

GROUNDWORK  
CHANGING PLACES  
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## The Mayor of London's Clean and Healthy Waterways Challenge, 2026

Information Pack for Teachers, Play Scheme Leads and Parents

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## Introduction

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, is calling on young Londoners to lead the way in celebrating our city's waterways, from rivers to canals and wetlands, and showcasing a vision of what clean and healthy waterways look like. The Mayor is looking for designs which imagine a future where all Londoners can connect with water and nature, and enjoy the benefits this brings. He is now inviting London's primary school age children, aged 4 to 11, to submit designs, with the chance to have them decorate eight new benches, helping more Londoners enjoy waterside locations across the city.

Groundwork London is commissioned to lead on the promotion and administration of the challenge.

## 1. Join the challenge

To join the challenge, your school, home school or play scheme should:

### 1. Nominate an adult lead

The adult lead will champion the challenge in school, home school or play scheme, plan how children take part and be responsible for submitting their entries on time.

### 2. Encourage children to take part

You could announce the challenge in a school assembly, make it a homework assignment, or add it to a lesson plan as an activity.

### 3. Submit your entries

You will need to be able to upload a clear photo or scanned image of the design to submit with your application.

We need all entries by **midnight, Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June**. All entries should be submitted through our online form. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GLCNMQ7>

### 4. After submitting entries, the adult lead is required to retain the original artwork.

Winning entries will be contacted and required to provide the original designs before the schools break up for the Summer Holidays. The winners will be required to provide the original artwork to the Groundwork London Team by 10<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

## 2. What do your children need to do?

All designs:

- Should be created on white A4 or A3 paper using the template found below and as a downloadable template. <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Clean-Healthy-Waterways-Template-1.pdf>
- Must be in colour and hand drawn – coloured pencils, paint, and felt tip pens are all examples of materials that can be used.

- Pupils must not stick additional material (such as tinsel, glitter, buttons or sequins) onto the entry.
- Have a strong, clear message in response to the theme of clean and healthy waterways.
- Must be uploaded as a JPEG or PNG (File size should be 20MB maximum).

### 3. Theme Brief for Children

This year, we're inviting responses to the theme of 'River of Life'.

We're all Londoners, because we live in London. London is a city built on a big river called the Thames, that cuts it into two parts – as well as loads of other smaller rivers, canals (rivers made by humans) and wetlands (places where the ground is full of water). Londoners need rivers to keep them healthy, and connect them to the plants and animals that are all around us. Rivers are an essential part of life.

Lots of different plants and animals live in, on or next to rivers, canals and waterways. People also live in, on or next to a river – they swim (where it is safe), travel on boats and walk alongside it. For too long, our waterways haven't been taken care of. But we want to bring back more wildlife and animals – including more beavers like those who live in Ealing and Enfield.

People sometimes talk about “the river of life” because sometimes a river reminds us of our lives. Just like rivers, sometimes our lives have twists and turns, sometimes our lives are calm and sometimes they are not. When we look at these rivers, canals and wetlands we can feel connected to everyone in London, and remember that everyone is living the same wonderful, difficult, fascinating life.

We're inviting children to create designs inspired by:

- life in, on or beside London's waterways
- wildlife and plants that live in rivers, canals and wetlands
- memories or experiences near water
- hopes for cleaner, greener waterways in the future

### 4. Words to inspire design

- River of life
- River journey
- Healthy rivers
- Clean rivers
- Full of life
- Down to the river

### Key Stage 1 – curriculum vocabulary

clear	wet	blue	wavy	muddy	shallow
crystal	soggy	liquid	boiling	freezing	hot
fresh	pure	sparkling	soft	warm	bubbly
flowing	dripping	deep	foamy	cool	murky

### Key Stage 2 – curriculum vocabulary

banks	brackish	channel	curent	deposition
erosion	estuary	floodplain	meander	mouth
ox-bow lake	plunge pool	rapid	reservoir	river
river bed	sediment	transportation	tributary	waterfall

## 5. Entries

To submit your pupils' designs, please complete the entry form:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GLCNMQ7>

We will let you know if any of your pupil's artworks has been chosen to help London celebrate our waterways.

## 6. Prize

Eight winning designs will be featured on eight benches around London in locations in Barnet, Ealing, Hackney and Wandsworth.

Designs will feature the winner's age and name of the school. The child's name will be anonymised for data protection purposes.

The first prize will win a Clean and Healthy Waterways workshop for their class, specially designed for their year group and the curriculum.

## 7. Any questions?

If you have any questions, please contact Molly Sweeney at [waterways@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:waterways@groundwork.org.uk) or phone 07549019169. Alternative number 07913 604364

## 8. Terms and conditions

We reserve the right to include the pupil's age and the name of school alongside where images are used. No other information will be shared. See full terms and conditions below.

### 8.1 The Mayor of London's Clean and Healthy Waterways Challenge 2026: Full Terms and Conditions

- Entry to the challenge is only open to resident children of primary school age in Greater London aged between 4 and 11 – excluding children of members of staff who are working on the Clean and Health Waterways project for Groundwork London (GL), the Greater London Authority (GLA), or of its Functional Bodies.
- Entry to the challenge must be made by a teacher, parent, guardian or play scheme leader on behalf of a child. Teachers and play scheme leaders must ensure that they have the necessary parent/guardian authority before making the entries.

- Entries must be submitted via our Clean and Healthy Waterways Challenge 2026 entry form. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GLCNMQ7>
- Entries must be submitted as JPEG or PNG and should be a maximum of 20MB.
- All entries should respond directly to the challenge – to submit a design based on the theme ('the river of life') using the template.
- Submitting an entry to the challenge indicates acceptance of these terms and conditions. The GLA reserves the right to refuse entry or refuse to award the prize to anyone in breach of these terms and conditions.
- The challenge opens for entries from 5<sup>th</sup> June 2026. The deadline for receiving entries is Midnight 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026. Entries received after this time will not be considered. Parents, guardians, teachers and play scheme leaders can submit as many entries as they wish, however entries are limited to one per child.
- Original artwork designs should be on the printed out template with all information completed.
- Designs must be in colour – coloured pencils, paint, crayons and felt tips could all be used. However, children must not stick additional material (like tinsel, glitter or buttons) onto the entry.
- Entries will be judged on their artistic merit (taking into consideration the age) and creative responses to the requirement to design a poster based on the theme of 'the river of life'.
- Entries will be anonymous for judging purposes.
- The judging process will be final and binding in all matters and no correspondence will be entered into.
- Entrants will be notified via their parent, guardian, teacher or play scheme leader using the contact information provided if their entry is selected.
- The age and schools of winners will be used in marketing activity for Clean and Healthy Waterways and on the GLA, GL, and local borough council websites, social media and newsletters.
- The winners will be required to provide the original artwork to the Groundwork London Team by 10<sup>th</sup> July 2026.
- The winning designs will be added to eight benches across four London boroughs. There will be one pan London Borough, and one borough winner for each of the boroughs receiving benches: Barnet, Ealing, Hackney and Wandsworth. It will also feature the winner's age and school name.
- The GL will not be liable for any loss or damage, however caused, to any entries, and bears no responsibility for incomplete or delayed entries.
- Personal data supplied during the course of this challenge will only be processed as set out in the Groundwork London Privacy Policy.
- The GLA reserves the right to cancel the challenge at any stage if it considers such action necessary, or for reasons beyond the GLA's reasonable control, and the GLA and GL will have no liability to the entrants in respect of any such cancellation.

- By entering the challenge, each winning entrant grants the GLA, GL and all media partners an irrevocable, perpetual licence, free of charge to reproduce, enlarge, publish or exhibit, mechanically or electronically on any media worldwide (including the internet) the entrant's winning design.
- Winning entrants shall not object to any cropping or other minor alteration of the photographs of their artwork when used outside the remit of this challenge.
- By entering the challenge, the parent/guardian/teacher/play scheme leader confirms and warrants that the entrant's artwork that has been submitted:
  - is their own original work
  - that all copyright, and any other intellectual property rights in the artwork photograph are vested in the child and they have not assigned, licensed or disposed of or otherwise encumbered any of their rights in the artwork
  - does not infringe the intellectual property rights of any third party in respect of the artwork, and the parent, guardian or school as applicable will indemnify the GLA or GL against any claims made against the GLA or GL by any third parties in respect of such infringement;
  - and by entering the challenge the parent, guardian, teacher or play scheme leader confirms and warrants that they have the permission of those pictured in the artwork, (if any) (or, where the artwork pictures any persons under the age of 18, they have obtained the consent of that child's parent or guardian) for the design to be published and used by the GLA and GL as contemplated by these terms and conditions.
- The challenge will be governed by English law and entrants to the challenge submit to the jurisdiction of the English courts.