you to discuss during your conversation.

The aim of these conversations is to capture the diverse range of voices that represent London. We are keen for you to use your knowledge of the community you work with, or are part of, to design the sessions as you see fit. We do ask that, where appropriate, you use the discussion questions to frame the conversation, as these questions are being asked across all our engagement activity and will enable us to analyse the trends and patterns coming out of these conversations.

After a community conversation, you will need to submit a summary of your discussion using our [online form](#). The deadline for hosting your conversation and submitting your summary is midnight on Sunday 8 August 2021.

Once we receive all the community conversation summaries, we will be analysing the feedback along with other forms of engagement and using them to shape the long-term vision for adult learning in London, called the 'Adult Education Roadmap for London'. We will also share the results back with you. These community conversations will build on feedback collected last summer as part of London's Recovery Programme, as well as engagement with community organisations on priorities for skills and employment earlier this year.

2. Discussion Questions

- 1. What are the current barriers to taking part in different classes, courses, and training opportunities in London?**
- 2. Where do you currently go to do classes, courses, training or any other type of learning? How about for help getting a job?**

Hint: this could be locations in your community/neighbourhood, or further afield across London. We're interested in any kind of learning you might do, big or small, formal or informal. We'd also like to know whether these are the same places you go for help finding and preparing for a job.

- 3. Where would you like to see more classes, courses and training opportunities? How can these be made as accessible as possible?**

Hint: this could be specific locations in your community/neighbourhood, or general ideas about where and how learning and training could take place to make it as easy as possible for your community to take part.

- 4. What kind of resources or support would you like to help you find different classes, courses and training opportunities? How about to find job opportunities?**

Hint: we are interested in how you look for and find out about different opportunities. We are also interested in how you decide to take part and sign-up to different opportunities.

5. What can be done to make sure that people doing classes, courses or training have the right digital devices and access to the internet?

Hint: Digital devices could include smart phones, tablets, lap tops or other digital equipment needed to take part in a class, course, or training.

6. What ideas do you have to raise awareness about adult learning opportunities and encourage people in your community to do training, courses, or other kinds of classes?

7. How would you describe adult learning to your community to encourage them to take part?

Hint: The definition of adult learning is any learning, training or education completed by those aged 19+. This includes any classes, courses, training, or qualifications – big or small, formal or informal, in a college or in any other location. This could be anything from training for a particular job, brushing up digital and computer skills, taking an arts class in the evening, or learning English as a second language. This does not include going to university. Taking part in learning opportunities can help you find a job, improve your mental health and well-being, and help you feel more connected to your community.

3. Step by Step Guide

Step 1: Pick a date & time

Think about what time and date is best for your community. Community conversations will need to be held by Sunday 8 August 2021.

Step 2: Identify how you want to reach your community

Think about whether you want to organise a video call, do telephone outreach, host a conversation on your Facebook group or have a session within a community space in accordance with [public health guidance](#).

Step 3: Reach out to or invite your community or network

Think about your community and reach out to individuals or groups who should have a voice in setting the recovery agenda in London. Invite them to participate in a group session or arrange a time to talk to them over the phone.

We have provided sample text for your invite in the appendix.

Step 4: Assign roles and responsibilities

If you are hosting a group conversation, consider assigning roles to help manage the tasks.

- Chair – someone to facilitate the discussions, explain the recovery process and guide discussions.
- Support – someone to send emails, record invite acceptances, take notes during the meeting, upload conversations etc.

Step 5: Preparation

We have provided discussion questions that we'd like you to use for your conversation, if possible. You will need to think about how to structure your session. You may want to focus on particular questions that matter most to your community. Remember that you will need to upload a summary after the conversation, so make sure you've made arrangements to capture a summary of the discussion, for example someone to take notes.

Alongside the discussion questions, consider preparing prompt questions or examples which may help participants engage more fully with the topics.

It is up to you to structure the conversation in the way that works best for your community (length, format, platform etc). In a session that lasts one hour and half you could spend 10 minutes on each question, with 10 minutes of introduction and 10 minutes to close. Alternatively you may want to spend more time on some questions than others.

- Introduction and welcome
- Discussion questions (1-7)
- Close

Step 6: Hold the conversation

Use the agenda as a guide and keep an eye on the time.

Set “ground rules” at the beginning of the call e.g. if you are using an online call platform, use the ‘raise hand function’ to manage contributions.

Bring all participants into the conversation, ensuring all have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

Frame the conversation with the discussion questions set out above whilst being flexible to allow participants to lead the conversation based on their ideas and experiences, keep the questions in mind to guide the conversation.

Make sure someone take notes during the meeting so that they can be fed back at the end.

Step 7: Post conversation activity

You should send a follow up email/letter to all attendees and upload a summary of your conversation using our [online form](#). We have provided a template for the follow up email/letter in the appendix.

4. Signing up to Talk London

City Hall has an online community called Talk London, where Londoners can have their say on big issues and help shape the Mayor's plans and policies. As part of your Community Conversation you may wish to encourage people to [sign up to Talk London](#), so that they can feed into future consultations across a range of different topics, from environment to social integration.

5. Frequently Asked Questions

Who else is holding a Community Conversation?

We are inviting a range of partners to work with us to host Community Conversations. This includes community organisations, individual volunteers, learning providers, local authorities and statutory partners. Your conversation will contribute to the insights used to inform the long-term vision for adult learning in London, particularly the draft Adult Education Roadmap.

Is there funding available to host a conversation?

If you need financial support to engage with your community, whether you will need to create paid roles to deliver the conversation or equipment such as a Zoom subscription, we are providing small access grants of up to £500 to support groups to participate. More information is available in our [guidance document](#) and you can apply using [this online form](#).

How do I support digitally excluded community members to attend my Community Conversation?

We are encouraging hosts to design the Community Conversations in the way that is most accessible to their community. As suggested in the step-by-step guidance, for communities who may be digitally excluded, conversations can be held over the phone or within community or outside spaces in accordance with public health guidance. For those who are not online or are unable to attend in person, we are also encouraging telephone conversations. If you are planning to hold the conversation online, consider members of your community who may be excluded from these discussions and arrange individual phone calls or face to face sessions so they can also feed in their views.

How much flexibility do I have in structuring the session?

The aim of these conversations is to capture the diverse range of voices that represent London. We are keen for you to use your knowledge of the community you work with to design the sessions as you see fit for the group you are engaging with. We do ask that you use the questions set out in this discussion guide to frame the conversation, as these questions are being asked across all our engagement activity and will enable us to analyse the trends and patterns coming out of these conversations. This analysis will be shared with you and will inform the long-term vision for adult learning in London, particularly the Adult Education Roadmap for London which we aim to publish in December 2021.

What happens if we don't get through all the questions during the session?

While ideally you'd cover all the questions during a session, this is not essential. You may want to focus on the questions that matter most to your community. You may also be limited in what you can cover by time or other constraints.

What happens after a Community Conversation?

After a Community Conversation, you will need to submit a summary of your discussion on [our online form](#). There will be a space to upload the notes from your meeting. Once we receive all community conversations, we will be analysing the feedback along with other forms of engagement and sharing them with you. The insights will also inform the long-term vision for adult learning in London, particularly the Adult Education Roadmap for London, which we aim to publish in December 2021.

How will I know what happens with our Community Conversation?

We will be publishing the results and analysis from the Community Conversations on our website and will send these to conversations hosts to share with their participants too. The insights will inform the long-term vision for adult learning in London, particularly the Adult Education Roadmap for London, which we aim to publish in December 2021.

How can my community stay engaged?

The Community Conversations are part of a long-term journey with communities and Londoners to shape learning, employment and skills in the capital. You can stay in the loop with skills and employment related opportunities by signing up to our newsletter for grassroots community organisations (you can sign up when you submit your Community Conversation summary, or alternatively please email sflnews@london.gov.uk). You can also encourage your community to sign up to [Talk London](#), so that they can feed into future consultations across a range of different topics, not just skills and employment, for example environment, social integration, or housing.

6. Appendix

6.1 Invite - sample text

Dear *[insert name]*,

London is facing a historically high unemployment rate at a time of great uncertainty, with communities across the capital deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are working with the Mayor of London's Skills and Employment team to host a Community Conversation on *[insert date/time]* to hear directly from Londoners. We would like to invite you to participate.

Our Community Conversation will involve discussing the future of employment and skills in London, including adult learning, such as classes, courses, training and other qualifications, can work better for Londoners.

Our Community Conversation will be held *[online/venue/over the phone – please add details here]*.

Please confirm by *[insert date/time]* if you like to attend the Community Conversation.

Kind regards,

[insert name]

6.2 Follow up - sample text

Dear *[insert name]*,

Thank you for attending our Community Conversation on the future of employment and skills in London. We have shared your feedback with the Mayor of London's Skills and Employment team.

What will happen with our conversation?

The feedback from our conversation will be analysed alongside conversations held by other communities across London. These results will be shared with us, and will also be used to shape the Mayor's vision for the future of adult learning, skills and employment.

Talk London is the online community where you can have a say on big issues like housing, the environment, transport, recovery and more. You can join the community and stay involved [here](#).

You can also access the [Covid-19 hub](#) which includes public health information, translations, employment rights guidance and more.

Thank you again for your contributions.

Kind regards,

[insert name]

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