

MAYOR OF LONDON

A Fairer, Healthier London

WHAT IT MEANS FOR HEALTHCARE



Guide to the London Health Inequalities Strategy



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“We in the NHS play a vital role in Londoners’ health, and I want London to be the best place in the world to access care; but Londoners’ health is mostly also influenced by how we grow up, where we live, what we do and how we move about – the determinants of health. Ensuring London is the world’s healthiest city requires the NHS to work in partnership with local authorities, voluntary and community sector organisations and businesses to address the poor health which disproportionately affects some communities.

As our services adapt to meet the needs of our ageing population, we all need to work together to tackle health inequality at the root. By working alongside our colleagues outside of healthcare, we can help prevent poor mental health and conditions like diabetes, cancer, or dementia: reducing the demand for care and, most importantly, helping people enjoy healthier lives.”

Sir David Sloman
Regional Director London,
NHS England and NHS Improvement

What’s in this guide?

- an overview of the London Health Inequalities Strategy and what it means for London’s healthcare organisations
- examples of what healthcare organisations 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.

Healthcare organisations in the capital are already pushing ahead with innovation and working with partners across all sectors to help create a fairer, healthier London. This guide champions that work and shares examples and ideas to help you focus on health inequality in everything you do.

£4.8bn

the extra costs to the NHS of socioeconomic inequality

The NHS Long Term Plan, 2018

Why is this important for London's healthcare providers?

As part of London's healthcare sector, you have a major role to play in tackling health inequalities – as a provider of vital services, in how you care for patients, as an employer, and as a key part of the local community and local economy.

The new NHS Long Term Plan recognises the importance of prevention and addressing wider determinants of health to reduce the demand on stretched services and help people stay healthier for longer. It reflects the [legal duty](#) that NHS England and CCGs have regarding the need to reduce inequalities between patients in access to services and in outcomes. Putting this into practice requires partnership working, and in London the Mayor wants to work together with NHS partners to fulfill their health inequalities duty and help ensure all Londoners have the best opportunity to live more of their lives in good health.

This guide is aimed at senior leaders in healthcare organisations such as NHS trusts (including acute, community and mental health), general practice, clinical commissioning groups, ambulance services, private and voluntary sector healthcare organisations, NHS England and other statutory bodies such as Health Education England and NHS Improvement.

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

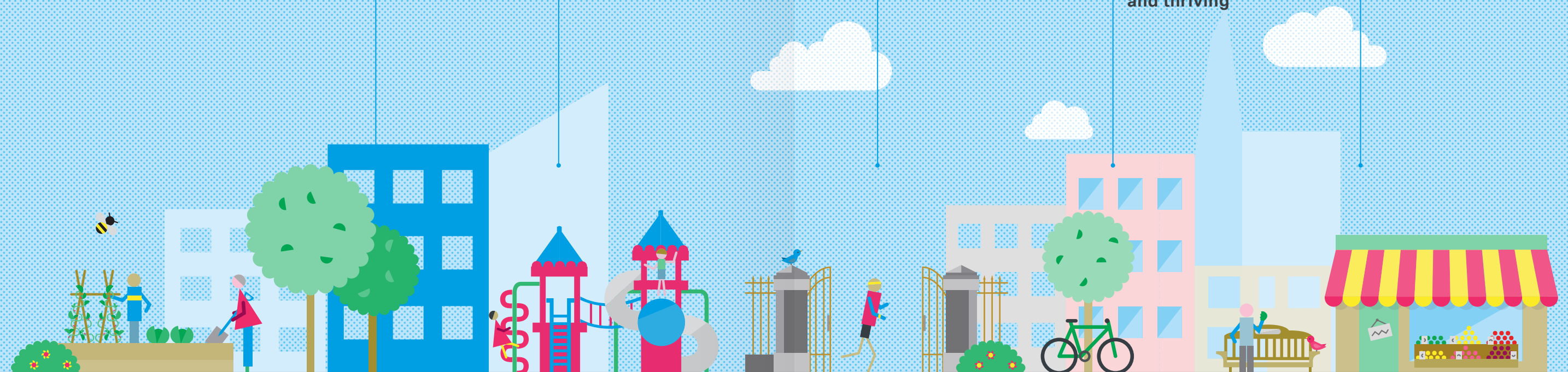
Healthy Communities

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.

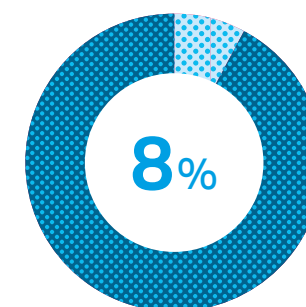
Download the full Health Inequalities Strategy and find guides developed for other sectors at: london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/health-inequalities-strategy

Aim 1

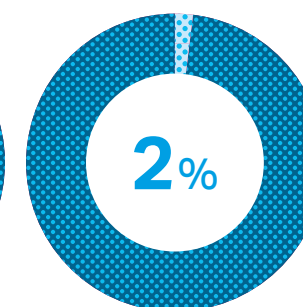
Healthy Children Every London child has a healthy start in life



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.



Barking & Dagenham



Richmond upon Thames

Percentage of children who are severely obese in two London boroughs

"We know that children born in deprived areas are more likely to have poor health outcomes than their more affluent peers. This unfair situation needs to be addressed through the provision of levelling services and initiatives, which is why programmes like Healthy Early Years London are so welcome."

Prof Russell Viner
President of Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health



1 in 4

children have tooth decay when they start school

What the Mayor is doing

- Convening the [London Child Obesity Taskforce](#) to lead on city-wide action to reduce childhood obesity and related inequalities
- [Banning advertising of less healthy food and drink](#) across the TfL estate and a new planning policy in the draft London Plan to restrict new hot food takeaways near schools
- Bringing together partners to explore how to make London a more [baby-friendly city](#)
- Rolling out [Healthy Early Years London](#), building on the success of [Healthy Schools London](#), to help all children develop, play and learn in healthy settings, especially in areas with the greatest challenges
- Engaging young people in City Hall policy through [peer outreach workers](#)
- Investing £45 million in the [Young Londoners Fund](#), to support local projects helping young Londoners fulfil their potential
- Conducting [air quality audits](#) for primary schools and nurseries in the most polluted areas in London and providing guidance to schools on how to reduce emissions and exposure

Case study Supervised toothbrushing for early years

Whittington Health's oral health promotion team is delivering a targeted supervised toothbrushing programme for more than 10,000 children aged under five in early years settings across the London boroughs of Islington, Camden, Ealing, Brent and Hounslow. The programme has trained more than 1,180 oral health champions who now have the knowledge and skills to run the daily programme in their own setting (primary schools and nurseries).

The programme has led to behaviour change, with children reported as being less reluctant to brush their teeth at home, increased awareness and parental knowledge about appropriate twice-daily brushing, and increased numbers visiting the dentist for their continuing dental care.



What organisations like yours are doing

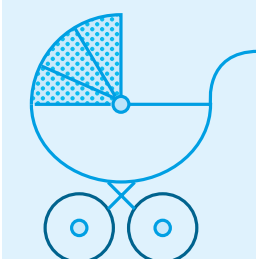
- Implementing family-friendly policies and flexible working to support working families
- Working with patients, staff and visitors to improve support for breastfeeding, and signing up to the [Unicef Baby Friendly Initiative](#)
- Creating more holistic postnatal and perinatal support, including advice on parental mental health, quitting smoking and breastfeeding
- Supporting vulnerable parents and improving opportunities for positive parenting in the early years
- Promoting the uptake of [eRedbook](#) with all London families, and supporting those who face the most challenges engaging with it
- Taking bold action locally on child obesity by reducing advertising and availability of unhealthy products, signing up to Sustain's [Sugar Smart campaign](#) and creating opportunities to encourage physical activity through active travel and active play
- Developing pathways for children and families to access social prescribing
- Promoting free child dental care to staff and patients, with advice on good eating, drinking and oral health habits

Case study Baby-friendly maternity care

Women using the West Middlesex University Hospital maternity unit are receiving more baby-friendly care, thanks to the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI), which reaccredited the unit in 2017. The programme recognises the importance of offering consistent, face-to-face support from pregnancy through to the early months of a child's life.

At West Middlesex, staff invite women and their families to an infant feeding class before giving birth, and are trained to BFI standards to ensure women feel able to breastfeed for as long as they wish.

Meanwhile, an 'early days' class explains what to expect during the baby's first weeks. This is all with the aim of shifting a culture of blame and guilt about breastfeeding difficulties to one of achievement and success.



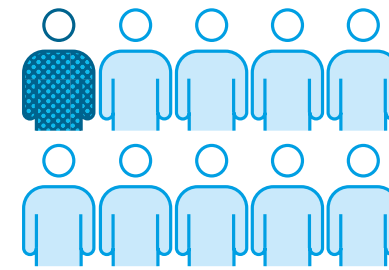
Aim 2

Healthy Minds

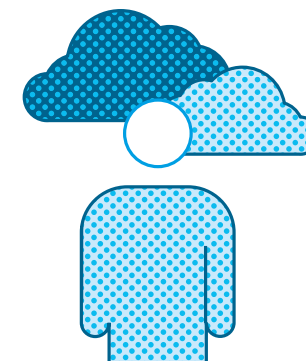
All Londoners share
in a city with the best
mental health in the world



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 10 children aged 5–16
have some form of mental illness



People with a serious mental illness are **3x more likely** to die prematurely than the general population

"We all need to understand that at some point in our life we will face a mental health problem. So we need to take the stigma out of it and find ways that we can improve everybody's mental health."

Sir Sam Everington
Chair, London Commissioning
Council and GP

What the Mayor is doing

- Championing the importance of mental health through the [London Health Board](#), including challenging the NHS to move faster to achieve parity between physical and mental healthcare
- Co-funding [Thrive LDN](#) – a city-wide movement to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Londoners – with NHS and other partners
- 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
- Prioritising employee mental health and wellbeing through the [London Healthy Workplace Award](#), helping employers to create more supportive, healthier workplaces
- Considering mental health across all strategies and programmes, including early years and schools, rough sleeping and policing
- Supporting suicide prevention work through Thrive LDN

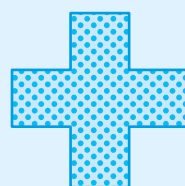
Case study

Supporting patient mental health

Of all the calls London Ambulance Service receives, nearly 10 per cent are from people experiencing mental health problems. As part of its work to support patient mental health, the service has made a range of changes, drawing on insights from mental health patients and carers.

It has introduced mental health nurses to the control room and runs a new emergency response car, with paramedics accompanied by mental health nurses. It has also expanded staff training and introduced a mental health risk awareness tool to help frontline staff with assessment and handover.

The organisation is also supporting the Heads Together and Time to Talk campaigns and signing up to the Blue Light Time to Change pledge.



What organisations like yours are doing

- Getting involved with [Thrive LDN](#) activities and sharing its resources
- Signing up to the [Time to Change employer pledge](#), the [Blue Light Programme](#) (for emergency services) or [Equally Well UK](#)
- Helping make sure the most excluded Londoners, such as those in the criminal justice system and rough sleepers, have access to mental health support, treatment and care when they need it
- Supporting [evidence-based schemes](#) that integrate health and employment support, to help people with mental illness return to and remain in work
- Promoting to organisations, colleagues and patients the [Good Thinking](#) online wellbeing tool, the [schools mental health toolkit](#) and [best practice guidance on first-episode psychosis](#)
- Working with partners to help reduce suicide across the capital, and promoting the Zero Suicide Alliance’s [online training](#) to staff

Case study

Boosting staff health and wellbeing

NHS staff are at high risk of long-term sickness absence due to a mental health condition. Workplace counselling services may not be equipped to address more complex psychological needs and psychological therapy services often have long waiting lists.

To address this need, a clinical psychologist was seconded to King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to pilot a new service. All staff referred to the service had significant psychological needs, including depression and anxiety disorders.

An evidence-based approach demonstrated clinically significant improvements in mental health, with associated benefits on work attendance and performance. The occupational health team valued having access to a psychologist to discuss cases, and staff valued therapy tailored to their situation.



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.



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



47yrs

the average life expectancy for rough sleepers

"Our vision is to make London the healthiest global city in the world, but to do this the NHS must help tackle air pollution which results in thousands of hospital admissions and early deaths every year."

Sir David Sloman
Regional Director London, NHS
England and NHS Improvement

What the Mayor is doing

- Leading on action to clean up London's toxic air, including through the introduction of the [Ultra Low Emission Zone \(ULEZ\)](#)
- Leading efforts to tackle rough sleeping across London, including commissioning pan-London services to complement local provision, such as a pilot service providing specialist assessment of mental health
- Encouraging and supporting employers across London to create better quality work, through the new [Good Work Standard](#)
- Protecting and increasing London's network of green spaces and helping make London the world's first [National Park City](#)
- Taking action to lift Londoners out of [fuel poverty](#) and overcome the health effects of cold, damp, draughty homes
- Improving the quality, security and affordability of private rented housing and increasing the supply of affordable homes
- Promoting measures to reduce heat risk in homes and to keep Londoners informed during extreme temperature events

Case study

Introducing healthcare careers

Barts Health NHS Trust is one of the largest NHS trusts in the country, with a turnover of £1.5 billion and a workforce of around 17,000. In January 2019, Barts Health and Barts Charity launched the Healthcare Horizons programme. Supported by the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, the programme will enable more than 1,000 East London students to learn about different health professions and take their first steps towards accessing higher education and securing employment within the NHS.

The scheme, the biggest of its kind in London, includes mentorship opportunities giving students first-hand experience in a hospital environment. Mehwish Iqbal, apprentice at Barts Health NHS Trust said: "Having exposure to real-life situations will make it easier for me to secure jobs in the long run."



What organisations like yours are doing

- Paying all staff the [London Living Wage](#) and encouraging organisations in their supply chain to do likewise
- [Reducing their impact on air pollution](#), including emissions of buildings, estates, ambulances and other vehicles – for example, by signing up to and getting accredited under the Clean Air Hospitals Framework
- Creating healthier working environments for staff, for example by signing up to and getting accredited under the [London Healthy Workplace Award](#)
- Creating opportunities for greening projects around the setting or workplace
- Reviewing procurement processes to target investment on the local economy
- Providing good quality jobs, apprenticeships and training for local residents, to help boost the local economy and support local communities
- Working with partners to better understand, improve protocols and systems with the aim of preventing people being discharged from hospital inpatients to the street

Case study

Stopping discharge to the street

At Guys and St Thomas' NHS Trust A&E department, a high proportion of patients are experiencing homelessness. Some may have challenging behaviour, or need long hospital stays. The Trust responded by setting up services in their clinical decision unit to treat these patients in bespoke areas that offer greater security and specialist support.

At the unit, people are assessed by a range of services, including homelessness, mental health and drug and alcohol teams. They are then either redirected to temporary accommodation or their progress is followed by the Trust homeless discharge team. The initiative is making a big difference to some of the Trust's most vulnerable patients.



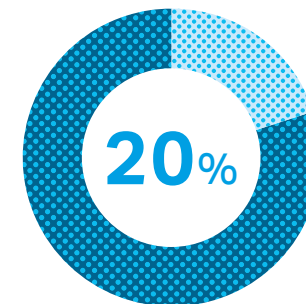
Aim 4

Healthy Communities

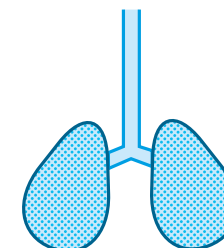
London's diverse communities are healthy and thriving



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. We must ensure 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.



of visits to GPs are for non-medical problems



Rates of TB are more than **4x higher** in deprived areas than less deprived ones

"Social prescribing for me is about identifying non-medical needs which patients have and supporting them to overcome them. Things like financial concerns, bereavement issues or social issues will often be packaged as a medical problem. And if you treat the medical problem then you won't get to the root cause of it."

Dr Mohan Sekeram
GP and clinical lead for social prescribing, Merton and Wandsworth

What the Mayor is doing

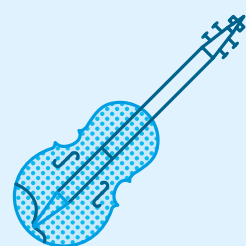
- Working with partners as part of the [UNAIDS Fast-Track Cities](#) initiative, to end new HIV infections in London by 2030
- Championing [social prescribing](#) in London, working with partners to improve the London offer and accelerate adoption and access for the most deprived communities
- Maximising the potential of physical activity, sport and culture to improve social integration and health, and improving access to volunteering programmes, through [Team London](#) so that more Londoners benefit from being active citizens
- Encouraging more Londoners to become trained Dementia Friends, and working with partners to make London the world's first [dementia-friendly capital city](#)
- Working with local partners to develop opportunities for improving engagement with London's diverse communities, including enhancing often-unheard voices

Case study

Supporting people with Parkinson's through dance

Having Parkinson's can be a very isolating experience. Dance for Parkinson's is a dance and cultural programme developed by English National Ballet that supports people with Parkinson's to manage their symptoms and rebuild their confidence through weekly dance classes with live music, social time and access to cultural events.

The programme, commissioned by the West London Clinical Commissioning Group, provides opportunities for personal expression, social interaction and peer support that people with Parkinson's might otherwise lack. The project has helped fill a gap in provision for post-diagnosis support – especially for older adults with Parkinson's and their carers.



What organisations like yours are doing

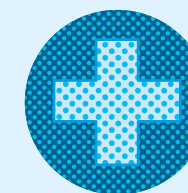
- Using care navigators, health champions and other trained volunteers to help people access services and empower and motivate them to get involved in health-related activities
- Commissioning initiatives like the [expert patient programme](#), which supports people to develop the skills and knowledge they need to look after their health
- Developing and expanding social prescribing programmes, in partnership with the VCSE sector
- Involving communities and citizens in decisions about the future of local health and care services
- Supporting youth violence intervention programmes, sharing information to tackle violence, and creating pathways to other services that can treat the underlying causes of violence
- Tackling HIV-related stigma in healthcare, reducing time to treatment and introducing opt-out HIV testing where appropriate

Case study

Helping excluded people access healthcare

Many people in the UK struggle to access health services despite being fully entitled to them. Some may be frightened to reach out or may not understand the system, while others have difficulty paying charges or have been wrongly turned away.

Since 2006, Doctors of the World UK has run a clinic in Bethnal Green and pop-up and mobile clinics staffed by volunteer doctors, nurses and support workers offering primary care and health and social advice. They help homeless people, sex workers, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. They also provide Safe Surgeries training to improve healthcare professionals' understanding of migrant rights to NHS care. In 2017 they supported 1,617 people to access the NHS, including 124 pregnant women.

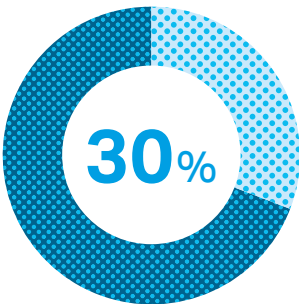


Aim 5

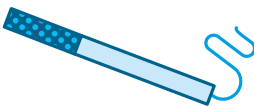
Healthy Living
The healthy choice is the easy choice for all Londoners



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.



of adults in London walk or cycle for 20 minutes or more on a given day



Smoking rates in adults in routine and manual roles are **double** those of adults in managerial roles.

"Though individuals may engage in unhealthy behaviours, the risk of this is profoundly influenced by social factors."

London Health Inequalities Strategy
Greater London Authority, 2018

What the Mayor is doing

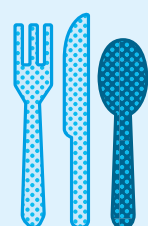
- Addressing physical inactivity through London's public transport system, and investing in building [healthier, safer streets](#), to make it easier for all Londoners to walk and cycle
- Delivering the [Sport Unites](#) programme to bring people from different backgrounds together – strengthening communities while encouraging more Londoners to be physically active
- Helping more Londoners access [healthy, affordable, sustainable food](#), regardless of their background and circumstances. This includes working with the NHS to improve their food procurement for the communities they serve
- Supporting London-wide work on tackling illegal tobacco and counterfeit alcohol
- Supporting an annual event to share best practice on alcohol harm reduction
- Reviewing how drug services are working in the criminal justice system and how to work most effectively with health agencies to prevent violence and crime

Case study Healthy food choices for patients and staff

The Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust is committed to enabling healthy eating for all patients, visitors and staff.

Food retailers across the hospitals offer healthy options including fresh fruit and hot and cold foods to take away, and commissioned hospital food services promote eating healthily alongside ethical sourcing and recycling. At Barnet Hospital and Chase Farm Hospital, a Steamplicity system cooks fresh food under steam pressure to retain its taste and nutritional value.

Royal Free London staff have attended cookery training using familiar ingredients to make simple, healthy recipes, to encourage healthy eating. Attendees, including porters and cancer nursing specialists, have recognised the benefits of cooking with fresh ingredients to avoid the fat, sugar and salt in cooking sauces.



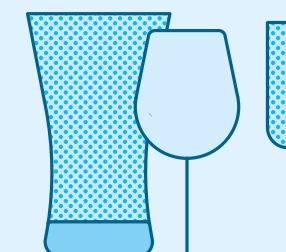
What organisations like yours are doing

- Encouraging a culture of daily physical activity for staff and patients, including signposting them to walking and cycling opportunities
- Providing [Making Every Contact Count](#) training to help staff make the most of opportunities to talk to service users and carers – especially those at greater risk of poor health – about how to improve their health and wellbeing.
- [Signing the NHS Smokefree Pledge](#), supporting staff to quit, while also providing targeted smoking cessation support for higher-risk patient groups – for example, as part of the maternity pathway and mental health services
- Promoting 24-hour healthier, sustainable food for staff, patients and visitors. Encourage caterers and contractors to sign up to initiatives such as [Food for Life](#), [Sugar Smart](#) and the [Healthier Catering Commitment](#)
- Sharing learning and good practice on how to address alcohol, drug and gambling-related harm for the most vulnerable citizens
- Requiring drug and alcohol treatment providers to incorporate support for children of service users in service planning

Case study Better Lives Family Service

Better Lives is a free and confidential integrated drug and alcohol service delivered by Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with WDP and Blenheim. Responding to the needs of Islington residents, the family service at Better Lives has improved outcomes for recovering individuals and their families through an intervention programme lasting six-to-eight weeks.

The specialist team includes substance misuse practitioners, doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists and pharmacists, alongside complementary therapists, volunteers and peer mentors. The service also provides a programme of structured group interventions in the form of coffee morning drop-ins and evening sessions for carers, family and friends, and offers advice and training to local community organisations.





"The Health Inequalities Strategy reminds us to understand not just symptoms but the cause of those symptoms, and the causes of those causes, which might be housing, debt, family breakdown. As healthcare professionals, we don't deal directly with those issues but we need to have an understanding of them so that we can commission preventive support but also signpost patients to the help they need, through measures such as social prescribing.

If we understand people's needs better, we can address them more effectively. That means less suffering for individuals and less demand on healthcare."

Malti Varshney
Associate Director, Clinical Networks
and Senate, NHS England

Find out more

There are many resources that can support healthcare organisations to understand and take action on health inequalities locally – for example:

- **NHS RightCare Intelligence** provides tools and support to help CCGs with data and evidence in their local area, including **Equality and Health Inequality Packs**
- **Public Health England’s Fingertips** tool provides easy-access to data on health and health inequalities locally, including at **General Practice level**
- **Healthy London Partnership** can keep you informed of ‘once for London’ health and care programmes
- Your local Health and Wellbeing Board and local public health team are vital resources for understanding and acting on local health inequalities challenges

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:
healthinequalities@london.gov.uk

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enquiries 020 7983 4100
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