

MAYOR OF LONDON

Marina Ahmad AM

Chair of the London Assembly Economy Committee
C/o jack.booth@london.gov.uk


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Dear Marina,

Thank you for the Economy Committee's investigation into financial security and employment opportunities for older Londoners. My reply to each Recommendation set out in the letter received from your predecessor Hina Bokhari AM is set out in the annex below.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

Sadiq Khan

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Annex

Mayor of London's response to the recommendations of the London Assembly Economy Committee's investigation into financial security and employment opportunities for older Londoners

Recommendation 1

The Mayor should promote the GLA as an age-friendly employer and sign the Age-friendly Employer Pledge. He should also encourage other employers in London, including the rest of the GLA Group and local authorities, to sign up to the pledge.

The Mayor has consistently sought to model the best employer practice in order to lead by example and influence employer standards across London and improve the experience of Londoners at work.

Clear examples include the Mayor's Good Work Standard; the Greater London Authority (GLA) leading the way on publishing its disability, ethnicity and gender pay gaps together with action plans; and the GLA's progressive employment policy, including on:

- workplace adjustments
- domestic and gender based violence and abuse
- menopause
- premature birth and neonatal care
- trans and gender identity

The Mayor is very happy to accept this recommendation, which is in line with his record on equality, diversity and inclusion, and will instruct his officers to look at how this recommendation can be properly implemented.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor should lobby the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus to provide more personalised careers advice and support to over 50s seeking employment. This support should be tailored to the specific needs of the individual, for example in relation to health, caring responsibilities and reskilling for those who are looking to change careers.

The Mayor recognises the challenges older people can face when accessing employment support. Health issues, digital exclusion, ageism and lack of support in the workplace can pose significant challenges for older Londoners in accessing employment support and skills provision. This can undermine their well-being and limit the huge contribution older Londoners make to their communities and to London's economy. Addressing these challenges requires us to work collaboratively with employers and support services to create age-friendly workplaces and services, which acknowledge and value the contributions and needs of our older citizens. By doing so, we can not only improve their financial stability but also enhance their overall well-being and quality of life.

The Mayor is determined to make London a city where no matter what point people are at in their life, they are valued, respected and supported every step of the way on their educational and employment journeys. Reskilling and supporting older Londoners to access information on the skills and employment opportunities they need is a key part of this, and the Mayor is already making key strides towards improving this.

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The Mayor is in full agreement that JobCentre Plus (JCP) has an important role to play in providing advice and support to Londoners seeking employment and adult education opportunities, including providing tailored support to meet the needs of individuals. To support this in London, he is using the No Wrong Door programme to create strategic partnerships with London Councils, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and JCP. No Wrong Door is working to improve the integration and coordination of London's skills and employment systems and better connect Londoners with relevant support. The programme is delivered through four integration hubs in each of London's sub-regions.

Each hub is promoting referral pathways to adult education for residents who face additional barriers to accessing skills and training. For example, the Local London sub regional partnership's integration hub regularly engages with colleges and adult education providers to build appropriate referral pathways for residents over the age of 50. In West London, the West London Alliance is conducting research into the barriers and challenges facing the over 50s in getting the support they need to move into good work; this research will be shared with strategic partners to inform future work. Through No Wrong Door, we will address the barriers that marginalised groups of Londoners face in accessing support and create pathways for them to access training and employment.

This programme has provided a good foundation for strengthening our relationships with JCP and employment support providers in London, and the Mayor will continue to work with JCP to promote good advice and support and referrals to upskilling opportunities. GLA officers now meet monthly with London Councils, DWP and the subregional partnerships to coordinate London's skills and employment offer, sharing information which promotes greater access, support and inclusion, resulting in a more streamlined skills and employment system and providing greater and more relevant opportunities for Londoners.

The Mayor has also been clear on his commitment to making adult skills provision accessible and relevant for all Londoners so that they can get the skills they need for life and work. Significant numbers of older Londoners are already benefitting from learning funded through the Adult Education Budget (AEB). In the 2021/22 academic year, for example, 58,660 Londoners over the age of 50 enrolled in 129,920 courses. There has been a 22 per cent increase in participation over the last year, showing the great steps the Mayor has made to upskilling for older Londoners, following the pandemic.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor should develop an Employers Toolkit for older Londoners in the city to help employers become age-friendly, based on similar examples in other parts of the UK.

In May 2022, the London Recovery Board published Building a Fairer City, its structural inequalities action plan for London. The foundation of the plan's ambition was created by reaching out and speaking directly with London's communities, and specifically older Londoners, and the actions contained in the plan recognise that those who were hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic were Londoners already familiar with hardship and unequal living standards. Those who could least afford to lose were those who lost the most, and the inequalities experienced by older Londoners worsened during the pandemic.

The action plan focuses on four main priority areas, one of which is labour market inequality. The London Recovery Board, co-chaired by the Mayor, is acutely aware of the entrenched discrimination experienced by older Londoners, and the resulting actions are ones that London Recovery Board members can take as employers, service providers and influencers and can be used

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as a route map to their own progress against entrenched inequality and injustice. This action plan brings London's recovery partners together around a common vision for a future where everyone has a fair chance at getting a job, promotion or training, with less pay disparity and fewer barriers to work, and public services tackle structural discrimination head on to eradicate all forms of inherent bias.

In addition, through the Mayor's WIN programme, he is supporting employers across London to improve their practices to recruit more diverse workforces and retain staff. The Mayor's Inclusive Employers Toolkit sets out actions businesses can take to improve workforce diversity, and the Workforce Data Equality Guide lays out how employers can gather evidence to test initiatives to support specific groups of Londoners.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should encourage employers in London to adopt age friendly practices to support older workers in the capital.

The Mayor has sought to model the best employer practice and to influence employer standards across London through his Good Work Standard, a benchmark he would like all employers to aim for and achieve.

This includes promotion of the highest standards in recruitment, flexible working, skills and career development, health and wellbeing support and inclusive culture. These are all identified as important areas in the Age Friendly Employer Pledge.

The Mayor is very happy to accept this recommendation, which is in line with his record on equality, diversity and inclusion, and will instruct his officers to look at how this recommendation can be properly implemented.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor, working with local authorities and businesses, should ensure that decent public toilet provision is in place across the city to allow older Londoners to travel and work with confidence.

The Mayor's Good Growth Programme is delivering accessible and inclusive public toilets on an ongoing basis.

Large-scale development must conform with London Plan Policy S6. This expects developers of new, large-scale developments that are open to the public, or large public realm spaces, to provide and secure the future management of free, publicly accessible toilets suitable for a range of potential users. There must also be free '[Changing Places](#)' toilet provision; these toilet facilities should be available during opening hours, or 24 hours a day for public realm spaces.

For smaller development proposals, Policy S6 supports London boroughs to secure access to toilet facilities through other means.

The Mayor's Night Czar and the GLA's Public Toilets Working Group will explore how to increase the provision of public toilets between 6pm and 6am for older people going out in the evening.

Transport for London (TfL) is in the early stages of conducting a feasibility study into improving and expanding toilet facilities on the network, which they recognise are important for customer care and particularly for older customers. Through this study, TfL hopes to gain greater

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understanding of where to focus efforts to improve existing facilities and identify future opportunities for more toilets.

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should set targets for the number of older Londoners that will benefit each year from his digital inclusion initiatives. He should report back to the Committee on progress and the impact of his work.

The Mayor's Get Online London (GOL) programme has partnered with the London Office of Technology and Innovation and the national digital inclusion charity Good Things Foundation to support 75,000 Londoners during a three-year pilot.

The programme is strengthening the social infrastructure in communities to support all digital Londoners with getting online – including around employment. GOL embeds digital inclusion support into a variety of different organisations, and assists older Londoners who are a key demographic that are supported – including those who are from different ethnic backgrounds, unemployed, insecurely housed and/or living in poverty or those with disabilities.

As well as providing access to free data and devices, GOL is also offering training to hubs to use Learn My Way with the people they support. This is a free-to-access learning platform for helping people to build digital skills. Learn My Way has been designed with community organisations for use in community-based settings, such as libraries and community centres, to build basic digital skills and confidence. Topics cover multiple areas relevant to older Londoners' digital confidence and skills – starting with the basics such as using a touchscreen or mouse – and progressing to digital skills around using video calls online safety.

Also, there are multiple topics on the digital skills required to access today's employment opportunities:

- Basics of online job searching
- Searching for jobs online
- Applying for jobs online
- Advanced features of job sites
- Checking your skills for work
- The skills needed for different jobs
- Help getting a job
- Preparing for work

The GOL programme is designed to help provide resources for and train organisations that support Londoners. Organisations supporting GOL do so on a voluntary and needs-led basis. They would be unable to monitor and set a target for older people as this would be difficult to manage, and resource intensive. Research undertaken by the London Office of Technology and Innovation through the Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme has focused instead on user profiles known as 'personas' drawn from the experience of the pandemic.

Other evidence presented to the Digital Inclusion Taskforce suggests that fear of scams is a particular factor with older people, and this is recognised in the government's national awareness campaigns to help create more confidence in the benefits of being online and how to navigate it in a safe way. The Mayor can report on the following:

The number of digital inclusion hubs and the number of local databank partners in London – Currently there are 326 digital inclusion hubs and 201 databanks.

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The proportion of these organisations that specifically support older Londoners – (Some hubs support a wide range of people, but they may not identify as providing specialist support to older Londoners, so the true number of hubs supporting older people will be higher). Currently, there are 133 hubs that support older Londoners.

The Mayor also funds a national legal entitlement for Londoners to access essential digital skills courses through his management of the AEB in London. This targets groups that are disproportionately likely to be digitally excluded, such as older Londoners, allowing them to gain a qualification up to level one, which supports learners to gain skills such as using devices, communicating and being safe online. The Mayor has also introduced provider delivery plans for all AEB funded providers. Through these plans, providers need to set out how they will be delivering to learners in line with the Mayor's priorities. This includes setting out how many older Londoners they will aim to reach through their provision.

The number and demographics of Londoners accessing the AEB are monitored and published on the London Datastore. In the last academic year, 24 per cent of Londoners accessing these courses were aged 50 and over.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should report back to the Committee on the impact of his campaign to boost the uptake of Pension Credit amongst older Londoners. He should inform the Committee of his plans to scale up this campaign and identify other proactive ways to improve the uptake of Pension Credit in London. He should also lobby the Government to do more to raise awareness of Pension Credit in London, and to explore options for simplifying the application processes.

Final letters for the Pension Credit Uptake Campaign have now been sent out. We have started receiving early data for the impact of the campaign and we will have final data towards the end of Summer 2023. The Mayor will be pleased to report to the Economy Committee when the evaluation has been completed, and share any plans for future Uptake Campaigns in due course. Officers will be engaging with the DWP Pension Credit Policy Team to share these findings when they are available.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor should explore options to carry out research and collect the views of older Londoners on their levels of financial security and access to employment. This could be carried out as part of the GLA's regular polling of Londoners.

The current polling programme and other data sources provide GLA officers with information on the views of older Londoners on these issues. This is supported by regular engagement with organisations representing the views of older Londoners. Therefore, additional research is not required at this time. The Mayor will continue to ensure policies and programmes delivered by the GLA give due consideration to the needs of older Londoners via the full range of our research activities, including ongoing consideration of whether further sources of information are needed at any point.