

# LONDON

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Green Paper on Demographic Change  
DG EMPL/E/1  
J-27 01/122  
European Commission  
B-1049 Brussels

DG EMPL / E.1 "ARRIVEE"
05-08-2005 A18250
Attrib.:

Dear Sirs

London is the most ethnically diverse city in Europe. 300 languages are spoken, over 14 faiths are practiced and 42 communities of over 10,000 people born in countries outside Britain live in the capital. 7.3 million people live in London. It is predominantly a young and growing city but is also home to nearly 1.2 million people aged over 60.

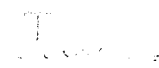
The Mayor of London has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, health of Londoners and sustainable development through his policies for the city. The Mayor welcomes the Commission's Green Paper "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations" which raises a number of issues that closely link to his responsibilities for London.

I hope you will find our response useful for the further development of EU initiatives aimed at tackling the consequences of demographic change. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact London's European Office.

Yours sincerely



**Anne Harradine**  
Head of Office  
London's European Office



### Executive summary

London is the most ethnically diverse city in Europe. 300 languages are spoken, over 14 faiths are practiced and 42 communities of over 10,000 people born in countries outside Britain live in the capital. There are 7.3 million people living in London, which is predominantly a young and growing city but also home to nearly 1.2 million people aged over 60. This paper aims to draw the attention to the particular demographic situation in London and highlight examples of good practice in the areas related to younger and older people as well on employment issues. The main points are:

- While much of the developed world contemplates demographic decline undermining economic growth prospects, **immigration to London** has made it possible for the London Plan to project **population and employment growth**;
- To counter future labour market shortages in view of Europe's ageing population, the EU must step up efforts to facilitate the **access to EU labour markets for immigrants** from non-EU countries. This requires securing broad equality of employment rights between third country nationals and EU citizens; securing mobility of migrant workers; adapting the principle of community preferences to assure equal opportunities and providing third country nationals with the possibility of applying for permanent residence;
- The **business case for improving family-friendly and flexible working hours** needs to be clearly demonstrated to employers. It is necessary to provide more good practice examples which demonstrate the savings which can be gained through the retention of skilled and experienced workers and reduced recruitment and training costs.
- Evidence shows that projects that support the **solidarity between generations** lead to higher levels of awareness about the valuable contributions both younger and older groups make to society. This may involve younger people visiting residential care homes, housebound older people and sheltered housing schemes. It may also involve older people working with refugee families or volunteering their services at young people's hostels or drug programmes;
- EU policies aiming to tackle the consequences of demographic change must include considerations about **the diversity of the older population** to prevent inequalities in the access to services among older people and ensure services that are culturally appropriate;
- **Barriers to employment** of older people must be addressed across all initiatives related to reducing unemployment and increasing diversity in the work place;
- The role of direct payments made in lieu of service provisions should be considered as a means to increasing the flexibility in the provision of social services by giving consumers greater **choice and control over their lives**.
- Implications for the care sector of the labour market should be considered – both in terms of **planning for employment and training** to meet an increased demand and in terms of whether it is **desirable to constrain costs by the low status** of this type of work.
- It is important that **e-enabled services are designed around the needs and aspirations of consumers** of those services, rather than based on the capabilities of the technology. This means older people must be involved at the design and planning stage of any major re-structuring of local service provision.

**European Commission Green Paper "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations"****Response by Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, and the Greater London Authority**

August 2005

**1. Introduction**

The demographic situation in London is in many ways different from the rest of Europe. London has relatively low proportions of older people and a birth rate, which is below replacement level, but not as dramatically low as in other parts of Europe. International immigration levels are high balancing relatively high domestic emigration. This results in an ongoing rejuvenation of London's population, with large numbers of people in the fertile age groups and low death rates.

Despite this particular situation in London, the Commission's Green paper "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations" raises a number of issues which clearly are closely linked to the Mayor's statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, health of Londoners and sustainable development across his policies for the city. In particular, this concerns the Mayor's Childcare Strategy, his Draft Older People Strategy and activities related to the integration of London's immigrant population.

The Mayor therefore welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Green Paper to share experiences of good practice from London on the relevant issues. This paper firstly gives an overview of the demographic situation in London. Secondly, it addresses a number of the questions raised in the Green Paper and draws attention to good practice from London. Finally, a conclusion sums up a set of recommendations to the European Commission.

**2. London: young, growing and diverse**

London is one of the largest cities in the developed world in terms of its total land area of 1,584 square kilometres, and is by a considerable margin the most populous city in the EU, with 7.39 million residents at mid-2003. It is also one of the EU's most densely settled areas at 4,664 persons per square kilometre.

The crude birth rate in London, at 14.9 live births per thousand residents, is high compared with those for most cities on mainland Europe, while London's crude death rate, at 7.9 deaths per thousand residents, is amongst the lowest. London's birth rate is consistent with other British cities but its death rate is significantly lower than that seen elsewhere. The young age structure of London is partly responsible for the relative levels of these crude statistics and the resulting high natural growth of London's population.

The main reason for London's high crude birth rate is the high proportion of women of childbearing age in the population compared with the population of the United Kingdom as a whole. Based on births occurring in 2003, the total fertility rate (TFR)<sup>1</sup> in London was 1.71 children per woman.

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<sup>1</sup> The total fertility rate (TFR) is a hypothetical measure of the number of children that an average woman would have during her lifetime if the local age-specific fertility rates were to remain unaltered.

London is different from the rest of the UK with regard to its age structure, the population tending to be younger on average than in the country as a whole. The mean age of Londoners is 36.5 compared to 38.9 for the UK population. In 2003 London had proportionally more children at each age under 7 and more adults aged between 22 and 43 than the United Kingdom, but proportionately fewer people at all other ages, particularly aged 12 to 15 and 49+. In 2003, 44 per cent of London's residents were in the critical age band 20 to 44 compared with only 35 per cent of the UK population.

As the young population ages and enters different stages in the life cycle – especially raising a family – there is a need for different kinds of accommodation which is generally better catered for either in outer London or beyond London's boundary. This demand for living space creates high levels of net outflow of people in their thirties and early forties. London also experiences annual net outflows of people approaching and over retirement age, leading to the relatively low numbers of over 65s in the population.

- In recent years, a high level of natural change has underpinned population growth in the capital. The rate of natural change in London – an increase of 7.0 persons for every thousand residents in 2003 – is therefore extremely high compared with that for the United Kingdom as a whole (1.4 persons per thousand). The result is that in 2003 the natural population increase in London accounted for 63 per cent of the total natural increase of the United Kingdom, in contrast to London being home to only 12.4 per cent of the total population.

Building on large-scale immigration to London in earlier decades, the inflow of recent years means that by 2002/03<sup>2</sup>

- Londoners born outside the UK totalled two million people or 29% of the city's resident population
- they made up 35% of its working-age population
- London had achieved a degree of ethnic and cultural diversity not matched by any other city in the world – not merely a high proportion of non-white citizens, but a huge variety of cultures, races and nationalities

In line with Government projections for UK population growth, the Mayor's statutory London Plan assumes net international immigration to the city will stay around the recent level of 100,000 per annum and projects population growth of 11% or about 800,000 people between 2001 and 2016. The GLA moreover projects employment in London to increase by 541,000 over this period.

### **3. Promoting a flexible work-life balance and access to childcare**

Needless to say, policies and services should enable women who choose to have children to be able to work and to benefit from education and training while bringing up their children in financial security.

Childcare in London is scarce and exceptionally costly. If London is to maintain its position as a world class city it needs to counteract the negative effects of this. Provision regarded as a basic right elsewhere in Europe can be seen as a major disincentive for business in London.

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<sup>2</sup> The following demographic data from: GLA, *Country of Birth and Labour Market Outcomes in London* (2005) at <http://www.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/factsandfigures/DMAG-Briefing-2005-1.pdf>.

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The Mayor of London is therefore committed to improving access to childcare. In 2003 he launched "The London Childcare Strategy – Towards affordable good quality childcare for all", which concerns childcare and the benefits system as an aid to London's economic growth and to enable families to escape poverty and share in London's success now and in the future.

In addition, the Mayor is also keen to promote a flexible work-life balance across London to facilitate access to the labour market for parents, in particular mothers, to increase their economic opportunities and to reduce child poverty. Work carried out by the GLA shows the extra challenges faced by parents and carers in London in balancing caring and working commitments. Women with children in London are less likely to be in employment than those in the rest of the UK. Currently in the UK, parents of children aged under six have the right to request flexible working hours. The UK Government has been consulting on extending this right, and the Mayor believes the right should be extended to parents of children aged under 17. The extension of flexible working hours would enable more parents to arrange their hours of work to fit in with the needs of their families.

The London Development Agency, which is the Mayor of London's economic and regeneration agency, is currently in the process of developing a good practice guide for small and medium-sized enterprises in supporting flexible working hours. The guide will be published later this year. London's European Office would be pleased to keep the European Commission informed about the results.

The business case for improving family-friendly and flexible working hours needs to be clearly demonstrated to employers. It is necessary to provide more good practice examples which demonstrate the savings which can be gained through the retention of skilled and experienced workers and reduced recruitment and training costs.

The Mayor wants to see employers encouraging parents into work by providing leave and flexible hours that fit in with the needs of their children. The aim would be to encourage employers to adopt family-friendly policies which would benefit all existing and potential employees who have families and other caring responsibilities and improve recruitment and retention.

Also, there is a fundamental need to change attitudes and counter-act the long hours culture. There is often a stigma about requesting time off, or even going home at the normal time – especially for men. It is often seen as a weakness to spend time on caring responsibilities and as detrimental to people's careers. The Mayor favours introducing a right for mothers to transfer a proportion of their statutory maternity leave and pay to fathers. However, a low rate of paternity pay will not be much of an incentive for many fathers to take time off due of the need to earn their full wages or salary, because of the fixed and often high costs of mortgages, rents and other bills, plus the added expense of having a child.

The Mayor is also keen to encourage the growth of co-operative and other social enterprise models of childcare, to help supply more daycare provision which is affordable by parents and to promote best practice in pay and terms and conditions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Social Enterprise London (<http://www.sel.org.uk/home.aspx>) is working with five nursery projects to establish new multi-stakeholder childcare social enterprises; it has developed and launched a legal structure for social enterprises in the childcare sector and is providing a support framework and cluster website for childcare providers interested in the social enterprise model.

#### 4. The significant contribution of immigration<sup>4</sup>

##### 4.1 Demographic gain for London and driver of economic development

As indicated above, for London, as for a number of other great cities in developed countries, net domestic migration is heavily negative as the influx of UK workers under age 30 is consistently exceeded by outward movement to other parts of the UK by older residents – typically with high levels of skills and qualifications – and their children. The result would be steady erosion of the city's population and its skills base, with potentially damaging consequences for its economy, were it not for:

- the continued arrival of international migrants who are concentrated in the young working age range (16-44 years old);
- the same process, acting over time through the reproduction of the city's population.

The arrival of migrants seeking work or self-employment has become a key driver of London's economic development. Its dynamic effect starts with the simple fact of expansion in the city's labour supply, but operates at many other levels too, for example:

- Commercial strength: London businesses point to 'availability of appropriately skilled labour' as their most important constraint.<sup>5</sup> Workers born outside the UK, at all 'skill' levels, are critically important in easing this constraint. In none of London's major industrial sectors, in 2002/03, did migrants contribute less than 21% of the workforce. They also make up a high proportion of London's entrepreneurs, especially in the small and medium business sector.
- Public services and quality of life: Londoners born outside the UK, from surgeons to street cleaners, play a central part in maintaining public services which are essential to life in a modern city. They make up more than one-third of all London's health and social care workers.

The impetus given to London's economy by international migration means in turn that the wider UK economy will gain significantly from the arrival of migrants in the city. With regional Gross Value Added (GVA) of £174.2 billion for 2003 (around €250 bn), London generates about 18% of total UK GVA – well above its share in population, because of its high productivity. The city's annual net contribution to national tax revenues was estimated to be between £2 and 9 billion (€3-13 billion) for 2002/03.<sup>6</sup>

##### 4.2 The social dimension

The arrival of migrants in a city, and the way it responds to them, are key factors in its social development.<sup>7</sup> The Mayor believes that London can realise the full economic benefit of migration only if policies that guide it are shaped by social goals, alongside economic criteria. Migration policy must aim at social inclusion, allowing new migrant Londoners to achieve their full potential and share in the city's prosperity. This implies that it will be geared to: securing equality of opportunity and equality of rights; ending discrimination; and promoting respect for diversity.

Major regional partners in the field of employment and training share the Mayor's aim of putting social inclusion at the heart of this work. The London Development Agency at his request joined a range of other leading agencies in the field, from statutory, private and voluntary sectors, to set up

<sup>4</sup> The comments in this section have been presented in full length in the Mayor's response to the Commission's Green Paper consultation on an EU approach to managing economic migration in April 2005. The full response can be consulted at: [http://www.london.gov.uk/london\\_house/policy\\_agenda.jsp](http://www.london.gov.uk/london_house/policy_agenda.jsp)

<sup>5</sup> London Annual Business Survey (LABS) 2004, cited GLA *London's Economy Today*, Issue 31

<sup>6</sup> Estimates supplied by GLA Economics. Conversion at rates for 31/12/03 and 31/03/03 respectively.

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that London's migrant population is deeply polarised, including both higher-skilled groups from richer countries of origin and lower-skilled groups from poorer countries of origin. The comments below relate primarily to the latter group.

the London Skills Commission which oversees a Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action for the city. Its vision, underlying the regional framework, is defined by the Commission in these terms: *"For London to achieve a healthy and dynamic labour market accessible to all London's residents and delivering benefits to employees, employers and the wider community"*.<sup>8</sup>

#### **4.3 Allowing for migrants' integration into the EU labour market**

In order to combat social exclusion and sustain labour market demands, it is vital for London to, as far as possible, lift social and institutional barriers that block the employment choices of third country migrant workers. This means creating conditions in which they can integrate themselves into regional, national and EU labour markets on equal terms with EU citizens. London and the EU generally can only gain from a policy framework that encourages Member States and their employers to compete for labour from a common European pool where third country and EU nationals offer their skills alongside one another. This requires action at four levels:

1. Effective migration policy will have to secure broad equality of employment rights between migrant workers and EU nationals. Some restrictions on access to public resources - in particular social security - will presumably continue to apply to migrants in initial stages of their residence within the EU. But they must be able to enter the workplace protected by rights equivalent to those of EU citizens, which must include the right to change employers.
2. EU migration policy must secure mobility for migrant workers once they are legally employed in the EU. Migrant workers' mobility inside the Member State of residence should not in general be restricted, whether by employer, sector or region. Also, EU or national permits to work should be held by the employee.
3. The principle of Community Preference, defining who has first chance of applying for jobs in the EU, should be adapted to ensure equal access to these opportunities for migrant workers generally. Without this equality, they cannot really take advantage of the right to mobility within the Union.
4. If the EU labour market is to work inclusively and efficiently, those migrants who want to invest in a future as an EU resident - whether through training, buying property or family reunification - must be enabled to do so. Third country nationals must therefore be able to apply for permanent residence in the Member State where they work, after a given period of employment in the EU.

#### **5. The Mayor's draft Strategy for Older People in London**

Although London's population is generally perceived as young, almost 16 per cent of the population, nearly 1.2 million people, are aged 60 or over. There is almost a quarter of a million people in London who are aged 80 and over.

To support older people in London now and in the future, the Mayor is developing a strategy based on extensive consultation with Londoners, local authorities, service providers and the community and voluntary sector. The Mayor has identified four key priorities that he wants to address to better support the needs of older people in London:

- Challenging perceptions and promoting the contribution of older people to London
- Pensions and income
- Supporting discretionary services
- Promoting good quality social care

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<sup>8</sup> London Skills Commission *Update on the Implementation of the Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action: the Regional Skills Picture* October 2004.

The Mayor's vision is for London's older people to have choice and control over their lives, to live free from poverty and with dignity, to have their contribution to all spheres of life in London valued and to challenge negative perceptions of older people. London's older people must be able to access a wide range of affordable and quality services including high quality social care and discretionary services for their independence and well-being without the worry of their financial security.

The strategy will provide a platform for the Mayor to exercise his powers and to influence national and local policy makers and other sectors to ensure that older people in London are adequately supported now and in the future. The comments included in the following sections draw upon the material from the draft Older People Strategy. The final strategy is expected to be published in Spring 2006.

## **6. Improving mutual understanding and respect among generations**

Evidence shows that projects that support the social interaction between older people and younger generations lead to higher levels of awareness about the valuable contributions both groups make to society. The Mayor recognises the importance of intergenerational relationships to help challenge negative perceptions of older people.

By bringing together older and younger generations to share experiences and skills, younger generations can start to form more positive images around ageing and develop a greater appreciation of the diversity, experience and creativity of older people. Older people also learn from younger people and this helps them to better understand the issues that specifically affect young people and to take away some of the 'fear' of younger people. It can thus help to make communities more cohesive.

Intergenerational projects can also be a way of tackling issues of social exclusion by connecting people of all age groups through shared activities like arts, sports, cooking, oral histories and the internet. This may involve younger people visiting residential care homes, housebound older people and sheltered housing schemes to help support more socially excluded older people to build their skills and confidence. It may also involve older people working with refugee families or volunteering their services at young people's hostels or drug programmes to share life experiences.

In the future, the Mayor, working with the Association of London Government and the voluntary sector, wants to help promote intergenerational initiatives that encourage greater involvement of older people in the community.

## **7. Diversity of older people**

An issue that is not addressed in the Green paper is ethnicity. London is one of the most diverse and cosmopolitan world cities. Over 300 languages are spoken in London and a third of the population is of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) origin. This diversity is one of London's greatest strengths, accounting for its world city status. Because of the younger age structure of London's BAME population, this diversity is not yet fully reflected among London's older people, but this will change significantly in the coming years. Indicative population projections suggest the number of BAME Londoners aged 65 or over will have increased by 50 per cent between 2001 and 2016. The proportion of the total 65 or over population who are from Black Asian and minority ethnic groups will increase from 12 per cent to 19 per cent.



There is little data on BAME elders and social inequality, but what evidence there is suggests significant differences between and within all groups in access to material and social resources. BAME elders also experience discrimination in terms of both age and race in health, community and social services, income and housing.

Reports suggest that people from minority ethnic communities are more likely than others to live in deprived areas and in unpopular and overcrowded housing. They are more likely to be poor and to be unemployed, regardless of their age and qualifications. Discrimination in London's labour market is a recurrent problem for many BAME groups, particularly younger black men. This affects the kind of retirement that they can look forward to.

This inequality may have far reaching implications for the provision of services for older people in London. While they share many of the same needs as all Londoners, many BAME groups have distinct needs. There is a need to promote the development of services which are ethnically and culturally appropriate.

- These issues may be specific for London for now. But over time, big cities in the rest of the EU, who are experiencing an increasingly more diverse population, are likely to be confronted with similar challenges.

## **8. Older people and the labour market - tackling barriers**

Many people of retirement age continue to work in London. In England and Wales, 13 per cent of people aged from State Pension Age to 74 are economically active. This figure rises to 15 per cent in Outer London and to 16 per cent in Inner London, with similar percentages employed full-time and part-time.

But people aged 50 to State Pension Age in Inner London have low rates of employment

by national standards. This low rate of employment reflects high levels of permanent sickness and impairment among this age group. Evidence suggests that a considerable number of people aged 50 and over currently not working might welcome paid employment. The skills and experience of these people could make a substantial contribution to London's workforce. However at present many people over the age of 50 find that they are the first to be made redundant, miss out on opportunities for training and find it difficult to find a new job.

There are considerable benefits to London's businesses and economy from employing more older workers, including: high retention rates, lower absenteeism, reliability, commitment and dedication, and a lifetime of experience in the workplace.

The Mayor recognises that if London is to make the most of the opportunity that this pool of underemployed labour represents then the barriers to employment must be addressed.

As the Mayor of London's economic development and regeneration agency and responsible for driving London's sustainable economic growth, the London Development Agency are leading on a number of initiatives to promote diversity and equality in the workplace:

- *Diversity Works for London*: to help companies develop and harness the benefits of a diverse workforce. The campaign will work with businesses to ensure that all levels of their workforce reflect the diversity of London's population, including older people.
- *OOPs 50plus*: a pan London project to support up to 300 people aged 50 or over who are not in employment. Investment in the 50+ age group will be needed to develop their

transferable skills to meet the future ICT needs of small and medium enterprises. The project is co-financed through the European Social Fund.

- *Pathways to Jobs*: uses a consortium of voluntary and community organisations working within an equalities context to provide job opportunities and employment with the public sector. One project delivers specialist brokerage for over 50s and childcare training. Specialist brokerage provision offers targeted support to overcome particular barriers to employment.

## **9. A new place for elderly people**

### **9.1 Engaging in the volunteer sector**

The UK Institute for Volunteering Research<sup>9</sup> recently conducted a study on the role of volunteering and associated issues and barriers, for supporting older people's transition from work to retirement.<sup>10</sup> It was found that although many people see volunteering as an important avenue to potentially 'fill a void' which is often felt by people when they have retired, volunteering rates for people in their 50s and 60s were much lower than at earlier ages. This is even more significant for older volunteers from BAME communities, who are under-represented. It suggested that organisations need to broaden their recruitment strategies and work more effectively with community leaders and BAME groups to increase the diversity of volunteers. It is also suggested that more flexible retirement strategies are needed to encourage and promote volunteering for older people.

The Mayor views the London 2012 Olympic Games as an opportunity to put in place an inclusive volunteering programme, drawing on the successes of the Sydney 2000 volunteer programme, which values the experience, skills and contribution of older people.

### **9.2 New approaches to health and care**

The Mayor has identified the promotion of good quality social care as a key priority to address the needs of older people in London. The Mayor believes that services supporting older people should be inclusive and designed to empower people to have control over their lives and environments on an equal basis with their peers. The Mayor supports the UK Government's vision that individuals should be in control to make choices about the services they use.

The King's Fund Inquiry 'The Business of Caring'<sup>11</sup> which examined the state of care services for older people in London, concluded that the capital's care system is under-funded, under-staffed, and offers little in the way of choice and quality, and, that unless urgent action is taken, even more older people will suffer from poor care in 20 year's' time.

The Mayor recognises the findings of the King's Fund Inquiry, and also welcomes the UK Government's recent Green Paper on Adult Social Care as contributing to the debate on the future of social care in England. In particular, the Mayor welcomes proposals to introduce individual care budgets which allow people to purchase the care they want and manage their own care budget.

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<sup>9</sup> The Institute for Volunteering Research aims to develop knowledge and understanding of volunteering in a way that is relevant to practitioners and policy makers. This site provides an overview of the work of the Institute as well as detailed summaries of research that it has undertaken ([www.ivr.org.uk](http://www.ivr.org.uk)).

<sup>10</sup> Volunteering in retirement, " Joseph Rowntree Foundation Findings, March 2005  
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/O115.asp>

<sup>11</sup> 'The Business of Caring: King's Fund Inquiry into care services for older people in London', published 27<sup>th</sup> June 2005.

This follows the successful example of direct payments, i.e. cash payments made in lieu of social care provision, with the specific intention of providing more choice and control.

The changing nature of ageing is leading the agenda on the provision of services to older people beyond the realms of the traditional approach through health and social care. In the future, it will be necessary to increase the accessibility of cultural and leisure facilities to older people and promote the types of low level services that can do much to allow older people to retain their independence and to be active and productive members of their communities. Increasingly services have been concentrated on those most in need because of constraints on financial resources.

Population ageing will lead to increased demand for workers engaged in delivering home based and residential social care and the management of long term medical conditions. The economic and social implications of a major expansion of this sector of the labour market will need to be taken into account in the development of employment and training policy. Much of the employment in these sectors in the UK and other countries is marked by low rates of pay, poor terms and conditions and casualisation of the workforce. This applies particularly to those activities which are usually categorised as

‘low –skilled’, a judgment based more on the levels of formal qualifications which these jobs tend to require than on the content of the work involved. One implication of demographic change is a tightening of labour markets, and it is open to question whether the costs of providing care in the face of demographic change can continue to be constrained by the low status of this type of work, whether or not this is regarded as desirable.

### **10. e-Government and access to new technologies**

In 2003 the Mayor released a report on the levels of home internet access by Londoners which showed that 45 per cent of households in London had internet access at home.<sup>12</sup> This went up to 54 per cent of all those aged between 51 and 60 but then sharply declined to only nine per cent for those aged 81 to 90. Older BAME people were least likely to have access at home.

Some of the major barriers and reasons identified by older people for not having access to the internet include lack of skills and confidence; the internet being unnecessarily complex; the lack of affordability of hardware, software and internet connection; or they see it as having no relevance or they are not interested.

New technologies provide people with new and alternative forms of communication, access to information and support networks. They also enable the provision of a wider range of personalised services that support the well-being and independence of older people. They allow individuals to remain in their own homes and within their own communities rather than being admitted to hospital or residential care. New technologies also help to alleviate the pressure on carers and help to strengthen their relationships with older people. A lot more work needs to occur with the development and production of electronic assistive technologies including their impact on current and future social care service delivery.

Londoners have free public access to the internet in public libraries and many other community access centres, such as the UK Online centres. There is also some suggestion that such places could begin to use their facilities to provide citizens with access to e-government services and better support older people to engage in our democratic institutions.

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<sup>12</sup> Londoners on-line: An analysis of levels of home internet access from the London Household Survey 2002, Mayor of London, November 2003

It is important that e-enabled services are designed around the needs and aspirations of consumers of those services, rather than based on the capabilities of the technology. This means older people must be involved at the design and planning stage of any major re-structuring of local service provision.

The Mayor is committed to ensuring that our growing digital communications society is enjoyed by all Londoners and that it does not lead to a greater digital divide, particularly amongst more socially excluded people living in London.

## 11. The role of the European Union

Various EU targets and objectives for the employment of older people and ethnic minorities, reducing child and family poverty and developing childcare structures in the Member States have been established over the past years. Focus now should not be on setting more targets but on implementing policies that allows Member States to meet the existing targets. This includes allocation of adequate resources to regional and local authorities that are directly involved in delivering policies on the ground.

Clearly, many of the issues raised in the Green Paper related to younger and older people are within national and not EU competences. Consequently, the role of the EU would be to facilitate exchange of information between stakeholders on relevant issues and to provide information and overview at European level. The annual reports on the social situation in the European Union already provide useful information on the demographic situation. Nevertheless, separate annual reports on demographic developments as suggested in the Green paper would clearly strengthen the attention devoted to the demographic aspect and would as such be welcome.

## 12. Concluding remarks

This submission has aimed at drawing the European Commission's attention to the particular demographic situation in London and at highlighting some examples of good practice. In summary the main points are:

- While much of the developed world contemplates demographic decline undermining economic growth prospects, **immigration to London** has made it possible for the London Plan to project **population and employment growth**;
- To counter future labour market shortages in view of Europe's ageing population, the EU must step up efforts to facilitate the **access to EU labour markets for immigrants** from non-EU countries. This requires securing broad equality of employment rights between third country nationals and EU citizens; securing mobility of migrant workers; adapting the principle of community preferences to assure equal opportunities and providing third country nationals with the possibility of applying for permanent residence;
- The **business case for improving family-friendly and flexible working hours** needs to be clearly demonstrated to employers. It is necessary to provide more good practice examples which demonstrate the savings which can be gained through the retention of skilled and experienced workers and reduced recruitment and training costs.
- Evidence shows that projects that support the **solidarity between generations** lead to higher levels of awareness about the valuable contributions both younger and older groups make to society. This may involve younger people visiting residential care homes, housebound older people and sheltered housing schemes. It may also involve older people working with refugee families or volunteering their services at young people's hostels or drug programmes;

- EU policies aiming to tackle the consequences of demographic change must include considerations about **the diversity of the older population** to prevent inequalities in the access to services among older people and ensure services that are culturally appropriate;
- **Barriers to employment** of older people must be addressed across all initiatives related to reducing unemployment and increasing diversity in the work place;
- The role of direct payments made in lieu of service provisions should be considered as a means to increasing the flexibility in the provision of social services by giving consumers greater **choice and control over their lives**.
- Implications for the care sector of the labour market should be considered – both in terms of **planning for employment and training** to meet an increased demand and in terms of whether it is **desirable to constrain costs by the low status** of this type of work.
- It is important that **e-enabled services are designed around the needs and aspirations of consumers** of those services, rather than based on the capabilities of the technology. This means older people must be involved at the design and planning stage of any major re-structuring of local service provision.

### 13. More information

For more information about the GLA and the Mayor of London please consult: [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)

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