

London Youth Response

Mayor of London

Sport for All of Us: London Sport Strategy

12 October 2018

London Youth
47-49 Pitfield Street
London N1 6DA



About this consultation

The Mayor of London is consulting on the draft [Sport for All of Us: London Sport Strategy](#) and is seeking responses by 12 October 2018.

About this response

This response is on behalf of London Youth and supported by [Coram's Fields](#), [London Basketball Association \(LBA\)](#), [Mary's Youth Club](#), and [Pro Touch SA](#). We would like to thank the GLA's Sports Team for attending our member consultation session and engaging with us directly.



About London Youth

[London Youth](#) is a federation of over 400 community youth organisations in London. We are a youth charity on a mission to improve the lives of young people in London, challenging them to become the best they can. Young people need opportunities outside school to have fun with their friends, to learn new skills, to make a positive change in their communities and to shape the city they live in.

We deliver a broad range of meaningful benefits to our members, including funded opportunities, training and professional development, specialist member networks on issues affecting young people, Quality Mark accreditation, policy and influencing voice, and research that evidences the needs of the young people and the youth sector. With members and partners, we deliver sports, arts, and youth social action programmes, as well as the [Talent Match London](#) employability programme to young people in London.

We also run two residential centres, [Hindleap Warren](#) in East Sussex and [Woodrow High House](#) in Buckinghamshire, that help young people develop their skills and confidence through specialist outdoor education.

We directly develop the confidence, resilience and relationship skills of over 27,000 children and young people each year through our programmes and reach tens of thousands more through our membership network.

London Youth believes it is vital to connect those who make decisions with young people and the over 400 youth organisations in our membership. We are able to facilitate:

- Visits to community youth organisations;
- Consultation on specific issues or programmes with young people and youth professionals;
- Dissemination of opportunities or information to community youth organisations; and
- Young people and youth professionals attending and speaking at events.

Our response

Key messages

London Youth considers that:

- Community youth organisations are an important vehicle for engaging young people in sport and physical activity and encouraging social integration.
- It is vital to ensure that funding and support is available and accessible to smaller community youth organisations. Local organisations that have proven programmes and existing relationships should be supported as a priority.
- The Mayor and the GLA should support community youth organisations to partner with businesses, local authorities, and schools and colleges.
- It is vital to invest in positive, high-quality activities and facilities for young people and to support training and development of youth professionals.

Consultation questions

Do you agree with the overall vision and the three themes of this draft sport strategy? If not, why not? Is anything missing?

London Youth generally supports the vision and themes of the Mayor's strategy. We strongly support accessible and sustainable community sport provision for its own sake and note the wide range of physical, mental, and social benefits it delivers for young people and London's communities.

We still have questions about how the strategy, and particularly the Sport Unites programme, will translate in practice, particularly regarding accessibility for smaller youth and community organisations.

We strongly encourage the Mayor and the GLA to ensure that young people and communities have an active voice in how local sport provision is delivered and what opportunities are available to them.

Does chapter 2 (London: socially integrated through sport) identify the main issues that might impact on the role of sport to support social integration? If not, what is missing?

We consider that social integration is an important goal and that sport provision to have an important role to play in encouraging it. One youth professional from LBA said that "social integration and sport go hand in hand".

In 2017, London Youth partnered with a market research company to understand the views of young Londoners between 15 and 25 years old.¹ From this research, we can demonstrate that sport activities were an important basis for community among this group. For example, young people considered their sport club a greater source of community than either religious or cultural

¹ London Youth (2017) *Listening to Young Londoners*. NB: Unpublished data, available on request.

groups. Young males were more likely to consider sport clubs a source of community than either their schools or extended families. Of those polled, 10% thought that sport and leisure facilities were among the best things about London and 9% thought they were among the worst. However, 29% of young Londoners were confident that sport provision in their local areas would improve over the next year.

We consider that youth professionals can be very positive for developing social integration, particularly when they are empowered to connect different organisations and groups of young people. An example of this is London Youth's three Sports Development Officers, who work with 90 youth organisations and 2,800 young people each year. Youth professionals in similar roles have a broad knowledge of communities and organisations and are able to act as trusted community connectors. This assists individual organisations to work together and aggregate their impact.

London Youth considers strong and cohesive communities to be vital for the success of London and young Londoners. We have demonstrated the positive role that youth organisations play in strengthening London's communities by:

- Creating connections for young people and the community;
- Giving young people a sense of belonging and ownership over the local area;
- Being places of physical safety;
- Allowing young people to recognise and celebrate difference and cultural identity;
- Developing young people's skills and confidence for community involvement; and
- Being known and trusted within the community.²

Young people from Mary's Youth Club noted that the biggest barriers for young people were the social influence of friends and peers, cost, and time. They also noted that there is huge variance in sport provision and facilities between different boroughs. This is a particular problem for Outer London boroughs.

Case study: Camden Unity Cup

One example of a sport programme effectively encouraging social integration is the Camden Unity Cup, a community football tournament that has been running since 1997. The tournament is considered to have helped foster social cohesion and reduce racial tension among young people in the borough. One youth professional described the moment he knew the programme was a success was when he observed a young person stepping in to stop racist abuse of a team member by members of another team from the same background. While much of the attention for the programme focuses on the tournament at the end, it is the weeks of relationship building before and afterwards that make it a success. Young people meet and train with young people from different areas and backgrounds with the incentive of the final tournament to keep young people engaged.

² London Youth (2018) [*"A Space of Our Own" – The role and value of youth organisations in strengthening communities.*](#)

How should the Mayor best work with partners to help remove barriers and help improve social integration through sport in London?

We consider it vital not only to encourage greater youth participation in sport and physical activity, but also to reach those groups who are least likely to engage. Community organisations play a vital role in encouraging participation among the hardest to reach groups of young people among the most deprived communities in London.

We frequently hear from members that many young people struggle with what may seem like basic barriers to engaging in new activities. These barriers include difficulty affording travel costs to sport facilities, particularly as public service cuts and the cost of living mean many young people are travelling significantly further to access opportunities. For this reason, London Youth pays travel expenses for young people involved in its programmes and advises employers we work with in our employability programme to include this in opportunities like work placements.

For many young Londoners, cost is not the only or largest impediment to travelling to other parts of the city. Young people and youth workers frequently tell us that many young Londoners are intimidated to travel beyond the familiar areas where they usually live, learn, work, and play. The most commonly expressed are: fear of travelling into unfamiliar postcodes, with safety and crime remaining the largest concern for young Londoners according to our polling; and a lack of confidence. Youth professionals from our members tell us that young people often require significant amounts of support to travel to unfamiliar parts of London. Youth professionals play an unacknowledged role in accompanying young people to new areas and introducing them to new activities. To meaningfully increase participation in sport, the Mayor should consider partnering with community youth organisations that already have the trust of young people and, with the right support, can introduce them to new opportunities.

There is value in supporting existing youth and community organisations because any knowledge or capacity investment remains in communities. Relationships that are formed and experience that is gained by individual programmes continue after those programmes end.

The largest barrier to participation for young people is access to facilities. While there are many examples of positive and long-standing partnerships, community and youth organisations struggle to work with schools and colleges. Members comment that schools are often over-stretched, focused on their own targets, and sometimes unfairly associate youth organisations with 'trouble makers'. While many schools offer 'community rates' for access to their facilities, these are still a barrier for many community and youth organisations. The education and youth sectors are both supporting many of the same young people through their journey and should be partner more effectively for their benefit.

We consider that the GLA could play a much more active role in mediating relationships between schools and local authorities to ensure that community and youth organisations are able to access local facilities.

Young people from Mary's Youth Club said that the Mayor could have most effect by improving the communication of opportunities, encouraging sport events with a social or community component, and incorporating cultural understanding and tolerance into sport provision.

How can the Mayor help to increase sports participation to improve the physical and mental health of all Londoners, but in particular, for those Londoners who are inactive, or who have poor access to sports activities/facilities?

To encourage more young people to participate, we consider that the Mayor should seek to go to the places they choose to go, including community youth organisations, and should do more to deliver sport to young people on their terms in the places they feel most comfortable. For example, by supporting sport programmes in those organisations that already have relationships with young people but are not delivering this type of project. Those actively involved in sport in their communities through organisations like youth organisations are more likely to take up the wider sport offer of London, as well as developing skills, knowledge, and relationships that may lead to careers in the sport sector.

In order to drive participation among young people not interested in sport and physical activity, it is important to offer mixed activities. Coram's Fields have had a lot of success with their Sports With model. For example, they combined the girls group within their youth and sport programmes and developed a mixed programme that includes elements of art, music, and physical activity. One successful example was young people creating and practicing their own dance routine, which they performed in outfits designed and created in the art component. London Youth also runs an Art of Fencing that targets our fencing offer at young people from arts-based organisations who wouldn't normally get involved in sport but love to be creative. The programme allows them to link an art of their choice with fencing.

We consider that forming positive habits early in life is vital to creating a cultural change around physical activity. For example, a youth professional from Coram's Fields noted the effectiveness of the Daily Mile programme in the young people they work with. The programme sees schools commit to getting young people outside of the classroom and being active for at least 15 minutes each day.

Case study: Getting Ready

Getting Ready is a London Youth sports development programme designed to provide young people, particularly those who are typically inactive, with regular sport opportunities. It also aims to build the long-term capacity of community youth organisations to deliver diverse and accessible sport opportunities.

The programme has been operating since 2009 and currently works with over 90 member youth organisations and a minimum of 2,800 young people in east, central and west London each year. The main funders are Sport England and the Greater London Authority.

The programme focuses on the more disadvantaged areas of the capital where a lack of facilities, equipment, and trained instructors has built a barrier between young people and participation. We support member youth organisations to deliver a bespoke 'sport offer' chosen by young people in their local community. We reach those not currently participating, who can be disengaged from school and not currently accessing sports elsewhere.

Our model is carefully staged to allow us to deliver a huge range of sports, as chosen by young people. We capture young people's interest and keep them engaged by using the following simple but flexible model tailored for each youth club: taster sessions, weekly structured sports sessions, NGB (National Governing Bodies) or equivalent coaching and leadership training and progression, residential weekends and tournaments, disability-specific programmes, and the provision of free sport equipment.

Our impact measurement for the period between September 2016 and August 2017 shows the positive effect of the programme for young people and youth professionals. For 151 surveyed on process, the mean score was 9.11 out of 10 and the NSS (National Schools Survey) Score was 74.7%, which is interpreted as 'excellent'.

Our impact data from the Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ) completed by 272 indicates that the programme had a strong and positive impact on young people's social and emotional capabilities. We found statistically significant differences across all LEQ factors including those relating to young people's confidence, resilience and relationship skills. Strong changes were seen for a relatively large proportion of young people with the biggest effect sizes seen for intellectual flexibility, emotional control, and social competence. Over three quarters of young people had improved 'life effectiveness' (overall score) at the end of the programme.

This was echoed by youth professionals, the overwhelming majority of whom saw positive change to young people's motivation, confidence, teamwork and self-expression during their time on the programme in 2016/17.

One attendee from Calthorpe Project in Camden on the 2014 programme was involved in gang activity, disengaged from school and at risk of exclusion. His inability to connect with formal education meant he missed out on what was on offer inside the school gates. He became involved in Getting Ready in a place he trusted. He began enjoying sport and taking responsibility within the club, supported by older youth workers. He quickly became a role model for other young people and has set up and now runs local football and futsal leagues, doing everything from arranging and booking fixtures, to ensuring discipline and high standards of behaviour. He has grown a great deal of confidence, and has taken his Level One coaching qualification, and enrolled in a Level One youth work programme, reigniting his interest in and passion for learning.

Within the Getting Ready model, we also run specific programmes aimed at young people with disabilities and young women and girls. Through the 2014 Getting Ready programme within Attlee Youth & Community Centre, a group of young Muslim girls took the opportunity to develop for themselves a project which combined sport with healthy cooking and eating, giving them the opportunity to demonstrate to their families that their learning was valuable, while at the same time improving their own leadership, confidence, and wellbeing. Some of the girls have engaged in regular sessions of non-contact boxing, and one is now a qualified coach, giving other young people the chance to learn from her.

Does chapter 4 identify the main issues for creating a thriving sport sector in London? If not, what is missing?

We support the proposed ways of improving the capacity of the sport sector in London.

We strongly support developing and investing in people from within their communities as role models. For many young Londoners, sport programmes operate as effective pre-employability programmes that open other avenues by developing interpersonal skills and confidence, and providing professional experience and qualifications. Providing increased professional opportunities in an area that many young people are passionate about would lead to higher retention for the sector and an increased sense of worth, responsibility, and motivation.

To create a thriving sport sector, it is vital to develop and invest in individuals by providing skills and qualifications, incentives to remain engaged (for example, through sports competitions), and positive opportunities, including employment.

Professional development is particularly important in smaller community and youth organisations that may lack the resources for professional development.

In considering the wider professional development in the sector, it is important for youth work to be central. While many youth professionals could benefit from development to increase their ability to deliver sport programmes, it is equally true that those from a sporting background who work with young people could benefit from developing core youth work skills. This would provide increased impact on sport programmes for other goals, such as supporting mental health and wellbeing or reducing youth violence.

A youth professional from Pro Touch SA noted that not everyone is made or developed in a classroom and this is particularly true for many in the sport sector. It is important to strike a balance between the different ways that people learn and develop. While qualifications are an important opportunity for development, it is important that these do not cause experience and local knowledge to be undervalued.

Do you think these are the right criteria for the Mayor's support of major sports events in London? If not, what should the criteria be?

We support the principle of major sporting events delivering genuine economic and social benefits to London's communities and young Londoners and for communities to be proactively involved in decision-making.

What sort of major sports events do you think should be held in London in future, and why?

Young people from Mary's Youth Club suggested a greater focus on cycling events, combined with improved road safety and cycle awareness, as it would encourage adoption of a healthy and positive form of transportation. They also suggested some form of pan-London games between the different boroughs to encourage participation and use the legacy of the 2012 London Olympic.

If you are a funder of activities, what scope is there to work with you:

- To align policies
- To align funding pots
- In other areas (please specify)

If you are a potential recipient of funding, what practical issues do you consider important in helping you with delivery?

We support dedicated community grants to small and medium sized community youth organisations under Sport Unites.

It should be a priority that funding reaches those smaller, community-based youth organisations, rather than only larger umbrella organisations.

The Mayor and GLA should consider funding for core costs and facilities. While we acknowledge that this has not been the traditional role of the GLA, it is important to recognise that community youth organisations have suffered under austerity. Just from local authority youth service budgets across London, £39 million less is being spent than in 2011/12, 81 youth centres were closed, and 800 fewer youth workers are employed.³ The Mayor's Young Londoners Fund has been a welcome support for the sector. However, there are limits to what programmatic funding can achieve without investing in the spaces and relationships that make programmes possible.

Funding for the voluntary and community sector is very competitive and youth organisations have to make hard decisions about applications and the return on the investment on their often over-committed time. The GLA needs to ensure that applications, including eligibility and funding guidance, are transparent and not time-consuming. For example, youth organisations would appreciate very clear communication of the scale and range of funding available. A youth professional from LBA suggested that clear guidance could include the size of grant an organisation could apply for, such as an organisation not being eligible for funding more than 50% of its turnover so as not to destabilise its operations.

The Mayor and GLA could use their role to encourage relationships between businesses and community youth organisations, particularly encouraging corporate donors to focus on focused and long-term partnerships.

It is important that young people are actively involved in the decision making process for the allocation of funding. We have supported the GLA's engagement with young people, such as through the Peer Outreach Team, on the Young Londoners Fund. It is vital that engagement for Sports Unite includes the voices of those young people who are hardest to reach but who could benefit the most from it.

Organisations applying for funding should be assessed on their ability to demonstrate youth involvement, such as through the Quality Mark or other accreditation.

³ Sian Berry AM, [London's Lost Youth Services](#), 2018.

Is there anything that you would like to add about our proposed involvement in sport as set out in this document? Please also include where you think there are issues that ought to be included but are missing.

We appreciate the GLA's engagement on this strategy, including attending a session with members at London Youth. However, we note several barriers to engagement and participation:

- Even nominal fees for events or activities discourage participation for many young people and smaller community youth organisations.
- Ensuring that engagement activities occur in times and places that are accessible for young people and youth professionals. For example, the GLA should be conscious of summer holidays, school times, and youth organisations' typical hours of operation. Where possible, the GLA should seek to engage with young people and youth professionals in their communities because this will ensure exposure to the views that are heard least often.

Get in touch



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