



# Activities for children and young people in Southwark

## A strategy for 2017-2020

# Contents

- Foreword.....3
- About this strategy.....4
- Where we are now.....5
- What we want to achieve.....6
- Priority themes.....7
- How to take part.....12
- Key principle.....13
- Contact us.....14

# Foreword

Southwark is an amazing place to grow up, with a vast range of places to go and things to do. The council has promised its children and young people the very best start in life. Despite challenging financial times, we remain committed to helping our children and young people to be happy, healthy, active, safe and prepared for the future.

Like most councils, Southwark has seen huge reductions to its budgets across all areas, but we have protected frontline services wherever possible. Beyond the school gate, the council continues to provide and support many activities for children and young people. From the council's libraries and heritage services, to events and support for arts and drama as well as, in its parks and playgrounds, leisure centres, sports and youths clubs - there is plenty going on.

However, the world is changing, and our services need to change with it. We need to adapt and evolve alongside the young people in Southwark. This is an opportunity to reassess what we provide in our borough and to ask local people what they want to see for children and young people

This is still a great time to be a young person in Southwark. Our borough has embraced its place at the heart of London and is committed to making regeneration work for all our existing communities. We want our young people to make the most of the opportunities on their doorstep and to help us shape the activities on offer, whether from the council or other local organisations. Whether you want to let off steam in the park or learn a new skill, Southwark offers something for everyone, especially those growing and flourishing in our great borough.



Cllr Maisie Anderson,  
Cabinet member for  
Public Health Parks and  
Leisure



Cllr Victoria Mills,  
Cabinet member for  
Children and Schools

# About this strategy

This strategy sets out Southwark Council's approach to providing and commissioning activities for children and young people over the next three years\*.

The strategy focuses on activities outside of schools and colleges that are open to all children and young people in the borough, and reflects their views and ideas.

It was developed in partnership with young people and we have sought the views of as many children and young people and their families and carers as possible.

We've had honest conversations about the financial challenges we face and some of the ideas we have to overcome these challenges. We've also listened to what children and young people have to say about what's important to them.

This strategy marks the start of an ongoing discussion with children and young people and their families about the things that are important to them and the roles they can and do play in their communities

In recognition that the council can't do everything on its own, and that we have to work together with other organisations, we also sought the views of partners, such as schools, voluntary and community organisations on the development of this strategy.

The strategy therefore recognises that the council and our partners need a new approach to how these services are planned for and delivered.

Overall, this strategy reflects a commitment from the council and our partners to deliver high quality, young people-focused services that deliver the best outcomes for children and young people, their families and carers.



# Where we are now

We are a dynamic, youthful and diverse borough in the heart of London. Children and young people make up a significant and growing proportion of our population, with around 70,000 residents or 22 per cent of our total population, aged 19 or under.

Our population of children and young people is ethnically diverse, with 66 per cent of our children and young people from black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds, with minority ethnic groups expected to rise significantly by 2025.

Being a child or young person in Southwark presents many opportunities. Our schools have seen significant improvement over the last five years, with 91 per cent of our schools now being judged by Ofsted as providing good or outstanding educational provision to Southwark pupils.

Children and young people also have access to a range of play, sport and leisure activities. This is provided through the borough's playgrounds, parks and leisure centres as well as services provided by a range of voluntary and community organisations from sports clubs to internationally renowned arts organisations.

As a council we're making significant investments in our services, such as the Castle our new leisure centre at the Elephant and Castle, our partnership with the Old Vic and our investment in libraries. There are also a rich range of

activities provided by Tenants and Residents associations and through the Neighbourhoods and Cleaner Greener Safer (CGS) funds.

However some of our young people still face significant challenges. We were ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in London and 18<sup>th</sup> in England on the Child Poverty Index for 2012, with 13 out of 21 wards in Southwark having 30 to 40 per cent of children living in poverty. We also have significant levels of sexual ill-health, substance misuse and violence as well as challenges with child and adolescent mental health and too many children who are obese and overweight.

Effective universal services for children, young people, their families and carers, can help prevent some of these issues arising in the first instance. Research suggests that play activities, for example, lead to improvements in children's health and well-being, and have a range of cognitive and developmental benefits.

Effective services can also help our young people get the best out of living in London and enable them to feel in control of their lives and achieve their goals. The importance of getting our provision right for children and young people in our growing population is therefore crucial.

# What we want to achieve

Our Fairer Future for All vision is for all our children and young people to have the best start in life. We want them to grow up in a safe, stable and healthy environment where they have the opportunity to develop, make choices and feel in control of their lives and future.

In this strategy we've set out a number of things that we want to achieve for our children and young people.

Our aim is for all the services we provide or commission to help our children and young people to be happy, healthy, active, safe and prepared individuals.

In order to achieve this we have developed a set of commitments which we set out in this strategy, and that will be underpinned by detailed action plans.



## Outcome 1: Happy

### “Children and young people have fun and feel happy”

Many things contribute to the happiness of children and young people; family and friends, stimulating environments, the freedom to play, recreational activities and being listened to and having a say.

Children and parents across Southwark agree that the happiness of our young people should be a top priority, with 93% of survey respondents saying it was important. For younger age groups, good quality playgrounds are an essential, everyday local resource. One in five also love drama and music activities, and all agree that activities should be inclusive, multicultural and accessible to all.

#### Our commitments

We will

- ensure a top quality children's playground in every local area
- ensure young people have access to free or low cost participatory cultural activities and events delivered by the council and its partners
- with cultural partners, commission new and up-and-coming artists, performers and filmmakers to create, innovative and exciting projects for young people to participate in
- ensure our services are accessible, inclusive and positive environments where young people feel welcome and enjoy themselves
- ensure that children and young people have a voice and they can influence decisions



## Outcome 2: Healthy

### “Children and young people live healthy lives”

Being both physically and mentally healthy, and being able to take healthy life choices are key elements in living a positive fulfilled life.

Children and young people of all ages told us that sports and fitness is a key priority and one that they love taking part in, especially for the over 12's

#### Our commitments

We will

- support physical activity by removing cost as a barrier to being active through free swim and gym
- support the drive to reduce obesity by developing healthy eating and living programmes
- promote healthy activities such as dance and cycling
- work with our clubs and partners to increase opportunities for young people to access physical activities and develop skills to live healthy fulfilled lives
- work with partners to deliver and promote a range of cultural events and activities that raise personal aspirations and ambitions, support the development of self-confidence and promote good mental health and wellbeing
- ensure that children and young people have access to a wide range of information and resources to support their personal development

## Outcome 3: Active

### “Children and young people participate and are active citizens”

Being able to take part in what’s going on local communities, schools and families can help to create a sense of belonging and is essential for growth and personal development.

Children and young people say that having a voice and being able to share their opinions is important, both to them and to others around them. Young people want to be able to participate and older young people consider debate and democracy an important part of their lives.

#### Our commitments

We will

- support young people to be active participants within their communities, creating opportunities to influence local decision making through participation in Youth Councils
- bring young people together by providing a range of creative activities and events in libraries, youth centres and playgrounds to engage children and young people
- work with partners to provide free or low cost, inclusive participatory cultural activity that taps potential and promotes social cohesion
- work with partners to provide access to music, theatre and arts activities
- ensure that young people have opportunities to influence the range of activities made available to them



## Outcome 4: Safe

### “Children and young people feel safe and secure”

Feeling safe allows children and young people to develop, to fulfil their potential, participate, be active and happy. Providing opportunities to explore, do new things and take risks also helps children and young people grow and gain independence. Places, spaces and activities need to be safe, welcoming and non-threatening.

Alongside happiness, feeling safe is the most important thing to children, young people and their families in Southwark. The need to feel safe is a particular concern for young people in secondary school as is being able to travel safely to and from activities.

#### Our commitments

We will

- deliver a safer cycling network
- deliver 'play streets', where some streets are closed to traffic during school holidays and weekends
- continue to support the Safe Havens initiative extending provision where possible
- work with partners to provide positive activities that can divert from anti-social behaviour
- create and maintain safe, secure and welcoming environments for our children and young people
- ensure that our partners have safe, secure and welcoming environments for our children and young people
- ensure that our staff and those of our partners are fully trained in safeguarding
- work with partners to address barriers to participation caused by insecurity about travelling to venues
- promote independent travel training with our partners

## Outcome 5: Prepared

### “Children and young people have the life skills to succeed”

Developing the life skills to become independent, confident, well informed and ready for work is key to leading successful, productive lives and ensuring that young people reach their full potential.

Young adults over the age of 16 believe that being prepared for life is the top priority and they identified that activities that support careers advice and information, work experience and training are very important.

#### Our commitments

We will

- provide all secondary school pupils with a library card, enabling them to access all library services to support their learning and development
- provide homework clubs, ICT support and places for study
- with our partners, promote volunteering opportunities in libraries, youth clubs, sports centres and cultural venues
- work with partners to provide coaching opportunities in sports centres and clubs
- with partners offer a range of training and support in developing cultural events and activities and growing creativity
- with partners create cultural programmes that stimulate creativity, grow confidence, experience team work and celebrate individuality create informal learning opportunities for young people to enable them to improve their understanding of the law, and citizenship,(i.e. improving social skills, relationships, democracy and family)
- support the development of life skills through targeted work focusing on independent living and, job preparation
- support our young people to make the best of the learning, training and work opportunities available from the economic growth and regeneration in the borough

## How to take part:

## You also told us:

The main reasons for you not being able to participate in activities are;

- cost
- distance to travel
- lack of information about what is going on and where
- timing of activities

### Our commitments

We will

- make sure that there is a broad range of free and low cost activities run by the council and its partners
- review the timings of activities to ensure that they are at the best times and days so everyone can take part
- make sure that partners provide a broad range of activities designed to be inclusive to all
- make sure that our grants to partners to help deliver activities for children and young people, align with the new commissioning strategy “Common Purpose Common Cause”.
- make sure that up-to-date accurate information is available using print electronic and social media
- fund targeted activities for young people most in need of support
- review provision of activities across the borough working with partners to ensure that distance is not a barrier to participation

# Our approach to delivering the strategy

In delivering on these commitments we'll be guided by the following principles

Work as one council so that we make the best use of our resources.

Recognise when the community and voluntary sector have been more effective at working with young people and support them to provide and manage services rather than always doing things ourselves.

Different communities and areas of Southwark sometimes have better services, where others may have strong more pressing need. Council and partner provision should reflect this.

Build the capacity of our voluntary and community sector and maximise opportunities for, and support our volunteers”

Children, young people and their families should always have a say in designing and developing services.

We will deliver the strategy through an action plan developed with our partners building on the excellent work we already with them.

# Contact us

We'd love to hear what you think about this strategy and if you've got questions, we are here to answer them.

There are lots of different ways to get in touch with us and share your views.



@lbs\_southwark



/southwarkcouncil

Or if you prefer, email [Fiona.dean@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:Fiona.dean@southwark.gov.uk) call 020 7525 1577