

Dear Assembly Member Duvall,

Following our very useful meeting a few months ago, I am writing to you on behalf of the London Youth Assembly to highlight three of the key areas we will focus on this year and how we hope to engage with the London Assembly in order to achieve our goals.

Political Awareness and Education

Recently, many young people have become apathetic towards politics, reflected in falling turnouts for those aged 18-25. Lowering the voting age risks worsening this, so we must act now to ensure all young Londoners receive an active political education. A review of citizenship lessons is needed, as well as more interactions between politicians including Assembly Members and young people.

LYA members rank political awareness and education as the most important single topic for young people in their boroughs, with an average 4.43 out of 5 rating. We are creating a new Sub-Committee to investigate this issue, working with our first ever Shadow Cabinet Lead for Education. We are already engaging with the GLA Democracy team and Partnership for Young London, but we need to work directly with the London Assembly on this topic.

Mental Health

Secondly, it's time to start conversations about young people's mental health. Over a fifth of young people in England face a probable mental health disorder according to the NHS itself, and these children are also seven times more likely to miss fifteen days of school in a year. The NHS struggles to cope with demand, so more responsibilities for mental health provision are being given to schools. Alongside this, there are huge differences in the how educational facilities in London address student mental health. Therefore, with the support of the London Assembly, to need a review mental health in schools and clearer guidance about how schools can best support students, and to work with the Health Committee to discuss this further.

Equal Opportunities

Thirdly, opportunities. Ensuring equal access to opportunities was overwhelmingly voted as the focus for our second Sub-Committee in July, showing the importance of this issue to young people across London.

But equal access isn't just an issue – it holds huge positive potential. We want to work with the Economy, Skills and Culture Committee to reduce barriers to opportunities and ensure all young Londoners have access to information about work experience and different forms of higher education. Our Sub-Committee will be producing a report on different inequalities of opportunity across the capital and looking at how to encourage organisations to improve the range of opportunities they offer.

On these topics and others, we really look forward to working with yourself and the London Assembly. Our enlarged Shadow Cabinet are also contacting the Chairs of their respective committees over the next few weeks about priorities and how they can best support the work of the committees.

We would really appreciate you coming to one of our main meetings at City Hall in coming months. They are on the 23rd of September, the 20th of November and the 17th of February, please let us know what would work best for you.

Many thanks

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Chair of the London Youth Assembly

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