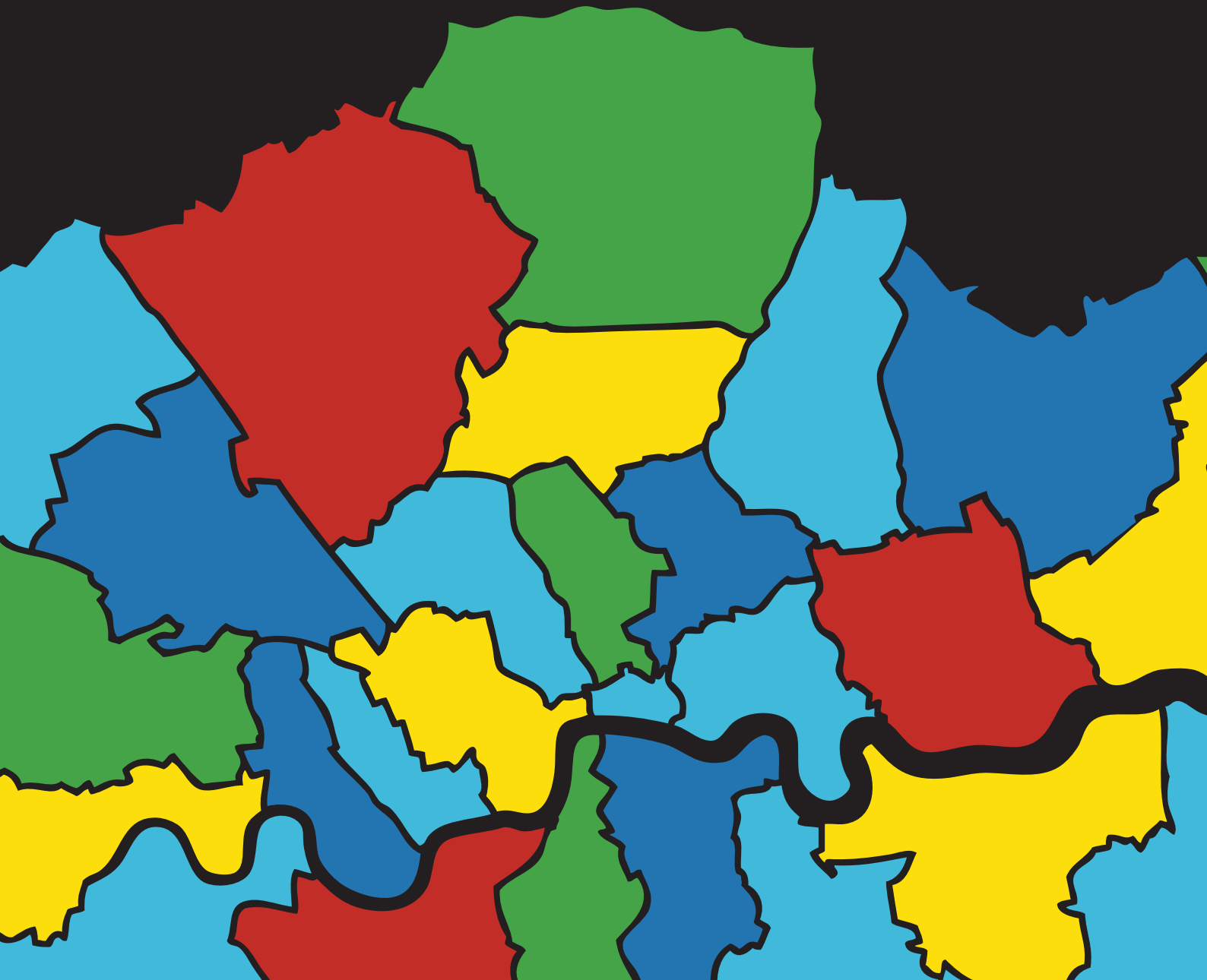


Beyond the Food Bank

2015

London Food Poverty Profile



HEALTHY START ALLIANCE



The Baby Friendly Initiative
For all babies



Alexandra Rose Charities



sustain
the alliance for better food and farming



Foreword by Bharat Mehta

Ask someone to describe living in London, and some of the most common phrases you hear are 'global city', 'wealthy', 'vibrant' and 'dynamic'. All of that is true but there is another side to London that is less talked about. The reality for too many people in the capital, whose income falls well short of what they need to have an acceptable standard of living, is that they are struggling to make ends meet and going without essentials. Families with children are the most likely to be living below a Minimum Income Standard – as many as 4 in ten London families (43%) face a growing gap between their income and the amount they need for a basic living standard. The main culprits are housing, childcare and public transport.

Almost 3 in 10 (27%) Londoners live in poverty (after housing costs), compared to 2 in 10 (20%) in the rest of England. What many may find even more surprising is that the majority of people living in poverty are in a working family, an increase of 70% in the last decade. Whilst work has traditionally been regarded as the best way to move out of poverty, this is not always the case, and the increase for the fifth consecutive year in the number of jobs being paid below the London Living Wage (currently £9.15 per hour) is troubling, as the low-waged economy continues to grow.

Safety net benefits are no longer enough to meet people's basic costs, and the benefit cap has already affected more than 10,000 families in London, with over 2,400 losing more than £100 per week. The numbers affected will grow further if the cap is lowered as planned. Whilst the Chancellors' recent announcement about the new 'national Living Wage' is welcome, it would be disappointing if the proposed reduction to in-work tax credits negated the benefits that might come from higher wages.

The hard truth is that a large number of people in London do not have enough money to meet their basic needs, and that includes feeding themselves. The large number of people having to rely on food banks should shock everyone, but as this report illustrates, this is not the only measure of food poverty. The implications are wide ranging, not least on health outcomes and life expectancy, but on educational attainment and the quality of life.

However, there is one success story to emerge from London: In every London borough, pupils receiving free school meals did better at GCSE than their peers in the rest of England. But how could we improve this educational attainment even further? Many studies link improved diet in children to improved concentration and attainment, and

demonstrate that providing a healthy, free school meal especially helps boost attainment for the poorest children.

Even in this challenging environment of budget reductions, there are beacons of good practice being undertaken by local authorities in London, including some creative ideas for making the most of their resources. Whether it be adopting and promoting the London Living Wage, expanding free school meals provision to address holiday hunger, or ensuring that meals on wheels are providing nutritious meals to vulnerable older people, these are all important steps to ensuring that people have access to good food. However, much more needs to be done, so that these go beyond individual 'initiatives', access to which rely solely on whether someone happens to live in that area, which amounts to a postcode lottery.

I would call on all local authorities to be bold and combine your resources, knowledge, and power to develop a more co-ordinated approach to tackling food poverty in London. Share your ideas, work together and let's ensure that no one goes hungry in London.

Bharat Mehta OBE
Chief Executive
Trust for London

Notes

The statements and opinions expressed in this report should not be attributed to any individual or organisation unless explicitly connected by quotation with that person or organisation.

The London borough maps of actions that are shown in this report are correct to the best of the evidence available to us at the time of publication. We have made every effort to ensure that we highlight good practice of London boroughs. However, if things have improved in your borough or if you think there is more activity that we have missed, please let us know and we will update the maps and the commentary.

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Introduction

More than 2.3 million Londoners live below the poverty line, often just one small crisis away from being able to afford an adequate diet.¹ Last year, more than 100,000 Londoners turned to food banks for an emergency food parcel.² Many of those living in poverty are in employment, a consequence of low wages and the proliferation of exploitative zero hours contracts; others can't find work at all. Changes to the benefit system, including an increased use of sanctions, delays in processing and low benefit levels, have contributed to growing poverty and inequality. Rising costs for food along with difficulty simply accessing affordable and nutritious food create additional challenges for the poorest in our communities.³

No official measurement for food poverty or food insecurity exists in the UK. For the purposes of this report, we will define food poverty as the absence of 'physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet [people's] dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, and the confidence

that access can be assured in the immediate and long-term future.'⁴ Food banks, which are a crisis response to the immediate needs of people without enough money for food, are not a long term solution to food poverty, a position that even those running food banks agree with. While we have an obligation to support individuals in crisis, the problem of food poverty won't be solved unless we also take action to reduce inequality, preserve a strong safety net and build resilient communities where good food is available to all. Experience elsewhere clearly shows that when food banks become too well established they legitimise charity as a response to food poverty and undermine fundamental rights enshrined in our welfare system.

While the key causes of food poverty must be addressed at the national level, local authorities play a key role in maximising family incomes, minimising the cost of living and ensuring that local services meet the needs of families struggling to make ends meet. This report covers six key areas within the influence

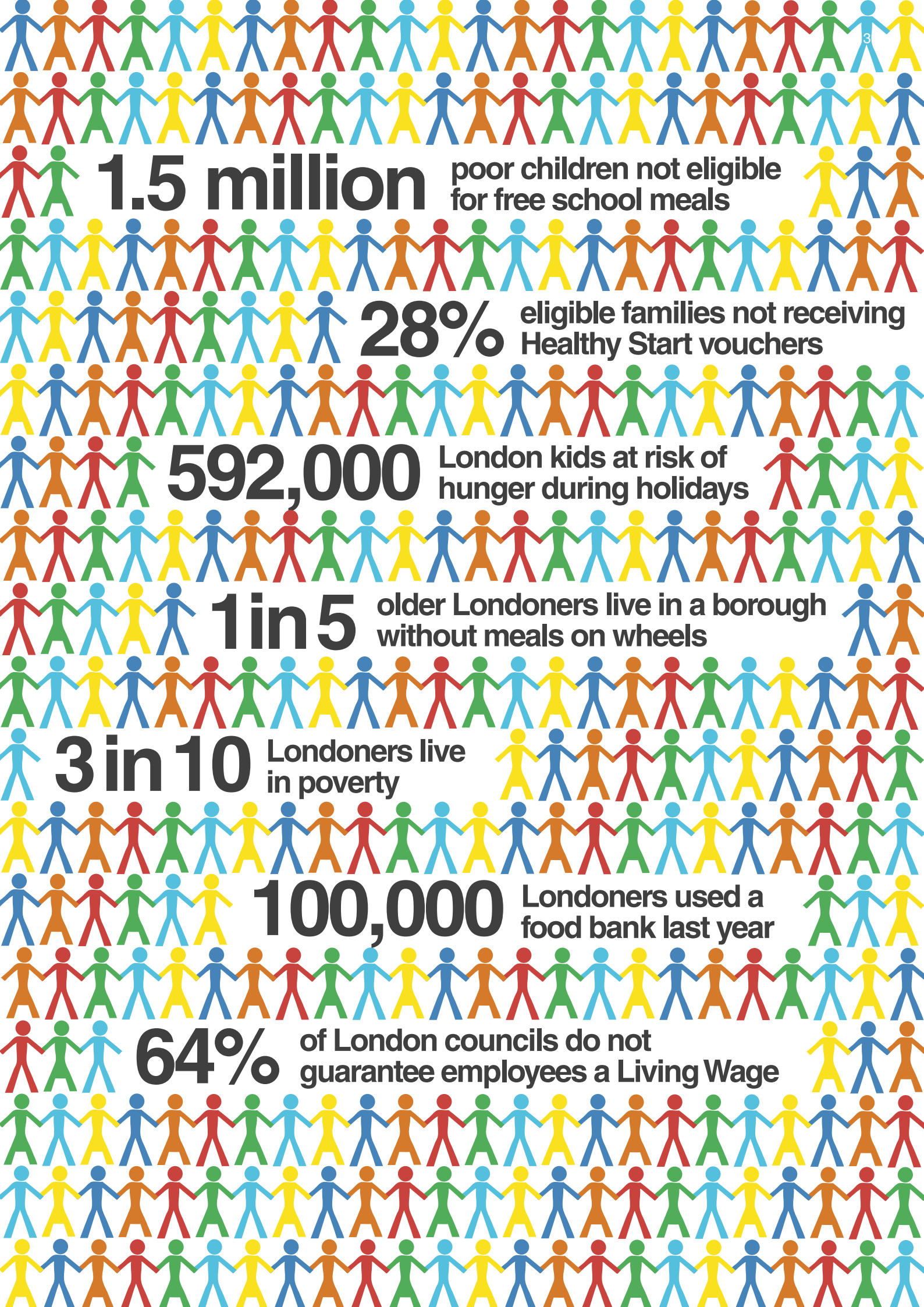
and responsibility of local authorities to help those in food poverty. Publicly-funded nutrition programmes such as Healthy Start vouchers, free school meals and meals on wheels must be safeguarded and extended to reach all eligible participants. London boroughs should invest in public health prevention strategies that promote good health, including breastfeeding promotion and malnutrition screening. Investments in public health and the social safety net must be bolstered by local Living Wage policies that ensure work is a pathway out of poverty. Finally, we believe London boroughs and moreover towns and cities across the UK should increase access to healthy, affordable and culturally-appropriate food through local businesses and community initiatives. While this report focuses on actions by local councils, we recognise that businesses, social enterprises and community-based organisations are also part of the solution. Taken together these actions should take us a step closer to removing the growing need for food banks.

1 London's Poverty Profile 2015. New Policy Institute/Trust for London. 2015. Available at <http://bit.ly/1wHcKh0>

2 Foodbank statistics with Regional Breakdown. Trussell Trust. 2015. Available at <http://bit.ly/1OaGlZ7>

3 Jones NRV, Conklin AI, Suhrcke M, Monsivais P (2014) The Growing Price Gap between More and Less Healthy Foods: Analysis of a Novel Longitudinal UK Dataset. PLoS ONE 9(10): e109343. Available at <http://bit.ly/1PQ956Q>

4 Elizabeth Dowler, The Future of UK Household Security. University of Warwick. 2012. Available at <http://bit.ly/1OaGk7q>



1.5 million

poor children not eligible for free school meals

28%

eligible families not receiving Healthy Start vouchers

592,000

London kids at risk of hunger during holidays

1 in 5

older Londoners live in a borough without meals on wheels

3 in 10

Londoners live in poverty

100,000

Londoners used a food bank last year

64%

of London councils do not guarantee employees a Living Wage

Recommendations for action

This report shows that many of London's boroughs have made great strides to address food poverty.

The recommendations below are informed by the research of this report, but go much further, drawing upon Sustain's work and the expertise of many other organisations working to address food poverty in London and nationally. They build on the recommendations of Feeding Britain, the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom, and the report of the Fabian Commission on Food and Poverty.

The challenges below are levelled at local authorities, the next Mayor of London and national Government all of which have a role and responsibility to act. Equally, we call on businesses and community groups who can help innovate and provide support where the state is not currently operating. Whilst all of the initiatives covered in this report help to alleviate food poverty, the following have the potential for the biggest change.



Develop a coordinated response to food poverty.

In an era of significant reductions in funding from central government, local councils are being asked to do more with less. To ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable Londoners are met, London councils should follow the lead of boroughs such as Sutton and Hammersmith and Fulham to develop food poverty action plans. Councils should identify and monitor key risk factors for food poverty and use this information to prioritise funding for interventions that mitigate the effects of food poverty on high risk populations, including children and older people.

Maximise uptake of emergency payments and wider support services for those in poverty.

Councils should ensure that relevant agencies are working in a coordinated way to provide rapid referral to hardship funds and other support, including - in extremis - emergency food aid. Councils should provide cascading training to those working on the frontline of food poverty, including included housing services, homelessness or substance abuse charities, refugee support groups, schools and health services.

Protect and extend universal Free School Meals.

Increasing the uptake of free school meals by all eligible children should be a priority for all boroughs. Boroughs with high levels of child poverty should consider following the lead of Islington, Newham, Southwark and Tower Hamlets and provide universal free school meals to all primary school children, as one of the most effective ways to reduce the number of children in food poverty.

Eradicate holiday hunger.

Local councils should work with funders, charities, local government, food suppliers – particularly those providing term-time school meals – to coordinate provision of holiday meals for children in poverty.

A London Living Wage for all.

Much more can be done by London's employers, particularly the public sector, to ensure all employees and contractors are paid the London Living Wage. London boroughs can use their leadership to develop incentives for London's biggest employers, including those in the food sector, to sign up and ensure their employees do not have to resort to food banks.

Save meals on wheels.

Councils should explore strategies to protect meals on wheels provision, including social enterprises and joint purchasing approaches that can lower costs while meeting the needs of vulnerable older people and those with disabilities.

Improve access to food.

London boroughs should establish food access plans that will identify physical barriers to affordable, nutritious food in their area and develop an action plan to overcome them. Councils can lead on the development of cross-sectoral interventions with retailers, caterers, manufacturers, advertisers and planners to ensure that good food is more affordable, more accessible and better promoted than junk food.

Engage with national policy.

Robust assessments of the local impact of national spending decisions can improve policy coordination between different levels of government. Many London boroughs are already implementing innovative responses to food poverty. By sharing the impact of these interventions, local policymakers can influence the national debate on inequality and poverty. Some of the key areas for engaging with national policy include:

Collect evidence of the impact of welfare reform on London residents. Information about the impact of sanctions, delays in processing and low benefit levels is needed to fix holes in the safety net.

Introduce a sugary drinks tax to fund initiatives to improve children's health, such as extending free school meals, holiday provision or breakfast clubs. Whilst this is beyond the decision of most local authorities, they can add their weight to call on government to introduce one.

Establish a measure on food poverty. In order to understand the scale of the problem and inform the most appropriate solutions, we need national monitoring of food poverty. Local areas to help us find the best methods to measure this, in a way that will be useful for their work to address food poverty.

About this report

Sustain has worked on food poverty and food access since it was founded in 1999. In addition to a wealth of reports on the issues, Sustain has run the Food Poverty Project, Food Access Network and Buywell programmes. As part of Sustainable Food Cities, Sustain is currently leading the Beyond the Foodbank campaign, which asks towns, cities and boroughs to take action to address food poverty. Through London Food Link, we launched the London Food Poverty campaign in 2015, which focuses on what London boroughs can do to reduce long-term food poverty.

This report was born from the *Good Food for London* report, now in its fifth year. This report has documented how London boroughs have improved their commitments to good food – through support for Fairtrade, community growing, and sustainable fish amongst other issues. By mapping commitments and progress from local authorities, it has helped encourage more to get on board, but until now, the report lacked a joined up way to measure local actions to alleviate food poverty.

Working with local authorities, researchers and civil society organisations, we identified the six key areas for local council action and developed a questionnaire to unpick the level of activity by local authorities. We gratefully acknowledge the efforts of London boroughs in taking the time to respond.

Next year's report will refine the measurements to ensure it effectively represents the best solutions to food poverty. We hope to be able to show how the performance of London's local authorities has improved. In time, we hope to show how London is leading the way in the UK to ensure that no citizen, no matter how vulnerable, is unable to access or afford a healthy, sustainable diet.

This report was made possible by the generous support of the Trust for London.

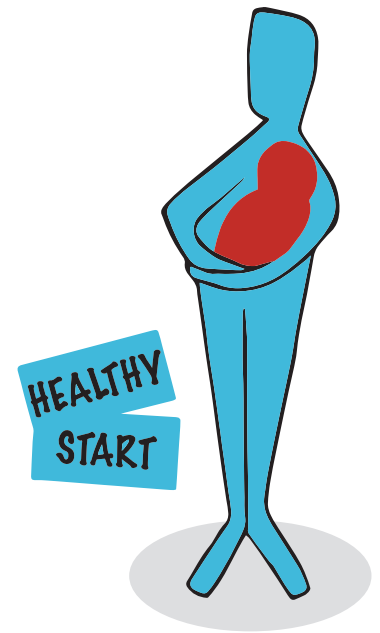
Actions London
boroughs are
taking to reduce
food poverty

Improve the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers

Healthy Start is the UK's food welfare scheme for low-income pregnant women, children under four and pregnant women under 18. Healthy Start aims to provide a nutritional safety net and to encourage healthy food choices. To apply, women and families confirm their pregnancy or family status with a health professional, and then apply to the Department

for Work and Pensions (DWP) to confirm their income. Healthy Start vouchers are a passported benefit, which means they continue even when a recipient is sanctioned by DWP for failing to meet the rules for claiming benefits.

The Healthy Start benefit incorporates a food voucher scheme and a vitamin coupon.



CASE STUDY: Healthy Start in Greenwich

Nearly a third of children in Greenwich live in poverty. The Royal Borough of Greenwich has prioritised improving uptake of the Healthy Start and increasing fruit and vegetable consumption by low-income families. Greenwich established a steering group to coordinate activities and improve communication between partner agencies. To encourage registration, the midwife talks about the programme and signs all registration forms. Greenwich provides free vitamins to all pregnant women to improve uptake.

To increase fruit and veg consumption, Greenwich public health and its partners run several cookery courses that promote healthy eating. Greenwich piloted incentives for healthy eating through the Alexandra Rose Voucher project.

Families eligible for Healthy Start received an additional £3.00 in Rose Vouchers per week per child to spend at food co-ops run by Greenwich Cooperative Development Agency (GCDA).

The borough has mapped the distribution of Healthy Start retailers and encouraged more than 100 local shops to become authorised. Several other retailer partnerships are in the works, including recruiting street traders and box schemes to accept Healthy Start Vouchers. Greenwich public health is working with GCDA to support a fruit and vegetable stall at Mulgrave Children's Centre, where family workers promote Healthy Start to harder-to-reach families. Public Health Greenwich supports the project by promoting the initiative to local health and non-health services.



"As a Council, we recognise how important it is to give all children the best start in life. The Healthy Start programme is a vital benefit helping families with lower income to have good maternal health, good nutrition in the early years and a healthy lifestyle for the whole family. We're working with our partners and our families to increase take up of this important scheme and using it to go further

in achieving our goals for tackling food poverty, improving health outcomes and reducing inequality."

Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald, Royal Borough of Greenwich Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing and Public Health

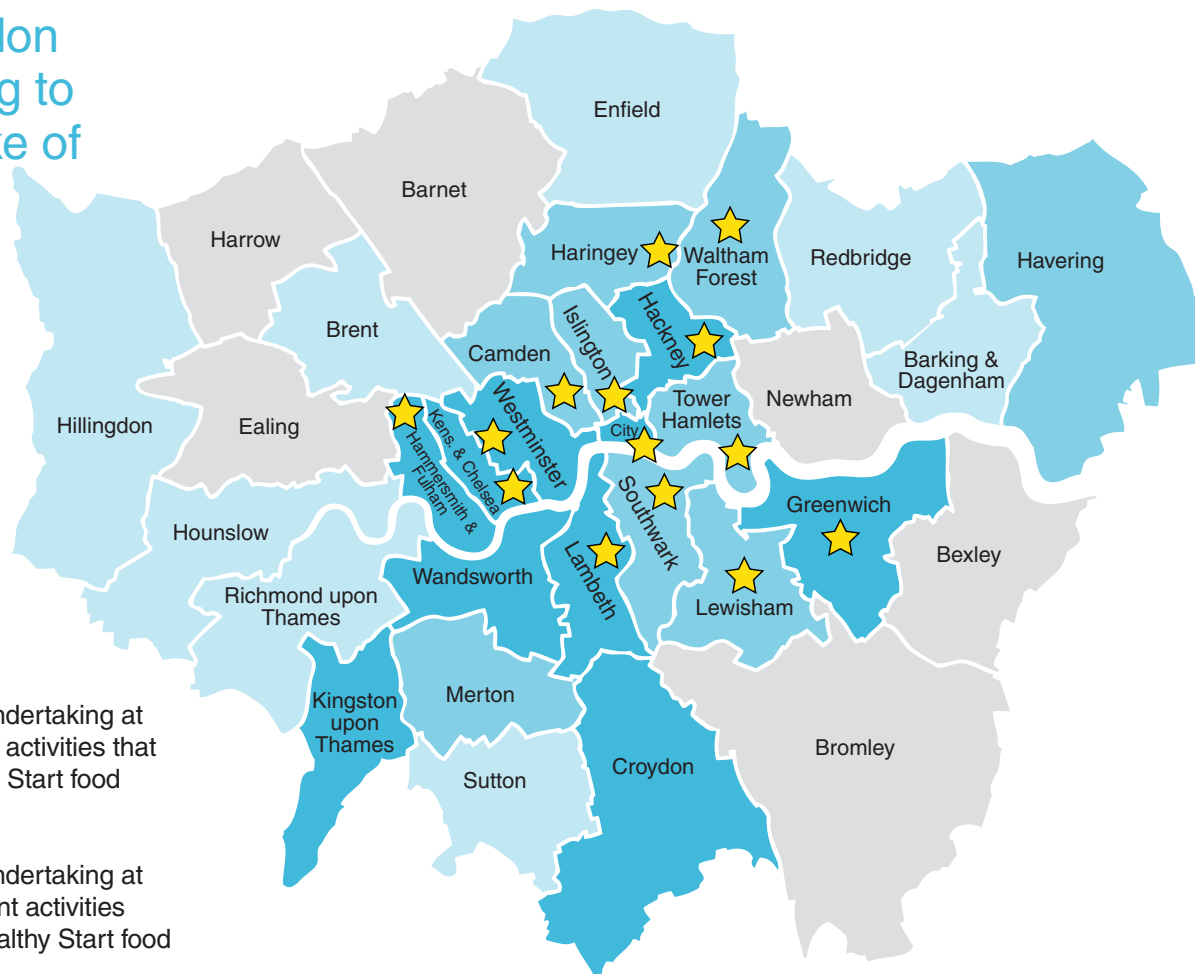
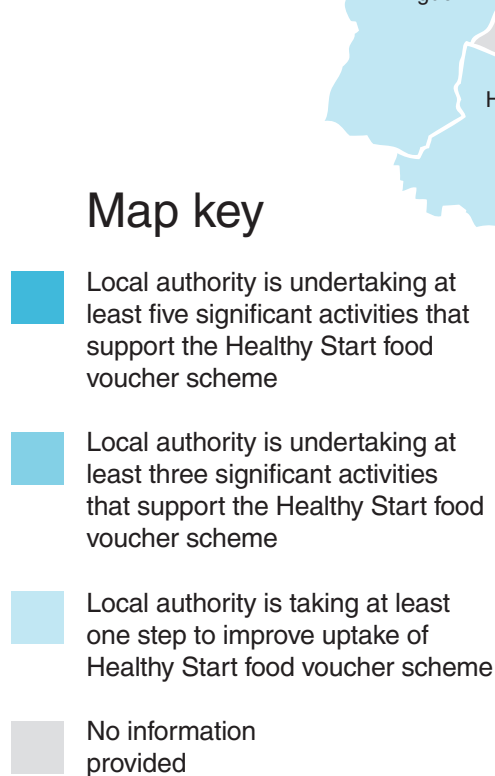
Food vouchers can be spent on fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables, plain cows' milk and first infant formula. Pregnant women and children under four years old receive one £3.10 voucher per week. Babies receive two £3.10 vouchers (£6.20) per week. Healthy Start vitamins are available through children's centres and at pharmacies.

Healthy Start vouchers provide a valuable financial support for low-income families. For a two parent household with a baby and toddler, Healthy Start food vouchers could increase the weekly food spend by 14%. For a single mother with a baby and toddler, Healthy Start boosts purchasing power by almost 25%.¹

Although child poverty rates have increased, Healthy Start uptake has decreased recently due to problems with service delivery and lack of awareness about the benefit. The national average uptake is 75% - meaning that 1 in 4 eligible participants does not receive the benefit. Local authorities are best placed to increase uptake through health professionals in direct contact with those who may be eligible.

What are London boroughs doing to increase uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers?

2015



Notes

This measure recognises councils that are taking significant steps to increase uptake of Healthy Start vouchers, including (but not limited to) appointing a coordinator, ensuring application forms are readily available, providing ongoing training to staff, monitoring the diversity of retailers accepting vouchers and offering information about using vouchers to participants. Councils who have chosen to provide vitamins free of charge in their Borough to simplify delivery and increase uptake are marked with an .

What can London boroughs do?

Local authorities can improve Healthy Start uptake by taking the following steps:

- Appoint a Healthy Start coordinator as a central point of contact for analysing and tracking uptake data, coordinating training and providing information. Boroughs should consider establishing a target for uptake of Healthy Start vouchers in their area that meets or exceeds the national target (80%)
- Ensure that an adequate supply of Healthy Start application forms and up to date information is available at children's centres, nurseries, schools, play centres and food banks as recommended in the 2015 NICE Guidance, Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition²
- Offer training so that health visitors, midwives and other health staff who see women during pregnancy are prepared to explain how and where they can use food vouchers. Ensure children's centres designate a staff person responsible for providing cascading training to relevant staff
- Monitor diversity of retailers accepting Healthy Start vouchers and, as needed, work to improve the diversity of retailers accepting the vouchers, such as street markets, independent stores, or other innovative schemes such as food co-ops and box schemes. Make connections with planning, economic regeneration and other efforts to improve availability of fruits and vegetables
- Increase the value of Healthy Start vouchers by developing nutrition incentive programmes such as the Alexandra Rose Voucher Project

¹ These estimates are based on Office for National Statistics estimates of weekly household food expenditures for families in the lowest quintile of income. Available at <http://bit.ly/1tyA7Ub>.

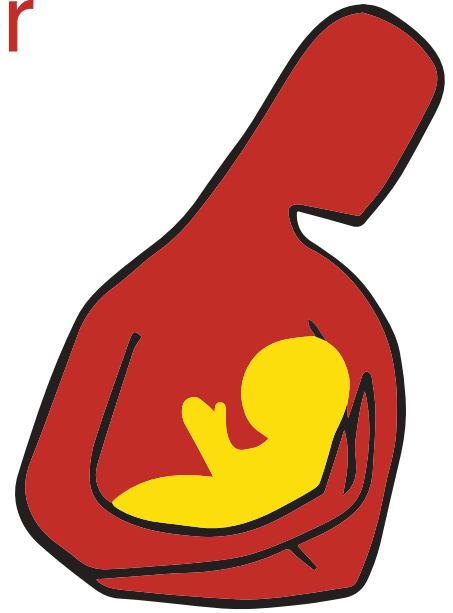
² Nutrition: Improving maternal and child nutrition. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. 2015. Available at <http://bit.ly/1KVtYu2>

Ensure the best start for every infant in London

Young mothers and those from lower socio-economic groups are least likely to breastfeed and have the worst health and social outcomes for themselves and their babies.¹

Breastfeeding improves the health and wellbeing of both mothers and babies. Breastfed children are less likely to suffer from illnesses including digestive disorders, respiratory and ear infections, diabetes and allergies, as well as having a higher IQ and being less likely to be obese in later life. For

the mother, breastfeeding reduces the risk of some cancers, including breast cancer.² Transition to parenthood and the first 1001 days from conception to age 2, is widely recognised as a crucial period, impacting and influencing the rest of the child's life.³



CASE STUDY: Baby Friendly Islington

In Islington, the level of child poverty is worse than the England average with 34.4% of children aged under 16 years living in poverty.⁴ Islington's strategy to tackle this includes encouraging breastfeeding and a commitment to becoming a Baby Friendly borough. The aim is to support mothers to breastfeed for longer, helping reduce childhood obesity and health inequalities; and to improve children's social and emotional wellbeing through nurturing strong loving parent-baby relationships.

Islington health visiting teams and children's centres are working together to achieve the Unicef UK Baby Friendly standards, enabling them to provide effective support to mothers and babies. Breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks are steadily rising and community services are on target to achieve full Baby Friendly accreditation by the end of 2015.

Islington commissions the Breastfeeding Network to train local mums as breastfeeding peer supporters. They proactively contact every breastfeeding mother in the first week to offer support over the phone, in drop-in groups and through home visits and working closely with health visiting, midwifery and children's centre teams to provide a seamless service. Islington's 'First 21 months project' includes one children's centre cluster recruiting mothers from an area of deprivation and low breastfeeding rates to provide a service tailored to meet local need.



"Giving every child the best start in life is a prominent priority for Islington and breastfeeding is recognised as an important element within this. Collaborative working across local partners has been integral to the implementation of the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative in the community. The Baby Friendly Initiative has proven both a valuable catalyst and framework for shaping Islington's infant feeding offer, and has supported us to embed good practice across Islington's frontline health and children's services."

Julie Billett, Director of Public Health, Camden and Islington

Many local Councils support breastfeeding, with the major initiative to drive and monitor the quality of this support being the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative. The Baby Friendly Initiative is an externally evaluated programme that encourages the protection and promotion of breastfeeding, as well as helping build strong nurturing relationships between mother and baby, to improve the health and wellbeing of all infants. The programme is recognised by the Department of Health and Public Health England and helps to ensure good quality support is available, across the community, for all mothers and babies, whether breastfeeding or bottle feeding.

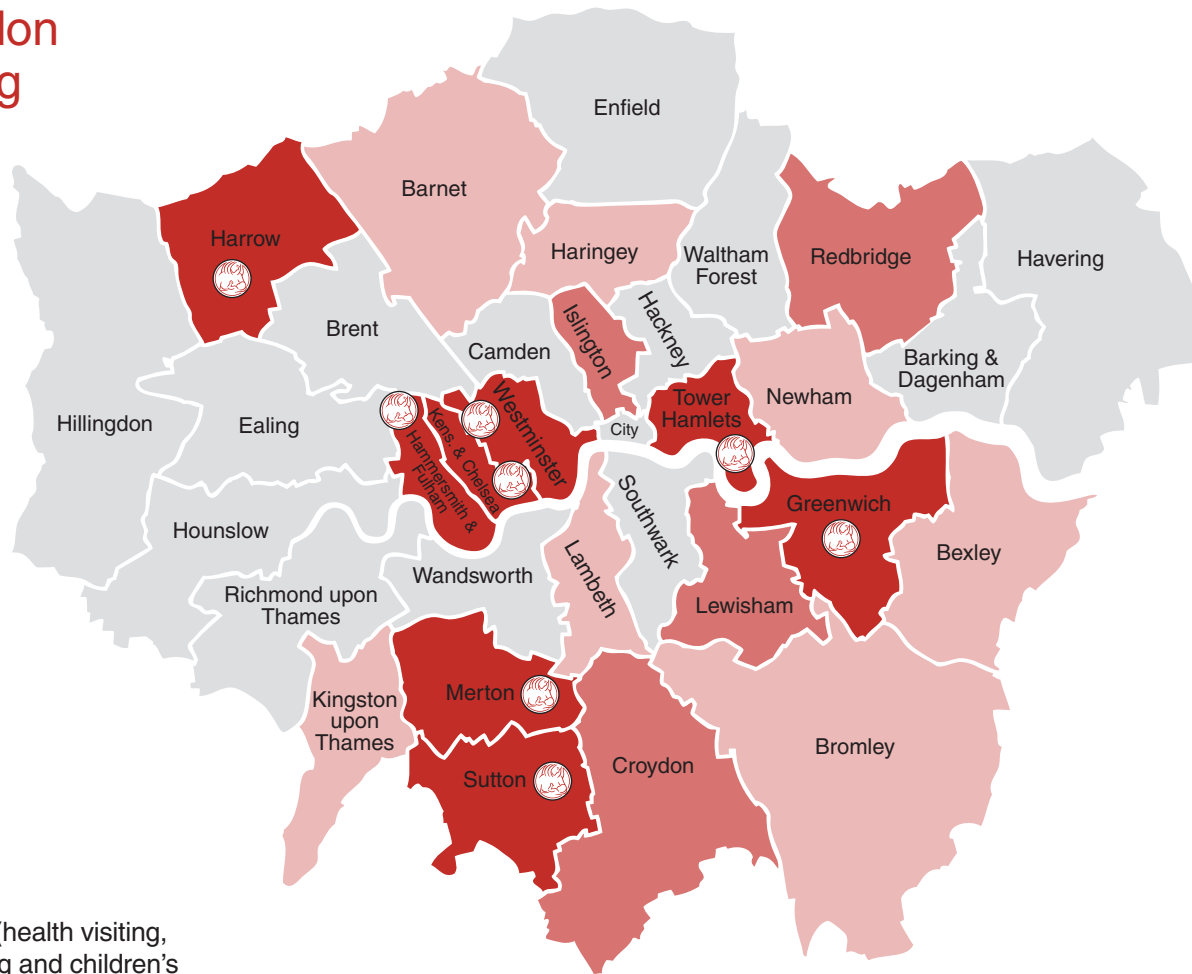
The programme has three main stages:

- **Stage 1** assesses how the team plans to implement the standards
- **Stage 2** assesses staff knowledge and skills
- **Stage 3** assesses parents' experiences to ensure that the Baby Friendly standards have been implemented.

Accreditation can be achieved within maternity, neonatal, health visiting/specialist public health nursing and children's centres.

What are London boroughs doing for infants?

2015



Map key

- The local authority (health visiting, public health nursing and children's centres) has achieved Stage 3 accreditation.
- The local authority (health visiting, public health nursing and children's centres) has achieved Stage 2 accreditation.
- The local authority (health visiting, public health nursing and children's centres) has achieved Stage 1 accreditation.
- The local authority (health visiting, public health nursing and children's centres) only have a certificate of commitment or are not yet participating in the Baby Friendly Initiative.

Notes

This measure recognises councils working towards the Baby Friendly accreditation for health visiting and public health nursing and children's centres. Infant feeding leads with sufficient capacity are necessary for the council to achieve the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative awards. If the council's capacity is insufficient, it will be difficult in the long term to sustain the initiative.

What can London boroughs do?

London councils should work towards full Baby Friendly accreditation for health visiting/specialist public health nursing and children's centres and use their influence, including through Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies, to advocate the co-ordinated adoption of the standards across wider borough services.

From October 2015, local authorities took over responsibility from NHS England for commissioning (i.e. planning and paying for) public health services for children aged 0-5. The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) is the national public health programme, based on best knowledge/evidence to achieve good outcomes for all children. To support implementation of the HCP, six Early Years High Impact Areas (HIA) have been developed. Breastfeeding is the third HIA and recommends a whole system approach to promoting breastfeeding, by implementing the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Standards and supporting other settings, such as children's centres, to become Baby Friendly, including training for early years staff.

1 McAndrew F, Thompson J, Fellows L, et al (2012) Infant Feeding Survey 2010, Health and Social Care Information Centre. <http://bit.ly/1KOcjGP>

2 UNICEF (2013) *The evidence and rationale for the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative standards.* Available at: <http://bit.ly/1MJ5zL3>

3 For more information, see <http://bit.ly/1hdlepf>

4 For more information about child poverty in Islington, see <http://bit.ly/1VrWSqE>

5 For more information about Early Years High Impact Area 3 – Breastfeeding, see <http://bit.ly/1hdlepf>

Provide free meals 365 days a year for children living in poverty

London has the highest child poverty rates in the country - almost four in 10 children grow up below the poverty line. An Ipsos Mori poll found that eight per cent of London parents say their children have had to miss meals because they cannot afford to buy food.¹ Raising a child in London is more expensive due to higher costs for housing, transport and childcare. Inequality in early

childhood can impact health, wellbeing and life chances in adulthood.²

Free School Meals

School meals are a critical safety net for low-income children. Free school meals help tackle child hunger and boost attainment, especially for the poorest children. They save families about £400 per year.

More than 230,000 London children meet the eligibility guidelines for free school meals. However, the most recent figures available, from 2013, showed that about 11% (about 32,000 children) of those eligible were not registering.³ It is thought that stigmatisation and social exclusion are important reasons why parents do not register. Because pupil premium funding for schools relies on free school meals registration, schools are missing out. Over £27m of pupil-premium funding, intended to help close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, is not being claimed by London schools due to under-registration of free school meals.



CASE STUDY: Holiday meal provision

Children in poverty are left with few options during the 170 days each year that school is not in session. The absence of holiday meal provision contributes to the pressures faced by low-income families. One in eight pupils is not getting enough to eat in the school holidays.⁷ A national poll found that four out of every 10 parents reported skipping meals during the summer holidays so that they can feed their children. Food banks also report a surge in demand during the summer.

The All Party Parliamentary Inquiry on School Food identified a need for programmes that deliver food and enrichment activities during school holidays. There are a number of programmes in London that exemplify the APPG's best practices for holiday meal provision.⁸ These include:

Futureversity offered a summer enrichment programme in 3 locations in Tower Hamlets and Islington for 14-19 year olds, all of whom were eligible for free school meals.⁹ Food provision is a core part of the offer – the programme offers a breakfast snack and lunch each day. Futureversity received food for the programme from the charity FareShare.

Islington Play Association (IPA) offers the Healthy Holidays project at five adventure playgrounds.¹⁰ Cooking sessions are offered at lunch times for children, all of whom attend the playgrounds for free. The IPA encourages the children to share their new skills at home. The project received funding from the Department of Health.

The Mayor's Fund for London works with 67 London primary schools to deliver healthy breakfasts where more than 40% of pupils are eligible to receive free school meals. With support from Kelloggs, the Mayor's Fund worked with 9 clubs in Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham to deliver more than 7000 breakfasts during the summer holidays in 2015.

These programmes, and others like them in London and across the nation, demonstrate how providing food can help low-income families maximise their income, promote good health and engage children in learning and physical activity. However, there are not enough programmes like these to meet the need. More work needs to be done to ensure that no child goes hungry during school holidays.

In addition, as many as 1.5 million poor children nationally are not eligible for free school meals because their parents are in work and receiving tax credits, but on low wages.⁴ The absence of reliable, up to date national datasets on free-school meal eligibility and registration rates makes it difficult for schools to evaluate their progress.

The rollout of universal infant free school meals from September 2014 has seen tens of thousands more London children in poverty eating free school meals. Meal uptake in London is higher than the national average of 85%. However,

1 See <http://bit.ly/1oNkBkH>

2 Fair Society, Healthy Lives. Michael Marmot. 2010. Available at <http://bit.ly/1hs5CeE>

3 For more information, see <http://bit.ly/1QZHqkg>

4 For information about free school meals eligibility, see <http://bit.ly/1Ome3en>. Families in receipt of Working Tax Credit, who are otherwise income eligible, are not eligible for free school meals.

5 Magic Breakfast website, (accessed 01/10/2015) <http://bit.ly/1LmlUrN>

6 For more information about the School Food Plan, see <http://bit.ly/1dZpzuU>

7 School holidays leave children hungry for three meals a day. Kelloggs and Trussell Trust. 2015. Available at <http://bit.ly/1hqVFCs>

8 For more information about the 10 key areas to consider when setting up holiday meal provision, see <http://bit.ly/1hu5AY0>

9 For more information about Futureversity, see <http://bit.ly/1LnSCmy>

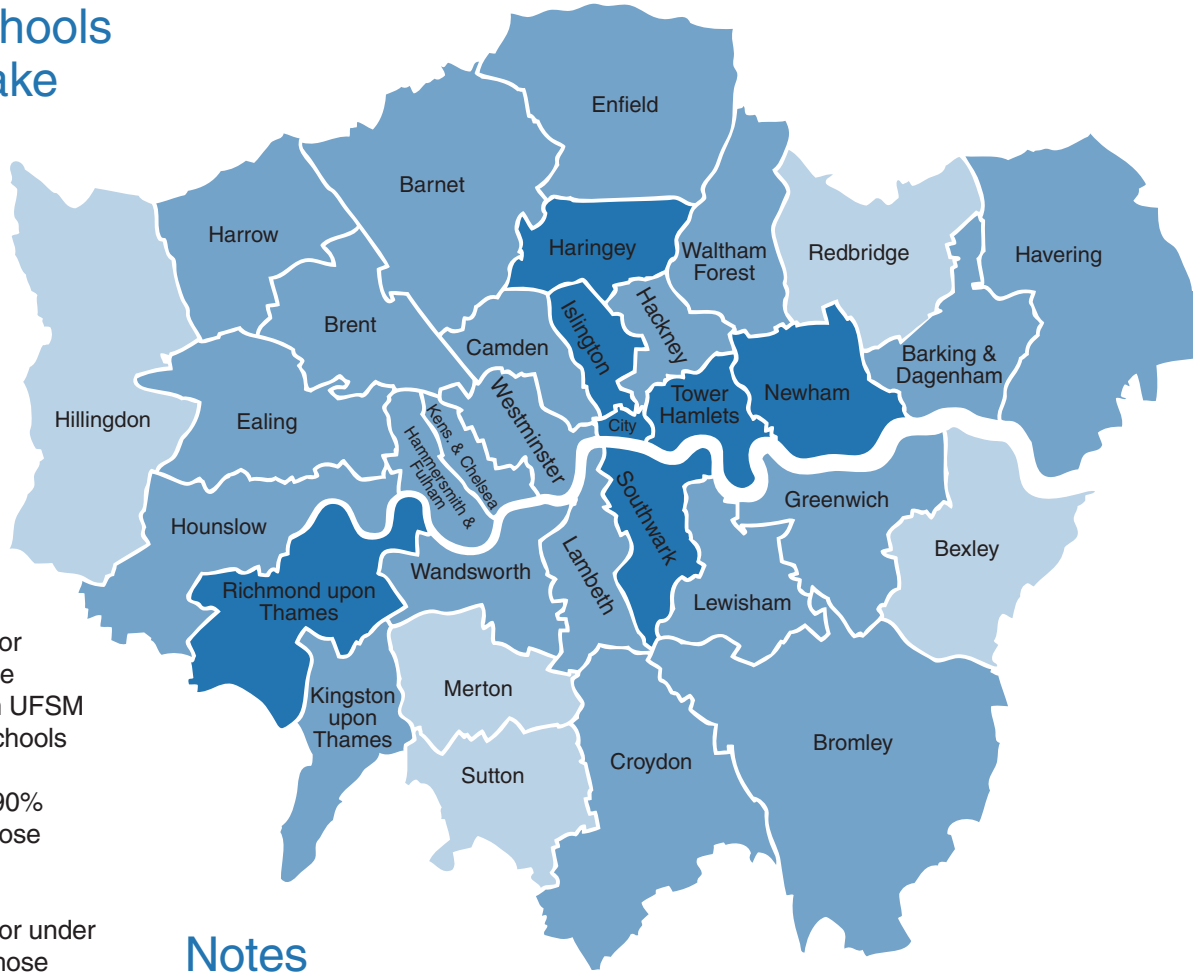
10 For more information about the Islington Play Association, see <http://bit.ly/1LaLhHG>

Are London schools promoting uptake of free school meals?

2015

Map key

- Boroughs with 90% or greater uptake of free school meals or with UFSM across all primary schools
- Boroughs with 81 - 90% uptake of FSM by those eligible and claiming
- Boroughs with 80% or under uptake for FSM by those eligible and claiming



Notes

The School Census does not collect information on pupils entitled to receive FSM, only those who meet the eligibility criteria AND are registered to claim them. The total number of those pupils who take FSM on a snapshot date is recorded on the School Census. The map shows participation in the free school meal program by enrolled pupils (rather than all pupils entitled to free school meals).

- Work with schools to establish a referral policy for identifying pupils at risk of hunger. Provide training for frontline employees, including school nurses, public health leads, cafeteria staff and teachers, on the referral process
- Promote free school meals, breakfast clubs and holiday meal schemes to parents
- Offer free school breakfast to pupils eligible for free school meals and provide universal free school breakfast in schools with greater than 35% FSM eligibility
- Offer food as a part of enrichment activities at schools, parks, and other community locations during holidays. Councils can offer use of publicly-owned facilities (including school kitchens), provide financial support, promote the availability of free food and refer children in need
- Convene a coalition of businesses, philanthropy, and council staff to develop a strategic approach to implementing breakfast clubs and holiday meal schemes which addresses sustainable funding and includes a healthy eating policy.

What can London boroughs do?

Local authorities can help ensure that low-income children have access to good food year round by taking the following steps:

- Provide universal free school meals service for all primary school children (Islington, Newham, Southwark and Tower Hamlets already do this)
- Work closely with schools to automate pupil premium registration. Councils should monitor the number of entitled children not claiming the benefit.

some schools have reported that the universal provision has affected their ability to register infant pupils for the pupil-premium. Some councils nationally have used centrally held benefits data to automatically enrol pupils for schools. But improved clarity on how schools and councils should work together is needed. There is still too much variation among London Boroughs on pupil premium registration, which need not be so. Local councils should make it priority to ensure that as many children in poverty as possible receive a free meal at school.

School breakfast

Children from low-income families need more than just a school lunch. As many as one in three children regularly arrive at school not having eaten breakfast.⁵ School breakfast clubs can help improve concentration, behavior and educational outcomes. The School Food Plan recommends that breakfast clubs should be set up in schools with the highest levels of deprivation.⁶

Adopt the London Living Wage

Despite London being one of the richest cities in the world, thousands of its citizens sometimes go without food, or have too little money and too few opportunities to buy healthy food. For low-income households, food is often the only flexible budget item, so when money is tight, diet and health suffer. This is particularly worrying for people in the most vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, young children and older people, and those living with physical disabilities or mental health problems.

National statistics from the Trussell Trust show that nearly a quarter of food bank users are employed in low wage jobs.¹ As many as 1 in 5 Londoners is employed in a job which pays less than the London Living Wage, currently set at £9.15 an hour.² Topping-up low-wage incomes with in-work benefits, such as working tax credits, costs UK taxpayers an estimated £11 billion per year.³

London boroughs can make a significant contribution to tackling the financial barriers to a healthy diet by paying the London Living Wage. The Living Wage is an hourly rate set independently by the Living Wage Foundation (predating the Chancellor's announcement in the 2015 budget) and calculated according to the basic cost of living.

As an accredited Living Wage employer, London boroughs can ensure that staff employed and those contracted by the council do not experience in-work poverty. In addition, councils can promote the Living Wage to local businesses and improve the wage of residents across the borough. We would urge the capital's biggest employers to sign up to the London Living Wage, including those in the food and drink sector. The GLA estimates that this sector as a whole accounts for 1 in 10 jobs in London.



CASE STUDY: Brent offers business rates discount to Living Wage employers

Brent has some of the lowest average wage levels in London, with one third of working residents paid below the London Living Wage. This is linked to very high levels of deprivation, and four in ten children in Brent live in poverty.

Brent Council believes that one of the key ways to raise living standards across the borough is to encourage local employers to raise wage levels to at least the London Living Wage, so that the money residents earn will be enough for them to provide a decent standard of living for their families.

Therefore in April 2015 Brent Council became the first council in the UK to offer a business rates discount to employers who are accredited with the Living Wage Foundation, as well as a wider package of incentives including

free advertising and discount services from local partner organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce. The discount is worth five times the cost of accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation, and ranges from £250 for the smallest employers to up to £5000 for the largest employers.

Within three months of the scheme launching, Brent has celebrated its tenth accreditation, with several other accreditation applications currently being processed.



“Promoting the London Living Wage is one of our top political priorities in Brent as we understand how important earning a fair wage is for residents to be able to provide a decent standard of living for themselves and their families. We’ve seen a marked increase in the number of residents who have had to visit food banks over the last year, and it is clear that in-work poverty is a huge issue in Brent and across London. By launching the first business rates discount in the UK for accredited Living Wage employers, we are helping to tackle low pay at its source in a pro-business way.”

Councillor Roxanne Mashari, Lead Member for Employment and Skills

What are London Boroughs doing for low paid workers?

2015



Map key

- Borough is an accredited Living Wage employer, paying the London Living Wage to those directly employed as well as those contracted by the council
- Borough is not an accredited Living Wage employer

Notes

Here boroughs are recognised for having achieved accreditation through the Living Wage Foundation. Due to the size and structure of local authorities, there is a specific framework a Living Wage Local Authority needs to follow and is accountable for, as they implement the Living Wage both internally and to third parties. They agree to a timetable to deliver the Living Wage for third parties over time. Accreditation secures the Living Wage not just for one year but for every year it is recalculated in November.

Four London boroughs, Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Haringey and Waltham Forest, report that they pay the London Living Wage, but are not independently accredited by the Living Wage Foundation.

What can London boroughs do?

Pay the London Living Wage to all those directly employed as well as contracted by the council.

Offer incentives, such as the business rates discounts offered by Brent and Greenwich Councils, to employers who are accredited with the Living Wage Foundation.

Use civic leadership to encourage other businesses to become accredited Living Wage employers. This could include holding Living Wage awareness events for local employers and suppliers and outreach to help local businesses understand the benefits and process of becoming a Living Wage employer.

1 'Food bank use tops one million for first time,' Trussell Trust. 2015. Available at <http://bit.ly/1Fdw7lw>

2 Joanna Smith, *Patterns of Low Pay*, Greater London Authority. 2012. Available at <http://bit.ly/1j553xb>

3 'Taxpayers subsidise big business by an estimated £11 billion a year,' Jonathan Cox, Citizens UK. 2015. Available at <http://bit.ly/1QP8y5k>

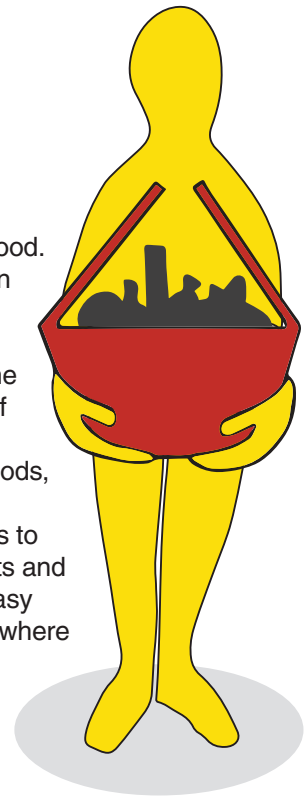
Improve physical access to good food

Despite London being home to a diverse range of food outlets and restaurants, many Londoners struggle to find affordable, healthy food near where they live. Reasonable physical access to healthy food outlets is a distance of 500 metres or less – a walking time of approximately ten minutes for the average person. People with physical challenges such as old age or disability, may struggle to travel further to buy their food, and those on low-incomes often live in areas where fast food and other unhealthy food outlets predominate. This means that leaving provision

of groceries to supermarkets alone does not work for everyone, and a diverse retail sector must be encouraged in order to offer healthy and affordable food to all.

Improved access to good food can offer a win-win situation for everyone, delivering on objectives of social inclusion, community cohesion, crime reduction, urban regeneration, improved business opportunities as well as improved health outcomes. Councils will need to engage staff in planning, regeneration, environmental health and public health to ensure that all Londoners have access to

healthy, affordable food. Local authorities can also encourage and support outlets and stalls that provide the low-cost provision of fruit and vegetables and other healthy foods, helping low-income citizens have access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables within easy walking distance of where they live.



CASE STUDY: Increasing access to affordable food in Lambeth

Lambeth Council, like other inner city London boroughs, has high levels of deprivation and, as a result, high levels of food poverty. Lambeth received major support through the Mayor of London's Food Flagship programme to tackle childhood obesity through better diets and food education. Lambeth were keen to test out how the social supermarket model could improve access to healthy, affordable food for low-income residents. The council reached out to Community Shop, a social enterprise that sells surplus food at 70 per cent cheaper than usual prices. Community Shop offers free professional support to help members get out of debt and find a good job, including budgeting and debt advice, employability training and cookery classes.

When Community Shop began looking for potential store locations, it proved difficult to find affordable premises in the right location. Lambeth Council worked closely with Community Shop team to

identify an appropriate location for the store in an unused Council-owned building. Once the location had been secured, Lambeth Council helped Community Shop conduct outreach to community organisations and local food banks to raise awareness of the project, which opened its doors in December, 2014. The store works on a membership basis – 580 Lambeth residents have joined since the store opened. Members have gone on to become peer mentors, seek out additional training and to launch small businesses.



"It's a fantastic initiative which makes a very real difference to people's lives. We're only too aware how difficult it has become for hundreds of families living on the breadline with rising costs over the last few years and the Community Shop is a lifeline for many.

The Community Shop does a great job of matching up perfectly good surplus food with those who need it. But it's not only about food – it's about making communities that bit fairer and supporting those people who need a little bit of extra help. That's why we're happy to facilitate the Community Shop in Lambeth."

Leader of Lambeth Council, Councillor Lib Peck

What are London boroughs doing to improve access?

2015



Map key

- Local authority is taking at least five significant steps to improve physical access to good food
- Local authority is undertaking at least three significant steps to improve physical access to good food
- Local authority has initiated work to improve physical access to good food
- No information provided

Notes

This measure recognises councils that are taking significant steps to improve access to healthy food. These steps include (but are not limited to): mapping food access against transport routes, deprivation, high concentration of diet-related disease and concentration of unhealthy food outlets; taking action based on mapping data or other data from the Public Health Department or Health and Wellbeing Board; recognising physical access to healthy and affordable food as a criterion in the Local Development Plan, in other guidance documents or in health and wellbeing guidance; and/or consulting with the Director of Public Health or other appropriate bodies on any planning applications, including at the pre-application stage, to consider physical access to healthy and affordable food.

What can London boroughs do?

Map physical access to good food: Local authorities can collect information on how easy is it for people to travel to, buy or provide themselves with fresh and healthy food. Surveys, demographic data and local public health information can help identify areas needing targeted intervention.

Work with existing businesses: local authorities can help local retail outlets serve healthier food through shop improvement projects; crime reduction initiatives to help local food shops be more viable; cheaper rent for fresh produce stalls in local authority markets, and overall promotion of markets; helping local outlets accept Healthy Start Vouchers and Rose Vouchers (see pTK); promotion of the Healthier Catering Commitment; and controlling competition from the proliferation of junk food outlets, particularly around schools.

Support community food projects: Community markets, social supermarkets, community food growing projects and food co-ops can benefit from advice on planning permission, securing sustainable funding and promoting their project. Support with finding premises and equipment can also help.

Engage partners: Local service providers such as children’s centres, the local public health team and social landlords may be important partners in such work, and can help comment on retail and planning policy to improve food access for the communities they serve.

Develop policies referencing food access in local planning, retail and health strategies that will help to keep physical access to good food on the decision-making agenda.

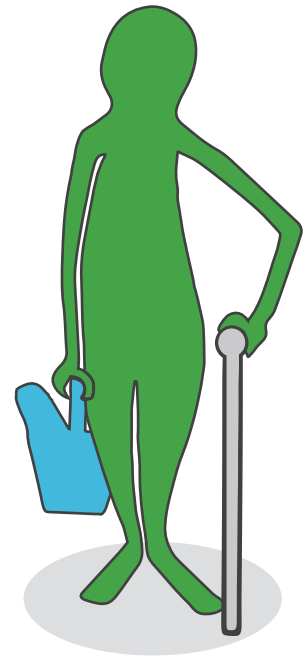
Reduce risk of food poverty and malnutrition among older people

For older and disabled people who have difficulty with shopping or cooking for themselves, meals on wheels is more than just a hot food delivery service. Drivers also provide regular, social contact and make sure that some of the most isolated and vulnerable people are safe and well. The meals are subsidised, not free, and cater for people who may suffer from dementia, be disabled or have limited mobility.

Nationally, more than 1.3 million people over 65 suffer from malnutrition due to underlying disease, decreased mobility, limited transport to local shops and poverty.¹ Many end up in care homes or hospital as a result. Malnutrition costs UK taxpayers £13 billion a year, more than half of which is spent on people over the age of 65.^{2,3} Home delivery

of hot, healthy meals helps keep older people living independently for longer.

Nationally, one third of councils no longer provide meals on wheels service due, in part, to severe cuts to adult social care funding. Only 19 million meals on wheels are served in the UK each year, compared with 40 million ten



years ago.⁴ During this period, the rate of hospital admissions for malnutrition among adults in England more than tripled.⁵ The service represents extremely good value. A report commissioned by Apetito concluded that, as part of an overall package of investments to prevent malnutrition-related admissions to care homes and hospitals, an investment of just £1.32 per taxpayer per year in meals on wheels could save the UK economy as much as £1.7 billion by 2020.⁶ This service provides a vital lifeline for vulnerable groups who may otherwise end up in food poverty.

CASE STUDY: Community meals in Redbridge

London Borough of Redbridge currently delivers approximately 200 meals a day to people in the borough who are referred who are unable to prepare themselves a hot meal. A wide variety of meals to meet cultural requirements are offered, including Kosher, Asian halal and vegetarian and African/Caribbean. Menus are designed to meet dietary needs and meet the National Association of Care Catering nutritional standards for older adults. Redbridge also offers a frozen meal service delivered fortnightly to those that are able to heat and serve the meal. Microwave ovens and table top freezers are available free to loan if required. The price to the recipient is £4.15 for two courses, main and dessert.

Recent client satisfaction survey results show that 99% think the overall quality of the meal is excellent or good and 85% think that receiving a nutritionally balanced meal makes them feel healthier. Redbridge meals on wheels supports older people and those who are disabled to live independently in their own homes, preventing isolation and loneliness.

Redbridge employs 12 trained, permanent staff to deliver meals 365 days each year. With each meal delivery, staff carry out a 'safe and well' check and follow up if any problems are noted. The Council has a partnership with the Fire Brigade to provide service users with smoke alarms, and with the Redbridge Bogus Callers Partnership who support older people to be safe at home.

1 *Introduction to Malnutrition*. BAPEN, 2012. Available at <http://bit.ly/1ywiMhB>

2 *Combating Malnutrition: Recommendations for Action*. Output of a meeting of the Advisory Group on Malnutrition, led by BAPEN. Editors: M Elia and CR Russell. 2012. Available at <http://bit.ly/1O51AtU>

3 *Malnutrition among Older People in the Community. Policy Recommendations*. This report was produced jointly by BAPEN, the European Nutrition for Health Alliance and the International Longevity Centre, UK in association with the Associate Parliamentary Food and Health Forum, 2006. Available at <http://bit.ly/1j2DGnE>

4 'Meals on Wheels and community meals services face bleak future as local government cuts bite,' National Association for Care Catering. 2014. Available at <http://bit.ly/1Gk5SqE>

5 'Malnutrition and Rickets 2004-2014,' Hospital Episode Statistics, Health and Social Care Information Centre. Available at <http://bit.ly/1KUPJcu>

6 *Meeting the Wider Funding Challenge: The real value of community meals on wheels*. Apetito (a commercial meals on wheels caterer), 2013. Available at <http://bit.ly/1j2DKUj>

7 For more information about the National Association for Care Catering's nutritional standards for adults, see <http://bit.ly/1FHGCQg>

What are London boroughs doing for older people?

2015



Map key

- Local authority offers home delivery of prepared meals that meet the National Association of Care Catering (NACC) nutritional standards for adults 365 days per year AND is taking at least two additional, significant steps to reduce the risk of malnutrition in older people.
- Local authority is taking at least three significant steps to provide access to healthy food for older people and/or raise awareness of the risks of malnutrition in older people.
- Local authority is taking two or fewer significant steps to provide access to healthy food for older people and/or raise awareness of the risks of malnutrition in older people.
- No information provided

Notes

This indicator measures whether a council provides home delivery of prepared meals meeting NACC's nutritional standards.⁷ Councils are also recognised for supporting lunch clubs through direct financial support, transportation and/or signposting. The indicator also recognises councils for raising awareness of the risks of malnutrition in older people by, for example, providing training for front-line staff.

What can London boroughs do?

Service provision: Whether directly or through strategic commissioning, councils should ensure that older people are offered hot, prepared meals through home delivery or lunch clubs. Councils should provide signposting online and through community locations to promote meals on wheels and lunch clubs.

Provide leadership: Work strategically and with cross sector partners to create a community where local people can age in place, living independently for longer into later life. Health and Wellbeing Boards have a key role to play to ensure the needs and voices of older people are included across local decision making, particularly around housing, health and care services.

Malnutrition, in particular, requires cooperation across national and local agencies, the private and the third sector.

Provide information: Councils should review how they provide information on locally available services, advice and other support to help older people with food access difficulties. Information should be made available in alternative formats for those unable to access information online. Councils should make sure that older people can get accurate advice about the benefits they are eligible for and are encouraged to take up their benefits. Information on the signs, symptoms and consequences of malnutrition should be disseminated by all those working with older people and through community locations such as local shops, leisure centres and lunch clubs.

Beyond the Food Bank

London Food Poverty Profile

A Sustain publication

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Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming, advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the living and working environment, enrich society and culture, and promote equity. It represents around 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level.



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