

Making London better for all children and young people



MAYOR OF LONDON



**Making London
better**



for all children and young people

This is the Mayor's plan on how to make London a more child-friendly place

The Mayor produced a draft children and young people's plan in April 2003 and asked Londoners what they thought of it. There was a fantastic response from children and young people. Over 1,000 of you wrote to us or emailed us with your suggestions and ideas on how London could be made better for you.

You said that there wasn't enough space to play, that parks needed to be safer and better looked after. You wanted more sports and activities for older children and young people and cheaper and safer public transport. You said you'd like to be able to walk and cycle more too. You wanted better housing and more **child-friendly neighbourhoods**. You also wanted a say in how London is run and to know that you were being listened to.

All your ideas have been carefully looked at and this final plan for London includes your views and suggestions, as well as those of all the adults and organisations who also responded.

As a result of all this discussion and feedback the Mayor is launching this **strategy**. He wants to work with everyone in London to make it a better place for all of London's children and young people. He's determined not to let you down.

The Mayor's job is to make plans for improving things in London, such as transport, the police and fire brigade, businesses, making Londoners healthier, the environment and London culture, like museums, attractions, music... etc. There are some things that the Mayor has the power to do himself and there are others things where he has to work with other groups and organisations in London to make sure things change.

There is a jargon-buster at the back to help you understand any of the words in **bold**.

What's in the strategy?

The **strategy** is made up of different parts and describes what it's like growing up in London and what the Mayor will do to make things better for children and young people.

This **strategy** is linked to what the Government also wants for all children. These are known as **national outcomes for children**, which they are calling-being healthy, enjoying and achieving, staying safe, a positive contribution and economic well-being. Here we are calling them the same, except for the last two, which we've re-named 'making a difference' and 'having a fair chance'.

Growing up in London

A child-friendly London is

A place where every child and young person has the right to:

- be part of decisions about their city
- say what kind of city they want
- be involved in family, **community** and social life
- get good quality, **child-friendly** services such as health, education and care
- be protected from **exploitation**, violence and abuse
- walk safely in the streets on their own
- meet friends and play
- have green spaces for plants and animals
- live in an unpolluted area
- take part in cultural events
- be equal to other Londoners.

The **strategy** is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is a big list of rights for all children that nearly every country in the world has signed up to. It covers children and young people from birth to 18 years.

This **strategy** is for children and young people aged from 0 to 18 years.



"I think it would be good if we have nature reserves because children would be learning about nature and having a good time"

Girl, Year 5, Northview Primary School.

Children and young people are important citizens in London, and they add a lot to the city. It will be good for everyone if London is a better place to grow up

There are 1.62 million children and young people in London. Nearly a quarter of all the people in London are under 18 years.

For children and young people, London can be an especially hard place to grow up. There are lots of different reasons for this. Maybe they don't have enough money, or there is too much **pollution**, or they don't have anywhere decent to live, or they feel unsafe.

Most children and young people grow up in families and as part of their local **community**. That's why the **strategy** says families and **community** are important and wants to help them in supporting children and young people better.

The Mayor will do this by:

- supporting families
- doing what he can to meet children's needs and wishes, recognising that everyone is different
- being fair to all children
- encouraging people to work with each other so that services link well together.



You've told him what you want to see happen in London.

Now we have this **strategy**, the Mayor will speak up for London's children to get the changes needed.

This means

- trying to get more money and help – from national government and other places
- having more and better public services like education, transport and housing.

He will do this by

- making sure that all his other **GLA** strategies think about what children and young people need and try to meet them
- setting up a new Children and Young People's Unit at City Hall. The people who work in the Unit will speak out on behalf of children and young people and give advice and support to the **GLA** and to other organisations in London, so that this **strategy** really begins to change things.

A voice for London's children

The goal!

All children and young people are listened to and can be involved in decisions about all areas of their lives.

How?

Make sure that children and young people are involved as often as possible and in the right way.

Make it possible for all children and young people to be involved if they want to be.

Check that this is really happening.

Work with other organisations to make sure children and young people have access to help and **advocacy** services.

Develop ways for children and young people to get involved in how government works.



By...

Setting up a children's website with information about children's rights, what's going on and where to get help in London. It will be for both children and young people and those helping them have a say.

Asking children and young people what's the best way to involve all children and young people and how a **Young Londoners' Forum** might work. This will be by talking to all the different children and young people's groups that already exist and to individual children to ask for their ideas.

Holding **'Meet the Mayor'** events for children and young people.

Making sure children and young people who are not normally heard are given a voice, including very young children.

Supporting the government's decision to create a **Children's Commissioner** for England but making sure it has real powers, is independent and listens to London's children's concerns.

Supporting the campaign to lower the voting age to 16 years.

"...the children and young people live in London, just as adults do. I think it is vital that we are allowed to have input into the way things are run around us"

girl, 12 years.



Understanding London's children's lives

The goal!

Make sure that people who make decisions which affect children and young people know what it's like growing up in London.



How?

Understand and share information about what makes children happy and helps them grow up well and confidently.

Make sure this **strategy** gets support from everyone and starts to make a difference for children.

See what works.

"At the end of the day we use everything that everybody else uses, so we should have a say"

young person.

By...

Finding out about and talking to all the projects in London where children are already having a say in how they should be run and what they should be doing.

Getting a picture of what's happening to children in London by producing a new **'State of London's Children' Report**.

Checking that all the Mayor's strategies, starting with transport, make things better for children by doing **Child Impact Assessments** – measuring how much children and young people have been affected by all these strategies.

Finding out how much money is being spent on children and arguing for more.

Making things better for children and young people

Being healthy

The goal!

All children should have good physical and mental health and enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

How?

Make London a child-friendly city.

Make sure all children and young people have good health services.

By...

Getting **London boroughs** to design **child-friendly neighbourhoods**.

Making sure all local open spaces include what children want in them too.

Making sure the people who design buildings and plan our streets and public areas think about where children will play and learn, and where there will be **childcare** services.

Making it easier to walk and cycle to places children want to go to.

Asking **Transport for London (TfL)** to make more space to park cycles, to help make low-cost helmets available and to provide information and training on cycling.

Encouraging all schools to be part of the '**National Healthy Schools Scheme**'.

Encouraging people not to smoke in public.

Making sure local sports are included in the Olympics bid and there are more chances to do sports at school.

Making sure there is better help for children who are unhappy, and enough money for services to support them. Also, by making sure that people like teachers and police have training to help unhappy children.

Supporting families so that children and young people do not get drug or alcohol problems.



“We think that smoking should be banned, as it can cause lung cancer and can also tempt children to smoke when they’re older.”

*Boy, Year 5,
Northview Primary School.*



Enjoying and achieving

The goal!

All children and young people should be able to get the most out of life and develop the skills to help them as adults.

How?

Make available a range of different play, sports, arts and cultural activities which can be used by all children and young people.

Get London's attractions and services to be more **child-friendly**.

Make sure all children and young people can get an education and have a good chance of doing well in school (including groups of children who often miss out and may have had time out of school).

Make sure all young people, especially those who often miss out, get the training and skills they need to get a job.



By...

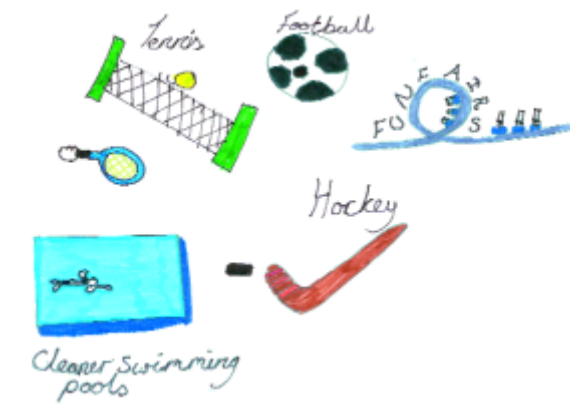
Making it much easier for young children in pushchairs and disabled young people to get around, and making all public transport accessible to them.

Looking at who uses play areas and what stops others from using them too.

Making sure that everyone understands that playing is important to children.

Looking after outdoor play spaces and trying to stop play spaces and school playing fields being sold or changed to something else.

Supporting steps to make sure all young Londoners have good **youth services** in their area.



“We could make more places for children like funfairs, more children’s shops, cleaner swimming pools, football pitches, tennis courts...”

Girl, Year 5, Northview Primary School.

Supporting ways for children to do more creative activities in school and helping young people who would like to find work in this area.

Making it easier for children to use and take part in drama, art, music and libraries in London.



Working with the **Visit London** and others to make London a good place for children to visit.

Working with the **Education Commission** to decide what to do to make sure that black children have a good chance of achieving well at school and are not **excluded from school** more than other children.

Getting more money for refugee and asylum seeking children to help with their education.

Helping children and young people to get the training they need to find work – particularly children and young people who have had a difficult time growing up.



Staying safe

The goal!

All children and young people should be protected from being hurt and be able to grow up safely.

How?

Make sure that all children and young people feel safe when they are out and about.

Make transport and the streets safer for children and young people.

Make playing in London safer.

Stop children and young people from being picked on and treated unfairly and show how good it is that everyone is different.

Protect children and young people from violence, **neglect** and bad treatment.



“more traffic lights, street police, street lights..”

Boy, Year 5, Northview Primary School.

“More car free streets so children can play sport on the street”

boy, Year 5.

By...

Working with Transport for London (TfL) to...

Look at safety and the needs of disabled children when preparing their Action Plan for Children and Young People (for 0-18 year olds).

Find out which children are more likely to get hurt in traffic accidents and what needs to be done to stop this from happening.

Ask young people about their experiences of crime on public transport.

Work with schools to make sure that it becomes safer to use public transport.



Girl, Year 5, Northview Primary School.

as well as...

Slowing down traffic to 20 mph where possible to stop accidents.

Involving children in deciding what makes it easier and safer to walk to places. Making parks and open spaces safer by having more trained staff to watch over children and young people. Also getting people responsible for these parks to think of other ways of making them safe, like having emergency help points and giving out information.

Involving people in London in finding ways to stop **discrimination** against children and young people and show how all our differences can be valued and enjoyed.

Encouraging people to involve children and young people in anti-bullying and anti-discrimination projects in schools.

Bringing everyone in London together so they can campaign to get the law changed so that all violence against children, including hitting children, is against the law.

Encouraging the new **Local Children Safeguarding Boards** to look into what has happened every time someone under 18 dies.

Asking the **Londonwide Child Protection Committee** to find out how many disabled children are abused, so that they can be better protected.

Making a difference

The goal!

All children and young people in a child-friendly city should be part of the decisions about London – encouraged to get involved in what happens and in how decisions are taken.

How?

Get **London boroughs** and others to talk to children and young people when they make plans on things that affect them and listen to their views.



Boy, Year 5, Northview Primary School.

Make sure that when young people do commit crimes they are treated fairly and their rights are respected.

By...

Encouraging boroughs to involve children and young people in designing play and leisure services.

Involving young Londoners in planning and designing transport to make sure it's safe.

Getting the police and the **London boroughs** to take crimes against children and young people more seriously, and to collect more information about these kinds of crimes.

Involving children and young people in thinking about how to reduce crime and make London safer for them.

"The Mayor should involve young children in making plans for the city. He should involve schools so they can make these decisions. And he should not just use young people who are already involved in groups"

Young person.

Having a fair chance

The goal!

All children and young people should be helped to achieve what they can.

How?

Make sure all children have a good standard of living (this means enough money, a good place to live, and the things they need).

Provide better support to parents and children.

Make it easier for young children to go to nurseries and other early years' activities.

Make sure young people who don't have enough money get help and support. Make plans to help young homeless people in London, including **unaccompanied asylum seeking children** who are here on their own. Make sure they get the support they need.

By...

Campaigning to get the government to make sure fewer children in London are poor.

Encouraging people to collect their **benefit money**, and making sure there is good information for them.

Making sure there is good and **affordable childcare** in London, and there is help for parents who go to work.

Looking at ways to make transport cheaper for children.

Providing better housing.

Making sure fewer children and babies have to live in **bed and breakfast**, and that they can use health, education and **social services**.



Girl, Year 5, Northview Primary School.



Making it happen

How will this be done?

The Mayor is setting up a Children's and Young People's Unit at the **Greater London Authority** and it will be responsible for making sure all the things set out in this **strategy** happen.



Jargon buster

Advocacy services – people that will help children when they have a problem. An example is a lawyer for children.

Affordable – cheap enough for ordinary people. This means that things like housing and childcare should be things that most families can afford.

Bed and breakfast – when a family or person does not have a home they sometimes have to stay in 'bed and breakfast', where they usually get a small room to live in and their breakfast is given to them every day.

Benefit money – this is extra money from the government for people who don't have enough or need more.

Child Impact Assessment – a way of seeing how children are affected when different plans or decisions are made – for example how they might be affected if a new road was built in their area.

Child-friendly – good for children, and understandable to them.

Childcare – how a young child is looked after when their parents go to work.

Children's Commissioner – a powerful person who has the job of making sure the government respects children's rights.

Community – a group of people that know each other, or live near each other, or have other things in common.

Discrimination – when a group of people is treated unfairly.

Education Commission – this is a group of people who will look at ways of improving education and training for young Londoners. It was set up by the London Development Agency, which is an organisation linked to the GLA.

Excluded from school – this is when a child or young person is told they cannot go to a school any more.

Exploitation – when someone is mistreated or taken advantage of.

GLA-Greater London Authority – the organisation that helps the Mayor in his work.

Health services – these include doctors, hospitals, school nurses and lots more.

Local Children Safeguarding Boards – will bring together representatives from the police, social services, education and voluntary organisations in every London borough to make sure children are protected.

London boroughs – these are the councils that run lots of services in London. There are 33 altogether. Do you know which borough you live in?

Londonwide Child Protection Committee – a group of organisations, including the police and social services, who work to stop children from being abused.

‘Meet the Mayor’ events – big meetings when the Mayor meets with different Londoners, including children and young people.

National outcomes for children – how the government can find out if things for children have got better.

National Healthy Schools Scheme – a government project to provide children and young people with health information and help in their schools.

Neglect – not looked after properly.

Neighbourhoods – the area where you live.

Pollution – how bad the air is and how much rubbish there is.

Social Services – when a person or family is having problems they can get help from a social worker or social services.

‘State of London’s Children’ report – a report that includes everything that is known about children and young people and measures how well their lives are going.

Strategy – an agreed plan.

TfL – Transport for London – the organisation which looks after transport in London for the Mayor.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people – who had to leave their country because of problems there, and didn’t come with any adults.

Visit London – the organisation that tries to make London a good place for people to visit.

Young Londoners’ Forum – a network of children and young people’s groups who could get together to tell adults what young Londoners think.

Youth Services – provide support to young people and places for them to meet and do things together.



What you told us

Who responded?

In all, 1,047 of you gave us your views and suggestions – some came from individuals, some from schools and others from children and young people's groups.

Nearly the same number of boys and girls (just a few more girls) replied.

Most of you were between 8 and 15 years.

You said you came from 19 different ethnic groups or cultures.

Some of you had a disability.

You thought the best ideas in the draft strategy were...

More space to play, with parks that are safe and well looked after.

Public transport should be safer and cheaper and free for all children who go to primary school.

Public transport should be easier for people in wheelchairs or with pushchairs.

We should make sure that there are good health services for children.

As London grows and new houses, transport and neighbourhoods are built, they should be child-friendly.

We should do more to help children and young people who are abused.

We should make sure all children and young people can learn and do well in school.

Children and young people should be more involved in decision-making in London.

What many of you thought was missing or should be improved in the strategy

More, better and cheaper leisure and sports facilities.

More awareness about litter and the environment.

Some of the other most important issues facing children and young people in London

Bullying and racism.

Some of you can't take part in things because you don't have enough money.

You think the Mayor giving children and young people a say and helping them is really important!

We would like to thank all of you who gave your ideas. A special thank you to children from Northside, Argyle, Edmund Waller and Northview primary schools and Willow Dene special school for your many suggestions, with the drawings from Northview children.



MAYOR OF LONDON

Copies of the full document and further copies of this child-friendly version
are available from www.london.gov.uk
or by calling
020 7983 4100

Alternatively you can write to:

Ken Livingstone
Mayor of London
Children's & Young People's Unit
Greater London Authority
FREEPOST 15799
LONDON SE1 2BR

If you would like these documents as audiotape, Braille, large print or rtf files
on disk, or if you require assistance with these publications in another language,
please contact us on **020 7983 4100**
or Minicom **020 7983 4458**

ISBN: 1 85261 567 2

Photography credits

Pool of London Partnership · Adam Hinton · Hayley Madden
National Youth Agency · d2ps.com