

MAYOR OF LONDON

A Fairer, Healthier London

WHAT IT MEANS FOR BUSINESS

Guide to the London Health Inequalities Strategy

A young child with dark hair, wearing a teal school uniform with a white collar, is shown in profile from the chest up. The child is reaching out with their right hand towards a bunch of fresh, orange carrots with green leafy tops. The carrots are in a wooden crate. In the background, there are more crates of fresh produce, including what looks like a bunch of green leafy vegetables. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an outdoor market setting.



Contents

Introduction	04
The Health Inequalities Strategy	06
Aim 1: Healthy children	08
Aim 2: Healthy minds	12
Aim 3: Healthy places	16
Aim 4: Healthy communities	20
Aim 5: Healthy living	24

“We’re a family owned company and yes, we are a business, but it’s the people who work for us who actually drive it forward. If we’ve got people who are coming to work and they’re happy, healthy, engaged and motivated, then they’re going to be far more productive in the workplace than if we didn’t invest that time and that energy into the wellbeing of the people who work for us.

It’s also important that we’re sustainable and impact positively on the communities we operate in. So for us, the Mayor’s Health Inequalities Strategy makes perfect sense.”

Kelly Osborne
Occupational Health Manager,
Wates construction, development
and property services company

What’s in this guide?

- an overview of the London Health Inequalities Strategy and what it means for London’s businesses
- examples of what businesses are already doing to make London a fairer, healthier city
- what the Mayor is doing to help tackle this crucial issue

Introduction

London has the potential to become the world's healthiest city, but this cannot happen while so many Londoners suffer ill health because of social and economic exclusion.



The opportunities to help Londoners live more of their lives in good health are well known.

Health inequalities are differences in health between individuals and groups of people that are unfair and avoidable.

Making sure that all Londoners have the same opportunities to live healthy lives means acting on the social, environmental and economic factors that impact on people's health – known as the wider determinants of health. Doing this requires partnership work. That's why the Mayor is asking all organisations across London – voluntary organisations, businesses and the public sector – to play their vital part.

Businesses across the capital are already pushing ahead with innovation, working with their employees, local communities and the public sector to help create a fairer, healthier London. This guide champions your work and shares examples and ideas to help you focus on health inequality through everything you do.

“London's businesses are clearly important to London's economic health, but they also affect the health of employees, customers and those living nearby.”

Why is this important for business?

As a business operating in London, you have a vital role to play in creating a fairer, more inclusive economy that works for all Londoners. London's businesses are clearly important to London's economic health, but they also affect the health of employees, customers and those living nearby.

Communities need businesses, but businesses need communities too, and this guide offers you opportunities and ideas for building that relationship. It links you to ways you can support your staff to be more physically and mentally healthy, which in turn can make them more resilient, flexible, engaged and productive. It also suggests ways to support and invest in your local community, with benefits such as raising your profile, demonstrating your social and environmental responsibility, and helping build strong support among local customers.

Whatever your business, whether a large multinational financial institution or a local takeaway shop, you have huge potential to influence people's lives for the better. Everyone involved in your business, from staff to suppliers and customers, will benefit from living in a thriving city where children enjoy a healthy start in life and adults are supported to lead healthy, balanced lives.

Introducing the Health Inequalities Strategy

The London Health Inequalities Strategy 2018–2028 offers a vision of a city where nobody’s health suffers because of who they are or where they live.

Addressing the wider determinants of health – the conditions in which people are born, grow, live work and age – is the most important thing that can be done to create a fairer, healthier city. By including health in all his strategies, from housing to economic development to transport, the Mayor is taking action on the root causes of health inequalities.

Aim 1 Healthy Children

every London child has a healthy start in life

Aim 2 Healthy Minds

all Londoners share in a city with the best mental health in the world

Aim 3 Healthy Places

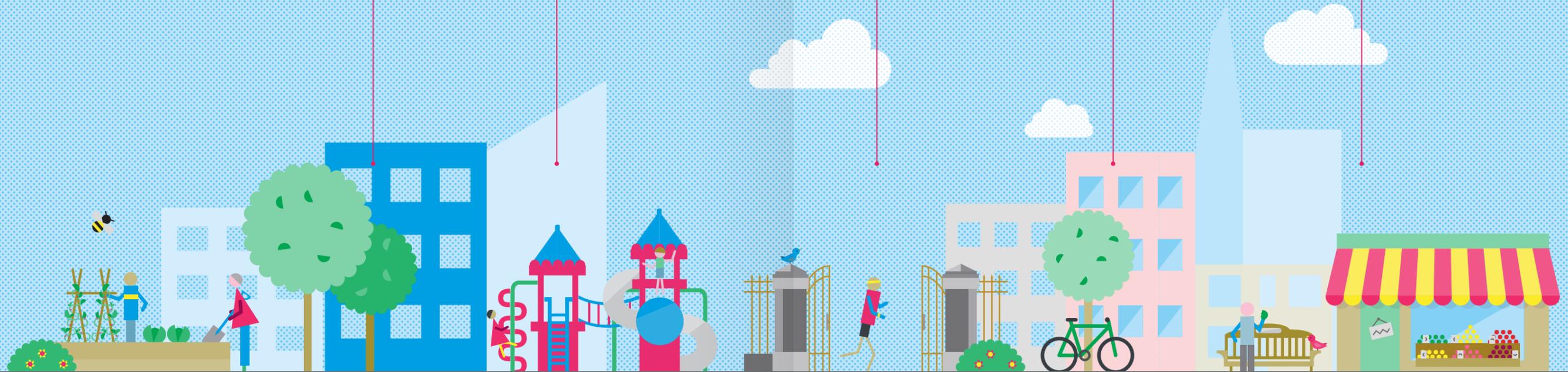
all Londoners benefit from an environment and economy that promotes good mental and physical health

Aim 4 Healthy Communities

all of London’s diverse communities are healthy and thriving

Aim 5 Healthy Living

the healthy choice is the easy choice for all Londoners



The Mayor’s Health Inequalities Strategy aims to improve the health of all Londoners, but with progress happening fastest in those groups who have the greatest risk of poor health.

Download the full Health Inequalities Strategy and find guides developed for other sectors at: london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/health-inequalities-strategy

Aim 1

Healthy Children Every London child has a healthy start in life



Experiences in early childhood set the foundation for physical, intellectual and emotional development. The Mayor wants to see all London's children enjoying environments that allow them to develop well and thrive, and to help more children achieve a healthy weight, particularly in deprived communities. By putting in place the foundations, we can offer all young people – whatever their background – the best chance of growing into healthy, resilient adults.



86% of Londoners feel that tackling childhood obesity should be a top or high priority



1 in 4

children have tooth decay when they start school

“Family-friendly policies means being supportive: recognising that if a child is ill at school, then someone has to go and collect them. Those things are important.”

Barry Francis
Chair, London Healthy Workplace Award and Business Adviser

What the Mayor is doing

- Making water more freely available by piloting a **network of drinking water fountains**
- Supporting programmes such as **Care Leavers into Work**, to help businesses confidently employ young people who need a bit of extra support
- Supporting London's schools and early years settings to provide the best environments for child health and development through the **Healthy Schools London** and **Healthy Early Years London** programmes
- Convening the **London Child Obesity Taskforce** to lead on city-wide action to reduce childhood obesity and related inequalities
- Bringing together partners to explore how to make London a more **breastfeeding-friendly city**
- Investing £45 million in the **Young Londoners Fund** to support local projects helping young Londoners fulfill their potential, with projects ranging from employability training to art lessons
- Leading the way by giving **City Hall employees paid leave** if their baby is born prematurely, or is in need of neonatal hospital care.

Case study Healthier kids' options at a chicken shop

In January 2018, Tasters Fried Chicken Shop in Tottenham won Haringey's Healthy High Streets Challenge, after trialling healthier options on its children's menu. The new options included grilled chicken, salad and chunky chips (generally lower in calories than French fries when served in controlled portion sizes), priced the same as the existing menu.

The shop tried nudging techniques including special discounts during the after-school rush and staff recommending the healthier menu at the point of sale. During that week, grilled chicken sales exceeded fried chicken sales. Tasters owner Shahid Majeed said he believed it would take time to shift the behaviour of regular customers but felt confident that sales of grilled chicken would continue to grow.



What businesses like yours are doing

- Implementing **family-friendly policies** and flexible working to support working families
- Working with employees and visitors to better support breastfeeding, and becoming a more **baby-friendly organisation**
- Helping Londoners drink more water by getting involved in **water refill** schemes. This drives potential customers to your doors while offering a vital service
- Signing up to the **Care Leaver Covenant**, which commits to provide work-based opportunities to young people leaving the care system
- Helping customers make healthier choices by exploring the many new food and drink retail lines that are popular and also meet healthy standards

Case study Investing in a family-friendly culture

The London School of Economics (LSE) has set up several initiatives and resources to actively promote a family-friendly culture in the workplace. A new and expectant mothers' room provides a comfortable and private setting for women to rest, express and store milk. The LSE Nursery is open to children of past and present staff, students and non-LSE related parents, and offers emergency childcare to all parents.

LSE also has an active Parents' Network, which is staff driven and has a highly inclusive membership drawn from all staff groups. The network organises a range of awareness and social events and in January 2019 it was presented with an award as part of an annual staff recognition ceremony to reflect its efforts to improve staff equity, diversity and inclusion across LSE's community.



Aim 2

Healthy Minds

All Londoners share in a city with the best mental health in the world



Around two million Londoners experience mental ill health every year, but the risk is not evenly distributed. The Mayor wants all Londoners to feel comfortable talking about their mental health, and to see an end to the stigma people face due to mental health problems. To support children to have the best start in life, he wants their mental health and wellbeing to be better supported across a wide range of settings. He also wants to see progress made on reducing suicides in London, aspiring for a zero-suicide city.



1 in 4 adults in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year



People in low income households are **2-3x more likely** to develop mental health problems than those in the highest income families

“When there is a national focus on productivity... it is massively in the interest of both employers and Government to prioritise and invest far more in improving mental health.”

Thriving at work:

A review of mental health and employers, Stevenson/Farmer 2017

What the Mayor is doing

- Making mental health and wellbeing a priority of the **London Healthy Workplace Award** to help create supportive workplaces where all employees can flourish
- Providing a **Good Work Standard** to support business to provide better quality work
- Acting as a partner, funder and political champion of **Thrive LDN** – a London-wide movement supporting good mental health in the city and challenging stigma
- Rolling out support for children and young people's mental health, including funding **youth mental health first aid instructors** in every London borough, to deliver training in schools
- Using the power of arts and culture to promote positive mental health and address stigma, through events and programmes such as the annual Thrive LDN Culture Festival
- Reviewing and updating City Hall's Time to Change pledge, and rolling out mental health first aid training for staff

Case study

Promoting mental health at work

In 2017, Thames Water published its Time to Talk Mental Health strategy, which gave mental health equal parity with physical health across the organisation. As part of the strategy the company launched mental health first aid training, with the first course in June 2017.

So far, more than 400 employees have taken up the offer, while 310 have joined its mental health online engagement forum, posting stories, hints and tips on how to manage their mental health in a positive way. Thames Water's holistic approach to treating mental health as an important workplace issue has resulted in a 75 per cent reduction in work-related stress, anxiety and depression in the past five years.



What businesses like yours are doing

- Prioritising their employees' mental health and learning what they can do to make their business a more mentally healthy place to work – including reviewing policies and practices around sickness absence
- Creating wellbeing strategies to ensure the mental and physical health of their staff are equally valued
- Implementing mental health first aid training for staff
- Signing up to the **Time to Change Employer Pledge** and accessing its tools to understand how better to support employee mental health at work
- Recognising the importance of line managers, and providing appropriate people management training to help them to do their job well, including training on recognising and supporting poor mental health in staff
- Signing up to the **This is Me** campaign and wearing a green ribbon to #endthestigma on mental health
- Improving their understanding of what adjustments at work can help people experiencing mental ill health to remain at, and thrive in, work

Case study

Preventing suicide

Investor-owned energy company National Grid is a champion member of the Business in the Community's (BITC) wellbeing campaign. The company tackles mental health-related stigma and discrimination in the workplace by equipping managers to support employee mental wellbeing and helping staff look after their mental wellbeing and perform at their best.

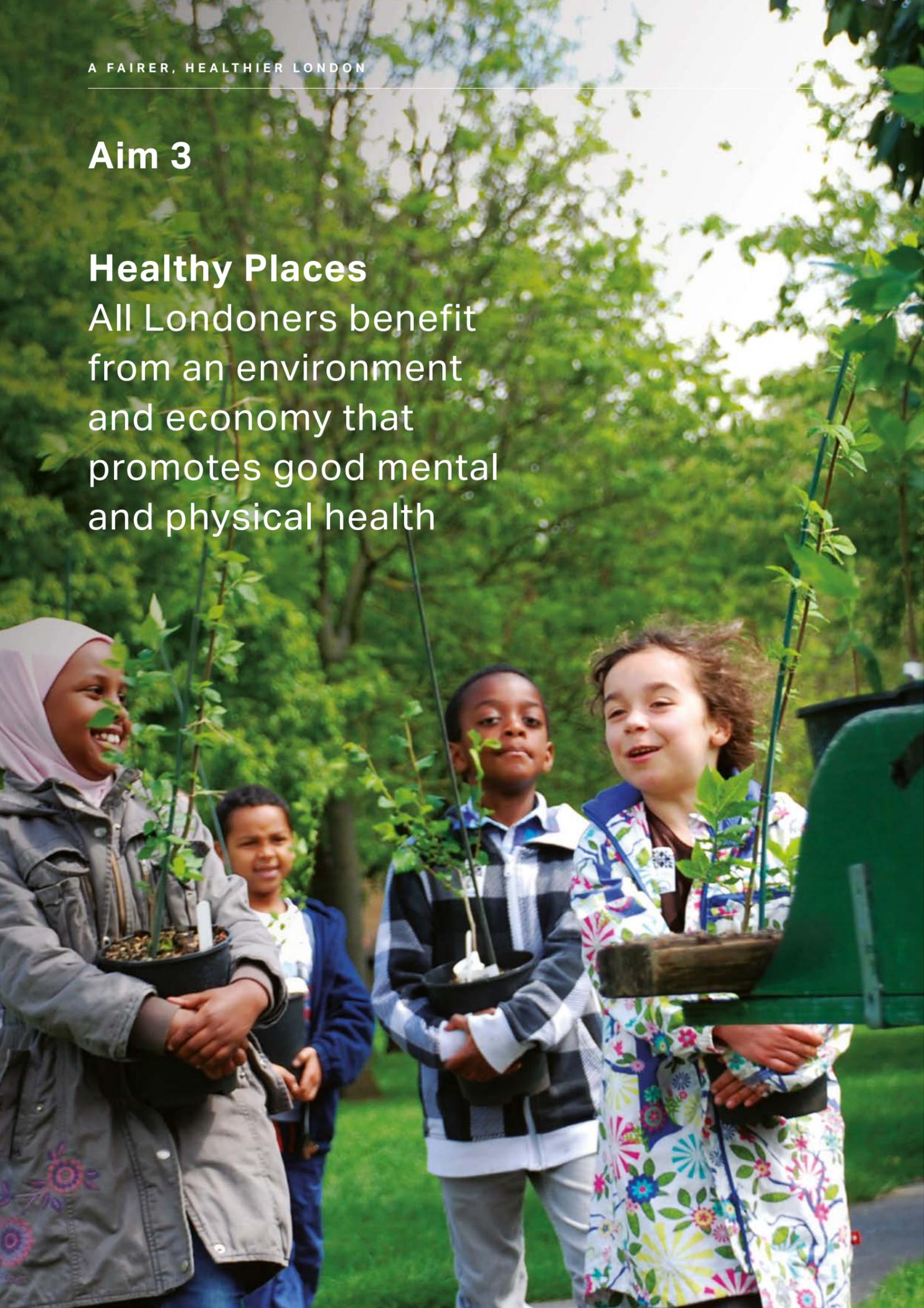
In 2017, several employees expressed concerns regarding their mental wellbeing, including suicidal thoughts, to managers. The wellbeing and health team supported them through its mental wellbeing programme. National Grid has produced its own suicide prevention pathway and guide that is now embedded in the organisation's policy on managing mental health at work.



Aim 3

Healthy Places

All Londoners benefit from an environment and economy that promotes good mental and physical health



Tackling underlying inequalities in our social, economic and physical environment will have the biggest long-term impact on health and health inequalities. The Mayor wants the places we live, work and play to support good health. This includes access to green spaces and clean air, safe and welcoming streets, fair access to good quality work, an adequate income to live a healthy life, and a safe place to call home.



of people in poverty in London are in working families



Nearly **1/4** of London's primary schools are in areas of poor air quality

"A healthy workforce is better for us as employers – reducing absenteeism and increasing productivity. But it's better for our employees too."

Barry Francis
Chair, London Healthy Workplace Award and Business Adviser

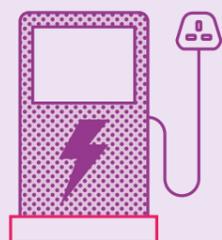
What the Mayor is doing

- Promoting the **Healthy Streets Approach**, which develops safer, more accessible and more attractive streets and public spaces to encourage people to walk and cycle and improves access to amenities including food and retail outlets
- Supporting businesses to improve job quality and competitiveness through the **Good Work Standard**, and championing the **London Living Wage** and its benefits
- Making sure the **London Healthy Workplace Award** supports all London's diverse businesses, including launching an award aimed at micro businesses
- Taking action to clean up London's toxic air, including through the introduction of the **Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ)**
- Investing £4.82 billion through his **Affordable Homes Programme** to support 116,000 genuinely affordable home starts by 2022
- Helping make London the world's first **National Park City**, including working with partners to improve green spaces and make our city greener

Case study Greening delivery fleets

To help reduce congestion, air pollution and dependency on fossil fuels, international delivery company UPS has been greening its delivery fleets in London. UPS first introduced electric vehicles to its London fleet in 2008 and now operates 67 electric vehicles.

In 2017, UPS expanded its London fleet to include e-assist cycle solutions and has been working with UK-based technology firm ARRIVAL to trial a fleet of smart electric vehicles. UPS is also working with manufacturers, government agencies and non-profit organisations to advance charging solutions, making it easier for companies to adopt electric vehicles and contribute to a safer, cleaner and more sustainable environment in the capital and beyond.



What businesses like yours are doing

- Reducing their environmental impact, including the waste they produce, air pollution from estates and vehicles (with many swapping diesel vehicles for electric), and supporting staff to travel to work by sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport
- Paying the **London Living Wage** to all employees, and making sure others in their supply chain do too
- Making the workplace a more pleasant and comfortable place for everyone, thinking about common workplace problems such as pain and poor mental health
- For larger organisations, playing a leadership role in bringing other local businesses together to influence local community wellbeing
- Signing up to the **Mayor's Good Work Standard** and the **London Healthy Workplace Award** (see back page 30)
- Thinking about their role as part of the community: providing good, fairly paid jobs and training for local people, and 'buying local' products and services
- Retailers are accepting **Healthy Start** vouchers which give vital financial support to low-income families. This can help improve the nutritional health of pregnant women and new families on low incomes, and boost London's economy

Case study Investing in the community

Matthews Yard is an award-winning arts and creative hub in the heart of Croydon, home to a range of community spaces including a café, bar, co-working space, art gallery and theatre.

The multi-functional space is committed to reducing its impact on the environment and ensuring the health and wellbeing of its workforce, by recruiting new staff from the local area and paying all staff and contractors the London Living Wage. They source all their breads and cakes from local London bakeries, and beers and ciders from breweries within a 20-mile radius. They have also stopped selling bottled water, with filtered tap water freely available in their café.

Their next focus is to ensure all cleaning products are eco-friendly, and to expand the range of health and wellness events they host, including a maternal wellness class.



Aim 4

Healthy Communities

London's diverse communities are healthy and thriving



The Mayor wants more Londoners to feel part of a healthy and thriving community. This includes supporting opportunities for social integration, engaging people through volunteering and community activities, and ensuring people feel safe and able to act on the things that affect their communities' and their own health and wellbeing – for example, through social prescribing. It also means supporting those at risk of infections, such as tuberculosis (TB) and HIV, through prevention, and addressing stigma and discrimination.



4 out of 5 GP appointments are for social rather than medical issues



3.5m

Londoners volunteer each year. Women are almost twice as likely to volunteer as men

“There are definitely business benefits in schemes that support the community – both in terms of the company image but also team building and making your own workforce proud to work for you.”

Barry Francis
Chair, London Healthy Workplace Award and Business Adviser

What the Mayor is doing

- Encouraging and supporting more Londoners to volunteer through [Team London](#)
- Maximising the potential of London's many sport, arts and cultural opportunities to improve social integration and mental and physical health, including through a range of grants to communities
- Bringing together specialists from health, police, local government, probation and community organisations to tackle violent crime and its underlying causes and improving community safety through the [Violence Reduction Unit](#)
- Supporting more Londoners to be able to access a range of social support to benefit their health and wellbeing ([social prescribing](#))
- Working with partners to eliminate discrimination and stigma associated with HIV
- Encouraging more Londoners to become trained [Dementia Friends](#), and working with partners to make London the world's first [dementia-friendly capital city](#)

Case study

Promoting social inclusion

Employing more than 5,600 people, Timpson is a leading UK retailer specialising in shoe repairs, key cutting and other services. The Timpson Foundation specialises in the recruitment of marginalised groups within society. Recognising that employment is proven to significantly reduce re-offending, the company supports ex-offenders to break the offending cycle by offering them an alternative to crime.

Since 2002, the company has been pro-actively recruiting ex-offenders, with approximately 10 per cent of their workforce now made up of people who have criminal convictions. All recruited ex-offenders are risk-assessed and provide full disclosure during their interview. Timpson has achieved a retention rate of approximately 75 per cent, with the vast majority of ex-offenders going on to have successful careers within the business.



What businesses like yours are doing

- Encouraging staff to take up volunteering, including by offering paid volunteering leave
- Improving access, participation and inclusivity in services they provide to Londoners
- Finding ways to adapt their services for people with different needs: for example, making services [dementia friendly](#), [autism friendly](#) or [baby friendly](#)
- Working with local voluntary sector partners to share facilities or other resources – for example, offering space to local community groups
- Working with community groups to understand what businesses can do to support some of the most vulnerable and excluded Londoners, such as rough sleepers, care leavers and people in the criminal justice system
- Working with and contributing to the local community through corporate social responsibility and working with organisations such as [London Funders](#)

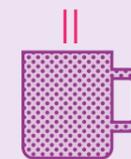
Case study

10 million happier, healthier lives

In June 2017, Marks & Spencer announced its national plan to support 1,000 communities, help 10 million people live happier, healthier lives and make M&S a zero-waste business. As part of this ambition, M&S is currently piloting community support programmes in ten locations, including the London borough of Newham.

The retailer is using the café space in its Westfield Stratford City store for a 'Frazzled Cafe' for people feeling stressed or in need of support, and for 'mush-ups' – group meetings to connect parents who are feeling isolated.

Other initiatives include supporting disadvantaged groups into work with M&S, providing career advice to school leavers, and encouraging employees to volunteer with a range of community projects.



Aim 5

Healthy Living
The healthy choice
is the easy choice
for all Londoners



The risk of people engaging in unhealthy behaviours – from eating a poor diet to drug misuse – is profoundly influenced by social, economic and environmental factors. The Mayor wants to make it easy for all Londoners – especially young people – to live healthier everyday lives. This includes having access to affordable, healthy food, making walking and cycling the norm, reducing the use of tobacco and illicit drugs, and tackling alcohol misuse and problem gambling.



Only **30 per cent** of adults in London walk or cycle for 20 minutes or more on a given day – the minimum needed to stay healthy

“There’s a lot that companies can do to help: having fruit available for staff and healthy options in the canteen, encouraging walking and cycling... Anything that improves health reduces health inequality.”

Barry Francis
Chair, London Healthy Workplace Award and Business Adviser



of Londoners believe having healthier, cheaper food options on London’s high streets would have the biggest impact on improving healthy eating in the capital

What the Mayor is doing

- Helping employers think about how they can support staff to have a healthier diet, be more physically active, give up smoking and drink within guidelines
- Taking action on physical inactivity by improving opportunities for active travel, such as walking and cycling, and improving public transport, including providing funding for London boroughs through the the **Liveable Neighbourhoods programme**
- Investing in **community sports** and programmes that target physical inactivity, working towards getting all Londoners to be active – whether through, sport, dance or walking
- Helping more Londoners access **healthy, affordable, sustainable food**, regardless of their background and circumstances, including by supporting and promoting values-driven food businesses.
- Supporting London-wide work on tackling illegal tobacco and counterfeit alcohol

Case study

Smoking cessation on construction sites

Wates is one of the largest privately owned construction, development and property services companies in the UK, employing more than 4,000 people. In 2018, Wates invited the NHS Redbridge Stop Smoking Service to their Atam Academy construction site to deliver a stop smoking drop-in session. Staff met informally with facilitators to hear about what smoking does to the body (with free carbon monoxide tests) and how to begin their smoke-free journey.

Following the positive engagement, facilitators agreed to return to site to provide individual support sessions, with prescriptions provided by a local pharmacy. This is part of Wates' Reshaping Tomorrow programme, developed with the aim of leaving a positive legacy in the communities in which it works.



What businesses like yours are doing

- Working with employees to understand what barriers they face to living healthier lives
- Developing **active travel plans** with staff, including cycle-to-work and car-share schemes, incentivising them to walk, cycle or use public transport rather than driving
- Signposting staff to **NHS stop smoking support**
- Setting up or supporting lunchtime running clubs or walking groups, and encouraging staff to take the stairs or simply stretch and move around the workplace more
- Making sure healthy food choices are the easiest choice for employees, for example by adopting **Public Health England's healthier catering standards**
- Providing support such as counselling, and signposting to other support on the intranet and noticeboards, to ensure staff have help when they need it, including with alcohol and drug problems
- Joining the **London Food Poverty Campaign** or entering the **Urban Food Awards**, which recognise the enterprises, initiatives and organisations bringing good food to London's table

Case study

Getting fit in the park

The Royal Albert Hall has achieved Commitment level on the London Healthy Workplace Charter (now called the London Healthy Workplace Award) and has developed a robust offer to promote staff physical activity and wellness. The staff events team and wellbeing network provide information on the benefits of activity, and organise and promote walking, running and boxercise events in Hyde Park during lunch breaks and after work.

Staff receive benefits such as discounted membership at local gyms and are part of the Cycle to Work scheme, with a secure cycle storage area and changing and showering facilities. The staff also receive free medical check-ups during working hours, with an in-house medical contractor.





"If our great city is to continue to prosper in the decades ahead, we must value the health of all Londoners. By working together, we can do the right thing by Londoners, their families and our communities, and ensure that Londoners can look forward to healthy, happy and fulfilling lives."

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Find out more

The London Healthy Workplace Award

This Award (formerly the London Healthy Workplace Charter) is backed by the Mayor of London and provides clear and easy steps for all employers, large and small, to make their workplaces healthier and happier. The business benefits of developing a healthy and committed workforce are now well established. These include lower absence rates, fewer accidents, improved productivity and greater employee engagement.

As of April 2019 over 250 organisations have been accredited under the award, with more than 330,000 employees benefiting. Many more employers are signed up to start their journey.

Find out more or sign up here:

london.gov.uk/healthyworkplace

Visit our website to:

- download the full Health Inequalities Strategy
- find guides developed for other sectors
- sign up to our health inequalities newsletter, sharing updates on action in the city

london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/health-inequalities-strategy

Or contact our team at:

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