

# MAYOR OF LONDON

## Mayor of London's response to the recommendations of London's Child Obesity Taskforce

Given the complexity of child obesity and need for a whole systems approach, [Every Child a Healthy Weight: Ten Ambitions for London](#) is aimed at driving action by multiple actors across the city. This response focusses on those calls to action where the Mayor of London and Greater London Authority (GLA) can play a role.

### Ambition 1. End Child Poverty in London

The Mayor believes it cannot be right that in a city as prosperous as London, so many children are living in poverty. In his Equality and Inclusion Strategy he has committed to addressing the root causes of child poverty such as affordability of housing, childcare and transport, low pay and lack of flexible working. Key initiatives include:

- Pressing ahead with building a **record number of genuinely affordable homes** and investing £1 billion in building 11,000 new council homes.
- **Freezing Transport for London (TfL) fares** and launching the **hopper bus fare**.
- Working with the Child Poverty Action Group to pilot a range of **innovative school-based approaches that support low-income families**, many of whom regularly experience food insecurity. As part of the project, the Mayor also funded dedicated advisers to work in schools to deliver welfare benefits advice to help struggling families – an approach which generated £50,000 of additional annual income (an average of around £7,000 per family) in the first few weeks alone.
- **Measuring levels of household food insecurity** for both adults and children in London for the first time this year. The measure, published in the Survey of Londoners, showed 1.5 million adults (60 per cent of whom are working either full or part time) and 400,000 children have low or very low levels of food security and struggle to access and afford a sufficient diet.
- Commissioning a **cumulative impact assessment of tax and welfare reforms** since 2010 to understand the effect Government policies have had on the incomes of Londoners. The study found that households with children have lost out most and that an additional 75,000 London children will be in poverty by 2021/22 as a result.
- Funding a London sample boost for the next round of **research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Herriot-Watt University** into the nature of destitution in the UK.
- The Mayor's Fund for London has expanded the **Kitchen Social** programme to deliver more healthy meals and holiday activities to children at risk of hunger and malnutrition during the school holidays.
- Working with partners to **lobby the Government to provide universal free school meals**.
- Improving access to quality early education and childcare for the most disadvantaged children through the Mayor's **Early Years Hubs** and **London Early Years Campaign**.
- Launching the **Childcare Deposit Loan Scheme Toolkit** to encourage London businesses to help their employees with the upfront cost of childcare when returning from parental leave.

- Action is underway through the Mayor’s Food Strategy to work with the London Food Board to look at uptake and eligibility for **Healthy Start vouchers**, and to support five local authorities to develop **Good Food Retail Plans**.
- The Mayor will also **write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care** to ask the Government to begin consultation on Healthy Start as set out in their Child Obesity Plan as a matter of urgency.

### **Call to Action 1a.**

**We call on the Mayor to lead a drive to significantly increase the number of employers becoming London Living Wage accredited, and the UK Treasury to devolve power to the Mayor to set a legal minimum wage for London.**

The Mayor is committed to a fairer and more inclusive London economy – one which works for all Londoners.

- The **London Living Wage** is set independently by the Living Wage Commission which includes the Mayor’s statutory Deputy Mayor for Education and Childcare as one of several Commissioners.
- The Mayor launched the **Good Work Standard (GWS)**, encouraging London’s employers to pay the London Living Wage and do more to support their employees with the cost of living. 42 business have already achieved the GWS and the GLA is working to accredit more.
- The Mayor also encourages businesses to become London Living Wage accredited through his **London Healthy Workplace Award**. To date, over 1,000 businesses have signed up to the scheme.

<p><b>Ambition 2.</b> <b>Support Women to Breastfeed for Longer</b></p>
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The Mayor is committed to giving all London’s children the best start in life, as a key objective in his Health Inequalities Strategy. This includes enabling parents and carers to provide good nutrition in the earliest years and to breastfeed where they choose to. It is encouraging that, where reported, breastfeeding rates in London are higher than elsewhere in the country; however, there is more that can be done to support parents:

- The Mayor is convening partners to produce an action plan to make London a **Baby Friendly City**. This plan will consider and recommend steps that partners can take to enable and support women to breastfeed – whether they are living, working or travelling through London.
- An **Empowering Infant Nutrition in London** event was held at City Hall and a briefing subsequently published outlining the actions local authorities and partners can take to support an increase in breastfeeding rates and good infant nutrition.
- Work is being undertaken to look at actions to make the **transport network more infant feeding friendly**. This has included a new infant feeding statement in the ‘Travelling in London when pregnant or with a buggy’ leaflet and infant feeding briefings have been provided to operational staff across all modes.
- Work is also underway to make **City Hall breastfeeding friendly** for staff and visitors.

- Breastfeeding friendly status is promoted by the Mayor’s **Healthy Early Years London (HEYL)** programme. HEYL settings with the Bronze award should show that there is a supportive breastfeeding environment and that they have been recognised as Breastfeeding Welcome<sup>1</sup>
- Through the Health Inequalities Strategy and London Food Strategy, the Mayor encouraged all local authorities to become **UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative-accredited** in maternity and community services.
- The Mayor will consider whether to **extend TfL advertising restrictions on HFSS products by adopting the WHO code on marketing of breastmilk substitutes** as part of a one-year review of the policy.

### **Ambition 3. Skill Up Early Years Professionals**

The Mayor recognises the importance of improving skills in the early years sector and has committed through his strategies to work with stakeholders to help improve quality and access to early education in London. Key initiatives include:

- **HEYL** is an awards scheme funded by the Mayor of London that supports and recognises early years setting achievements in child health, wellbeing and development. HEYL focuses on the whole child and gives settings a framework for their activity with children, parents, carers and staff and the wider community. Among other benefits, in HEYL settings and at home, children are supported to eat a healthy lunch and healthy snacks; drink plenty of water; be more active; and walk, scoot or cycle to the setting. HEYL signposts boroughs and practitioners in HEYL-registered settings to **training and resources**, including advice for engaging with young children and their parents on healthy eating and physical activity.
- The Mayor actively supports improving **quality of early education** provision and increasing the skills, confidence and knowledge of those working in the sector. His three **Early Years Hubs**, launched in January 2018, bring together local early years providers, schools and colleges to offer peer-to-peer support. To date, 2000 practitioners have benefitted from the Hubs’ activities.
- The Mayor’s **Early Years Leaders programme**, launched in March 2019, **supports early years practitioners** in London to progress in their careers and improve outcomes for children, particularly those that are disadvantaged.

#### **Call to Action 3a.**

**We call on the NHS, Health Education England, the Mayor and the London boroughs to provide a core training programme for the early years workforce and NHS staff who engage with young children and their parents.**

- GLA Health and Education teams will convene a roundtable discussion with the NHS and Public Health England (PHE) to look at what **additional training needs** there are in the early years workforce to support young children and their parents in maintaining a healthy weight.

<sup>1</sup> See [www.breastfeedingwelcomescheme.org.uk](http://www.breastfeedingwelcomescheme.org.uk). Applies for settings in boroughs where there is a scheme only: Bromley, Camden, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster, East London & City, London Borough of Redbridge, Wandsworth

### Call to Action 3b.

**We call on the Mayor, Public Health England and the London boroughs to implement food training and require qualifications for all early years settings with caterers and chefs.**

- The Mayor's HEYL programme already provides boroughs and practitioners in HEYL-registered settings with training and resources on nutrition and menu planning. HEYL is currently **piloting a 'train the trainer' programme** and developing **resources on nutrition and menu planning**.
- Funding has been secured from **Bloomberg Philanthropies Partnership for Healthy Cities** to pilot approaches to increasing the number of HEYL settings implementing menus that meet England's Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines.

#### **Ambition 4. Use Child Measurement to Better Support Parents**

The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) provides valuable data for public health teams in London. However, the Mayor recognises that there is more that can be done to use this important moment of contact with families to provide them with the information and advice they need, in a way that is encouraging and supportive.

That's why one of the key actions to deliver London's health and care partners' ambitions on child obesity in the new [Vision for London](#) is to *"develop specific proposals on ways that local communities can offer integrated, meaningful support to families from the most disadvantaged backgrounds to maximise the impact of the National Child Measurement Programme process"*.

To achieve this, a new **Child Obesity Delivery Board** will be established from March 2020 to oversee this work.

#### **Ambition 5. Ensure All Nurseries and Schools Are Enabling Health for Life**

The Mayor wants to see all early years settings and schools playing a role in nurturing the health and wellbeing of children and families, as an important contributor to tackling health inequalities. Alongside the support to early years settings outlined above, the Mayor supports several initiatives aimed at helping schools to support pupils to maintain a healthy weight:

- **Healthy Schools London (HSL)** is supporting London's children to lead healthier lives, as well as with social and emotional problems such as bullying, self-harm and depression. HSL promotes a whole school approach across five themes which include healthy eating and physical activity. To date 85 per cent of London schools (2,162) are signed up to the programme with over 28 Boroughs with 1 million children and young people and their families attending a 'Healthy School'. This year's celebration event on 26 June 2020 will focus on food and water in schools.
- To support this work, the Mayor will **write to Ofsted** to highlight the recommendations in the Taskforce report and to call for monitoring the action schools and early years settings are taking on healthy diets, water and physical activity.

- The **London Curriculum** is a fun way of teaching young people about the city while getting them active. Hundreds of schools in London are already enjoying our free learning resources in lessons and visits. Through the **Family Explorer** trails, parents and carers can also engage with activities.
- In January 2020, the **GLA hosted the London Children’s Food Insecurity Summit** in partnership with the Mayor’s Fund for London and the Food Foundation, the first ever summit on children’s food insecurity in the UK.

**Ambition 6.**  
**Make Free 'London Water' Available Everywhere**

The Mayor recognises both the health and environmental benefits of water fountains and refill points for Londoners and is improving access and availability of free water:

- Partnering with the **Zoological Society of London’s #Oneless campaign** to install an initial 28 fountains across London.
- Partnering with **Thames Water** to install a network of more than 100 drinking water fountains in busy and accessible areas of London.
- Improving access to drinking water in public places through the **Refill London** scheme which encourages London’s many restaurants, cafes and businesses to offer free refills and drinking water fountains. There are now more than 3,500 Refill points across the capital.
- Requiring **new major public realm developments** to install and manage free drinking water fountains in appropriate locations.
- Working with TfL and Network Rail to identify suitable **locations in the transport network** for refill points.

**Call to action 6a.**

**We call on the Mayor, water companies and the advertising industry to incentivise children to drink water by reframing London’s free drinking water as a ‘London Water’ brand, co-designed with London’s children.**

- In collaboration with the Taskforce, the GLA will invite representatives from water companies and the advertising industry to form a **new partnership group** to consider how London’s children can be encouraged to drink more water.

**Call to action 6b. We call on the Mayor, the food service industry, schools and public institutions to scale up and extend existing initiatives to make drinking water widely, freely and conspicuously available from public drinking fountains, all restaurants and public buildings, and in ‘water only’ schools.**

- The Mayor wants to see all **schools adopting water only policies** and has supported the development of a water only schools toolkit in partnership with PHE. This will be launched alongside a visit by the Mayor and the Taskforce Chair to a primary school in Southwark that is leading the way.
- Consideration will be given to how the Mayor’s **existing water fountain and refill initiatives** could have a greater focus on supporting children.

**Ambition 7.**  
**Create More Active, Playful Streets and Public Spaces**

The Mayor is supportive of making London's streets and neighbourhoods places where all Londoners can be safe and active. His new London Plan recognises that development proposals should increase the opportunities for play, and the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) outlines how he will work with TfL and boroughs to create a high-quality public realm that encourages walking and cycling by all by adopting the **Healthy Streets Approach**. This includes:

- Creating '**Liveable Neighbourhoods**' to improve the public's experience of walking, cycling and using public transport; to increase opportunities to use streets as public spaces and for play; and to encourage fewer trips by car.
- Providing **attractive, safe and accessible walking routes** to schools and other local destinations, such as shops, health services and parks, with a particular focus on improving conditions for children, older people and disabled people.
- Providing more **secure, accessible cycle parking**, particularly in residential areas, town centres, public transport interchanges and at key destinations.
- Reducing the **severance caused by roads and railways**, which can separate people from local services and limit social interaction, community engagement and active travel.
- Ensuring any scheme being undertaken on London's streets **improves conditions for walking and cycling**.

The Mayor has also worked in partnership with PHE, London Councils, ADPH London and Healthy London Partnership to develop and support the **School Superzones** pilot programme. To date, this has involved pilots in 13 boroughs, creating healthier and safer physical environments within a 400m radius around schools. Future plans for School Superzones are currently in development.

**Call to action 7a.**

**We call on the Mayor, the London boroughs, housing associations, landowners and developers to dramatically increase timed closures of streets to motor traffic and other public realm improvements that reduce traffic and support children's health, wellbeing and mobility.**

The Mayor's new London Plan highlights the importance of children and young people being able to independently explore their neighbourhoods. The Plan **requires development proposals used by children and young people to incorporate accessible routes to existing schools;** encouraging children to be more active and to move freely through safer, healthier streets. The new London Plan also **requires new residential developments to provide at least 10 square metres of play space per child that is not segregated by tenure.**

The Mayor's Transport Strategy also sets out how the Mayor, through TfL and the boroughs, will work with local communities and cultural organisations to promote one-off, regular and trial closures of streets to some or all motorised traffic. This includes:

- Delivery of the **TfL STARS programme**. STARS inspires young Londoners to travel to school sustainably, actively, responsibly and safely by championing walking, scooting and cycling. Since the accreditation scheme started in 2007, STARS schools' pupils, parents/carers and staff have replaced over 22 million kilometres of car journeys.
- The **London Walking Plan** aims to increase the number of STARS schools, particularly in areas with poor air quality, high road casualty numbers and the most active travel potential.

The target is to double the number of gold-accredited schools from 500 to 1,000 by 2024 and to promote measures, which can be delivered through Local Implementation Plans (LIPs), to reduce road danger and improve air quality around schools, including timed road closures, car-free days and 20mph speed limits.

- [TfL's Local Communities and Partnerships team](#), alongside the Healthy Streets officers, work with boroughs to encourage and support **further use of play street and school street legislation**. There are currently 22 boroughs who have play streets up and running and the Mayor will continue to work with London Play with the aim of spreading the initiative more widely.
- The Mayor has confirmed funding for the next global **Car Free Day** in September 2020, including support to boroughs and communities for their local car free activities.

### **Call to action 7b.**

#### **We call on the Mayor and the London boroughs to make children's health, wellbeing and mobility required criteria for public funding and authorisation of regeneration and transport schemes**

As part of the Mayor's **Good Growth by Design** programme, the '[Making London Child Friendly – designing for independent mobility](#)' report, published in January 2020, highlights how the design of the built environment can increase opportunities for young Londoners to independently move around within their neighbourhoods and the city. The next steps for 'Making London Child Friendly' are currently being scoped to address the emerging recommendations of the report via an innovative 'action-led research' process.

The **Good Growth Fund** is the Mayor's £70 million regeneration programme to support growth and community development in London. As part of action 8 'Enhance Public Space', the programme promotes the adaption and creation of public space to make London a more child-friendly city. The associated 'Outputs and Outcomes Framework' which identifies the measures to evaluate the impact of the projects include childhood obesity at 10-11 and at 4-5.

Wider GLA-led activities to support children and young people to be more active include:

- **Active Londoners** funding, which is a key part of the Mayor's **Sport Unites** programme. The fund tackles inactivity by supporting individuals and organisations who use sport and other kinds of physical activity to improve the physical and mental health of Londoners.
- The Mayor's **Young Londoners Fund (YLF)**, which gives young Londoners an opportunity to get involved in positive activities – like sport – to deter at-risk young people from violence and crime. £3 million of the YLF has been allocated to the delivery of sporting initiatives.
- Maximising the opportunity of the UEFA **EURO 2020** tournament to get Londoners of all ages actively engaged through the FanZone programmes and commissioned projects taking place throughout June and July 2020.
- Through the **London Borough of Culture** programme which supports the active engagement of Londoners through cultural programmes including dance, music and circus across all ages. The current programme is being delivered by Brent with a focus on young people, and the next borough Lewisham to be launched in spring 2020 for delivery in 2021.

**Ambition 8.**  
**Stop Unhealthy Marketing That Influences What Children Eat**

In recognition of the evidence, including from Cancer Research UK, that advertising impacts on consumer choices, the Mayor's London Food Strategy introduced bold new **advertising restrictions across TfL's advertising estate** to reduce exposure to advertisements for foods and non-alcoholic drinks which are high in fat, sugar and salt.

Since implementation of the policy in February 2019 there has been a positive response: a number of boroughs, including Haringey and Southwark, have already adopted local policies; and most major retailers continue to advertise on the TfL network through amending their advertising copy or switching to advertising healthier products. An evaluation of the junk food advertising ban is being carried out independently by a team at The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

**8a. We call on the Mayor, Transport for London, the London boroughs, sport clubs, stadia and leisure centres to extend the advertising restrictions on the TfL estate – initially to all outdoor public spaces in London, sports stadia and leisure facilities, and then beyond.**

- While the Mayor has focussed on implementing advertising restrictions in the TfL estate which is within his remit, support is also being provided by the GLA in partnership with Sustain to **boroughs seeking to adopt similar advertising restrictions**. To date 18 boroughs have expressed an interest in adopting local policies with two having already implemented them.
- **Tier 2 of the Healthy Catering Commitment** will include a number of criteria requiring businesses to advertise smaller portion sizes, at least one portion of veg or fresh fruit (for breakfast options) with every meal instore and online, and only healthier children's menu items, accompanied by water or plain milk.

**Ambition 9.**  
**Transform Fast-Food Business**

There are over 7,000 existing hot food takeaways in London, and many boroughs have high densities of such uses compared to other parts of England. Many schoolchildren, particularly secondary pupils, call into takeaways and other shops at lunch time and on their way home. National guidance is clear that planning policies can limit the proliferation of certain use classes in certain areas, and that regard should be had to locations where children and young people congregate including schools. This is why the Mayor's new London Plan **does not permit new hot food takeaways within 400m of existing or proposed primary or secondary schools**.

The London Food Strategy sets out the Mayor's ambition to promote the role that food can play in making streets healthy places, with more healthy food options and good food businesses. Along with funding Good Food Retail Plans, delivery of this includes:

- Convening and enabling boroughs, partners and external stakeholders to share best practice on how to develop and implement healthy food policies, including through the **Boroughs Food Group**.



- Hosting the **Urban Food Awards**, recognising the contribution and achievements of values-driven food businesses, social enterprises and individuals working in London’s food sector, especially those serving disadvantaged communities.

**9b. We call on the London boroughs and the Mayor to step up to support takeaway and fast-food businesses to enable them to become Healthier Catering Commitment accredited and to identify and trial tangible incentives to encourage them all to do so, with academic partners to evaluate impact.**

- The Mayor has increased funding through the 2019/20 Food programme to support delivery of Healthy Catering Commitment (HCC), in partnership with Association of London Environmental Health Managers. This has funded a **new, dedicated website** mapping all HCC accredited food outlets and a new, CPD accredited course for Environmental Health Officers delivering HCC is currently in development.
- **Tier 2 of the Healthy Catering Commitment** is currently out to consultation and has been developed to recognise and encourage the progress of chains and larger outlets investing in healthier and sustainable catering through a range of actions.

**Ambition 10.  
Fund Good Food Innovation and Harness the Power of Investment**

The London Food Strategy set out a number of ways in which businesses offering healthier food options will be supported through guidance and investment. To build on this work, the GLA Food Team is currently scoping a **business support programme** as part of the 2020/21 Food Programme. A tender will invite consortium bids to deliver incubator and accelerator business support to food businesses and social enterprises in London.

Funding will also be earmarked to develop a ‘**Good Food Funding Charter**’, which will incorporate ‘good food’ principles and act as guidance to help funders and prospective applicants embed these principals in their proposals.

**10a. We call on investment funders, the Mayor, the London boroughs, established businesses and Guy’s and St Thomas’ Charity to support the development of a ‘good food’ investment fund.**

- Whilst the Mayor will consider supporting any new ‘good food’ investment fund, should this develop, the GLA’s primary focus will be on the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP) business support initiative, the **London Growth Hub**, which has supported a number of food and drink businesses through the B2B mentoring programme **Mentoring for Growth**, and the **Meet the Buyer** programme. A number of new physical Growth Hubs across London will also be targeting existing everyday businesses, including food & drink businesses in the retail and manufacturing sectors, which will receive specialised advice and support.

**10b. We call on the Mayor to support the responsible investment case for solutions to unhealthy weight in childhood and encourage institutional investors to join the ShareAction Healthy Markets coalition.**

- GLA Health and Food teams have met with **ShareAction** to consider how the Mayor can support their ambitions to promote responsible investment, including by promoting the initiative through over 1,000 businesses registered with the London Healthy Workplace Award.