

London Anchor Institutions' Charter

Our Context

Covid-19 has hit our city hard. Thousands of Londoners have died or are grieving loved ones as a result of Covid-19, thousands more have lost their jobs, countless businesses have been pushed to breaking point or gone under, and we've all had our lives put on hold. The pandemic has not hit all of London's communities equally, with many from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, as well as disabled Londoners, being disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. Unquestionably, the impact of the pandemic – both on public health, and personal and collective economies - will continue to take a deep toll in the months ahead. But with the vaccine rollout gathering pace, we must begin to look to the future and think about how we want to rebuild, how we want our city to change, and become more equitable.

If we take the right decisions now London can be a better place to live and work after this pandemic than it was before. Our economy can grow faster and more equally – reducing unemployment, especially in hard hit communities, and creating better paid and more secure jobs than those we've lost. This will not happen in months and may take years. But action now can set the stage for a better future. We can all live and work in greener, cleaner, healthier and safer communities. And our society can be fairer – with a stronger safety net, more engaged communities and more value placed on the things we care most about.

A Way Forward and Our Role

That better future is possible – but it's not something that one politician or organisation can do alone. It will take all of us working together. This commitment to new ways of working together is at the heart of the London Recovery programme, a joint initiative led by City Hall and London Councils, and includes many institutional partners representing London's private, public and voluntary sectors alongside Trade Unions.

The London Recovery Board has identified a particularly important role for our city's anchor institutions. An anchor institution is an organisation that by virtue of its size and the power of its procurement, recruitment and estate management capacity has the potential to make a real social and economic impact in the place it operates. London's anchor institutions perform and support critical work in our communities and have been engaged in these important efforts for years, with a deep footprint in their many communities. The London Recovery programme has committed to bring the city's anchor institutions together to reach shared goals, making a bigger and more positive change together than by working alone.

Our Commitment

This charter is a commitment from key anchor institutions in London to work together to help deliver activity that can help meet this grand challenge, as set out by the London Recovery Board: **to restore confidence in the city; minimise the impacts on communities; and build back better the city's economy and society**. As anchor institutions we pledge through this work to begin to redress the deep structural inequalities that the pandemic has exposed.

We will endeavour to undertake work that can meet the five key objectives agreed by the London Recovery Board¹. These are:

- To **reverse** the pattern of **rising unemployment and lost economic growth** caused by the economic scarring of Covid-19
- **Narrow** social, economic and health **inequalities**
- **Help young people to flourish** with access to support and opportunities
- **Support our communities**, including those most impacted by the virus

¹ For a list of the crosscutting principles and an overview of the London Recovery programme please see this paper: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/recovery_programme_overview.pdf

*List of signatories correct as of 26th March 2021

- **Accelerate delivery of a cleaner, greener London**

The London Recovery Board has also agreed on a set of principles that cut across all areas of activity and this includes an explicit focus on supporting communities and individuals who have been most impacted by Covid-19.

- *Much research and data shows that some Londoners, including those of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, people living with disability and those living with high levels of deprivation have been infected at higher rates by the virus itself than other Londoners and also that they have been consistently more exposed to the economic impacts of the pandemic.*
- There is also evidence pointing to the fact sudden unemployment for people aged over 50 is also a particular problem as it can be harder to retrain and re-enter the labour market at this age.
- Research also points to the long-term, disproportionate economic impact of the pandemic and pandemic response on London's young people.

As we learn more and systematically measure and map the social and economic impacts of this pandemic across our city, we believe that it is incumbent upon us to focus on the groups most impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, we pledge to begin our work in this area by focusing on two areas:

1. maximising employment opportunities; and
2. helping young people to flourish.

Our Collective Will

As several of London's anchor institutions, we employ over 490,000 people across the city and our collective budget is over £73bn a year. We commit to play our part in meeting this grand challenge by collaborating on projects and initiatives including but not limited to decisions about procurement, recruitment, estate and building management and other more general workplace policy decisions. We will also reflect on our deep and enduring presence in our communities through people we serve and engage daily, to leverage every opportunity to expand the power of our reach to improve community well-being.

We acknowledge that we have never worked collectively before on such a grand challenge and scale. We also recognise that the challenges ahead will be great, and though there may be some quick wins from our collective efforts, we will need to work collaboratively with focussed intent to provide sustained recovery for our world class city. We understand that this will require collaboration, coordination, commitment, trust, robust communication and community engagement. We agree to:

1. Commit to significant efforts to leverage our anchor status by working across sectors on city-wide strategies, and coordinate specifically at the community level to ensure our most marginalised populations can fully engage with the opportunities and services our institutions offer;
2. Engage the members of our communities fully in this effort, to hear their needs, foster relationships of trust, and direct our strategies with their guidance;
3. Meet regularly at a level of decision makers within anchor institutions. We recognise some of the people attending our meetings represent a broad sector or a range of organisations under an umbrella where decision making is more diffuse but their attendance represents a commitment to advocate within their sector and/or organisational structure to achieve the aims set out in this charter;
4. Regularly work collaboratively on priority areas of action;
5. Grow the evidence base about the role and impact of anchors, scale the work of anchors across London and support innovation while informing policy change; and
6. Promote public health messaging.

Our collaboration will be supported by the GLA and London Councils London Recovery Team, which will be responsible for organizing routine meetings, maintaining regular communication, providing guidance on

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best practice in priority areas, collecting and disseminating data, and coordinating agendas with the London Recovery Board.

Our Call to Action

The scale of the employment crisis in our country including in our capital is one that calls for new solutions and approaches. We call on all institutions in this city to join our challenge and orient their work to help achieve the outcomes and complete the missions agreed by the London Recovery Board. We stand ready to share our learning and best practice from this initiative.

Signed by:

- Association of Colleges
- Church of England
- Film London
- Greater London Authority
- London Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- London Councils
- London Fire Brigade
- London Higher
- London Jewish Forum
- London's Local Chambers
- Metropolitan Police
- Muslim Council of Britain
- Newham College
- NHS London
- Transport for London
- Trade Union Congress (London, East & South East)
- University of Greenwich
- University of London