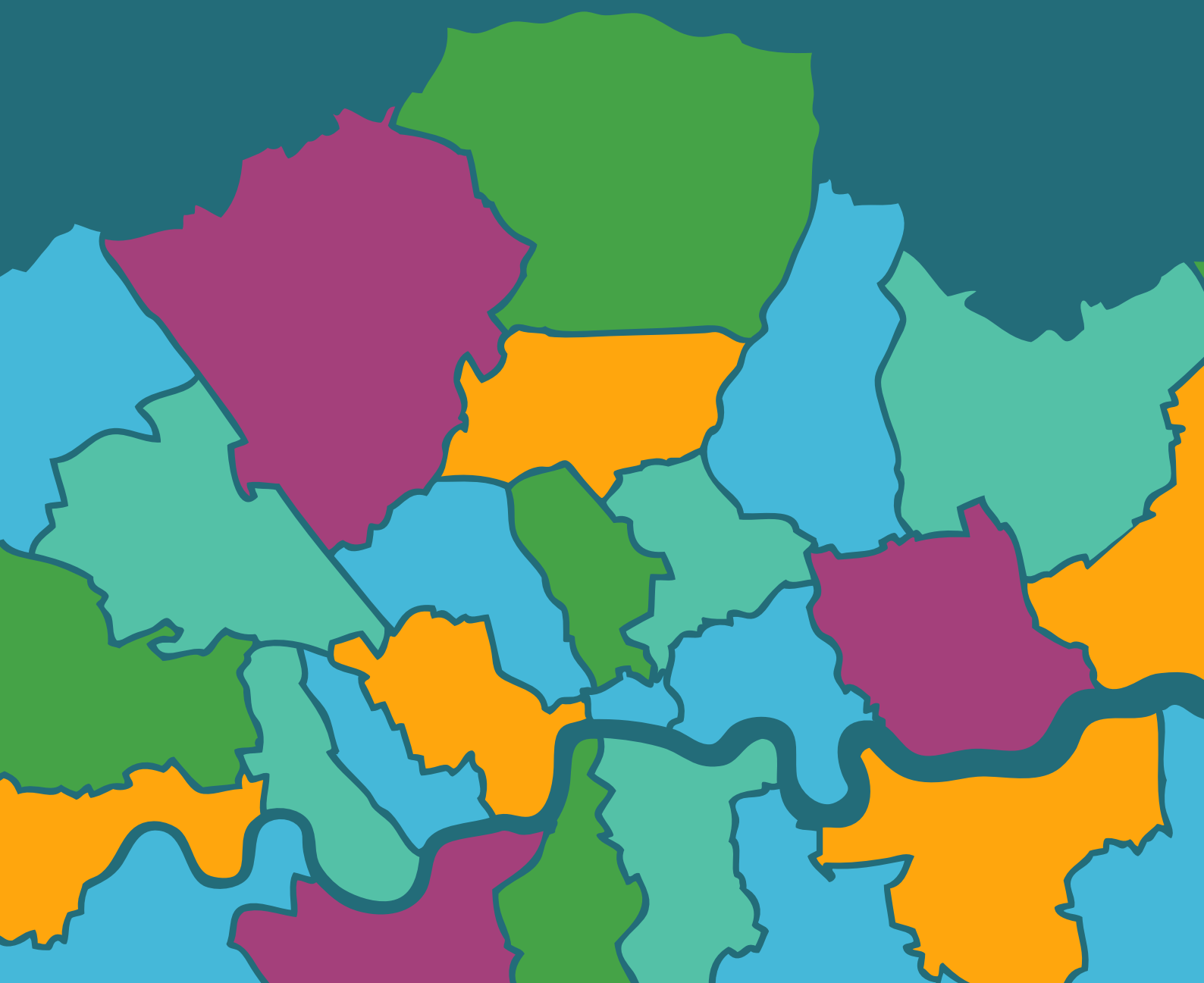


Beyond the Food Bank

London Food Poverty Profile

2017





Foreword by Sarah Williams

London's wealth is famous and visible and being consumed, literally, in a multitude of eateries. But experience and observation shows us that London's wealth co-exists alongside poverty and hardship; millions of Londoners struggle with the high cost of housing, the increasingly precarious nature of work – and often worry about whether there will be enough money left to pay for food.

London's local authorities – the councils surveyed for this report – are not the cause of these problems and they cannot provide all the answers. But, as this report once again shows, there are a number of practical actions they can take to help people eat well, and to improve the food environment in their boroughs for everyone - not least by adopting a holistic food poverty action plan, as described on

pages 8 and 9. Our findings show that some councils are taking more action than others and that, despite financial constraints, many have made progress since 2016. But as wages remain flat and living costs continue to rise for many, I hope this report inspires further action.

A handwritten signature in white ink, reading 'S. Williams'.

Introduction

This is London Food Link's third *Beyond the Food Bank: London Food Poverty Profile* report. It tracks what London councils are doing to improve household food security, which according to accepted definitions is means helping residents to 'feed themselves and their dependents adequately, healthily and without anxiety'.¹

Unfortunately, for a significant number of Londoners, including many who work, household food *insecurity*, or food poverty, is a daily reality. This means many people end up skipping or skimping on meals, choosing less healthy options, and frequently worrying about how to balance food bills against other necessities.

Food poverty has many causes. These included low pay, precarious work, ill-health and shortfalls in welfare support, combined with high housing and travel costs, which all put pressure on budgets where food is often the easiest item to squeeze. Other factors that compound this include an inability to reach shops selling a variety of nutritious foods, or a declining ability to shop and cook due to age or illness. This can result in episodes of hunger, chronic poor nutrition (with attendant ill-health) and psychological stress. Local authorities have limited powers

to tackle national problems, but the 10 measures selected for this report are all policies that councils can and are implementing, to varying degrees. By improving performance on all 10, councils can make a real difference to the health and wellbeing of their residents.

Our findings are primarily based on a self-assessment questionnaire completed by councils. To reflect changes in policy and practice and assist councils to respond, this year some questions were simplified and some expanded. The biggest change to the survey is the addition of a measure on financial support, which compares the minimum Council Tax payment required from low-income residents.

Two thirds of councils (22) responded to our survey, presenting a helpful picture of different council responses to food poverty. For those unable to respond there is a missed opportunity within these authorities to take stock of their response and identify gaps in support, as well as making year on year tracking more difficult. It is recognised that there is significant pressures on officers' capacity (as well as the particular challenges for the tri-borough following the Grenfell disaster) but continued efforts will

be made to encourage councils to recognise the benefits and engage in the process of reviewing practise.

Finally, our report is called *Beyond the Food Bank* for a reason - to encourage analysis of the underlying causes of food poverty. In recent years food banks have, justifiably, attracted public attention, due to the surge in supplies handed out by organisations such as the Trussell Trust, which has illuminated a hidden hunger crisis. Provision of food parcels, as the Trussell Trust points out, is an emergency measure where people are referred to food banks in times of crisis, often caused by wage disruptions or delays in benefit payments.² Food poverty is actually a more insidious condition – a debilitating consequence of persistent low wages, difficulties in finding work and lack of appropriate support. Food banks are a generous response to human emergency but to go beyond the food bank and reach a stage where recipient numbers go into decline – we need societal and political solutions to the underlying causes of food poverty. One good example is the Menu for Change Initiative.³ The measures being undertaken at borough level by local authorities, as tracked in this report, are a vital part of that process.

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. Boroughs should contact Sustain if there is any relevant data or information which have not been included.

The organisations that run the various accreditation schemes highlighted in the chapters and maps in the body of this report are sometimes referred to collectively as 'Sustain's partners' or 'our partners' for the purposes of this publication. Sustain's expertise is in food and farming, including food poverty. Where analysis and recommendations are included that touch on matters such as income, benefits, social services and local authority responsibilities, we have taken the expert advice of our partners and others.

Download this report at
www.sustainweb.org/foodpoverty/profile/

London Food Link

Part of Sustain, London Food Link is an independent network of individuals, businesses and organisations working for better food in the capital.

We run and partner on policy initiatives, campaigns and practical projects that improve the food system including Urban Food Fortnight, the Urban Food Awards, the Capital Growth network, The Jellied Eel magazine, London Food Poverty Campaign, the Good Food for London report as well as running good food training and networking events.

Contents

Recommendations for action	4
Which councils are leading the way in tackling food poverty?	5
London food poverty in numbers	6
Actions London councils are taking to combat food poverty:	
Develop and implement a food poverty action plan.....	7
Increase the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers.....	10
Promote breastfeeding to boost the health of infants and mothers.....	11
Protect children's centres and maximise their value.....	12
Ensure low-income families have good access to childcare.....	13
Secure children's access to food 365 days a year.....	14
Ensure all residents have physical access to good food	16
Support and enhance meals on wheels provision.....	18
Become a London Living Wage employer and promote the London Living Wage	20
Set low minimum payments for residents qualifying for Council Tax Reduction	21
Into action: tips from the councils	22
References	23

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Survey and report developed with support from: Alexandra Rose Charities, Dr Martin Caraher, Child Poverty Action Group, Family and Childcare Trust, Food Matters, Healthy Start Alliance, Living Wage Foundation, Lindsay Graham, Magic Breakfast, Myles Bremner, National Association of Care Catering, School Food Matters and Sustainable Food Cities and the Unicef Baby-Friendly Initiative

Recommendations for action

We recommend that councils continue or take on these actions to develop a local response to food poverty and the factors that drive it.

1. Have a comprehensive plan to reduce food poverty which would include these subsequent recommendations.
2. Have a designated Healthy Start coordinator and an integrated programme of activities to reach a minimum local uptake for 80%.
3. Boost breastfeeding by working towards full Unicef UK Baby Friendly accreditation.
4. Harness the value of children's centres, using them to deliver concrete actions to tackle food poverty.
5. Ensure there is sufficient and good childcare provision.
6. Work with partners to tackle hunger among children throughout the year.
7. Lead on activities to improve physical access to good food by working with planners, retailers and caterers.
8. Reinvigorate provision of meals on wheels, developing a 'more than the meal' approach.
9. Become an accredited London Living Wage employer and contractor, champion the London Living Wage with local employers and become a Friendly Funder.
10. Minimise the burden of Council Tax payments for residents on low-income.

Which London boroughs are leading the way in tackling food poverty in their area?

	Food Poverty Action Plan	Healthy Start	Breast Feeding	Children's Centres	Childcare	365 Food	Physical Access	Meals On Wheels	Living Wage	Council Tax Reduction	Overall Score
Islington											75
Lambeth											73
Greenwich											72
Tower Hamlets											65
Lewisham											65
Croydon											62
Southwark											57
Redbridge											52
Camden											51
Merton											50
Kingston upon Thames											48
Hackney											45
Haringey											37
City of London											36
Ealing											35
Hounslow											33
Enfield											32
Harrow											30
Barking and Dagenham											29
Havering											26
Richmond upon Thames											26
Wandsworth											25
Barnet											*
Bexley											*
Brent											*
Bromley											*
Hammersmith & Fulham											*
Hillingdon											*
Kensington and Chelsea											*
Newham											*
Sutton											*
Waltham Forest											*
Westminster											*

* No survey response received and these councils have not been scored.
We have included the data received from the Unicef Baby Friendly Initiative and the Living Wage Foundation.

London food poverty in numbers



722,000 London workers (around 20%) earn less than the London Living Wage⁵

111,101 emergency food parcels were given to Londoners in 2016-17⁶

>36,900 schoolchildren are not getting the free school meals they are entitled to⁷

London councils' response

8 councils have a food poverty action plan and 4 are developing one

16 councils are accredited London Living Wage employers

4 councils provide universal free school meals to all primary school children

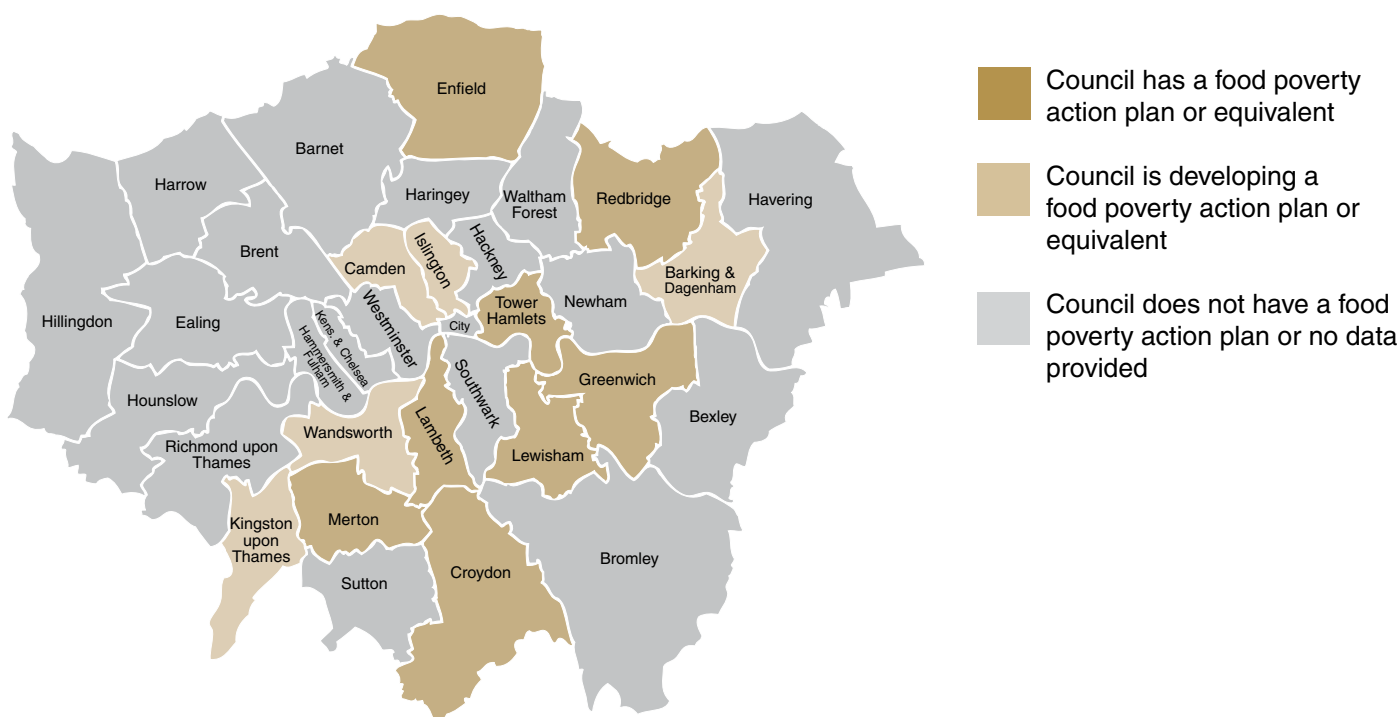
15 London councils provided meals on wheels service in 2016⁸

Why this matters

Food poverty action plans are coordinated strategies for ensuring all local residents have good access to affordable, nourishing food. They can span all the issues covered in this report, and more. Their structure and approach vary according to local priorities, but they begin with an assessment of current needs and provision, and go on to

develop concrete actions. Areas with plans have found they bring multiple benefits. This is because they raise the profile of the issues with local decision makers, and highlight linkages; act as a catalyst for cross-sector partnerships; enlist local businesses; attract resources; and enable officers to allocate time to the issues. The 2016 *Beyond the Food Bank* report identified that only one third of London boroughs had

or were developing Plans. To boost the process, the Greater London Authority has now allocated funding to five councils to develop action plans, with support from Sustain (see pages 8-9).



What can councils do?

1. Download Sustain's Guide to Developing Food Poverty Action Plans and review examples of other areas' plans.
2. Make a start! Establish a steering and/or working group and hold an initial workshop or summit bringing together a wide range of organisations addressing food poverty.
3. Carry out a needs analysis and map current activity across the borough.

Tracking progress

Eight participating councils had food poverty action plans, and five more were developing them. Sadly, one council had abandoned its plan since last year. Of the 13 councils reporting they had a plan in place or in progress, 11 had established multi-sectoral groups to oversee the process; seven had designated a councillor to lead on the work and 11 had allocated resources and / or staff time to it. All of these actions have been identified as factors likely to lead to successful implementation.



Developing food poverty action plans in five London boroughs

Around the UK, food poverty action plans have helped to bring partners together to address the issue more effectively. In late 2016, London councils were invited to apply for Greater London Authority (GLA) funding to develop food poverty action plans, with Croydon, Enfield, Merton, Redbridge and Tower Hamlets receiving the funding. Sustain provided additional support to the five boroughs, made possible through funding from Trust for London, which included advice to individual boroughs and help with sharing learning among the five boroughs and beyond. The final plans will be published in due course. There will also be a second round of GLA funding, and support from Sustain, for five more boroughs to develop food poverty action plans.

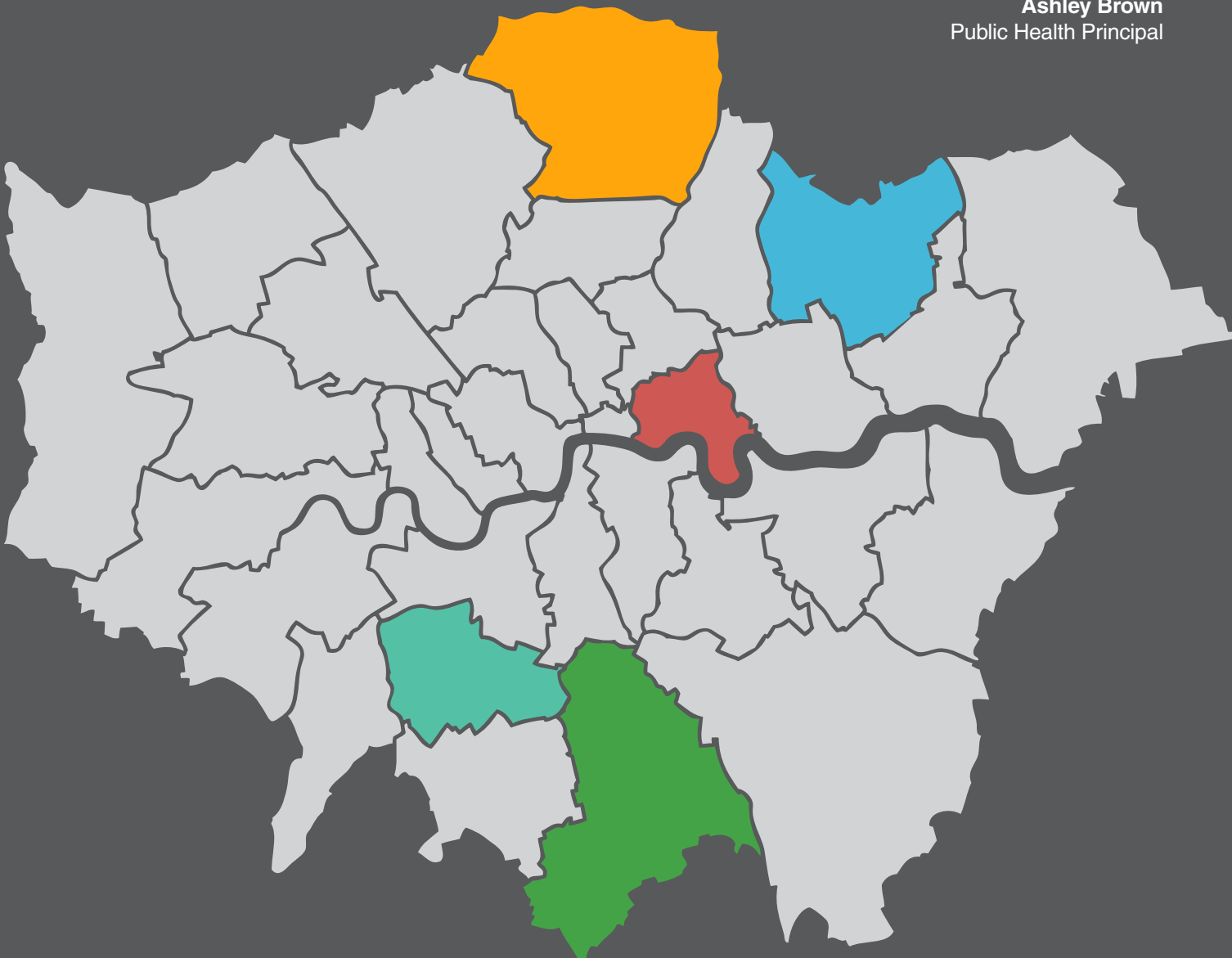
Using the funding available, all five boroughs conducted a review of evidence and action through desk research and consultation with individuals and organisations. They also all established working groups to oversee the development of the plan. This section pulls out some of the key activities and learning that has taken place during the development of plans.

Croydon

Croydon's action plan builds on the experiences and learning from being a *Food Flagship*⁹ borough and the work already undertaken by the council's Gateway and Welfare team. The Public Health team hosted two workshops with key stakeholders to build up a picture of food poverty and to identify the borough's priorities for ensuring access to healthy food.

"Developing the action plan has allowed us explore the current situation in Croydon and work with stakeholders to address the issue of food poverty. Some fantastic work is taking place in the borough such as an increased take-up of healthy school meals, food growing, cooking courses and more businesses offering better menu choices. Residents can find out more on our health platform www.justbecroydon.org"

Ashley Brown
Public Health Principal



Enfield

The Council's Public Health team produced a *Food Poverty Profile*, supplemented by a food mapping exercise which identified areas of the borough with limited access to affordable healthy food. Surveys provided vital insight into the experiences and views of residents and community groups. Further research will be conducted to investigate the factors affecting food poverty locally. As well as informing the food poverty action plan, these evidence-gathering activities helped foster greater buy-in from local decision makers.

"The process involved in developing an action plan has enabled us to explore the current situation in Enfield and identify areas of the borough where we need to target our resources. By bringing together key stakeholders we've started to coordinate our efforts to address the issues of food poverty. We've identified initiatives that could be upscaled (e.g. Healthy Start), as well as new projects (e.g. Kitchen Social) and funding opportunities. A stakeholder workshop for the public, Council and local businesses will help us to further develop the action plan."

Ailbhe Bhreathnach
Health in all Policies Strategist

Tower Hamlets

As well as scoping, research and consultation activities, the council ran an 'open space' whole systems stakeholder event that explored the challenges and opportunities to address them. Over 50 attendees from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors attended. The event was successful in generating the values and principles, threading through the plan and partner buy-in to the five key priority action groups that link to existing assets and plans. The action groups include: integrating food poverty into the corporate action plan, food growing, access to more fresh food, education knowledge and tackling hunger. Groups have tended to concentrate on whole system solutions such as generating more meanwhile growing opportunities and growing groups in localities.

Merton

The council's Public Health Department and Corporate Services contracted Sustainable Merton to lead on developing the plan. Two successful consultation workshops have informed the plan. The first workshop helped to get a broader understanding of factors affecting food poverty, as well as map the needs of residents in the borough and the services currently on offer. The second workshop created an opportunity for partners from a range of organisations to explore solutions and bring together local stakeholders as well as FareShare, Mayor's Fund for London, Olio and Sustain to give their input and share experiences. The food poverty action plan will also closely link to Merton's *Child Healthy Weight Action Plan* as the definition of food poverty includes the inability to afford, or to have access to, the food needed for a healthy diet.

"Our research has unearthed several food initiatives in the borough that already offer vital support to combat food poverty. Many of these rely heavily on help from volunteers. It had also highlighted avenues where these projects could benefit from closer partnerships to achieve even more successful outcomes. We hope to engage organisations and residents further, through a drive to divert good food that is currently wasted, back into the community and to those who may need it."

Michelle Kolattek
Community Officer
Sustainable Merton

"Tower Hamlet's Action Plan will play a significant role in addressing health inequalities. With local communities, we've designed a plan to challenge and improves existing food systems. This includes developing primary schools for communities experiencing holiday food insecurity, deploying land for food growing, and encouraging food sellers to promote use of fresh fruit and vegetables. Developing the action plan has renewed commitment across the partnership to address issues of food insecurity within Tower Hamlets"

Dr Somen Banerjee
Director of Public Health Tower Hamlets

Redbridge

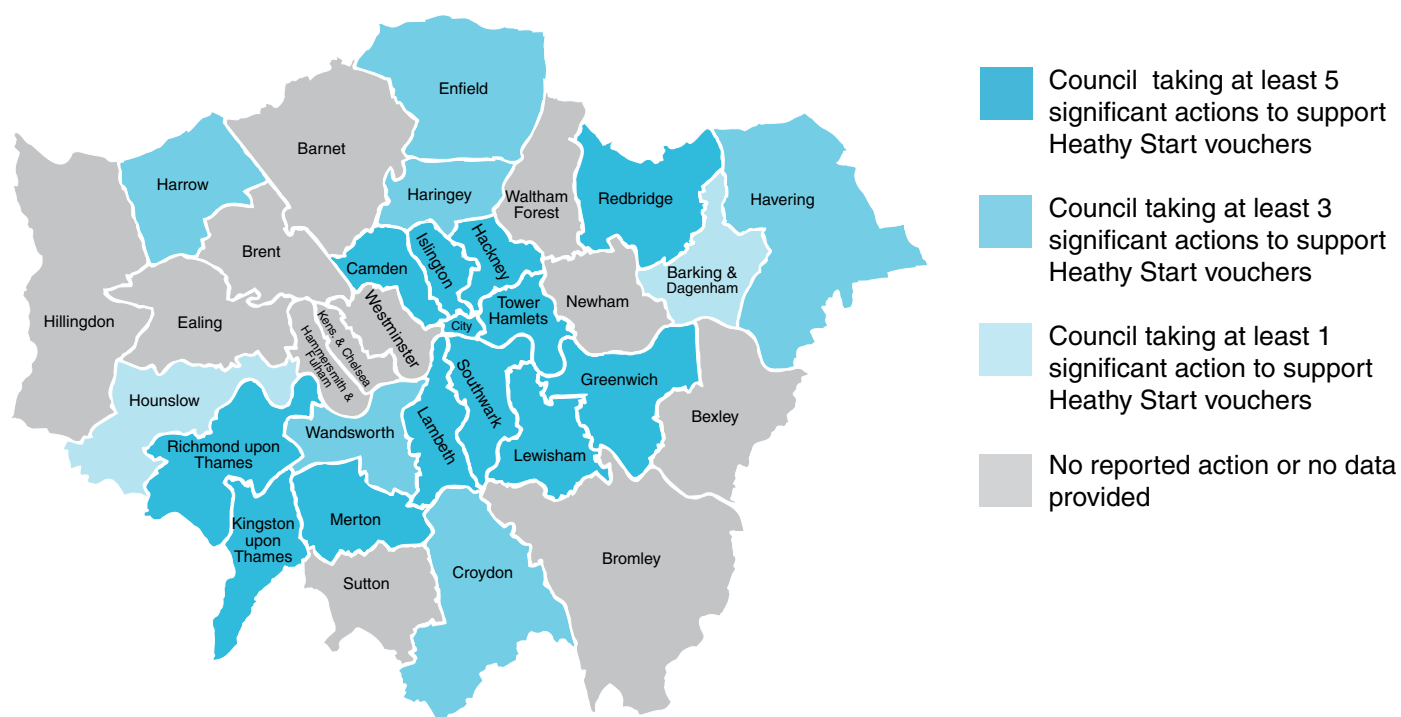
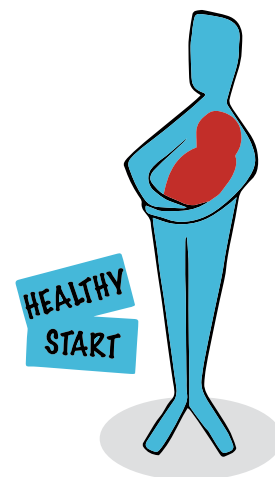
Redbridge Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) was contracted by the council to lead on researching and drafting an action plan. To inform the plan, they ran an online survey and had interviews and focus groups with residents to better understand potential drivers of food insecurity. A multi-agency steering group made up of representatives from Public Health, Housing, Social Care, Children's Centres, the local food bank, Redbridge CVS and Sustain met on a monthly basis to guide the development of the action plan. The Healthy Start Alliance, the Mayor's Fund for London and school meals provider ISS also gave presentations to the group. The council produced a *Food Security Profile* assessing the extent of and potential drivers for food insecurity in the borough. This research includes surveys for individuals and community organisations, as well as interviews and focus groups with individuals and some engagement of local businesses.

"Redbridge Council has worked in partnership with our local CVS and Sustain to develop a plan to improve access to healthy food for our residents. This has been a great way to address the issues of food insecurity and limited access to healthy food for some communities in the borough. A number of organisations have been involved in developing the plan including the Redbridge Food Bank and Children's Centres, all of whom have been extremely enthusiastic and supportive. Implementing the plan will support efforts to improve health and tackle health inequalities in the Borough, and support the commitments made in the declaration on healthy food and drink that the council adopted this summer."

Vicky Hobart
Director of Public Health
Adult Care and Wellbeing

Healthy Start is a programme funded by central government that provides eligible women and children with vitamins and vouchers to spend on fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, cow's milk and infant formula. Each voucher is worth £3.10. To qualify, women must be on low income, and either pregnant or the parent of a child under four years old (all pregnant women

under 18 qualify). The scheme also provides coupons for free vitamins. It is the only government scheme that directly supports healthy food purchases. However, uptake of the vouchers varies considerably, and many eligible parents do not apply and are not offered access by their health visitor or midwife. Councils can promote uptake in various ways, and can also ask central government for data on the uptake in their area, but not all do so.



Tracking progress

1. Designate and support a council officer or health professional to have overall responsibility for Healthy Start food vouchers and vitamins.
2. Ensure that information on Healthy Start is available in all relevant settings and that workers and volunteers are sufficiently trained to support families apply for the scheme.
3. Pool resources across departments and/or boroughs to pay for Healthy Start training for staff and volunteers.

Health professionals in most boroughs were trained to provide information on Healthy Start, and leaflets were fairly widely available. But only around half the councils that submitted data were promoting the scheme actively and systematically – for example by having a designated coordinator, collecting data, or having a strategy for increasing uptake. Only about a third provided training to workers in other organisations on how to help potential beneficiaries to apply. Importantly, a few councils scored extra points for encouraging a wider range of retailers to accept

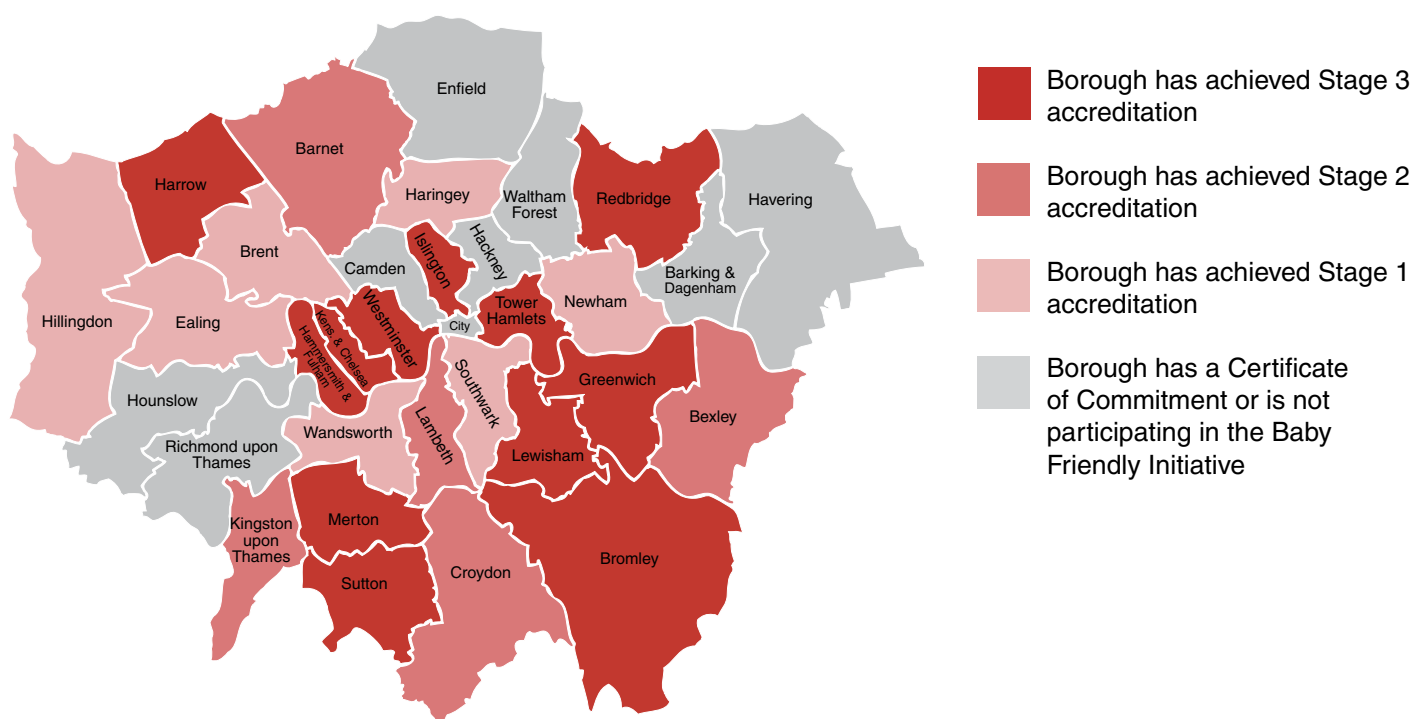
vouchers, for example involving street markets (where fruit and vegetables tend to be cheaper) and local corner shops.

Why this matters

The WHO and UK Governments recommend that all babies should be exclusively breastfed for 6 months and thereafter with other foods for around two years. In the UK only 34% of babies are receiving any breastmilk at 6 months, compared to 71% in Norway. Importantly, women living on low incomes or in deprived areas are among those

least likely to breastfeed. Social and cultural factors are held to be the main obstacles, so promoting breastfeeding and supporting mothers is a shared responsibility.¹⁰ To ensure that new mothers have the knowledge and confidence to begin and continue breastfeeding, boroughs can become accredited with the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative.¹¹ This uses a set of interlinking standards for maternity,

health visiting, neonatal and children's centre services. Analysis has shown that the initiative is an effective strategy for increasing breastfeeding rates. Local authorities can also play an important role by welcoming breastfeeding in all public spaces and council-run workplaces and ensuring all settings are aware that the Equality Act 2010 allows for mums to feed their babies without discrimination.

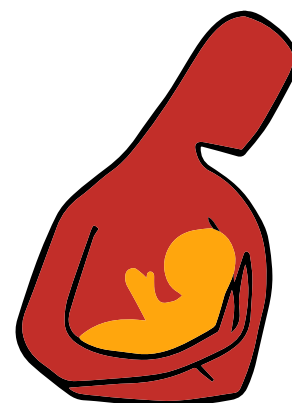


What can councils do?

1. Work towards full Baby Friendly accreditation in all eligible services, including ensuring access to the required training.
2. Join the National Infant Feeding Network for London.¹²

Tracking progress

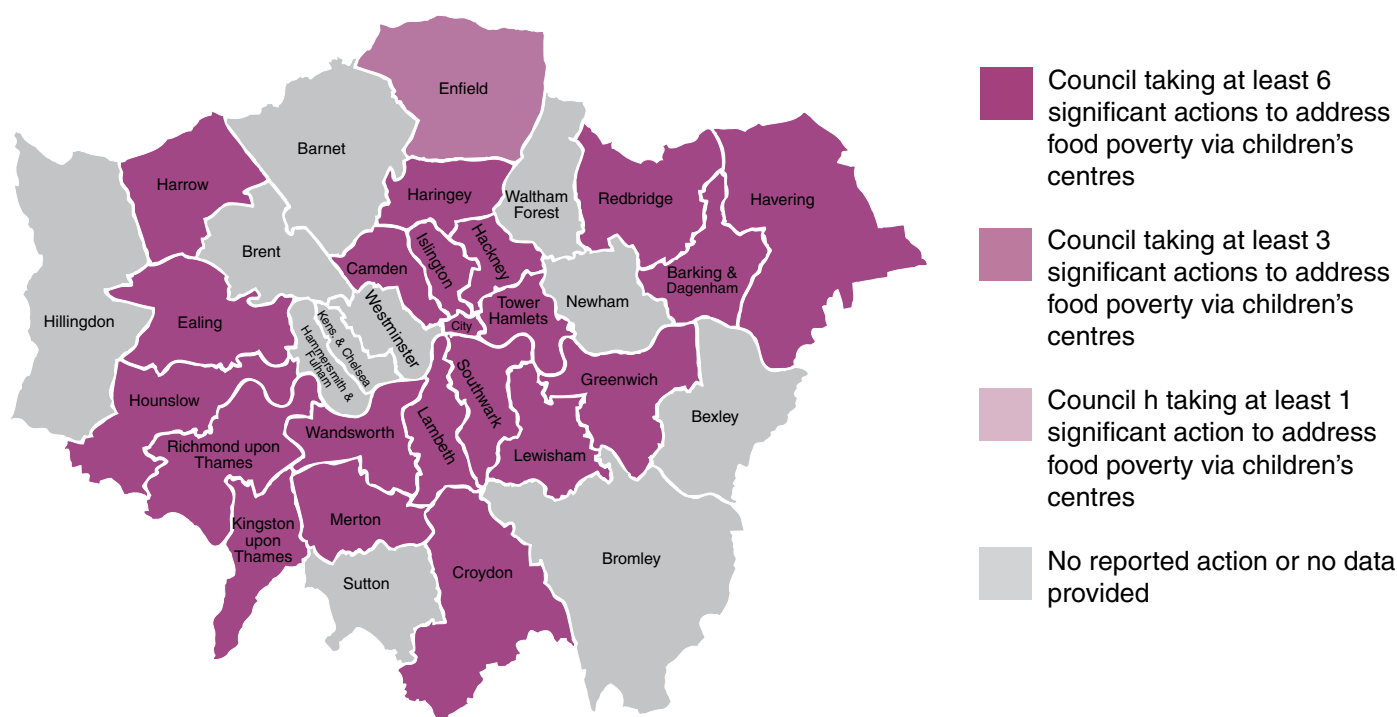
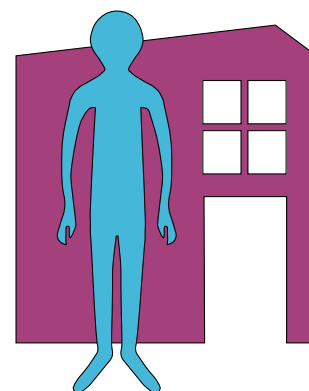
Overall 24 boroughs are already at Stage 1 or above or taking steps to achieve Stage 1. One borough, Bromley, moved from Stage 2 to Stage 3 - the highest level of accreditation - since last year. But one more was at Stage 2 and four more at Stage 1. Six boroughs, (Barking and Dagenham, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Hounslow and Richmond) though not yet accredited, were engaged with the scheme and either already had a Certificate of Commitment, had achieved Stage 1 in some services, or had undertaken preparatory work.



Why this matters

Provision of 'sufficient' children's centres is a statutory duty for local authorities. This is critical as children's centres provide a one-stop-shop for a range of community health services, parenting and family support, plus links to training and employment opportunities, for families with children under five. A six-year evaluation found

that attending centres improved children's personal, social and emotional development, and school readiness. The same report also showed that adults benefited from improved parenting skills and greater knowledge of child development, as well as receiving help with personal needs.¹³ Leading from this it can be seen that they can, therefore, play a vital role in supporting families at risk of food poverty.



What can councils do?

1. Continue to protect funding for children's centres and the number of children's centres
2. Make maximum use of children's centres to address food poverty supporting Healthy Start, healthy cooking on a budget, income maximisation, or debt and employment advice.
3. Consider how children's centres can play a role in increasing access to fresh fruit and vegetables, for example through stalls or coops.

Tracking progress

Councils deserve credit for protecting children's centres amid drastic budget cuts. The findings show that 16 councils had kept the same number, with one council - Havering – increasing the number of children centres. While nine councils reported a fall in funding, four (Croydon, Lambeth, Merton and Redbridge) had still managed to maintain the same number of centres with less funding. Those scoring highly used centres to provide multiple services to help avert food poverty, including cooking classes, benefits and debt advice, employment services,

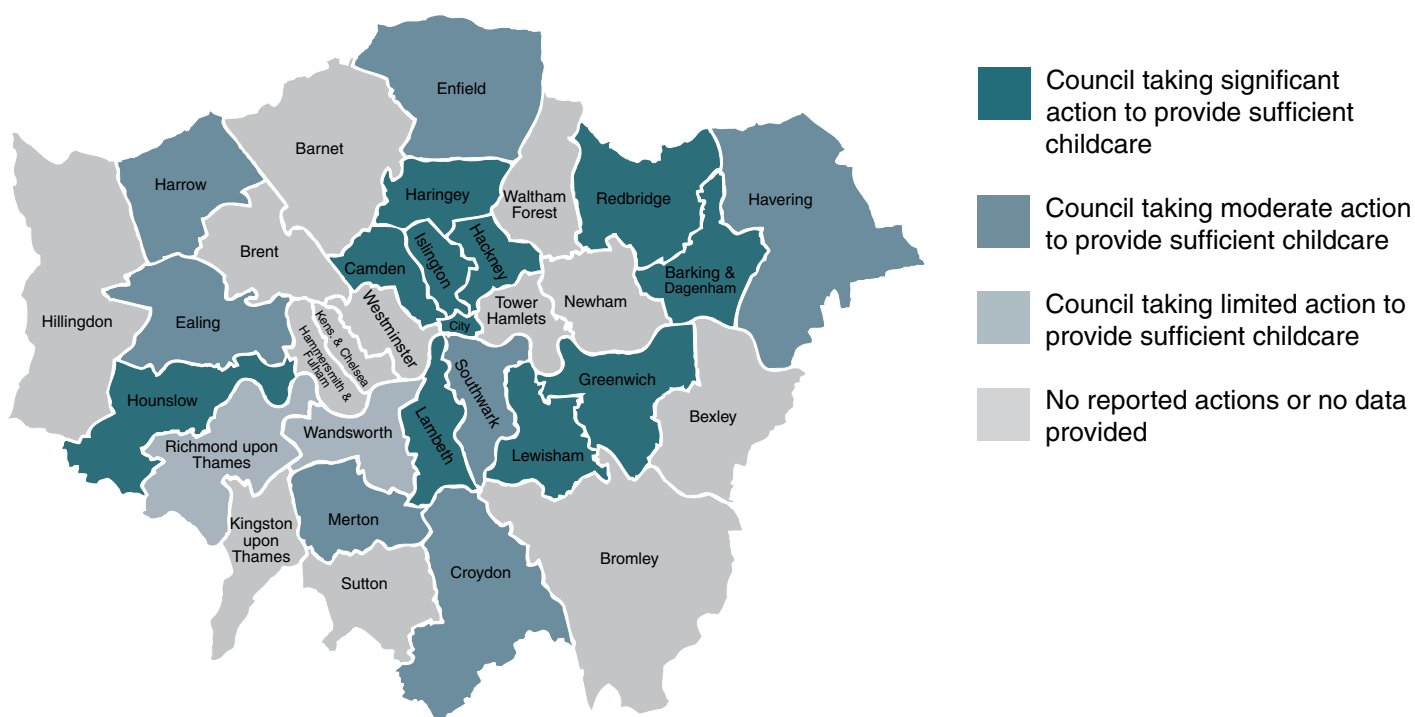
information about Healthy Start and childcare, and breastfeeding support. Two councils, Greenwich and Lambeth, had made efforts to ensure children were fed during school holidays while in Southwark and some centres had community kitchens. Hackney and Lambeth also used children's centres to distribute charity-funded Alexandra Rose Vouchers, which can be spent on fruit and vegetables, supplementing the Healthy Start scheme.

Why this matters

Access to high-quality, affordable childcare is essential if parents, and especially mothers, are to be able to work to support their families and maintain their skills. Childcare costs are one of the most serious issues facing Londoners, with fees preventing some parents from working. There is also variable availability of affordable childcare

across the capital. Every child in London aged three or four (as well as some two-year olds) is entitled to 15 hours of free childcare a week from an approved childcare provider. From September 2017, the entitlement for three- and four-year-olds has been extended for working parents to 30 hours a week. Local authorities have a duty to ensure that enough childcare is available to meet these requirements. To do

so, they should carry out regular Childcare Sufficiency Assessments, and if provision is lacking they should produce plans to remedy the situation.

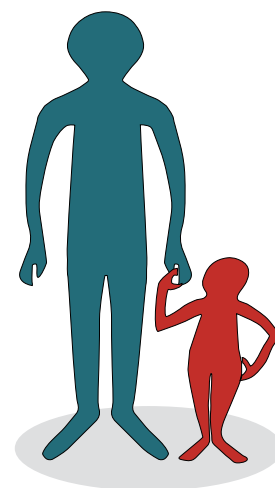


What can councils do?

1. Keep childcare assessments up to date, and ensure provision is both adequate and appropriately distributed throughout the borough.
2. Draw up plans to remedy deficiencies in the quantity or spread of childcare available.
3. All children cared for over a mealtime should be provided with a healthy meal, healthy snacks and drinks should be available at other times, and staff should be sufficiently trained to support healthy eating.

Tracking progress

This year almost all councils had an up-to-date Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, but only six had adequate care in all parts of the borough, and of the rest only three had clear remedial plans in place. Funding healthy food provision for children as part of childcare provision is discretionary, and only three councils (Camden, Haringey and Lambeth) had taken this step, despite its potential to improve nutrition and ease costs for low-income families. Camden, with the highest marks on this measure, had a perfect score reflecting an up-to-date assessment, adequate coverage in all parts of the borough, and use of funding for food for two, three and four year olds.



Increasing free school meal uptake in Havering

Havering's Learning and Achievement Team ran a check on all families receiving housing benefits with children attending a school in Havering, as well as a check on the pupil database of all children who were registered as eligible for free school meals (FSM). By comparing the two reports they were able to find 250 children from the housing benefit list who were not registered for FSM. This inspired the team to develop an opt-out system, involving writing to all of the identified families stating that unless families said otherwise, they would advise the school that their child was eligible for pupil premium funding. The letter also informed parents that their child could now receive FSM immediately using the letter, in case the school system hadn't been updated. As a result only 10 parents opted out, meaning a significant number of pupils were now receiving a free meal.

The Learning and Achievement team also contacted all schools (about 80) with the names of the children found to be eligible, asking schools to notify them when this had been updated on the school system and following up on any who did not reply. Through this process an additional £300,000 in pupil premium funding has been received by the schools and from now on the opt-out process will be used on a regular basis.

Lewisham Council's holiday meal provision pilot

Through the Lewisham Food Partnership, Lewisham Council's Public Health Team coordinated a mapping exercise to identify partners who would volunteer their services to pilot a holiday meal provision project. The pilot ran for a week during the summer holiday in 2017, with the key challenge to run the service with existing community assets and no additional funds.

Lewisham Training Kitchen (operated by Chartwells, Lewisham's school catering service) and FareShare London (a charity that collects and redistributes surplus food) agreed to work together. Somerville Youth and Play Provision, located in the north of the borough, where deprivation levels are relatively high, was nominated as the pilot site. Chartwells supplied ingredients and prepared, delivered and served the meals. FareShare donated surplus yoghurt and fruit each day.

Over the week, 269 meals were served to children aged 5 to 18 years old. The meals were compliant with the school food standards and puddings contained very little or no added sugar, supporting the council's efforts to become a Sugar Smart borough.¹⁴ The recipes were distributed to children to take home to their families.

The pilot has provided useful information and created a dialogue across teams. The borough now hopes to establish a steering group to enable holiday meal provision in future.



"The holidays add emotional, physical and financial stress to parents and families. You have to prepare in advance to "make it work" in the holidays. It has been a relief knowing that the children are taking part in activities here and also being offered a decent meal. As a result, I would like to volunteer and give back to Somerville Youth and Play Provision"

Parent of two children



Why this matters

With almost 4 in 10 (37%) of the capital's children living in poverty,¹⁵ there is no doubt that many experience hunger.¹⁶ Research for the GLA found that 9% of London children sometimes went to bed hungry, and teachers report children arriving at school too hungry to learn.¹⁷ There are various ways council can help. The most important is by ensuring that all those entitled

to free school meals (FSM) claim them (universal provision applies only to infant pupils). Breakfast clubs are popular and can improve concentration and behaviour,¹⁸ but they are not centrally funded and support varies widely between boroughs and schools. Finally, councils can tackle 'holiday hunger', when children who receive free school meals are at risk of not getting a healthy balanced diet during the holidays due to the squeeze on families' budgets.



What can councils do?

1. Ensure that all eligible children are registered for free school meals.
2. Provide free breakfasts to pupils in receipt of free school meals, and provide universal free school breakfasts in schools with greater than 35% FSM eligibility.
3. Collect and share information on local activities where food is available during the holidays and work with partners to refer children who may be at risk of holiday hunger.

Tracking progress

This question asked how councils supported meals for pre-school age children, school lunches, breakfast clubs and holiday food schemes. Responses varied, suggesting there is scope for sharing best practice. Islington Council scored well across the board, and was one of only three participating councils (Southwark and Tower Hamlets) and one non-participating council (Newham) to offer free lunches to all primary pupils. Five boroughs also offered free meals to pre-school age children. Islington (like Havering and Redbridge) also worked hard to keep uptake high, but overall only

around half the councils monitored uptake. Ealing and Lewisham funded school breakfasts. Of the rest of the councils, around half collated information on breakfast clubs, but a few, notably Southwark, were more diligent about this and published the details. On holiday food provision, few councils reported taking action, but there were exceptions; Southwark provided funding for holiday food provision, Lewisham coordinated a holiday meal provision pilot, Islington ensured its holiday play and youth activities provided healthy snacks or meals, and Havering was planning holiday food 'hubs' supported by the Mayor's Fund for London Kitchen Social programme.¹⁹

Barking and Dagenham's 'Mobile Green Grocer' mobile food store

Barking and Dagenham's 'Mobile Green Grocer' is a mobile unit that offers fresh fruit and vegetables at competitive prices. The service is run by Community Food Enterprise Limited (CFE), a registered charity and social enterprise business. The 'Mobile Green Grocer' store is a Luton van which has been customised so that shoppers can come on board and select their own produce. The service is currently set up near to two schools in the borough. It also provides a service to supported living units for people with learning disabilities, as part of a wider programme to promote the benefits of good nutrition to this target population. To help promote the service, the CFE attends a number of events organised by the council through the year.

Harrow's Fruitables: term-time fruit and veg stalls

When Harrow Council put out a call for projects to tackle childhood obesity and get kids interested in healthy eating, Steve Porter's social enterprise, now called Capable Communities, won – and Fruitables was born. It set up stalls selling fruit and vegetables and running cooking demonstrations during term-time in four local school playgrounds. They were staffed by parent volunteers who also received training in food hygiene (Level 2), health and safety (Level 1) and food preparation.

The results proved very encouraging; as Steve says, seeing a seven-year-old run across the playground for a 14p carrot is an inspiring sight, and beyond that, the project was creating a support network for the parents (mostly mothers) from diverse backgrounds who shared the fact that they had children in the same school. Parents were also acquiring skills that could help them find work. These outcomes meant that when the three years of funding finished, further funding was accessed through social prescribing, which involves referral of patients with social, emotional or practical needs to local, non-clinical services, often provided by the voluntary sector. The project now works closely with the local Clinical Commissioning Group, and makes a small amount of money from selling the produce.

Croydon Gateway's co-produced community food club

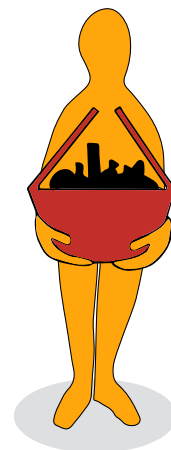
Croydon Council, in collaboration with local voluntary and community sector partners and FareShare, will deliver a 'pantry model' inspired community food club. The club will be located in The Family Centre in New Addington and will open late Oct 2017. Members will pay a small weekly fee to obtain eight to ten food items per week, including fresh fruit and vegetables. The aim is to support members to become financially stable and where relevant provide housing support by helping to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness. The membership will also include access to an onsite community job club, health and wellbeing advice, training and volunteering opportunities, referrals for budgeting and debt support as well as signposting to other local voluntary, community and statutory advice and support services.

Why this matters

London has no shortage of food outlets, but Londoners do not have equal access to food, with some densely populated areas lacking access to shops selling fresh produce, and some high streets dominated by fast food. Local authorities can intervene to ensure that residents have access to a variety of healthy foods. To begin with, they can map food provision to

see which areas have limited access to certain types of shop; whether public transport routes link to food shops; and whether, for example, outlets selling unhealthy snacks are congregating near school gates. They can then use their planning powers to encourage a spread and diversity of shops and markets, ensure that new developments have enough food shops, and support good public transport links. They can also play an important role in

encouraging local businesses to provide healthier options, and to accept both Healthy Start vouchers and, where available, the charitably funded Alexandra Rose vouchers, redeemable for fruit and vegetables.



What can councils do?

1. Map food access, checking how easy it is for lower income groups and those who face other barriers such as disabled people, older people or parents to get to local shops that sell varied and healthy foods.
2. Use planning processes and business rates to foster shops, shopping areas and markets selling healthy diverse foods, including healthy takeaways.
3. Provide information to local businesses about Healthy Start, the Healthy Catering

Commitment and where available the Alexandra Rose scheme, and encourage them to participate in these schemes.

Tracking progress

A good number of councils are working hard to understand and improve food access. The most common form of mapping was of takeaway outlets near schools. Around half of the councils had planning documents focussing on food, and 15 involved a senior public health or health official in planning decisions. Many councils were providing advice and incentives

to small shops to supply healthier options, or supporting street markets. Three-quarters participated in the Healthy Catering Commitment, which helps outlets to make menus healthier (Haringey had 110 outlets in a deprived part of the borough signed up). Kingston Council included support for community growing, cook-and-eat sessions, an annual feast for homeless people and promotion of healthy eating in workplaces. Haringey council had included food growing in park redevelopment and provided capital funding for a healthier fast food outlet, offering teatime £2 'juniors specials' that were subsidised through evening trade.

Developing a new approach to meals on wheels in Camden and beyond

Finding a sustainable solution to supporting our growing older population is an issue that social care, health and public health services, as well as families, are struggling with. As budgets tighten, public services often re-focus on statutory provision. This leaves individuals having to resolve crucial needs themselves that, if met, would save money in the long term, such as access to nutritious meals, hydration, and dealing with loneliness.

In response to this challenge, Hertfordshire Independent Living Service (a charitable social enterprise), One Housing (a leading housing association), and apetito (the UK's largest food manufacturer for the health and care sector) joined forces to help vulnerable Londoners through a brand new 'meals and more' service – London Independent Living Service (LILS).

LILS operates from One Housing's famous Arlington House, providing daily nutritious lunches alongside caring welfare checks and multi-portion meals for lunch clubs. Clients choose meals from a wide menu, or can select a personalised menu to meet their health, religious, or ethical requirements and can receive meals as often as they like. Along with the meals, the LILS team provide a friendly face, reassurance, and caring welfare checks, making sure that clients are well nourished and getting in extra help when needed.

Although currently restricted to Camden, the service aims to extend across London to provide much needed support for older and vulnerable people and hard-stretched health and care services. LILS also hopes to add to its services to offer the wider nutrition, health, and wellbeing support that HILS currently provides throughout Hertfordshire.

"Not only do I enjoy the food, but I've got someone to chat to. It can get quite lonely here, and because I live on my own, I don't see many people. I've got no family or anything, so it's nice that someone comes in each day."

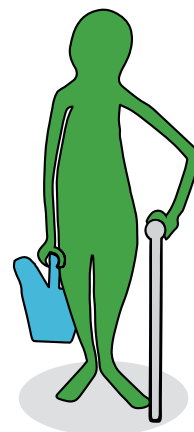
Margaret
Meals on wheels client



Why this matters

Poor nutrition in older people, or in people who for various reasons cannot easily get out to buy food, is part of a vicious circle: lack of nourishment makes them frailer, which in turn makes them less able to provide nourishing food for themselves. With an aging population and a well-publicised shortfall in care budgets,²⁰ meals on wheels services, which deliver some sort of

meal to people in need have never seemed like a better idea – but they are in decline. Research last year found that fewer than half of councils across London were providing a service, whereas two years earlier, two-thirds had been supplying a daily hot meal.²¹ There is great scope for London councils to use meals on wheels as a way to help people retain their health and independence and there are working examples of services doing this.²²



- Council providing significant support via a meals on wheels service
- Council providing moderate support via a meals on wheels service
- Council providing limited support via a meals on wheels service
- No borough service or no data provided

What can councils do?

1. Explore examples of effective models for meals on wheels services which address a wide range of needs and councils' objectives.
2. Maximise referrals to local services by ensuring all relevant staff are aware of local provision and how people can register.
3. Ensure local services link in with meals on wheels services to bring multiple benefits, such as nutritional advice, falls prevention and fire safety.

Tracking progress

In 2017, just nine out of 22 councils surveyed had a meals on wheels service of some sort and of these only Tower Hamlets prepared and distributed meals, with three others (Greenwich, Hackney and Southwark) buying meals to distribute, and five more (Croydon, Haringey, Kingston, Lambeth and Richmond) subsidising a contracted-out service. Only a handful of boroughs maximised the value of meal deliveries to conduct welfare checks or to link to other services, but most providers helped recipients

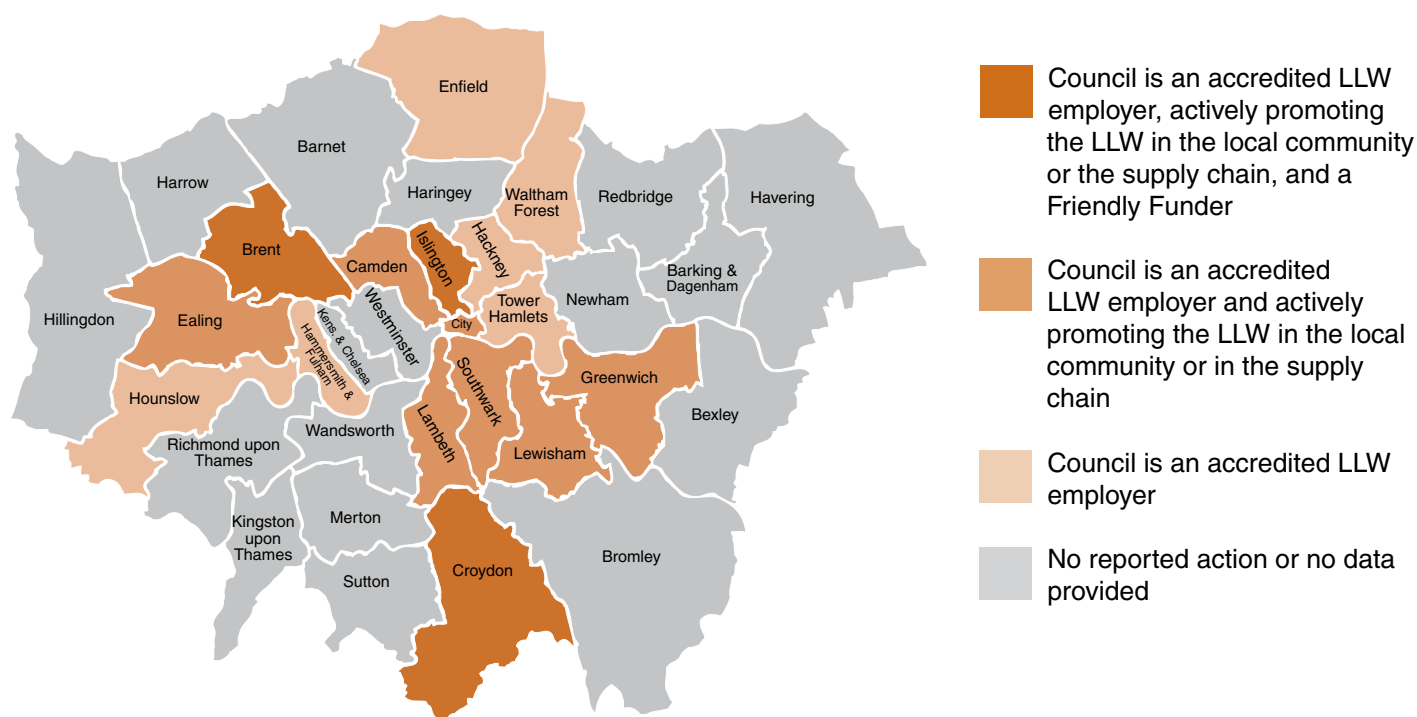
by ensuring they were able to eat meals by, for example, removing lids or cutting up food. Of those not providing a service, eight councils signposted residents to external services.

Why this matters

Raising incomes is the surest way to lift people out of poverty, and therefore food poverty. The London Living Wage (LLW) is set at £9.75 an hour, based on what people in the capital need to live on, and applies to all workers over 18. Being paid the LLW can mean the difference between 'just about managing' and earning enough for a decent life, including being able to

afford adequate, good quality food. Currently almost one in five jobs in London pays below the LLW, with female part-time employees and young people suffering most from the implications of living on a low wage.²³ Councils can lead the way, both by becoming accredited Living Wage employers, and by setting an example to local businesses. Accredited employers make a public and accountable commitment to pay all their directly employed staff and

onsite contractors (such as cleaners) the LLW. This creates a demonstrable ripple effect, with London businesses more likely to pay the LLW if their local council is an accredited Living Wage employer. Councils can also use rate incentives to encourage sign-up and become Friendly Funders²⁴ to ensure charities receiving council funding are able to pay the LLW.²⁵



What can councils do?

1. Become an accredited London Living Wage employer.
2. Promote the London Living Wage by holding awareness events, advising local businesses on accreditation, and offering incentives, such as business rate discounts, to accredited employers.
3. Become a Friendly Funder.

Tracking progress

Councils can only score on this question if they are accredited with the Living Wage Foundation. Since 2016 Waltham Forest has become accredited, taking the total number of accredited councils to 16. This means that almost half of London's councils are still not accredited. Some of the accredited councils in our survey promoted the scheme energetically and reported benefits. For example, Hackney reported that there was 'a clear link between paying LLW and the recruitment and retention of higher-calibre staff', as demonstrated on its security services

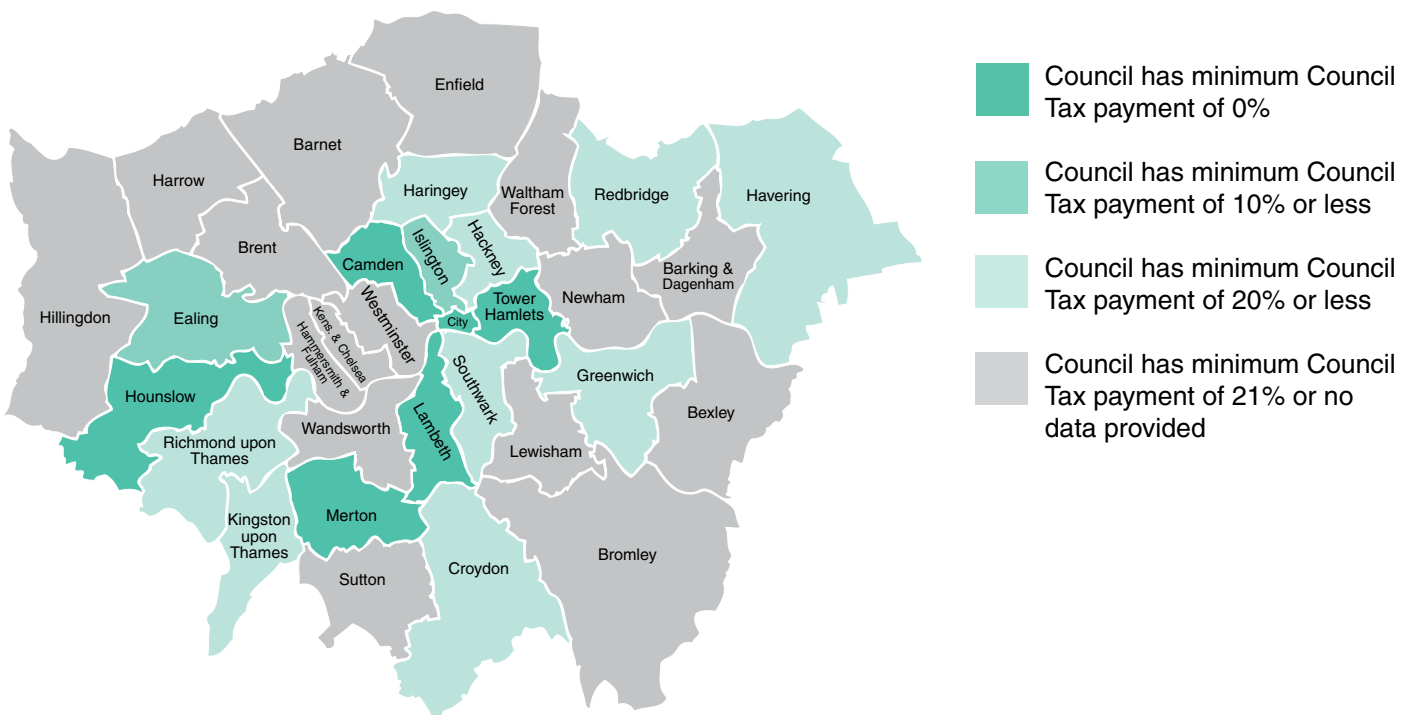
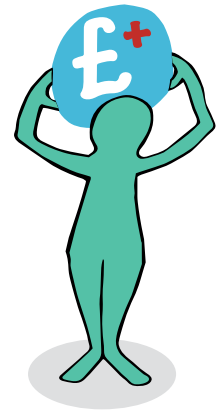
contract where there has been 0% staff turnover in the past 12 months. Greenwich has used the Public Services (Social Value) Act to promote the LLW in supply chains and City of London, Croydon, Islington and Lambeth who were all accredited as Friendly Funders. Some councils, while not accredited, used the LLW as a benchmark.



Why this matters

The number of Londoners referred to bailiffs for non-payment of Council Tax increased by 51% between 2015 and 2016. More than 80,000 of those summonsed had court costs added to their Council Tax arrears, increasing indebtedness and the likelihood that food budgets might suffer.²⁶ Since 2013, every council has been required to produce a scheme for reducing council tax

liability for people in financial need, by deciding whether a minimum payment must be made, and if so how much. This year we have included the Council Tax minimum payment as a measure of the financial support councils are giving to people at risk of food poverty.



What can councils do?

1. If possible, do not require residents on very low income to pay any Council Tax.
2. If essential, keep minimum payments at 10% or lower.
3. Refrain from using bailiffs to recover debt from Council Tax support claimants.

Tracking progress

This is a new measure, so we cannot compare scores to last year, but the 2016 Z2K/CPAG report referred to above found that seven London councils required no minimum payment. Of the 20 boroughs we surveyed, six (Camden, City of London, Hounslow, Lambeth, Merton and Tower Hamlets) required no minimum payment. Two other boroughs, Ealing and Islington, had minimum payments of under 10%. Nine other councils scored a point for keeping payments under 20% of liability.

Into action

Tips from councils

As part of this year's survey we asked respondents to include their 'top tips' for taking action on food poverty in the capital. Just some are included here.

"Using the **Sustainable Food Cities framework** helped develop a food poverty action plan."

LB Lewisham

"Three children's centres have **Healthy Start**-registered fruit and vegetable stalls, and staff have created 'introducing solids' bags for weaning children. They also allow mums to use Healthy Start vouchers over the duration of a week, as some have limited storage space."

RLB Greenwich

"We run a Meal Club, selling **hot meals to older and disabled people** in disadvantaged areas who can't access meals on wheels."

LB Harrow

"We have undertaken a lot of preparation work to achieve **Baby Friendly** Stage 1, including setting up baby feeding cafés run by trained breastfeeding supporters and health visitors. We have also set up an Infant Feeding Support line."

LB Barking and Dagenham

"**Strong partnership** work across different sectors is important."

LB Lambeth

"The re-landscaping of our parks now includes provision of land for **community food growing** for our cafés to reduce the cost of fresh vegetables used in meals."

LB Haringey

"**School meal take-up** is a standing item on the contract monitoring meetings, and the school with the lowest take-up will be targeted to identify causes (we currently do not have schools with a take up below 80%) and discuss how this can be improved. Options to boost take-up include taster sessions, improving dining rooms, inviting a parent to lunch, and making sure packed-lunch and school meal children sit together."

LB Islington

"The Southwark Seeds project supports small businesses to create more than 100 **London Living Wage** jobs and apprenticeships for vulnerable young people, with the council paying up to half the young person's salary."

LB Southwark

"Having a **dedicated infant feeding team** helped drive forward culture change towards breastfeeding across the organisation"

RLB Kingston

"**Healthy Start** is promoted to all retailers of fruit and veg rated 3 or higher on Environmental Health inspection."

LB Islington

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Beyond the Food Bank

London Food Poverty Profile

A Sustain publication

October 2017

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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London Food Link

Part of Sustain, London Food Link is an independent network of individuals, businesses and organisations working for better food in the capital.

We run and partner on policy initiatives, campaigns and practical projects that improve the food system including Urban Food Fortnight, the Urban Food Awards, the Capital Growth network, The Jellied Eel magazine, London Food Poverty Campaign, the Good Food for London report, Cage Free Capital, as well as running good food training and networking events.