



LONDON'S PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE UN'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

London Sustainable Development Commission

March 2021

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The London Sustainable Development Commission (LSDC) was established in 2002 to provide independent advice to the Mayor of London on ways to make London a sustainable, world-class city. The Commission is an independent body, challenging policymakers to promote a better quality of life for all Londoners, both now and in the future, whilst also considering London's wider global impacts. The Commission is made up of individual experts from the economic, social, environmental and London governance sectors. Commissioners give their time voluntarily, promoting sustainable development, embedding sustainability into London-wide strategies, and helping make sustainability a meaningful and understandable concept for all Londoners.

Emily Auckland was Network Director at the UKSSD, an initiative she helped to found following successful advocacy work at the United Nations inter-governmental negotiations for the Sustainable Development Goals. Through her work with UKSSD, Emily has played a critical role in awareness raising and engagement in the SDGs across the UK and advocating for changes in the Government's approach, including producing 'Measuring Up', the first report on the UK's performance on the SDGs. (Please note: Since Emily's contribution to this report, UKSSD have now merged with UN Global Compact UK,

and Emily has taken up a new role as Programme Director at Chapter Zero).

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FOREWORD BY DR ASHOK SINHA



This report is the first comprehensive assessment of London's local contribution to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

When the LSDC started on this project, Covid-19 was unheard of. The deprivation and disadvantage that so many Londoners face has since been laid bare and exacerbated by this awful disease. As the vaccination programme rolls out at pace, London is also grappling with the complex task of forging a green and fair recovery from pandemic's terrible impacts.

On top of that, the existential threats of the climate and ecological emergencies demand urgent action before it is too late to avert the worst consequences, not least at the critically important Glasgow climate summit, hosted by the UK Government, which will soon be upon us.

Because of the pandemic, our city may never be the same. Nor should it be. In this report, we set out why we believe the SDGs can and should form the guiderails for the recovery, achieving a better, fairer and more prosperous city whilst living within planetary boundaries.

This report is the start of a process of discussion and engagement, bringing together people from across the whole of society, to determine how best to do so.

An enormous amount of work has gone into producing this assessment. I would principally like to thank LSDC commissioner Paul Toyne and Jon Emmett from the GLA for leading this effort, as well as the experts at Newcastle University and UKSSD who undertook the data gathering and analysis. I would also like to warmly thank the rest of the commission and the LSDC secretariat, plus the many others from a variety of organisations, for their time, guidance and insights.

We hope that readers from a broad range of sectors find this report valuable, and we welcome any feedback on the data or the conclusions we have drawn. Most importantly, we look forward to forming further partnerships on the back of this report, to help build a truly sustainable London.

Dr Ashok Sinha
Chair of the LSDC

FOREWORD BY DR PAUL TOYNE



As London develops its plans to recover from the pandemic, political leaders, businesses and the public have rightly recognised the need to build a better society – the future we want – which is kinder, more tolerant, more just and equitable, and more environmentally sustainable.

We cannot simply return to the old status quo that has failed so many and polluted our planet. In doing so, we must come together to address a myriad of issues - improving public health and wellbeing, job creation and sustained employment, alleviating poverty, enhancing our environment and many more.

The LSDC believes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have a crucial role to play in this. The SDGs are the closest thing we have to a global sustainable development strategy. Agreed unanimously by the UN's 193 members in 2015, they are universally recognised, and have become a global language for sustainability among national and local government, businesses and community groups.

The SDGs cover a comprehensive range of issues, and take a holistic, systems-thinking approach, with a strong focus on reducing inequalities and supporting society's most marginalised. They provide a cross-cutting framework and are supported by a set of indicators and targets. Analysing London's local contribution to the SDGs can help reveal the full picture of sustainability

across London, helping us to identify any gaps in performance and policies. The SDGs take an integrated approach to the complex, interconnected challenges we face. This can help decision-makers unlock co-benefits across a wide range of policy areas, while making informed decisions on any trade-offs.

For the first time, this report uses the SDGs as a lens to analyse evidence of London's performance on 110 SDG indicators tailored to the city, exploring the collective contribution of local and regional government, businesses, communities and others. It also explores the interconnections between them to show how the co-benefits approach of the SDGs can help London make key decisions on its future. We also make a number of recommendations on how key stakeholders can deliver the SDGs in London.

The SDGs are part of the UN's wider '2030 Agenda' for sustainable development, and the decade ahead will be critical. The decisions we make now will shape the battle against the climate and ecological emergencies, and the connected challenges of poverty and inequality. The SDGs provide an opportunity to help create decent jobs and ensure a just transition to a zero-carbon circular economy; improve public health and wellbeing; whilst creating a fairer, more cohesive and inclusive society – and above all, leave a London that is fit for generations to come.

Dr Paul Toyne
Chair of the LSDC subgroup on the SDGs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LSDC RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1** London's boroughs should embed the principles of the SDGs to support integrated decision-making on policy-making and investment, to plan London's green and fair recovery and beyond – particularly in Borough Plans and recovery strategies.

The SDGs' comprehensive, systems-thinking approach could help boroughs to act on synergies and manage trade-offs intelligently and transparently, whilst supporting the most marginalised communities. Some boroughs are already taking excellent steps towards delivering this, and this good practice should be shared between boroughs – which the LSDC's SDGs Hub can help facilitate.

- 2** The London Recovery Board should continue to effectively implement and integrate its 'Cross-Cutting Principles' (CCPs) as a way to embed the principles of the SDGs in London's recovery.

The CCPs – which align with the SDGs – are a mechanism to embed equalities, healthcare, community participation, the environment and other priorities throughout the recovery programme. They provide a way to strategically manage synergies and trade-offs between key issues, guided by the principles of sustainable development.

- 3** Businesses, civil society groups, public sector organisations and others should use the SDGs to help develop integrated sustainability plans. This should be supported by the London SDGs Hub – which the LSDC intends to convene to facilitate networking, best practice sharing and resource development

to accelerate collaborative action on the SDGs in London.

- 4** All levels of government, public bodies, businesses and others, should drive more meaningful community participation in decisions on local policy; investment and budget setting; major developments; and public services.

Engagement should be wider (in the number and diversity of participants, focusing on groups whose voices that are often not heard), and deeper (more nuanced and reflecting people's experiences). It should build on existing excellent practice in co-creation by the London Recovery Board, boroughs, the NHS and others noted in this report. The lessons learnt from London's recovery should leave a legacy of more inclusive and participatory governance in London for years to come.

- 5** Further collaboration should take place between national government, the ONS, local government and public bodies, in order to collect and publish SDGs indicator data at the local level, particularly in areas this report identified as patchy.

Data should be regularly reported, and publicly accessible and comprehensible. It should be better disaggregated by geography (London-wide and by borough), and by demography to enable better analysis of intersecting inequalities. National government should provide additional resources for larger sample sizes in national surveys, enabling more reliable and timely data analysis at local level.

WHY THE SDGS?

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set ambitious targets to create transformative social, economic and environmental improvements by 2030.

They provide an integrated framework covering a comprehensive range of issues – jobs, housing, inequalities, healthcare, the environment and more – supported by targets and performance indicators. The SDGs were agreed unanimously in 2015 by the UN's 193 member states within 'Agenda 2030' – a landmark UN Resolution on achieving sustainable development¹.

However, national governments cannot deliver the SDGs alone. Sustainable development is dependent on the local contribution of cities, businesses, communities and others – and coordinated local action on the SDGs has been gathering momentum in recent years.



The LSDC believes the SDGs can benefit London by:

- Providing a comprehensive picture of London's performance to help identify any gaps
- Helping decision-makers unlock co-benefits across a wide range of policy areas while making informed decisions on any trade-offs, by using a systems-thinking approach to the complex, interconnected challenges we face
- Prioritising society's most marginalised, reducing inequalities and promoting inclusive and participatory approaches, via a focus on 'Leave no one behind'
- Emphasising partnership working involving many types of stakeholder at all levels
- Providing global recognition and legitimacy among national and local governments, businesses and community groups – the SDGs are the closest thing we have to global sustainability strategy – helping London to demonstrate leadership and bring a wide range of stakeholders on board.



For the first time, this report draws together data on the full range of SDG issues in London, and analyses the data using the SDG lenses of systems-thinking and reducing inequalities to gain a unique and fresh understanding of the city.

This is a report on London as a city. London's governance comprises not only the GLA but the 32 boroughs and City of London, national government, as well as other statutory bodies. Business, employers and financial institutions shape the functioning of the economy. Infrastructure providers (such as transport and utilities); 'anchor institutions' such as hospitals; public service providers (including public sector and civil society groups); and many others underpin the daily life of the city.

Meanwhile civil society groups, London's 30+ universities, the culture, entertainment and hospitality sectors and other sectors drive London's vibrant cultural life. Above all, Londoners themselves are the driving force that make the city what it is.

This analysis builds on the LSDC's 'Quality of Life' reports on London's sustainable development, which have been published since 2004 – see 'Introduction' for details.

This report aims to:

1. Conduct an integrated assessment of London's SDGs performance, with a particular focus on inequalities
2. Assess high-level data and policy coverage
3. Encourage adoption of the SDGs to support decision-making for London's green and fair recovery
4. Support partnership-building and community participation
5. Raise awareness and spark debate on the SDGs in London and globally.

OUR APPROACH

The LSDC, in partnership with Newcastle University and UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD), have conducted a comprehensive analysis of London's performance against localised SDGs indicators, exploring the collective contribution of local and regional government, businesses, communities and others.

We have developed a set of 110 metrics tailored to London – believed to be the largest of any world city's SDG indicator set – with a focus on selecting metrics to enable us to unpack the inequalities behind the headline data. The full dataset is presented in the [London SDGs Indicator Data Set](#), and the 40 most salient quantitative indicators are presented along with a brief narrative summary in a high-level dashboard – see 'Methodology' for further details.

We also present a narrative analysis of the data to draw out some of London's most important stories, structured according to the 'five Ps' themes - an umbrella grouping that frames the 17 individual SDGs (see diagram opposite), which are set out in the 'Agenda 2030' UN resolution that established the SDGs²:

We have used the five Ps as a lens to conduct our integrated analysis because their simplified and cross-cutting nature helps us to understand how each of the 17 SDGs inter-relate, rather than simply analysing each of the 17 SDGs in isolation.

This enables our analysis to gain value from the SDGs' comprehensive and systems-thinking approach, exploring the complex web of issues represented by this report's 110 indicators – particularly relating to systemic inequalities and disadvantaged groups.

In doing so, our SDGs analysis aims to help towards devising win-win solutions whilst ensuring any necessary trade-offs are fully informed. This can help London's recovery to simultaneously create jobs, improve public health, enhance the environment, and reduce poverty and inequalities.

This will require a joint effort from a wide range of London stakeholders – not just the cross-sector partners collaborating on the London Recovery Board, but London's full range of local government bodies, public sector, businesses, civil society groups, communities and others.

PEOPLE

PROSPERITY

PLANET

PEACE

PARTNERSHIPS



PROSPERITY

- 1 No Poverty
- 2 Zero Hunger
- 3 Good Health & Well-Being
- 5 Gender Equality
- 7 Affordable Clean Energy
- 8 Decent Work & Education
- 9 Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure

- 10 Reduced Inequalities
- 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities
- 12 Responsible Consumption & Production

PEOPLE

- 1 No Poverty
- 2 Zero Hunger
- 3 Good Health & Well-Being
- 4 Quality Education
- 5 Gender Equality
- 8 Decent Work & Education
- 10 Reduced Inequalities
- 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities
- 15 Life on Land

PEACE

- 1 No Poverty
- 4 Quality Education
- 10 Reduced Inequalities
- 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

PARTNERSHIPS

- 10 Reduced Inequalities
- 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities
- 13 Climate Action
- 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- 17 Partnerships for the Goals

PLANET

- 2 Zero Hunger
- 5 Gender Equality
- 6 Clean Water & Sanitation
- 7 Affordable Clean Energy
- 8 Decent Work & Education
- 9 Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure
- 10 Reduced Inequalities
- 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities
- 13 Climate Action
- 14 Life Below Water
- 15 Life on Land

THE 'FIVE PS'



KEY FINDINGS: PEOPLE, PROSPERITY, PLANET, PEACE, PARTNERSHIPS

28% of Londoners live in relative poverty, i.e. with incomes below 60% of the national median. Housing costs are a major contributor to this, and also represent a larger proportion of income for those on lower incomes and in privately rented housing; rough sleeping rose 9% from 2015/16 to 2018/19.

Covid-19 has shone a light on pre-existing inequalities and exacerbated them, disproportionately affecting groups that were already the most disadvantaged. Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME)³ communities, women, and those with low incomes have been hit hardest financially, disproportionately having frontline jobs where they cannot work from home, and which are low-paid or precarious.

A rise in food insecurity, housing insecurity and other challenges have disproportionately impacted low-income households, BAME Londoners, women, people with disabilities and young people.

Children from low-income households have been particularly affected by disruption to schooling, through lack of access to IT and increased risk of food insecurity. Policies that provide more integrated support to adults undergoing financial hardship could therefore help reduce childhood food insecurity and enhance educational outcomes.

Connected with this is the long-term trend of in-work poverty, where wages do not reflect the true cost of living, despite a long-term reduction in unemployment rates prior to Covid-19, as well as a steady rise in zero-hours contracts.

Following the surge in unemployment during the pandemic, Universal Credit claims in London doubled between March and November; however, the poorest boroughs saw around five times more new claims than the wealthiest. Exposure to poor air quality – associated disproportionately with low-income and BAME neighbourhoods – has also been linked with increased vulnerability to Covid-19. This reflects wider long-standing health inequalities, where deprivation and poverty are closely linked with London's leading causes of death.

Reducing inequalities and ensuring all Londoners are paid a decent wage could therefore simultaneously improve public health and reduce homelessness.

As London tackles the climate and ecological emergencies, it is crucial that the journey to a zero-carbon circular economy is a just transition, investing in skills development to create decent green jobs.

Environmental improvements can also contribute to tackling inequalities: improving energy-efficiency can reduce fuel poverty (Newham in London has the second worst rate in England); poor air quality disproportionately impacts already disadvantaged communities; whilst improving quality and equality of access to green space is key to improving health and wellbeing, whilst also boosting resilience to heatwaves and flooding caused by climate change. More funding and a clear national strategy are needed from national government to decarbonise our energy system, reduce environmental inequalities, and create more resilient cities.



Gap between top and bottom income quintiles: (2015-17)



Building urban resilience also requires strong social as well as physical infrastructure. In order to do this we must foster community cohesion, including by tackling inequalities. This must be supported by building trust in public institutions, including through inclusive public participation in the development of local and policies plans.

The analysis uncovered a need for more active engagement with Londoners, particularly with communities whose voices are not always heard. This includes hearing from people about their lived experiences, and an open dialogue on how to devise solutions in a participatory way.

In order to be effective and inclusive, this requires capacity building: participants must be actively supported to contribute, through training and skills, and they (and the civil society and faith groups often supporting their participation and engagement) must be compensated for their time – especially those on low incomes, as highlighted in the LSDC's Insights Paper on the SDGs and London's recovery⁴.

As the London Recovery Board (LRB) prepares to help London rebuild from the devastating effects of the pandemic, it is heartening to see its focus on creating a greener and fairer city (exemplified in the 'missions' and 'cross-cutting principles'); the partnership approach taken (between local government, the private sector, civil society groups and others); and the focus on community co-creation of the work programme⁵.

There is excellent work underway across the city to better engage Londoners in decisions that affect their lives – particularly the LRB's work to engage Londoners in co-creating the recovery programme. This should leave a lasting legacy for a renewed focus on participatory decision-making in London – not just by local and national government (e.g. on policy and legislation), but other key public and private sector institutions too (e.g. major construction and development, and the development of public services).

The LRB's public engagement work could inform a participatory strategy for London's future delivery of the SDGs. This in turn could form the basis of a formal Voluntary Local Review of London's contribution to the SDGs, which would build on the work of this report to present London's progress, community participation and future goals to the UN's annual High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The London Recovery Board's 'cross-cutting principles' (CCPs) align with the SDGs, and aim to embed improvements to community engagement, health and wellbeing, equality and diversity, and the environment throughout the recovery programme, whilst strategically managing synergies and trade-offs between these issues. Effective and integrated implementation of the CCPs will reflect that the recovery has embedded the principles of the SDGs.



The London Datastore collates data very effectively, across economic and social measures especially, in a way that might be a model for other cities. However, the analysis found that more granular data is needed on intersecting marginalised communities in order to enable local, regional and national government to better design effective and targeted policy. This requires improved collaboration between national and local government and other agencies such as the ONS, as well as increased funding from UK Government

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis above shows that none of these issues can be addressed in isolation, due to their interdependence – and that taking a holistic view when making policy decisions can yield myriad co-benefits.

The LSDC's evidence and analysis indicates that the SDGs can help decision-makers to act strategically in order to identify synergies and make intelligent choices about potential trade-offs, whilst empowering all Londoners to have a say in building London's green and fair recovery.

including for larger sample sizes in surveys. London is home to an extraordinary array of partnerships delivering SDG themes (though often not explicitly framed in SDG terms). However, there is a need to explore where there are gaps – e.g. there may be a need for more coordinated action on poverty – and seek to actively fill them. There is also a need to galvanise a range of organisations and stakeholders to accelerate collaborative action on the SDGs.

The London Recovery Board has already started to adopt the SDGs' principles of systems-thinking, partnership, reducing inequalities, and community participation, in order to address some of London's complex challenges. However, far more work remains to be done, and it is vital that decision-makers across London and beyond continue to build on this approach, in order to build a sustainable city that can be enjoyed by future generations to come.

INTRODUCTION

THE SDGS AND LONDON

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set ambitious targets to create transformative social, economic and environmental improvements by 2030.

They provide an integrated framework covering a comprehensive range of issues – jobs, housing, inequalities, healthcare, the environment and more – supported by targets and performance indicators. The SDGs were agreed unanimously in 2015 by the UN's 193 member states within 'Agenda 2030' – a landmark UN Resolution on achieving sustainable development⁶.

Although the SDGs were initially developed by and for national governments, achieving them requires action at all levels of society, as articulated in the UN Localization Routemap⁷. This includes cities and local governments, businesses, the public sector, communities and others – and coordinated local action on the SDGs has indeed been gathering momentum in recent years.

According to the UK Government, 65% of the SDGs rely on local level implementation⁸. The role of local action, and especially local authorities, was also central to implementing Agenda 21 of the Millennium Development Goals⁹, the predecessor to the SDGs.

Cities and regions have played an increasingly important role in UK and global politics over recent years, and this is especially true in sustainable development - such as the leading role the C40 Cities network has played in driving climate change progress. Cities' support for the SDGs has also gained momentum, which is reflected in the 32 (and counting) cities that have published 'Voluntary Local Reviews' on the SDGs¹⁰ at the UN's annual High Level Political Forum, including Bristol, New York, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires and Helsinki. There is also growing interest in Kate Raworth's 'Doughnut' model¹¹ and C40 Cities' 'Thriving Cities' Toolkit¹², both of which are based on the SDGs.



Businesses have also embraced the SDGs. The UN Global Compact (an international network of organisations committed to delivering the SDGs) boasts over 12,000 members, including a strong UK chapter. 150 UK businesses wrote to the Prime Minister in June 2020, advocating that the SDGs form the basis of a sustainable recovery¹³.

In the wake of Covid-19, the London Recovery Board committed a “green and fair recovery” from the pandemic and its economic impacts. The LSDC believes the SDGs offer an excellent toolkit to help London achieve its goals as a fair, prosperous, green and global city, by offering the following:

- Providing a comprehensive picture of London’s performance to identify any gaps
- Helping decision-makers unlock co-benefits across a wide range of policy areas while making informed decisions on any trade-offs, by using a systems-thinking approach to the complex, interconnected challenges we face
- Prioritising society’s most marginalised, reducing inequalities and promoting inclusive and participatory approaches, via a focus on ‘Leave no one behind’
- Emphasising partnership working involving many types of stakeholder at all levels
- Providing global recognition and legitimacy among national and local governments, businesses and community groups – the SDGs are the closest thing we have to a global sustainability strategy – helping London to demonstrate leadership and bring a wide range of stakeholders on board.



OUR OBJECTIVES

1 Conduct an integrated assessment of London's SDGs performance, with a particular focus on inequalities.

This project brings together existing, publicly available data to produce a comprehensive picture of London's performance on the SDGs, using a tailored London indicator set. We explore the collective contribution of local and regional government, the public sector, businesses, civil society groups and others.

The SDGs emphasise 'Leave no one behind', prioritising society's least well-off, and seeking to include marginalised groups. In keeping with this ethos, the report aims to highlight how London's underlying inequalities and poverty play out across the range of SDG issues, and asks how these might be redressed using more inclusive and participatory approaches.

2 Assess data and policy coverage.

Our analysis identifies where data is missing or could be strengthened, particularly in terms of supporting analysis of inequalities. It also provides a high-level snapshot of the extent to which national and local policy frameworks are driving delivery of the SDGs – though it would clearly not be feasible to conduct an exhaustive review of every relevant policy in this exercise.

3 Encourage embedding the principles of the SDGs to support decision-making for London's green and fair recovery.

This report shows how embedding the principles of the SDGs can help deliver a green and fair recovery for London, by supporting more joined up decision-making on policy and investment. Our systems-based analysis of the evidence from our holistic indicator set examines how a wide range of issues interconnect with each other, paving the way to seize win-win opportunities whilst making informed decisions about any trade-offs.

4 Support partnership-building and community participation.

Far more needs to be done to achieve the SDGs by 2030, particularly by national governments through policy and funding, but also by local actors. This report aims to provide a platform for policy-makers, businesses, civil society groups, the public and other stakeholders, to build new partnerships to accelerate local action on the SDGs in London. This should take a strongly participatory approach, promoting and resourcing co-creation and co-development with London's diverse communities, in line with the ethos of the SDGs.

5 Raise awareness and spark debate on the SDGs in London and globally.

Awareness of the SDGs is low in London. It is hoped that this work can provide a springboard for engagement, raise understanding among organisations and the general public – especially among local government officials, and organisations led by and representing marginalised groups who may benefit most from the SDGs' emphasis on participatory decision-making that reduces inequalities.

At a time when the need for international cooperation has never been more pressing, this report presents London's contribution in a global language and context. We hope London's global reach will enable this work to support other cities (in the UK and globally) in their own efforts to address the SDGs. Above all, we hope to spark a wider conversation on building a greener, fairer society in London and beyond.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

THE FOCUS OF THIS REPORT

For the first time, this report draws together data on the full range of issues under the SDGs umbrella within London. We have analysed this data using the SDG lenses of systems-thinking and reducing inequalities to explore how the city is shaped by this complex web of intersecting issues.

Using the UN's 'localisation' approach¹⁴, the LSDC developed a tailored indicator set to measure London's performance on each of the 169 SDG targets which are relevant to London and where there is data available. The set of 110 metrics is believed to be the most comprehensive of any city's SDG indicator set.

Rather than exhaustively present data on each individual indicator, this report draws on the SDGs' whole-system approach to synthesise a picture of the city as a whole, drawing out salient connections and themes that run throughout the extensive dataset and myriad issues. Our research focuses on sustainable development within London's own footprint, and not London's wider impact on the UK or the world – though this could be considered in future work.

This is a report on London as a city, not a report on the Mayor or the GLA, which have only limited remits in relation to the many actors with a role in the city's complex ecosystem (as well as limited powers in relation to many other cities' mayors).

London's governance comprises not only the GLA but the 32 boroughs and City of London, national government, as well as other statutory bodies. Business, employers and financial institutions shape the functioning of the economy.

Infrastructure providers (such as transport and utilities); 'anchor institutions' such as hospitals; public service providers (including public sector and civil society groups); and many others underpin the daily life of the city. Meanwhile civil society groups, London's 30+ universities, the culture, entertainment and hospitality sectors and other sectors drive London's vibrant cultural life. Above all, Londoners themselves are the driving force that make the city what it is.

BACKGROUND TO THE LSDC'S WORK ON THE SDGS

2002-2017: LSDC's Quality of Life (QoL) reports assessed London's sustainability using a tailored indicator set.

2017: [Quality of Life report](#) mapped the 28 QoL indicators against the SDGs and established that future reporting should transition to using the SDGs as its framework. The LSDC's SDGs indicator set features all the original QoL indicators (where still available), adding supplementary indicators where necessary to cover the full breadth of the relevant SDG targets.

Sept 2019: ['Young Londoners' Priorities for a Sustainable City'](#) report mapped young Londoners' sustainability priorities against the SDGs, in order to address the challenge of intergenerational fairness.

July 2020: [The role of the UN SDGs in London's green and fair recovery](#)

LSDC Insights Paper showing how the SDGs can support London's green and fair recovery from the pandemic. It drew on preliminary findings of our SDGs indicator data to show how the systems-thinking approach of the SDGs can help unlock multiple co-benefits. For example, investing in housing retrofits could simultaneously create jobs, cut carbon, improve residents' health and wellbeing, and reduce inequalities by tackling fuel poverty.





THE IMPACT OF COVID-19



Covid-19 has shone a light on London's underlying inequalities, and exacerbated them. The impacts on health, inequalities, employment, the environment and other issues are woven throughout the evidence and commentary of this report.

More than ever, the pandemic has highlighted the need for well-planned and joined up policy-making, with participation of all communities, to tackle complex and interlinked challenges in the context of deep and persistent inequalities and the climate and ecological crises.

However, as much of this work is based on longer-term trends of data that often features significant in-built time-lags in reporting, it is not possible to analyse the full effects of Covid-19 on London, or local and national responses, in detail in this report. The LSDC has published a separate Insights Paper on the SDGs and London's green and fair recovery from Covid-19 – [here](#).

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND IN LONDON

To "leave no one behind" is a fundamental principle running throughout the SDGs. This means prioritising the poorest and most marginalised communities in order to reduce poverty, inequalities and discrimination. Understanding how these issues play out across London is a primary focus of this report, which we address by focusing on disadvantaged groups and their needs first and foremost.

We also selected indicators that enabled us to disaggregate the data, in order to unpack disparities between (wherever possible) boroughs, genders, ethnicities, income groups and others, as well as some of the intersections between them.

The report also examines where there is insufficient data to give the full picture, thereby obscuring the challenges faced by the most severely and multi-disadvantaged groups.

Although this statistical data can never tell the full stories of marginalised Londoners, it is an important first step. Future work may build on the engagement work already underway by the London Recovery Board and others, to seek more active dialogue with marginalised communities in order to build active and inclusive participation in addressing London's challenges.

METHODOLOGY AND PRINCIPLES

The 17 SDGs feature 169 targets for governments to monitor progress. In order to develop a tailored indicator set relevant to London's context, it was necessary to identify which of those targets to select indicators for, and how many. The LSDC opted to develop an indicator for all SDG targets that are relevant to London – as opposed to selecting a smaller high-level set that map to existing policies or priorities. The rationale for this was to remain true to the universality of the SDGs and adhere to the targets agreed by consensus at the UN, as well as retaining their comprehensive approach.

In order to determine which of the 169 SDG targets were applicable to London, we adopted the following principles:

- Where SDG targets are pitched at national level, we identified London equivalents where possible. Where this was not applicable, e.g. in the case of inter-governmental state aid, the target was excluded

- Where no data was available to directly monitor a target, best efforts were made to identify a suitable proxy; where this was not possible, the target was excluded for the purposes of this report, though future iterations of the work may revisit this
- Qualitative targets, which test the existence and quality of a certain policy, rather than a statistic: we have explored some of the most significant ones (e.g. the London Plan) in the narrative report; others are treated as "yes/no" questions for the purposes of the SDG indicator data
- SDG targets that specifically focus on developing countries were excluded.

The next step was to consider suitable indicators and data to measure progress on each target. This required an analysis of the intended spirit of each SDG goal and target – their context, coverage and ambition – as well as their alignment with available data sources. Some targets contain multiple themes that required multiple indicators, but where possible one indicator was sought for each target.

This assessment was informed by the indicators used in a number of city indices; other individual cities' SDG work; data presented on the London Datastore; and previous Quality of Life reports.

Throughout the process we worked with policy and data experts from the GLA, ONS and Environment Agency, who helped to identify available data and advise on its suitability, and advised on the relationship between data issues and policy development.

We specifically sought indicators that can be disaggregated to understand the specific challenges faced by marginalised groups, in keeping with the SDGs' call to 'leave no one behind' and reduce inequalities.

The full indicator set is presented in the [London SDGs Indicator Data Set](#), and all sources are cited with links, so readers

can further explore the detail of these inequalities. The report draws on existing data available in the public domain, and in almost all cases available from official sources only.

For all data we have used a baseline of 2015 (unless stated otherwise), as this is the year the SDGs were adopted and the baseline year against which they are measured.

In addition, the most salient quantitative indicators are presented in a high-level dashboard, accompanied by a short commentary on each of the 17 SDGs, in order to summarise the report's findings.

These headline indicators were selected by the LSDC and the research team with input from GLA policy and data experts, to give a snapshot of some of the report's key themes.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DASHBOARD

The dashboard below presents trend data on the 40 most salient statistical measures for each SDG, as well as a short narrative summary of progress since 2015 for each.

ABOUT THE DASHBOARD

Symbol	Meaning
	Improvement (These can be upward or downward trends, indicated by direction of arrow. E.g. increase in life expectancy and decrease in carbon emissions are both green (positive), but the arrows point up and down respectively.)
	Negative Change (These can be upward or downward trends, as with 'improvements' above.)
	No / negligible change
	Denotes no clear trend, either because data fluctuated too much or was unavailable.

Two SDGs do not feature in the dashboard: SDG 14 (Oceans), and SDG 17 (Partnerships), where key targets cannot be measured statistically.

Changes were said to have occurred where either: new values were outside 95% of available Confidence Interval (CI) data; or changes appeared substantive when CI data was unavailable.

Full data for all indicators, along with links to sources, are available in the [London SDGs Indicator Data Set](#).

London indicator	Current level	Trend since 2015	Trend since 2000
SDG 1 – Poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere			
There has been no reduction in absolute and relative poverty since 2015. Poverty varies widely between communities and boroughs. Myriad contributing factors include low-income and insecure labour, housing costs, and changes to the welfare system. Covid-19 has worsened this situation for many Londoners.			
Absolute poverty	25% (2016/17-2018/19)		
Relative poverty	28% (2016/17-2018/19)		
SDG 2 – Hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture			
Food insecurity has only recently been measured in London and, based on this data, it is clearly a serious challenge. Adult and child obesity, which should be recognised as a form of malnutrition, are also both relatively high and broadly unchanged since 2015. Foodbank usage rose significantly following Covid-19.			
Food insecurity	Adults: 21% Children: 17% ¹⁵ (Sep 2018 – Mar 2019)		
Adult obesity Child obesity	Adults: 24% (2018) Children: 23.2% (2018/19)		¹⁶
			¹⁷

London indicator	Current level	Trend since 2015	Trend since 2000
SDG 3 – Health: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages			
Healthy life expectancy for Londoners tended to increase from 2015-2018 (the latest data available), though with significant inequalities - but this will be significantly impacted by the pandemic. London's suicide rate and the prevalence of HIV have fallen since 2015. The rate of sexually transmitted infections has worsened significantly, while alcohol abuse remains a serious health issue.			
Healthy life expectancy (at birth)	Females: 64.4 years Males: 64.2 years (2016-2018)		¹⁸
Gap in life expectancy between quintiles	Females: 4.1 years Males: 6 years (2015-2017)		
Suicide rate ¹⁹	8.1 per 100,000 population (2019)		²⁰
Sexuallytransmitted infections diagnosis rate	1,663 new STI diagnoses per 100,000 population (2019)		²¹
SDG 4 - Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all			
London's education results are very good across all key stages; so is pupils' progress between key stages. The proportion of youth not in education, employment or training and adults without qualifications has decreased over time. Significant inequalities in educational outcomes remain between boroughs, genders, ethnicities and pupils eligible for free school meals.			
GCSE results (Average Attainment 8 score per pupil)	49.4 (2018/19)	²²	
16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)	4.8% (Dec 2019 – Feb 2020)		
Adults with low (NVQ1) or no qualifications	13.2% (2019)		²³

London indicator	Current level	Trend since 2015	Trend since 2000
SDG 5 – Gender: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls			
Violence against women and girls reported to the police has markedly increased since 2015 (though with caveats on improved reporting), and rose further following the lockdown. Female representation on councils and in management has slightly increased since 2015.			
Domestic abuse Sexual offences	10 per 1,000 of population (2018/19) 18,963 offences in year (2019/20)	²⁴	
Gender breakdown of councilors	Female: 42% Male: 56% (2018)		
Female representation in management	Females: 9.2% Males: 14.9% Gap: 5.7 % points (2019)	²⁵	
SDG 6 – Water and sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all			
Reservoir levels are down very slightly, though within historically-normal fluctuations. The health of London's water bodies is a concern, with only 1 of 41 in good condition.			
Reservoir levels	Lower Lee: 86.1% Lower Thames: 91.0% (2020)		
Status of water bodies	Good: 1 Moderate: 32 Poor: 5 Bad: 3 (2016)		
SDG 7 – Energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all			
Fuel poverty has increased significantly across the capital, and Newham has the second highest rate of fuel poverty in England. Absolute energy consumption is up slightly since 2015, but the proportion from renewable sources is markedly increased.			
Fuel poverty	11.4% of households (2018)		²⁶
Renewable energy consumption	121.7 kilotonnes of oil equivalent ²⁷ (2017)		²⁸

London indicator	Current level	Trend since 2015	Trend since 2000
SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all			
Productivity measured (gross value added per hour of work) increased slightly from 2015 to 2018. Unemployment rates fell from 2015 to the start of 2020, though in-work poverty rose over the same period; unemployment then jumped following Covid-19, and is not expected to recover until at least late 2022. Universal Credit applications doubled in London from March to November 2020. The proportion of employed people on zero hours contracts has increased, and the gender pay gap persists, roughly unchanged from 2015 to 2019.			
Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour of work (indexed 2010 = 100)	131.6 (2018)		29
% of workers on zero hours contracts	2.9% (2019)		30
Unemployment rate ³¹	5.3% (Jun-Aug 2020)		
Mean gender pay gap	21.9% (2020)		
SDG 9 – Industry innovation and infrastructure: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation			
The energy efficiency of new and recently-transacted domestic dwellings has improved overall, and the quantum of greenhouse gas emissions from the industrial and commercial sector has fallen. Both research and development expenditure, and the number of people employed as researchers, have increased across public and private sectors – though this appears to be at risk as R&D SMEs were badly affected by Covid-19.			
Energy rating of homes – proportion with combined A and B ratings	19.9% (2020)		
Greenhouse gas emissions (industrial & commercial sector)	11.02Mt CO ₂ equivalent (2017)		
Research & Development (R&D) expenditure	£5,886 million (2018)		32

London indicator	Current level	Trend since 2015	Trend since 2000
SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities: Reduce inequality within and among countries			
Income inequality in London has fallen marginally over the longer term, but increased slightly in the shorter term. There is evidence of discrimination and other challenges facing migrants and refugees, plus an increase in reported hate crime.			
Income inequality (ratio of household income top and bottom 10% households)	10.0 (2016/17 – 2018/19)		33
Hate crime (total number recorded)	16,980 (2018/19)		34
SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable			
Rough sleeping and housing affordability worsened from 2010 to 2017/18, though unaffordability has dipped from its highpoint in 2016/17. Housing quality has improved over time, though remains a challenge in the private rented sector. Air quality has improved since 2015 due to successful policy interventions, but most Londoners still live in areas breaching WHO standards. The proportion of Londoners accessing cultural facilities and events has worsened. Public and active transport use was constant between 2015 and early 2020; Covid-19 saw a significant shift towards active travel, but also to private vehicles, while public transport use plummeted.			
Rough sleeping (per year)	10,726 (2019/20)		35
Housing quality	14.6% of homes are non-decent (2018)		36
Housing affordability	26.1% (Median housing costs as a % of gross household income) (2017/18)		
Active travel for work (% of adults using mode of transport at least once per week)	Cycling: 8.9% Walking: 58.8% (2018/19)		
Air pollution (background level)	PM ₁₀ – 13.9 µg/m ³ PM _{2.5} – 8.9 µg/m ³ NO _x – 24.4 µg/m ³ (2019)		

London indicator	Current level	Trend since 2015	Trend since 2000
SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns			
There has been an overall reduction in the waste produced by London households, but no significant change in recycling rates from 2015 /16 to 2018/19, which remain among the lowest in the UK.			
Household recycling rates	33% (2018/19)		
Amount of waste generated per household (kg per household per year)	550kg per household per year (2018/19)		
SDG 13 – Climate change: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts			
London aims to be net zero carbon by 2030, supporting the Paris Climate Change Agreement. London's greenhouse gas emissions show a long and short-term downward trend, but far more remains to be done to achieve this target.			
Greenhouse gas emissions	30.3 Mt CO ₂ equivalent (2017)		
Greenhouse gas emissions per capita	3.4 tonnes CO ₂ equivalent (2017)		
SDG 14 – Life below water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development			
Pollution (e.g. plastics) entering the Thames does make a contribution to ocean health but official data on London's contribution to ocean plastic is unavailable. The environmental status of London's water bodies is presented under SDG 6 above.			

London indicator	Current level	Trend since 2015	Trend since 2000
SDG 15 – Life on land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss			
48 – 51% of London is green and blue space, providing health and environmental benefits. However, inequality of access to good quality green space remains.			
SSSIs	34.39% favourable; 54.76% unfavourable recovering; 4.48% unfavourable no change 6.07% unfavourable declining 0.18% partially destroyed 0.13% destroyed (2020)		
Green and blue space coverage	48-51% of London (2019)		
SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels			
Violent crime has increased in London, and reported offences of modern slavery have also risen. Public perception of citizens' ability to influence local decisions, and confidence in the police, have both decreased since 2015 in line with UK trends. More positively, turnout for the Mayoral election has improved.			
Crimes of violence against the person	24.8 per 1000 population 2020)		
Public perception of ability to influence local decisions	31% 2018/19)		
Election turnout (mayoral election)	46% (2016)		
SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise global partnerships for sustainable development			
Goal 17 addresses multi-stakeholder partnerships for to deliver the SDGs – we address this in detail under 'Partnerships', rather than through statistical data.			

PROSPERITY

- 1 No Poverty
- 2 Zero Hunger
- 3 Good Health & Well-Being
- 5 Gender Equality

PEOPLE

- 1 No Poverty
- 2 Zero Hunger
- 3 Good Health & Well-Being
- 4 Quality Education
- 5 Gender Equality
- 8 Decent Work & Education
- 10 Reduced Inequalities
- 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities
- 15 Life on Land

PLANET

- 2 Zero Hunger
- 5 Gender Equality
- 6 Clean Water & Sanitation
- 7 Affordable Clean Energy
- 8 Decent Work & Education



- 7 Affordable Clean Energy
- 8 Decent Work & Education
- 9 Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure
- 10 Reduced Inequalities
- 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities
- 12 Responsible Consumption & Production
- 13 Climate Action
- 14 Life Below Water
- 15 Life on Land

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: USING THE 'FIVE PS' OF THE SDGS AS A LENS

We present the findings and analysis of our data in the following chapters, structured according to the 'five Ps' themes - an umbrella grouping that frames the 17 individual SDGs (see diagram below), which are set out in the 'Agenda 2030' UN resolution that established the SDGs³⁸:

PEOPLE

PROSPERITY

PLANET

PEACE

PARTNERSHIPS

We have used the five Ps as a lens to conduct our integrated analysis because their simplified and cross-cutting nature helps us to understand how each of the

17 SDGs inter-relate, rather than simply analysing each of the 17 SDGs in isolation. This enables our analysis to gain value from the SDGs' comprehensive and systems-thinking approach, exploring the complex web of issues represented by this report's 100+ indicators – particularly relating to systemic inequalities and disadvantaged groups.

In doing so, our SDGs analysis aims to help towards devising win-win solutions whilst ensuring any necessary trade-offs are fully informed. This can help London's recovery to simultaneously create jobs, improve public health, enhance the environment, and reduce poverty and inequalities.

Each chapter presents analysis of the evidence, followed by a summary and commentary on the policy context for each area.



Foundation for Future London,
Changing Minds In Challenging Times by Catalyst in Communities CIC.

PEOPLE

'We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.'³⁹

"We are reporting in the era of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs. At least 11 of the 17 SDGs can be seen as key social determinants of health. The twin problems of social inequalities and climate change have to be tackled at the same time. Addressing each is vital to creating a society that is just, and sustainable for the current and future generations."

Professor Sir Michael Marmot,
in the foreword to Health equity
in England: The Marmot review
10 years on⁴⁰.



This chapter on ‘People’ aims to explore the connections between a range of social issues. In particular, the need for holistic action focused around poverty and inequality, which cause (and are caused by) connected challenges on health, housing, education and others.

But this chapter's themes are also integral to the subsequent ones on Prosperity, Environment, Peace and Partnerships. Unemployment and labour conditions are key to understanding poverty.

Reducing environmental inequalities can alleviate aspects of poor health and wellbeing, as well as fuel poverty. And equalities are central to issues of community cohesion and crime (Peace), and participating fully in civic life (Partnerships). The SDGs (and the framing of the five Ps) can help explore some of the connections, with the aim of identifying solutions with co-benefits across a range of policy areas.

POVERTY

28% of Londoners live in relative poverty, i.e. with incomes below 60% of the national median (target 1.2⁴¹). 26% live in absolute poverty, i.e. income below 60% 2010/11 real terms median (target 1.1⁴²).

Housing costs are a major contributor to poverty in London - before such costs are included, relative poverty is 16%. This proportion of people living in relative poverty after housing costs has remained largely static over time, showing little change over the last 20 years (though this varies for different sub-groups – explored below).

Housing affordability trends have worsened – 26% of average household income was spent on housing costs in 2017/18, up from 25% in 2010/11 (albeit down from its highpoint in 2016/17) – though the figure is as high as 33% in the private rental sector⁴³ (target 11.1⁴⁴).

This is set against a national backdrop which has seen household budgets squeezed as poorer households experienced average annual price rises of 2.6%⁴⁵. The London Economic Fairness Indicators explore this in further detail⁴⁶.

The SDGs invite us to focus on the “poorest, most marginalised and vulnerable”. Persistent poverty⁴⁷ (target 1.1⁴⁸) in London has fallen slightly, but experience by 17% of people in London face persistently low incomes (2014-18 average). Poverty in London is unevenly distributed *spatially* – in inner London, 27% of children and 20% of pensioners live in material deprivation and low (or severely low) income.

In outer London, these figures are 14% and 13% respectively. However, poverty rates have generally been increasing in outer London over recent years, and although the poverty rates are lower in outer London, there are more people living below the poverty line there due to its higher population.

Covid-19 has eroded the financial resilience of many households, placing many in serious financial stress⁴⁹; across the UK, 4.2 million more people were frequently running out of money by the end of the week than in March, with younger people, those with disabilities, women and BAME people hit the hardest⁵⁰.

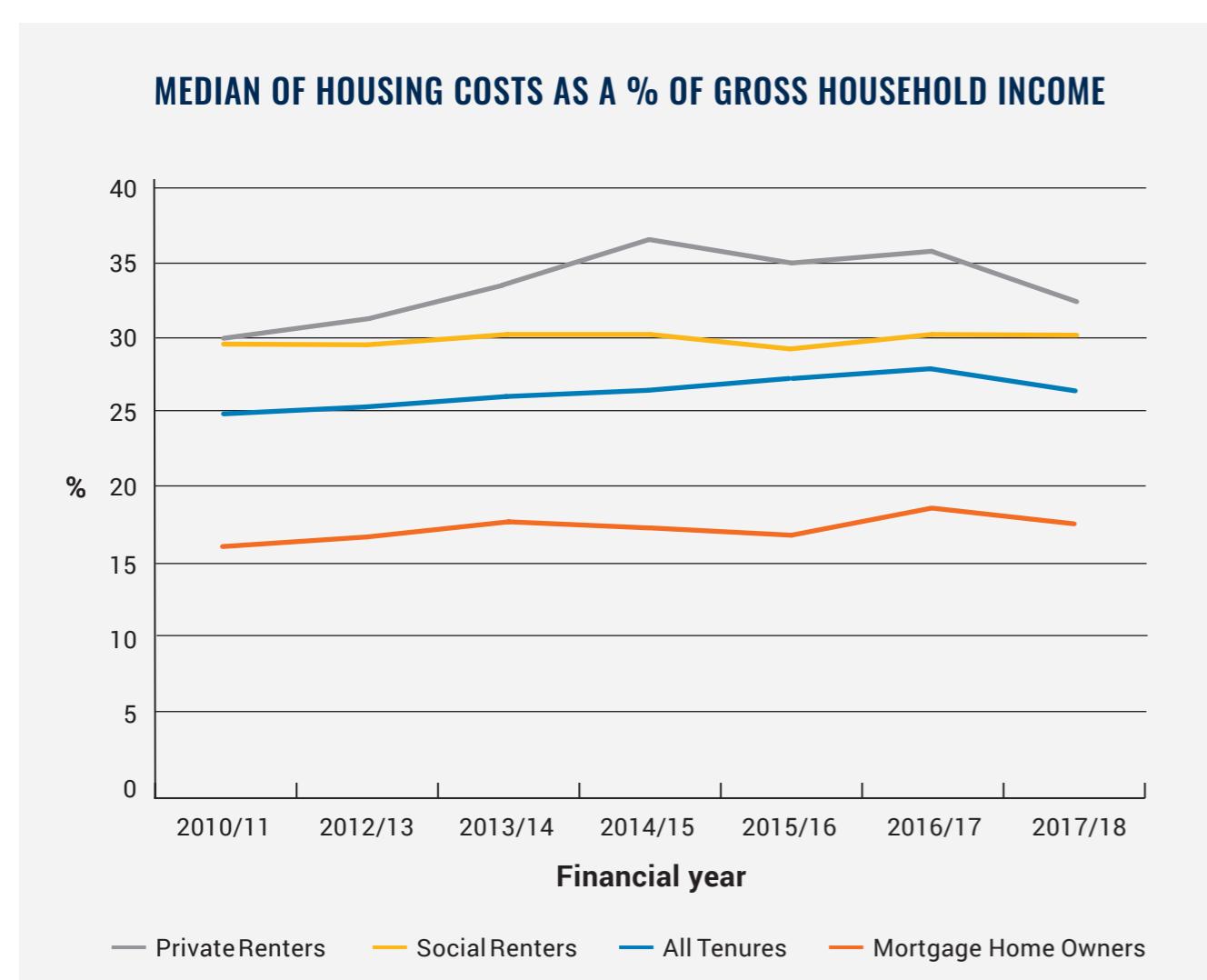
The years following the last recession in 2008 also saw a change in the nature of poverty in London. A focus from national government on getting people back into work led to unemployment falling to the lowest level since 1970s, but this did not translate to a dramatic decrease in the number of people living in poverty.



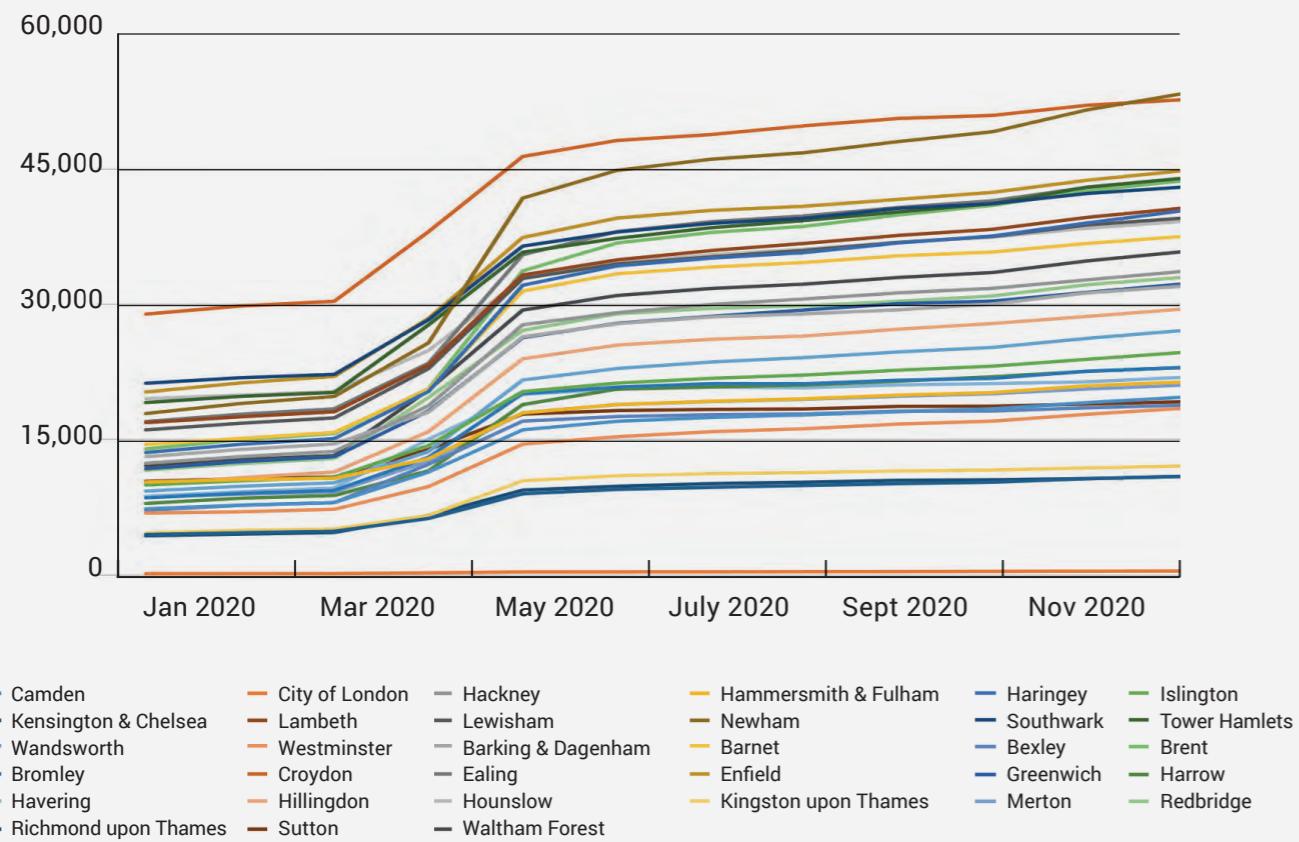
With little focus on the quality of jobs or progression, and cuts to in-work benefits, many low-income Londoners still did not earn enough to escape poverty. This is commonly referred to as ‘in-work poverty’. Unemployment trends as a result of Covid-19 are explored further in ‘Prosperity’.

Although overall poverty rates in London have remained stable over the past 25 years, the last five years in particular have seen poverty rise among certain groups, most notably children. The start of this uptick coincides with the introduction of a range of welfare reforms (the majority brought into effect by national government in April 2016) which saw significant cuts to national welfare benefits.

Of particular note were the four-year freeze to all working age benefits, the lowering of the benefit cap (which particularly effected single parent households), and the introduction of the two-child limit.



NUMBER OF PEOPLE ON UNIVERSAL CREDIT BY BOROUGH



GLA research⁵¹ analysed the impact of changes to tax and welfare since 2010, including Universal Credit to highlight how these will differently affect separate groups (target 1.3⁵²).

That analysis finds that changes will hit single-parent families, Black people, disabled people, renters, and women the hardest, and will exacerbate poverty and unequal outcomes for these groups. Collectively all these reforms have led to an additional 100,000 Londoners (including 75,000) children being pushed below the poverty line.

Policies introduced by the Government in 2016 had a particularly big impact, most notably the four year freeze to working age benefits, the lowering of the benefit cap, and the introduction of the two child-limit.

Collectively these reforms are believed to be the main cause of a rise in child poverty from 37% to 39%). As a result of Covid-19, the number of Londoners claiming Universal Credit doubled between March and November 2020, and is still rising⁵³.

The UK Government's furlough scheme was a lifeline to many, but uptake was unevenly distributed according to Manchester University's Rapid Evidence Review on the unequal impacts of Covid-19⁵⁴ which states: "In April (2020), the accommodation and food services sector had 73% of its workers on furlough, with an estimated 68% of jobs in that sector at risk; yet the information and communication sector had just 13% of workers on furlough and 8% of jobs at risk. This reflects great variations across occupations in the ability to work from home."

The SDGs also invite us to look at the many dimensions of poverty beyond income (target 1.2⁵⁵):

- Food insecurity⁵⁶ is not measured consistently in the UK, likewise it is newly-measured in London. A survey in 2019 indicated that 21% of adults face "low" or "very low" food security, and 17% of parents have children in the same situation (target 2.1⁵⁷). Children of parents aged 16-24 are most likely to be in food poverty (70%). This has been exacerbated by Covid-19 – increased use of food banks is noted in 'Peace', and the provision of free school meals has been highly contested

- Fuel poverty has risen in London – affecting 9.7% of households in 2015 and 11.4% in 2018 (target 7.1⁵⁸), Cold homes, in turn, damage health - for example, through increased mortality risk for older people and significant negative effects on children's development⁵⁹

- Poorer people face financial barriers to accessing transport in London and disabled people, who are more likely to be poor, face reinforcing financial and physical barriers (target 10.3⁶⁰)

- The number of people sleeping rough on the streets of London increased by 32% to 10,726 people between 2015/16 and 2019/20 (target 11.1⁶¹). Covid-19 caused a surge in people experiencing housing insecurity and vulnerable to eviction, repossession and homelessness, compounded by a reduction of related services (shelters, substance abuse services) during lockdown. However, the immediate response to housing rough sleepers in the wake of the pandemic demonstrates that homelessness can be reduced overnight with the right will and funding

- Refugees and asylum seekers are particularly at risk of falling into extreme poverty, as many are ineligible for welfare benefits and other state support. We have no accurate data on the number of Londoners in the situation, and their invisibility makes them doubly marginalised.

INEQUALITY

Disadvantage and inequality of opportunities and outcomes in London takes many forms. Poverty and inequality are interwoven (relative poverty is explicitly measured in terms of inequality) and self-reinforcing (for example, since wealthy buyers increase house prices for all). The universal provision of freely accessible social protections, education and health systems is a way to limit inequalities. The very universality of these systems – addressed in SDG 1 – is one way to make sure that “no one is left behind”.

However, universal access does not necessarily translate into universal equality. For example, despite a universal NHS system (target 3.8⁶³) guaranteeing outcomes that exceed the expectations of many targets under SDG 3⁶³, health inequality persists. For example, life expectancy for the most deprived quintile of London’s population lags 6 years (male) and 4 years (women) behind that of the least deprived (2015-17).



The Marmot Reviews show clearly the relationship between deprivation and socio-economic inequalities and some of the leading causes of mortality, including circulatory diseases and cancer. This same socio-economic patterning of disease outcomes has been seen with Covid-19 (target 3.4⁶⁴).

The strong links between health and wealth again highlight that an integrated approach to health, economic and social equalities policies would be mutually beneficial.

Covid-19 has exposed major health inequalities, and BAME communities have been hit especially hard. Public Health England ascribe this to a combination of disproportionate more precarious and frontline employment and higher rates of certain underlying health problems⁶⁵, whilst migrants have faced special problems accessing healthcare⁶⁶.

Although the disease itself has proved more lethal for men than women⁶⁷, Covid-19’s socio-economic impacts have fallen disproportionately on women⁶⁸, including through unpaid care work, disproportionately having frontline and precarious jobs, childcare and home schooling during lockdowns, and a surge in domestic violence. Further inequalities in the impacts of Covid-19 are explored in the Rapid Evidence Review⁶⁹.



Londoners’ mental health and wellbeing has also been severely impacted by Covid-19. In addition to the stress and isolation caused by the pandemic, there is a close relationship between poor mental health and financial stress⁷⁰, which has been exacerbated for many by the loss of income, as well as a reduction in some services⁷¹.

London’s education results are very good, with the best ‘Attainment 8’ and ‘Progress 8’ scores of any region in England (which are respectively measures of attainment, and progress between key stage 2 and GCSE). (The Department for Education advises making geographical comparisons rather than year-on-year ones). The proportion of youth not in education, employment or training and adults without qualifications has decreased over time (target 4.4⁷²).

However, London’s underlying social inequalities manifest in significant inequalities in educational outcomes, reflecting a major challenge for national and local government. Systematic gaps in attainment remain between sexes (target 4.5⁷³), reflecting the national picture.

There is a gap of 20 points between the GCSE attainment of the best and worst performing ethnic groups (Chinese and Black students, respectively), and a wide disparity between pupils eligible for free school meals and those are not.

The rates of adults with low and no qualifications are down (target 4.6⁷⁴), though with disparities between boroughs - from Havering (24.7%) to Richmond (6.6%). There are also age and gender disparities, with older women being more likely to have no or low qualifications than younger women and men of the same age.

Covid-19 has further disrupted education and childhoods in ways that set back already-disadvantaged and vulnerable children the most, from a lack of IT equipment in poorer households to greater risk of hunger and abuse⁷⁵.

POLICY CONTEXT

London and the wider UK have been grappling with the issues above for many years, and there is a plethora of national and local policies and strategies in place, including on social integration, health inequalities, economic growth, homelessness, and poverty.

The SDGs ask whether these strategies and policies are distributed across issues in the best way, a greater focus on how policies in related areas could be mutually reinforcing, and how different levels of policy-making align.

More deeply, we need to understand the extent of positive overlap, synergy and reinforcement within policy-making, as well as potential tensions and trade-offs. For example, the ‘health in all policies’ approach has meant that health features throughout London’s recovery programme: not just in the ‘Mental Health and Wellbeing’ mission, but the missions on Good Work, Young People, Food, Green New Deal and Robust Safety Net. This is crucial, because it is social, economic and environmental factors that largely determine health and health inequalities.

Target 10.3 expects policies and action with regard to legislation that ensures equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome. Primary UK legislation for delivering this is the Equality Act 2010. The characteristics it includes broadly reflect those in target 10.2 (age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion), and additionally sexual orientation and gender reassignment (which are not explicitly addressed by the SDGs). This regulation drives data collection priorities. However, data is not collected evenly across all characteristics – for example there is less data available disaggregated by sexual orientation than there is by gender.

Evidence-based policy-making requires good data to make informed decisions: timely, granular, and disaggregated by geography and demographic. It also requires effective partnerships between different data-collecting and decision-making bodies. However, there are a number of challenges in these areas, notwithstanding that the UK has a good international track record on measuring a range of social and economic equalities data. These data issues are explored further under ‘Reflections on data collection in London’.



PROSPERITY

*'We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.'*⁷⁶

London is one of the world's most prosperous cities, and its economy is the eighth largest if ranked against European countries (on a comparable basis). London's net fiscal contribution to the Exchequer in 2017/18 was around £34.3bn. Between 2010 to 2018 (the latest data available), gross value added (an indicator of economic activity) increased by 27% (target 8.1⁷⁷), while productivity, measured by gross value added per hour of work, also grew (target 8.2⁷⁸).

However, London's economy has been heavily impacted by the recession caused by the pandemic. Unemployment rates fell steadily from 6.7% in 2015 to 4.5% at the start of 2020, but rose sharply to 6.3% by autumn 2020 (target 8.5⁷⁹). GLA projections (which pre-date the second wave of Covid-19) do not expect GVA or employment rates to approach pre-Covid-19 levels until late 2022⁸⁰. 413,000 jobs were furloughed in London as of October 2020, and 73% of the top 33 constituencies (top 5%) for furlough take-up rate were in London.

Data on SDG target 9.5, expenditure on research and development, shows a 16% increase in the number of researchers per million people in London; this is consistent with the fact that the tech & digital and life sciences sectors are two of the Mayor's seven priority sectors for boosting London's economy⁸¹.



However, August 2020 research shows that 26% of science, R&D and veterinary SMEs were at risk due to the economic downturn (the highest-risk of all SME sectors)⁸².

Brexit is also expected to have a major negative impact on London's economy. Despite the UK's free trade agreement with the EU, the loss of Single Market and Customs Union membership will be a major challenge, especially to the service sector which makes up over 90% of the London economy. Its trade surplus with the EU (estimated at £21bn in 2017) is at risk.

The financial and professional services sectors face large immediate challenges. London-based firms are now having to negotiate a patchwork of individual EU nations' regulations. Major UK-based banks have had to move more than £1trillion of assets, and thousands of jobs to other EU cities to avoid disruption.

SHARED PROSPERITY

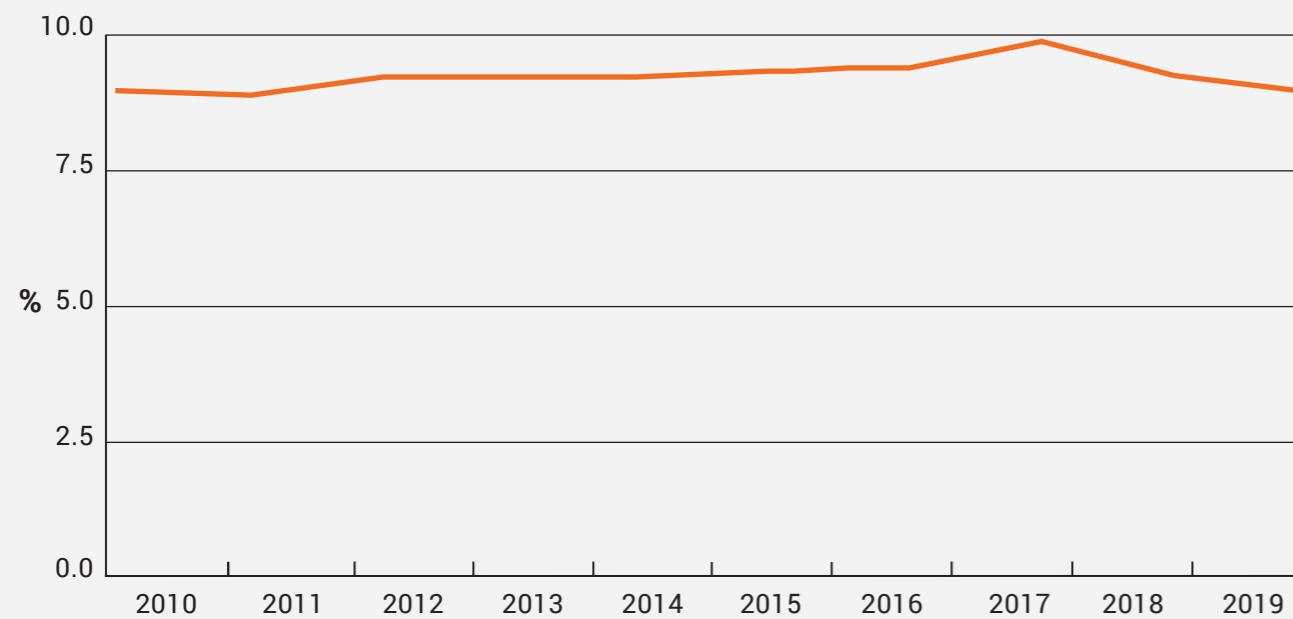
However, the SDG targets and indicators also direct attention to how widely this prosperity is being shared. Even at the same time as this headline growth, the rise of the 'gig economy' has seen the proportion of employed people in London on zero-hour contracts grow steadily, from only 0.4% in 2010 to 2.5% in 2018, and as high as 11.4% of 16-24 year olds.

Nationally, part-time workers are more likely to be in precarious work, the non-UK nationals is above the average highest proportion is found in the health and social care sector, and the rate for at 3.5%. Covid-19 has further has highlighted and exacerbated these inequalities, with precarious frontline workers most exposed

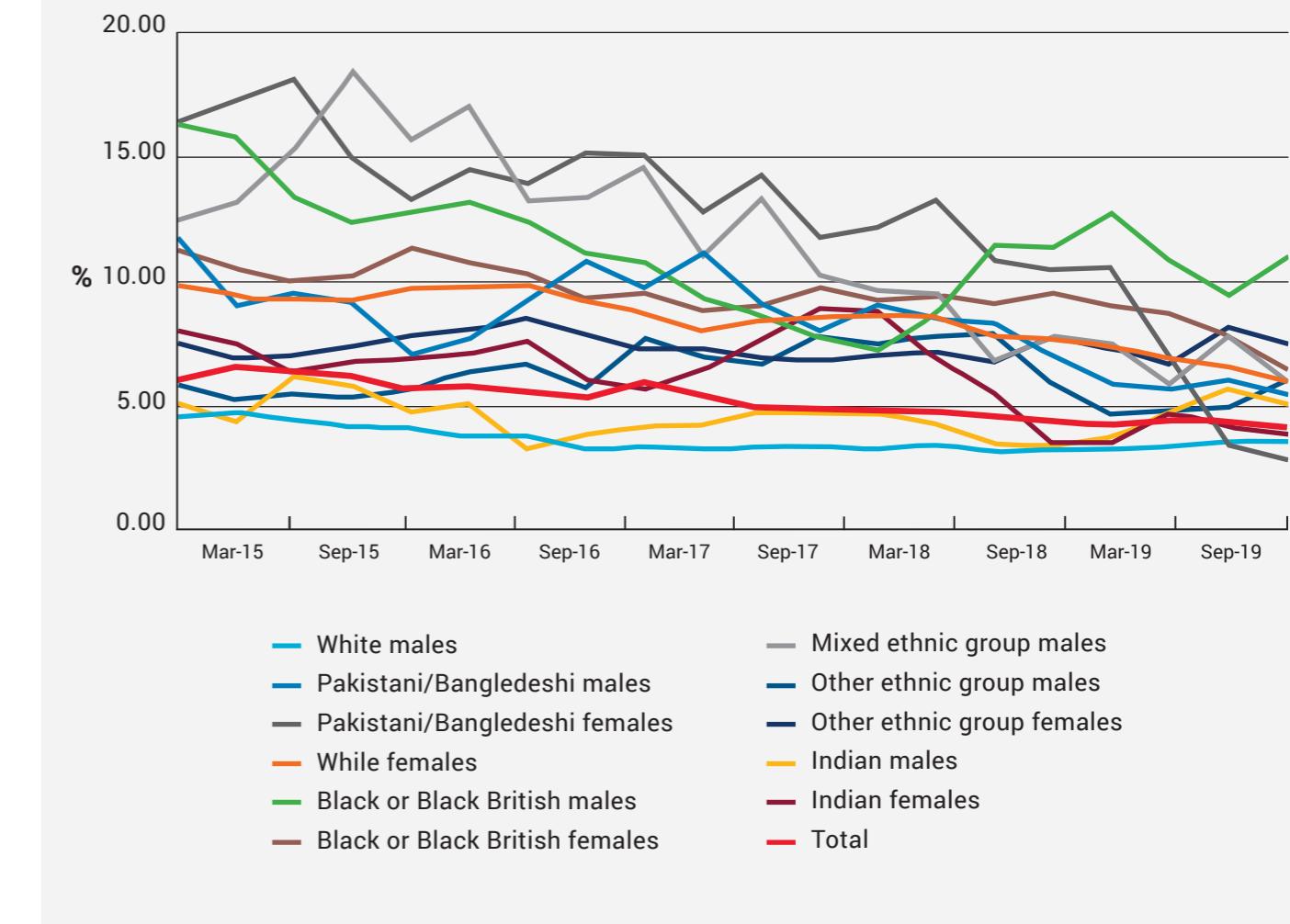
to the virus as they are least able to work from home or take sick leave. The unequal impacts of Covid-19 in London are explored in depth in research by Manchester University⁸³.

Unemployment, too, is uneven across different social groups (target 8.5⁸⁴). Disabled people are twice as likely (8.2%) to be unemployed as the non-disabled people and Black men are nearly three times as likely to be unemployed (11.0%) as white men (3.7%) (2019). Statistics on human trafficking and modern slavery - as identifying two particular ways in which groups are marginalised - are imperfect, but show a substantial increase in these crimes⁸⁵.

PERCENTAGE OF LONDONERS IN INSECURE EMPLOYMENT



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY ETHNICITY AND GENDER



The mean gender pay gap for men and women in full time employment (target 8.5⁸⁶) has remained broadly unchanged (20.4% in 2019, versus 20.7% in 2015) while the picture for part-time employment has fluctuated significantly between negative and positive figures. Though not a perfect measure of equality of employment between genders, these headline figures point to a complex set of causes, some of which are addressed in the SDGs across Goals 5 and 8.

These include time spent on unpaid care and domestic work (target 5.4⁸⁷), a commitment to equal pay for equal work (target 8.5⁸⁸), and a commitment to end discriminatory laws and practices (target 10.3⁸⁹). Headline pay inequality across ethnicity (a median of 12.6% in 2018) and disability (16.6% in 2019) are similarly present, with similarly complex causes. No clear trend of a narrowing of pay inequality is discernible across any of this data in recent years.

PROSPERITY WITHIN ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITS

The SDGs call attention to whether economic growth can be decoupled from environmental degradation. We address the state of London's environment more fully under the Planet section, but it is crucial that London's economic growth must be environmentally sustainable if we are to leave a city for future generations to thrive in.

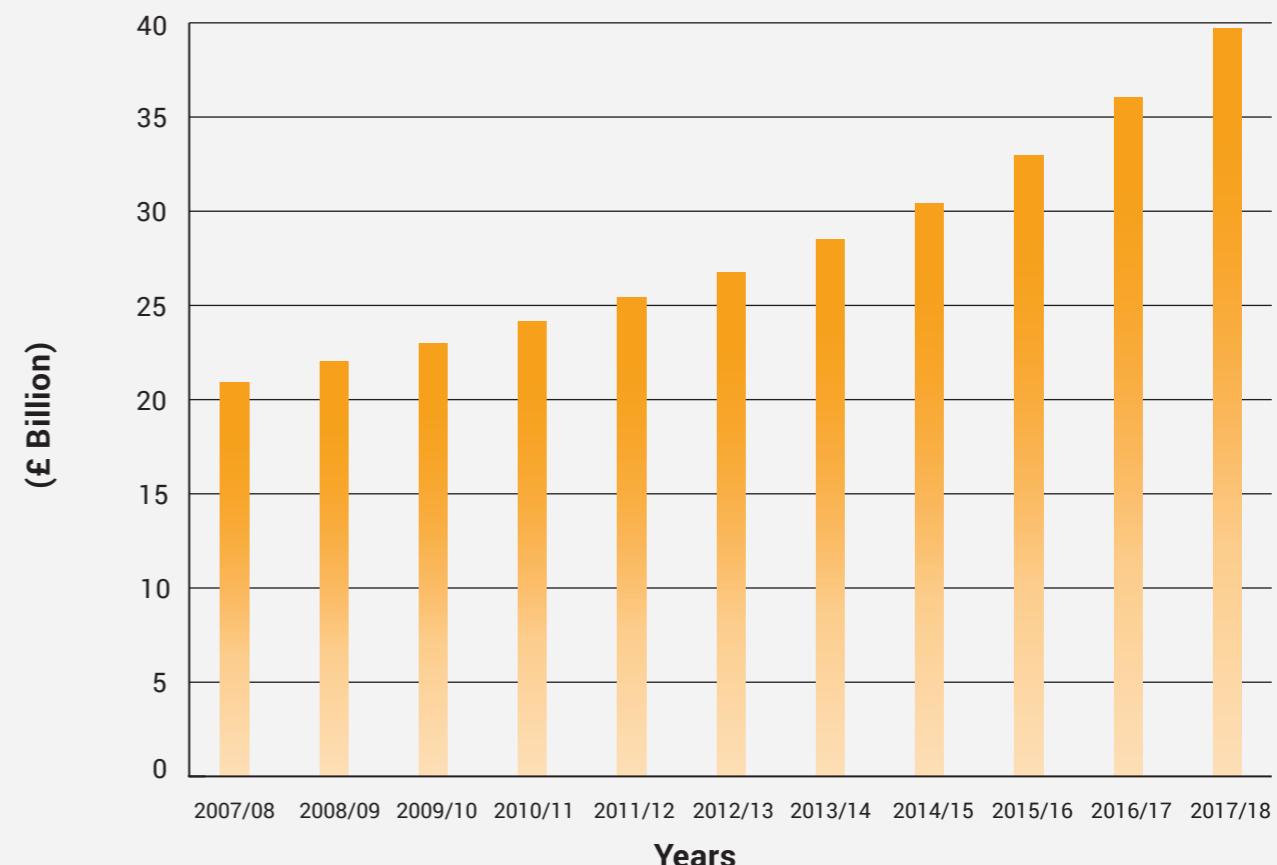
London's resource consumption shows a positive downward trend - total supply chain carbon emissions dropped by 5% from 2001 to 2016; per capita, they dropped by 21% over the same period⁹⁰. The amount of waste generated per household dropped 45% between 2000/01 and 2018/19. However, data is no longer publicly available on the wider ecological footprint of the city, i.e. the impact of its production and consumption on natural resources, biodiversity and land-use change. (Target 8.4⁹¹, 9.4⁹²).

This data was previously available, and reported in the LSDC's QoL reports – however, it appears to be a new gap that current data and public discussion focus solely on carbon, and not wider ecosystem impacts. This is problematic if we are to understand the full impact of London's economy on the planet.

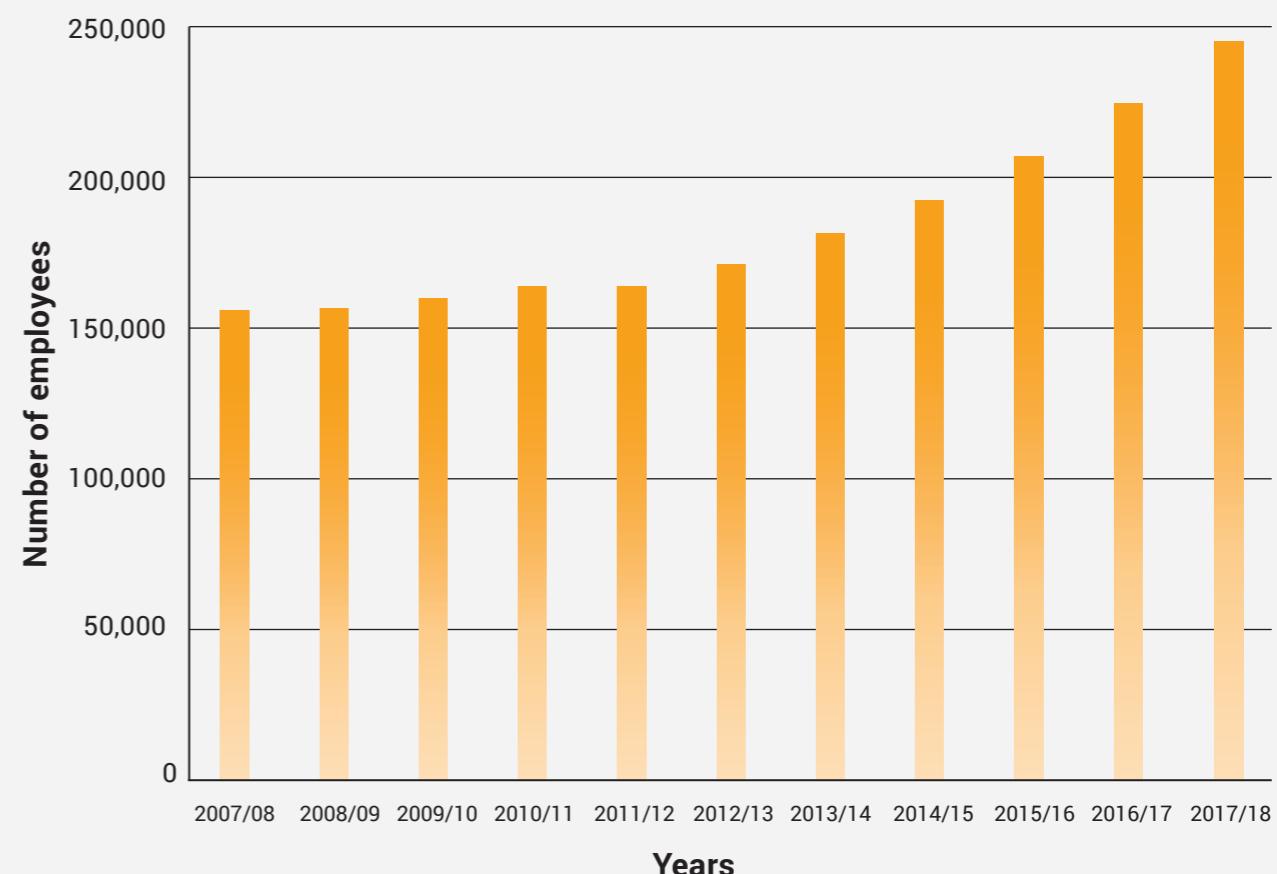
However, London's Low-Carbon Environmental Goods and Services (LCEGS) sector has the capacity for businesses to contribute to decarbonise the economy through innovative clean technology and services. And the growth of the sector – which grew by 90% between 2007/08 and 2017/18, and which London targets to double further by 2030 – could create thousands of green and resilient jobs. LCEGS sector sales in London were £39.7bn in 2017/18, representing 13,906 businesses and employing 246,073 workers⁹³. This is vital for a just transition to a fair, zero-carbon circular economy. It is also crucial that we invest in the green and fair recovery.

The LSDC's recent Financing for a Future London report also highlights the key role of London's finance sector in building the transition to a zero-carbon economy, exemplified by the UK Government's announcement in November 2020 of a Sovereign Green Bond (target 17.1⁹⁴).

LONDON LCEGS SECTOR TOTAL SALES (£ BILLION)



LONDON LCEGS SECTOR TOTAL EMPLOYEES



POLICY CONTEXT



A set of policies and initiatives are present to address aspects of London's competitiveness and prosperity, and the need for inclusive and sustainable growth, notably the Mayor's London Economic Development Strategy.

A number of national and local policies and initiatives have attempted to address economic unfairness, for example the UK Government's requirement for certain organisations to report on the gender pay-gap; the Mayor's Good Work Standard, recognising employers who champion fair pay and good work, and Workforce Integration Network, supporting underrepresented groups to enter the workplace with an initial focus on supporting young Black men into living-wage employment in London; and London Councils' grant scheme to tackle poverty through employment.

However, the proportion of jobs below the London Living Wage remains broadly unchanged from 2015, at 19.8% in 2019 and a constant 45-50% of part time work pays below this figure (target 1.b⁹⁵). The Living Wage Foundation have worked with over 7,000 employers from civil society, public and private sector through their accreditation process, to ensure more workers earn at least a real Living Wage.

They have consistently put forward that a real Living Wage is essential as global part of a global solution in order to meet the SDGs⁹⁶. This remains a challenge that must be addressed by employers and businesses, policy-makers and other stakeholders. The SDGs have specific targets on the quality and coverage of policies around equality and discrimination. A judgement on whether these targets are met in the London context might be tested against these standards in the discussion that follows the publication of this report.

The transition to a low carbon, circular economy is an objective within the London Environment Strategy and Economic Development Strategy, and a range of measures have been proposed to help facilitate this transition⁹⁷. Many of these proposals target innovation, business support and competitiveness in greening business. It remains critical that these policies integrate a “just transition” that deliver a zero-carbon circular economy whilst prioritising the needs and livelihoods of the lowest paid and most disadvantaged.



PLANET

*'We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.'*⁹⁸

The SDGs are clear that climate and ecological damage are not just 'environmental' challenges – they are social challenges too. Environmental degradation often affects society's most disadvantaged hardest, and this is the case in London. In order to achieve a 'just transition' to a greener and fairer society, we must simultaneously enhance our natural environment and resilience, reduce

environmental inequalities, and boost green skills and jobs to build a zero-carbon circular economy.

This chapter explores three key aspects of London's environment: climate change, air quality and green space. We assess progress, and particularly examine the ways that poor and more marginalised groups are affected.



CLIMATE CHANGE

SDG 13 (Climate Action), closely connected to the Paris Climate Change Agreement, calls on leaders to take urgent action to address the effects of climate change⁹⁹. London's efforts in response are beginning to bear results. London's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have been decreasing since their highest point in 2000.

GHG emissions dropped from 33.91 to 30.3 million tonnes CO₂e between 2015 and 2017, and the Mayor of London has committed to becoming a zero carbon city by 2030, a goal compatible with the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

Buildings are responsible for around four fifths of London's total GHG emissions¹⁰⁰ and there is some evidence of better and more energy efficient building practices. In 2020, 20% of dwellings attained an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of A or B, up from 17.2% in 2015 and 9.9% in 2008 (target 9.1¹⁰¹).

EPC ratings do not offer a complete picture of sustainable buildings (they don't address embodied carbon or other ecological impacts, and are only available for new and recently-transacted buildings). Even this is not compatible with a net zero carbon in operation standard that would be necessary for all new buildings to meet by 2030 in order to reach ambitions under Paris Agreement.

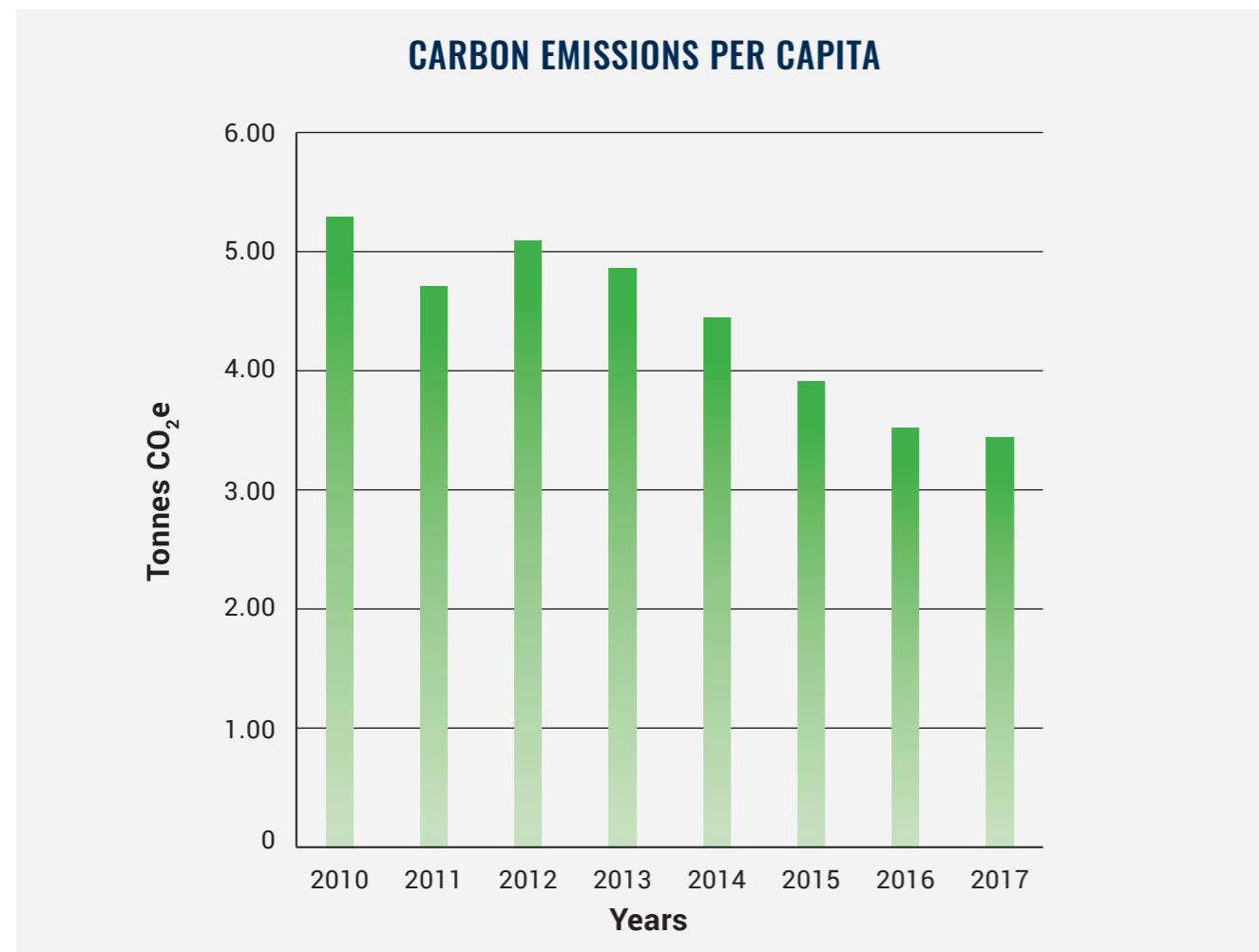
The Equality Impact Assessment of the Homes for Londoners: Affordable Homes Programme 2021-2026 identifies that improving housing quality can also enhance the environmental impact of housing whilst reducing social inequalities¹⁰².

For example, improving thermal efficiency helps cut carbon whilst reducing utility bills, so alleviating fuel poverty. Well-insulated homes are more resilient to climate change and extreme heat – this is of particular benefit to elderly people who are more vulnerable to spikes in temperature, as well as being more affected by illness caused by cold, damp homes.

Furthermore, despite UK Government, GLA and borough funding and initiatives, much more will need to be done to retrofit London's existing housing stock – £61bn must be invested in London's built environment to achieve net zero carbon by 2050, largely from the private sector – showing the scale of the challenge facing London's ambitious commitment on low carbon homes. The LSDC's report, Financing for a Future London, explores this and led to the GLA commissioning the Green Finance Institute to explore the development of a London Future Finance Facility.

London has made progress on its efforts to increase the use of more carbon friendly transport options. There are high numbers using public transport and walking as forms of transport in London, which remained largely constant from 2015 to the start of 2020, but which dropped drastically at the start of lockdown. (target 11.2¹⁰³). Cycling numbers remain relatively low - though on a positive trajectory - with 9% of residents cycling at least once a week for travel in 2017/18.

During the pandemic, there has been a modal shift towards walking and cycling, but also private vehicles: the proportion of journeys made by walking and cycling increase significantly, from 29% between January and March 2020 to an estimated 46% between April and June 2020.





The proportion of journeys made by private transport increased from 38% between January and March 2020, to 45% between March and June 2020. Although the early weeks of the 2020 lockdown saw a substantial reduction in air pollutants¹⁰⁴, Covid-19-related reductions in the capacity and use of public transport, and increased car use, threaten to worsen air quality in London. In response the Mayor created the Streetspace programme to enable more people to walk and cycle, rather than drive¹⁰⁵.

In order to improve its resilience to climate change, London has been developing plans around preparedness and adaptation to extreme weather events. These centre on the triple threats of drought, flooding and heat. Given that nearly a fifth of London is in the Thames floodplain, the possibility of flooding is of particular concern. In February 2020, the Local Resilience Forum noted that even when London was in a level 1 drought, South London was at risk of flooding due to high ground water¹⁰⁶.

The new London Plan aims to address this by emphasising the importance of maintaining green and blue space that can absorb rainfall more effectively. This includes making even greater use of green infrastructure such as reedbeds to increase absorption, but also encouraging hard infrastructure projects such as increased sewer capacity and processing, in turn improving water quality and living conditions for those living near waterways.

Heatwaves - likely to increase in frequency and severity as a consequence of climate change - are estimated to have led to 238 additional deaths in 2019, mostly amongst older people¹⁰⁷. The impacts of climate change on the health of London's ecosystems, and especially the health of London's priority habitats and species, is an additional concern, though one where data - especially time series data - remains sparse.



AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES

London's air quality, along with many other national and global cities, has a significant public profile and is heavily monitored, with attention focused on particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) because of the health risks these pose (targets 3.9¹⁰⁸, 11.6¹⁰⁹). Since 2016 there have been dramatic improvements in London's air quality, especially for NO_2 , according to a report on London's air quality between 2016 and 2020 using data from London's air quality monitoring network and modelling from the Environmental Research Group at King's College London (now Imperial College London).

The number of Londoners living in areas exceeding the legal limit for NO_2 fell from over 2 million in 2016 to 119,000 in 2019, a reduction of 94 per cent. In 2016 monitoring sites in London recorded over 4,000 hours above the short-term legal limit for NO_2 – in 2019 this reduced to just over 100, a reduction of 97 per cent.

The majority of monitoring sites recorded a reduction in annual mean PM_{10} with an average reduction of 11 per cent across the network, rising to 14 per cent for roadside sites. Less data is available for $PM_{2.5}$ as there are fewer sites and more issues with data capture. However, the majority of sites recorded reductions in annual mean $PM_{2.5}$ with an average reduction of 9 per cent across the network, rising to 16 per cent for roadside sites. However, there is work still to be done: 99% of Londoners still live in areas exceeding the WHO $PM_{2.5}$ limit.

Between 2016 and 2019 the reduction in annual average nitrogen dioxide at roadside sites in central London was five times the national average reduction. This shows the most significant improvements in London have been driven by local, as opposed to national, policy. These successful Mayoral policy interventions include the ULEZ, Low-Emission Bus Zones, cleaning up bus and taxi fleets, and increasing electric vehicle charging infrastructure.



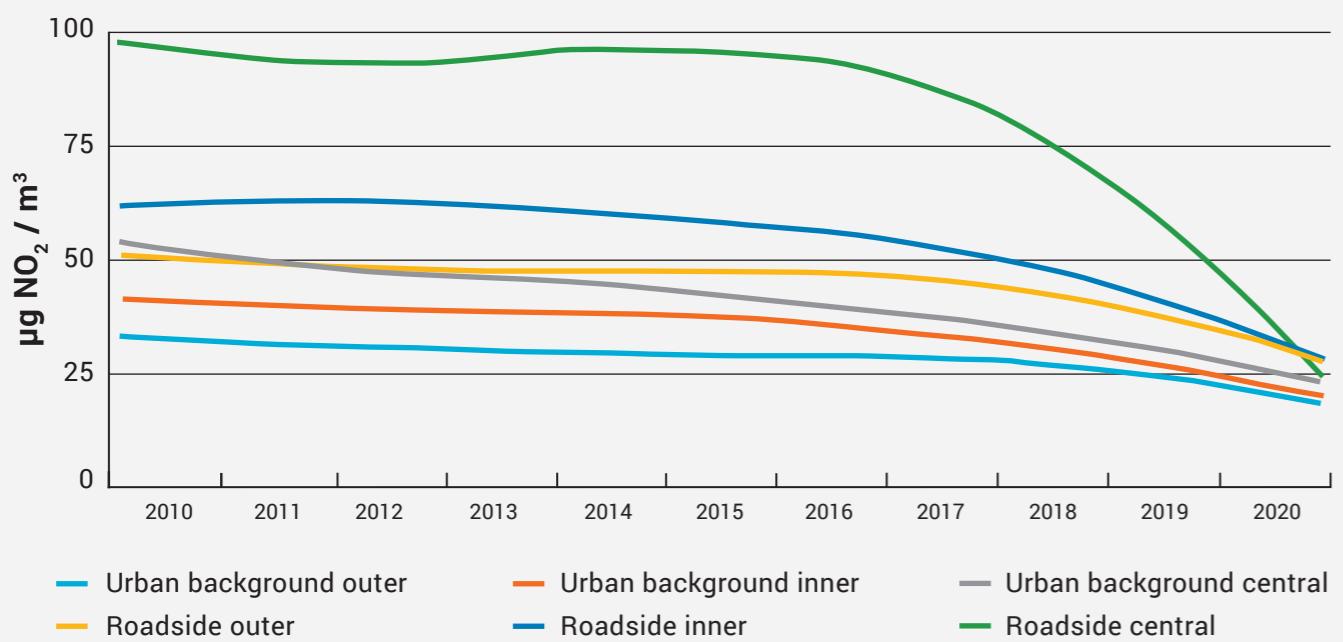
Across the globe, the environmental justice movement has highlighted the fact that in many cities, pollution of all types tends to be concentrated in low-income and minority neighbourhoods¹¹⁰. A report commissioned by the GLA in 2019¹¹¹ found that in 2013 the most deprived Londoners are on average exposed to nearly a quarter more nitrogen dioxide pollution than the least deprived.

There was also increased exposure to air pollution in areas that have a higher percentage of non-white ethnic groups, with a particularly skewed distribution for the Black/African/Caribbean/Black British population. Nitrogen dioxide concentrations were on average between 16 and 19 per cent higher in areas where non-white people were most likely to live compared to areas where white people were most likely to live. However, the report found that as a result of Mayoral policy the inequality in exposure across the deprivation scale will be greatly reduced by 2030.

There is emerging evidence of an association between exposure to air pollution and the most severe effects of Covid-19, including an increase in the death rate. Most recently Sasidharan et al reported a strong correlation between NO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$ levels and an increase in the risk of Covid-19 transmission in London¹¹².

There is strong evidence that disadvantaged communities and non-white ethnic groups have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. A range of social and environmental factors have been suggested as the cause of increased vulnerability amongst these groups, including lifetime exposure to higher levels of air pollution. Whilst more research is needed to investigate the relationship between air pollution, inequality and Covid-19, there is established evidence linking air pollution exposure to social inequalities.

AIR QUALITY: MONTHLY AVERAGE NO_2 CONCENTRATION TREND





GREEN SPACE

Urban green space provides environmental benefits such as cooling effects, better air quality and a reduction in flooding. In addition, accessible green space provides residents with important physical and social benefits, such as a place to exercise and meet friends and neighbours. The Covid-19 lockdown reinforced the value of access to greenspace for Londoners: the use of parks increased 160% in the first half of 2020¹¹³, and 62% of Londoners surveyed in May 2020 thought protecting and enhancing green spaces should be a higher priority after the lockdown¹¹⁴.

The overall level of greenspace in London is high: approximately 48-51% of Greater London is green and blue space (target 15.1¹¹⁵). However only 18% of London is officially designated as publicly accessible green space – much of the rest includes private land such as gardens, and land that is technically private despite some public access, such as nature reserves.

Approximately 50% of households in London live within 400m of a formally designated public green space (target 11.7¹¹⁶) as of 2014 - though many households within such areas of deficiency do have access to smaller amenity green spaces, pocket parks or private gardens.

However, there is inequality over who has access to the best quality public open space. Large, high quality parks are disproportionately located in wealthier neighbourhoods, partly because property values have increased in areas close to good quality parks, thus displacing those Londoners on lower incomes. Black people in England are four times less likely than white people to have any outdoor space at home. 21% of London households have no garden, compared with 12% of Great Britain. However, the boroughs and the Mayor are addressing this, including via Grow Back Greener grants which support communities to create green spaces.

These projects prioritised areas of the city with poor access to open space and nature, and which work with or are led by Londoners who are less likely to access green space, including BAME and lower-income Londoners, and over-65s.

The air quality inequalities noted above also affect green spaces. According to researchers at Imperial College London, whilst 27% of public parks in Greater London had levels of NO₂ higher than the EU limit in 2016, the NO₂ level for play spaces most accessible to the children in the most-deprived quintile were on average 6µg/m₃ higher than those accessible to children in the least-deprived quintile¹¹⁷.

Although target 11.7 on providing greenspace which is “inclusive and safe, particularly for women and children” is often framed as safety from crime, inequalities in the air quality of play spaces should also be noted in this context.

An interactive map presented by the GLA tracks a number of green infrastructure issues which can be cross-referenced against Indices of Multiple Deprivation, and an overall score on the ‘need for green infrastructure’. There is excellent data on public space and green space in London through the Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) database, too. However, these resources require specialist tools and knowledge to make the best of use of them.

For example, the green infrastructure map plots data across 15,000 equal hexagonal zones, whilst data on deprivation is available at the level of the 32 boroughs. Overall, the accessibility of this data could be further improved in order to make better policy decisions.



POLICY CONTEXT

The current Mayor has clearly made the environment a priority. The London Environment Strategy (LES), in May 2018, lays out priorities, targets and action plans for climate change, air quality, green infrastructure and waste, treating these areas as integrally linked. The majority of London's boroughs have declared a climate emergency, and London Councils have published a six-point plan to support the boroughs in devising climate emergency action plans.

The London Recovery Board's 'Green New Deal' mission will deliver a recovery that is both green and fair – boosting green skills and jobs; cutting carbon and air pollution; enhancing green spaces; and reducing health inequalities and fuel poverty. This will be delivered in partnership between the GLA, boroughs, community groups and private sector. COP 26 in November 2021 also represents a huge opportunity for London and the UK to take a leadership position in the battle against climate change.

The Mayor's 1.5°C Compatible Climate Action Plan maps a pathway for a zero-carbon city, but he has since committed to achieving this by 2030¹¹⁸. The LES also connects energy efficiency and carbon reductions with tackling the rise in fuel poverty, supported by the Fuel Poverty Action Plan¹¹⁹.

The new London Plan (December 2020) aims to deliver this through the built environment, setting a net zero carbon target for new development; requiring all major developments to monitor energy performance post-construction; requiring reduced embodied carbon from new developments; energy efficiency and retrofitting; climate adaptation measures; and encouraging placement of employment and housing so as to enable car-free commuting¹²⁰.



Climate adaptation is incorporated into mayoral strategies on food, transport and resilience. It is also crucial that the UK Government should not set national carbon standards in buildings as a ceiling for cities, but as a baseline – particularly because policies such as the new Future Homes Standard, although a step in the right direction, only requires new-builds to be 'zero-carbon ready' from 2025, rather than delivering zero carbon.

Environmental data is often resourced and held by local multi-stakeholder partnerships, rather than being funded and managed by central government agencies. For example, GiGL (green space data) is a partnership of the GLA, boroughs, third sector bodies and others, and is funded by the GLA; Thames River Watch (river pollution data) is managed by the charity Thames 21 and funded by Tideway, in the absence of statutory monitoring. Other information is only available from private companies.

Although initiatives such as these can and do provide excellent data, the absence of central government support may reflect that national policy has historically placed less importance on the environment. It can also lead to greater variability in accessibility and presentation, and lower reporting frequencies which makes trend analysis difficult.

This issue is also reflected in the national policy frameworks for climate adaptation, which are patchy: boroughs are the lead local flood authorities; drought responsibility lies with water companies and borough resilience forums; and there is no formal responsibility for heat, although London has strong heat planning policies. These issues are explored further in 'Reflections On Data Collection In London'.

PEACE

*'We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.'*¹²¹

The SDGs state that maintaining a peaceful society is partly about minimising crime and discrimination, but also nurturing a strong civil society by fostering cohesive and resilient communities.

This chapter focuses on both of these issues. The SDGs also cite the connected importance of building trust and participation in governance and public institutions – this is explored later in the Partnerships chapter.



VIOLENCE AND CRIME

Recorded instances of violence rose from 20.1 to 24.8 per 1,000 people from 2015 to 2020 (target 16.1¹²²), and in particular the use of knives and acid in these acts stand out. The causes of knife crime have been widely debated, and data gathered on other SDG indicators (e.g. health, poverty, inequalities) captures a broad picture of social challenges and their relationship with crime.

For example, a GLA report identifies a relationship between victims of serious youth violence and deprivation, mental wellbeing and educational attainment¹²³. Knife crime was also found to be a particular concern of young people in the LSDC's report on Young Londoners' Priorities for a Sustainable City¹²⁴. However, it is difficult to ascribe causation (as opposed to correlation) to any given factor, due to the wide range of intersecting issues at play, and the difficulty of isolating any single one.



Public confidence in the police to "do a good job in the local area" was 57% in 2020, down from 67% in 2015 (SDG targets 16.6, 16.7). However, trust in the police varies significantly between ethnicities (46% mixed ethnicity and 65% white other) and boroughs (47% in Hackney and 70% in Kensington and Chelsea).

Reporting and recording of different kinds of violent crime have increased since 2015, partly due to the police being required to correctly implement rules on statistics collection. This is especially true for violence against women and girls (target 5.2¹²⁴), where the ONS qualifies available statistics by noting 'improvements in police recording practices and increased reporting by victims' as possible causes of the increase¹²⁶.

However, underreporting of such offences remains a pervasive problem, and exacerbated for some victims by other issues such as migration status and language problems¹²⁷. The volume of hate crime reported to the police (target 10.2¹²⁸) has also risen over time, though with similar caveats around the data. These kinds of crimes directly express and are deeply interwoven with inequalities that are entrenched right across UK society, not just London.



COMMUNITY COHESION

Reducing inequalities is important in creating mutual respect between diverse individuals and communities, and hence building social cohesion. This is a priority for the Mayor's Social Integration Strategy. According to London's Social Integration Dashboard, 92% of Londoners in 2018/19 said that their area is one where people of many different backgrounds get on well (markedly up since 2010), and 45% of Londoners "borrow things and exchange favours with their neighbours", yet challenges remain. For example, 39% of all non-white respondents testify to having been treated unfairly because of their ethnicity in the last 12 months (2018-19). Socioeconomic inequality exacerbates this challenge: only 9% of the same respondents have positive, frequent contact with people outside their own social class.

Social isolation is a challenge for many – 27% of adults feel they "do not have a spouse, friend or family member they can rely on a lot" (2018-19). This number is markedly higher for LGBTQ+ people, people in local authority housing, and members of Sikh and Muslim faiths. This has led the Trust for London¹²⁹ and the London Assembly¹³⁰, to call for a greater focus on relationships and tackling loneliness.

Spatial planning is an important part of the response to such issues, and the participatory nature of these planning processes is itself the subject of SDG target 11.3¹³¹.

The increasingly digital nature of social interactions is a trend across the world, and one that has the potential to change the nature of this challenge for London. As the Relationship Project explains ‘technology connects us more than ever, but increasingly digitises human exchange.¹³² London’s transient population may be a factor in feelings of community too, with migration into London from elsewhere in the UK and abroad, movement within London and the increasing emigration of Londoners to neighbouring counties as trends that will impact on ‘community’ in the city¹³³.

However, Covid-19 has also demonstrated the power of – and necessity for – strong community spirit and action in London. A GLA report estimates that around 280,000 Londoners participated in 740 local mutual aid networks during the first lockdown¹³⁴, rapidly self-organising non-hierarchical, hyper-local networks to help their neighbours with essential items, social support and more.

The pandemic has shone a light on the crucial role of formal and informal social networks to support the most disadvantaged (UK food bank usage was 89% higher in March 2020 than 2019¹³⁵). This carries an important lesson on the need for resilient community infrastructure as well as physical infrastructure, not only for future crises but the everyday life of the city. The London Community Response Survey provides further granular data on Londoners’ experiences of the pandemic¹³⁶.

However, data has shown that while many communities did experience an upsurge in community togetherness during Covid-19, this was not consistent across

London. Better off areas, those with more community assets, pre-existing higher levels of neighbour trust, higher incomes, higher levels of civic participation, low population churn, low levels of social isolation, and low levels of divisions, had stronger community responses compared to less well-off areas^{137 138}.

This reflects more widely the huge and ongoing importance of active citizenship in London, and especially community volunteering – in terms of the benefits to those receiving support; the feelings of belonging it can engender in volunteers; and the overall resilience and cohesion of the community arising from these networks of relationships. 26% of Londoners stated they had volunteered in the last 12 months (2015/16)¹³⁹.

The legions of volunteers for the 2012 London Olympics were among the most visible examples of this, but examples also range from tree-planting to care work. People are more likely to feel happy and like they belong in a city which they have helped to shape and support. However, to participate, Londoners need access to relevant opportunities and activities to do this effectively.

These opportunities and activities will be derived from a healthy eco-system of civil society organisations operating at local level and also from Londoners having the knowledge and confidence to set up their own collective action organisations. The pandemic has increased visibility of more friction-less and informal volunteering but overall there are still barriers for many Londoners in terms of their ability to participate.

POLICY CONTEXT

The Mayor’s Social Integration Strategy¹⁴⁰ is closely aligned with the SDGs’ focus on reducing inequalities while enhancing community cohesion and active citizenship, especially through democratic participation. It is supported by a social integration dashboard offering a rich source of data on aspects of integration.

The national Community Resilience Development Framework sets the context for the London Community Resilience Steering Group, which as part of the London Resilience Forum brings the boroughs,

GLA and other key agencies together, recognising that social infrastructure is just as vital to a well-functioning city as physical infrastructure and resources¹⁴¹.

London’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy¹⁴² also connects barriers to belonging with active citizenship and inequalities, with particular objectives to focus on the groups disproportionately affected by knife crime. London also has a knife crime strategy, task force, and multi-agency violence reduction unit, along with a raft of initiatives, funding, and toolkits.



PARTNERSHIPS

'We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalised Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focussed in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people'¹⁴³

The SDGs place an emphasis on partnership working across different levels of governments, departments and sectors to address key challenges. Multi-stakeholder partnerships (SDG target 17.16) can unite resources, knowledge and action behind causes which are important to all parties, and cannot be addressed by any single actor alone. Vertical links between different levels of government, or horizontal links within these levels, could produce more coherent policies (target 17.14¹⁴⁴) in response to complex and interlinked challenges.

The SDGs also place importance on their implementation through "the participation of all people". The case for greater involvement for people in decision-making is well established¹⁴⁵ – more considered decision making and increased buy-in for resulting policies, and enhanced trust, respect, and equality. Participatory approaches are endorsed by organisations from the Local Government Association¹⁴⁶ to Extinction Rebellion¹⁴⁷.

This chapter presents an overview of the diversity of organisational partnerships in London, as well as the breadth and depth of community participation. Both also link closely with community cohesion and engagement explored in 'Peace', above. However, this is non-exhaustive, and only a snapshot of the myriad interactions between the huge range of stakeholders in London.



PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN ORGANISATIONS

The sheer number and diversity of partnerships across London, across the range of SDG themes, resists easy analysis. Some are relatively small, tackling a single or hyper-local issue. Others span hundreds of partners and address multiple, intersecting challenges at larger scales - for example the Partnership for Young London¹⁴⁸. Partnerships are active across People, Prosperity, Planet and Peace, and at the intersections of these areas.

Although the majority of partnerships addressing SDG-related themes do not mention the Goals explicitly, some partnerships are specifically built around the SDGs. Model My City, in Camden, is a local community interest company bringing together stakeholders and citizens to contribute to a sustainable borough using the framework of the SDGs¹⁴⁹. The West London Business and BeeMidtown Business Improvement District networks both frame their work programmes around the SDGs.

Other partnerships contribute to the Goals without an explicit SDG framing. The London Health Board is a partnership between London's boroughs, the NHS, PHE and the Mayor, aiming to transform health and care, and reduce health inequalities – contributing to SDG 3 (Health) without referring to it directly.

Thames River Watch, developed in partnership between Thames 21 and Tideway, and supported by local 'citizen scientists'¹⁵⁰ contributes invaluable data on plastic pollution in the Thames (SDG target 14.1¹⁵¹) in the absence of statutory monitoring, but again without being inspired or framed by the SDGs.

The London Urban Forest Partnership is a network of organisations that collaborate to protect, manage and enhance the capital's trees and woodlands; it comprises national and local government, the third sector, professional bodies and community groups.

The London Child Poverty Alliance is a partnership of (mainly) civil society organisations and charities committed to tackling child poverty in London. They bring together collective knowledge, expertise and experience to develop and champion the practical solutions needed to tackle child poverty in London. They campaign and influence to ensure that London child poverty issues are understood and addressed by policymakers and the wider community.

There are a number of examples of GLA-led partnerships that work together to address specific aspects of poverty. For example, the London Boroughs Food Group has a specific focus on tackling food insecurity, and the London Fuel Poverty Partnership (which also includes partners from the energy industry and regulators) works together to support Londoners living in fuel poverty.



London is also home to a large number of partnerships that focus on the SDGs beyond the city itself. For example, London plays a leading role in the global C40 Cities climate change network, spearheading collaborative initiatives such as international cities divesting financial assets from fossil fuels and championing investment in the green economy¹⁵².

The City of London Corporation's Sustainable Development Capital Initiative, which is supported by private sector institutions alongside the UK's Department for International Development and the UK government-owned development finance institution CDC Group, works to develop London as a leading hub for SDG oriented development finance. The UN Global Compact UK is a network of leading businesses committed to the SDGs, whilst a number of London universities are signatories to the global 'SDGs Accord' for the higher education sector.

Despite effective collaboration across many elements of national and local government, spanning many policy areas, there is an absence of an overarching national or regional sustainable development policy framework in London and the UK.

Germany is one example of a multi-tiered government sustainability strategy incorporating the SDGs; the Scottish Government also uses the SDGs as indicators for its National Performance Framework, and the Welsh Future Generations Act is framed using the SDGs. The GLA Act also places a statutory duty on the Mayor of London to address sustainable development – the LSDC support the Mayor to deliver this requirement.

Since partnerships are underpinned by mutual benefit, there is no guarantee that partnerships will form in those areas where the SDG challenges are greatest or multi-stakeholder action is most needed – in fact, in some such areas it is unlikely that partnerships will arise without a change in context. It may therefore be desirable to conduct a further assessment of gaps where new partnerships could do most good, and analyse barriers to their formation as well as how to unblock them. This is explored further in 'Further work for the LSDC', below.



PARTICIPATION AND TRUST IN LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

Participation in formal local government is positive. Electoral registration has remained relatively steady (86% in 2018), and turnout for the 2016 mayoral election - 46% - was 21% higher than in 2012. However, there are disparities between voter turnout – from 36% in Barking & Dagenham to 57% in Richmond – though detailed demographic data is unavailable. There has been an increase in the number of female councillors on 2018 data, up to 42% from 36% in 2013.

All levels of government use a number of tools to enable public participation in London's governance beyond simply voting, reflecting SDG 16¹⁵³ and SDG target 11.3¹⁵⁴ on inclusive city planning. For example, formal public consultations are carried out by national and local government to inform legislation and strategies, and responses are recorded in the evidence-bases for those documents.

Public debate is encouraged through meetings – albeit not during lockdown – including on specific issues such as planning; regular meetings at ward and borough level; and ‘People’s Question Time’. Online forums are popular within boroughs, as is the GLA’s [Talk London](#) site, whilst councillors’ surgeries, direct correspondence and social media platforms all provide opportunities for public engagement.

However, the SDGs call for public decision-making to focus on including the voices of communities which are often sidelined. This requires both a greater *breadth* of engagement, i.e. including more (and more diverse) voices; and greater *depth* of engagement, i.e. creating opportunities for more nuanced debate, which can shed light on the particular needs of all Londoners.

The Centre for London’s 2019 report, ‘Strengthening public participation in London’s planning system’, highlights these challenges in the context of local planning consultations. It states that community representatives say “that they were ignored, marginalised and patronised by consultation on new development”, and also that “younger people, renters, small business owners, and people from some ethnic groups” were under represented in attendance at planning meetings¹⁵⁵.



31% of Londoners felt they were “able to influence decisions affecting their local area” in 2018/19, down from a high of 36% in 2015/16. This period coincided with a nationwide downward trend, with London consistently outperforming the UK average on this metric. With the rise in apathy and polarised politics, plus the on-going low turnout in local elections, active participation should also include the ability for Londoners to have their voices heard and fully participate in democracy.

There are many excellent examples of participatory local governance in London, which could be extended and replicated across boroughs and institutions. Newham Council held ‘People’s Budget Forums’ to agree council spending plans¹⁵⁶. Newham and Camden have both held Citizens’ Assemblies on climate change; Camden’s brought together a cross-sections of the public to hear evidence and then co-create local solutions to be adopted by the residents, community groups, businesses and the council¹⁵⁷. The UK Government similarly held ‘Climate Assembly UK’ in 2020¹⁵⁸.

NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups in City & Hackney¹⁵⁹, as well as in Barking & Dagenham¹⁶⁰, have both implemented ‘co-production’ approaches so that residents’ needs and priorities are reflected in healthcare strategies. In Westminster, the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum convened residents, businesses, students, visitors and others to help develop the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan, whose objectives are framed around the SDGs¹⁶¹.

The London Recovery Board has also taken a strong approach to engaging with diverse communities in shaping the programmes of work that will underpin London’s recovery from the pandemic. This engagement has been delivered via the recovery mission on ‘Building Strong Communities’, as well as an overarching goal on ‘Collaborating and involving London’s diverse communities’.

This is one of a number of ‘Cross-Cutting Principles’ (CCPs) – a set of objectives that are being applied across the recovery work programme.

Collectively, the CCPs align very closely with the SDGs – they also include goals to improve the environment, health, and equality and diversity, across the programme. Therefore applying the CCPs effectively and in an integrated way is a route to embedding the SDGs within London’s recovery programme. Appendix 1 presents CCPs the alongside the SDGs, showing they map onto each other.

However, it is clear that further steps must be taken to actively involve all Londoners, especially marginalised groups. Possible avenues for future work in this area are explored in ‘Recommendations’.



REFLECTIONS ON DATA COLLECTION IN LONDON

LONDON IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

The LSDC's analysis has focused on local delivery of the SDGs within London, and not London's nationwide and global impacts, because the SDGs frame global cooperation at an inter-governmental level (e.g. overseas aid), and do not offer a suitable framework to address the international impacts of cities.

However, the SDGs' inherently global outlook does offer a vision of how we might consider these issues, which may be explored in future work. However, new data would be required, as well as a discussion around ethical questions such what should be the contribution of any one city to the SDGs, especially in the context where the government is not providing a strong lead? What does sustainable and fair prosperity look like in London, and how can we get there from here?

This report does not seek to compare London's performance with that of other world cities, though this could be explored in future work. A number of other benchmarks and metrics have attempted this, including the SDSN SDGs Cities Index¹⁶² and the ISO 37120 standard for cities metrics.

The sheer diversity between different UK and global cities means it remains challenging to provide like-for-like comparisons, especially on complex social issues, and where metrics are highly tailored to individual local contexts. However, the universality of the SDGs provide our best opportunity to create a shared understanding of shared challenges, and collaborate to drive progress.

The UN's 'Voluntary Local Review' (VLR) process also enables cities and regions from around the world to report on their SDGs journeys, including past performance, embedding the SDGs in policy-making, and community engagement and participation. VLRs were initially an informal mechanism based on the Voluntary National Reviews undertaken by national governments, but are becoming increasingly significant in their contribution to the global sustainability effort.

In future, London may wish to explore developing and submitting its own VLR to the UN, grounded on the work started in this report. This would enable London to demonstrate a global leadership position on supporting the SDGs' aims on social equity and the environment. It would also require further work to engage Londoners in embedding the SDGs – see 'Further work for the LSDC' below.

In terms of reporting on London's own performance, this report provided some context on policies and initiatives in place for each area, but it would not be feasible to provide an exhaustive account of all relevant policies for all SDG areas; future work may wish to consider more

detailed mapping of policy coverage and effectiveness in key areas. The report also largely focused on historical trends within London, rather than projecting the likelihood that London will achieve certain SDG targets by 2030 on current trends; this may be the subject of future analysis.



GRANULAR DATA ON MARGINALISED GROUPS

The 2030 Agenda call to 'leave no one behind' requires us to disaggregate data to understand the circumstances of different sub-groups of the population at a more granular level. However, we identified a number of challenges during data gathering and analysis.

National level data is commonly available for age, disability, ethnicity and gender, and often available disaggregated by socio-economic factors such as deprivation. However, this is not always available at London or borough level, and it rarely possible to analyse the intersections of disadvantage (for example, age and ethnicity and gender) facing different social groups in particular locations.

Data on inequality at regional level is also of poorer quality than national level, because national surveys which produce good quality estimates for groups such as ethnicity, sexual orientation do not produce good estimates at sub-regional level where the sample sizes are much smaller.

A related challenge applies to certain policy issues: for example, suicide rate data is presented by borough and gender, allowing intersecting comparisons across those two metrics – however, the number of annual suicides among one gender in one borough is often so small that trend analysis is not meaningful.

This means that obtaining a sample size large enough for a robust estimate for a particular demographic requires combining several years' worth of data – which creates a significant time-lag. (For example, estimating poverty in 2020 by ethnic group requires combining data from 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. So any change after 2017/18 can't be fully measured until 2020/21 and won't be available until 2022.)

This lag makes it challenging to understand the nature and extent of poverty and inequality. It is also difficult to evaluate the success of policy measures (even over an electoral period such as a government or a mayoralty), and hence more difficult to design effective and targeted policy solutions.



Sometimes the most marginalised groups are the ones least likely to be captured by official datasets, for example victims of domestic violence who have uncertain migration status. An understandable emphasis on 'households' as units and household surveys as a methodology means that data, especially on those who are homeless and in social care, is less easily accessed.

Data that only considers the head of the household can also render invisible the other members of the household, especially when the household is made up of a mixture of people. This invisibility compounds these groups' marginalisation and vulnerability.



DATA COLLECTION INFRASTRUCTURE

Intelligence gaps are created through lack of integration between the administrative systems the ONS and government departments, and other external bodies, and this contributed in part to the lateness of spotting that BAME groups are disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. There is a need to overcome administrative barriers to local government accessing data held by national government and the private sector.

Furthermore, as the GLA is neither a central government department nor a borough, it is often excluded from other data sharing initiatives. County councils and other devolved administrations are able to better access frontline data across a range of services compared with the GLA for London. Data sharing is rarely a political priority – it does not capture the public imagination and is often controversial due to data protection concerns.

The LSDC's analysis also highlights that environmental data is often managed by multi-stakeholder partnerships and the private sector, and has been under-resourced by central government, potentially as a result of the environment not having been a national political priority. The result is that certain areas of environmental data can be hard to publicly access, patchy, and infrequently collected.

Work is underway to address these issues. The GLA Group have partnered with the London Office of Technology and Innovation to share data to support the recovery. The UK Government's National Data Strategy is piloting new approaches to data sharing between a range of public bodies.

The ONS is making local SDGs indicator data available via an online portal. The UK Statistics Authority's Inclusive Data Taskforce aims to address the issues above on improving data to better understand the issues faced by marginalised groups. However, there remains far more to be done.

CONCLUSIONS



The LSDC's unique analysis of data on an extensive range of sustainability issues has highlighted key themes and trends in London. We have shown how deeply interconnected and interdependent these issues are, as well as the need to reduce inequalities and be inclusive in our decision making. It therefore follows that London's solutions must be systems-based and participatory in their design.

28% of Londoners live in relative poverty, i.e. with incomes below 60% of the national median. Housing costs are a major contributor to this, and also represent a larger proportion of income for those on lower incomes and in privately rented housing; rough sleeping rose 9% from 2015/16 to 2018/19.

Covid-19 has shone a light on pre-existing inequalities and exacerbated them, disproportionately affecting groups that were already the most disadvantaged. BAME communities, women, and those with low incomes have been hit hardest financially, disproportionately having frontline jobs where they cannot work from home, and which are low-paid or precarious.

A rise in food insecurity, housing insecurity and other challenges have disproportionately impacted low-income households, BAME Londoners, women and young people. Children from low-income households have been particularly affected by disrupting to schooling, through lack of access to IT and increased risk of food insecurity.

Policies that provide more integrated support to adults undergoing financial hardship could therefore help reduce childhood food insecurity and enhance educational outcomes. Connected with this is the long-term trend of in-work poverty, where wages do not reflect the true cost of living, despite a long-term reduction in unemployment rates prior to Covid-19, as well as a steady rise in zero-hours contracts.

Following the surge in unemployment during the pandemic, Universal Credit claims in London doubled between March and November; the poorest boroughs saw around five times more new claims than the wealthiest. Exposure to poor air quality – associated disproportionately with low-income and BAME neighbourhoods – has also been linked with increased vulnerability to Covid-19.

This reflects wider long-standing health inequalities, where deprivation and poverty are closely linked with London's leading causes of death. Reducing inequalities and ensuring all Londoners are paid a decent wage could therefore simultaneously improve public health and reduce homelessness.

As London tackles the climate and ecological emergencies, it is crucial that the journey to a zero-carbon circular economy is a just transition, investing in skills development to create decent green jobs.

Environmental improvements can also contribute to tackling inequalities: improving energy-efficiency can reduce fuel poverty (Newham in London has the second worst rate in England); poor air quality disproportionately impacts already disadvantaged communities; whilst improving quality and equality of access to green space is key to improving health and wellbeing, whilst also boosting resilience to heatwaves and flooding caused by climate change. More funding and a clear national strategy is needed from national government to decarbonise our energy system, reduce environmental inequalities, and create more resilient cities.

Building urban resilience also requires strong social as well as physical infrastructure. In order to do this we must foster community cohesion, including by tackling inequalities. This must be supported by building trust in public institutions, including through inclusive public participation in the development of local and policies plans. The analysis uncovered a need for more active engagement with Londoners, particularly with communities whose voices are not always heard.

This includes hearing from people about their lived experiences, and an open dialogue on how to devise solutions in a participatory way. in order to be effective and inclusive, this requires capacity building: participants must be actively supported to contribute, through training and skills, and they (and the civil society and faith groups often supporting their participation and engagement) must be compensated for their time – especially

those on low incomes, as highlighted in the LSDC's Insights Paper on the SDGs and London's recovery¹⁶⁴.

As the London Recovery Board prepares to help London rebuild from the devastating effects of the pandemic, it is heartening to see its focus on creating a greener and fairer city (exemplified in the 'missions' and 'cross-cutting principles'); the partnership approach taken (between local government, the private sector, civil society groups and others); and the focus on community co-creation of the work programme¹⁶⁴.

There is excellent work underway across the city to better engage Londoners in decisions that affect their lives – particularly the LRB's work to engage Londoners in co-creating the recovery programme. This should leave a lasting legacy for a renewed focus on participatory decision-making in London – not just by local and national government (e.g. on policy and legislation), but other key public and private sector institutions too (e.g. major construction and development, and the development of public services).

The LRB's public engagement work could inform a participatory strategy for London's future delivery of the SDGs. This in turn could form the basis of a formal Voluntary Local Review of London's contribution to the SDGs, which would build on the work of this report to present London's progress, community participation and future goals to the UN's annual High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The London Recovery Board's 'cross-cutting principles' (CCPs) align with the SDGs, and aim to embed improvements to community engagement, health and wellbeing, equality and diversity, and the environment throughout the recovery programme, whilst strategically managing synergies and trade-offs between these issues (see Appendix 1). Effective and integrated implementation of the CCPs will reflect that the recovery has embedded the principles of the SDGs.

The London Datastore collates data very effectively, across economic and social measures especially, in a way that might be a model for other cities. However, the analysis found that more granular data is needed on intersecting marginalised communities in order to enable local, regional and national government to better design effective and targeted policy. This requires improved collaboration between national and local government and other agencies such as the ONS.

London is home to an extraordinary array of partnerships delivering SDG themes (though often not explicitly framed in SDG terms). However, there is a need to explore where there are gaps – e.g. there may be a need for more coordinated action on poverty – and seek to actively fill them. There is also a need to galvanise a range of organisations and stakeholders to accelerate collaborative action on the SDGs.

The above shows that none of these issues can be addressed in isolation, due to their interdependence – and that taking a holistic view when making policy decisions can yield myriad co-benefits. There is pressing need for national and local government to devise integrated approaches to London's complex challenges.

The LSDC's evidence and analysis indicates that the SDGs can help decision-makers to act strategically in order to identify synergies and make intelligent choices about potential trade-offs, whilst empowering all Londoners to have a say in building London's green and fair recovery.





FURTHER WORK FOR THE LSDC

This report is just the beginning of London's journey on the SDGs. By providing a snapshot of key trends, challenges and opportunities, it is hoped to spark further activity and discussion. There remains a huge amount of work for London to become a truly sustainable city by 2030. The LSDC will look to undertake the following actions as a next step towards this.

- 1 The LSDC will look to establish a 'London SDGs Hub' – a multi-stakeholder partnership network to share best practice and accelerate action on the SDGs in London.

This will be set up in partnership with, and include representation from: local government; the public sector; businesses; community groups and charities, particularly those representing marginalised communities; and organisations from across a range of sectors, levels, and geographies across London.

It should develop a strategic understanding of where there are partnership gaps that are currently not filled, targeting efforts at these priority areas. It should explore what new tools and resources are needed to empower organisations and communities to act on the SDGs. In particular, the Hub may wish to explore developing new resources to support local authorities to deliver the SDGs.

- 2 Assess data and policy gaps. The LSDC will look to partner with the GLA, UK Government and other relevant bodies to publish a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) for London and submit it to the UN's High Level Political Forum in July 2022.

Far more needs to be done to achieve the SDGs by 2030, particularly by national governments through policy and funding, but also by local actors. This report aims to provide a platform for policy-makers, businesses, civil society groups, the public and other stakeholders, to build new partnerships to accelerate local action on the SDGs in London.

This should take a strongly participatory approach, promoting and resourcing co-creation and co-development with London's diverse communities, in line with the ethos of the SDGs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence above indicates that London would benefit from embedding the SDGs to help address a range of interconnecting issues, unleashing the co-benefits of job-creation, reducing inequalities and poverty, improving health and wellbeing, and enhancing our environment. The LSDC makes the following recommendations:

1 London's boroughs should embed the principles of the SDGs to support integrated decision-making on policy-making and investment, to plan London's green and fair recovery and beyond – particularly in Borough Plans and recovery strategies.

The SDGs' comprehensive, systems-thinking approach could help boroughs to act on synergies and manage trade-offs intelligently and transparently, whilst supporting the most marginalised communities. Some boroughs are already taking excellent steps towards delivering this, and this good practice should be shared between boroughs – which the LSDC's SDGs Hub can help facilitate.

2 The London Recovery Board should continue to effectively implement and integrate its 'Cross-Cutting Principles' (CCPs) as a way to embed the principles of the SDGs in London's recovery.

The CCPs – which align with the SDG – are a mechanism to embed equalities, healthcare, community participation, the environment and other priorities throughout the recovery programme. They provide a way to strategically manage synergies and trade-offs between key issues, guided by the principles of sustainable development.

3 Businesses, civil society groups, public sector organisations and others should use the SDGs to help develop integrated sustainability plans. This should be supported by the London SDGs Hub – which the LSDC intends to convene to facilitate networking, best practice sharing and resource development to accelerate collaborative action on the SDGs in London.

4 All levels of government, public bodies, businesses and others, should drive more meaningful community participation in decisions on local policy; investment and budget setting; major developments; and public services.

Engagement should be wider (in the number and diversity of participants, focusing on groups whose voices that are often not heard), and deeper (more nuanced and reflecting people's experiences).

It should build on existing excellent practice in co-creation by the London Recovery Board, boroughs, the NHS and others noted in this report. The lessons learnt from London's recovery should leave a legacy of more inclusive and participatory governance in London for years to come.

5 Further collaboration should take place between national government, the ONS, local government and public bodies, in order to collect and publish SDGs indicator data at the local level, particularly in areas this report identified as patchy.

Data should be regularly reported, and publicly accessible and comprehensible. It should be better disaggregated by geography (London-wide and by borough), and by demography to enable better analysis of intersecting inequalities. National government should provide additional resources for larger sample sizes in national surveys, enabling more reliable and timely data analysis at local level.



APPENDIX 1

The following mapping exercise establishes the alignment between the London Recovery Board's recovery programme (in terms of its missions, cross-cutting principles, and outputs), and the SDGs (in terms of the 17 Goals and the 'Five Ps').

'FIVE PS' VS RECOVERY

'Five Ps' of the UN 2030 Agenda	Recovery Cross-Cutting Principles	Recovery key outcomes
People	Recognising and addressing structural inequalities , promoting a fairer, more inclusive London and focusing on supporting the most vulnerable. Improving the health and wellbeing of all Londoners.	Narrow social, economic and health inequalities
Prosperity	Innovating and using digital technology and data to meet emerging needs. Ensuring affordability of measures and providing value for money .	Reverse the pattern of rising unemployment and lost economic growth caused by the economic scarring of Covid-19.
Planet	Prioritising sustainability , mitigating climate change and improving the resilience of our city.	Accelerate delivery of a cleaner, greener London.
Peace	Inequalities	Support our communities, including those most impacted by the virus.
Partnerships	Collaborating and involving London's diverse communities.	Support our communities, including those most impacted by the virus.
'Leave no one behind' (overarching SDGs principle)	Inequalities	Narrow social, economic and health inequalities
Future generations (overarching SD principle)	Inequalities	Help young people to flourish with access to support and opportunities.

17 SDGS VS RECOVERY

17 SDGs	Recovery Cross-Cutting Principles	Missions	Recovery outcomes
1: No Poverty	Inequalities	Robust safety net	Narrow inequalities
2: Zero Hunger	Inequalities; health	Robust safety net; Healthy food healthy weight	Narrow inequalities
3: Good Health and Well-being	Health	Mental health and wellbeing; Healthy food healthy weight	Support communities
4: Quality Education	-	New deal for young people; Helping Londoners into good work	Support communities
5: Gender Equality	Inequalities	Helping Londoners into Good Work; Mental Health and Wellbeing	Narrow inequalities
6: Clean Water and Sanitation	Environment	Green New Deal	Cleaner greener London
7: Affordable and Clean Energy	Environment	Green New Deal	Cleaner greener London
8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	Inequalities; communities	Helping Londoners into good work	Employment and Growth
9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Digital	Helping Londoners into good work; Digital access for all	Employment and Growth

17 SDGs	Recovery Cross-Cutting Principles	Missions	Recovery outcomes
10: Reduced Inequality	Inequalities	All	Narrow inequalities
11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Environment	High streets for all; Green New Deal	Cleaner greener London
12: Responsible Consumption and Production	Environment	Green New Deal	Cleaner greener London
13: Climate Action	Environment	Green New Deal	Cleaner greener London
14: Life Below Water	Environment	Green New Deal	Cleaner greener London
15: Life on Land	Environment	Green New Deal	Cleaner greener London
16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions	Inequalities; communities	Robust safety net	Support communities
17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal	Communities	All	Support communities
Leave no one behind	Inequalities	Robust safety net	Narrow inequalities
Future generations	Inequalities	New deal for young people	Narrow inequalities

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E
- 2 UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E
- 3 'BAME' refers to black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. However, whilst this paper makes several references to inequalities affecting BAME people, we recognise that this is not a monolithic group, and that forms of marginalisation are driven by complex intersecting factors including class, gender and beyond.
- 4 LSDC, 2020, [The role of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in London's green and fair recovery](#)
- 5 London Recovery Board, 2020, [recovery programme overview](#)
- 6 UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E
- 7 UN Global Taskforce of local and regional governments, 2016, [Roadmap for localizing the SDGs: implementation and monitoring at subnational level](#)
- 8 HM Government, 2019. [Voluntary National Review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals \(pg16\)](#)
- 9 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/outcomedocuments/agenda21>
- 10 <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/voluntary-local-reviews>
- 11 <https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/>
- 12 https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/Creating-City-Portraits-A-methodological-guide-from-the-Thriving-Cities-Initiative?language=en_US
- 13 <https://www.ukssd.co.uk/build-back-better>
- 14 UNDP, 2016, 'Roadmap for localizing the SDGs: implementation and monitoring at subnational level' https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/commitments/818_11195_commitment_ROADMAP%20LOCALIZING%20SDGS.pdf
- 15 Figure is % of parents who have children in low/very low food security
- 16 Since 2003
- 17 Since 2006/7
- 18 Since 2009-2011
- 19 The overall rate is a rolling 3-year average 2016-2018; female and male rates are for 2018
- 20 Since 2002-2004
- 21 Since 2012
- 22 Year on year comparisons are not suitable for this metric – see 'People' chapter for analysis
- 23 Since 2004
- 24 The level of these crimes recorded by police does not provide reliable trend because of changes in recording practices by police and reporting by victims
- 25 Since 2004
- 26 Since 2003
- 27 Does not include electricity from renewables
- 28 Since 2003
- 29 Since 2004
- 30 Since 2010
- 31 Those people out of work, who are actively looking for work and are available to start immediately
- 32 Since 2013
- 33 Since 2008/09-2010/11
- 34 Since 2011-12
- 35 Since 2012/13
- 36 Since 2006
- 37 Since 2009
- 38 UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E
- 39 UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E
- 40 Institute of Health Equity, 2020, [Health equity in England: The Marmot review 10 years on](#)
- 41 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- 42 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere
- 43 GLA, 2020, Housing in London 2020 https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/housing_in_london_2020.pdf
- 44 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services
- 45 ONS, (2019), [Household Costs Indices, UK: second preliminary estimates, 2005 to 2018](#)
- 46 London Economic Fairness Indicators <https://data.london.gov.uk/economic-fairness/>
- 47 Defined as being in relative income poverty in the current year and at least two of the three preceding years.
- 48 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere
- 49 GLA, 2020, [Socio-economic impact of Covid-19](#)
- 50 Turn2Us, 2020, [Weathering the storm](#)
- 51 GLA, 2019 [Cumulative Impact Assessment of Welfare Reform in London](#)
- 52 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
- 53 GLA, 2020, [Socio-economic impact of Covid-19](#)
- 54 Nazroo, J et al, 2020, [Rapid evidence review: Inequalities in relation to COVID-19 and their effects on London](#)
- 55 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- 56 The Food and Agriculture Organisation defines food insecurity as "a situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life." Varying from mild to severe, food insecurity can range from worrying about where the next meal will come from to going without food entirely.
- 57 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round
- 58 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
- 59 Marmot Review team (2011) [The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty](#)
- 60 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
- 61 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services
- 62 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
- 63 For example, SDG targets 3.1 and 3.2

- 64 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being
- 65 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892085/disparities_review.pdf, section 4;
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- 67 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892085/disparities_review.pdf p 10
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- 69 [Rapid evidence review: Inequalities in relation to COVID-19 and their effects on London](#)
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- 71 Young Minds, 2020, <https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/coronavirus-having-major-impact-on-young-people-with-mental-health-needs-new-survey/>
- 72 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- 73 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable
- 74 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- 75 <https://en.unesco.org/Covid-19/educationresponse/consequences>
- 76 UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E
- 77 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances
- 78 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
- 79 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- 80 GLA, 2020, [Covid-19 economic impact analysis](#)
- 81 GLA, 2018, [The Mayor's Economic Development Strategy for London](#)
- 82 GLA, 2020, [Covid-19 economic impact analysis](#)
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- 84 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- 85 As with violence against women, this rise might be in part due to increased awareness and improved reporting
- 86 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- 87 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 88 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- 89 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
- 90 <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/e84ba8d7-1f32-4025-82fd-23950662f8f6/london-s-consumption-based-greenhouse-gas-emissions-2001-2016> - though "scope 3" emissions per capita rose slightly from 2015-16 (the last date for which data is available).
- 91 Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production
- 92 By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes
- 93 https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_low_carbon_market_snapshot_-2019.pdf
- 94 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization
- 95 Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions
- 96 Living Wage Foundation, [The Sustainable Development Goals and the Living Wage](#)
- 97 Mayor of London, 2018. [London Environment Strategy](#)
- 98 UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E
- 99 UNFCCC, 2015. [The Paris Agreement](#)
- 100 Mayor of London, 2018. [London environment strategy](#) p14
- 101 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all
- 102 [GLA, 2020 Homes for Londoners: Affordable Homes Programme 2021-2026](#) https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/homes_for_londoners_-affordabe_homes_programme_2021-2026_-equality_impact_assessment.pdf
- 103 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
- 104 <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/dramatic-improvements-in-air-quality>
- 105 <https://tfl.gov.uk/travel-information/improvements-and-projects/streetspace-for-london>
- 106 [London resilience forum](#). Minutes 6 February 2020 p4
- 107 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/841320/PHE_heatwave_report_2019.pdf
- 108 By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination
- 109 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
- 110 Schlosberg, David. (2007) *Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements, and Nature*.
- 111 Aehter (2019) [Air Pollution Exposure in London](#)

- 112 Sasidharan, Manu et al (2020) [A vulnerability-based approach to human-mobility reduction for countering COVID-19 transmission in London while considering local air quality](#)
- 113 Google, 2020 – Community mobility reports <https://www.google.com/Covid19/mobility/>
- 114 CPRE London, 2020 - Appreciation of green space grows during lockdown <https://www.cprelondon.org.uk/news/cpre-poll-of-londoners-shows-appreciation-of-green-space-duringlockdown/>
- 115 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands
- 116 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
- 117 Charlotte E Sheridan et al, "Inequalities in Exposure to Nitrogen Dioxide in Parks and Playgrounds in Greater London", *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, September 2019
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- 119 GLA, 2018, Fuel Poverty Action Plan <https://www.london.gov.uk/WWHAT-WE-DO/environment/environment-publications/fuel-poverty-action-plan>
- 120 GLA, 2020, Publication London Plan, <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/new-london-plan/publication-london-plan>
- 121 UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E
- 122 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 123 GLA, 2019 - [A Public Health Approach to Serious Youth Violence: Supporting Evidence](#)
- 124 LSDC, 2019, [Young Londoners' Priorities for a Sustainable City](#)
- 125 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 126 ONS <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingseptember2019>
- 127 Omolade Femi-Ajao, Sarah Kendal & Karina Lovell (2018) A qualitative systematic review of published work on disclosure and help-seeking for domestic violence and abuse among women from ethnic minority populations in the UK, Ethnicity & Health,
- 128 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
- 129 Relationships Project, 2020. [The relationship-centred city; building a better London by building better relationships](#)
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- 144 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
- 145 UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) <https://unece.org/environment-policy/public-participation/aarhus-convention/text>
- 146 <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/devolution/engaging-citizens-devolution/case-civic-and-democratic-engagement>
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- 149 <https://www.camdencca.org/model-my-city-sustainable-development-goals-for-camden/>
- 150 <https://www.thames21.org.uk/thames-river-watch/>
- 151 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
- 152 <https://www.c40.org/divest-invest>
- 153 SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions
- 154 SDG target 11.3: "By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries"
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