

Consultation response

Healthy children

1. Is there more that the Mayor should do to reduce health inequalities for children and young people?

Opportunities for young disabled people to participate in sport and physical activity should be increased. This could include, for instance, working with cycle training providers (e.g. Bikeability) and schools to explore ways of expanding the offer of cycle training to young disabled children. This should be complimented with increased investment in specialist inclusive cycling sessions, equipment, cycles and trained staff/instructors.

2. How can you help to reduce health inequalities among children and young people?

Wheels for Wellbeing works with disabled individuals as young as 18 months-old, providing them with the opportunity to discover cycling through our inclusive cycling sessions. By working alongside local authorities, CCGs, health bodies and others we can give many more young disabled children the chance to try cycling. However, in order for our services to continue to exist and expand we rely on partnership working, adequate funding and resources.

3. What should be our measures of success and level of ambition for giving London's children a healthy start to life?

Any evaluation must include data on the numbers of disabled children who are participating in cycling and cycle training.

Key measures of success:

Every child (including every disabled child, regardless of impairment level) should have access to experiencing cycling and should be able to take part in Bikeability training at school - from primary through to secondary - with the right support and equipment.

Every child should be offered support in exploring cycling to school.

Every family with a disabled child should have easy access to an inclusive cycling hub, including advice and support about how to make cycling a regular part of their child's life.

Healthy minds

4. Is there more that the Mayor should do to make sure all Londoners can have the best mental health and reduce mental health inequalities?

Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to experience social isolation and encounter mental health issues (it should also be noted that, as disabled people are likely to be older, they are more prone to additional physical and mental health problems). Cycling is a great form of physical activity that is often easier than walking and can offer the following benefits to disabled and older people:

- Delays onset of many conditions and reliance on NHS, mental health and social care services;
- Reduces social isolation (especially where disabled people have access to a local inclusive cycling hub or live close to good quality cycling infrastructure);
- Improves mental wellbeing, confidence and skills;
- Provides a means of access to the outdoors, including green spaces, for many for whom walking is not an option.

Therefore, as part of any health inequalities strategy, the Mayor should ensure there is increased investment for projects and initiatives seeking to encourage more disabled and older people to be physically active.

Furthermore, with greater investment in e-cycles, disabled and older people will be able to stay physically active in life for longer (and thus have improved mental health and wellbeing). As part of this, e-cycles should be added to the cycle hire offer across London, with an initial focus on the hilliest Boroughs.

5. How can you help to reduce mental health inequalities?

Wheels for Wellbeing works with around 1,200 disabled people a year, aged 18 months to 99 years-old. As part of this, we are increasingly working with people suffering from dementia. With the necessary funding and resources, we would hope to expand our work in this area and to explore other active befriending schemes, especially for people experiencing any form of mental ill-health.

6. How can we measure the impact of what we're doing to reduce inequalities in mental health?

Any evaluation must include data on the numbers of disabled, older people and people with mental health issues who are actively participating in physical activity, including cycling.

Healthy places

7. Is there more that the Mayor should do to make London's society, environment and economy better for health and reduce health inequalities?

According to figures cited in this strategy, there is a clear correlation between the propensity to cycle or walk, and age – namely that the older you are, the less likely you are to cycle or walk. One solution to this is to make cycling more inclusive for disabled and older people, including by:

- Ensuring all cycling infrastructure is inclusive by making adoption of the London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS) – and consequently the 'inclusive cycle concept' – a mandatory requirement for all Boroughs;
- Recognising cycles as mobility aids (possibly through some kind of 'Blue Badge' scheme), which would permit disabled cyclists certain rights and exemptions and enable them to cycle, rather than drive or use other non-active modes of transport;
- Ensuring that cycle parking and storage facilities cater for non-standard cycles (e.g. tandems and tricycles);
- Investing in e-cycles, including as part of cycle hire schemes;
- Increasing the proportion of non-standard cycles available as part of cycle hire schemes;
- Integrating all transport modes and ensuring public transport is fully accessible and inclusive, including by permitting the storage of non-standard cycles on-board Tube, Overground and bus services where physically possible;
- Targeting overcrowding, which disproportionately affects and discriminates against disabled, older people and people with mental health issues;
- Ensuring the built environment, including workplaces, buildings and facilities, cater for the needs of disabled cyclists (e.g. as part of the London Healthy Workplaces Charter employers should offer inclusive shower and cycle facilities);
- Ensuring new homes are built in a way that takes into account the needs and requirements of disabled cyclists (e.g. providing cycle parking and storage facilities for non-standard cycles, as well as easily accessible and safe cycling routes).

8. How can you help to reduce inequalities in the environmental, social and economic causes of ill health?

Wheels for Wellbeing will continue to work with TfL, civil engineers and others to develop practical solutions for making cycling infrastructure and facilities more inclusive. Our new [Guide to Inclusive Cycling](#) provides a framework for this, and we ask that signposting to this resource form part of the Mayor's Transport Strategy and that its principles are adopted by TfL and London Boroughs.

9. What should be our measures of success and level of ambition for creating a healthy environment, society and economy?

Any evaluation must include data on the numbers of disabled cyclists who are using London's cycling infrastructure; the proportion of cycle parking facilities that accommodate non-standard cycles; the number of disabled cyclists who have encountered difficulties when using their cycle as a mobility aid; and the proportion of public transport services that adequately cater for the needs of disabled cyclists.

In other words, we believe that public spaces, including the public realm, cycling infrastructure, the highway, footways etc. cannot be classed as 'healthy' unless they are routinely frequented by multiple users, including disabled people. As such, we recommend that a qualifying criteria of the Healthy Streets Approach be the amount of different users, including disabled people, making use of an environment (for cycling environments, a good indicator of a well-designed inclusive cycle network is the variety of users from under-represented groups using it, including disabled people, women, children and older people).

Healthy communities

10. Is there more that the Mayor should do to help London's diverse communities become healthy and thriving?

We agree with the Mayor's ambition to "support the most disadvantaged Londoners to benefit from social prescribing to improve their health and wellbeing". Social prescribing should form a routine part of community support across London and acts as a way of reducing pressure on NHS services. As ways of making the most of social prescribing, we would advise that:

- There should be signposting to the fact that disabled people can cycle;
- Funding and resources for social prescriptions be channelled to frontline services, in order to ensure the sustainability of community-based support (i.e. money must follow a person to the frontline, to provide funding so that grassroots organisations can continue running and keep charges to a minimum);
- Every Borough should provide an inclusive cycle hub, offering disabled people an opportunity to discover or rediscover cycling – and reap the many physical, mental health and rehabilitative benefits it has to offer;
- Partnerships be encouraged between inclusive cycling hubs, CCGs, Health and Wellbeing Boards, SEND schools and others so that all disabled, older people and people with mental health issues can be signposted/referred to inclusive cycling opportunities in their area.

11. How can you help to support thriving communities?

Wheels for Wellbeing is a strong supporter of social prescribing. Through our regular inclusive cycling sessions we offer disabled, older people and people with mental health issues the opportunity to try cycling and to enjoy the holistic benefits it has to offer – physically and mentally, as well as socially. With the right funding and resources we can diversify and expand our services, as well as continue to seek out partnerships with organisations that support disabled, older people and people with mental health issues.

12. What should be our measures of success and level of ambition for creating healthy and thriving communities?

Any evaluation must include data on the number of Boroughs who are actively engaging in inclusive cycling opportunities – including those Boroughs who have developed a recognisable inclusive cycling 'hub'.

A measure of success would be an observable increase in the number of community-based, health-enhancing offers that are available throughout London (and which are able to operate in a sustainable, long-term manner).

Healthy habits

13. Is there more that the Mayor should do to help to reduce health inequalities as well as improve overall health in work to support Londoners' healthy lives and habits?

Given that disabled people are half as likely as non-disabled people to be physically active, the Mayor must make concerted efforts to encourage – and improve opportunities for – more disabled Londoners to cycle, particularly from a young age. As ways of achieving this, it is essential that:

- Disabled children are given equal access to cycle training and skills, from as young an age as possible;
- The cycling environment is designed in an inclusive way that affords disabled children and adults the confidence to cycle freely, without fear for their safety or physical obstacles - as per the principles outlined in our Guide to Inclusive Cycling;
- The Mayor and TfL work with schools to develop schemes and initiatives that encourage more disabled children to cycle to school.

14. What can you do to help all Londoners to develop healthy habits? What is preventing you from doing more and what would help you?

With the right funding and resources, Wheels for Wellbeing can continue to support schools, parents and carers to design and deliver inclusive cycling opportunities, including the development of active travel plans for travelling to school.

However, in order to achieve this it is desirable that a more joined up strategy be devised - bringing together health, transport, education and leisure services at Borough level - resulting in a more holistic provision of services.

15. What should be our measures of success and level of ambition for helping more Londoners to develop healthy habits?

Any evaluation must include data on the number of schools (including mainstream schools) offering inclusive cycling provision for disabled children, as well as the number of disabled children who are actively participating in cycling, as a form of leisure or transport.

Any provider of cycling services receiving TfL funding should be required to gather disability data as a matter of course.

A measure of success would be for every disabled child (as well as their parents) and adult to be aware of the fact that cycling is an option for them; that they have tried it and/or that they know where to go locally for support to make cycling a regular part of their lives.