

## LONDON HE: LEVELLING UP WITHIN LONDON

Having been recently lauded as [major engines of social mobility](#), London's universities are committed to levelling up London, and those who call the city home. Having received praise from the Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, for London universities leading role in [widening participation in higher education](#) to the most disadvantaged in society, this document outlines how London's local representatives can work with its thriving Higher education sector for the benefit of all.

### INTRODUCTION

While those elected in the London local elections on 05 May 2022 may face significant challenges tackling inequalities in their local boroughs, they should know that they have major assets on their doorstep on which they can rely in the form of London's universities and higher education colleges.

Indeed, London is home to the highest concentration of higher education institutions of any major city in the world – from large, multi-faculty institutions through to small, specialist conservatoires and research institutes.

London's higher education institutions, collectively represented by London Higher, are also civic at heart, meaning that they are already busy working "beyond the campus" to boost living standards and tackle societal problems across all 32 local boroughs and the City of London.

[The London Higher Civic Map](#), launched in December 2021, clearly demonstrates the incredible civic power of London's higher education institutions and celebrates their role as agents of levelling up in six key ways: enhancing community cohesion; boosting education and skills; supporting business and enterprise; improving health and wellbeing; unleashing creativity; and "greening" London.

But what is shown on our map is just the start. London's universities and colleges are well-established drivers of opportunity and success. They have recently been lauded as [major engines of social mobility](#) for the individuals and the communities they serve. The Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, has also [recently praised the progress that London's universities have made in widening access](#) to higher education to the most disadvantaged in society.

With their clear commitment to transforming the lives of those around them, London's higher education institutions play a vital role in shaping the recovery and prosperity of London's boroughs. Our members stand ready to work with London's new councillors and borough mayors on the capital's ongoing recovery effort.

At London Higher, we are keen to show London's new policymakers the power of partnership with London's higher education sector and have created this position paper to show the various ways in which the capital's universities and colleges can help them to transform London localities and make a positive difference to the lives of local Londoners.

### EDUCATION AND SKILLS

As the Mayor of London's [Skills Roadmap for London](#) outlines, supporting Londoners to retrain, upskill and enhance their employability is key to London's recovery and creating the new, secure and well-paid jobs that Londoners need and deserve.

The capital's higher education institutions are key to delivering this as important drivers of innovation and inclusive, economic growth. They will also be at the forefront of delivering the skills and new technologies that will be essential to the capital's sustainable and green recovery.

Local government plays a key role in London's local education and skills success story. To ensure local Londoners get the skills and opportunities our city needs, we ask London's new councillors and borough mayors:

- to work with London's higher education providers (including through the new London Higher representation on the ['Skills for Londoners' Board](#)), alongside London Councils, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and other strategic partners, to better align local skills programme provision with employers' needs and help Londoners to access opportunities to find and progress in work; and
- to support and champion the opportunities afforded by London's higher education institutions, particularly via the vital research and outreach conducted by our [AccessHE division](#), to ensure that students from underrepresented learner groups can access, succeed in and progress out of higher education into good jobs in local London communities

### ENTERPRISE

London's universities are a hotbed of talent, with [Forbes 30 under 30 data confirming London is the best city in the world to be a young entrepreneur](#). With strong links to the City of London, the West End and the capital's booming Tech industry, London's universities provide unrivalled opportunities for Londoners of all ages to develop game-changing ideas and transform the capital's public services or turbocharge our business growth.

To continue London's enterprising success story, we ask London's new councillors and borough mayors:

- to invest in social enterprise schemes which promote entrepreneurship among London's students, graduates and researchers to ensure that our city continues to benefit from fresh ideas and innovations and that London boroughs are levelled-up through innovative and lucrative start-ups; and
- to work with London's higher education institutions and the main public and private sector employers in each borough to create clear employment pathways and signposting which will help London's graduates into fulfilling and rewarding careers locally.

### RESEARCH

The research undertaken by London's universities and higher education colleges is vast and wide-reaching, harnessing the power of our members' local, national and international collaborations. [The Knowledge partnerships](#) which we announced recently between our members and selected London boroughs show the immense value that London's higher education institutions can bring to supporting local government ambitions.

Given the UK Government's current focus on levelling up the regions, however, there is a clear risk that London's research base could be undermined if it does not continue to receive appropriate levels of funding and capital investment. There is also a risk that any research progress made in London – such as that made towards the Net Zero ambition (as detailed in our '[Clearing the big smoke](#)' report) – will be overlooked in favour of a focus on other regions.

To harness the full transformative power of London-based research for local benefit, we ask London's new councillors and borough mayors to:

- use the London Higher and London Councils knowledge partnerships as a blueprint for successful University-borough collaborations, enabling local government access to the best available evidence and data in their work; and
- work with London's higher education institutions to co-design the research that is needed for the capital's future – be it by scoping green skills, finding ways to improve local air quality and pollution levels, tackling health inequalities, and so much more.

If you would like to discuss this briefing note further or require any further information, please contact Chloe Bukata, Head of Communications and External Affairs at London Higher on [chloe.bukata@londonhigher.ac.uk](mailto:chloe.bukata@londonhigher.ac.uk)