Policy Paper
Our priorities for the next Mayor of London

February 2020
**About London Youth**

*London Youth* is the body for youth work 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.

We directly develop the confidence, resilience and relationship skills of over 27,000 children and young people each year through our arts and culture, employability, outdoor education, sports, and youth social action programmes. In every borough of London, through programmes run every day and most evenings and services open to all, our members reach tens of thousands more.

To keep our diverse network of over 500 community youth organisations in London strong, we provide funded opportunities, training and professional development, specialist member networks on issues affecting young people, Quality Mark accreditation, a policy and influencing voice, and research that evidences the needs of the young people and the youth sector.

We can facilitate for policymakers:
- 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.

**About this paper**

This policy paper lays out London Youth’s priorities for the next Mayor of London. A copy of this paper has been sent to all candidates in the 2020 Mayoral Election.

This policy paper is on behalf of London Youth and supported by our 500+ members and associate members.
Our priorities for the next Mayor of London

Prioritise violence reduction in London by funding for relationships

1) London Youth recommends that the next Mayor of London prioritises violence reduction and the safety of young Londoners by funding for long term relationships in community youth organisations.

Community youth organisations play a clear role in addressing the root causes of violence and its long term prevention. Transformative youth work is built on trusted relationships - with young people, with families, and in communities - that do not spring up overnight.

London Youth supports the work of the Violence Reduction Unit and the continued expansion of the public health approach to violence in London.

Retain and improve the Young Londoners Fund

2) London Youth recommends that the next Mayor of London retains the Young Londoners Fund, committing £15 million of funding for positive activities for children and young people across London in each of the four years of their term, and improve it by prioritising the needs and sustainability of grassroots community youth organisations.

Building on the successes and lessons from the first rounds of the Young Londoners Fund, we encourage the next Mayor to seek ways to improve the fund in the following ways:

- Transition from programmatic funding to core costs and unrestricted grants that provide stability for community youth organisations, allow them to respond to community need including the root causes of violence, and capitalise on their relationships and expertise.¹
- Prioritise smaller and grassroots community youth organisations and simplify their access to funding.
- Prioritise improving the long-term sustainability of community youth organisations. There is a need for a greater emphasis on capacity building, recognising and funding the true costs of operating facilities and programmes, and prioritising funding to support trusted relationships and high-quality spaces.
- Invest in the infrastructure of the London youth sector to ensure a sustainable and diverse network of organisations, with no single point of failure, and that can balance hyperlocal provision with pan-London strategy.

The next Mayor should also lobby the Government on behalf of London’s youth sector to ensure that London gets an appropriate share of national funding for young people’s and violence reduction initiatives.

The next Mayor should consider initiatives to enable the emergence of new youth provision and local support specifically for young people in Outer London. Young people in outer boroughs are

already under-served relative to those in inner boroughs, and this is being compounded by current and predicted population growth.

| Enable youth work-led employability support for young people |

3) London Youth recommends that the next Mayor of London enables community youth organisations to support young Londoners, particularly those who identify as black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi, to address barriers and disadvantage and help them into good and sustained employment.

We encourage the next Mayor to support London-wide employability initiatives built around youth work approaches and delivered by community youth organisations.2

- The youth work approach delivers employability support through trusted relationships. This gives young people the best chance to overcome their personal barriers, which are as individual as they are. Because young people enjoy and trust their youth organisations, they’re in the right position to help young people take the next step into employment.
- Community youth organisations are known and trusted within their local communities, with local services, and with families. These networks and relationships increase the impact of their work.
- Getting young people into good and sustained work is about developing life skills as much as it is education. Giving young people the support that they need early is the way to make the most of London's future talent.
- Being young is about exploring and finding what's out there. All young people - from every background - should have as many chances as possible to experience the world of work.

We see this as the key strand of activity that is currently missing from a public health approach to reducing violence in London. The links between poverty and violence, and racial disproportionality in employment and in the experience of violence speak for themselves. Young people and the youth workers who support them consistently tell us that a lack of positive opportunities, including good and sustained employment, contributes to young people becoming involved in violence and crime.

An employability programme built around community youth organisations could be supported by the following initiatives:

- Encouraging businesses to adopt best practice in hiring young Londoners and setting the example with Transport for London and Greater London Authority hiring.
- Lobbying the Government to devolve the Apprenticeship Levy and education and skills provision for 16 to 18 year olds.
- Expansion of the London Enterprise Adviser Network (LEAN) to community youth organisations, as well as secondary schools and colleges.
- Alignment with the Skills for Londoners work programme, devolved Adult Education Budget, and devolved UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

2 London Youth (2017) *Hidden in Plain Sight: Young Londoners unemployed yet unsupported.*