

### Call for evidence: The declining number of children in London

September 2025

The London Assembly Economy, Culture and Skills Committee has launched an investigation into [the declining number of children in London](#). The aims and objectives of the investigation are:

- To investigate current and projected trends relating to birth rates and the number of children in London
- To investigate how these trends differ in inner and outer London
- To understand the causes of the declining number of births and young children living in London
- To examine what a declining child population will mean for schools and other public services in London
- To understand the immediate and medium-term economic impact of fewer families and children living in London
- To ask whether the Mayor, local and central government should take action to address the decline in London's child population

The Committee would like to invite those who have knowledge of this topic to provide written evidence to the Committee. It would also like to invite individuals with lived experience of this issue to

respond. The information you provide will help to inform the work of the Committee and influence its recommendations.

### Background

The total number of children in London's primary schools has been falling since around 2016. The numbers are continuing to fall in Inner London, while they appear to have stabilised in Outer London.<sup>1</sup> This can be explained by both domestic migration out of London and falling fertility rates.

The annual number of births in London peaked around 2012 but has since fallen steadily, and the number of births in 2023 was 20 per cent lower than the 2012 figure.<sup>2</sup> This has been driven by a drop in fertility rates rather than a decrease in the number of potential mothers.<sup>3</sup> The decline in the fertility rate is greater in Inner London than in the rest of England and Wales, while the decline in Outer London is similar to the national picture.<sup>4</sup>

The reduction in the number of children in primary schools impacts the amount of funding a school receives.<sup>5</sup> There have been

<sup>1</sup> City Intelligence, [London's population of young children - current and future](#), July 2024

<sup>2</sup> City Intelligence, [The State of London - June 2025](#)

<sup>3</sup> City Intelligence, [The State of London - June 2025](#)

<sup>4</sup> City Intelligence, [London's population of young children - current and future](#), July 2024. Total Fertility Rate is defined as "the average number of children a

woman would be expected to have in her lifetime if she were to experience current age-specific fertility rates".

<sup>5</sup> London Councils, [Continued drop in school places demand creates impossible choices for London schools](#), 18 February 2025

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various reports of primary schools in Inner London boroughs having to merge or close due to decreasing numbers of children.<sup>6</sup>

The decline in the number of children growing up in London is generally attributed to the high cost of living, and in particular housing costs. According to London Councils, “the drop in birth rate is mainly due to the severe shortage of affordable family housing in the capital, leading to more people deciding not to have families in London”.<sup>7</sup> The GLA highlights housing costs, childcare costs and the increased cost of basic necessities as factors creating “an unfavourable environment for low-income families with children”.<sup>8</sup>

London’s declining birth and fertility rates mean that the decrease in the number of young children living in the capital is expected to continue. A London Councils report from February 2025 predicts a decrease of 3.6 per cent in reception pupil numbers in London over the next four years, which translates to 3,195 places or 117 reception classes.<sup>9</sup> All Inner London boroughs are expected to see a fall, whereas some Outer London boroughs are expected to see an increase.<sup>10</sup>

### How to respond

The Committee welcomes any evidence relevant to the following questions from organisations and experts on this topic:

1. What are the reasons behind the reduction in the number of people raising children in London?
2. What impact is this demographic change having on public services in London, in particular schools, and what further impact could it have in the future?
3. Is this demographic change having any immediate impact on London’s economy, and what impact could it have in the future?
4. Should the Mayor, central and local government take action to address this issue, and if so, how?

You do not need to answer all questions - please answer only those that are most relevant to you or your organisation.

**The deadline for responding is Monday 10 November 2025.**

<sup>6</sup> BBC News, [Two more schools to close amid birth-rate decline](#), 25 April 2025; [Decline in London school pupil numbers to continue](#), 18 February 2025.

<sup>7</sup> London Councils, [Continued drop in school places demand creates impossible choices for London schools](#), 18 February 2025

<sup>8</sup> City Intelligence, [The State of London - June 2025](#)

<sup>9</sup> London Councils, [Continued drop in school places demand creates impossible choices for London schools](#), 18 February 2025

<sup>10</sup> London Councils, [Continued drop in school places demand creates impossible choices for London schools](#), 18 February 2025

The Committee is also keen to hear from Londoners and people who have moved out of London about this issue. If you have moved out of London, or are considering moving out of London in order to have children, please share your experiences and tell us your reasons for this. [Please fill out our online form here.](#)

### What we will do with the responses

The results will be used to inform the London Assembly Economy, Culture and Skills Committee's investigation. Responses may be used to form part of a report or output from the Committee.

In the large majority of circumstances we will publish written submissions and the name of the individual or organisation that submitted it online. This is so that there is transparency about what evidence the Committee has received. Exceptions to this are usually applied where there is a legal reason for non-publication or if there is a safeguarding or welfare issue. If there is a reason that you would like your evidence not to be published with your name (submitted anonymously) or not to be published at all (submitted confidentially), please let us know and the Committee will consider the request. However, this cannot be guaranteed, and the Assembly may be required to release non-personally identifiable information if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

### About the London Assembly Economy, Culture and Skills Committee

The London Assembly consists of 25 elected London Assembly Members, who publicly examine the policies and programmes of the Mayor of London and relevant agencies through committee meetings, plenary sessions, site visits and investigations.

The Economy, Culture and Skills Committee examines and reports on matters relating to economic development, culture, skills, sport and tourism in London, and leads on scrutiny of any actions or decisions taken by the Mayor in these areas. It routinely publishes the findings and recommendations of its investigations.

The members of the committee are:

- Hina Bokhari AM (Chair)
- Anne Clarke AM (Deputy Chair)
- Marina Ahmad AM
- Neil Garratt AM
- Alessandro Georgiou AM
- Zack Polanski AM
- Unmesh Desai AM

### Contact us

<b>Email submissions</b>	<b><a href="mailto:scrutiny@london.gov.uk">scrutiny@london.gov.uk</a></b> Please use 'Economy, Culture and Skills Committee call for evidence' as the subject title
<b>Further information</b>	Tim Gallagher, Senior Policy Adviser, <a href="mailto:Tim.Gallagher@london.gov.uk">Tim.Gallagher@london.gov.uk</a>
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