

MDA No.: 1869

**Title: Health Committee Rapporteurship –
*Enabling community use of school sports facilities in London***

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the Health Committee Meeting on 16 June 2026, the Health Committee received a report on its work programme and resolved:

That authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree any output from the Rapporteurship on the community use of school sports facilities to support exercise and reduce health inequalities for young Londoners.

- 1.2 Following consultation with party Group Lead Members, the Chair of the Health Committee agreed the Committee's *Enabling community use of school sports facilities in London* rapporteurship report, as attached at **Appendix 1**.

2. Decision

- 2.1 **That the Chair of the Health Committee, in consultation with the party Group Lead Members, agree the Committee's *Enabling community use of school sports facilities in London* rapporteurship report, as attached at Appendix 1.**

Assembly Member

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Printed Name: Krupesh Hirani AM, Chair of the Health Committee

Date: 24 June 2026

3. Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

Background and proposed next steps:

- 3.1 The exercise of delegated authority approving the report will be formally noted at the Health Committees' next appropriate meeting.
- 3.2 At the Health Committee Meeting on 26 November 2025, the Committee agreed to recommend to the GLA Oversight Committee the appointment of Krupesh Hirani AM as a rapporteur to carry out an investigation into community use of school sports facilities to support exercise and reduce health inequalities for young Londoners and agreed the scope of the investigation.
- 3.3 At the Greater London Authority (GLA) Oversight Committee Meeting on 11 December 2025, the Committee agreed that Krupesh Hirani AM be appointed as a rapporteur to lead an investigation into community use of school sports facilities to support exercise and reduce health inequalities for young Londoners on behalf of the Health Committee and agreed the scope of the investigation.
- 3.4 Officers confirm that the response falls within these terms of reference.

Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision:

Signature (Committee Services):



Printed Name: Diane Richards

Date: 24 June 2026

Financial Implications: NOT REQUIRED

Note: Finance comments and signature are required only where there are financial implications arising or the potential for financial implications.

Signature (Finance): Not Required

Printed Name:

Date:

Legal Implications:

The Chair of the Health Committee has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signature (Legal): 

Printed Name: Rory Mckenna, Monitoring Officer

Date: 24 June 2026

Email: rory.mckenna@london.gov.uk

Supporting Detail / List of Consultees:

- *Emma Best AM, Caroline Russell AM and Alex Wilson AM*

4. Public Access to Information

- 4.1 Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the FoIA, or the EIR and will be made available on the GLA Website, usually within one working day of approval.
- 4.2 If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.
- 4.3 **Note:** this form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If yes, until what date:

Part 2 – Sensitive Information:

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA or EIR should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form? NO

Lead Officer / Author

Signature: *Kenny Oladimeji*

Printed Name: Kenny Oladimeji

Job Title: Research Analyst, Research Unit

Date: 24 June 2026

Countersigned by Executive Director:

Signature: *Helen Ewen*

Printed Name: Helen Ewen

Date: 24 June 2026

Enabling community use of school sports facilities in London

Health Committee - Rapporteurship

June 2026



Health Committee



Krupesh Hirani AM
Chair
Labour



Emma Best AM
Deputy Chairman
Conservatives



Marina Ahmad AM
Labour



Andrew Boff AM
Conservatives



Caroline Russell AM
Green



Alex Wilson AM
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The Health Committee examines matters relating to health and wellbeing issues for Londoners, particularly public health issues. It also keeps a close eye on how well the Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy is doing.

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Foreword



Krupesh Hirani AM
Rapporteur

Sports and physical activity are so important for young people's overall wellbeing. As well as mental and physical health benefits, exercise is closely linked to improved learning and educational attainment.

I was motivated to undertake this rapporteurship because too many young people in London face barriers to enjoying the benefits of physical exercise.

Shockingly, more than half of London's young people do not meet the recommended daily level of exercise – the highest number of young people not meeting this level in the country. A key problem in London is the lack of publicly available affordable sports facilities.

Schools offer a great way forward – walk around your local area and you'll no doubt come across schools with fields, sports halls, and even swimming pools, locked away and left unused outside school hours.

These are public assets that should be put towards maximum public benefit. This investigation heard of excellent models working across London, but we also heard that too often, community groups couldn't access facilities and schools face barriers to opening up out of hours.

Since I launched this rapporteurship, the Government has announced a £1 billion national fund for school sports, with £200 million ringfenced for improving school sports facilities. I'm delighted to see this recognition of the important role that school facilities can play in getting more of our young people exercising. There is also the additional positive impact that having facilities available and open outside school hours can also have on community groups as well as older and disabled people.

This report heard from many schools and community organisations across London through in-person sessions and our written call for evidence. I'm very grateful to those who gave up their time to participate in this work and I hope they'll see their input reflected in the report.

We also drew on the insight and expertise of London Sport, without whom this report wouldn't have been possible.

Finally, I would like to thank the Assembly's Scrutiny staff for their dedication throughout this process and my fellow Health Committee Members for their support and feedback in drafting the report.

Schools can be an excellent resource for enabling community use of school sports facilities and the recommendations in this report should go some way towards improving London's physical activity rate.

Executive Summary

A significant proportion of sports facilities in London are located on school sites; 40 per cent of sports halls, 32 per cent of playing fields and 22 per cent of swimming pools in London are behind school gates.

Despite this, community and youth groups face challenges when trying to access school facilities outside school hours. Groups are sometimes met with reluctance from some schools and education authorities to open up their facilities for community use with only 42 per cent of schools in London reportedly making their facilities available to the community outside school hours.

A lack of access to affordable sports facilities is a barrier to Londoners, including young Londoners, being active. In 2024-25, more than half of children and young people in London did not achieve the Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) recommended daily levels of physical activity. Participation in sport and physical activity also varies among different demographic groups with children and young people from Black and Asian ethnic groups, those from less affluent families, and girls all being less likely to meet the recommended activity levels.

On behalf of the Health Committee, Krupesh Hirani AM carried out an investigation into whether and how community use of school sports facilities should be enabled to support exercise and reduce health inequalities for young people.

We heard general agreement on the positive impact that access to sports facilities outside of school hours can have on people's mental and physical health. Increased access can help to increase physical activity levels in children and young people, support the development of social skills, and even provide constructive activities that may reduce the risk of involvement in crime. We were also told that community use of school sports facilities can benefit schools themselves, for example when youth and community groups advocate for funding to improve or install new school sports facilities.

Improving community access to school sports facilities requires sustained and dedicated funding. We heard that the previous Opening School Facilities fund had a material impact on the ability of schools to make their sports facilities accessible after hours, but that in its absence, a lack of funding is a significant barrier. While examples of good practice shared during this investigation demonstrate what is possible, these models rely on dedicated funding to enable schools to successfully open their facilities. There is therefore a clear need to restore and strengthen government funding to provide consistent and sustainable community access to school sports facilities across London.

There is also a role for the Mayor to play in maximising the impact of existing GLA funding mechanisms. Making the funding requirements of the GLA's Go! London scheme more flexible, including reopening the fund to schools and enabling it to be used for both capital and revenue

projects, would mean that it could be utilised for this purpose. Similarly, closer integration between funding aimed at achieving violence reduction outcomes for young people and that aimed at health outcomes for young people, would ensure that the impact of funding is maximised.

Improved funding opportunities can address some of the barriers facing schools and youth and community groups when trying to open up facilities effectively. However, we heard that there are further barriers to community access to school sports facilities which must be taken into account to ensure additional funding has the desired impact. These barriers include difficulties locating suitable facilities and the existing condition of some facilities being unsuitable for lettings.

These barriers are not insurmountable. We heard examples of approaches that have worked well in improving access to school sports facilities, such as School Sport Partnerships, dynamic pricing and practical steps such as keypad entry systems. It is clear that combined with suitable funding and a collaborative approach, these examples of good practice can provide a blueprint for how more schools can successfully open their facilities. This will help ensure that youth and community groups can access these facilities and expand opportunities for young Londoners and the wider community to lead healthy and active lifestyles.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Department for Education should ensure that the newly announced funding for school sport includes a sustained funding stream for both revenue and capital expenditure, similar to the Opening School Facilities (OSF) fund, to support schools in opening their sports facilities for community use over the long term.

Recommendation 2

In 2026-27, the GLA should work with partners to reinstate funding for schools, through Go! London or other programmes, to enable greater out-of-hours access to their sports facilities. It should ensure these grants can be used flexibly across both revenue and capital expenditure as needed.

Recommendation 3

In the next two months, the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) should meet with Go! London and relevant GLA health teams, as well as external partners such as London Sport, to explore the areas where funding programmes can simultaneously deliver both violence reduction and health inequality outcomes for young people and to ensure that opportunities for crossover are maximised. Going forward, the GLA should, all else being equal, prioritise funding programmes that aim to improve both health and violence reduction among young people.

Recommendation 4

The GLA should ensure that any GLA funding for school sport facilities is contingent on youth and community groups, including those for elderly and disabled Londoners, being able to access those facilities at reduced prices.

Recommendation 5

The GLA should partner with Sports England to develop its existing database with additional details on availability, pricing and booking arrangements. The GLA should promote the use of the database in London as a tool for community and youth groups to find suitable facilities.

Recommendation 6

London boroughs should explore opportunities to create partnerships, such as Merton's School Sport Partnership, to connect communities and youth groups with schools and share best practice. A first step would be for London Councils and borough representatives to meet with

Merton's School Sport Partnership in the next two months to find out how its approach could be replicated in other boroughs.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor's next London Plan should continue to explore how planning tools and guidance can support the delivery of sports facilities that benefit both schools and the wider community. Once the Plan is published, the GLA should meet with local authorities to ensure they have clarity on how planning decisions might maximise suitable opportunities to develop sports facilities on school sites.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor should explicitly recognise school sports facilities as key delivery partners in implementing the Health Inequalities Strategy, ensuring they are embedded within London's wider approach to supporting physical activity and reducing health inequalities.

Chapter one: Accessing sports facilities in London

Having local sports facilities means little if people cannot access them to reap their benefits. But this is the reality facing many youth and community groups in London. We carried out this investigation to dig deeper into these challenges and understand the possible solutions. In this context, we looked at the provision and availability of sports facilities in London, considering whether it is easy for people, particularly youth and community groups, to find and access local facilities.

Youth and community sport group representatives told us that access to suitable spaces is one of the biggest challenges they face, and many are constantly searching for new facilities.¹ Written evidence submitted by Merton Hockey Club, a community sports club, highlighted the shortage of accessible facilities in London as the “root problem”, limiting opportunities for community groups to access suitable spaces.² This reflects the Sported Community Pulse Winter 2024 report, which found that 45 per cent of community groups surveyed in London identified the availability of facilities as a significant challenge.³

National data shows that 12 of the 15 local authorities with the lowest number of publicly accessible sports facilities per 10,000 people nationally are in London.⁴ We heard from London Sport that these boroughs also have some of the highest inactivity levels in London. It added that in areas where sport and physical activity levels are lowest, a lack of available facilities is likely to make this worse.⁵

According to London Sport, public playing fields and other sports facilities in London are being placed under increasing pressure, with reduced public access and availability as sites are privatised, developed, or change use.⁶ Some types of facilities are in especially short supply. Sports Fun 4 All, a charity which provides football coaching and sessions, noted the difficulties of accessing training facilities in the evenings for community football clubs due to a lack of astroturf pitches with suitable floodlighting.⁷ Similarly, Synergy Gymnastics London, a Community Interest Company (CIC) providing gymnastics classes for children and adults, argued that gymnastics in particular is a “really underserved sport” in terms of available and suitable facilities.⁸

¹ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

² Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by Merton Hockey Club

³ Sported, [The Pulse - London](#), Winter 2024–25, page 13

⁴ ONS, [More adults are active in areas with a higher number of sports facilities](#), 7 March 2024

⁵ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by London Sport

⁶ London Sport, [London Sport Partners with Sport England and KKP to Safeguard London's Playing Fields](#), November 2024

⁷ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

⁸ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

London Tigers, a community sports charity, highlighted that the provision of sports facilities was likely to be uneven across London, with more sports facilities located in outer London compared to inner London.⁹

School sport facilities in London

The Government's School Premises Regulations 2012 states that schools must provide suitable outdoor space for physical education (PE) and for pupils to play outside.¹⁰ As a result, a significant number of the capital's sports facilities are located on school sites; London Sport told us that 40 per cent of sports halls, 32 per cent of playing fields and 22 per cent of swimming pools in London are behind school gates.¹¹

Yet community and youth group representatives reported that accessing school facilities outside school hours can be very challenging. Sport England's response to our call for evidence noted that it is occasionally met with reluctance from some schools and education authorities to open up their facilities for community use.¹² At our roundtable in February 2026, there was consensus from all youth and community group representatives that it was "really difficult" to get access to school facilities.¹³ We heard that community and youth groups were frequently met with unresponsiveness or resistance when trying to access these spaces.

This is unsurprising. Research by London Sport found that only 42 per cent of schools in London open their facilities outside of school hours for community use.¹⁴ Figure 1 illustrates school sports facilities in London, distinguishing between those that are publicly accessible in some form and those that are private and not open to public or community access.

⁹ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

¹⁰ Gov UK, [The School Premises \(England\) Regulations 2012](#), accessed 19 March 2026

¹¹ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by London Sport

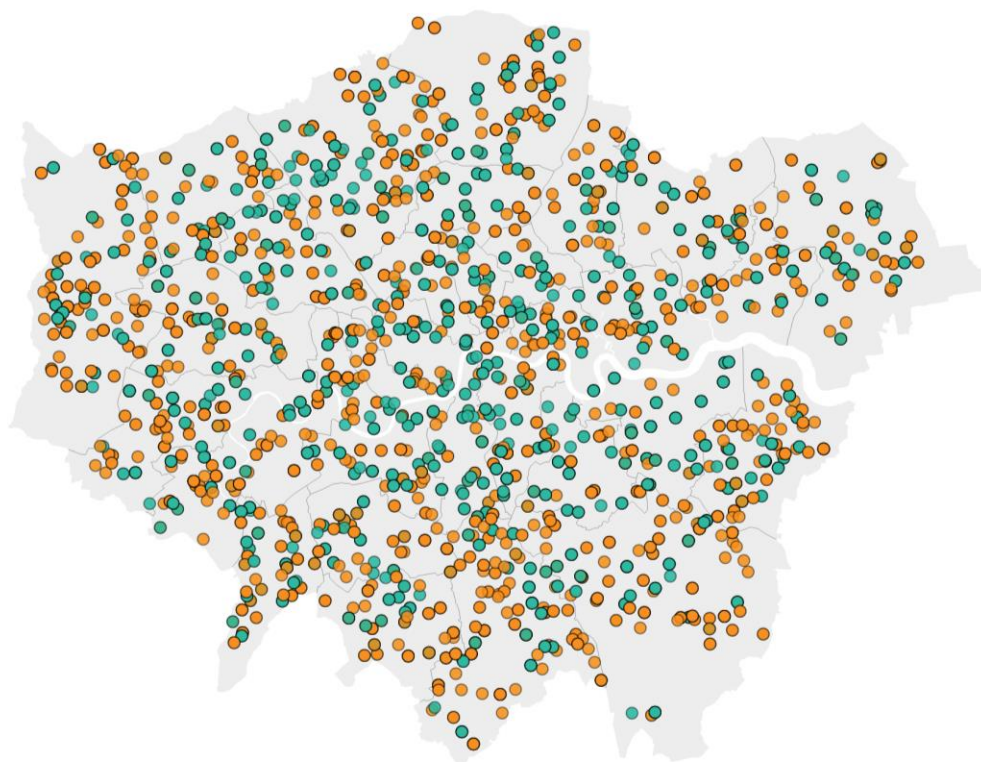
¹² Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by Sport England

¹³ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

¹⁴ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by London Sport

Figure 1: Operational school sports facilities in London¹⁵

Private (not open to public access) Public access



Map data: © Crown copyright and database right 2018 • Created with Datawrapper

It is clear that despite schools holding a large share of sports facilities in London, many of these are not accessible to the wider community. As a result, youth and community groups often struggle to find suitable spaces to be active. Opening up more school sports facilities in London outside of school hours can help to address this unmet need, reducing the challenges faced by youth and community groups and helping more Londoners lead active and healthy lifestyles.

¹⁵ London Assembly Research Unit analysis of data from [Active Places Power](#), accessed 26 March 2026

Chapter two: Impacts of opening up facilities

We carried out this investigation into community access to school sports facilities because the impacts of not being physically active are real, and serious. Physical inactivity is not just a personal issue, it is a major public health challenge with serious implications for individuals, the NHS and the wider economy. The barriers to accessing school sports facilities identified in this investigation limit opportunities for people to be physically active, particularly for youth and community groups.

Physical inactivity is associated with 1 in 6 deaths in the UK and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually, including £0.9 billion to the NHS.¹⁶ Regular physical activity reduces the risk of major illnesses, such as cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, stroke and cancer, and lowers the risk of early death by up to 30 per cent.¹⁷ It is also associated with a reduced risk of diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis and with improved mental health.¹⁸

The UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) Guidelines recommend that children and young people aged 5 to 18 years old engage in sport and physical activity for at least 60 minutes each day.¹⁹ It states that in children and young people, regular physical activity contributes to a healthy weight and is associated with improved learning and attainment and better mental and cardiovascular health.²⁰ Youth group representatives at our 16 February roundtable told us that community youth sports offer significant social and mental health benefits, helping young people build friendships, develop social skills and boost wellbeing.²¹

Physical inactivity in London

Sport England's 2024-25 Active Lives Children and Young People survey found more than half of children and young people in London (53 per cent) were not achieving the recommended daily levels of physical activity.²² This was the highest proportion of all regions in England. The percentage of children not meeting these activity levels varied significantly between boroughs, ranging from 60 per cent in Enfield to 43 per cent in Wandsworth.²³

¹⁶ OHID, [Physical activity: applying All Our Health](#), 10 March 2022

¹⁷ NHS, [Benefits of exercise](#)

¹⁸ DHSC, [Obesity, physical activity and nutrition](#), updated February 2026

¹⁹ DHSC, [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#), September 2019

²⁰ DHSC, [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#), September 2019

²¹ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

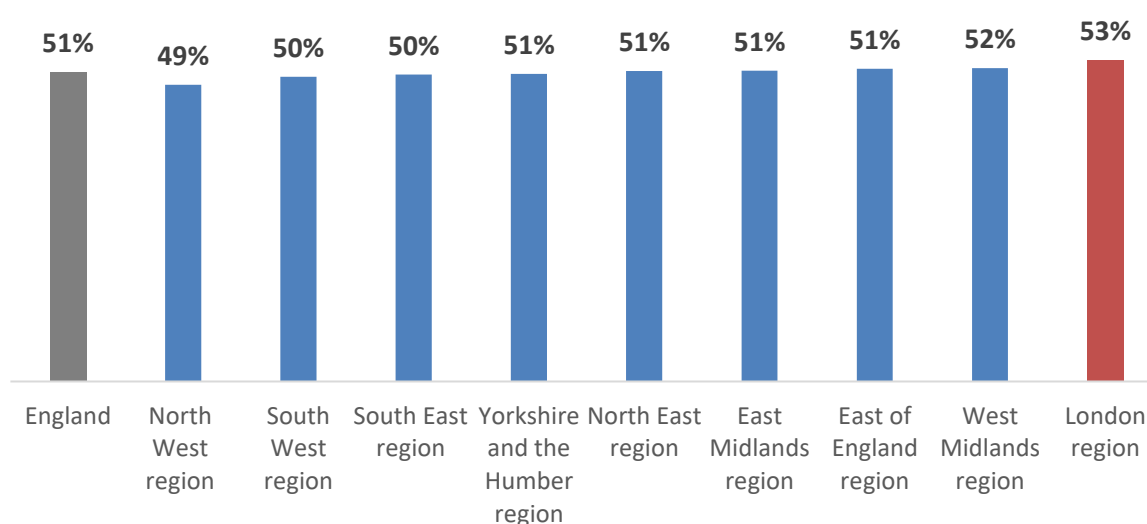
²² Sport England, [Active Lives Children and Young People Survey 2024-25](#), December 2025

²³ DHSC, [Obesity, physical activity and nutrition – Data](#), accessed 31 March 2026

Sport England's survey also found that children and young people from Black and Asian ethnic groups, those from less affluent families, and girls were all less likely to meet the recommended activity levels.²⁴

The lack of physical activity is reflected in wider health outcomes. According to Trust for London, childhood obesity is also more prevalent in London than England overall. Its research shows that 23 per cent of children aged 10-11 in London were considered obese in 2024-25, compared to the national average of 22 per cent.²⁵

Figure 2: Percentage of children aged 5-16 years old not meeting CMO guidelines for physical activity, 2024-25²⁶



Barriers to becoming active, including a lack of affordable access to facilities, disproportionately affect the most disadvantaged Londoners. This contributes to inequalities in both participation and wider health outcomes.²⁷ According to London Sport, those experiencing the most pronounced health inequalities, including Londoners with disabilities and long-term health conditions, are most likely to be among the least active.²⁸

²⁴ Sport England, [Active Lives Children and Young People Survey 2024-25](#), December 2025

²⁵ Trust for London, Childhood obesity by London borough,

²⁶ London Assembly Research unit analysis of DHSC, [Obesity, physical activity and nutrition – Data](#). Figures based on calculating the percentage of children that do not meet the UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMOs') recommendations for physical activity.

²⁷ London Sport, [Why We Are Needed](#), accessed 22 October 2025

²⁸ London Sport, [Health](#), accessed 10 April 2026

What are health inequalities?

The Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy defines health inequalities as avoidable and unfair differences in health. They are wholly or partly a result of differences in the determinants of health and wellbeing, for example, income and wealth, or early childhood experiences.²⁹

According to NHS England, people living in areas of high deprivation and those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities are most at risk of experiencing these inequalities.³⁰

These patterns of physical inactivity, and the inequalities associated with them, highlight the need to increase opportunities for people to be physically active across London. Access to suitable, affordable facilities plays a central role in this. Opening school sports facilities for community use offers a significant opportunity to improve participation and reduce inequalities.

Benefits of opening school sports facilities

We heard consistent evidence that improving access to school sport facilities can deliver a range of benefits for young people and the wider community. Representatives of both schools and youth and community groups told us that access to sports facilities outside of school hours can have a positive impact on people's mental and physical health and bring wider community benefits.³¹ They added that increased access can help more children and young people to participate in sport and physical activities and therefore meet the CMOs' guidelines on daily physical activity. Synergy Gymnastics London, told us that this can also support the development of children and young people's social skills.³² London Tigers further added that out-of-hours access has provided constructive activities that have reduced the risk of involvement in crime among the children they work with.³³ Written evidence from StreetGames, a UK charity providing sport opportunities to young people, highlighted that for many of the young people they work with – particularly those facing financial barriers to participation – affordable, local access to sports facilities can be “transformative”.³⁴

We heard that school settings provide benefits over and above other sports facilities. Youth and community group representatives at our roundtable told us that parents are more likely to allow their children to attend after school activities if they are held in schools, as these are perceived to be safer environments compared to other public spaces such as parks.³⁵ We heard that

²⁹ GLA, [Health Inequalities Strategy](#), September 2018

³⁰ [NHS England » What are healthcare inequalities?](#)

³¹ Roundtable, 16 and 27 February 2026

³² Roundtable, 16 February 2026

³³ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

³⁴ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by StreetGames

³⁵ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

schools are also familiar spaces for both parents and young people, who often already know the site and the journey to and from it, which can further increase confidence and attendance. Parents trusting schools means more young people attending sport activities and increasing their physical activity levels.

Opening school facilities not only benefits youth groups. Schools can also reap rewards. For example, during our site visit to Kingsbury High School, we heard of instances where youth and community groups have advocated for funding for schools or supported their planning applications to improve or install new school sports facilities. In turn, discounts were given to groups who helped the school to secure funding.

Partnerships with community groups can also have benefits for physical education in school hours. We heard from school representatives that partnerships with external sport coaches have led to closer integration with the school's physical education (PE) curriculum. PE is a compulsory subject under the National Curriculum, which must be followed by local authority maintained schools.³⁶ At our roundtable in February 2026, one coach told us of an arrangement they had with schools to deliver sessions during PE lessons in school hours and then run after-school activities for the wider community.³⁷ These partnerships provide continuity for pupils and maximise the use of school facilities both during and outside school hours.

It is clear that opportunities for extracurricular sports have a positive impact on young people's mental and physical health, as well as a range of wider community benefits. However, these benefits are not currently being fully realised, in part because of a lack of accessible facilities for youth and community sports groups in London.

Opening up more existing school facilities in London for out-of-hours use provides a clear opportunity to rectify this. However, realising this potential depends on schools having the capacity and resources to overcome barriers to opening their facilities for community use.

³⁶ Academies and free schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum but are required to provide a curriculum that support the physical development of pupils.

³⁷ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

Chapter three: Funding

Schools want the best for young people and their local communities. But while many see the benefits in opening up facilities, they nevertheless remain behind locked gates. In order to understand why youth and community groups face challenges in accessing suitable sports facilities, we looked at the key issues affecting schools' ability to open their facilities. We found that funding plays a central role in whether schools are able to provide community access.

Throughout our conversations with community groups, schools and key stakeholders, we heard that cost is the most significant barrier to opening school sports facilities for community use. London Sport told us that opening facilities after hours involves additional costs for schools, including increased operational costs to keep schools open for longer.³⁸ This can include heating and lighting, staffing costs to manage evening and weekend lettings and administrative costs.

While some funding initiatives have provided valuable support in the past, we were told that these were often short-term, with funding being withdrawn once the programme period was over. As a result, schools continue to face challenges in sustaining community access to their facilities on an ongoing basis.

The Opening School Facilities Programme

In July 2019, the then-Government committed to £1.5 million funding to help open school sport and physical activity facilities for children outside of school time, with further £10.1 million funding announced in 2021.³⁹

In 2022, the Department for Education launched the Opening School Facilities (OSF) school funding programme with up to £57 million of funding to help schools open up their sports facilities outside of the school day to both pupils and community users.⁴⁰ The OSF fund was delivered from January 2023 by the Active Partnerships Network, in collaboration with StreetGames, ukactive and the Youth Sport Trust. The programme aimed to create a sustainable increase in physical activity levels, specifically among women and girls, those living in low-income areas, ethnically diverse communities and people with special educational needs, disabilities or long-term health conditions.⁴¹

³⁸ Written evidence submitted by the Health Committee by London Sport

³⁹ Sport England, [New funding to help schools open their sports facilities](#), February 2021

⁴⁰ Active Partnerships, [Opening School Facilities](#), accessed 22 October 2025

⁴¹ Active Partnerships, [End-of-Programme-Report](#), July 2025

London Sport reported that the OSF programme provided revenue funding for over 190 schools across London, supporting a total of 1,048 projects to deliver 24,064 sport and physical activity sessions.⁴²

School representatives told us that they found the OSF fund beneficial in supporting measures to improve facility access. For example, a representative from Poplar Primary School told us that the funding allowed them to purchase additional sports equipment to expand the range of activities they offered, as well as install a separate alarm system for the sports hall.⁴³ This allowed external coaching providers to access and use the hall independently, without needing to enter the rest of the school or rely on on-site staff. A representative from Laurel Park School told us about the lasting impact of the OSF funding, noting that the initial pilot had created a strong legacy of ongoing activity.⁴⁴ OSF funding allowed them to purchase new trampolines, safety equipment and expert coaching and create a new community club.⁴⁵ They reported that over 120 children and young people now regularly attend trampolining sessions. They also have established sport club partnerships, with school facilities open for community hire during evenings and weekends.

Opening School Facilities programme – Case Study

Whitings Hill Primary School in the London Borough of Barnet used OSF funding to open up its swimming pool to the local community through its Swimming Club. A representative of the school said:

“We have loved to have had the opportunity to open up and share our pool with the local community. Due to receiving the funding, we were able to form new relationships with local clubs who could offer extra activities which included competitive swimming, aqua Zumba and SEN lessons. This has helped our pool offer to become more inclusive to the local community and surrounding area.”⁴⁶

However, we also heard from school representatives that by only funding revenue costs, the OSF fund was not as effective as it otherwise could have been. Youth Sport’s end of programme report for the OSF fund highlighted that restrictions on funding capital costs limited the potential of some schools to open their facilities to community use.⁴⁷

Despite this, the OSF programme was a positive response to the challenge of opening school facilities, and we heard a lot of evidence supporting it. However, it ended in March 2025, and

⁴² London Sport, [Review of Opening School Facilities](#), accessed 10 April 2026

⁴³ Roundtable, 27 February 2026

⁴⁴ Roundtable, 27 February 2026

⁴⁵ [OSF case study](#), accessed 10 April 2026

⁴⁶ Additional information shared with the Health Committee by London Sport

⁴⁷ Youth Sport Trust, [OSF End of Programme Report](#), June 2025

there are no clear plans for a replacement. In response to calls to continue the OSF funding, the then Secretary of State for Education said the OSF programme would end as planned. They added that learning from it would help inform the department's ongoing work to support high-quality PE, school sport and physical activity for all pupils.⁴⁸

During our roundtable in February 2026, school representatives told us that sustaining community access to their facilities was difficult following the closure of the fund and without ongoing financial support.⁴⁹ A representative from Laurel Park School told us that, when the OSF fund became available, the school “jumped at the chance” to apply.⁵⁰ However, they added that with the programme now ended, they are waiting to hear what will replace it. They emphasised that consistent, ongoing funding is essential to sustaining community access to their facilities.

In July 2025, the Youth Sport Trust published a toolkit aimed at supporting schools to continue to make their facilities available for community use following the end of the OSF programme.⁵¹ This covers practical advice, case studies and templates to guide schools in successfully opening up their facilities for community use. However, written evidence submitted by London Sport highlighted schools' concerns about covering operational costs and other ongoing expenses such as staffing, utilities and routine maintenance, as well as capital facility repairs without additional funding.⁵²

It is disappointing that it was not possible to extend the successful OSF programme. Although we were encouraged to hear from several schools that the investment and established relationships meant that they continued to offer their facilities after the programme closed, we heard that this may be difficult to sustain long-term without ongoing funding. We recognise that funding is constrained but believe the OSF programme offered substantial benefits for children, schools and the wider community, and should be revived as soon as possible.

In May 2026, the Government announced plans to invest £1 billion in school sports over the next three years. It confirmed that £200 million of this funding will go towards improving school sporting facilities, while part will be used to connect schools with grassroots sport clubs and strengthen extra-curricular activities.⁵³ We welcome this funding and recognise the benefits it could bring in addressing physical inactivity among young people. This represents a positive step towards ensuring more schools are equipped with suitable facilities, enabling them to support sustained community use of their facilities.

⁴⁸ UK Parliament, [Schools: Sports – Question for DfE](#), 8 January 2025

⁴⁹ Roundtable, 27 February 2026

⁵⁰ Roundtable, 27 February 2026

⁵¹ Youth Sport Trust, [Opening School Facilities Toolkit](#), July 2025

⁵² Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by London Sport

⁵³ Department for Education, [£1bn boost to PE and school sport to end fitness postcode lottery](#), 21 May 2026

Recommendation 1

The Department for Education should ensure that the newly announced funding for school sport includes a sustained funding stream for both revenue and capital expenditure, similar to the Opening School Facilities (OSF) fund, to support schools in opening their sports facilities for community use over the long term.

Go! London

We also considered the city-wide funding available to schools to support them in opening facilities. In March 2023, the Mayor launched Go! London, a community sports fund aimed at supporting young people through sport and physical activity, in partnership with the London Marathon Foundation and Sport England.⁵⁴ The Go! London fund offers a range of grants to grassroot organisations to support community use of school sports facilities. In July 2025, the Mayor announced a further £1.4 million funding for Go! London.⁵⁵

In Autumn 2023, Go! London launched its Access grant, which provided up to £50,000 each to schools to upgrade their facilities to enable wider community use.⁵⁶ The grant was specifically for capital improvements rather than ongoing revenue costs, funding projects at five different schools. Improvements included a resurfaced playground, installation of a temporary swimming pool and a resurfaced asphalt pitch. However, the Access grant is no longer available.⁵⁷ While Go! London funding continues, it is now only open to community groups, meaning schools can no longer access this funding directly.

We heard some frustration at our roundtable discussions and through other stakeholder engagement about these funding options. School representatives and others emphasised that funding must be school-led and flexible in how it is distributed, with fewer restrictions on how it can be used. For example, the Youth Sport Trust told us that there is a need to “stop putting restrictions in” and allow schools to determine how best to use funding to open their facilities.⁵⁸ While funding was welcomed, restricting funding to capital improvements, as with the Go! London’s Access Grant, does not address the ongoing revenue costs associated with opening facilities. The Access Grant’s withdrawal means that schools now cannot access any of the capital or revenue funding for opening facilities, which is a double blow in the context of the end of the Government’s OSF funding.

⁵⁴ GLA, [GO! London Fund](#), accessed 20 March 2026

⁵⁵ GLA, [Mayor announces new £1.4m investment to transform young Londoners’ lives through sport](#), 19 July 2025

⁵⁶ Go! London Fund, [Access grant](#), accessed March 2026

⁵⁷ [Our Funding Pillars | Go! London](#)

⁵⁸ Roundtable, 27 February 2026

Recommendation 2

In 2026-27, the GLA should work with partners to reinstate funding for schools, through Go! London or other programmes, to enable greater out-of-hours access to their sports facilities. It should ensure these grants can be used flexibly across both revenue and capital expenditure as needed.

Other GLA programmes and funding

London's Violence Reduction Unit

There are other GLA programmes and funding streams that support community and youth sport activities as well as wider youth outcomes in London. In April 2025, the Mayor announced a new £1 million sports investment through the London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).⁵⁹ This funding was intended to deliver sport and physical activity projects which focused on tackling violence affecting young people.⁶⁰ As of March 2026, the VRU has invested a total of £2 million in this area over the past two years.

London's Violence Reduction Unit

London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) was set up by the Mayor in 2019 and works in partnership with people and organisations in order to understand the complex causes of violence and to prevent it from happening.⁶¹ It has three impact goals, setting out what it wants to help change in its communities and how it plans to achieve this. These include making children and young people feel safer, having a partnership approach to delivering solutions and stabilising and reducing violence.⁶²

We heard from TETH Youth & Adult Service that the funding it had received from the VRU to reduce violence affecting young people had the additional benefit of improving young people's physical activity levels and reducing health inequalities.⁶³ However, London Sport noted that while the VRU often funds programmes that meet both violence reduction and health inequality outcomes, the relationship between London Sport and the VRU is limited.⁶⁴ We heard that the VRU does not necessarily see itself as targeting health outcomes, while London Sport does not view itself as directly delivering violence reduction outcomes. As a result, programmes tend to focus on their respective objectives rather than shared outcomes, although there may be

⁵⁹ GLA, [New £1m sports investment featuring holiday activities for young people](#), 09 April 2026

⁶⁰ GLA, [London's Violence Reduction Unit Sports](#), accessed 23 March 2026

⁶¹ GLA, London's Violence Reduction Unit, [About Us](#), accessed 26 March 2026

⁶² GLA, [London's Violence Reduction Unit – Our Strategy to 2025](#)

⁶³ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

⁶⁴ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

opportunities to share learning across both areas. In the context of limited funding, the GLA should consider how funding programmes can be designed to achieve multiple objectives simultaneously and maximise impact.

Recommendation 3

In the next two months, the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) should meet with Go! London and relevant GLA health teams, as well as external partners such as London Sport, to explore the areas where funding programmes can simultaneously deliver both violence reduction and health inequality outcomes for young people and to ensure that opportunities for crossover are maximised. Going forward, the GLA should, all else being equal, prioritise funding programmes that aim to improve both health and violence reduction among young people.

Chapter four: Barriers to effective community use

Opening up more school sports facilities is an important step, but it will not, on its own, solve the challenges faced by youth and community groups. If youth and community groups can't find facilities, or can't afford them, the simple fact that they are 'open' will have little impact. We heard that even where facilities are available, barriers to access mean that many remain out of reach.

High hiring costs

Even when school facilities are technically accessible to youth and community groups, we heard that the cost of hiring them can be prohibitively high. Research conducted by Sported in 2022 highlighted pricing as a significant barrier to accessing school sports facilities.⁶⁵ It identified particular challenges in central London, where it argued that higher levels of disposable income can drive up prices. Sported reported that in many cases, management of school facilities had been outsourced to independent companies, which had increased prices for community groups in order to generate income.

Written evidence submitted by Merton Hockey Club noted that access to good quality sports facilities is "difficult, especially affordable facilities."⁶⁶ It argued that "schools, and their intermediary letting agents, are very commercial, trying to get the highest price [...] so it takes real persistence." Similarly, written evidence submitted by Phoenix Rising, a youth led community charity, argued that:

"Schools frequently charge commercial rates, minimum booking hours, additional fees for security, cleaning, or utilities. So, for small community organisations, especially those working with low-income families, these costs are prohibitive. Pricing also varies widely between schools, with no standardised approach."⁶⁷

We also heard some evidence that accessing the sports facilities of independent private schools is even more challenging. During our roundtable with youth and community groups, London Tigers highlighted differences in pricing, telling us that private schools often charged more than state schools for youth and community groups to use their facilities. Written evidence submitted by Merton Hockey Club also described independent private school prices as being "especially bad".⁶⁸ They felt that private schools are "taking revenge" on them for the introduction of VAT on school fees. However, we do not know the effect that VAT increases

⁶⁵ Sported, [Community Facilities Report](#), January 2022

⁶⁶ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by Merton Hockey Club

⁶⁷ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by Phoenix Rising

⁶⁸ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by Merton Hockey Club

have had on private schools' ability to open up their sports facilities to the wider community at discounted costs.

A number of private schools in London were proactively invited to take part in the roundtable and answer the call for evidence, but we failed to receive any responses. Therefore, we are unable to make any conclusions or recommendations on the role that private schools have to play in facilitating community use of their sports facilities.

Some schools in London use third-party platforms to list facilities available for hire.⁶⁹ Written evidence from StreetGames highlighted that the increasing use of private booking system providers can create further barriers for community organisations. It argued that these systems "prioritise commercial bookings or impose processes and pricing structures that effectively prevent community organisations from securing regular, affordable access."⁷⁰ Merton Hockey Club also highlighted the unsuitability of booking systems. It noted that "enquiries often go unanswered, booking systems are not fit for purpose and facilities go to the highest bidder."⁷¹

As a result of unaffordable prices, community organisations told us they often have to absorb additional costs or pass them on to participants, which can create financial barriers for young people taking part in sport and physical activity.⁷² This disproportionately impacts those from lower-income households, limiting opportunities to be active and contributing to widening health inequalities.

Differential pricing

We heard examples of how pricing models can be used to support community access to school sports facilities. During our roundtable with school representatives, we heard that some schools apply forms of dynamic or tiered pricing structures, where youth and community groups are charged lower rates to hire sports facilities compared with commercial or corporate users. This approach can help reduce the financial barriers for youth and community groups and support more inclusive access to facilities. Youth and community groups at our roundtable noted that this can also prevent costs from being passed on to young people and their families.

This differential pricing approach is welcome. It is a sensible step that enables school to cover costs with commercial bookings, while ensuring that youth and community group activities remain affordable and accessible, particularly for those from lower-income backgrounds.

⁶⁹ Roundtable, 27 February 2026

⁷⁰ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by StreetGames

⁷¹ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by Merton Hockey Club

⁷² Roundtable, 16 February 2026

Recommendation 4

The GLA should ensure that any GLA funding for school sport facilities is contingent on youth and community groups, including those for elderly and disabled Londoners, being able to access those facilities at reduced prices.

Awareness of facilities

Opening up school sports facilities only benefits Londoners if they know about them. At our roundtable in February 2026, youth and community groups told us that it can be difficult for groups to know what school sports facilities exist or how to access them. As a result, current access to school sports facilities often relies on personal networks and informal relationships, and making a “cold approach” to schools can be difficult.⁷³

To tackle this issue, there was broad agreement among youth and community group representatives, and key stakeholders on the need for better mapping of available school sports facilities across London.

National tools already exist that support this approach, including Sport England’s Active Places Power tool, an open database managed by Sport England, that maps over 115,000 sports facilities and over 41,000 sports sites including school sports facilities.⁷⁴ Written evidence shared by Sport England states that this database is “updated daily with each facility being audited on a rolling basis”.⁷⁵

Despite this, London Sport noted that there was not always clear information about when facilities are available, how to book them and who to contact. Representatives from both youth and community groups and schools echoed this point.

The Active Places Power tool provides an invaluable starting point for the mapping of available facilities. It would be counterproductive for the Mayor or other partners to develop an alternative database in this context. However, it is vital to address the feedback from community groups and schools in London to ensure that the tool provides a fuller picture of facility accessibility.

⁷³ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

⁷⁴ [Active Places Power](#), accessed 10 April 2026

⁷⁵ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by Sport England

Recommendation 5

The GLA should partner with Sports England to develop its existing database with additional details on availability, pricing and booking arrangements. The GLA should promote the use of the database in London as a tool for community and youth groups to find suitable facilities.

Conditions of school sports facilities

School representatives told us that general wear and tear can leave facilities in a condition that is not suitable for external hire. We heard examples of youth and community groups hiring facilities for football training but arriving to find no access to goalposts.⁷⁶ The Youth Sport Trust also highlighted that some school facilities, particularly outdoor pitches, are unavailable for hire at certain times of the year, as heavy rainfall during wetter months can lead to flooding and make them unusable.⁷⁷

In addition, a lack of appropriate on-site storage was raised as a barrier to effective usage, with youth and community groups often unable to store equipment securely.⁷⁸ As a result, groups are often required to transport equipment to and from sessions, which can limit their ability to make full use of facilities.

The layout and design of school sites can limit practical access. One example of this is access to toilet facilities. School representatives noted that toilets are often not located near outdoor pitches or sports facilities, meaning that additional buildings must be opened to enable access for those using the playing fields.⁷⁹ For example, Wandsworth Council's survey on access to school facilities, shared with the Rapporteur, showed that 57 per cent of responding schools did not have a separate toilet area.⁸⁰ We heard that this could lead to increased staffing requirements, as staff may be needed to unlock, supervise and secure additional areas of the school site during evenings and weekends, creating additional operational costs for schools if they open sports facilities to others.⁸¹

These practical examples of kit stores, toilet access and equipment show the need for flexible funding for schools, that encompasses capital and revenue expenditure, to support them to open sports facilities that are of a suitable condition for use.

⁷⁶ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

⁷⁷ Roundtable, 27 February 2026

⁷⁸ Roundtable, 16 February 2026

⁷⁹ Roundtable, 27 February 2026

⁸⁰ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by Wandsworth Council

⁸¹ Evidence received by Wandsworth Council

Chapter five: Good practice and what works

Funding remains a significant barrier for schools to open up their facilities. However, during this investigation, we heard examples of innovative and effective practice that show what is possible when the right support is put in place. These examples highlight practical approaches that can help overcome common barriers for schools and youth and community groups and help build relationships with community providers. The following examples illustrate good practice and demonstrate how schools can open their facilities in ways that are sustainable, safe, and beneficial for both schools and local communities.

Clear guidance

London Sport told us of the importance of having clear guidance on who is responsible for opening up facilities, alongside advice on practical steps for opening up effectively.⁸²

In June 2015, Sport England published a free resource for schools as part of its 'Use our School' initiative, aiming to support schools in opening up their facilities to the community.⁸³ Schools can use this resource to find information, templates and case studies to help open their facilities in an inclusive, accessible and sustainable way. In Sport England's written submission to the call for evidence, it stated that it is constantly reviewing its advice and guidance.⁸⁴

Sport coaches

In its submission to our call for evidence, London Sport argued that one of the main challenges schools identified in opening their facilities externally was finding and building a network of coaching and user organisation contacts.⁸⁵ They noted that school staff are very busy, and identifying new contacts can be time-consuming.

London Sport also reported that the previous Government funding via the OSF programme enabled schools to build partnerships with the local community, particularly local coaches and sports clubs by opening up their facilities.⁸⁶ These partnerships helped strengthen relationships between the schools and their local community, while also creating pathways for young people to continue participating in sport beyond what is offered within the school day. This highlights the importance of developing strong local networks of coaches and community organisations as a key enabler of sustainable community access to school sports facilities.

⁸² Informal meeting with London Sport, January 2026

⁸³ Sport England, [Use our school](#)

⁸⁴ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by Sport England

⁸⁵ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by London Sport

⁸⁶ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by London Sport

Keypad entry and separate access points

During both roundtables, representatives from youth and community groups and schools highlighted the use of keypad or coded entry systems as a practical way to reduce the additional staffing requirements associated with opening school facilities outside of school hours. London Sport argued that installing separate access points with secure keypad entry, as well as making use of multiple entrances where available, can allow community groups to access sports facilities without requiring on-site staff to supervise entry and exit.⁸⁷ We also observed this approach in practice during our site visit to Kingsbury High School, where separate access arrangements and entry systems enabled community use of their facilities. This approach can help lower operational costs while maintaining appropriate levels of security and control over who is accessing the site.

Community Use Agreements

Sport England highlighted that when an educational establishment decides to open its facilities for wider community use, it can be valuable to formalise arrangements through a Community Use Agreement (CUA).⁸⁸ CUA's are formal agreements which outline the terms for public access to private or restricted facilities such as school sports halls or pitches. Written evidence submitted by Sport England highlight that these agreements help ensure secure, well-managed and safe community use by setting out how access will operate, typically covering areas such as hours of availability, management arrangements and pricing policies.⁸⁹

However, to be effective, is also imperative that CUAs are properly enforced. StreetGames argued that without active monitoring and enforcement, CUAs risk becoming "symbolic rather than operational".⁹⁰ In addition, written evidence submitted by Merton Hockey Club noted that encouraging local authorities to monitor and enforce Community Use Agreements more proactively could help improve community access to school sports facilities in London.⁹¹

School Sport Partnerships

Examples of good practice, such as those highlighted above, are only useful if they are shared and learned from. As such, it is imperative that there are partnerships in place to facilitate this kind of collaborative approach.

School Sport Partnerships (SSPs) are networks of schools that work collaboratively to improve PE, physical activity and sport for young people within their local areas.⁹² These partnerships support schools to share facilities, coordinate activities and develop links with external providers. They also work with local community sports clubs, providing resources such as specialist coaches, to enable more young people to participate in club activities.⁹³ When SSPs were first introduced, all schools in England were a part of a partnership.

⁸⁷ Roundtable 27 February 2026

⁸⁸ Sport England, [Community Use Agreements](#)

⁸⁹ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by Sport England

⁹⁰ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by StreetGames

⁹¹ Written evidence submitted to the Health Committee by Merton Hockey Club

⁹² House of Commons Library, [School Sport Partnerships](#), 10 September 2015

⁹³ Ofsted, [School Sport Partnerships - A survey of good practice](#), June 2011

During our roundtable, a representative from Poplar Primary School spoke highly of the work of the “well-established” School Sport Partnership in the London Borough of Merton, highlighting its role in enabling community access to school sports facilities. Merton School Sport Partnership was first established in September 2003 through the Government-funded national PE School Sport & Club Links (PESSCL) programme.⁹⁴ In October 2010, it was announced that the PESSCL programme would be discontinued, with funding for School Sport Partnerships ending in August 2011.⁹⁵ As a result, many SSPs were dissolved.⁹⁶ However, the Merton School Sport Partnership continued as a self-funded entity, with funding coming predominantly from state schools and academies in Merton.

We heard that one of the key benefits of the Merton School Sport Partnership is its ability to create structured links between schools and community and youth groups.⁹⁷ This makes it easier for youth and community groups to build stronger relationships, access facilities and deliver more activities for young people.

In June 2025, the government announced plans to introduce new School Sport Partnerships, with the aim of ensuring that all children have equal access to high-quality PE.⁹⁸ This could give London boroughs an opportunity to set up or strengthen local partnerships to improve community access to school sports facilities. The experience of the Merton School Sport Partnership shows that using an established model can help boroughs better connect schools with youth and community groups and provide more consistent and sustainable access to facilities.

Recommendation 6

London boroughs should explore opportunities to create partnerships, such as Merton’s School Sport Partnership, to connect communities and youth groups with schools and share best practice. A first step would be for London Councils and borough representatives to meet with Merton’s School Sport Partnership in the next two months to find out how its approach could be replicated in other boroughs.

⁹⁴ Merton School Sport Partnership, [About](#), accessed 18 March 2026

⁹⁵ UK Parliament, [School Sport Partnerships](#), 10 September 2015

⁹⁶ UK Parliament, [Delivery of school sport – School sport partnerships](#), 22 July 2013

⁹⁷ Roundtable, 27 February 2026

⁹⁸ GOV, Prime [Minister meets with Lionesses ahead of the Euros to announce a new approach to school sport](#), 19 June 2025

Chapter six: Mayoral strategies

Several of the Mayor's strategies and policies provide a framework that can support the opening up of school sports facilities for community use. We heard that strengthening the role of these policies in enabling community use could help increase participation in physical activity and unlock wider benefits, including improved health outcomes and reduced inequalities.

The Mayor's London Plan

At our roundtable, school representatives shared several examples of the difficulties they face navigating the planning system when seeking to either develop new or improve existing sports facilities.

A representative from Little Heath Primary School, a special educational needs (SEN) school, described how a planning application for a new cycle track was refused by the local council, despite the school having secured the necessary funding. They also noted that alternative local provision, such as the Redbridge cycling centre, is not suitable for their pupils due to the track being "too steep".⁹⁹ As a result, their pupils have been left without access to a suitable cycling facility.

The Youth Sport Trust highlighted similar challenges, noting that planning permission to install a new 3G pitch¹⁰⁰ at another school was denied in order to preserve green space.

We did not investigate specific examples of planning applications as part of this investigation so cannot comment on the details of any individual cases, but it was concerning to hear that planning approvals were considered an additional barrier to securing or expanding school sports facilities. As a result, potential opportunities to increase sports provision and widen community access may be missed, particularly in areas where access to facilities is already limited.

The Mayor's London Plan 2021 recognises the importance of social infrastructure in supporting strong and inclusive communities.¹⁰¹ Chapter 5 of the Plan highlights that social infrastructure, including schools and sports facilities, plays a vital role in supporting health and wellbeing across London. It also provides guidance to boroughs on how to assess and plan for social infrastructure needs across these facilities.

The London Plan emphasises the need to protect, enhance and expand social infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population, and encourages the co-location and

⁹⁹ Roundtable, 27 February 2026

¹⁰⁰ 3G pitches are third generation artificial grass pitches specifically designed to replicate natural turf.

¹⁰¹ GLA, [The London Plan 2021, Chapter 5 Social Infrastructure](#), March 2021

shared use of facilities where possible. Opening up school sports facilities for wider community use aligns with these objectives, as it can help maximise existing infrastructure and create opportunities for different groups to come together, supporting greater inclusion and community participation. However, the examples above suggest that current planning processes may not consistently support the development of school-based sports facilities, even where there is clear demand and secured funding.

The evidence we heard suggests that while the London Plan recognises the importance of sports facilities as part of social infrastructure, this may not always be reflected in planning decisions in practice. Where proposals to develop or improve school sports facilities are not granted planning permission, opportunities to increase provision and widen community access may be lost. This suggests a need to strengthen how existing policy is implemented and applied.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor's next London Plan should continue to explore how planning tools and guidance can support the delivery of sports facilities that benefit both schools and the wider community. Once the Plan is published, the GLA should meet with local authorities to ensure they have clarity on how planning decisions might maximise suitable opportunities to develop sports facilities on school sites.

The Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy

The Mayor has a statutory responsibility under section 309 of the Greater London Authority (GLA) Act 2007 to prepare and publish a health inequalities strategy which should include proposals and policies for promoting the reduction of health inequalities.¹⁰² The current Strategy, published in 2018, sets out the Mayor's ambition for "all Londoners to be doing the physical activity they need on a daily basis to stay healthy, with efforts focused on supporting the most inactive."¹⁰³

The Health Inequalities Strategy Implementation Plan 2025–2028, published in June 2025, states that the Mayor will "continu[e] his investment in community sports, through the multi-million pound investment in Go! London and through improving quality and accessibility of green and blue spaces for people to enjoy."¹⁰⁴

The Mayor also chairs the London Health Board, established in March 2015, whose role is to "drive improvements in London's health, care and health inequalities where political

¹⁰² [Greater London Authority Act 1999](#), S309E

¹⁰³ GLA, [Health Inequalities Strategy](#), September 2018

¹⁰⁴ GLA, [Health Inequalities Strategy Implementation Plan 2025–2028](#), June 2025

engagement at this level can uniquely make a difference”.¹⁰⁵ This includes by championing and supporting the spread of good practice across London. Improving community access to school sports facilities could form part of this approach by promoting examples that increase participation in physical activity.

Improving community access to school sports facilities could help address these inequalities by increasing the availability of affordable and local opportunities for physical activity. Schools are often located within local communities and can provide accessible and affordable spaces for physical activity, particularly in areas where provision is limited. Given this, school sports facilities could play a more explicit role in delivering the Mayor’s Health Inequalities Strategy.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor should explicitly recognise school sports facilities as key delivery partners in implementing the Health Inequalities Strategy, ensuring they are embedded within London’s wider approach to supporting physical activity and reducing health inequalities.

¹⁰⁵ GLA, [London Health Board](#), accessed 30 March 2026

Committee Activity

The rapporteur held a roundtable on enabling community use of school sports facilities on 16 February 2026. This roundtable had representatives from community and youth groups and other key stakeholders to understand their experiences of accessing sports facilities in London. The guests came from the following organisations:

- London Sport
- Sports Fun 4 All
- Synergy Gymnastics London
- TETH Youth & Adult Service
- London Tigers

The rapporteur held a second roundtable on 27 February 2026 with school representatives to understand their experiences of letting, or supporting the letting of, school sports facilities for community use outside of school hours. The guests came from the following organisations:

- Poplar Primary School
- Laurel Park School
- Little Heath School
- Youth Sport Trust
- Oval Learning
- Jo Richardson Community School

Site visit

On 18 February 2026, the rapporteur attended a site visit to Kingsbury High School in Brent, a state-funded secondary school that currently offers out of hours access to its sports facilities.

Call for evidence

The rapporteur published a call for evidence in January 2026 and received five responses from the following organisations:

- London Sport
- Merton Hockey Club
- Phoenix Rising
- Sport England
- StreetGames

Further information was received by Wandsworth Council.

Other formats and languages

If you, or someone you know needs this report in large print or braille, or a copy of the summary and main findings in another language, then please call us on: 020 7983 4100 or email assembly.translations@london.gov.uk

Chinese

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Vietnamese

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Greek

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Punjabi

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Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज़ का सारांश अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটা সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে ফো করবেন অথবা উল্লিখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

Urdu

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Arabic

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