

Response to Rewiring the State

Central government data to improve public service delivery

October 2026

1. Executive Summary

This note sets out a wide-ranging set of data requests from the GLA to central government. It represents the GLA's response to No.10 North's invitation to identify opportunities for improved access to data held by central government departments.

Improving access to government data can support the delivery of devolution, economic growth and public service reform – helping regional and local government plan and deliver services, monitor and evaluate their impact, anticipate future pressures, and develop new data-driven services to improve outcomes.

The requests outlined in this note do not represent a complete list of all central government data that could be of value to the GLA, but, if granted, they would represent a major transformation in our access to data.

We focus on data that is (a) directly relevant to the delivery of the GLA's current or potential future strategic responsibilities and (b) is considered potentially accessible through existing or future data-sharing arrangements. It also doesn't represent the whole of London government's data ask (i.e. those from London's 33 local authorities and other bodies including TfL and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime); in this regard our data needs as an organisation will not be directly comparable to those from Mayoral Combined Authorities.

We set out data requests across seven areas: skills and employment; financial hardship; housing; infrastructure; children and free school meals; migration and immigration; and supporting analytical tools.

Finally, data from central government will help enormously to deliver better services to our citizens, which will serve the interests of all tiers of government; we look forward to working with government to realise the benefits that can come from better data sharing.

2. Context

Access to high-quality, timely and linked data is critical to the success of devolution, enabling the GLA – as a Strategic Mayoral Authority (SMA) – to fulfil and further its core strategic purposes, including supporting economic development, promoting social development and improving the environment.

As London's strategic authority, serving around nine million residents across 32 boroughs and the City of London, the GLA needs to understand trends and challenges across the capital, including those that extend beyond individual borough boundaries. This requires a London-wide view of the evidence, alongside more detailed data to understand differences between places and support local service planning and delivery.

The emerging data requests outlined below reflect both these strategic and local delivery needs. They provide a starting point for discussions with government departments, partners and stakeholders, and are grouped by policy or thematic area:

- Skills and Employment
- Financial Hardship
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Children and Free School Meals
- Migration and Immigration
- Analytical Tools

An important caveat to the list above is that the GLA, and local government more widely, faces challenges in identifying required datasets given that visibility of data held across central government departments is somewhat limited. Another request is therefore for central government to support the GLA and other MSAs in understanding what data is held across departments. This might, for example, involve the opening of a new communications channel between the GLA's City Intelligence Unit (CIU) and the data team at No.10 North, allowing the GLA to make ad-hoc data inquiries on behalf of policy teams.

3. Skills and employment

a. 14-19 Education (main stakeholder: Department for Education)

Greater responsibilities for 14-16 technical education, alongside the potential devolution of 16-19 funding and provision, create an opportunity to develop a more coherent and responsive education and skills system for London. To support these responsibilities, the GLA will require access to comprehensive data, including:

Programme Delivery and Performance Monitoring

Participation and education records, including full access to the Individualised Learner Record (ILR), School Census and National Pupil Database (NPD), with timely in-year operational data refreshed regularly. Historical data is required to calculate achievement rates and assess performance trends over time.

- NCCIS participation and tracking data, including information on NEET young people and those whose activity is unknown.

Evaluation and Impact Assessment

- Progression and destination data, supported by timely-linked Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data or equivalent, covering medium-term progression to further study, employment and earnings.
- Linked data across education, employment and earnings outcomes to support robust evaluation of programme impacts and long-term outcomes.

- Value-added and learner progress measures to assess learner achievement and compare provider performance fairly.

Forecasting and Strategic Planning

- Historic provider-level 16-19 funding allocations and adjustments, covering at least the previous five years, to establish funding baselines, understand demand trends and model future funding requirements.
- Workforce data, including vacancies, recruitment, retention, pay and shortage subjects, to assess workforce capacity and identify future pressures.
- Longitudinal participation, progression and demographic data to forecast learner demand, participation trends and future skills needs.

Development of New Data Services and Analytical Capabilities

- Data infrastructure that supports the development of new analytical products and operational services, for example providing a single view of participation, supporting early identification of young people at risk of becoming NEET, or enabling more proactive and preventative interventions.

b. Employment Support (main stakeholder: Department for Work and Pensions)

Access to employment support data is essential for managing and improving programmes such as Connect to Work and Restart (or any successor programme) in London. It supports performance management, identifies unmet need, evaluates outcomes and value for money, informs future planning, and enables more integrated, preventative services.

Programme Delivery and Performance Monitoring

- DWP Claimant and caseload data, alongside referral, participation and attrition data for employment support programmes.
- Programme delivery and provider performance data, including delivery models, and performance against targets.
- Jobcentre and workforce data, including estate information, work coach caseloads, staffing levels and operational capacity.

Evaluation and Impact Assessment

- Linked outcomes data, drawing on DWP, HMRC and other administrative datasets to track employment, earnings, job retention and benefit transitions.
- Job quality measures, including earnings, progression, and employment stability.

Forecasting and Strategic Planning

- Historic expenditure and funding baselines across employment support programmes, and by local area, to support transfer negotiations and future funding settlements.

- Operational capacity data, including provider and Jobcentre workforce capacity, to identify future delivery constraints.

Development of New Data Services and Analytical Capabilities

- Linked education, employment, benefits and health datasets to provide a holistic view of service users and their progression through the system.
- Cross-system datasets that enable the creation of new analytical and operational products, such as early-warning systems for labour market disengagement, coordinated support for young people at risk of becoming NEET, and more proactive employment support for people with health-related barriers to work.

c. Skills and Apprenticeships (main stakeholder: Department for Education)

Adult Skills Fund (19+) responsibilities were delegated to the Mayor of London in August 2019. The GLA currently has access to the London cut of relevant 19+ data. The GLA would welcome the opportunity to explore access to data beyond MSA boundaries. This would:

- Improve understanding of commuting patterns, learner mobility and internal migration.
- Support the identification and sharing of good practice.
- Strengthen evidence of programme impact (exploiting regional variation).

Similar considerations apply to **other skills programmes**, where devolved responsibilities would benefit from access to data beyond administrative boundaries.

The GLA would also welcome access to data on **Apprenticeships** and other non-devolved skills and employment programmes. This would:

- Support a more complete understanding of the skills and employment system.
- Improve tracking of learner progression and outcomes between different forms of provision.
- Enable better coordination and planning across programmes.

d. NEET (main stakeholder: Department for Education)

Access to comprehensive, linked data (examples listed above in sections 2 and 3) is also essential to tackling London's NEET challenge by identifying young people at risk, targeting support effectively, evaluating outcomes, forecasting demand, and enabling earlier intervention.

Key asks

- Linked education, employment, benefits, health and children's services data to better understand and predict disengagement and NEET risk, enabling earlier and more effective preventative interventions.
- Integrated data infrastructure to support intelligence sharing and coordinated action across agencies.
- Cross-system tools, including NEET risk indicators, participation dashboards and coordinated case management, to enable earlier intervention and improved outcomes.

4. Financial Hardship (main stakeholder: Department for Work and Pensions)

Financial hardship analysis relies heavily on national datasets such as Households Below Average Income (HBAI), Children in Low-Income Households (CiLIH), and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). More detailed and timely data would strengthen local authorities' ability to identify financially vulnerable households, target preventative interventions, and support benefit take-up activity.

Key asks

- Improved access to administrative Universal Credit (UC) data to support the identification of financially vulnerable households and strengthen the evidence base for interventions
- Access to HMRC PAYE data to support the design and targeting of cost-of-living support programs, as well as to strengthen institutional understanding of personal incomes and tax receipts across London and within each borough.
- Improved access to more detailed regional-level demographic breakdowns of HBAI and Family Resources Survey data, where sample sizes permit, reducing reliance on time-intensive analysis of survey microdata.
- Publication of relevant income and poverty statistics for smaller geographic areas, such as local authorities, wards and neighborhoods, where feasible. Ward-level publication of CiLIH data has proved valuable for targeting child poverty interventions, and extending similar geographic detail to other datasets and cohorts would further strengthen local targeting and decision-making.

Additional considerations

- Local authorities previously received detailed data on some low-income residents through administering Housing Benefit. As Housing Benefit is gradually phased out, local authorities are increasingly reliant on UC data to understand the characteristics of low-income residents in their area. However, local authorities receive data on only those UC claimants who receive council tax support (between 20% and 45%).
- The GLA's existing understanding of personal incomes and taxes in London is primarily based on estimates from survey data, which necessarily gives rise to considerable uncertainty around the design, scope and funding of, for example, income support schemes. At a basic level, we cannot confidently say how many Londoners pay a basic rate of tax compared to higher and additional. There is even less certainty around, for example, tax deductions and other entitlements.
- Improved linkage between financial hardship, health and employment datasets could support earlier intervention, stronger referral pathways and wider public service reform objectives.

5. Children and Free School Meals (main stakeholder: Department for Work and Pensions)

Improving the local identification and enrolment of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) requires better access to administrative data held by central government. Currently, the GLA and local authorities do not have access to the DWP data needed to identify children eligible for FSM and related entitlements, limiting the effectiveness of local auto-enrolment schemes.

DWP does share data with local authorities, but these don't list everyone receiving Universal Credit; they are 'live' feeds that report changes as they happen, not a complete list of Universal Credit recipients that is required. Evidence from local authority work suggests that using the current DWP and DfE datasets available to them significantly under-identifies FSM-eligible children compared with estimates based on wider administrative information, meaning that pupils may be missing out on FSM and FSM-related entitlements such as pupil premium.

Key asks

- Access to DWP Universal Credit data required to identify children eligible for FSM and related entitlements.
- Clearer guidance on the sharing and use of data to support local automatic enrolment schemes for FSM.
- Development of a long-term national FSM automatic enrolment system linked to Universal Credit.

6. Housing (main stakeholder: Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government)

Housing analysis would benefit from the creation/addition of new specific data outputs, as well as improved access to key datasets.

Key asks

- Creation of an official linked dataset combining Land Registry Price Paid Data and Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) records.
- Routine publication of London-level outputs within MHCLG housing statistics and English Housing Survey publications.
- Creation of direct channels for accessing survey microdata (English Housing Survey and Family Resources Survey, for example), removing the additional burden of requesting data and renewing access agreements with UK Data Service (UKDS). Existing data access arrangements through UKDS are designed primarily for academic research projects rather than ongoing analytical work within public bodies.

Additional considerations:

- Producing and maintaining property-level data linkages centrally would reduce duplication of effort across combined authorities, local authorities, academic institutions, and other users.

7. Infrastructure (main stakeholder: Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs)

Our infrastructure coordination service would benefit from improved access to datasets on a range of infrastructure.

Environment Agency datasets

- Access to detailed asset condition data for flood defences, pumping stations, sluices and other flood risk management infrastructure.
- Access to asset inspection records and maintenance schedules.
- Access to property-level flood risk assessments covering all sources of flooding.
- Access to incident response records to support resilience planning and operational analysis.

Street Manager datasets

- Improved access to outputs from the Street Manager system, including summary permit statistics by highway authorities across London.

Electric Vehicle datasets

- Improved access to electric vehicle (EV) chargepoint data.

Additional considerations

- The National Underground Asset Register (NUAR) User Access Expansion programme provides an opportunity to support innovation by enabling access to underground asset data beyond its current safe-digging and efficiency use cases. This is exactly the type of programme that can have a significant impact on innovation and the GLA greatly supports these efforts.
- Ofgem's Transforming Connections Data initiative is a positive example of efforts to improve the accessibility and usability of electricity connections and network upgrade data. Improved access to these datasets could help identify infrastructure constraints earlier and support strategic energy planning across London.

8. Migration and Immigration (main stakeholder: Home Office)

Migration analysis would benefit from improved access to administrative datasets held by the Home Office and greater certainty around existing data-sharing arrangements. Changes to data-sharing practices have created challenges for ongoing local and regional analysis of migration trends and support needs.

Key asks

- Reinstatement of the monthly Asylum Contract Partnership Board UK Visas & Immigration Update ("Partnership Pack" dataset), providing borough-and-regional-level data on asylum claims, including accommodation arrangements.
- Reinstatement of the monthly Full Dispersal data, providing borough-and-regional-level data on the distribution of asylum accommodation.
- Accurate decisions and discontinuations data regionally would also be beneficial – for partners in London to be aware of the number of people moving through the system

Additional considerations

- If reinstated, the requested data will be integrated into the GLA's Migration Hub – a secure access dashboard that is primarily used by the GLA and borough partners to inform the provision of immigration support and integration services.
- Recent changes to Home Office data-sharing arrangements have created uncertainty regarding the availability of migration data previously used to support local and regional analysis. Clearer guidelines and communication would be helpful

9. Analytical Tools

Policy analysis and forecasting would benefit from access to central government analytical tools and models that are currently unavailable to local government. Using the same tools as central government would improve consistency, transparency, and comparability between national and local policy analysis.

Key asks

- Access to DWP's tax-benefit microsimulation model, ideally with some light-touch training and provision of some example simulations as a learning aid.
- Access to MHCLG regional housing supply and house price models.