

**Written submissions received for the London Assembly's Health and
Environment Committee investigation into Food Poverty
Responses received as of 14 December 2012**

Number	Organisation	Contact/Title
Sub-001	4in10	Ade Sofola – Strategic Manager
Sub-002	Affinity Sutton Group	Julie Schoon – Director of Supported Housing
Sub-003	Hackney Citizens Advice Bureau	Berenice Scandone
Sub-004	Best Before Project	Hanna Radlowska & Voytek Stando
Sub-005	Centre 70 Advice Centre	Brian Foxley – Joint Manager & Debt Supervisor
Sub-006	Church Army	Canon Mark Russell – Chief Executive
Sub-007	Community Food Enterprise & Greenwich Community Food Co-operative	Eric Samuel MBE – Chief Executive Officer Sue Pollock – Business Co-ordinator
Sub-008	Children’s Food Trust	Claire Rick – Media, Communications and Public Affairs Manager
Sub-009	Citizens Advice Bureau	Sue Royston - Social Policy Officer
Sub-010	Company Shop	Elin Twigge - Account Director PLMR
Sub-011	Sainsbury’s	Daniel Cizek – Public Affairs Executive
Sub-012	East London Food Access	Les Moore – Managing Director Lee Martin – Chair Miryam Salah – Head Researcher
Sub-013	FareShare	Anna Russell - Grants Development Manager
Sub-014	London Borough of Islington	Michelle Webb – London Borough of Islington Lead
Sub-015	Community Food Enterprise & Greenwich Community Food Co-operative	Eric Samuel – CEO Community Food Enterprise
Sub-016	Food Team – Greater London Authority	Mark Browne - Child Obesity Project Director
Sub-017	The University of Sheffield	Hannah Lambie-Mumford
Sub-018	Islington Food Bank	Chi Ifeacho
Sub-019	Greggs Foundation	Jackie Crombie - Manager
Sub-020	Child Poverty Action Group	Kate Bell – London Campaign Co-ordinator
Sub-021	Food Cycle	Kelvin Cheung
Sub-022	Kids Company	Laurence Guinness – Head of Campaigns & Research
Sub-023	Enfield Council	Alison Trew - Head of Corporate Policy and Performance
Sub-024	NHS Lambeth & Lambeth Council	David Minahan – Lambeth Council
Sub-025	Lauriston Primary School	Lorraine Groom – School Business Manager
Sub-026	Magic Breakfast	Carmel McConnell – Founder Director
Sub-027	Sutton Foodbank	Mark Tomlinson
Sub-028	City University London	Dr Martin Caraher – Professor of Food and Health Policy
Sub-029	LQ Group	Matt Corbett – Head of Community Investment
Sub-030	Plan Zheroes	Lotti Henley
Sub-031	University of Warwick	Elizabeth Dowler – Professor in Food & Social Policy
Sub-032	School Food Matters	Stephanie Wood
Sub-033	Save the Children	Graham Whitham – UK Poverty Advisor

Sub-034	Sustain	Jeanette Longfield
Sub-035	Carpenters Café	Tee Fabikun
Sub-036	Tower Hamlets Co-operative Development Agency	Gregory Cohn
Sub-037	Trees for Cities	Sharon Johnson - Chief Executive
Sub-038	The Trussell Trust	Christine Bamigbola - London Network Foodbank Development Officer
Sub-039	Urbanag	Gary Herman
Sub-040	A.P.P.L.E	Vicki Barker



4in10 Response to London Assembly Health & Environment Committee's investigation into food poverty

November 2012

4in10

England Programme, Save the Children
1 St John's Lane, Farringdon, EC1M 4AR
Telephone: 020 7012 6457 www.4in10.org.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1. 4in10 is a network of organisations working to end child poverty in London, funded by Trust for London and based at Save the Children. Together, the overriding concern of organisations within the network is the high level of child poverty persistent in London, where 4 in 10 children live in poverty.
- 1.2. The 4in10 network consists of 150 statutory and voluntary and community organisations working to impact the lives of children and families in London. The majority of members work with families who are facing the impact of low income, high rents, high food prices, and high childcare costs in the capital. They have shared evidence (research and anecdotal) of the increasing impact of the recession which has included food poverty and this evidence has led us to plan a good practice seminar on food poverty in January 2013 in collaboration with food banks in London.
- 1.3. In September 2012, Save the Children published 'Child Poverty: It Shouldn't Happen Here'¹, a report on child poverty in the UK. The report was based on results from two surveys carried out with parents and children in low income families across the UK and found that 61% of parents said that they had cut back on food in the last year, with 26% of parents saying that they have skipped meals in the last year.
- 1.4. 4in10 also campaigns on various issues that impact on families living in poverty. In the direct work that we do with front line 3rd sector agencies who deliver services to families, we have identified the following main areas of concern:
 - The combined impact of the economic downturn, welfare reforms and spending cuts on the amount of food families in London are able to afford
 - The application of the localised Social Fund on food banks rather than on emergency cash or loans
 - The increase of the number of children that are coming to school 'hungry'
 - The continued impact of fast-food outlets near schools and food deserts in deprived wards
- 1.5. This submission outlines views and recommendations from across the whole of the 4in10 network, representing a wide cross-section of London organisations supporting families on the lowest incomes in the capital. The nature of 4in10's work and our remit on child poverty influences the questions that we feel able to give relevant answers to and these will form the bulk of evidence we submit to this review.

2. Who is in food poverty?

8 million people live in London, making it the largest city in Europe and despite the affluence in the city, about 2.1 million people live in low income households.

"I feel that the basic costs of living have gone up so much – mainly the price of basic food. I used to be able to go to the supermarket and do a weekly shop for around £50 and this has now doubled. I can now only afford the very basics and occasional treat... I can only work part time, as childcare costs are too high to justify working full time. So I now have an evening job waiting tables to help make ends meet."

Low-income parent²

Whilst there is no data on the number of households in London affected by food poverty and the severity to which they are affected, we have information about the numbers of households (families) affected by poverty in London. Poverty in London is higher for all age groups with the highest gap in those figures present amongst children. The latest child poverty figures showed that a total of 592,000 children, 37 per cent of London's children, live below the poverty line.

High housing costs in London contribute to its high levels of poverty. Rented accommodation in London is 50% more expensive than the national average. This means that London is particularly vulnerable to changes in Housing Benefit that will be implemented by the Department of Works and Pension in April 2013. In the latest report by the National Audit Office³, it is clear that some families in London could experience a weekly fall in benefits of £100 or more⁴. The report concluded that: "More households would need to top up rents from other sources". Analysis from commentators suggest that families facing these types of reductions in their income will have to make difficult choices of moving home or cutting personal spending on other living costs such as food and fuel as highlighted in the quote above and the evidence from the Save the Children report.

It should also be noted that there is some evidence that more affluent families can also be affected by food poverty as a result of debt, reduced income and high housing and childcare costs in London.

A recent survey by Experian called 'At Risk Britain' found that the households in trouble include couples without children who earn a gross annual income of between £12,000 and £29,000, or couples with two children on incomes between £17,000 and £41,000. These families, who may not always fall into the category of low-income households, had no savings and "struggled at the end of the month to feed the children adequately"⁵

Despite the Experian report, evidence from our members shows that the key driver of food poverty amongst families in London is income poverty. Living in a low income household does not guarantee that you will be affected by food poverty but it does increase the likelihood of being affected by food poverty. We believe that it is important that this investigation explores

models for gathering information about families at risk of food poverty so that the statutory and voluntary and community sector can be more proactive in their approach to tackling what might become an increasingly large problem as the spending cuts begin to take effect.

In the 'Shopping for food' research paper published in the British Food Journal, researchers found in their analysis that some families would have to spend between 19 per cent and 30 per cent of their household expenditure on adequate food if they were in receipt of benefits⁶. This calculation was based on an average cost of a culturally relevant basket.

We suggest that this information could be used to calculate a food poverty ratio similar to the approach used to create a fuel poverty ratio and suggest the following calculation could be a useful template:

$$\text{consumption (average cost of food x access to food)} \div \text{household income}$$

We therefore recommend that in order to have better understanding of the numbers of households in food poverty in London:

- **That this investigation should seek to engage with the producers of the London Poverty Profile to include data on food poverty in London in their annual report**
- **That this investigation asks the Intelligence team at the GLA to look into the impact of the Housing Benefit reform on food poverty in the capital (with a particular focus on larger families)**
- **That this investigation looks at the possibility of a clearer definition of food poverty, which is based on a similar approach to that taken with fuel poverty⁷.**

3. School meals

The impact of food poverty on school children can be mitigated to a certain extent by the provision of free school meals to children during the school day. Children are currently entitled to a free school meal if their parents are in receipt of any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs⁸.

3.1. How does food poverty affect London school children?

"We have had problems with behaviour on Friday mornings before pay day due to no food in the fridge on Thursday evenings with one girl."

Teacher

From the figures for free school meals in London, it is clear that not all children that are entitled to free school meals are taking up the offer. This is due to a wide range of reasons that include: stigma of being on free school meals, the fact that the children are often restricted on their choice on meals when in receipt of free school meals, and that drinks are often not included in the free school meals offer.

Table: pupils eligible for Free School Meals, London 2007 – 2009⁹

		% taking free school meals in primary schools	% known to be eligible for free meals in primary schools	% taking free school meals in secondary schools	% known to be eligible for free meals in secondary schools
2007	Inner London	30.7	35.9	28.4	35.9
2007	Outer London	15.7	18.9	12.7	16.8
2008	Inner London	29.9	34.6	27.6	35.0
2008	Outer London	15.5	18.4	13.1	16.8
2009	Inner London	29.3	33.5	28.4	35.1
2009	Outer London	15.3	18.1	13.4	16.9
2010/11*	Inner London	29.8	35.7	27.1	35.6
2010/11*	Outer London	16.4	21.6	12.8	18.7

It should also be noted that many children who are living in poverty in London are not qualifying for free school meals as there is a discrepancy in the figures of children in poverty in the capital and those eligible for free school meals. Research shows that 700, 000 children in England who are living in poverty are not entitled to free school meals¹⁰. This is because the current system uses out of work benefits to determine eligibility. However with the increase of in-work poverty, we should use the opportunity of the Universal Credit to reform the provision of free school meals to include low-income families.

3.2. Should all schools be providing breakfasts, and if so how can this be delivered?

"I work in a deprived area with an above average number of free school meals, behaviour and poverty issues seemed to be linked. The breakfast club had to be scrapped because of

the inability of parents to pay for breakfast. The government should try and fund breakfast for children in some deprived areas so all children can start the day on an equal footing."

Teacher, Guardian Teacher Network survey

Organisations like Magic Breakfast are better placed to answer this question in detail. We have noted that the provision of nutrition in the morning is key to supporting learning in the school and also provides an opportunity to teach key soft skills that can help children flourish in school.

3.3. What else can schools do to ensure children have access to healthy food?

The universal provision of free school meals to children could be a good way to ensure that children have access to healthy cooked food on a regular basis. This has been trialled as part of a government funded 2 year pilot and the London Borough of Newham signed up to provide free school meals to all primary school children in 2009. The Mayor of Newham has committed to continued provision of free school meals in all of Newham's primary schools¹¹. The impact of this pilot needs to be monitored and evaluated.

We would recommend to the committee to persuade the Mayor to:

- **Support a policy that Free School Meals be extended to families on low income not just in receipt of out of work benefit**
- **Investigate the impact of the free school meals policy in the London borough of Newham in tackling the effects of food poverty on children**

4. Food banks

4.1. Does London need more food banks, and if so how can we increase available resources?

According to anecdotal evidence from our members, an increasing number of families are turning to food banks to provide the essential food items that their families need.

Food banks provide emergency food to those in need and are springing up all over London. They are being set up in the main by voluntary and community sector and faith-based organisations but increasingly, localized food banks are emerging across London in partnership with the private and possibly the statutory sector.

Lambeth Council indicated that it was considering providing financial support to its local food bank with money from its Social Fund allocation. With cuts to the Social Fund, come Local Authorities have admitted that they will no longer be able to provide emergency cash loans to those in need and are looking at alternative investments such as supporting food banks with their money.

Table: Trussell Trust statistics (April to September 2012)

Region	Adults, number	Children, number	% of all adults in region	% of all children in region	% of all people in region	Total using food banks	Number of people per foodbank	Number of food banks
East	6,609.	2,906.	0.14%	0.28%	0.16%	9,515.	559.71	17
East Midlands	1,497.	757.	0.04%	0.10%	0.05%	2,254.		
London	8,627.	6,388.	0.13%	0.42%	0.18%	15,015.	556.11	27
North East	1,610.	792.	0.07%	0.18%	0.09%	2,402.	218.36	11
North West	6,263.	3,507.	0.11%	0.28%	0.14%	9,770.	1,085.56	9
Northern Ireland	304.	237.	0.02%	0.06%	0.03%	541.	270.50	2
South East	9,971.	6,171.	0.14%	0.40%	0.19%	16,142.	733.73	22
South West	13,719.	7,269.	0.31%	0.84%	0.40%	20,988.	617.29	34
Wales	7,978.	4,020.	0.31%	0.77%	0.39%	11,998.	666.56	18
West Midlands	8,404.	5,543.	0.18%	0.54%	0.25%	13,947.		
Yorks & Humberside	1,838.	1,036.	0.04%	0.11%	0.05%	2,874.		
Scotland	2,672.	1,176.	0.06%	0.13%	0.07%	3,848.	549.71	7
UK	69,494.	39,800.	0.13%	0.36%	0.17%	109,294.	635.43	172

4.2. Are food banks a sustainable response to food poverty?

The aim of a food bank is to provide short-term food supply to families and individuals in need. Most food banks are not designed to be a long term solution to food poverty – rather they mitigate the worst impact of food poverty by ensuring families and individuals in crisis situations are able to access food.

In order to develop a sustainable response to food poverty, we need to collect more data about the drivers of food poverty and set up systems that allow statutory organisations to react earlier in the cycle of food poverty so that fewer people are reliant on food banks.

We recommend that this investigation focus on

- **Collecting research on the early drivers of risk of food poverty**

5. The Mayor's role

5.1. How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address food poverty?

Given the impact of food poverty on the life chances of children and families in London, we believe that it is important that the Mayor uses his strategic power to convene a London Food Poverty Group that will take the lead in collating and analysing data on food poverty in London as well as leading on early intervention work to tackle food poverty. This group could be modelled on the London Debt Strategy Group¹²

We recommend that this investigation seeks

- **The creation of a London Food Poverty Group (LFPG) made up of voluntary and statutory sector members in order to collate data from localised food banks, co-ops together to create a wider map of the position of food poverty in London**

For further information, please contact:

Ade Sofola | 4in10 Strategic Manager, Save the Children UK

e: a.sofola@savethechildren.org.uk | t: 020 3215 3468

Endnotes:

¹ Whitham, G (2012) Child Poverty in 2012: It Shouldn't Happen Here, Save the Children UK 2012
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/child_poverty_2012.pdf

² Parent from the Child Poverty in 2012: It Shouldn't Happen here report, see endnote 1

³ (October 2012) Managing the impact of Housing Benefit reform, National Audit Office

⁴ (October 2012) Managing the impact of Housing Benefit reform, National Audit Office p. 15

⁵ Working Britons one push from penury, The Guardian 18 June 2012 -

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/jun/18/working-britons-one-push-from-penury>

⁶ Bowyer, S, Caraher, M, Eilbert, K, Carr-Hill, R (2009) Shopping for food: lessons from a London borough, British Food Journal Vol. III No. 5, p. 468

⁷ A household is said to be in fuel poverty if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime

⁸ Where a parent is entitled to Working Tax Credit during the four-week period immediately after their employment ceases, or after they start to work fewer than 16 hours per week, their children are entitled to free school lunches. Children who receive a qualifying benefit in their own right are also eligible to receive free school meals

⁹ Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals, Borough – data set by GLA from Department of Education -
<http://data.london.gov.uk/datastore/package/pupils-eligible-free-school-meals-borough>

¹⁰ (June 2012) Fair and Square: a policy report on the future of free school meals, The Children's Society p.4

¹¹ Mayor's Promise #3

<http://www.newham.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/Schools/SchoolMeals/PrimarySchoolMenus.htm>

¹² London Debt Strategy Group - <http://www.london.gov.uk/debt>

Fiona Twycross AM
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

Affinity Sutton Group
Level 6
6 More London Place
Tooley Street
London
SE1 2DA

01 November 2012

Dear Fiona

Food Poverty

Thank you for inviting us to submit evidence towards your investigation into food poverty in London.

Affinity Sutton Group is one of the largest independent providers of affordable housing in England, with over 57,000 homes, of which over 20,000 are in London.

We have seen increases in the number of residents who we believe to be in food poverty. Food poverty is often associated with wider financial crises, in particular those associated with gaps in benefits payments. These gaps arise for a variety of reasons, including delays within the claim process itself and are often linked to a change in personal circumstances. Some of the recent rise in food poverty may be attributed to changes to the welfare system, levels of benefit support and the need to transition from one form of benefit to another. As more welfare reforms are introduced from 2013, we are expecting to see more cases of food poverty arising. Difficulties which may be associated with the introduction of Universal Credit are a particular cause for concern.

Other cases of food poverty associated with sudden crises may be caused by circumstances in which give rise to a need for emergency accommodation, such as parental evictions and domestic violence. Applicants for temporary accommodation in these circumstances may not have any means with which to purchase food.

Although some instances of food poverty are short-term, with support needed only as a stop-gap (for example until a benefit claim is processed and benefits paid), there are also cases which are longer-term. Some households may be in-work but their salaries are insufficient to provide for basic food needs without reliance on support. Increasing energy costs lead more households to be forced to make difficult decisions about whether to "heat or eat".

The reduced availability of support to vulnerable households also contributes to food poverty, leaving more households lacking everyday living skills or access to the necessary services or facilities to maintain a good diet. Such needs are wide ranging, including the skills to manage finances and cooking skills, through to the availability of the facilities and equipment within the home to prepare healthy meals. Therefore needs may vary from 'hands on' support through to grants to obtain cooking equipment. People with disabilities may not have the support they need to provide food for themselves.

Other factors which may be associated with a higher risk of food poverty include lack of literacy and computer skills, mental health problems and learning difficulties.

Food poverty can contribute to numerous wider problems, including:

- Deterioration of health and wellbeing
- Increase reliance on health and social care services including placing increased pressure on emergency healthcare, higher rates of hospital admissions and longer periods of intervention required
- Increased mortality and morbidity
- Higher rates of crime
- Increases in debt and reliance on doorstep lending
- Increased homelessness.

Initiatives exist to help address food poverty directly. We work with a range of food banks and other charities which provide food parcels, cooked meals and furniture/equipment to individuals and families upon referral. However, as indicated above, whilst such services help to address the immediate problem of food poverty, preventing food poverty requires a much broader approach including early intervention to prevent the circumstances which lead to food poverty occurring. This may include support making benefit applications, skills training (both directly related to food and in areas such as financial management) and advice. Affinity Sutton is directly involved with the provision of such support in many cases.

Early intervention can prevent problems escalating and the crises which often trigger food poverty occurring. Ultimately food poverty is only symptomatic of wider problems and its prevention relies on well functioning welfare benefits, health, care, social services and education systems, the availability of employment and the wages that are paid, and lower energy costs.

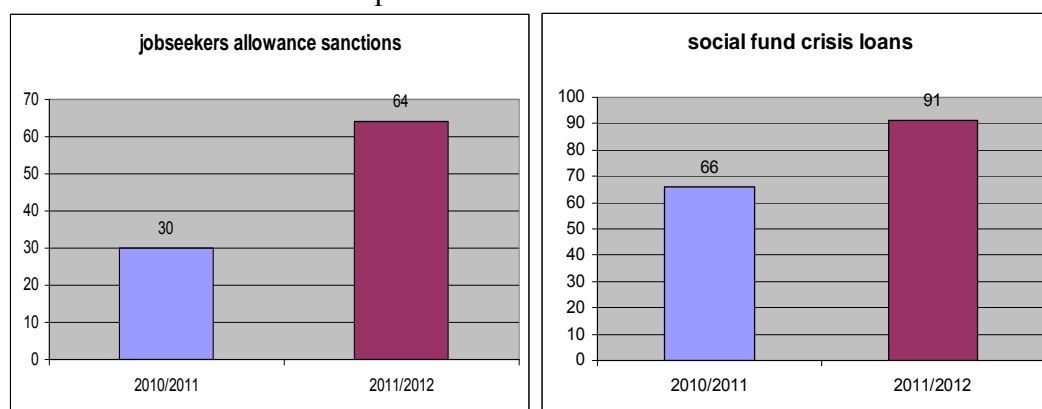
Should you wish to discuss our response please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

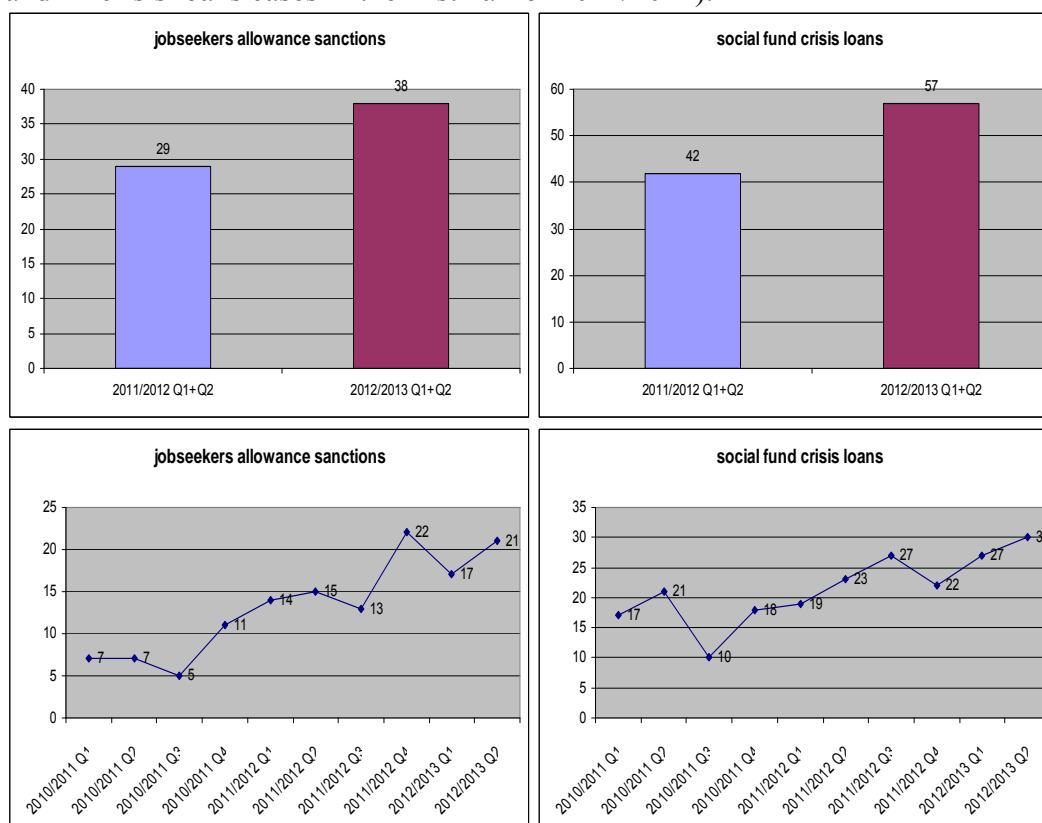
Julie Schoon
Director of Supported Housing

Food poverty and foodbank scheme in Hackney – briefing 26/10/2012

Hackney Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) has joined the Hackney Foodbank scheme (<http://hackney.foodbank.org.uk/>) in September 2012. Since then, we have issued 8 vouchers. Most of the clients need vouchers as a result of having had their benefits stopped or simply not being entitled to benefits. Many of them have been sanctioned from Jobseeker's Allowance at Jobcentre Plus and are therefore not entitled to crisis loans. At Hackney CAB we have actually seen a sharp increase in the number of cases related to both Jobseekers Allowance sanctions and crisis loans, which have risen respectively by 113% and 130% in 2011/2012 compared to 2010/2012.



This growing trend is continuing well into the first half of 2012/2013 (38 JSA sanctions cases and 57 crisis loans cases in the first half of 2012/2013 compared to 29 JSA sanctions cases and 42 crisis loans cases in the first half of 2011/2012).



Another main reason for clients being referred to food banks is that their Immigration status is as yet not decided, which means they have no recourse to public funds.

One recent case is that of a single mother whose application for LTR is still under scrutiny from the Home Office.

Vouchers can be issued up to ten per day, but there are strict criteria to be followed. The client has to be in a situation of dire need or emergency, and not receiving any other source of help.

So far no client has been repeatedly given food vouchers.

The scheme has so far gone well and new vouchers have been received shortly after re-ordering. As we only joined the scheme very recently, we are not able to say much about trends. However, given the increasing number of cases on JSA sanctions and crisis loans we also expect a growing number of clients to claim food vouchers.

For more information please contact:

Berenice Scandone

e-mail: _____

Hackney Citizens Advice Bureau

300 Mare Street

Hackney

E8 1HE

Dear Fiona and Simon,

We really appreciate London Assembly's concern about the issue of food poverty and we would like to thank you for consulting us on this very important subject. We hope that together as a society we will work out lasting solutions to this growing and pressing problem.

Best Before Project was established one and a half years ago as a voluntary group of individuals concerned about the amount of perfectly edible food being sent to landfill by the food industry, with its social, economic and environmental consequences. We began by talking to food businesses and food charities to find out what problems lie behind the phenomenon. Since then we have developed into a growing network of individuals and community groups working in partnership with businesses and food charities, who in turn work with a wide range of recipients, from the homeless to youth clubs in deprived areas to working but low-income families.

After we started developing our information and re-distribution network and having liaised with different parties, we began to realise that the level of need in London itself is much higher than we had previously envisaged. While we do not work directly with the individual recipients of food parcels or free/subsidised food, the food charities and community groups with whom we work with have informed us on a number of occasions (especially from the end of 2011 up until now) that the need for food among their target groups has increased, and often doubled or trebled. We have seen increasing numbers of small food banks travel long distances to one of our 4 depots to pick up food in order to deal with the increased demand. Some of the organisations have mentioned that never before have they had so many working but low-income households turn to them for help, often with a feeling of shame only outbalanced by necessity. (We are happy to provide contact details for those organisations who have expressed such views and who has given us those accounts should you require more information.)

As surprising as this may sound, there is no objective reason why food poverty should exist in London at all. We have no food shortage. There is more food than can be consumed and the only problems to solve are: an effective information campaign and creating appropriate channels of distribution. Currently the amount of edible food being classified as waste and sent to landfill at every stage of the food distribution chain, day in and day out, is so vast that the problem of affordability of food constituting a basic, wholesome diet is completely artificial. What is more, we know how to remedy this situation and have proven that the solutions are successful and work on a small scale.

What is required, first and foremost, is an education campaign, conducted on a mass scale, about what is and what is not food 'waste'.

The figures quoted by the authorities are alarming. The latest report about food waste by WRAP, dated November 2011 states there are up to 5.8 million tons of possibly avoidable waste of food annually generated by households across the UK. This amount is equal to 4640 block-trains with payload of 1250 tons each, or 290 000 fully loaded lorries, 20 tons each. This means that British consumers are throwing away enough food to feed 6.37 million people every day, 365 days per year (based on an average daily consumption of 2.5kg of food and drinks per individual). It is hard to believe that something like food poverty exists in the UK, when roughly 10% of the entire population could be fed the whole year round with just the food being thrown away.

We must bear in mind that this report deals only with leftovers wasted by households. The apparent reasons for this are “purchase more!” policies, lack of knowledge about food safety, and the confusion regarding date marks on food products.

However, what is most worrying of all is the amount of food being wasted by the food industry itself, very often due to the misinterpretation and meaning of date labeling on food products.

Although purchasing and consumption habits might be influenced and eventually changed by educational actions, such as WRAP’s “Love Food Hate Waste” campaign, what should be conducted on a larger scale is education regarding expiry dates. Such an initiative should be directed in parallel to the education directed at households and can be conducted in a very cost-effective way by using the existing channels of information. Businesses need to be provided with information regarding the meaning of ‘best before’ labels, which is readily available (such as DEFRA and Food Standards Agency’s ‘Guidance on the Application of date labels to food’ September 2011), as a legal base allowing them to sell products which are past best-before dates at reduced prices. Our volunteers have already started our own information campaign, on our own private initiative, called ‘Best before – still good after’ and we have managed to convince several businesses in different parts of London to offer “out of best before date” products at a fraction of the original price to their customers, thus saving money on landfill disposal fees, whole or partly recovering the cost of the items and distribution, rather than wasting perfectly good food. In this way sealed, safe and nutritional products – not leftovers, but food in its original packing that otherwise would never have made it to the shelves, could be provided to the low-income customers. However, if for some reason a food distributor is not interested in selling items past their best-before date, instead of sending them to landfill, they can be collected by local charities and/or local teams of volunteers who will place them in local temporary storages and distribute them among local charities feeding people most affected by poverty. For the past one and a half years we have distributed around 45 tons of food in this way and collected from several businesses out of the dozens of thousands across the UK regularly sending perfectly edible products to landfill. We have achieved this with just over £400 spent, operating from 4 distribution points but continuing to expand.

The paradox is apparent: mountains of food are being wasted every day, while people, often in the same neighborhood cannot afford a simple, balanced diet. This can be solved by simple cooperation between businesses and local communities. Moreover, there seems to be willingness to tackle the problem by all parties involved, food distributors themselves included (with supermarkets, as opposed to privately-owned wholesalers and retailers, treated here as a separate category).

Based on our experience and on the experience of other anti-food waste organisations, we believe that at least 3 types of food fit for human and animal consumption can be prevented from being sent to landfill:

1. Perfectly edible and safe to consume food approaching or past its 'best before' date.

Saving this type of food from waste is the ultimate focus of Best Before Project, due to the vast quantities involved and its long-term sustainability for human consumption. 'Best before' dates are defined in DEFRA and Food Standards Agency's 'Guidance on the Application of date labels to food', September 2011 as follows: 'Best before' dates relate to food quality, including taste, texture, aroma and appearance, whilst 'use by' dates relate to food safety. The 'best before' date is a quality indicator used by the manufacturer to indicate that the food will be (assuming correct storage has been maintained), 'safe to eat, but may not be at its best quality after this date'. Around 80% of all food in the UK is labelled with a 'best before' date and the levels of waste caused by businesses misinterpreting this as a product's 'expiry' date is enormous, although apparently no serious comprehensive research into this has been conducted. Basing our estimate on the amount of food saved from being wasted by Best Before Project up until now, and the number of our "waste food" suppliers we estimate that the approximate amount of "edible waste" being generated throughout the food distribution chain due to the misinterpretation of "best before" dates amount to 420-450 thousand tons annually (15326 wholesalers at ca. 20 tons a year each + 91509 retailers at 1.3 tons a year each (numbers of the businesses according to <http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/files/defra-stats-foodfarm-food-pocketbook-2011.pdf>), although these numbers are very conservative and may be underestimated. With development of our "Best before – still good after" action we hope to collect more relevant data, which will allow us to provide more reliable figures.

As things stand – and we can say this for sure - whole pallets of food in tins, cans, jars, and bottles, dried pasta, rice, lentils, flour, even honey are being crushed by wholesalers, complete with the whole packaging. Whole containers of such food never make it to the retailer's shelves and are disposed of instead – only because such food has reached its MINIMUM DURABILITY while being absolutely safe to consume.

2. The second type of waste food is fresh fruit and vegetables unwillingly wasted by farms due to problems with redistribution and contracts in place and throughout the whole redistribution channel. The resulting food waste has been analysed and is one of the main areas of focus for the organization: Feeding the 5 Thousand (please see www.feedingthe5K.org.uk).



Best before, still good after.

3. The third category of waste food is leftovers of freshly prepared food from restaurants, canteens, sandwich parlours, bakeries etc. - the perishable food that needs to be consumed quickly but does not need to be thrown away immediately. Preventing such food waste to the benefit of all requires close partnership between food businesses and food charities. An issue which is being tackled by another volunteer anti-food waste organisation - PlanZheroes (London Leader's initiative, www.planzheroes.org.uk).

All 3 categories of food waste require a slightly different approach in terms of information campaign as well as organisational and logistic solutions. Some of those solutions are already in place. With the cooperation of all parties involved: (i) Businesses - from large depots and wholesalers, retail chains through to smaller retail outlets (ii) Local councils - perhaps with the help of central government organisations such as WRAP as a unifying forum (iii) National and local food charities and community groups (iv) Existing anti food-waste organizations, with their expertise - we can solve these imbalances in the food supply chain and tackle the issue of food poverty.

The resources to tackle these issues are available, the knowledge is in place and the willingness to solve the problem is here. We believe that there is a strong argument for all parties to come together and to put forward and discuss viable solutions, many of which already exist and have been tested on a smaller scale.

Yours truly,

For Best Before Project:

Hanna Radlowska, Voytek Stando

Hi Simon

The details of the LA review into food poverty was passed on to me by a local counsellor.

Only a couple of informal points as we are a smallish local charity.

Centre 70 is an Advice and Counselling service. Details of the service can be found at www.centre70.org.uk . The advice service are food bank vouchers holders for Norwood Food Bank, <http://norwood.foodbank.org.uk/> . We assess and then issue vouchers that clients can use to obtain food.

However, we also felt that we also needed to look at and assist with the reasons people were unable to afford food. So C70 set up outreach advice sessions at the food bank. That way we can look to resolve problems in an holistic way, dealing with most if not all of the presenting problems, not just by a hand out of food, but such as dealing with benefit issues, non priority debts, high fuel costs (we have dedicated Utilities debt project), Housing problems etc. And at the same time also deliver work around financial capability and inclusion such as budgeting, savings, basic bank accounts, income maximisation, referral to back to work and education schemes, assist with grants to remain in education (we have a project funded by local Trust that allows us to provide that assistance), counselling for the emotional issues.

The need is there for us to increase that holistic service but, as with many organisations, resources are limited and can not fully meet the need.

I think with the above advice and counselling, if there was also a project or service that could work with people on ways to cook, cheaper but nutritional food, grow your own etc. But delivered in a non judgements, educational and fun way that also allows learning and experience of cross cultural cooking and food.

The main thing is that these services need to be connected so the end to end journey for the client is quick, easy and without them falling away from the process; an holistic service that addresses the various needs of someone in food (and other) poverty.

Regards

Briana

Brian Foxley,
Joint Manager & Debt Casework Supervisor
Centre 70 Advice Centre, 46 Knights Hill, London SE27 0JD
Switchboard: 020 8670 0070
www.centre70.org.uk

Hi Simon

Thanks for being in touch about this GLA Report.

Church Army runs the largest homeless hostel for women in London, the Marylebone Project, serving over 400 homeless women each week. Alongside this we have a number of colleagues working in community development in London. I have spoken to some colleagues and would want to make the following points for your inquiry.

We estimate 25% more people are asking for help in relation to food banks, unable to feed their families

What we are experiencing is increasing financial crises as access to benefits slows down and is more difficult, and as people turn to payday loans etc. The change to monthly payments of benefits will make things more difficult because of the additional delay for a fresh claim and because those many with poor education and mild but undiagnosed learning difficulties will find it very difficult to budget. If they get things wrong now over a fortnight they may have no or little food for 2-3 days. Over a month this is likely to be longer.

Another part of the problem is bills paid by direct debit which vary. In the old days they were paid by cash over a P.O. counter under the control of the payer. Bank accounts for those on benefits mean that bills are under the control of the creditor- including payday loan and staged payments for goods.

There are other factors like
Education and new reforms
Social housing shortages
Health

Hope this helps

Mark

Canon Mark Russell
Chief Executive

Church Army
Wilson Carlile Centre
50 Cavendish Street
Sheffield
S3 7RZ

Switchboard: 0300 123 2113
web: www.churcharmy.org.uk

Faith Words Action



Community Food Enterprise Limited (CFE) & Greenwich Community Food Co-operative (GCFC) Joint Response to London Assembly's Paper on Food Poverty in London

Page 1

Q1. What are the major risk factors for food poverty?

The main risk factor for food poverty:

- Cardiovascular diseases – diabetes, obesity, asthma etc
- Malnutrition – leading to underweight, stunted growth
- Poor food choices – high use of fast food outlets leading to obesity
- Looting/stealing of food due to lack of purchasing power.
- Increased cost to NHS due to health related problems.
- Increase in premature births due to poor diet
- Mental Health issues - Depression, low morale, lack of motivation, stigmatisation, due to low income/unemployment.

Q2. What evidence is available about health impacts of food poverty?

A wealth of information already exists and can be obtained from the following organisations:

- Local NHS Trusts (PCTs)
- Department of Health
- Universities (King's College, London, City Universities etc)
- Local Boroughs (Education Department; Social Services; Public Health)
- Think Tanks (Joseph Rowntree Foundation); Global Vision; Fabian Society etc)
- Private Health Trusts (King's Fund; Wellcome Trust, etc)

Page 2

Q1. How can we determine the number of Londoners that are in food poverty?

A wealth of information can be obtained from the following sources:

- Religious charities that run foodbanks (Trussell Trust; Christians Against Poverty etc)
- Local Authorities (Council and NHS/PCTs)
- Community organisations who deliver services to the needy (RAMP, Newham; RAMFEL, Ilford)
- Community Food Projects who deliver frontline services to families facing food poverty (Community Food Enterprise Limited (CFE); Greenwich Community Food Co-ops (GCFC) & Magic Breakfast Club etc)
- Government Social Care Agencies (Job Centres; social services etc)

Q2. Does London need more foodbanks, and if so how can we increase the available resources?

More foodbanks are definitely needed to alleviate the unprecedented level of food poverty London's diverse communities are facing, however, if local/regional governments are going to play a role in tackling the problem, then as an inclusive society, the manner in which foodbanks are currently being developed will have to change radically.

Different models of distributing food to families facing food poverty already exist. If we are to find a solution (short term) to tackle the problem, a plan of action would have to be developed. Stage one, would involve carrying out a mapping exercise. In London, Fareshare has been instrumental in distributing surplus food to numerous organisations throughout London for sometime now and they should be retained immediately to carry out a mapping exercise in London 33 boroughs to give the London Assembly (LA) an accurate idea as to how many organisations are presently engaged in distributing food to poverty stricken families.

Once the full extent of the problem is known, the second stage of the plan should involve finding way of getting the various agencies to work share their resources and work in partnership to deliver a more effective and efficient service to the community whilst at the same time extending the service to more needy families.

Over the last year, Foodbanks have been '*in vogue*' and as many of them are associated with Christian Churches/Charities, families from other religious background may not be accessing them and as such, the size of the problem may be bigger in large cities such as London than what available statics suggest. The LA will therefore need to find ways of getting other religions organisations/charities involve as well as members/organisations from the community who are not religious.

As a short term measure, perhaps we should encourage more involvement from members of the community who are associated with organisations/community groups such as Age Concern and Over 50s Clubs. In boroughs such as Newham, these organisations already run activities from Temples; Churches and Community centres.

If the LA decides to support foodbanks, then they will need to be sensitive to London's diverse religious practices and pay particular attention to the current manner which foodbanks are perceived and delivered. To avoid being accused of favouring a particular religious practice, the most sensitive and effective way of expanding foodbanks would be through a coordinated approach on a borough-wide bases (see attached structure). Each borough should have its own coordinator and part of their responsibility should be to ensure that all faith group and associated charities have an equitable opportunity to establish foodbanks should they wish to do so.

Local community organisations that are already providing training such as GCFC and Fareshare would be ideally suited to train new groups outside the Church movement that want to establish their own foodbanks.

Co-ordinate approach

Research will reveal that most foodbanks do not have adequate resources (food; transport and adequate storage capacity to name a few) to enable them to provide an effective service. In order to use scarce resources more efficiently, foodbanks should be encouraged to work in partnership with other local food access projects. For example, two of the largest community food projects in the UK, Community Food Enterprise Limited (CFE) and Fareshare are based in London and they already have the infrastructure in place to support foodbanks (storage and transport).

CFE operate from a large Warehouse (donated by Tate & Lyle Sugars) in Silvertown, Newham and they have a fleet of vehicles and they are currently using their infrastructure to support two local Foodbanks (Newham and Barking & Dagenham) by way of storage and transport and donations.

Surya Foods - more choices for London's ethnic communities

London is a diverse City and about 30-35% of the population are from an ethnic background and to ensure that they have access to the appropriate food, the LA (through the Mayor) should encourage manufactures/distributors of ethnic produce to support foodbanks by donating surplus food to them.

CFE already have an excellent working relationship with one of the UK's largest manufacturer/distributor of ethnic food, Suyra Foods, who has a customer base of 1000 retail independent outlets. Through its own charity, London Food Aid and World Food Aid, Surya are prepared to support the work of foodbanks through CFE as follows:

- Donate redundant food and over stocks to foodbanks via CFE on a regular basis

- Use the infrastructure of its supply partners to see what other manufacturers have access stocks which can be donated to foodbanks via CFE
- From its retail base, Surya could arrange to place shopping trolleys in selective retailers to enable the public to donate food into the trolleys. The food will then be passed on to CFE for delivery to the foodbanks.

Page 3

Q1. Are Foodbanks a sustainable response to food poverty?

Foodbanks are not a sustainable response to tackle food poverty, however, in the present economic climate they are an appropriate response.

Q2. How does food poverty affect London school children?

- Poor attention/concentration span = poor academic performance
- Low retention of information
- Behavioural problems: - aggressive, violent, moody, attention seeking, easily irritated and disruptive
- Fatigue to falling asleep
- Feeling of isolation and rejection.
- No energy – lack of integration/interest in socialising.

Q3. Should all schools be providing breakfasts and if so how can this be delivered?

Yes, all schools should be providing breakfast to pupils before the start of the school day.

To achieve this schools, a partnership approach is required whereby, local authorities and LA need to work together to ensure that there is enough resources available to provide the service. The responsibility should not fall on schools/community organisations alone. Food Poverty needs to be tackled on a macro level (and must include Community Food Projects (CFP) that deliver frontline services) and not in isolation by NHS PCTs. Statistics exist that illustrate working in isolation is counterproductive and serves limited purpose.

Again, a borough-wide mapping exercise should be undertaken to:

- Obtain an accurate idea of the extent of the problem (number of pupils affected in each borough)
- Ascertain a list of community organisations that are already delivering breakfast clubs in schools/community centres in each borough and decide which model deliver the best value for money

Once the LA has evaluated the above information an informed decision could then be made on which model could be rolled out throughout London's 33 boroughs. The burden of delivering and providing financing to deliver a common model throughout London boroughs should not rest on the LA alone. All London boroughs should contribute to the implementation of the chosen model.

Q4. What else can schools do to ensure children have access to healthy foods?

- Healthy eating should be a compulsory part of the school curriculum.
- Create growing spaces (raised beds if the school has no land available for growing)
- Training children on how to grow fruit and vegetables.
- Create edible gardens.
- All schools must provide healthy meals, with reduced salt, fats and sugars
- Training for parents & children, either combined or single workshops on healthy eating at low costs. Combined are more effective as the family is learning together.
- Provide healthy tuck shops (fruit, healthy bars, water. etc)
- Schools can provide health eating information to parents and children.

Q5. Does London have food deserts, and what is the impact of these?

Numerous food deserts exist in London especially in the poorer boroughs.

The impact on people living in areas classified as food deserts are as follows:

- The distance families have to travel to access food
- The additional cost families incur in travelling long distance to access food
- Families without their own transport cannot carry too many bags on a swaying bus. Moreover, they may have young children with them.
- Produce available are not acceptable in terms of quality and culturally appropriateness

Schools are doing great work in developing good healthy eating habits amongst pupils, however, at the end of the school day, parents are expect to continue the work at home. Families from poor background who live in food deserts area are at a disadvantage, as well as not having no access to shops that sells produce at affordable prices, they are likely to suffer from ill health in later years.

The Riverside Estate in Thamesmead, Barking, is one of the worse food desert in London, the estate does not have a shop to serve residents and public transport is limited. The closest supermarket that serves residents with cars is located in Beckton, Newham. However, residents without cars have to take several buses to get to a supermarket of their choice. In some cases, residents who want to access culturally appropriate produce at affordable prices have to travel to Green Street in Newham or Ilford Lane in Ilford.

Q6. What initiatives exist to ensure affordable, healthy food is available in every part of London?

Until April 2011, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and the Big Lottery Funding (through Making Local Food Work) were the main source of funding for Community Food Projects (CFPs), however once funding came to an end, numerous CFPs eased operation.

Between 2002 and 2010, Newham was seen as many as the epi-centre of community food projects in the UK, from a high of delivering 23 community food co-ops and a Mobile Food Store Service.

Today, CFE deliver the following services:

- Schools (Breakfast Clubs/Tuck Shops)
- Community Support Services (CSS) – using our unique infrastructure to support other community food projects
- Fruit & Veg. bags (FVB) delivery service
- Shop, Restaurants & Cafes (SRCs)
- Wholesale
- Workplace Health
- Mobile Food Store (MFS)
- Juice 4 Life

Sadly most of CFE's work is concentrated outside Newham. The PCT however sponsors cooking classes which are delivered throughout the borough.

Other programmes in Newham that receives support from CFE:

- (i) Refugee And Migrant Project (RAMP), Newham; Serbert Road, London E7 - Ramp delivers a weekly service to its users who receive food parcels (non perishable and perishable) free of charge.
- (ii) Helping Hands, Ballaam Street, London E13 8AQ – Helping Hands is a Homeless charity that provides a soup kitchen for the homeless and destitute.
- (iii) Anchor House, 81 Barking Road, London E16 4HB, Anchor House is an award winning charity that provides a soup kitchen for homeless and destitute people.

The Greenwich Community Food Co-op (GCFC) provides fresh fruit and vegetables at affordable prices to communities where there is limited or no access to fresh produce. From 2008, when food prices increased, up until 2011, GCFC had to close many of the food outlets due to funding. Supermarkets play a dominant role in the food industry, making it very difficult

for food access projects to have a lasting impact on improving health of. For instance, in 2008, GCFC had 15 food outlets throughout Greenwich, but have only 3 at present.

The Greenwich Community Food Initiative, (GCFI) consists of the following:

- The Greenwich Cooperative Development Agency (provides community cafes, social enterprise support to organisations, food training from the Greenwich Kitchen, works with Devers to provide chef training for young people and provides regeneration initiatives – Traders in Deptford.
- Growing Greenwich – Works with schools, community groups, Residential Estates and other organisations on training people in growing food.
- Age Concern – one aspect of the work focuses on healthy eating to the elderly.
- The Greenwich NHS/Pct runs 5 weeks cookery classes for community groups or individuals, also offers 12week OCN courses to train people in running the cookery classes.
- The Greenwich Community Food Co-op – provides fresh fruit and vegetables to disadvantaged areas in Greenwich at reasonable prices. Promotes healthy eating using 5-a-day messages.

Over the last three years, Tower Hamlets PCT and Tower Hamlets Council were instrumental in developing a vibrant community food sector in the borough. The development of CFP were led by Tower Hamlets Co-operative Development Agency, however, today, they are no longer deliver any food projects in the borough. Two CFPs serves the borough and they are delivered independently.

Both Waltham Forest and Redbridge had vibrant community food sector (funded by Registered Social Landlords and delivered by CFE), however funding came to an end in 2011.

Barking & Dagenham also had a vibrant community food sector (funded by the PCT and Big Lottery and delivered by CFE), however when funding came to an end, the project ceased. Today, only one community food project is delivered in the borough – CFE's Mobile Food Store (funded by Southern Housing Group and delivered by CFE).

Southern Housing Group has recently commissioned CFE to deliver a Mobile Food Store service to their residents on the Latham's Yard estate in Hackney.

Collective Purchasing

In Aberdeen, Community Food Initiative North East (CFINE) has recently secured funding from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to retain a coordinator who

would be responsible for mobilise community food projects as a single body and use their buying power to secure favourable prices from the most competitive sources. CFINE envisage that savings of upto 25% can be achieved through such initiative. CFE is seeking funding to set up a similar initiative amongst community food projects in London. If successful, CFE and CFINE will combine their resources and purchase from the same sources.

Page 4

Q1. What skills and information do people need to maintain a healthy diet?

- Train up professionals who work with early years in children's centres – Through The Children's Food Trust, School Food Trust, Let's Get Cooking – "Eat better be better"
- More publicity on health eating on bill boards – there is very little visible information.
- Many people do not know how to cook – and many NHS/PCT's have sponsored organisations to deliver cookery classes in various areas as well as providing trainings on how to run cookery classes.
- Disseminate information to parents/children on activities such as:
 - Change 4 Life
 - Get Active
 - Eat Well
 - Feel Happy
 - Keep Learning
 - Stop Smoking
 - Activities and Services

Q2. How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address poverty?

- The Mayor can use his statutory powers to ensure that all new developments include shops as a condition of granting planning permission to developers
- The Mayor can also find ways to encourage food companies to dispose of surplus/shorted dated stocks to charities who are involved in combating food poverty
- Establish collection points throughout affluent communities to enable people to dispose of short dated food stocks

Jointly submitted by: Eric Samuel MBE, CEO, Community Food Enterprise Limited

Sue Pollock, Business Co-ordinator, Greenwich Community Food Cooperative

Response to London Assembly Investigation: food poverty in London

The Children's Food Trust (formerly the School Food Trust) is a national charity which exists to protect every child's right to eat better and, so, to do better. We believe children must eat healthily to reach their full potential in life. That's why we're working to make sure all children can have a balanced diet in their early years and schooldays together with better family cooking skills, lifestyle and food education.

In the years since we began our work, we have worked with many schools in London on improving free school meal take up, with local authorities extending eligibility for free school meals, on establishing almost 600 healthy cooking clubs - many in areas of deprivation - to help children and families eat well on a budget and to deliver training in Southwark, Greenwich and Enfield local authorities on cooking with families with young children.

This experience informs the points below, which we believe should be considered as part of any strategy to tackle food poverty and to reduce its impact on children. In addition, Dr Michael Nelson, our Director of Research and Nutrition, was the Principal Investigator on nutrition and lead author on the national Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey¹ conducted in 2003-2005, in which a substantial element was London-based.

Our submission seeks first to look at the major risk factors for food poverty in children, the available evidence on the impact of food poverty on children's health and the central role of children's education in helping to prevent and reduce the impact of food poverty on their health.

We have also sought to provide ideas for the question at the heart of this investigation: *What steps could be taken by the Mayor and partner organisations to help lift London families out of food poverty?*

Food poverty: the risk factors for children, and the impact on their health:

International² and national¹ research highlights the strong correlation between income and the degree of food security. Households with low income are significantly more at risk of being food insecure in terms of quantity and quality of diet. Poor diet is a major risk factor for overweight and obesity, associated chronic diseases including heart disease (CHD), diabetes and some cancers, low birth weight and increased dental caries in children, which subsequently impact on quality of life. Dietary inequalities can result in wider health inequalities. The Department of Health defines food poverty as "the inability to afford, or to have access to, food to make up a healthy diet". The World Health Organization defines food poverty as "the inability to acquire or consume an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially

¹ Nelson M, Erens B, Bates B, Church S, Boshier T. Low income diet and nutrition survey. London. The Stationery Office. <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/lidnssummary.pdf>

² CSDH (2008). *Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health. Final Report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health*. Geneva, World Health Organization.

acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so.”

Food poverty: how can we determine the number of children living in food poverty in London?

There is no current London-wide database on food poverty and nutrition. Work on diabetes risk in the East End of London³ and subsequent evidence on mapping of “junk food” outlets⁴ suggest strong links between poverty, poor diet and poor health are strong. Sustain has published “Good Food for London”⁵ which maps good practice and support at Local Authority level but does not described nutrition and health. There are, of course, numerous indicators of poor nutritional health (heart disease, diabetes, obesity) but little data on food consumption itself, the circumstances which lead individuals and families to make poor nutritional choices. There is even less information about how Londoners living in poverty might be helped to make changes or the impact of that help on nutrition and health outcomes.

The National Diet and Nutrition Survey 6 of the population aged 18 months upwards living in private households in the UK involves an interview, a four-day dietary diary and blood and urine samples). This could be analysed specifically in relation to London and poverty. The annual survey of school lunch take up⁷ carried out by the Children’s Food Trust provides a wealth of data on paid-for and free school meal take up, catering provision, compliance with the existing standards for school food, and other information about school food provision. There is scope to conduct a detailed analysis in relation to London boroughs. It is also possible to approach London LAs for further information on school food catering provision at the school level, or to approach schools directly, to explore issues around changes in school lunch take up over the last few years and changes in associated measures of overweight, obesity and attainment. The Trust is well-placed to carry out further analysis of existing data, or to collect more detailed data on school food and on total diet from children in London schools and early years settings and their families. A good evidence base is essential to understand whether policy is effective.

Food poverty: what more can the Mayor and partner organisations do?

1: Start early.

Use the places where families go for support in the first years of a child’s life to spread knowledge, build up skills and confidence on how to eat well on a very tight budget. Give families skills and confidence to cook from scratch and make, informed food choices for example how to understanding food labelling information so that they can make their limited food money work harder. Our Cook4Life pilot in 2010 is

³ Noble D, Mathur R, Dent T, Meads C, Greenhalgh T: Risk models and scores for type 2 diabetes: systematic review. *BMJ* 2011;343:d7163

⁴ Noble D, Smith D, Mathur R, Robson J, Greenhalgh T: Feasibility study of geospatial mapping of chronic disease risk to inform public health commissioning. *BMJ Open*. 2012 Feb 15;2(1):e000711

⁵ “Good Food for London”. London. Sustain. 2012. www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/good_food_for_london

⁶ National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Headline Results from Years 1, 2 and 3 (combined) of the Rolling Programme 2008/09 – 2010/11. <http://transparency.dh.gov.uk/2012/07/25/ndns-3-years-report/>

⁷ Annual Survey of take up of school meals in England. <http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/research/surveys-and-monitoring#annualsurvey>

an example of how this can work, also helping to bring young families into children's centres to meet other parents and eat together. In this pilot, commissioned and funded by the Department of Health's Change4Life programme, staff at 60 Sure Start bases learned how to run sessions for families on cooking budget meals from scratch. Chantelle Boughton, Activity Coordinator for the Thames Children's Centre in Blackpool, said: "We'd never done cooking classes before, but we knew it was something that we needed to do. We got the parents on our courses to choose what they wanted to cook – things like cottage pie, lasagne and spaghetti bolognese. Some of our parents said they'd never realised how much you could get out of a basic bolognese recipe."

Train early years practitioners to feed children well in their care, providing a nutritional safety net for those who may not be eating so well at home. Help them to help families gain the skills and confidence they need to cook from scratch and to make their limited food budgets go further. Our **Eat Better, Start Better** training programme and resources, which have been recognised as best practice for delivering the health and wellbeing aspects of the new Early Years Foundation Stage, are an example of how both elements can be delivered.

Encourage every London organisation supporting children in their early years – whether a nursery, a childminder, a children's centre or a playgroup – to follow the new '**Voluntary food and drink guidelines for early years settings in England**' and sign up to the **Voluntary Code of Practice on Early Years Food and Drink**, meaning that parents can be reassured that every child attending early years settings in the capital has the best chance to access a healthy balanced nutritious meals and snacks. Where support for specific groups is needed, targeted programmes are needed.

2: Use the influence of London schools to its full potential

The document accompanying this investigation rightly highlights schools as a key part of this equation. Where food banks respond, schools are in a unique position to help prevent food poverty for children. Supporting decent food for every child at school is a way of extending the nutritional safety net from early years settings as children move up through their education. The Mayor could use his influence to ensure that all London primary and secondary schools (LA maintained, academies, free schools and independent) are serving healthy food in line with national school food **standards**. The Trust's research has shown how school lunches have significantly improved the nutritional quality of food eaten by children at both **primary**⁸ and **secondary**⁹ schools in a few short years, and the particular impact of this for children from low income families.¹⁰ There is still much more to do, though, so continuing to help schools to deliver affordable, nutritious food for all children is

⁸ Haroun D, Harper C, Wood L, Nelson M. The impact of the food-based and nutrient-based standards on lunchtime food and drink provision and consumption in primary schools in England. Public Health Nutr. 2011 Feb;14(2):209-18.

⁹ Pearce J, Wood L, Nelson M. Lunchtime food and nutrient intakes of secondary-school pupils; a comparison of school lunches and packed lunches following the introduction of mandatory food-based standards for school lunch. Public Health Nutr. 2012 Aug 24;1-6. [Epub ahead of print]

¹⁰ Stevens L, Nelson M. The contribution of school meals and packed lunch to food consumption and nutrient intakes in UK primary school children from a low income population. J Hum Nutr Diet. 2011 Jun;24(3):223-32.

essential. London may wish to consider becoming the first city in the country to join a robust national accreditation scheme for food in schools and in early years settings, which we are developing at the moment and about which we can provide further information to the Mayor if required.

London could inform schools of ways to improve those things which increase take up of school food in the capital (all part of the accreditation scheme mentioned above). If take up rises, and school meals become the norm for more children, this can contribute to tackling food poverty in a number of ways: a larger school food market means economies of scale which can then make school meals more affordable for all families. In addition, take up of free school meals tends to increase as take up of paid meals goes up¹¹ and as school meals become the option which is perceived to be most popular. Using Pupil Premium to help with small changes which can increase take up of school meals by those who need them most is one way to do this. Pupil Premium funding is provided to schools for use in supporting the most vulnerable children. By using it to improve the school meal offer, free school meal take up is highly likely to increase as eligible pupils feel more comfortable to take up the option of the healthy meal to which they are entitled.

Supporting free school meals for every child living in poverty should be a fundamental part of this strategy. London could help schools to make sure that every eligible child is registered for and taking up their free lunch; our Free School Meals Matter Toolkit and campaign and our 'hand-holding' work with schools to offer one-to-one support on improving free school meal take up are good examples of ways to do this. Better still, London could choose to target investment at significantly extending eligibility for free school meals or making school meals free for all children. Research from the National Centre for Social Research¹² shows how this can help improve nutrition and educational progress for children from less affluent homes, and this is a policy already adopted by some London boroughs, such as Newham, Islington and Southwark. The forthcoming implementation of Universal Credit should offer opportunities to remove the requirement to register for free school meals altogether, which would be a helpful step in helping families to access good food when they most need it.

Even if greater eligibility for free school meals is not a viable option in the current financial climate, pricing of school meals can also be used to help alleviate food poverty, making school meals affordable for more families. **New powers** under the Education Act make it easier for schools to offer discounts and promotional prices on school meals in all sorts of creative ways. **Research**¹³ shows that price is one of the main drivers of a family's decisions about what children eat at school; in these financial times, making school meals as affordable as possible will help to make sure that more children can at least eat well during their day at school.

¹¹ <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR227#downloadableparts>

¹² <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR227#downloadableparts>

¹³ <http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/schools/reports/an-analysis-of-the-relationship-between-school-meal-take-up-and-prices>

A related issue is about ensuring that the value of a free school meal is enough to buy a child a proper meal from the menu. The Children's Society recently reported on concerns¹⁴ that in some schools, free school meal allowance does not always extend to include a drink, or might only be enough for one option on the menu, meaning that children having free school meals have a more restricted choice. We have also seen examples of this issue in our work with schools; we recommend that schools are careful to ensure that children receiving free school meals can choose from a full range of meal options, and that 'meal deals' always offer a balanced meal and a drink.

London could use its schools to spread skills for cooking from scratch, using leftovers and making a limited food budget go further. It could ensure that practical cooking – at least 24 hours at each of key stages 1-3 – is part of children's core learning at every London school. Investment could be targeted at a cooking club for every school in the capital or expanding access at existing clubs to more learners, allowing families the chance to learn to cook easy dishes from scratch which will save them money. Our **Let's Get Cooking model**¹⁵ is a good example of how this can be successfully achieved.

3: Invest in a breakfast club for every school, offering free or low-cost breakfasts for all children. Quite aside from the appalling fact that anecdotal evidence from teachers and others working with children suggests that many are starting their day on an empty stomach, our **research**¹⁶ with schools in London also shows that eating a decent breakfast before school helps to improve attainment.

Options for this might include a concerted effort to engage business in supporting breakfast clubs in London schools, either with funding or in the provision of appropriate healthy foods for schools to serve. It might also include funding or working with charities that support schools to establish healthy breakfast clubs, or encouraging London schools to divert some of their Pupil Premium funding to provide healthy breakfasts for all pupils or for a targeted group.

4: Be innovative and inspiring

Use school catering services to offer budget food for families at other times of the day. Provide funding to support family breakfasts and family meal services after school, where families can come and eat good food, cheaply.

Encourage schools to use their growing activities to help feed families in the community. Offer produce for sale when it's been grown on the school site.

Use school summer programmes to support good nutrition during school holidays for those who rely on free school meals in term-time or those living in poverty who do not

¹⁴ http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/fair_and_square_policy_report_final.pdf

¹⁵ <http://www.letsgetcooking.org.uk/Howtheprogrammeworks/Evaluation>

¹⁶ <http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/schools/reports/the-impact-of-primary-school-breakfast-clubs-in-deprived-areas-of-london>

qualify for free school meals. This might include the provision of a healthy meal each day as part of the programme, and activities around cooking skills.

Encourage schools to consider using Pupil Premium funding to support nutrition for children living in poverty, based on the evidence about the importance of eating well for performing well in class and closing the attainment gap.

Consider putting a 'zero hunger' programme at the centre of London's manifesto, to focus attention, policy, effort and funding on this specific issue. The Fome Zero programme in Brazil¹⁷ ¹⁸ offers an example of this in practice. In London, this might begin with a pledge that all children in the capital will get three nutritious meals every day.

Claire Rick
Media, Communications and Public Affairs Manager
9/11/12

¹⁷ <http://www.brazil.org.uk/socialissues/zerohunger.html>

¹⁸ <http://www.fomezero.gov.br/>

Food poverty in London

Citizens Advice's response to the London Assembly's consultation

November 2012

About the CAB service

The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

The service aims:

- to provide the advice people need for the problems they face
- to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

The Citizens Advice service is a network of nearly 400 independent advice centres that provide free, impartial advice from more than 3,500 locations in England and Wales, including GPs' surgeries, hospitals, community centres, county courts and magistrates courts, and mobile services both in rural areas and to serve particular dispersed groups.

General comments

Citizens Advice welcomes this opportunity to comment on the London Assembly's consultation on food poverty in London.

The welfare benefits system is meant to act as the safety net for those living on a low level of income or those facing a crisis who don't have the financial resources to cope. Any analysis of why emergency food provision is necessary will involve looking more closely at, if and where the system is failing. It will also be important in any analysis of future risks to scrutinise the likely impact of the major changes in welfare reform which are due to happen in the next few years.

For those in work, some will gain from the introduction of universal credit (UC), however some groups will have even lower levels of income than currently. Because there is less support for childcare within UC, many lone parents who work and have high childcare costs will find themselves with lower levels of income to pay for food. Cuts in benefits such as housing benefit and the freezing of benefit levels will equally affect those in work because in work benefits are based on out of work benefit levels.

Our bureaux see many people in moments of crisis. In 2011/12, Citizens Advice Bureaux in London assisted with about 200,000 problems on benefits and tax credits, and about 140,000 problems with debt. In order to advise clients effectively, advisers need to have a good understanding of the benefits system and frequently also need an in depth discussion with the client about their situation and the problems they are experiencing. We are therefore in a strong position to give evidence about the major risk factors. We have concentrated mainly on question 1 in our response.

Question 1: What are the major risk factors for food poverty?

Bureaux have reported seeing a sharp increase in need for food parcels in the last year – a rise of over 50% between the first and second quarter of this year. This has been so pronounced that Citizens Advice plans to develop a database for bureaux to track, both the numbers affected by and the causes of, food poverty on a more systematic basis.

All cases cited in this report are from bureaux in London. Evidence from our advisers indicates the main causes of food poverty are:

- Benefit delays
- Benefit refusals
- Benefit sanctions
- Debt repayments
- Homelessness

Benefit delays

Claimants frequently experience disruptions in their benefits caused by poor administration in the benefit system. Many of our clients do not have any resources to fall back on, and so disruptions can leave claimants in extreme hardship.

A CAB client was being migrated from income support to jobseekers allowance. This caused a delay in payment which left the client without money to buy food for her or her child. The client needed two food parcels whilst applying for a crisis loan. The client was also refused a community care grant.

Another client, an asylum seeker with a 'right to remain', came to the CAB having moved from Manchester to London. As a result of their move, their appointment with Jobcentre Plus had been cancelled. The Jobcentre Plus adviser had not given them the required form to restart their claim in London. The client and bureau were unable to book an appointment and were repeatedly given new numbers to call. The client was given some food, but still had no money to pay rent.

Benefit refusals

CAB advisers see many people who are refused employment and support allowance (ESA), because they are found fit for work at their work capability assessment (WCA), but who have evidence from their doctors that they are not fit for work and who are subsequently placed in the support group (the ESA group for those who are the most severely disabled) when they appeal. At present once the claimant's appeal is received and registered by DWP, their ESA is once again paid at the basic rate. However there are frequent delays whilst waiting for the appeal to be registered.

A CAB client who was found fit for work at a medical assessment, has HIV, chronic hepatitis and as a result suffers from general fatigue, lethargy and also from diarrhoea. He has had a splenectomy and is at risk of developing infections. He also has a serious mental health condition. On appeal this client was placed in the support group of ESA.

A CAB client with paranoid schizophrenia did not attend her WCA as a consequence of her condition and as a result her ESA was stopped. The client's only income was disability living allowance and although the client appealed the decision to stop benefits she required a food parcel whilst waiting for payments to resume.

In future, however, someone who has claimed ESA but has not yet had their assessment or has had their assessment and been found fit for work will be expected to look for work whilst awaiting appeal. The steps they will be required to take to try to find work (the "conditionality") will be at the

discretion of the adviser. We believe this will substantially increase the numbers of people who find themselves in the position that they are unable to receive ESA until their appeal is heard but cannot claim JSA because they are unable to comply with the conditionality. It is also likely to increase the numbers whose benefit is stopped for a period (“sanctioned”) as a penalty for not meeting the conditions.

Benefit sanctions

We are already seeing a sharp increase the numbers of clients affected by benefit sanctions. Benefit sanctions are a reduction of benefit imposed upon claimants who are perceived by officials as having failed to comply with the benefit conditionality regime. What they are required to do varies depending on their situation. For example someone on JSA would be sanctioned for failing to seek work or accept a job if offered whereas someone who has been found not fit for work and placed in the work related activity group could be sanctioned for failing to attend an interview to help them prepare for work. The new sanctions and conditionality regime (from 22 October 2012) is likely to increase these numbers still further. Our evidence on sanctions shows that they disproportionately impact on people with mental health conditions or minor learning disabilities.

A client of one bureau was sanctioned for an inadequate work search. The client has a mental health condition but is not eligible for disability benefits. The client has difficulty understanding and accepting the actions he needs to take to comply with conditionality requirements. In this case the client has exhausted his access to foodbanks having received three vouchers.

Another bureau reported that one of their clients did not apply for a job as directed by jobcentre plus because she judged that she did not meet the requirements of the role, was sanctioned despite explaining this to the jobcentre and applying for two other jobs instead. The client’s application for a hardship payment took two weeks to process and as a consequence the client needed a package from a foodbank and was on emergency credit for electricity and gas.

We are concerned that as the conditionality regime becomes tighter we will see many more people facing sanctions. Of particular concern as highlighted above is the proposed policy to treat someone who is appealing a decision that they are fit for work as if they are fully fit for work while waiting for the appeal to be heard. This means they could be sanctioned for not actively seeking and accepting work if offered.

Debt repayments and impact of ongoing low income

There are a number of factors which can lead to financial hardship both for those in work and those unable to work. Clients often report that sudden drops in income because of illness or reductions in their hours of work are the reason for getting into debt. Those trying to meet debt repayments particularly to doorstep lenders, or payday loan providers, can find that their financial difficulties spiral out of control. Our evidence on payday lenders’ use of continuous payment authorities to collect the money suggests that people have little or no income to pay bills or to feed themselves and so frequently need a food parcel. Enforcement action by bailiffs can make this situation worse.

A client with debts for rent and council tax of £2,294 including court costs for the council tax was unable to pay her priority debts because three payday loan providers to which the client owes approximately £900 had continuous payment authorities in place which removed

money from the clients account before she can pay the priority costs. As a consequence the clients debts were growing and she struggled to feed her children despite being in full time work.

Additional problems exacerbate this, such as having to make up the shortfall in support to pay their rent because the level at which housing benefit is capped for their area is lower than the actual rent they need to pay. Levels of benefit are so low that deductions to cover shortfalls or repay debts can quickly lead to crises.

One CAB saw a client who had debts deducted from her JSA for a social fund loan, an earlier JSA overpayment and water direct payments. After these deductions the client received JSA of £39.80 every two weeks, as a consequence the client had reached crisis point. She had no money left for food and was unable to pay energy bills.

Cuts in benefits and freeze on benefit levels do not only affect those who are not working. Benefit levels for those in work such as child tax credits and housing benefit are based on levels of out of work benefits so cuts in housing benefit, for example, or a freeze on the level of benefits so they are not uprated with inflation impacts equally on those who are working but can only command a low level of income.

A client of another bureau is an 18year old who is working 30 hours a week but due to the shortfall in the amount of support for her rent she is struggling to manage on the income she receives. She is pregnant and her health has suffered (including a period of hospitalisation) as a result of the strain of trying to manage on such a low income.

Homelessness

Our advisers often see people facing very adverse circumstances because they are homeless. Some are living on the streets, others are 'sofa surfing' or in temporary accommodation. Their situation means that access to food is even more important but can be more difficult and expensive.

A homeless bed and breakfast tenant, and CAB client, was receiving ESA of £71 per week out of which she had to pay £22.50 in charges at the B&B. On her remaining money the client was really struggling to manage.

Bureaux in London dealt with 13,000 issues about actual or threatened homelessness in London during 2011/12. With shortages of affordable accommodation, increased instances of housing benefit shortfall, the implementation of the shared accommodation rate and the implementation of the benefit cap we expect this problem to become worse over the next few years.

Another client was evicted from his flat as a result of rent arrears caused by a disruption in his benefits. The client has been forced to beg for food and his mental health condition has worsened. The adviser comments that the client is in extremely poor health,

Question 4: How does food poverty affect London schoolchildren?
Should all schools be providing breakfasts, and if so how can this be delivered?

We do not have direct evidence on this issue but believe that good quality free school meals have an important role in tackling food poverty amongst children. We welcome the fact that some London boroughs have introduced universal free school meal provision. This helps address the issue of stigma and also increases the gains for people entering work if their children can continue to benefit from free school meals when they commence work.

We are concerned about how free school meals will be awarded (“passported”) to those receiving universal credit (UC). Our preferred solution is universal free school meals or at least free school meals for everyone on UC. However because of the current financial situation this is unlikely to gain acceptance at this time so we have also put forward a solution which would involve including it within UC but tapering away the amount of subsidy. This would mean that those on the lowest incomes would receive full support with the cost of school meals and those on higher incomes would be making a contribution towards the cost.

Question 6: What skills and information do people need to maintain a healthy diet?

Many of our bureaux have workers who undertake financial capability work with clients – assisting people to manage their income more effectively, assisting them to budget, and scoping out ways to save money. These skills are clearly essential if someone is trying to manage on a very low income.

However many of our clients do have the skills to manage their finances effectively. The problem is the increasingly low levels of income on which they are being expected to cope whether in or out of work. Cuts to housing benefit especially for those living in London mean that many have to make up their rent out of money which is meant to cover living costs such as food.

Another client is a lone parent who is working part time. She has a shortfall of housing benefit of £130 per month. Client has applied for a discretionary housing payment (DHP) but it is unlikely to succeed as she already has been awarded £120 DHP for a previous period. Client says she has tried to find alternative accommodation but cannot find landlords that accept benefit claimants and those that do charge more.

Conclusions

In the coming years we are concerned that food poverty is going to be an increasing problem as the impact of welfare reform is felt. In the answer to the first question, we highlighted the evidence we have as to why clients we see currently need food parcels and our concerns about different aspects of welfare reform which we believe will lead to increasing levels of food poverty.

We plan, as a result of these concerns, to create a database to monitor the level of need for food parcels amongst bureau clients over the next few years. We also plan to record the reasons why people need a food parcel and if these reasons change over time.

Company Shop – Summary note for GLA October 2012

What is Company Shop?

Company Shop is the UK leader in food surplus management, with over 20 years' experience in redistribution with retailers and manufacturers across the UK. It currently handles over 15,000 tonnes of surplus stock per year and has established partnerships with all the UK's major supermarket retailers and leading global brands – from Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Marks & Spencer, Morrisons and Asda, to Unilever, Heinz, and Nestle.

Surplus stock can be anything from damaged products, to incorrectly labelled goods, the wrong cut of meat, or product triggered by over production – but much of this is still fit for human consumption. Company Shop directly handles these surpluses at manufacturing premises and in its own outlets – Staff Shops – re-selling the products at discount prices to employees in the manufacturing industry. By selling to this customer base, it is possible to uphold brand integrity whilst saving low income families an estimated £30-50 per week on their shop.

Over the next three years, the organisation has the capacity to expand and increase its surplus grocery intake to 25,000 tonnes per year.

Please see some supplier testimonials below:

“Company Shop's ability to take product “in brand” helps them play an important role in the prevention of landfill.”

Tesco Environmental Guide

“You must give the employee sufficient information as to the quality of the product, as to not prejudice them. Marking it ‘STAFF SALES’ does exactly that.”

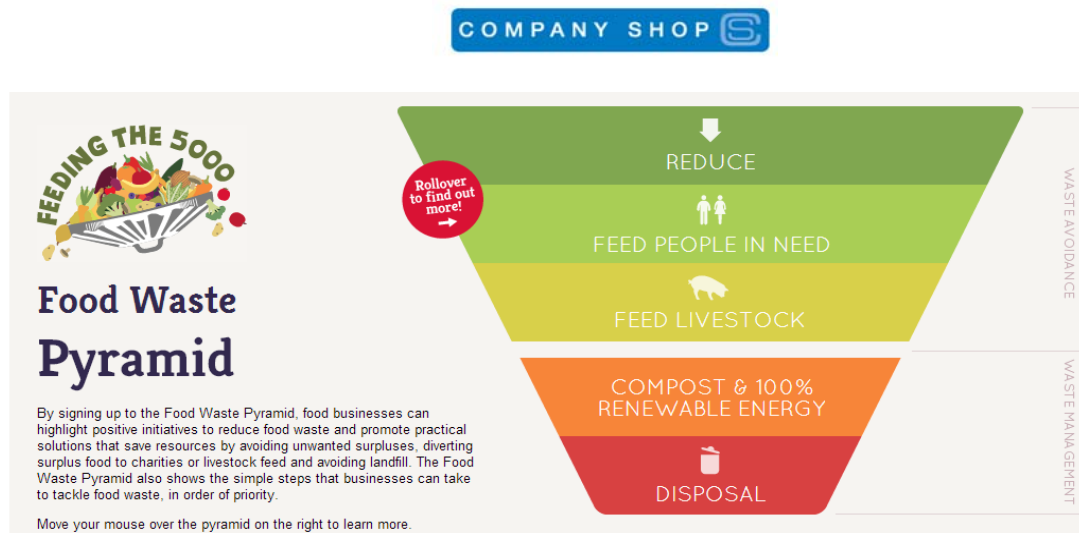
Heinz Technical/Legal quotes

The Food Waste Hierarchy and charitable partnerships

The Company Shop business model also means that the residual goods that it handles are promoted to the highest possible points within the Food Waste Hierarchy, ensuring that over 90% of the surplus food is still consumed by humans. One of the key ways in which this is achieved is through further distribution to food poverty charities, which significantly benefit from Company Shop's redistribution infrastructure, so there can be effective matching of demand and supply for those who need it the most. Company Shop has strong relationships with a range of food poverty charities, including FareShare, Create and His Church.

The company's new Staff Shop in South Yorkshire will achieve zero waste to landfill and 98% of all food stock going to human consumption. The Staff Shop also has catering facilities available for local charities such as the Salvation Army, Barnsley Churches Drug Project and FareShare Barnsley, which will allow them to produce wholesome meals from residual stock which can be donated to vulnerable people in the local area.

The latest year to date figure of Company Shop's donations to FareShare equate to 94 pallets or 99,294 units of food. By FareShare's calculations, this is equivalent of 128,000 meals for vulnerable people. With the on-going expansion of contracts with supermarkets and retailers across the UK, these figures are set to rise.



Customer demographics:

Company Shop's stores work on a membership only basis, for those within the manufacturing industry and certain public services. This enables the company to uphold its strict 'brand integrity protocol,' as those within the industry understand the importance of discretely handling surplus stock. It also means that the deeply discounted retail stock can be redistributed to those on lower household incomes, who will benefit the most from the reductions available.

Company Shop's customer base falls in the vast majority into the social grade categories of C2, D and E: skilled manual workers, semi and unskilled manual workers, and state pensioners or widows, casual or lowest grade workers.

Please see some customer testimonials below:

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my hearty congratulations on the occupation of your new store, which I had the pleasure of visiting on its opening day, Monday 15th October. Not only was there more than sufficient parking and less queuing time, but the new premises bore a warm and pleasant atmosphere which is so often lacking in discount food outlets. The staff were exceptionally helpful and friendly.

I have long been very grateful for the outstanding work you have carried out. As you will be aware, your company helps us to reduce waste and consequently protect the environment and your unbeatable prices have made grocery shopping in the current economic climate affordable once more. I had always taken the waiting times and small aisles as part and parcel of being able to purchase provisions so inexpensively, so was positively astounded by the privileges your new warehouse has afforded. I very much hope you will continue your good work and your relocation has guaranteed my loyal custom for a long time to come.

Thank you once again.

XXXX

“We love the Company Shop, and am grateful for our memberships! We both work for the NHS and haven't had much in the way of a wage increase since 2006. We used to shop at Waitrose; now even Aldi is too expensive for us. [...] The Company Shop; we're **grateful** that for £20 we will get enough meat to fill the freezer for the month.”

Customer Testimonial from the Sheffield Forum

Meat exchange project

One of Company Shop's most innovative projects to date is its meat exchange scheme. Appropriate fruit and vegetable waste that is no longer fit for human consumption is being donated to local farmers to feed their animals, in return for home-grown meat that will be supplied to them to distribute to charities.

FareShare, the national charity supporting communities to relieve food poverty, and the Barnsley Church Drugs Project are will directly benefit from the 'Company Shop Cows', which are providing a valuable source of protein to their food kitchens and helping to ensure stability of supply of protein rich foods to those who need it most.

The first meat ready for donation is expected for February 2013, and this is a concept that Company Shop is looking to continue expanding in the future.

ENDS



Sainsbury's

Food Donations at Sainsbury's

About Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's was founded in 1869 and today operates over 1,000 stores. We employ 150,000 colleagues and have over 2,000 direct suppliers. We serve around 22 million customers a week and have a market share of about 16.6 per cent, making us the 3rd largest supermarket in the UK. We launched our [20 by 20 sustainability plan](#) in October 2011.

Food waste

One of our commitments in our 20 by 20 sustainability plan is to put all waste to positive use by 2020. We take the issue of food waste very seriously and have achieved our industry-leading ambition of sending zero food waste to landfill. We were the first supermarket to commit to this standard and are one of the first major retailers to achieve it.

We are keen to reduce waste in the first place, managing waste out of our operations at every possible opportunity. We do this through stock control and accurate forecasting. We recently introduced a more efficient 'chill chain' process, ensuring that chilled produce gets to our shelves quicker, reducing waste. We also have state-of-the-art depots which minimise the amount of products which are spoilt.

Food donations

We donate any surplus food that is fit for human consumption to charities such as FareShare, Foodbank, FoodCycle and other local organisations, to ensure that it is not wasted. In fact, we helped set up FareShare eighteen years ago and we are still their biggest partner today. FareShare provides quality food to a network of 700 community-based organisations such as homeless shelters, day centres for the elderly and breakfast clubs for vulnerable children. Sainsbury's helps FareShare by donating surplus food that is edible, safe and nutritious, but is either past its display until date or the packaging is damaged.

In November 2011 we hosted our first [Million Meal Appeal](#) during which we encouraged customers across all of our supermarkets to buy an extra item of food to donate to FareShare. Customers were asked to donate a store cupboard item to complement the predominantly fresh produce that we donate and we surpassed our target, collecting 1.2 million meals in a single day.

In October 2012 we hosted our second Million Meal Appeal. Due to the success of the first year, we extended the food drive to a whole weekend and to 900 supermarkets and convenience stores. By the end of the weekend our customers donated 1 million meals, which we matched to [donate 2 million meals](#) to FareShare to help those in need.

Food waste that is not fit for human consumption is either donated to animal feed charities, or can be put to a number of other uses, including energy generation through anaerobic digestion (AD).

Last year we redistributed £1.5 million worth of food to charities and local organisations, diverted nearly 85% of all of our waste from landfill and diverted 44,000 tonnes of food waste to AD.

Daniel Cizek
Public Affairs Executive, Sainsbury's

15 October 2012

London Food Assembly

East London Food Access (ELFA) views on the investigation into Food Poverty in London.

The role of ELFA

ELFA has been delivering solutions to issue of 'food poverty' for over ten years. Based in Hackney, ELFA was originally set up as a borough-wide response to the issues, first raised by Eric Samuels MBE of Newham's Community Food Enterprise, that arise when local people face a lack of access to fresh produce. At the same time, similar initiatives were organised in the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Greenwich by local Co-operative Development Agencies.

The agencies in the four Inner London Boroughs, together with SUSTAIN, shared the objective that the most direct way to address food poverty was to create 'food co-ops' or 'fresh produce stalls' in localities where food poverty prevails.

Throughout the 2000's, SUSTAIN obtained funding to roll-out a 'fresh food co-op' model throughout London and the UK. However, this period featured levels of high economic growth. Their strategic interest in food, which followed closely the availability of funding, became increasingly focussed on food growing, artisan food, farmers' markets and environmental concerns. Therefore, SUSTAIN no longer supports 'food co-ops'.

It also appears that the success of the work of the other three agencies in Inner London Boroughs appears directly related to the amount of funding they receive, and like SUSTAIN, their work is largely funding driven.

Meanwhile ELFA have designed and adopted a distinctive and successful approach to tackling food poverty, with the following characteristics:

- Cost effective
- Successful ([Click](#) to see ELFA 's website, and an [LB Hackney Overview and Scrutiny Commission Report](#))
- Scaleable
- Measurable (Published Research on the impact on health of the Freshwell Seniors Project, please see additional attached document)
- Popular

ELFA adopts a partnership approach and operates as a Social Enterprise and no longer applies for funding. Instead ELFA has adopted a commissioning approach, whereby local agencies to deliver parcels of work around health and childhood obesity, notably NHS North East London and the City, and various Children's Centres. In 2008, Wandsworth NHS commissioned ELFA to undertake a mapping exercise in order to understand the underlying issues of limited access to fresh produce in the borough. (Available from ELFA on request)

ELFA employs a highly motivated team of staff and volunteers, and the signature of its success has been an innovative and flexible approach to tackling issues of food poverty during a period when resources were being applied elsewhere. Indeed, ELFA is currently trialling Collaborative Buying Groups in Children's Centres and Supported Housing Centres, and is developing a Design Team to oversee an intervention to ensure fresh produce is made available to clients using the services of food banks. (Link to PowerPoint presentation)

1. What are the major risk factors for food poverty?

ELFA believes that over the next two years, major risk factors for food poverty are:

- A rapid reduction in benefits to thousands of Londoners arising to changes to Universal Benefits. Les Moore, the CEO of ELFA, sits on the Team Hackney (LSP) Better Homes Housing Management panel. ELFA is considered as a key player in the development of a self-help, community response to a rapid reduction to the budgets of local people (estimated at over 2,000 in Hackney)
- The rapid reduction in benefits which compound the pre-existing lack of nutritional knowledge, shopping and budgeting skills, and cooking and menu planning skills
- Whereas within London there is a general availability of fresh fruit and vegetables, there are many pockets within where provision is poor or the prices are high, and for certain sections of the community such as the elderly and the disabled and housebound, access is impossible.

2. What evidence is available about the health impact of food poverty?

ELFA believe there may be value in researching the health impact of food poverty at the grass roots and frontline level in order to fully understand this question. Expert authorities inform us that there is

substantial evidence to suggest that people on lower incomes experience higher health risks, lower life expectancy and increased rates of diet related disease such as obesity and diabetes. There appears to be a consensus that people experiencing poverty tend to adopt a low-cost, high-calorific diet, which is deficient in fresh produce.

Furthermore, in a recent review of the literature, Benzeval and Judge provide evidence from 16 studies using eight different data sets from four different countries. Health status outcome measures include: subjective self-reports, mortality, emotional stability, chronic conditions, general life satisfaction and physical functioning. Socio-economic status measures include: current income level, recent income change, poverty flags, current earnings, multi-period averaged incomes, relative position in the income distribution and number of spells of poverty. In summing up their review, the authors conclude: "All of the studies that include measures of income level find that it is significantly related to health outcomes." (Shepps, 2003)

3. How can we determine the number of Londoners that are in food poverty?

The definition of food poverty is broad and it would be very hard to quantify an actual number from this definition given that there are needs to differentiate between absolute, relative and subjective. ELFA do not believe that using numbers from reports of people who use emergency support, or self reported data on a lack of food, would give a true indication of food poverty. For example in Hackney a large percentage of children are classed as living in poverty and yet Hackney has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in the UK. This data suggests people in food poverty are making the wrong choices on food on a regular occurrence and the real question should be, why is this?

However, should the definition of food poverty be redefined to include all Londoners who are suffering from diet related adverse health conditions, it may be possible to include numbers collected by the NHS. It may also be possible to ask supermarkets to estimate how many of their customers routinely or exclusively buy budget brand products.

4. Does London need more foodbanks, and if so how can we increase the available resources?

ELFA believe the provision of Foodbanks could further exacerbate a 'welfare culture' where beneficiaries are disempowered and come to rely on handouts from charity. This can do no good for the image of London. Food banks can and do provide a useful short-term response but they do not address many of the problems associated with food poverty and do not appear to work in partnership with local agencies.

For ELFA there are two key issues:

- The Food bank model is largely untested and uncoded
- The model is faith driven, a fact which may not appeal to all sections of the community

5. Are foodbanks a sustainable response to food poverty?

It may be questionable to invest in a product which may contain flaws in its design.

- It may be unrealistic, or unsustainable for donors to drive to supermarkets to buy food products to be transported to the local church then transported to the local food bank, and then the client travels to the food bank to transport the product home.
- Fresh produce is not included in the food aid

We suggest that providing low cost fresh produce and education along with information on accessing other services e.g. NHS, in collaboration with foodbanks would provide a more sustainable and productive option and help empower people to make positive change rather than have to always rely on handouts.

6. How does food poverty affect London schoolchildren?

ELFA consulted a dietitian who delivers the Children's Obesity Service in the London Borough of Westminster to comment:

'Food poverty in schoolchildren affects the type of foods consumed. Quite often there is no or a severe lack of fresh food, especially fruit & vegetables available at the home. Usually no hot meal is provided in the evening and instead the family rely on takeaway foods or similar foods are purchased by the child leaving school. There is a major lack of knowledge on nutrition including what is a balanced meal, what types of foods should not be consumed on a regular basis e.g. snacks are chocolate bars, fast food is main meals etc. Sometimes there is no breakfast eaten or

poor breakfast choices are made e.g. cheap sugar based cereals, chocolate spread on toast etc and this can be due to families relying on the supermarket deals to provide the options.

In Hackney the busiest places full of school children are takeaway shops, McDonalds and other similar outlets. This can easily be observed by watching these outlets after school closing time. These provide cheap easily accessible food which caters to the hungry customer with no nutritional balance in the food offered and is a cause of obesity in deprived areas (see research by Patterson, Risby & Chan BMJ 2012). The type of food consumed, where this food is consumed and how this food is consumed is inevitably linked to food poverty. Owners of smaller takeaway establishments near schools offer budget price portions, specifically targeted at children on their way home from school.

7. Should all schools be providing breakfasts, and if so how can this be achieved?

ELFA believes that the provision of free breakfast removes all responsibility from the parents. Breakfast is a cheap meal even when providing a healthy option e.g. porridge oats and milk! ELFA argues that the money spent providing free breakfast could be better spent on education of this sort of information. Free breakfast may also lead to an increase in obesity as children may have two breakfasts both of which could be high in sugar. Furthermore, our work in schools has led us to observe that the free breakfast provided in schools is often of poor nutritional quality, mainly toasted white sliced bread or conventional (highly processed) breakfast cereals.

8. What else can schools do to ensure children have access to healthy food?

Ensure school food policies are followed!

- Have sensible rules on what external foods can be brought onto the school grounds.
- Provide the option for breakfast clubs that are paid for e.g. £2 per week.
- Provide parents with options to access fresh fruit and vegetable on school premises. Within Hackney, ELFA currently operates fresh produce stalls in the grounds of 5 primary schools serving over 300 parents each week. ELFA are also developing Family Buying Groups in partnership with four Children's Centres in the borough. Both models could be

made available to primary schools and Children's Centres throughout London.

9. Does London have food deserts, and what is the impact of these?

To date, ELFA believe that the definition of 'food deserts' has been too broad to be of any practical use. In planning terms, the current understanding surrounds the need that fresh produce be available within 500 metres of a household, or 15-minute walk. However, ELFA believe that there are shortcomings to this definition. There are food deserts within the areas we operate which we consider as food deserts because we witness that local people in the area are not able to access such healthy food as may be available. For example there are people who are housebound or are unable to travel more than a 100m radius due to health conditions or mobility problems. With an ageing population it is likely this situation will be occurring more regularly. To conclude, the 500-metre rule is irrelevant to the following groups:

- Those with issues of infirmity, illness, or disability
- Pregnant women, the elderly etc who are totally restricted in their ability to carry heavy items
- Those suffering financial disadvantage who cannot afford good quality food
- Those without knowledge of the importance of including good quality food within a balanced diet

ELFA believe that this is the time for a consensual, open debate about what actually constitutes a 'food desert'

NHS Wandsworth commissioned ELFA to undertake a comprehensive food mapping exercise throughout large parts of the borough. ELFA found at least three areas in Wandsworth that could lead them to be defined them as 'food deserts' under the 500-metre rule. However, ELFA found many other areas in Wandsworth in which fresh produce was available, but of variable quality and high price. ELFA believe that this finding must be true of most of London.

10. What initiatives exist to ensure affordable, healthy food is available in every part of London?

ELFA operates **Fresh Produce Stalls** on estates and schools in the London Borough of Hackney, and in doing takes fresh produce direct to those that need it most. ELFA's **Fresh Produce Stalls** provide the option for people to buy as little or as much produce as they need, or can carry, or in fact depending on how much money

they have that particular week or day. Some of ELFA's customers spend a relatively large percentage of their income on fresh produce suggesting that even those in poverty can have a healthy diet if the right conditions are provided for them.

ELFA also uses a **Home Delivery** scheme for those who are housebound and cannot access the Fresh Produce Stalls, and is developing **Collaborative Buying Groups** in Children's Centres and Supported Housing Schemes where the operation of Fresh Produce Stalls is financially unsustainable.

Between 2009 and 2011, ELFA gained the support of the Innovation Unit of the Cabinet Office and rebranded its work as **Freshwell**, with the intent that this brand be made available to local food initiatives throughout London and the UK. As a result, the brand **Freshwell** now exists as a portal through which provision may be made to ensure high quality fresh fruit and vegetables are available to all sections of the community throughout London. Domain names have been reserved and brand images created by award winning sustainable branding designers, Title. (link to Title and Freshwell website)

11. What skills and information do people need to maintain a healthy diet?

On behalf of the Well London initiative, ELFA have run healthy eating and cooking sessions on the Woodberry Down Estate in North London. We learned that advice on budgeting and seasonal options to save money along with a clear price structure of food help people make better purchasing decisions for fresh food. We believe that supermarkets do not provide these options but moreover provide other unhealthy cheap options. Organisations such as ELFA communicate directly with local communities in London and can provide gateways to information and advice about what constitutes a healthy diet.

Participants tell us that once they know how to purchase the correct food, they need to know how to cook it and plan a menu around it. Partnership working with community kitchens and kitchens based in community settings may be one way of designing interventions to achieve this. However, such interventions must be realistic in terms of budget and the typical types of foods people would purchase.

ELFA believe that whereas increased nutrition knowledge is beneficial, many studies (Defra, 2011. Family Food 2010) show that price, taste and availability always trump health benefits in terms of

purchasing decisions, especially in multi-ethnic population (see research by Yeh et al, 2008. Health Promotion Interventions).

12. How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address food poverty?

ELFA believes the Mayor should use his strategic powers to bring about legislation on the amount of fast food outlets in an area or in particular around schools / children's centres that do not provide any healthy options. If these outlets don't provide healthy options they should be educated through training on how to make their products healthier. Perhaps a standard should have to be met i.e. the outlets would have to sign up to the Mayors healthy eating pledge so that these premises can provide a more valuable role in the battle against food poverty, rather than just providing access to cheap unhealthy quick food. As such shops are common in the most disadvantaged areas it would make sense to use them in a productive way.

Les Moore	Managing Director
Lee Martin	Chair
Miryem Salah	Head Researcher

ELFA
November 2012

FareShare feeds the UK's hungry

FareShare's recent annual survey of the charities and community organisations we work with shows:

- 59% of charities and community organisations report an increase in demand for food from their beneficiaries over the past 12 months.
 - 57% increase in the number of breakfast clubs feeding hungry children in need of food.
 - Some charities report a 100% increase in the numbers of people coming to them for a free, or cheap, meal.
 - 70% fear demand for food will increase in the future.
 - 42% of the charities we support are facing funding cuts.
 - A third of these said that made it harder for them to provide meals.
 - One in ten say they may have reduce their services or abandon providing food altogether.
-

Food Poverty

There are 5.8 million people living in deep poverty across the country, meaning they struggle to afford everyday essentials like food. People who face severe and multiple disadvantages such as homelessness, substance misuse, mental and physical illness, violence and abuse and extreme poverty are at greater risk of food poverty. At a time when one third of families are cutting back on food shopping to pay other living costs those already on the margins of society are likely to have their disadvantage exacerbated.

FareShare addresses the dietary needs of people experiencing food poverty, defined as “the inability to afford or to have access to, food to make up a healthy diet”.ⁱ When we talk about our beneficiaries experiencing poverty we mean deep poverty in that a person is unable to fulfil their minimum physical needs such as food, drink and shelter occurrences of this are on the rise in the UK.

The fact is we all need healthy food in order to thrive and live a healthy life. People who are held back by poor diet are more likely to develop vulnerability to food-related diseases such as [heart disease, cancer, stroke, and type 2 diabetes],ⁱⁱ arthritis and mental health issues. Malnourishment is also a barrier for personal development, affecting education and future success. Diseases related to ill diet cost the NHS nearly £6 billion a year.ⁱⁱⁱ Shockingly, 28% of our beneficiary charities and community organisations work with children under 11.^{iv}

Mike O'Brien, Head Teacher, St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, Greater Manchester, has told us *“Brinnington is a deprived area and around 40% of the children are on free school meals. Teachers have noticed an increase in the number of children arriving at school hungry over the last year, so we target these children to make sure they have something to eat in the morning.”* According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2011 report, [34% of children receiving free school meals were failing to meet minimum standards at age 11 in English and Maths, compared to 17% not receiving free school meals].^v

UK Hunger Spreading

Combined trends of increasing demand and diminishing resources are putting a strain on charities and affecting the urgency and demand for our services. FareShare is helping to take some of this strain by providing more surplus, good quality food from the food industry to these charities and community organisations.

Whilst researching breakfast clubs across the UK we found out that some breakfast clubs that are run in school believed that they were being used for childcare, but much more frequently they believed it was because the parents couldn't afford it, or weren't capable of delivering breakfast. In the poorer areas of South Yorkshire such as Rotherham (Canklow Woods Breakfast Club) and Sheffield (Greengate Lane Primary school and Lowfield Primary School) spoke about how they [started their breakfast clubs because they realised children were coming to school hungry, and if they didn't feed them, then they wouldn't get fed].

Many families are faced with the choice of giving up food in order to pay rent or mortgage with elderly or young dependents this is a critical situation. The solution is often to purchase cheap food which is high in fat, sugar, salt and saturated fat exacerbating health problems and paving the way for future ill-health and diet related diseases.

Meanwhile each year an **estimated 3 million tonnes of food**, much of it fit for human consumption, is **wasted** from the food industry. Food producers are throwing away food due to faulty packaging, ordering mistakes, or short shelf life.

FareShare, Fighting hunger, tackling food waste.

FareShare is a UK food charity dedicated to tackling **food poverty through addressing food waste**. Our mission is to **help feed people who cannot afford healthy food** and we are the UK's largest food redistribution charity, delivering in-date quality surplus food to relieve food poverty across the country. Access to food is a basic right, not a privilege.

FareShare has a very practical approach, rescuing good food that would otherwise go to waste and getting it to grassroots community charities such as hostels, food banks, day centres, breakfast clubs, and women's refuges. We are the UK's largest food redistribution charity, delivering in-date quality surplus food to relieve food poverty across the country. Last year we rescued **3,600 tonnes of good food** - enough for 8.6 million meals - and helped improve the health and wellbeing of **36,500 disadvantaged people a day**.

Without FareShare, all this food including fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, dairy products, cereals and juices would have been needlessly destroyed.

- In London alone, FareShare serves **109 community charities and community organisations** benefitting over **5,000 people every day**.
- By working regularly with over **100 food and drink companies**, last year FareShare rescued **3,600 tonnes of surplus food**.
- This contributed towards more than **8.6 million meals**, feeding **36,500 people a day**.

- FareShare currently has **17 locations across the UK** delivering to over **700 charities and community projects** enriching the diets of local people facing food poverty, including families, the elderly; homeless people of all ages; refugees; people with mental health problems and disadvantaged children.
- **890 volunteers** deliver the service across the UK creating awareness and social engagement with issues facing their communities. A true big society.

The UK's hungry relying on Charities

The sustained level of demand for our service signifies the number of people in the UK who rely on charities to help them access quality food. Many of the charities and community organisations we serve provide a real lifeline for people in areas where communities continue to suffer from an extended period of economic and social deprivation. People in deprived areas typically experience the worst levels of food poverty due to low income, poor access to affordable, nutritious food and a lack of skills or facilities to prepare food safely.

We recognise that the hardest population to reach are those who are less concerned where their food comes from, who regularly miss meals, and suffer the most ill-health. We have a multi-agency approach utilising local links, established charities and regional reach and we need to continue and grow our service to those most in need particularly in areas where we are not already serving.

We prioritise working with charities and community organisations where food provision is just a part of the overall support services. This helps to limit dependency by identifying and addressing the issues as to why they need food. Service Delivery Coordinator Mary Mantom at SIFA-Fireside explains, *'we find the food is the main hook to get people into our drop-in and from there we engage with them and start working with them to support them towards whatever their goals may be'*. By providing good, healthy and nutritious food to charities and community organisations, FareShare is helping to provide one of the key elements that allow them to engage with its beneficiaries; only once immediate concerns such as comfort and hunger are accounted for can the other aspects of the support service be most effective.

Members pay an annual fee in return for regular food deliveries. The value of the food they get is between **10 and 13 times the price of their annual subscription**. The benefit that our work has on the charitable sector is considerable charities and community organisations are able to save on their food budget to increase their reach. With 42% of charities surveyed facing funding cuts and more than one in ten saying they will either have to stop providing food or reduce their level of service as a direct result of the cuts. FareShare makes stretched food budgets stretch even further.

FareShare's holistic approach is more than food redistribution; we develop food training programmes in each of our depots providing recognised vocational skills designed to support the employment opportunities of our volunteers and beneficiaries. We also offer educational programmes - raising awareness of healthy diet and nutrition, meal planning and budgeting and providing people with much needed cooking skills.

FareShare's achievements have been recognised through a number of awards, including: Winner - Charity, Community and Environment category, Hollis Sponsorship Awards 2011; Winner - Britain's Most Admired Charity, Third Sector Awards, 2010; voted in the Top 100 NGOs in the world 2012, by Global Journal; Winner of the IGD Food Industry Awards 2012. Our Chief Executive, Lindsay Boswell is on the Executive Committee of London Food Board ensuring surplus food waste continues to be on the agenda and we have strong support and funding from the Mayor's London Waste Recycling Board for waste diversion work in North West London.

We could do much more...

Our current ambitions are to sign up four new charities and community organisations a month. According to the Charity Commission there are 936 registered charities in London which are providing services for the prevention or relief of poverty. We can assume that a proportion of them provide meals and could receive FareShare food however the scale of possibility should not be missed. The main limiting factors are securing food from the food industry and the capacity to deliver.

If just one percent of the 3 million tonnes of food waste was fit for human consumption we could provide **70 million meals** to those who need it.

We are urging the food industry to look at what happens in their surplus food and do the right thing with it. Sending it to FareShare first will mean they are prioritising human consumption over other more 'convenient' routes and pushing it up the waste hierarchy for its intended purpose. **The food industry has an ethical duty to put humans first at a time when millions face food poverty.**

We welcome any government/local authority-led initiative that encourages and makes it easier for food companies to do so.

ⁱ Choosing a better diet: a food and health action plan, Department of Health, 2005.

ⁱⁱ Scarborough et al. The economic burden of ill health due to diet, physical inactivity, smoking, alcohol and obesity in the UK: an update to 2006-07 NHS costs. J Public Health. 2011;33(4):527-35.

ⁱⁱⁱ Scarborough et al. The economic burden of ill health due to diet, physical inactivity, smoking, alcohol and obesity in the UK: an update to 2006-07 NHS costs. J Public Health. 2011;33(4):527-35.

^{iv} FareShare Annual Survey 2012.

^v Aldridge, H; Parekh, A; MacInnes, T; and Kenway, P. Monitoring Poverty and social Exclusion 2011. Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the New Policy Institute, 1 December 2011.

Islington has a food strategy with an overall aim to improve individual, community and environmental well-being by making healthy and sustainable food available and accessible to all.

The response below is a compilation of cross council department responses.

The Islington Food strategy takes on a wide definition of food poverty covering:

Access: the ease with which an individual can buy a range of healthy foods, get them to their home and consume them.

Affordability: whether a range of foods within reasonable access to an individual falls within their price range.

Appropriateness: whether individuals can access a culturally appropriate diet

Awareness: whether individuals have the knowledge of skills to buy and cook healthy foods.

The strategy steering group engages local authority teams, public health and NHS, voluntary sector and private sector to join up all areas of food work within the borough.

Is your organisation coming into contact with an increasing number of people facing food poverty?

Hard to measure as no defined measures for acceptable/accessible foods, cooking skills etc.

There is increased uptake of healthy start.

Anecdotally increase uptake of food bank services.

Free school meals eligibility is 48% primary and 45.5% secondary in Islington.

Meals on wheels uptake has fallen to 84 but that has proven due to other issues rather than need based.

How can we determine the number of Londoners that are in food poverty?

1. Link food poverty with other poverty indicators around fuel and transport. Anecdotal evidence of “heat versus eat” suggest strong links
2. More public health research on the impact of food and deprivation on health and well-being in communities in addition to the studies on food access identified by the Marmot Review team.
3. London councils modelling work on family budgets in 2011 did work on fuel poverty (www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/london%20councils/fue;povertyanduniversalcredit.pdf) may be of use in developing a model as may Joeseph rowntree foundation on minimum income standards (www.jrf.org.uk/publications/MIS-2012).
4. Perhaps the following as indicators

-% free school meals eligibility (FSME).

-uptake of healthy start in an area

-Demand for food banks

- use of meals in wheels
- childhood obesity and malnutrition data
- hospital admittance data regarding older people and malnutrition.

*** What initiatives exist to ensure affordable, healthy food is available in London?**

1. Local authorities developing food strategies and health inequalities strategies.
2. Healthy schools and healthy children's centre programmes-holistic approach to health and includes food provision, education and working with parents and vulnerable pupils.

In Islington

-41/61 schools recognised as healthy schools

-5/61 are enhancing

-3/16 children's centres are healthy children's centres.

15 schools are part of the magic breakfast programme (provides free orange juice and bagels to schools where FSME is greater than 50%.

Gregg's breakfast works in one school

Universal free school meals provision in primary schools (FSME in Islington is 48% primary and 45.5% secondary)

Family kitchen-run in 14 schools and 5 children's centres for families and children. Targeted for a number of reasons inc. FSME. Aims to inc. family cooking skills, easy low budget recipes, healthy eating and learning to eat together.

3. Healthy Catering commitment- promoting healthier cooking methods and ingredients at a wide range of caterers across London.

In Islington 25 caterers signed up so far. Mixture of fried chicken, kebab, canteens, cafes, fish and chip shops and pub/restaurants.

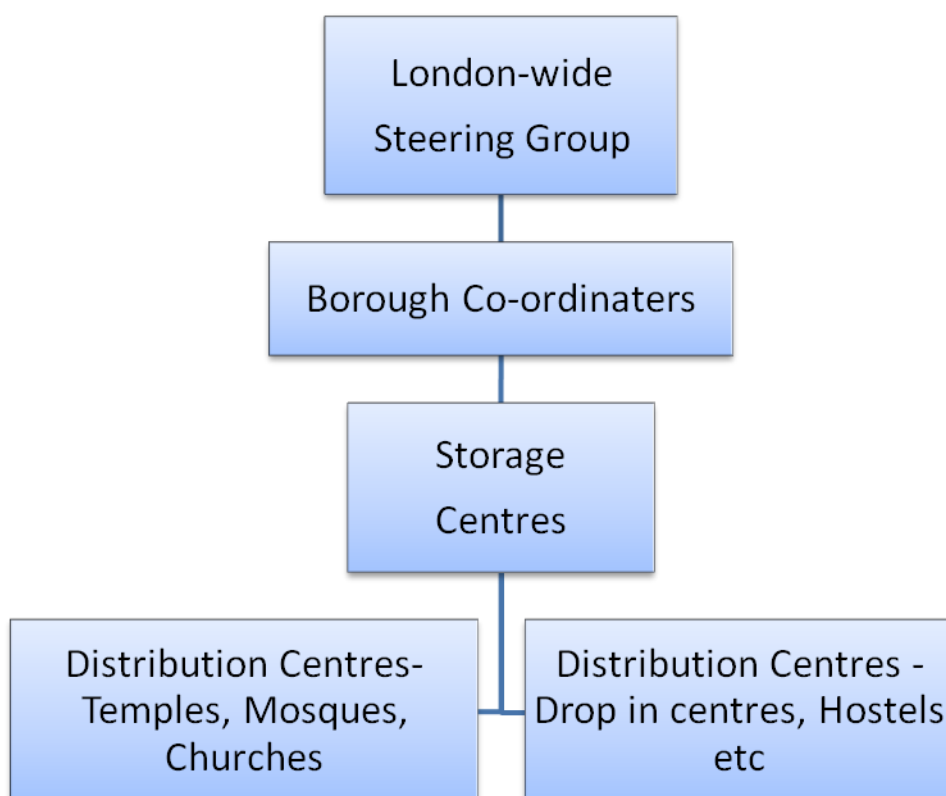
4. Delivery of healthy eating, cookery skills, cook taste and shopping on a budget to a targeted audience in appropriate settings. Done in Islington by Community Kitchen Project and St Luke's Project.
5. Promotion of the Healthy Start programme amongst residents and increased number of families registered and taking up the scheme-lead is Public health team
6. Promotion of new community food growing sites-increase food growing on estates.
7. Food for life programme has expanded in Islington-resulting in an increase of food growing in schools and raised awareness of food issues.
8. Meals on wheels services.
9. Promotion of organisations that redistribute excess food for example: Hare Krishna Food for All scheme and Trussell trust food banks.
10. Mapping of Islington to identify "food deserts".
11. Cataloguing of all food based activities in Islington to enable work together, access to funding and shared delivery where appropriate.
12. Focus of the Food Strategy group on food poverty to try and develop a measure of the Islington issue.

*** How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address food poverty?**

1. All academies and free schools should be obliged to abide by the same nutritional standards as those under local authority supervision.
2. Ensure that projects that provide information and education to Londoners on diet must speak to their aspirations and desires and cultivate a sense of ownership. Just providing information does not address the problem. Food initiative should be integrated with related initiatives such as fuel poverty.
3. Healthy schools London.
4. Adopt voluntary food and drink guidelines for early year's settings.
5. Make all schools cooking and growing schools.

Submissions will form a vital part of the London Assembly evidence base, shaping the recommendations made to the Mayor. Islington Food Strategy group will be submitting a joint response to the consultation and comments should be sent to Michelle Webb, LBI lead, for compilation by the deadline of 16:00 on 30 October 2012.

Proposed London-wide Foodbank Structure



Food poverty in London
An investigation by the Health and Environment Committee
of the London Assembly

Submission from the Food Team of the Greater London Authority

1. The Greater London Authority (GLA) food team works to deliver priority projects to implement the Mayor's Food Strategy: *Healthy and Sustainable Food for London* (2006).

2. The food team also provides secretariat support to the London Food Board, an advisory committee chaired by Rosie Boycott, which advises the Mayor of London on food issues in the capital and oversees implementation of the London Food Strategy. The London Food Board has members with expertise from all areas of London's food system, including on food poverty. The London Food Board welcomes this investigation into food poverty and will await its conclusions with interest.

3. The impacts of food poverty, hunger and malnutrition on Londoners are issues of major concern to the London Food Board. However, these issues are complex and resist easy explanation. Food poverty can be as much a result of lack of financial resources as it is about a lack of skills and knowledge. The London Food Board has sought to address issues of food poverty over time with an emphasis on food access. However the Board is also acutely aware that economic conditions have tightened in recent years and this is exacerbating and already entrenched problem. The structure of the Board's working groups means it has the flexibility to meet emerging and evolving challenges. A new, ad-hoc working group will consider over the coming months the most pressing issues (and recommended policy interventions) around food poverty in London.

4. We know that some member organisations of the London Food Board are replying to this investigation in their own right and we do not wish to rehearse here any of the issues which they will raise in those replies.

5. Whilst noting that further London Food Board work on food poverty will be developed in coming months, we summarise below four projects which have been funded by the GLA food programme and which we believe have a material impact on food poverty in its broadest sense:

i. Capital Growth

The Capital Growth initiative, a partnership between the Mayor, London Food Link and the Big Lottery, is seen as international leader in urban agriculture. In the four years since its inception the project has created 1,950 new community food growing spaces in London, engaging over 60,000 Londoners and turning large swathes of London into productive food growing spaces.

Capital Growth addresses food poverty in the broadest sense. It creates an accessible and affordable source of food for local people, many of whom are from deprived communities. GIS analysis of postcode data for Capital Growth sites has shown that 43

percent of Capital Growth spaces are based in the 20 percent most deprived Local Super Output Areas.

The project also tackles food poverty from the angle of knowledge and skills and food culture. Capital Growth spaces in London schools have been used as a catalyst for transforming school food culture with children learning for the first time not only where their food comes from but also how it is harvested, stored and cooked. Capital Growth spaces have also engaged London's diverse communities allowing them to grow and share their culturally- specific varieties of fruits and vegetables.

Many Capital Growth projects are now producing at scale and are providing healthy and nutritious food for the wider community. Many have developed into social enterprises that provide volunteering, skills training and employment while at the same time supplying local restaurants and residents. Capital Growth will be focusing more and more on productivity in the years to come and will be looking to answer the question "how much food could London grow?"

ii. Fast food takeaways: a toolkit for local authorities

[drafting note to GLA Scrutiny Team colleagues: this toolkit is not launched until 21 November 2012]

One of the problems of food access in London is not just easy accessibility to healthy and nutritious food but also the often too easy access to the wrong type of food. London has experienced rapid growth in fast food takeaways in recent years many of which sell food with high levels of salts, saturated fats, trans-fats and sugar. It has long been known that there is a correlation between deprivation and high levels of obesity. However more recently the National Obesity Observatory has found that there is a direct correlation between deprivation and prevalence of fast food establishments http://www.noo.org.uk/uploads/doc/vid_15683_FastFoodOutletMap2.pdf

The London Food Board has developed guidance for local authorities on how to tackle the public health impacts of these premises. The Toolkit advocates that action to address the public health impacts of takeaway food will necessitate engagement with industry alongside increasing partnership approach across local authority services. The aim of the Takeaways Toolkit is to help local authorities to develop strategies and programmes to tackle the impacts of fast food takeaways in their local communities. The Toolkit is targeted at those working in environmental health, trading standards, public health, education and planning.

The Toolkit recommends a three-pronged approach:

- **Local authorities should work with takeaway businesses and the food industry to make food healthier**

Through the use of information, training and advice and promotion of awards and schemes such as the London-based Healthier Catering Commitment we recommend that local authorities – through Environmental Health Teams - support businesses to improve the healthiness of the food they offer while helping the business to save money.

Environmental health teams working in local authorities are ideally positioned to work with takeaway businesses to encourage healthier eating and diets. EHPs visit a wide range of food premises on a regular basis to conduct food safety inspections giving them 'an access route' to provide information, training and advice.

- **Schools should introduce strategies aimed at reducing the amount of fast food pupils consume during lunch breaks and on their journey to and from school.**

The Toolkit recommends a 'stay on site' approach to lunches that can help prevent children from accessing unhealthy food at lunchtime. It recommends schools engage in work to improve the quality of their school meals and dining experience to attract young people back to school meal provision. It also recommends that schools (including academies) adhere to the national nutritional standards as advocated by the School Food Trust.

- **Regulatory and planning measures should be used to address the proliferation of hot food takeaway outlets**

The Toolkit recommends that local authorities utilise existing regulatory resources to encourage good practice within the takeaway sector. This could include the introduction of street trading policies, increased enforcement of hygiene standards, waste regulations and odour control.

In areas of over-concentration of fast food takeaways or where vulnerable groups such as children and young people are a concern, the Toolkit recommends promotion of clear guidance in planning policies that allow the restriction of fast food takeaways. These policies should be well thought through and evidence based. Boroughs which perceive take away proliferation as an issue should ideally articulate their approach to planning controls in their local development frameworks. This should be accompanied with a thorough articulation of the policy in a development plan document, supplementary planning document (SPD), or supplementary planning guidance (SPG). Boroughs where the local development framework has already been completed can look to develop SPDs or SPGs on this specific issue.

iii. Public Sector Food Procurement - Good Food on the Public Plate (GFPP)

Having previously worked only with hospitals, from 2008 this project broadened its scope to include London's local authorities, universities, schools, prisons, government departments and care homes. It helped many organisations to develop sustainable food procurement policies, and to find, audit and broker new, more sustainable food supply chains. Many influential public sector caterers are rightly proud of the sustainable food policies which this project has helped them to adopt and showcase, including the GLA Group itself.

Recognising the power of collaborative purchasing, GFPP helped to establish groups of organisations which benefit from joint contracts to buy tasty, healthy and sustainable food – including meat, dairy, fruit and vegetables, frozen food and other groceries – at a fair price. These include the 'Chelsea Cluster' of the Royal Brompton and Royal Marsden hospitals, Imperial College, Lambeth Hospital and Thamesbrook Care Home,

and the larger 'London Cluster' buying consortium. Independent assessors showed, for example, that GFPP contributed to some £1.4m of sustainable food being bought by London's public sector during 2010 – with much of it eaten by vulnerable populations group, and enabling organisations to make considerable financial savings.

GLA funding of this project ended in March 2012. In the year to then the project helped the 'London Cluster' to prepare new tenders for grocery and frozen collaborative contracts worth approximately £4m per year and which have a range of sustainability requirements, including sustainable fish, free-range eggs and fairly-traded beverages.

The London Borough of Havering currently co-ordinates work on this programme across London and it is hoped that the project will continue to develop similar collaborative procurement arrangements so that the project engages more organisations and becomes financially self-sustaining.

iv. Supply Chains for Healthy Sustainable Food – Business Development at Wholesale Markets

This project is currently based at New Covent Garden Market and builds the supply chain for healthy food into London, from producer to customer. Customers in London in previous phases of this project have included convenience stores (including, for example, many which participated in the Buywell project, which from 2008 to 2011 worked in 10 deprived areas of London to make it easier to buy healthy, affordable and sustainably produced food locally), food access projects and the public sector.

In the 18 months to July 2011 the supply chains project produced additional gross turnover from businesses of £14,605,500 net of healthy sustainable food into London.

v. Food Waste Pyramid & Feed the 5000 Event

In November 2011 the London Food Board in partnership with the GLA Waste Team launched a new tool for food businesses to help them avoid sending food to landfill. This policy called the Food Waste Pyramid was launched at the Feeding the 5000 Event in Trafalgar Square and was funded by the GLA Food Programme. The event sought to highlight the issue of needless food waste and to encourage London businesses to adopt the guidance in the Food Waste Pyramid. The top priority of this policy was to encourage food businesses to redistribute surplus food that was fit for human consumption to those charities who supported Londoners facing food poverty. More than 22 London based businesses signed up including Waitrose, Unilever, & Wahaca restaurant chain. The event itself profiled London based food poverty charities Food Cycle and Fareshare.

Greater London Authority Food Team, November 2012

Health and Environment Committee Investigation into food poverty in London.

Response from the GLA Health Team – 9th November 2012

The GLA Health Team is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the investigation into Food Poverty by the London Assembly's Health and Environment Committee.

The Health Team leads delivery on the Mayor's statutory duties in respect of health inequalities, through the London Health Inequalities Strategy. More broadly, the Team works with partners in the GLA family to ensure that improving public health and reducing health inequalities are fully embedded in pan-London strategy and delivery. The Team works with partners in the NHS, London's Boroughs and the third sector to deliver a range of health programmes.

Other respondents will be better placed to provide detailed answers to the majority of the questions set out in the consultation document (for example initiatives and projects in place in London; and data on the number of Londoners who are in food poverty). This submission will therefore focus on:

- The strength of the evidence on health impacts of food poverty;
- Understanding the causes and impact of food poverty in the context of the wider determinants of health and health inequalities;
- The contribution of the Health Team's current and future work in tackling food poverty, with particular reference to action in London's schools.

This submission takes a necessarily broad overview of these issues in this initial call for evidence, and the length of submission requested. The Health Team is very willing to work with the Committee Secretariat to offer further detail and advice.

Evidence on the health impacts of food poverty

The health impacts of poor diet and nutrition are well understood, and well reported. These are discussed in the consultation document, and the Health team supports the conclusions and comments.

Poor diet and nutrition is a major risk factor for the leading causes of premature death among Londoners (cardio-vascular disease, some cancers, and stroke); and a range of conditions that limit people's ability to work, travel and participate fully in society (e.g., diabetes, and hypertension). In addition, a number of population subgroups are particularly impacted by diet related conditions. These are also well understood and well reported. For example - low birthweight and some birth defects for babies; poor dental health and bone health in young children; low micronutrient intakes among adolescents; poor bone health and anaemia in older people.

There is also evidence on how the diet of those on lower incomes differs from that of the general population. The Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey shows that those living in households in the lowest 15% of income, compared to the general population:

- Eat less fruit and vegetables
- Have higher intakes of sugar, and saturated fats
- Have lower intakes of dietary fibre and a range of micronutrients.

However it is important to note that in many cases, these factors are not unique to lower income households. They reflect in a more pronounced way dietary trends and poor nutrient status seen in the general population.

Food Poverty in the context of wider determinants of health

The consultation document notes that "food poverty" should not be understood simply in terms of financial poverty, but also incorporate other non-financial barriers to a healthy diet. The Health Team strongly supports the need to understand food poverty in these wider terms - and to understand that dietary choices are fundamentally influenced by the physical, cultural and social environment, as well as the financial environment, in which we live.

Two highly important pieces of work in understanding the environment causes and vectors of poor diet and health are:

- *Foresight - tackling obesities: Future Choices* (2007). Although Foresight focuses on obesity rather than the wider range of health impacts of poor diet, the report has been highly influential in mapping the role that food systems play in the "obesogenic environment". The report articulates how physical, cultural and social factors combine with both family incomes and wider economic structure of the food supply chain to influence individual diets. We would urge the investigation to make use of this analysis, and of the concepts on which it is based, in developing its work.
- *Fair Society, Healthy Lives (the Marmot Review)*. This groundbreaking review is similarly much broader in scope than food poverty. The review articulates the way in which health inequalities result from social inequalities; sets out policy recommendations in six areas that will be directly applicable to tackling food poverty; and articulates the way in which government and public services at all levels, and the private and third sectors need to work together to develop and deliver action.

Foresight and Marmot both articulate the importance of understanding the causes of health inequalities and food poverty as multi-factoral; and as arising from a "whole system". Similarly, measures to tackle health inequalities and food poverty must be framed in terms of a "whole system approach". This means not just that action is required across a range of causal factors, but also that action requires the concerted commitment of all partners, and is delivered at a range of levels of the system.

Examples of the Health Team's work that are relevant to tackling food poverty

London Obesity Framework. The Health team is currently leading the development of a pan-London approach to support Boroughs and their partners to tackle child obesity. this work was initiated by the London Health Improvement Board. Tackling poor diet is clearly a major part of this work.

Since March this year, we have led a programme of research and consultation with stakeholders to identify and agree the actions that need to be taken in London, and from where in the system (i.e., communities, locally, pan-London, nationally) it would be most effective for those actions to be led. This includes articulating those actions that the Mayor and the GLA is uniquely placed to lead. The resulting workplan therefore includes priorities in the following areas:

- Engagement and advocacy – working with leaders across London to champion a vision among strategic partners; and advocate for actions and partnerships.
- Practical support for local delivery – resources, networks and advice that will enable local teams to increase the impact of their work.

Among the early priorities for the coming months that relate to diet are: work to support boroughs to understand the social impact of fast food takeaways; street audits of the food environment by children and young people; and supporting schools to provide a healthy food environment through the Healthy Schools London programme.

Healthy Schools London

The Health Team is piloting, and planning the pan-London re-launch of, the Healthy Schools London (HSL) programme, that will refresh the national programme of support to schools and boroughs. The programme aims to educate young people about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and encourages schools to develop a healthy school culture. The programme will encourage all participating schools to:

- Increase school meal uptake including free school meals
- Improve children and young people's access to healthy packed lunches and snacks throughout the school day.
- Reduce the incidence of weight related bullying
- Increase the knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils, parents and staff in healthy eating

Healthy Workplaces

The Health team is encouraging the sign up and assessment of organisations against a set of voluntary standards that help employers encourage employee health and well-being. This includes a standard on healthy eating, reflecting awareness of the impact of overweight and obesity on population health, its potential impact on organisational performance, and that the work environment can actively encourage and enable healthy eating among its staff. The standards are set at three levels with commitments including providing information to employees on healthy eating to actively promoting healthy eating options (for example, through on-site catering facilities).

The Healthy Workplace Charter is currently ending its pilot stage. In this period it has accredited fourteen London employers across a range of sectors and sizes and across six London boroughs. It will be available as a tool for London roll out from December 2012.

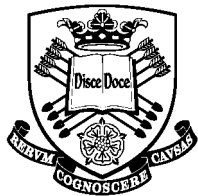
Well London

The Well London programme uses a community development, asset-based approach that focuses on the social determinants of health. It aims to build stronger local communities by providing residents in disadvantaged areas with the skills and confidence to improve their neighbourhoods, health and well-being. The Well London approach addresses low levels of healthy eating, physical activity and positive mental well-being.

In phase 1 of the programme which ran from 2007 to 2011 food projects helped to increase the demand for healthier food through practical activities such as cook and eat courses; and increase the supply of healthy food by improving local access to

affordable, sustainably sourced food. This included local food-growing projects. Food was also used as a mechanism for reducing social isolation by bringing people together.

Phase 2 of the programme is currently running in 9 boroughs.



London Assembly Health and Environment Committee investigation into food poverty in London

Submission from Hannah Lambie-Mumford

5th November 2012

This submission addresses a number of issues relevant to the investigation into food poverty in London. It is based on evidence from a series of recent and on-going research projects which have engaged with issues of food poverty and food insecurity in the UK context as well as policy and charitable responses to constrained food experiences. This submission focusses on the following key aspects: understanding and measuring food poverty; Trussell Trust Foodbanks; policy approaches to food deserts; and the utilisation of the Mayor's Strategic Powers in relation to food poverty.

Understanding and measuring food poverty

Question: What is food poverty?

The definition of food poverty employed by the Committee, 'the inability to afford, or to have access to, food to make up a healthy diet', and the emphasis being placed on the role of income and food prices is an important starting point for the London Assembly and their partners to come to a better understanding of food poverty. It is rightly outlined in the briefing paper that other factors such as access to adequate shops are also critical. Importantly, the role of key structural barriers to food access, including income, food prices, and retail and transport infrastructures has long been reported in UK-based research and should remain a focus (Hitchman et al 2002; Dowler et al 2001; Lambie-Mumford forthcoming 2012). Research has also highlighted the importance of broad conceptualisations of food poverty, which move beyond an understanding of food as an issue of health and healthy eating, towards an interpretation which equally takes account of the important ways in which food experiences impact on social participation and inclusion (Lambie-Mumford forthcoming 2012; see also Dowler et al 2001).

Recommendation: For food poverty to be conceptualised as an issue not just of health but also of social justice and for the Assembly to maintain a focus on the role of structural barriers within their understanding of food poverty.

Key Question: How can we determine the number of Londoners that are in Food Poverty?

In addition to gathering evidence on appropriate proxy measures or indicators for food poverty (such as free school meals), it may also be helpful for the Committee to look to more direct measurements. The 2007 Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey (LIDNS) incorporated within it a measure of food security amongst the low income population



surveyed (Nelson et al 2007).¹ In doing so, it drew on a methodology developed and routinely used by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) (see Bickel et al 2000). Canada also draws on these methods in monitoring food security (see Health Canada). Such household-level measures collect data relating to, for example, experiences of anxiety about being able to obtain enough food, experiences of running out of food, adults skipping meals and children's experiences of limited food available in households (see Bickel et al 2000).

Recommendation: For the London Assembly, working alongside practitioner and research partners, to consider direct measures of food security/food poverty, engaging with previous examples, not just from the UK but also from other countries.

The Trussell Trust Foodbank Network

This section of the submission draws principally on research carried out in 2011 and published in Lambie (2011) which looked at the rise of the Trussell Trust Foodbank Network. It also draws on an on-going research project which is looking at emergency food provision more broadly across the UK and its relationship to contemporary experiences of food poverty.

The Trussell Trust Foodbank Network is the first and most high profile national scale food banking initiative in the UK. The Network's growth and the proliferation of Foodbanks raises important questions not just for policy makers but practitioners and other community stakeholders as well. For the purposes of this investigation there are a number of key factors I would suggest that the London Assembly may wish to consider.

Firstly, Foodbank is one particular way of conducting emergency food banking or the distribution of emergency food parcels. It will therefore be important for the Assembly to come to an understanding of the particular aims, motivations and ways of working that Foodbanks have.

Recommendation: That Lambie (2011) and other available material from the Trussell Trust are consulted to enhance an understanding of the particularities of the Foodbank approach.

Key Question: Does London need more Foodbanks, and if so how can we increase the available resources?

The question of relating to Foodbanks need not necessarily just be about assisting them in terms of growth and resources. Instead, there are likely to be important ways in which the London Assembly and the Mayor could work together alongside food banking initiatives to identify where effective policies can be devised and implement which can have an impact on the underlying causes of food poverty. A key finding from the research published in Lambie (2011) was for the Foodbank Network to maintain a focus on campaigning and advocacy

¹ Food poverty and food security (at the individual and household scales) are closely related ideas, and have recently come to be used as synonyms.



work, promoting social justice and giving a voice to the experience of emergency food recipients. It will be important, in the face of extensive changes to the welfare landscape and the continued growth of this initiative, that the London Assembly gives consideration to the experiences that Foodbanks encounter across London and the evidence that they provide.

Recommendation: That the London Assembly explores opportunities for working in partnership with Foodbanks and possibly other independent initiatives, with the aims of learning from and listening to their experiences in local communities and reflecting on and realising the role that it can have in addressing the underpinning issues of food access which are revealed.

In coming to a position on Foodbanks and similar independent initiatives, the London Assembly will need to consider carefully the implications and knock on effects of more formalised relationships or support policies, in the context of on-going changes to welfare and community provision. Food poverty can be framed in a wider discourse of rights and entitlements (Dowler and O'Connor 2012; Lambie-Mumford 2012) and in light of the extensive changes to welfare provision, it will be even more important that the London Assembly draws on these discourses to come to a better understanding of the implications of their responses to food banking initiatives. In Canada, Riches (2002: 648) argued that when food banks become an established part of the welfare landscape they can provide policy makers with the opportunity to 'look the other way', giving the impression that the issue is being addressed. In constructing a more comprehensive approach to food poverty, the London Assembly will need to be very conscious of this, and to be sure that they will not take such an opportunity if it is afforded them.

Recommendation: That the London Assembly takes care to consider the implications and potential consequences of more formalised relationships or support policies towards Foodbanks and other initiatives; that this consideration is undertaken within a context sensitive to the importance of rights and entitlements in discussions of food poverty; and that ultimately the Assembly resists any temptation to 'look the other way'.

This is undoubtedly an important moment for the future of policy approaches to food poverty. The proliferation of the Trussell Trust Foodbank Network and the extensive media coverage and public commentary that we have recently been seeing is likely to be adding pressure for a timely response from policy makers. However, evidence of the entrenchment of food banking in other countries like the US and Canada indicates the importance of informed public debate at this critical juncture, around such questions as what this growth is telling us and also what we want to see in the future (Riches 2002).

Recommendation: That at the earliest possible stage the London Assembly engages with a full range of policy, practitioner and community stakeholders to initiate an informed and wide scale public debate about food banking in London.



Key Question: Are Foodbanks a sustainable response to food poverty?

The Foodbank Network represents a significant charitable effort. Between 2011 and 2012 4,360 volunteers helped 201 Foodbanks feed 128,697 people across the UK (Trussell Trust 2012). When thinking about the role of Foodbanks in relation to food poverty it is important to remember that they are *emergency* responses, intended to plug a gap whilst other agencies put appropriate assistance in place. They are designed to provide relief in times of acute need and are ultimately premised on the existence and work of a wider welfare system (Lambie-Mumford 2012). Beyond the provision of emergency food assistance and signposting to other help, initiatives such as Foodbanks are necessarily limited in the impact they can have on underpinning experiences of poverty and food poverty (Lambie-Mumford 2012; see also Tarasuk 2001).

Whilst there is a limited but growing body of research on food banking in the UK context, other countries have a much longer history of this kind of provision, the United States and Canada in particular, and have seen an extensive range of research into the efficacy and role of food banking (Poppendieck 1998; Tarasuk 2001 among many).

Recommendation: That the London Assembly turns to existing evidence from elsewhere in the Global North, particularly the US and Canada, to inform its policy towards food banking.

Food Deserts

The reflections provided here draw on relevant findings from recently conducted research into the work of area-based regeneration initiatives on food poverty (Lambie 2010; Lambie-Mumford forthcoming 2012).

Key Question: Does London have food deserts, and what is the impact of these?

The notion of food deserts has been and remains contested within the academic literature (Shaw 2006; McEntree 2009) and some authors are uncertain that a single focus on retail provision is sufficient (see Cummins et al 2005; Hitchman et al 2002). This being said, the role of retail infrastructure in experiences of food poverty is a key area with which policy makers, particularly those with planning powers such as the Mayor, can engage. Access to adequate shops selling a good variety of healthy food stuffs at affordable prices would necessarily form a key part of a more comprehensive approach to food poverty in London, which also takes account of such aspects as affordable and accessible transport and income levels.

Recommendation: that the London Assembly looks at the most effective ways to locate work relating to access to adequate shops as one aspect of a wider approach to food poverty.



Utilising the Mayor's Strategic Powers

Key Question: How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address food poverty?

Key recommendations which the London Assembly and the Mayor may wish to consider have been outlined throughout this submission. With specific regard to the Mayor's strategic powers, there are a number of ways that these could be utilised in relation to the recommendations which have been put forward.

1. Utilising strategic powers to ensure strategic thinking around food poverty: the London Food Board and the London Health Improvement Board could be key mechanisms through which co-ordinated action and cross departmental thinking around food poverty is realised. The use of *both* will be of critical importance, to ensure that food poverty does not come to be seen as an issue belonging to one directorate or department.
2. Regarding physical access to shops which sell a variety of good quality, healthy food at affordable prices: strategic planning powers and building relationships with food retailers could provide invaluable opportunities to address issues of physical access to food.

References

Bickel, G., Nord, M. Price, C., Hamilton, W. and Cook, H (2000) Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Alexandria VA [online] <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsec/files/fsguide.pdf> [accessed 30.10.12]

Cummins, S., Petticrew, M., Sparks, L., Findlay, A. (2005) 'Large scale food retail interventions and diet', British Medical Journal, 330, 683-4.

Dowler, E., Turner, S., with Dobson, B. (2001), Poverty Bites: Food, Health and Poor Families, London: CPAG.

Dowler, E. and O'Connor, D. (2012), 'Rights-based approaches to addressing food poverty and food insecurity in Ireland and the UK', Social Science and Medicine, 74: 44–51.

Health Canada (no date) Household Food Insecurity in Canada: Overview [online] <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/commun/insecurit/index-eng.php> [accessed 30.10.12]

Hitchman, C., Christie, I., Harrison, M., Lang, T. (2002) Inconvenience Food: The Struggle to Eat Well on a Low Income, Demos, London.

Lambie, H. (2011), The Trussell Trust Foodbank Network: Exploring the Growth of Foodbanks across the UK, Report to the Trussell Trust Foodbank Network, Coventry: Coventry University. [http://www.trusselltrust.org/resources/documents/Our%20work/Lambie-\(2011\)-The-Trussell-Trust-Foodbank-Network---Exploring-the-Growth-of-Foodbanks-Across-the-UK.pdf](http://www.trusselltrust.org/resources/documents/Our%20work/Lambie-(2011)-The-Trussell-Trust-Foodbank-Network---Exploring-the-Growth-of-Foodbanks-Across-the-UK.pdf) [accessed 30.10.12]



Lambie, H (2010) Food poverty and area-based regeneration: reflections on the work of two new deal for communities partnerships. Executive Summary (available from the author, forthcoming on www.hannahlambie-mumford.co.uk)

Lambie-Mumford, H. (forthcoming 2012) 'Regeneration and food poverty in the United Kingdom: learning from the New Deal for Communities programme', *Community Development Journal*

Lambie-Mumford, H. (2012) 'Every Town Should Have One': Emergency food banking in the UK', *Journal of Social Policy*, available on CJO doi:10.1017/S004727941200075X, [online] http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S004727941200075X (2 November 2012)

McEntree, J. (2009) 'Highlighting Food Inadequacies: does the food deserts metaphor help this cause?', *British Food Journal*, 111, 4, 349-363.

Nelson, M., Evans, B., Bates, B. et al. (2007) Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey, Stationary Office, London. [online] <http://tna.europarchive.org/20110116113217/http://www.food.gov.uk/science/dietarysurveys/li dnsbranch/> [accessed 30.10.12]

Poppendieck, J. (1998), *Sweet Charity? Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*, New York: Penguin.

Riches, G. (2002), 'Food banks and food security: welfare reform, human rights and social policy – lessons from Canada', *Social Policy and Administration*, 36: 6, 648–63.

Shaw, H. J. (2006) 'Food Deserts: towards the development of a classification', *Geogr. Ann.*, 88B, 2, 231-247.

Tarasuk, V. (2001), 'A critical examination of community-based responses to household food insecurity in Canada', *Health Education and Behaviour*, 28: 4, 487–99.

Trussell Trust (2012) 'UK Foodbanks double numbers fed in one year', press release [online] <http://www.trusselltrust.org/resources/documents/UK-foodbanks-double-numbers-fed-in-one-year1.pdf> [accessed 02.11.12]

Dear Simon Shaw,

There is often a misconception that food poverty is an issue that only affects poorer nations. However, this issue is right on our doorstep. The term 'food poverty' encompasses not only the inability to afford food but also the lack of access to the constituents of a healthy diet.

The number of people living below the poverty line has been on the rise and one of the main reasons has been the change in the benefit system leading to a delay in accessing funds. This has led to a large number of individuals being unable to afford food with nutritional sustenance.

At Islington Food Bank, we have a vision to bridge the gap for those unable to feed themselves. We wish to alleviate the burden many people are facing by providing much needed food essentials, thus bridging the gap and uniting our community. We are a Christian organisation, founded by the Trussell trust group. The Trussell trust partners with local churches and communities to meet the needs of the communities across the United Kingdom.

Since opening in March 2011, we have seen a steady increase of clients. The types of clients we deal with are single individuals, couples and families. The majority of our clients in our first year of operation consisted of single people and couples. As time has progressed, we have seen an increase in the number of families coming through our doors.

So far we have helped over 800 clients, including families with young children, thanks to the generous donations we have received from the public and organisations. As we approach the Christmas season and the temperature starts to drop rapidly, our services become a vital lifeline for some members of the community. A demographic particularly susceptible to food poverty in this period are the elderly as they often have to weigh up the cost of heating their homes against the cost of food and other necessities.

Does London need more Foodbanks?

The evidence would suggest that this is the case as new centers open across the city to cope with increasing demand. Due to increased austerity measures being implemented in the UK, unemployment has been on the rise with many people falling on hard times.

We would concede that the sustainability of food banks as a response to dealing with food poverty is debatable. However, irrespective of one's stance, there is an undeniable need for them. They provide a direct solution to a very basic problem. One may argue that food banks only alleviate the symptomatic problem emanating from food poverty. Nevertheless, in the same way treating smoking related illnesses doesn't address the underlying problem, the consequential effects still need to be attended to. As such, I can quite comprehensively say that London does need more food banks.

The role food banks in London play in the wider community is essential. They are not just a means of providing much needed sustenance, but also a point of contact to let people know that they are not suffering in silence and that people actually care. We live in a world where altruism is becoming a rarity and organisations like food banks can help to restore the belief in a sense of community.

Food poverty is an issue very close to our hearts at Islington Food Bank. I do hope that the contents of this submission prove valuable in your investigation. If you do require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us. I look forward to hearing the outcome of your efforts and I wish you all the best in your endeavours.

Yours Sincerely,

Islington Food Bank.

Dear Fiona and Simon

I received an email from Simon last week about food poverty in London, with specific questions relating to breakfast clubs.

In the email you have asked for written submissions, but it also says that meetings will be held between Fiona and experts and stakeholders in late 2012.

I'm writing to you as I manage the Greggs Foundation which has been running a breakfast club scheme since 1999, providing free breakfasts for primary school children in disadvantaged areas (over 40% free school meals).

We currently fund just under 200 breakfast clubs around the UK at a cost of around £280,000 a year, and will shortly be opening our 200th breakfast club in London.

In a nutshell, we provide start-up funding of up to £500 for equipment, cups, bowls, plates, toasters, freezers etc, free bread from a local Greggs shop, and funding each term of £10 per child for cereal, spreads, milk, juice, fruit and yoghurt
ie a club of 50 children would receive £500 a term and 100 children would receive £1,000 a term.

We ask that the school provides this club for free and is open to all so that the most vulnerable children will benefit. We also ask the schools to encourage parent volunteers to help run the club – this helps to keep the costs down but also promotes great relationships between the school and the local community, and helps parents to go on to become parent governors and often to employment.

A recent development in our scheme has been working with partners to grow the numbers of clubs.

We are now working with 25 other organisations with funding for 50 clubs.

These organisations include:

CBI
Royal Bank of Scotland
KPMG
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Etihad Airways
Typhoo Tea
UBS
Travis Perkins
Middlesbrough Council
Your Homes Newcastle

We have set up a breakfast club strategy group, chaired by Greggs plc chief executive, including representatives from several partners companies and our aim is to grow the number of clubs we support to 300 in 2013.

Since we have been opening and funding breakfast clubs for the last 12 years and now have a lot of experience in this field, it strikes me that a lot of what we are doing could contribute

really well to the debate you are having about food poverty in London, in particular relating to breakfast clubs.

We are passionate about the scheme and have seen at first hand the huge difference a breakfast club can make to schools and the children who attend them. We promote the clubs with our internal staff as we want them to feel proud to work for a company that helps out local communities, but we have always been quite reticent about promoting the clubs externally and we don't use Greggs branding at the clubs – indeed if you visited any of our clubs you would probably not even be aware that it is Greggs that funds the club.

I spend a lot of time in the South East and I would love to have the opportunity to come and meet with you and see if we can help in any way.

I will give you a call over the next couple of days to see if this would be possible.

Some additional information which may help you is that we currently have 15 clubs open in London with plans to open another 5 by the end of the year.

The Greggs Foundation is a registered charity which has been operating since 1987 and our aim has always been to help to alleviate social deprivation and poverty. We have four grant programmes, two of which are in the North East only, but two operate in London: the breakfast club programme and our regional grants programme.

We gave out £1.5 million in grants last year and following is a link to our website if you would like to learn more about us:

www.greggsfoundation.org.uk

I've also attached a brief one-pager about the breakfast club scheme.

I hope to speak with you soon.

Kind regards

Jackie

Jackie Crombie
Greggs Foundation Manager
Fernwood House
Clayton Road, Jesmond
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE2 1TL



Food poverty in London: A submission from Child Poverty Action Group

Child Poverty Action is the leading national charity working to end poverty among children, young people and families in the UK. Our vision is of a society free of child poverty where all children can enjoy their childhoods and have fair chances in life to reach their full potential.

We do not have good estimates of the extent of food poverty amongst families with children. But we know that families in London face a high risk of income poverty, one of the primary drivers of food poverty. London has the highest rate of child poverty of any English region, with as many poor children in the capital as in Scotland and Wales together.ⁱ Thirty-seven per cent of all children in London live below the poverty line, a total of 592,000 children.ⁱⁱ

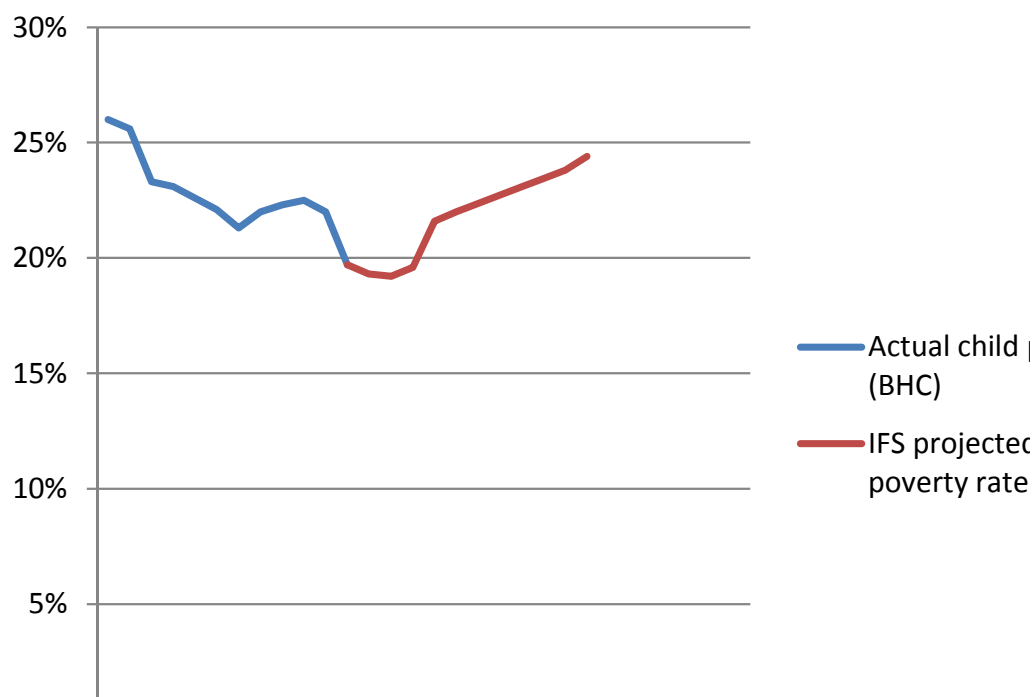
This submission looks at potential future drivers of poverty and income poverty in London, before examining the provision of Free School Meals for children, drawing on CPAG's own research.

Trends in poverty in London

Income poverty is likely to be a significant driver of food poverty amongst families. Child poverty in London is currently at its lowest level since the mid-1990s, although remains higher than in any other region of the U.K.ⁱⁱⁱ

Nationally, child poverty is expected to rise up to 2015. The Institute for Fiscal Studies predict that the number of children in poverty will reach 2.9 million by 2015,^{iv} a significant increase from the current rate of 2.3 million.^v

Figure 1: Actual and Predicted child poverty rates in the UK



Source: figures from Mike Brewer, James Browne and Robert Joyce (2011) *Child and working age poverty from 2010 to 2020 IFS*.

The IFS attribute some of the predicted increase in child poverty to the impact of the current Government's reforms to benefits and tax credits, finding that: *"there will be 200,000 more children in relative poverty in 2014, 2015 and 2020 than there would have been without the government's reforms."*^{vi}

The impact of benefit changes: cuts to support with housing

We can expect some of these reforms to have a disproportionate impact in London, due in part to the high housing costs in the capital. A forthcoming report from CPAG^{vii} looks at the impact of 'welfare reform' in London, examining three changes in particular:

Caps to local housing allowance (LHA) restrict the level of support that families can receive with their rents to the 30th percentile of rents within a local area. These began to take effect in April 2011, although many families will not see their level of support reduced until later this year. 17,400 households in London will be affected by this change.

The *benefit cap* will restrict the total amount of support received by a household to £500 a week for families with children and £350 for single people. 27,440 households in London are expected to be affected by the cap.

Under occupation penalties will reduce the level of support for families in social rented housing if they are deemed to have an extra bedroom. This will affect 80,000 households in London.

Research by London Councils suggests that the combined impact of these reforms may leave 63,000 households with children could be left unable to pay their rent.^{viii} CPAG's discussions with local authorities found that many are predicting an increase in homelessness as a result of these reforms, and reductions in family incomes as a result of these changes may result in an increase in food poverty.

The impact of benefit changes: the Social Fund

One further change in social security arrangements in London that may impact on levels of food poverty is the localisation of the Social Fund from April 2013. The Social Fund, currently administered by the Department for Work and Pensions, seeks to meet a range of needs that are not met by regular benefit or tax credit payments. There are two parts of the fund, a regulated and a discretionary scheme, and it is parts of the discretionary scheme that are being devolved to local authorities. From 2013, Local Authorities will have responsibility for meeting the needs for one off items of expenditure for those on benefits that were previously met by Community Care Grants, and for emergency financial support for all local residents through Crisis Loans. The money formerly spent on local areas on delivering this support will be devolved to a local level, but will not be ringfenced; rather, the purposes of this funding will be set out in a settlement letter.

Emergency cash provision, currently provided through Crisis Loans, may in some instances be used to buy food, if families are without other sources of income. When we spoke to Local Authorities about their plans to replace the Social fund, as part of research for a report produced by CPAG in June 2012, we found that some were not planning on providing any cash provision. Some of those local authorities planned to issue payment cards for use at local supermarkets in situations where families needed to purchase food; CPAG is concerned to ensure that such payment methods are not stigmatising, and allow families full choice over what they can purchase with such cards.^{ix}

We are also concerned that the level of funding that has been devolved to London Local Authorities to deliver these schemes will be inadequate to meet need. Programme funding across London will be reduced by £2,416, 267 in 2013/14 compared to that available in 2010/11.^x One use to which Community Care Grants are often put is to purchase a new cooker. There is a possibility that restrictions in this type of support may reduce the ability of some families to cook and prepare healthy food.

The impact of benefit changes: Universal Credit

Finally, the Trussell trust cite changes in benefits as one of the main reasons for people needing to access food banks.^{xi} We hope that the introduction of Universal Credit in October 2013 will proceed smoothly. A recent report by Inclusion for the JRF found that: *'The DWP is confident that the systems will be ready in time for implementation, despite concerns among IT experts that the timetable is unrealistic'* but that *'The consequences of system failure would obviously be serious for recipients of UC; DWP needs to clarify the 'stand-by' arrangements being put in place to ensure that claimants are paid'*.^{xii} We are concerned that an increase in food poverty could be one consequence of any problems in implementing Universal Credit.

Free School Meals

Food poverty can be mitigated among families by the provision of free school meals (FSM) to children during the school day. Young people in the UK are currently entitled to a FSM if their parents receive out-of-work benefits, including:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance

- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit, or
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) that does not exceed £16,190.

Using out-of-work benefits to determine eligibility excludes many children who live below the poverty line from FSM provision. Figures from 2010 show that while 3.8 million children were living below the poverty line (after housing costs; 2.6 million on a before housing costs basis), only 1.2 million children were entitled to FSM. While not all children below the poverty line attend schools or nurseries, research suggests that in England alone, 700,000 young people living in poverty line are not entitled to FSM. This constitutes around a third of school-aged young people living below the poverty line.^{xiii} When Universal Credit, which will replace most out of work benefits, is introduced in 2013, the eligibility criteria for FSM will need to be revised. Government have not yet announced how they intend to assess this.

Even those who do receive Free School Meals may not receive sufficient funding to enable them to buy a nutritious meal. Research by CPAG and the British Youth Council in 2012^{xiv} found that one in seven young people currently in receipt of FSM suggested that the allowance they received to buy a meal did not allow them to buy a full meal. Further youth-led investigations produced case studies from around the country that confirmed this finding, with only two case studies (out of eight) suggesting that a full meal could be purchased under existing FSM provision.

Recommendations

- CPAG recognises that food banks are providing a valuable source of assistance to many families in need. But we believe that ensuring that children are well nourished is a task that should not be left to charitable enterprise, but one that will only be addressed by a concerted effort by national, regional and local government to tackle family poverty.
- The evidence suggests that the impact of ‘welfare reform’ will be particularly keenly felt in London. We believe that the Mayor and London Assembly could play a valuable role in monitoring local authority responses to welfare reform and their impact on preventing food poverty, and in sharing examples of best practice. We believe that this fits naturally with the Mayor’s role chairing the London Health Improvement Board, given the clear associations between low income, food poverty and poor health (as set out in the call for evidence).
- We believe that this inquiry could play a valuable role by establishing the extent to which the level of support with Free School Meals in London is adequate to enable children to buy a healthy lunch. If shortfalls are found between the level of funding for Free School Meals and the price of a healthy lunch, we believe that the Mayor should use his influence to encourage Local Authorities to address the gaps.
- The London Borough of Newham currently provides Free School Meals to all primary school pupils. We recommend that this inquiry examine the impact of this policy in tackling food poverty, and the potential to encourage other London Boroughs to adopt this approach.

For further information please contact Kate Bell, London Campaign Co-ordinator, CPAG on

-
- ⁱ Department for Work and Pensions, *Households Below Average Income 2009/10* published 2011
- ⁱⁱ Figures for 2010/11. Defined as living below 60 per cent of the equivalised median income after housing costs. The figures before housing costs are 304,000 children, or 19 per cent.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Kate Bell et al (forthcoming) *We can work it out: Parental employment in London* Child Poverty Action Group.
- ^{iv} Mike Brewer, James Browne and Robert Joyce (2011) *Child and working age poverty from 2010 to 2020* IFS.
- ^v Department for Work and Pensions (2012) *Households Below Average Income 1994/05-2010/11*, DWP.
- ^{vi} Mike Brewer, James Browne and Robert Joyce (2011) *Child and working age poverty from 2010 to 2020* IFS.
- ^{vii} CPAG (2012, forthcoming) *Between a rock and a hard place: the early impacts of welfare reform on London* CPAG.
- ^{viii} Navigant Consulting, *Does the cap fit? An analysis of the impact of welfare reform*, commissioned by London Councils London Councils, 2011
- ^{ix} CPAG (2012) *Delivering the Social Fund at London Level: Opportunities and Risks* CPAG.
- ^x CPAG analysis of DWP figures available at: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/local-authority-staff/social-fund-reform/localisation-data/> and <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/social-fund-settlement-funding-allocation.pdf>
- ^{xi} See <http://www.trusselltrust.org/latest-news#FoodbankIncrease>
- ^{xii} Amy Tarr and Dan Finn (2012) *Implementing Universal Credit: Will the reforms improve the service for users?* JRF.
- ^{xiii} Royston, S., Rodrigues, L.& Hounsell, R. 2012 A Policy Report of the Future of Free School Meals The Children's Society London.
- ^{xiv} In February and March 2012 the British Youth Council (BYC) and the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) ran an online survey of 1,026 young people to find out what they thought about FSM, and conducted a focus group with 13 young people from Calcot, Gateshead, Redbridge and North East Lincolnshire to supplement the survey. Of the thousand young people surveyed, 190 were students on, or previously in receipt of, FSM. No such identifying information was collected in the focus groups to maintain anonymity.



FoodCycle
Unit 4, Huguenot Place
Heneage Street
London E1 5LN
United Kingdom
Registered Charity 1134423
www.foodcycle.org.uk

FoodCycle is a national charity that builds communities by combining surplus food, volunteers and a spare kitchen space to create nutritious meals for people at risk of food poverty and social isolation.

Since our first meal in May 2009, we have served over 40,000 meals to people at risk of food poverty across the country. We currently have 5 programmes in London, with another 9 in other parts of the UK.

The following is a response to some of the questions under investigation. We would like to be kept informed of any further consultations on this matter.

If you have any further queries, please contact or give us a shout at .

1. Is your organisation experiencing an increase in demand for your services?

Yes we are. Since we started, the numbers that we serve at our centres increase every year if they are 'open' services to the public.

FoodCycle addresses the gap in food poverty spectrum - meaning those falling in the gap between those who have the means to food and those who are in total poverty. We supply meals to the elderly, families with their children and the employed poor – who all have sources of income but not sufficient to eat a balanced meal. It is our intent to create a welcoming atmosphere for our customers to come, enjoy a meal, and meet other people in their community. It is our view that there is a close connection between food poverty and social isolation. The more socially isolated a person is, the higher percentage they also suffer from food poverty.

2. Does London need more food banks, and if so how can we increase the available resources?

Food banks are a band-aid solution to food poverty, and one of the best studies on the impact of food banks and the system of dependency that it creates is Sweet Charity, Janet Poppendieck. Although written almost two decades ago, the book offers a glimpse at the societal norms that are in America that can potentially be the norms here in the UK in a short time. It is worrisome that history is looking like it is going to repeat itself here in the UK.

FoodCycle is a company limited by guarantee (number 7101349) and registered charity in England and Wales (number 1134423) and Scotland (SC041893), registered office address Unit 4, Huguenot Place, Heneage Street, London, E1 5LN.

There are many ways to increase resources to food banks. Council funding, using council property to house food banks, the introduction of food stamps, leveraging contacts in the business industries to give food, bulk buying of fresh food from farms, have the Mayor do a public appeal for those less fortunate. There are many ways for the Mayor to support food banks. The question is – as a strategy, is this sustainable, and what kind of society will we create as a result of it. E.g. An underclass of people that rely on government food support to survive. This already happens in the United States with 46.4 million people (or 1 in 7) using food stamps. This can either be seen as a triumph in the scale of support or a tragedy in terms of how many people are left behind in the current economic system.

3. Are food banks a sustainable response to food poverty?

If the definition of food poverty is the inability to access healthy food due to income, access or knowledge, then much more needs to be done. Using the cliché – foodbanks gives people fish, we need to teach people how to fish. Food banks are not sustainable and their mission I think is stemming the tide of people falling into food poverty. At FoodCycle, our basic mission is to reclaim surplus food and make that into delicious meals for people at risk of food poverty. However, during the process, we are also teaching people food preparation skills through the preparation of the food – which is one small step closer towards a more sustainable response.

4. Should all schools be providing breakfast, and if so how can this be delivered?

If this is something that is going to be in ALL SCHOOLS then it must be something with government backing and will not be achieved solely through charities like Magic Breakfast. Arguably, depending on your definition of the responsibilities of the state – Magic Breakfast should not actually exist as this is something that the government should provide.

However, given trends in the rolling back of the state and the encouragement of businesses taking in more of a lead in the social betterment of society, the above is probably not feasible. Collaboration with companies like [Kellogg's](#) will need to be scaled up, and queasiness about the 'commercialisation' of childhood and schools probably need to be set aside in the interest of basic needs. In reference to Maslow's hierarchy of needs – base needs need to be satisfied (hunger, shelter and clothing) need to be satisfied first before higher concepts can be addressed (are they getting their 5 a day and higher up yet – are those fruits and vegetables sustainable?).

Further reading about school meals can be found in 'Free for All', by Janet Poppendieck (University of California Press, 2010)

5. How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address food poverty?

I think here, the question is not what powers should the Mayor use, but what is the strategic vision of London's food strategy. Not to polarise the issue, I'm sure there are many nuances in between these two 'future' visions... they are merely what I see as two possible futures.

1. A well funded multi-layered programme that has operations such as FoodCycle and food banks at the bottom, working closely with other organisations as referral locations to activities that will get people out of food poverty – e.g. cooking clubs, cooperative buying schemes, group cooking schemes, allotment groups, and school breakfast clubs. Many people will engage with the base of the pyramid systems, with a smaller percentage accessing the 'get out of food poverty' services.
2. A basic system – a safety net of local community groups offering local people assistance in times of distress. Local groups are part supported by government with grants and support in kind, in collaboration with large companies in the provision of surplus goods. Large bulk purchases direct through farms to a project of scale can be a cheap option of fresh food to these local community operations. EU surplus can also be redistributed this way. Offering a 'bottom price' for farmers for their crops to those most in need can be a good way to decrease waste of food on the farm level at harvest when it is retilled into the land (when cost of harvesting it actually exceeds the price they would get for it). [This could avert disasters like the milk fiasco when milk prices plummeted below cost of production.](#)

I hope some of those viewpoints help in the research of the report and happy to provide the links/evidence to some of the points addressed if that is needed.

To make it clear, views expressed here are solely those of Kelvin Cheung, the individual and not the views of FoodCycle, its trustees and the charity. Kelvin Cheung is on the London Food Board with Rosie Boycott, and is a member of the World Economic Forum Global Shapers group.

Hope that helps,

Kelvin Cheung Sept 26 2012.



Submission to the London Assembly's Health and Environment Committee into Food Poverty in London

November 2012

INTRODUCTION

Kids Company is a children's charity providing some 36,000 children and young people with access to practical and emotional services. We empower thousands of vulnerable children to overcome the devastating effects of poverty, neglect and abuse and are driven to provide these services by the lack of statutory opportunities for vulnerable children to self-refer, the lack of holistic services and the lack of any opportunities for emotional re-attachment. Our ethnically diverse clients range in age from birth to 26 years old and come from all 33 local authority areas throughout London.

Kids Company works to return children to safer childhoods; this begins with providing the basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. To alleviate hunger, ensure adequate ongoing nutrition and facilitate successful engagement, Kids Company offers up to three meals a day and/or food vouchers. Children eat at the dining table together with the staff and this affords them a family experience which they are often lacking. Many of the children who come to Kids Company are hungry and have reported to us that there is often not enough food for them at home.

"Kids Company has been operating at street level for 16 years. Under repeated governments the circumstances of the most vulnerable don't seem to have changed. 97% of children and young people self-refer to our provisions. They present with complex needs across health, social care and education. Their primary challenge is the absence of a functioning adult in their lives who can organise and reach out to services on their behalf. In the last two years we have seen an escalation of children presenting with requests for food as well as other basic resources, such as housing and bedding.

These children's needs are repeatedly being addressed under single-initiative interventions, whereas what they need is a holistic approach addressing their complex problems under one roof. Kids Company hopes that political leadership will emerge, genuinely prioritising the needs of the most marginalised children. The riots of summer 2011 were not a surprise. It was very telling that as much food was stolen from shops as consumer goods. When young people are running around carrying sacks of rice on their shoulders instead of trainers there is a message of desperation intended for society.

If the numbers of the marginalised grow, without meaningful help reaching them, our communities will experience a profound challenge to the current equilibrium."

- **Camila Batmanghelidjh, Kids Company Founder and Chief Executive**

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR RISK FACTORS FOR FOOD POVERTY?

Historically, Kids Company has supported extremely vulnerable children who have been severely maltreated, enduring neglect, abuse and poverty. The risk factors for such children are generally driven by parental difficulties such as mental illness, alcohol and substance dependency, involvement in crime, inter-generational unemployment and parents who have grown up in care, or who have been maltreated themselves. Peer factors multiply the risk factors when they too have experienced failures of care and parental dysfunction. Whilst factors such as these will always affect a minority of children in the population, Kids Company has experienced a 233% increase in self-referrals this year compared to last (from 30 self-referrals per week last year to 70 per week on average this year). In most cases, children are coming to us because they are hungry.

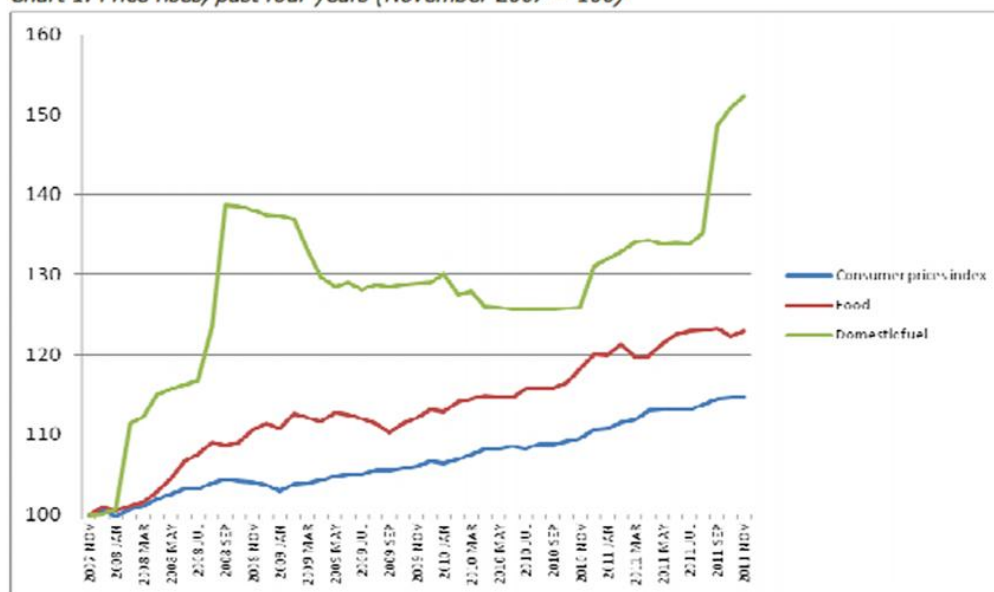
A nutritional survey of children at Kids Company found that:

- 64% reported being hungry because there is no food in their house
- 50% go to bed feeling hungry
- 33% rely on being given money to eat from a takeaway
- 85% rely on Kids Company for their main meal of the day

(Dr R.Gow, Institute of Psychiatry, for Kids Company, 2011)

The main driver of this increase appears to be upward inflationary pressures (food, energy etc) set against static or decreasing wages and benefits.

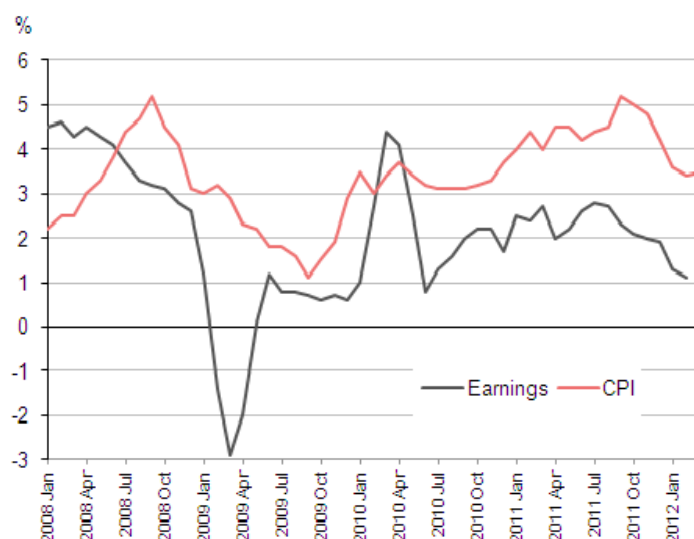
Chart 1: Price rises, past four years (November 2007 = 100)



Source: National Statistics

According to figures compiled by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, food prices in the UK have risen by 27% since 2007, double the EU average, with “no evidence yet of a return to a downward trend in real terms” (DEFRA stats, 2011).

Average earnings have been growing more slowly than price inflation for much of the past four years. The chart below from the ONS demonstrates how for average earners there has been a fall in real earnings with a persistent gap opening between growth in prices and earnings.



Earnings relative to Consumer Prices Index (O.N.S Q1, 2012)

Kids Company is experiencing a growing number of children needing our services whose parent or parents, despite being in work, earn low or minimum wages that are insufficient to sustain their family. A small, yet significant number of children at Kids Company have mothers who, because they have no recourse to public funds, have resorted to the sex industry to support their children. Such work is hazardous both to mother and child, rarely providing a sustainable income and frequently involving exploitation and abuse to the mother.

The increasing gap between average incomes and food prices disproportionately affects the poor. Kids Company is extremely concerned about the effect of the transition to the Universal Credit system starting in April 2013 in relation to children and young people. We expect to see serious consequences to children and young people resulting from the cap in housing benefit plus the proposed age threshold on housing benefit. Small decreases in welfare payments, coupled with increases in housing and fuel costs, could have disastrous consequences for those already struggling to afford basic levels of nutrition.

A further risk factor is the impact that youth unemployment is having on families comprised of multiple children. Such families are disproportionately affected as the oldest struggle to become financially independent whilst continuing to utilise resources from the family. Youth unemployment currently stands at 1million young people aged 16-24 (Parliamentary Briefing Note, 2012).

In short, new groups of children are now either at increased risk or are being directly affected by an increase in child poverty (See Appendix 1, Head Teacher interviews).

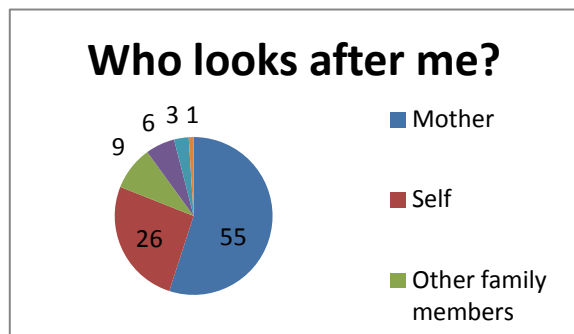
Data from a recent evaluative research study at Kids Company undertaken by Dr Saul Hillman (Anna Freud Centre) exploring the presenting needs of a random sample of 354 high-risk Kids Company clients reveals the compounding risk factors affecting the children Kids Company supports (Dr S Hillman, Anna Freud Centre & Dr L Wainwright Portsmouth University, 2012).

Almost a third of respondents (31%) did not have access to all these essential household items that are taken for granted by the wider community but often lacking in disadvantaged populations:

- 20% did not have a bed.
- 18% did not have blankets.
- 14% did not have a pillow.
- 10% did not have a towel.

Young people were also asked whether they possessed specific items of clothing.

- 38% did not own school clothes.
- 34% did not own shirts.
- 27% did not own a jumper.
- 20% did not own a jacket.
- 18% did not own underwear.
- 16% did not own socks.



The majority of clients reported being looked after by only their mother (55%), with 26% saying that they looked after themselves. Other options included being looked after by other family members (not a parent or sibling: 8%), by both parents (6%), by fathers only (3%) or by siblings (1.3%).

Care status of Kids Company clients

Many of the young people surveyed had additional demands. Almost half (49%) were responsible for the care of someone else, including parents and siblings.

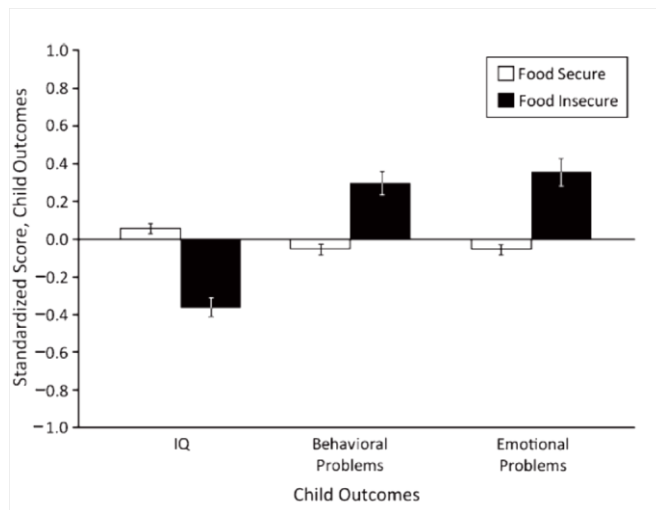
These high levels of material deprivation and deficits of care are matched by extremely high levels of trauma symptoms amongst children who attend Kids Company. Ongoing research with University College London highlights the consequences of adversity amongst this vulnerable population.

Compared to controls, Kids Company clients tested had:

- **2.2 times the level of anxiety**
- **1.8 times the level of depression**
- **2.2 times the level of anger**
- **3.3 times the level of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms**
- **3.7 times the level of dissociation**

(Cecil, preliminary research findings, Embargoed until publication: not for public release, 2012)

The effects of poor nutrition, food poverty and hunger on the development of these symptoms in relation to resilience require urgent investigation. Such research could help to characterise and identify children who are most at risk so that cost-effective intervention strategies can be implemented. Previous research has already demonstrated that food insecurity correlates with lower IQ, behavioural problems and emotional problems.



Mental health, at age 12, of United Kingdom children always food secure and ever food insecure during ages 7–10, Environmental Risk Longitudinal Twin Study, 1999–2000. Food insecurity refers to material hardship related to food, including hunger. Error bars indicate 61 standard error; $P < 0.001$ for all comparisons. (Reprinted from Belsky et al, 2010.)

Earlier this year, Kids Company surveyed head teachers and Pastoral care staff anonymously at 21 London Schools (Kids Company Schools Survey, 2012). We asked seven questions about the impact of hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity on their pupils. The findings are a serious cause for concern and reflect the growing trend of childhood food poverty.

- The majority of respondents (88%) think poor nutrition is having an impact on the children in their school.
- Over two thirds (69%) said they were either very (42%) or extremely (27%) concerned about children's levels of nutrition in their school.
- The majority (82%) said poor nutrition is affecting their pupils' ability to concentrate.
- Over three quarters (79%) said poor nutrition is contributing to children's negative behaviours.
- Staff at over half the schools surveyed (11) are concerned that most of their students are malnourished.
- 40% (14) think that over half their students are affected by hunger.
- Staff at nearly half (15) of these schools think that the majority of their students are experiencing food insecurity

Kids Company provides emotional and practical support services in 40 London schools. Head teachers have disclosed that they don't want to admit publicly that they have problems with children's nutrition for fear of being labelled by prospective parents as a "poor school". It is our recommendation that the committee, if possible, hears evidence from head teachers privately and anonymously so that full and frank disclosures can be made to help reveal the truth about food poverty in London. (See Appendix 1 – Head Teacher interviews.)

Schools are expected to provide 190 days of education per year (DfE, 2012), meaning that with 100% attendance a child spends just over half (52%) of their time at school. The Government recognises that many children live in circumstances where there isn't enough money in the household to provide an adequate school lunch for a child and entitles such children to free school lunches. Whilst such provision is literally a lifeline for many children it is anomalous that the very same children who are recognised as requiring nutritional support in school are left without any such support for nearly half their school-aged lives. It is Kids Company's experience that some children dread the approach of school holidays because they know that their one reliable source of food is going to be closed and

that they will have to fend for themselves as best they can. This is a serious problem and one that needs urgent investigation.

Providing food is one of the most important social functions of a family. We recommend to the commission that the extent to which diet and nutrition is affected by family poverty and breakdown be urgently investigated. Many researchers believe that it would be very beneficial to conduct a double-blind trial in a community setting so as to better understand the impact that poor nutrition is having on the poorest children. This is important in order both to re-evaluate government policies and to highlight how children living in poverty can be harmed or seriously disadvantaged by an inadequate diet. A failure to understand and act on poor childhood nutrition negates any educational potential offered by progressive policies or approaches.

HOW CAN WE DETERMINE THE NUMBER OF LONDONERS THAT ARE EXPERIENCING FOOD POVERTY?

Kids Company is primarily concerned with the health and well-being of children and, as such, has drawn attention to the fact that no official channel exists to monitor or measure the prevalence of food poverty/food insecurity as it affects children. There have been several recent surveys (Guardian Teacher Survey 2012; Princes Trust & TES survey 2012; Kellogs/Opinion Matters 2012, Local Authority Catering Association / ParentPay) asking teachers and parents about their experiences encountering childhood food poverty. All have produced alarming reports. The most recent survey by the Local Authority Catering Association completed by 12,000 parents, released on 5th Nov 2012 found that 6.2% of parents reported children leaving home without breakfast.

To better understand the prevalence of food poverty in London we are currently in discussion with Janet Cade, Professor of Nutritional Epidemiology and Public Health at the University of Leeds, and her department. They have unique data in the form of daily food diaries, collected from a large number of primary school-aged children in London during 2010 and 2011. This data has not yet been analysed in respect of under-nutrition or malnutrition. We think that the best way to assess the prevalence of food poverty in children is to ask the children themselves, preferably away from parental influence (many parents will not openly admit that they cannot provide adequate nutrition for their children). Such research must be undertaken in the poverty hot-spots where micro socio-economic factors prevail that tend to be missed or smoothed out by large-scale sampling.

Joe, 19: “When I first came to Kids Company about ten years ago I was really skinny. You could have blown me away. My main problem was that I could hardly eat anything – my stomach was so shrunken, my ribs were sticking out. I could barely manage half a sandwich, I was so used to having hardly any food.

It took about eight months for me to eat what I should be eating. But I got to have a full meal every day. Coming here made me so happy because I was a lot less stressed, it's a big family, a family I never had. I had stability for the first time. I was able to learn better. I was able to do a lot of things better because I wasn't tired all the time.

It gave me the will just to get out of bed. I didn't have to sit around or sleep all day. The only time I was getting up before was to hustle food. “

HOW CAN THE MAYOR USE HIS STRATEGIC POWERS TO HELP ADDRESS FOOD POVERTY?

- Commission urgently needed research to accurately measure the prevalence of food poverty amongst school-aged children and their parents/guardians. This should be comparative in design to better understand and measure the gap between those for whom adequate nutrition is not a problem and those who are really struggling with no real prospect of improvement.
- Ensure that such research is undertaken by independent academics, utilising food diaries and structured questionnaires, and targeting the poorest wards in London; the poverty hot spots where we know the most disadvantaged are living.
- Explore ways in which companies can be incentivised to reduce food waste through recycling via FARESHARE.
- Commission an economic cost/benefit analysis to better understand the social impact of food recycling and reducing food waste by re-distributing to the poorest members in society.
- Explore ways of utilising the dormant and latent resources presented in under-used school kitchens to create supper clubs in the most deprived areas. These could be sponsored by business and empower community members to collectively help themselves.
- Create official channels in deprived schools where hungry children can report to designated staff members who can distribute basic food packs on an as-needed basis. It is Kids Company's experience that children are more than capable of making their needs known when a safe and reliable opportunity to resolve a problem is offered to them with care and dignity.
- Provide immediate emergency nutritional measures for schools facing the toughest challenges in educating disadvantaged pupils. As well as funding breakfast clubs, the Mayor should consider directly funding a nutritious "food bar" for children who cannot afford breakfast clubs, who have parents who cannot get them to school early or even on time. A food bar can be healthy, high in calories, quickly consumed in class and would provide immediate and long-lasting relief for a hungry child who has probably not eaten substantially in nearly 24 hours, since the previous day's school lunch. Such a bar could be sourced in quantity for around 20p per bar and provide upwards of 400 calories in a reasonably nutritionally balanced package. It is Kids Company's experience that children enduring poverty are generally more than capable of making their needs known if the opportunity to alleviate those needs is within their reach, therefore we would expect it to be a quick and simple procedure for a teacher to offer children who haven't had breakfast such a bar, with minimal disruption to their existing classroom routine. It would be reasonable to expect that such a solution would have immediate educational, emotional and behavioural benefits.

Bibliography

Belsky D, Moffitt, T, Arseneault L, Melchior M, Caspi A (2010) Context and sequelae of food insecurity in Children's development. American Journal of Epidemiology, Vol. 172, No 7

DEFRA Stats, 2011 at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/files/defra-stats-foodfarm-food-pocketbook-2011.pdf>

Department for Education, Length of school day / year, 2012
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/schoolyear/a0064221/length-of-school-dayyear>

Grantham-Mcgregor, S. (1995). A Review of Studies of the Effect of Severe Malnutrition on Mental Development. The Journal of Nutrition. 125: 2233S-2238S

Guardian Teacher Survey, 2012 at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2012/jun/19/hungry-school-children#data>

Hillman S, Wainwright L, Kids Company Dial Assessment Initial Analysis, (a proprietary Kids Company assessment tool measuring clients practical, social and emotional needs; n = 97), the PedsQLTM Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory assessments for those under 18 (n = 82) and the generalized anxiety disorder 7 item scale for those over 18 (n = 46) July 2012

Hirsch, D. and Beckhelling, J (2012). *Child Poverty Map of the UK*, Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University. At: www.endchildpoverty.org (October 2012)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation. At: www.jrf.org.uk (October 2012)

Kelloggs/Opinion Matters Survey, 2012
<http://www.kelloggs.co.uk/whatson/pressoffice/News/kelloggs-and-breakfast-clubs/hunger-in-schools-on-the-increase-as-kids-are-left-to-fend-for-themselves-in-the-morning>

Local Authority / ParentPay Survey, Nov 2012
<http://www.laca.co.uk/news/poll-shows-92-parents-back-food-standards-all-schools>

Lui J., Raine A.D., Venables, P.H., & Mednick S.A. (2004). Malnutrition at Age 3 Years and Externalizing Behavior Problems at Ages 8, 11, and 17 Years. American Journal of Psychiatry. 161:2005–2013

Youth unemployment statistics - Commons Library Standard Note, September 2012, Standard notes SN05871

The Prince's Trust and TES Teachers Survey, 2012 at: www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/The_Princes_Trust_and_TES_executive_summary.pdf

Richardson, A (2005). *Food and Behaviour*, Public Service Review – Health and Social Care, Issue 4. At: http://www.publicservice.co.uk/article.asp?publication=Health&id=185&content_name=Catering&article=4644 (October, 2012)

For further information please contact:

Laurence Guinness, Head of Campaigns & Research

Head Teacher Interviews

Kids Company's resident journalist interviewed two head teachers about the nutritional status of children in their primary schools. These are excerpts from the interviews.

"There is a point where as a teacher you start to get worried about a child.... We have got some who make you think 'crikey, what are they surviving on?' They look underweight. It's a problem with particular families. It's usually the same ones. It's one indicator that there is something wrong. Sometimes the children say they haven't had anything to eat. We usually feed them if they haven't.

When we first introduced fruit to the reception class it was clear they weren't used to having it because a lot of them had stomach problems. We figured they probably hadn't been eating enough fruit."

Head teacher, Primary School in Wandsworth, 2012

"We know through general discussion with the children there are a significantly high proportion who don't have breakfast. I would say 50 per cent. Equally though, we have those children who say 'yes, I had breakfast'. We say 'what did you have?' And the answer is biscuits. Crisps. With some of our children we know the only meal they have is the one they have with us at lunchtime. Last year we tried to open our breakfast club for families in need. But it's not something we can support indefinitely in the current climate. We charge £5 for a cooked breakfast and childcare, per day. We used to be able to provide free places through this cost, but we can't do that anymore because more and more families can't afford to pay the £5. That is down to the fact that a number of them have lost their jobs or are moving to part-time hours. Or the mix of part-time work and benefits doesn't work for them. They may as well be on benefits. There is such a need for more food. We would certainly like to be able to offer all of our children the opportunity to have breakfast. When we do give them a cooked breakfast, we can see the difference it makes to our children.

I know children who look hungry and malnourished. Who are short for their years. One girl I know of says her nan doesn't wake up in time to make her breakfast. It depends on what time she wakes up as to when she gets into school. If she wakes up and wants to get out of the house, she just leaves. She doesn't think about what's in the kitchen. And sometimes you talk to her and you realise she has been a few days without food at home."

Head teacher, Primary School in Lambeth, 2012

Case Studies

These stories offer a disturbing insight into the suffering caused by lack of regular food and good nutrition. They also show how simple steps of providing food vouchers and regular meals help our children and their families take massive strides towards improving their lives.

A TEENAGER STARVES AFTER FAMILY SPIRALS INTO POVERTY FOLLOWING MURDER

When she was 19 years old Kerry regularly went without food so that her eight-year-old brother Jacob could eat. Her sacrifice led to migraines, light-headedness, irritability and a distended stomach. And while his sister went without food, Jacob's diet mainly consisted of £1 chicken and chips, depriving him of the necessary nutrients to develop and grow. Like many children who come to us, although he had food in his belly, he was suffering from malnutrition.

He still has extensive problems with his teeth and gums due to lack of vitamins, minerals and iron in his earlier childhood. It was the murder of the oldest son Steven, a diligent college student, that triggered this family's decline into shocking poverty. As they struggled to cope with their grief, circumstances changed and they found themselves having to get by with very little money. Suddenly feeding the children and providing basic necessities became a huge challenge. In the year-and-a-half that Kids Company has been working with this family, we have provided them with the practical and emotional support to help them survive and heal emotionally – from food vouchers to therapy. Now the family are able to buy nutritious food and have regular meals, Kerry's mood has stabilised, she is physically healthier and she is planning her future. Her younger brother is also doing well and forming positive friendships. There are many children who suffer the effects of malnutrition, and what may seem like a small gesture, such as weekly food vouchers, can have a lasting positive impact.

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD COMES TO KIDS COMPANY SUFFERING FROM RICKETS

Pam was suffering from rickets when her mother brought her to Kids Company. A common result of famine or starvation in developing countries, rickets is a disease that has not been prevalent in this country since the 19th century. It is caused by lack of vitamin D and the sunlight that converts it into an active state. It leads to a softening of the bones and potentially fractures and deformity and it hindered Pam's ability to move and grow properly – when she first came to our attention at 17 months old she couldn't walk.

Pam was diagnosed with rickets after her mother Sharon referred herself, her older daughter Judy and her baby, Pam, to our Arches II Centre. Sharon was relying on a family member for food and she would often skip meals so her older daughter could eat.

Pam was still being breastfed and had not yet been introduced to solid foods because her mother could not afford to buy it. But Sharon was malnourished too, so there was little nutritional value in her milk. Before Sharon came to Kids Company she was battling to stay in the country and living off a tiny weekly budget, as she was not eligible to claim benefits. The three of them were living with another family of three in a damp, cramped third-floor flat in a chaotic tower block.

The children and their mother lived in the small bedroom while the other family occupied the tiny sitting room, and rising tensions would erupt in arguments. When Sharon first came to Kids Company she was given very practical support in the form of food vouchers and a bus pass. This meant she could take Judy on the eight-mile journey to and from school with a packed lunch and there was food on the table for both children. Judy soon won an award for 100 per cent attendance – a testament to her mother's commitment to her education. Our nursing therapists have helped Sharon introduce Pam to solid foods, they have encouraged Sharon to have her chronic eczema treated and helped Judy with her special educational needs.

Judy is attending a small art class at our therapy centre, the Heart Yard, where it is hoped she will start to process her life experiences. Kids Company have helped Sharon resolve her immigration and housing situations and she is now supporting her children through her work as a cleaner. With our help, she has become

confident in using the internet and phones and dealing with officials on her own, so she can bring more stability into her families lives. The children having been getting more fresh air and exercise and no longer have to worry about where their next meal is coming from.

MATTHEW, 20, SEVERELY UNDERWEIGHT AND MALNOURISHED

He said: "Coming here made me so happy because I was able to learn better. I was able to do a lot of things better because I wasn't tired and hungry all the time. I never understood anything at school because I was so tired, but here, because of the food I was getting, my brain was like a sponge. Within about two days I knew every bone and muscle in the body. I know about blood circulation, lactic acid. I passed everything [Kids Company's Path to Life syllabus] so quickly. I was shocked."

HOMELESS SINCE 13 AND FORCED TO RUMMAGE IN SKIPS FOR FOOD

Since the age of 13, Amy had been sleeping on friends' sofas and in parks, in squats and on buses and trains. She would often rummage around in skips to feed herself and her cat as she used her benefits money to travel to college and pay for her lunch while she was there. She is determined to go to university to study English and comes to a Kids Company centre every Wednesday and Friday. She says the £20 weekly food vouchers we give her have made a huge difference to her life. She has even started to cook, after we gave her pans and a hob.

All names have been changed to protect our children's safety. The stories of their lives emerged within the context of long-standing trusted relationships with our staff. Our in-house journalist has conducted interviews with children and full transcripts are available.

Consultation on Food Poverty in London

Enfield Council has been concerned about increasing food poverty in Enfield for some time. The issue is addressed in both the Food Strategy and the Child and Family Poverty Strategy.

The Council has taken a two pronged approach:

1. Promoting Local Shops and helping residents to buy good food more cost effectively

A mobile food catering vehicle was launched along the Edmonton Concourse and Angel Edmonton on the 26th April 2012 and Enfield Highway and Ponders End on 27th April 2012 with Southgate College catering staff giving healthy cooking demonstrations and highlighting where on each high street ingredients can be bought, thus encouraging increased footfall into local businesses and encouraging low cost healthy eating in the Borough. The mobile kitchen is now working in schools and residential care homes.

2. Support for Low Income Families to Buy Good Food

Over the last year a need for food banks has emerged in the Borough. The North Enfield Foodbank opened in March 2012. During the first 6 months of operation the North Enfield Foodbank has fed 995 people, 442 of whom were children.

The Edmonton Foodbank in Church Street Edmonton, has recently received £20k funding as part of Enfield Council's Residents' Priority Fund for 2012/13, to cover set-up costs and initial purchase of food.

The Council is running a campaign to increase the uptake of free school meals and is also operating a pilot project offering free school meals to all children, regardless of eligibility

The Council has made a commitment to the Capital Growth Scheme, which aims to secure 2,012 new community food growing spaces in London by the end of 2012. We are committed to establishing 60 new sites in Enfield (10 on Enfield Homes' estates). There is an East-West split in Enfield, with the south and east considerably more deprived. Therefore the majority of sites will be set up in the Edmonton Leaside and North East Enfield.

Welfare reform

Given the potential effect on household incomes in Enfield resulting from the changes to housing and council tax benefit, food poverty is likely to grow significantly over the next few years. Enfield Council is considering how discretionary crisis funding should be given to those in need including the use of pre-paid cards for use in supermarkets.

Joint consultation response on food poverty in London from NHS Lambeth and Lambeth Council

Lambeth is a vibrant and diverse borough; it is a place where people come to live and work, and find opportunities for themselves and their families. Within our communities there is great social and economic wealth. But as with many inner London boroughs, there is also significant inequality between our communities.

In spite of the difficult economic climate, and the significant restrictions on public resources, we remain focused on tackling inequality, and creating opportunity. Good health and wellbeing are essential to realising these ambitions.

Yet with higher rates of unemployment, reductions in benefits that disproportionately affect Londoners, and rising food, fuel and rent inflation, many people in Lambeth are struggling. Advice agencies are reporting greater demand for their services; landlords are seeing rising arrears; and food banks are expanding to meet demand.

Often the poorer people are, the worse their diet and the more diet-related diseases they suffer from. Poor diet and unhealthy eating has long been recognised as a risk factor for the major UK killers such as cancer, coronary heart disease (CHD) and diabetes. Together they account for 60% of premature deaths in England. About one-third of cancers can be attributed to poor diet and nutrition.¹ Evidence also shows that increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables can significantly reduce the risk of many chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke and cancers by up to 20%.²

In 2011 the Marmot Review³ into health inequalities showed that the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age can lead to health inequalities. The report notes that:

- People living in the poorest neighbourhoods in England will on average die seven years earlier than people living in the richest neighbourhoods.
- People living in poorer areas not only die sooner, but spend more of their lives with a disability- an average total difference of 17 years.
- The lower one's social and economic status, the poorer one's health is likely to be.

¹ Department of Health (1998) Nutritional Aspect of the Development of Cancer. Report on Health and Social Subjects No 48, TSO, London.

² Faculty of Public Health (2005) nutrition + food poverty: a toolkit for those involved in developing and implementing a local nutrition and food poverty strategy

³ Department of Health (2010) The Marmot Review into Inequalities in England

- Health inequalities arise from a complex interaction of many factors- housing, income, education, social isolation, disability- all of which are strongly affected by one's economic and social status.
- There is a strong economic case for addressing health inequalities as it is estimated that the annual cost of health inequalities is between £36 billion to £40 billion through lost taxes, welfare payments and costs to the NHS.

Food poverty, the inability to obtain healthy, affordable food, is therefore a serious concern. Lambeth council is beginning to carry out its own research into the extent of food poverty in Lambeth, and the impact it is having on people in the borough, as we look to see how we can best use resources to build resilience in our communities.

Many public services are facing cuts in their funding, or reductions in the rate at which their funding is expected to increase. Lambeth council's budget has been reduced by almost a third over a three year period. We will be unable to mitigate rising food prices alone, or provide sufficient compensation for those households where income is insufficient to provide an adequate diet. However, we do believe that we can begin to support communities to build the knowledge and networks that can help them to become more resilient and develop effective solutions to the issue of food poverty.

Lambeth has recently begun to explore the challenges of food poverty in the borough. Our consultation response below describes our early findings. We welcome this enquiry, and look forward to working with the Mayor and the GLA on this issue.

1. What are the major risk factors for food poverty? What evidence is available about the health impact of food poverty?

Risk factors for food poverty

- 1.1. Lambeth council and NHS Lambeth recognise the importance of food to health and wellbeing, and are working to understand the factors that create food poverty.
- 1.2. We have conducted research with local food banks and those using food banks. We found that the main reasons people use food banks are due to benefit delay, benefit change or having no recourse to public funds. The detailed results of this research will be shared with the GLA once they have been finalised.
- 1.3. Many people who currently rely on benefits in Lambeth to support their household income are facing changes and reductions in benefit levels as a result of the government's welfare reform programme. In Lambeth we estimate

that there are approximately 670 households who will be subject to the benefit cap, and who, on average, will lose £93 per week in income. These households are predominantly single parent households, with 3 or more children, who may find it hard to find suitable employment to increase their income. In such circumstances, there is a risk that food poverty will increase.

- 1.4. Our early research already shows that delays in administering benefits are one of the principle reasons that people turn to food banks for support. As of April 2013, significant changes will be introduced to the benefits system, including Universal Credit, and Personal Independence Payments. There is a real risk that these changes will create delays and miscalculations in benefits payments, again, increasing the risk of food poverty.

Health impacts of food poverty

- 1.5. In Lambeth the estimated number of deaths from heart disease and stroke attributable to obesity is 172 each year and the NHS cost in Lambeth from diseases relating to being overweight or obese is estimated at £122.5million.
- 1.6. There is compelling research on the effects of food poverty on the health and development of young children, including increased hospitalisations and poor health including iron deficiency, developmental risk and behaviour problems, primarily aggression, anxiety, depression, and attention deficit disorder⁴. These concerns early in life increase children's risk of poor school readiness, poor school performance and subsequent health disparities and poverty. Those who are most likely to experience food poverty are people living on low incomes or who are unemployed, households with dependent children, older people, disabled people and ethnic communities⁵.
- 1.7. The relationship between food poverty and healthy weight in childhood is not straight forward, but childhood obesity is high in Lambeth with 25% of 10 - 11 years olds classified as obese (against a national average of 22%). In Lambeth, clinical and non-clinical staff have worked together to develop a children's healthy weight care pathway, one of the first of its kind nationally and an example of good partnership working in the borough.

⁴ Cook, J. T., & Frank, D. A. (2008). Food security, poverty, and human development in the United States. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1136, 193-209. Whitaker, R. C., Phillips, S. M., & Orzol, S. M. (2006). Food insecurity and the risks of depression and anxiety in mothers and behavior problems in their preschool-aged children. *Pediatrics*, 118(3), e859-68.

⁵ Mwatsama & Stewart, Faculty of Public Health, May 2005

- 1.8. Further work is ongoing in Lambeth to better understand how food poverty in the borough might be affecting other aspects of health and wellbeing.
2. Does London need more food banks, and if so how can we increase the available resources? Are food banks a sustainable response to food poverty?
 - 2.1. There are currently four food banks in Lambeth (five distribution sites), all of which are supported by the Trussell Trust. All of these food banks started independently of each other and as a result of voluntary action. Volunteers at the food banks claim that the main reason for starting a food bank was to help people in their local communities.
 - 2.2. Lambeth's food banks have seen an increase in demand for their services, and we are working to understand whether this is as a result of rising food poverty, or whether other factors might be contributing, for example, rising awareness of food banks among referre rs, and an increase in people with no recourse to public funds.
 - 2.3. Initial results from our research into food banks in Lambeth indicate that the volunteers at the food banks do not see their service as a sustainable response to food poverty. The aim of the food bank is to provide emergency support in a crisis.
 - 2.4. Lambeth's current research programme aims to establish the reasons why people are using food banks, and to identify the other services that people use before they access food banks. Counter to the suggestion in the consultation document provided by the GLA, Lambeth council is not currently considering providing financial support to food banks. Targeted and preventative support is often far more effective than reactive support, and therefore it is vital that we see whether there are opportunities to prevent people from experiencing food poverty in the first place.
3. How does food poverty affect London's school children? Should all schools be providing breakfasts, and if so how can this be delivered? What else can schools do to ensure that children have access to healthy food?
 - 3.1. Food poverty affects school children in a multiplicity of ways, including negative impact on educational attainment, reduced concentration and energy levels. Food poverty has to be seen in the wider context of family/child poverty. The specific impact of poverty varies across different ages and developmental levels. For example, inadequate nutrition is associated with low birth-weight, an

important measure of well-being for infants that is predictive of later behaviour problems and poor school achievement.

3.2. Research by the Schools Food Fund⁶ examines the trend over the last decade for schools to introduce breakfast clubs, especially primary schools. This trend has been driven by concerns that some pupils are not eating breakfast and are arriving at school hungry. This in turn may impact negatively on learning and behaviour. In the research it was found that the main aims of many breakfast clubs fit into four categories:

- provision of food at the start of the day
- improving pupils' education
- meeting the social needs of children and improving social skills
- improving school relations with parents.

Eating breakfast has been associated with improved academic outcomes, improved concentration, increased school attendance, decreased school lateness and improved mood at school. Breakfast schemes can provide a safe place for children to meet their friends before school.

3.3. A number of Lambeth schools participated in the Schools Food Fund research and the results suggest that the introduction of a breakfast club in schools in deprived neighbourhoods is associated with an improvement in pupils' Key Stage 2 average point score; the observed improvement was also sustained over time. Key Stage 2 results were better in primary schools in deprived areas of London one year after introducing breakfast clubs compared with the results of a comparable group of schools without breakfast clubs.

3.4. Magic Breakfast which supplies free, nutritious breakfasts to 6,000 pupils in 210 primary schools across the UK each day, has itself recently seen a steep increase in urgent food aid applications from schools across the country.

3.5. A survey of teachers published by Kellogg's on September 12th 2012 concludes that more children than ever are arriving at school hungry and are having to rely on handouts from teachers and food banks.

⁶ Lesley Stevens, Nina Oldfield, Lesley Wood and Michael Nelson, The impact of primary school breakfast clubs in deprived areas of London, Schools Food Fund, December 2008.

- 3.6. Breakfast clubs can be an effective way to mitigate against food poverty. Many breakfast clubs in Lambeth schools were established with the assistance of extended services funding. Many schools are using the pupil premium funding for breakfast club sustainability.
 - 3.7. The provision of free school meals is a key strand in addressing food poverty amongst school children. In Lambeth 34% of children were eligible for free school meals in 2011. Increasing the take-up of free school meals is a priority for the local authority and Lambeth schools and a key means at our disposal to address food poverty.
 - 3.8. Ensuring the quality of school meals is also important to ensure children are receiving adequate nutrition. Lambeth has continued to ensure the provision of good quality school food in primary and special schools. All 64 schools in the centrally managed contract received a local choice menu. A bespoke school meals service takes place in all special schools and for pupils with dietary requirements in mainstream schools.
 - 3.9. Fruit schemes are also available in a number of schools. These provide free, or subsidised, fresh fruit daily in school. Fruit may be given to targeted groups of children in class or at playtime, or it may be provided for all children through fruit tuck shops that charge at cost or subsidise the cost to children.
 - 3.10. Lambeth schools also routinely refer families to food banks.
 - 3.11. Raising awareness and education around healthy food and exercise also contributes to addressing food poverty. Lambeth has been successful in implementing the national healthy schools programme with 94% of schools achieving Healthy Schools' status. Lambeth has re-launched a local Healthy School programme in line with the previous national criteria for Healthy Schools. Schools have welcomed the re-launch of healthy schools and several are currently in the process of reviewing and updating their Healthy Schools action plans in order to renew their accreditation as Healthy Schools.
-
4. Does London have food deserts, and what is the impact of these? What initiatives exist to ensure affordable, healthy food is available in every part of London?
 - 4.1. Work is taking place to understand if there are areas of Lambeth where people struggle to access healthy, affordable food.
 - 4.2. In 2000, a food-mapping project was undertaken involving two estates in Lambeth and Southwark to understand if there were barriers to accessing fruit

and vegetables and to identify local solutions. The key barriers were cost and access. Suggestions to overcome the barriers included:

- Subsidised fruit and vegetable delivery/van and local shops.
- Taste and cook sessions.
- Fruit vouchers.
- Keeping fruit and vegetable prices stable.
- Maintaining the ability to choose and select own produce.
- Growing local food.

4.3. Lambeth's food, health and safety team has identified a number of areas where food available from retailers could be made healthier. In response, it has established a local network to promote the exchange of information, support and advice to enhance awareness of the key health challenges within the borough in conjunction with the Healthier Catering Commitments (HCC) project. The HCC project is a voluntary scheme about encouraging a group of businesses to undertake small steps to make the food they sell healthier. This could have a huge impact on an individual's diet and life expectancy. They aim to work with businesses and local community groups to increase understanding of healthy eating.

4.4. Food is not only important to the health of individuals, it is also important for the economic health of the borough and for community cohesion. Food markets, such as Brixton Market, have shown how food and food businesses can bring new life to London's high streets, at the same time as making good, fresh, food available. Lambeth is actively working to develop more markets across the borough, building on the success of markets such as Brixton, Herne Hill, and Norwood Feast.

5. What skills and information do people need to maintain a healthy diet?

5.1. Skills and information are vital in enabling people to maintain a healthy diet. We have already described how the council is working with food retailers to improve their knowledge around healthy food, but other public agencies are also working with communities and individuals to this end.

5.2. In 2009, NHS Lambeth commissioned a research study to identify the knowledge, behavioural choices and attitudes associated with overweight and obesity amongst black Caribbean, west African, white British, Portuguese and Somali mothers residing in Lambeth. Generally there was high awareness, across all communities, of the link between poor diet and health. However,

barriers to eating more healthily included stressful lives, expense and avoiding waste due to children's dislike of healthy food.

- 5.3. Lambeth has seen an explosion of food growing projects across the borough, from just a few two years ago, to over 100 in 2012, which are proving an effective way of increasing knowledge and skills around food. This has been championed by the food growing network, Incredible Edible Lambeth. These projects have brought food growing close to where people live and work; everywhere from GP's surgeries to bus stops, and increased knowledge and understanding of healthy, sustainable, food. Food growers have worked closely with the Healthy Weight team, and the Wellbeing Partnership acknowledges the importance of food growing in its 100 steps to wellbeing.
- 5.4. Lambeth's food strategy is building on this success. Co-produced by food growers, the council and other public agencies, it aims to provide learning opportunities in formal and informal settings to increase knowledge of healthy, sustainable food.
6. Lambeth council and NHS Lambeth welcome the GLA's investigation into the extent of food poverty in London, and its impact on the population. We share the GLA's concerns in this area, and are working to develop our understanding of the problem in Lambeth, and the solutions. We look forward to working with the GLA to take forward the findings of this consultation.

Contact: David Minahan, Lambeth Council

Dear Simon,

I attended a training session with Continyou and received an initial set up grant for Breakfast Club of £500. No other external support is received. Depending on attendance (which varies from day to day) the club may break even or operate at a slight loss. As you suggest, we see this as a worthy investment of school delegated funds.

The free school meals are provided from a small profit which we are achieving due to a high uptake on school meals.

Of course like everybody else our school is facing financial challenges and we may not always be able to support these two vital initiatives. The children supported may not otherwise receive a good meal each day.

Best wishes,

Lorraine Groom
School Business Manager

Dear Lorraine,

Thank you very much for taking the time to send this in. This will be considered alongside other responses that we receive in the coming weeks. Unless you object I will add your email to our mailing list so that we can update you as the project progresses.

Could you let me know if your Breakfast Club is financed by the school (including the pupil premium) or if you have any external support and if this is at a financial loss or whether it covers its costs (though we know schools see this as a worthy investment rather than a loss). And how do you cover the cost of the free lunches (where families are eligible for FSM) - is this a discretionary fund?

If you are facing financial challenges on either of these initiatives, it would be good to hear of any external support you would find useful.

Best wishes,
Simon

Simon Shaw
Assistant Scrutiny Manager

Dear Simon,

Lauriston is a Hackney Primary School.

We have 392 children on roll of which 69 are currently eligible for FSM.

Our main concern is for the families that are not eligible for FSM that have low incomes.

Several families in our school are on incomes that are just above the FSM cut-off. This means they pay £9 per week, per child for school meals. Our meals represent excellent value. They are cooked in house, using fresh ingredients and about 95% of our children take school meals.

We have found that the only way to support these families and ensure the children are getting at least one nutritious home cooked meal per day is to subsidise the most needy

families. Parents often request changing their children over to packed lunches, this is usually because they are struggling financially and cannot afford meals. I meet with them to discuss the issues. Where there are several children in the family we may offer to pay for one or two of them allowing all children in the family to continue with school meals.

Lauriston also offer Breakfast Club which is free to children on FSM utilising Pupil Premium.

Please feel free to contact me should you need any further information.

Best wishes,

Lorraine Groom
School Business Manager

Dear Simon,

Apologies for being almost last to submit on this. My colleague Mark Coussins met Fiona recently and I promised to send information across to help your work. So, attached is an overview of our work and also an important new piece of research by LACA, the school food caterer, released today. It shows, amongst other things, that nationally there are at least half a million children going to school without breakfast.

In terms of the London food poverty situation our key points are as follows

Magic Breakfast is the largest provider of free healthy breakfasts in London, providing food to 127 primary school breakfast clubs all over the capital. We have provided well over a million free breakfasts to London children in the past 10 years. We are a team of 3 based in London, feeding 6,000 children in 200 schools nationally. We have developed a London map of pupil hunger.

Our goal is to end child hunger as a barrier to education for good and we feel the way to do that is three fold

1. Food aid - universal free school breakfasts at primary level would mean no child started the day too hungry to learn. It would also mean childcare, exercise and child obesity would be tackled in a systemic way across the capital. If not Government policy (we're working on it) then through ringfenced pupil premium and business sponsorship.
- 2 Improve the food skills and nutrition awareness of low income parents. We know that many children arrive at school too hungry to learn because families do not have money, food skills and time. We have set up 20 cookery programmes (10 in Islington and Hackney) and we work in primary schools to help parents who love their children learn how to feed them before they go to school
3. Financial self sufficiency. We aim to provide a programme of financial social enterprise skills so schools can self fund their breakfast club after 3 years. We are funded by the Mayors Fund to do this in 50 of London's poorest schools and want to do this pan London and across the UK.

Our schools show an 88% improvement in attendance as a direct result of Magic Breakfast provision. It costs us just 22p to provide a healthy breakfast per child per day through corporate sponsorships (eg Tropicana orange juice). We have a draft cashflow forecast for the food aid benefits and costs for a larger programme across the whole of London - which has been given to the Mayors Fund.

Getting the best start for London's children means access to a healthy breakfast club at school. But what about hunger in the school holidays?

Glad you asked. We also have a plan (Magic Breakfast 365) which will build on a successful holiday school food pilot supported by Asda. We know that many children in London suffer food lack during their school holidays. We have a programme that can offer food, cookery skills and exercise to children, siblings and parents during the school holidays, which could be very easily rolled out across the capital.

Children in London needn't go hungry. We just need Magic Breakfast to be upscaled to deliver in areas of greatest need. We are delighted that the Children's Food campaign now has universal free school breakfasts as a campaign goal, and to have been invited onto the DoE expert panel to reform school food. We are also working with No 10 this year as their social action partner.

Thanks again for the chance to add to your survey, happy to come across any time to tell you more about what we're doing and wishing you every success with this important work,

with best wishes

Carmel McConnell
M.MBA, F.RSA
Founder Director, Magic Breakfast

website www.magicbreakfast.com
(twitter) MagicCarmel

Offices One90 High Holborn, London WC1V 7BH
<http://www.justgiving.com/magicbreakfast/donate/>
Magic Breakfast Charity Registration 1102510:

Hi Simon

Response to your consultation document

I run a Foodbank in Sutton in Surrey [London Borough of Sutton]. We commenced operation in Dec 2009 and were the 35th Foodbank in the Trussell Trust Network. We have helped over 1500 adults and children since then with an increase of over 50% in 2011 and so far since April 2012 have seen an increase of approx 43% over 2011 figures.

Sutton is generally an affluent borough with pockets of deprivation but nonetheless it is there. A number of schools have a low free school meals uptake but there are some with 50% uptake. As a council they are progressive and pioneering and wanting to tackle problems head on. An instance of their contribution to the issue of food poverty is support for the Community Farm where people can grow their own produce.

I would very much welcome a time when our Foodbank was out of business. However, with the welfare reform changes and austerity cuts affecting council services and others then that is highly unlikely.

I am also concerned about the sustainability of Foodbanks as a longer term measure to address underlying issues and causes of poverty. As a Foodbank we have set up a small social enterprise cafe with one of our partners to support our vulnerable clients. It also provides volunteering opportunities to clients, a small wage to a client and some teaching opportunities about how to cook nutritious low cost meals.

We have also set up a befriending/support scheme to help vulnerable clients get back on track and achieve some goals. We also work with voluntary organisations who can provide some opportunities for clients as a pathway into work.

That being said the keys are surely in education and employment ie ensuring clients access the right sort of foods and have the financial means to support themselves. I think the solution lies in a multi-agency approach where Foodbanks are part of a solution to clients needs. They are a short term crisis intervention and I see the role of the Foodbank to support the referring agency in supporting their client.

However, these agencies are limited by available resources, employment options for clients, current social policy etc...

I would welcome being part of a wider discussion and contribution to a sustainable solution and share the concerns raised in the Guardian article of creating a "soup kitchen" response.

However, in the meantime we do need to help those who are in crisis in the current climate.

Hope this helps

Thanks

Mark



Submission to London Assembly's Health and Environment Committee into food poverty in London

From: Centre for Food Policy, City University, London. November 2012

Contact

Dr Martin Caraher

Professor of Food and Health Policy/Thinker in Residence Deakin University, Melbourne

Centre for Food Policy

Department of Sociology

School of Arts and Social Sciences

Northampton Square

City University

London EC1V OHB



INTRODUCTION

You have asked three key questions:

- How can we determine the number of Londoners that are in food poverty?
- Does London have food deserts, and what is the impact of these?
- How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address food poverty?

This submission sets out some background to the problem followed by a section on measures of food poverty/insecurity¹, a discussion on food poverty in London/UK is followed by a segment on food prices with specific reference to low-income households and ends with a short piece on rising demand for ER food services. Some pointers as to the answers are provided.

BACKGROUND

Globally food prices are increasing this is due to a combination of issues:

- Rising oil prices.
- Crop failures due weather and climate change combined with some export embargoes eg floods in Queensland, hot weather in the American Midwest.
- Food speculation / bio-fuels.
- Lack of national (country EU plans for) food sovereignty and food storage of basics.
- Rising fuel, housing and food costs versus stability of wages and welfare.

Overall food has increased in price by 20% (12 % in real terms). Those who have a poor diet and are unable to access the food necessary for a healthy life are said to be experiencing food poverty. Although there are many definitions, but no official measure in the UK, of food poverty, all encompass an inability to afford a healthy diet. Food poverty is a complex issue and does not only affect dietary intake but also has implications for lifestyle, social interaction and, importantly, health status.

- Average food spend in the UK runs at 12% of household income while for those on low-incomes it is closer to 30%.
- Low-income families spend more on food and have to spend even more to afford a healthy diet.
- There are only two directly related welfare benefits left Free School Meals and Healthy Start for pregnant and new mothers.

¹ In the UK the term food poverty is used but internationally the term food insecurity is preferred, here they are used interchangeably.

Poor diet is a major health risk and contributes to the development of obesity, and some cancers, coronary heart disease, diabetes and also low birth-weight and increased childhood morbidity.

MEASURES OF FOOD POVERTY

There is a problem in that we do not measure food poverty and there is no official measure. DEFRA had proposed the following measure:

$$\text{DEFRA measure} = \frac{\text{Food expenditure}}{\text{Total expenditure}} \times 100\%$$

And



They were also considering the use of the Irish ² relative income measure which was a composite deprivation index of 8 items, three of which relate to food:

- having a meal with meat, fish or chicken every second day;
- having a roast or its equivalent once a week;
- not having gone without a substantial meal in last 2 weeks.

In the US and Canada a similar measure of food insecurity is used but with six questions.

- Q1. The food that I/we bought just didn't last, and I/we didn't have money to get more
- Q2. I/we couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.
- Q3. In the last 12 months did you and/or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
- Q4. If yes, how often did this happen?
- Q5. If yes, in the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should have because there wasn't enough money to buy food?
- Q6. If yes, in the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because you
- couldn't afford enough food?

Those who answer "yes" to one or none of the items are considered food secure. Those who marked "yes" to 2-6 items are classified food insecure. What we know is that food is an

² <http://www.socialinclusion.ie/poverty.html>



'elastic' item in the household budget and individuals cut back here with consequences for health.

Both the above measures could be adopted as a formal measure of the amount spent as a percentage of total income/expenditure along with a qualitative measure. The percentage of income spent on food could be applied in a number of different ways:

- Set against the cost for a healthy basket.
- As a comparative standard.
- To take account of local and cultural differences.

In 2009/10, 23% of people were living in poverty (defined as having an income below 60% of median net disposable income), this in one in four families and one in five individuals. This does not include the working poor, those who spends have been squeezed in other areas such as housing and fuel. The problem is poverty, of which food poverty is a symptom, so it is important to address the cause not the symptom.

THE SITUATION IN LONDON AND ENGLAND

Because of the lack of measures of food poverty we do not have clear picture of the extent of the problem in London or the UK. There are some small scales surveys which paint a disturbing picture. There are no overall national statistics on food poverty but there are some recent surveys from:

- Save the Children
- Oxfam UK
- CPAG Over a quarter of children (28%) are living in poverty.

Child poverty blights childhoods. Growing up in poverty means being cold, going hungry, not being able to join in activities with friends (Child Poverty Action Group, UK). We know that living in poverty puts people at risk of poor dietary intake and health inequalities. Food poverty data for those on low incomes in an area of London showed that food insecurity may be a common feature of households that have incomes at the level of the UK national minimum wage or lower, with 20% being food insecure and 6% food insecure with hunger.³

³ Tingay, R.S., Tan, C.J., Tan, N.C.W., Tan, S., Teoh, P.F., Wong, R. and Guilliford M.C. (2003), "Food insecurity and low-income in an English inner city" *Journal of Public Health Medicine*, Vol 25 No 2, pp. 156-159.



Our work in City and Hackney (and repeated in Preston) showed that:^{4 5 6}

At the time of the research a mother and two children in receipt of income support and child allowance (exclusive of housing costs) for the two children was entitled to £138.00 per week – £57.45 for the adult, £40-42 per child (Child Poverty Action Group, 2006). Table V shows the percentages spent on food to meet the requirements of our healthy baskets and menus. For all the groups this is higher than the average 11 per cent spent by the average English family on food for the home. This compares to data from the Family Food Survey where households with children spent 24 per cent less than the UK average on food and drink eaten at home and averaged across the UK at £23.56 per person, per week, on household food (i.e. not including food eaten outside the home) (National Statistics, 2006). The amounts spent on food in our three case studies represents a major proportion of household expenditure from a low of 19 per cent to a high of 30 per cent. Page 468

And

At the time of the research a mother and two children in receipt of income support and child allowance for two children was entitled to £138.00 per week. The percentages spent on food to meet the requirements of our healthy baskets and menus show that they would have to spend more than the national average – in both absolute and relative terms – to eat healthily. This percentage appears equivalent to the findings from other research such as that by Morris et al. and points to the fact that it is cheaper to eat unhealthily (Morris et al. , 2000, 2005). Our costing predate the global rise in food prices that have occurred in the year and are expected to continue into 2008. The total impact of world food prices are yet to be seen and not all consumers are equally vulnerable. Overall, the rise in food prices is predicted to be 5 per cent, this will reduce living standards among high-income consumers by approximately 3 per cent, for low-income consumers this reduction in an already poor diet could be as high as 20 per cent. For the vulnerable and price dependent poor this will mean having to spend more on food and possibly more on travel to access basics, a healthy diet will cost more. So public policy approaches which focus on skills ignore the determinants of food choice which are material deprivation. Page 470

Withdrawing free school meals (FSMs) from families when they reach a certain income threshold will create a significant disincentive: a family with three children, for example, would need to earn more than £3,000 more a year to offset this loss of support. Some estimate that already 70,000 families have lost entitlement to FSMs.

In terms of food deserts generally we now talk about issues and problems of access to healthy affordable and culturally appropriate foods. These were compounded by local pricing, what is available locally and family budgets being squeezed. Our work in City and Hackney showed that while affordable healthy food was available there were problems of access and

⁴ Bowyer S, Caraher M, Eilbert K. and Carr-Hill R. (2009) Shopping for Food; Lessons from a London Borough. *British Food Journal*, 111 (5): 452-474.

⁵ Lloyd S, Lawton J, Caraher, M, Singh G, Horsley K, and Mussa F. (2011) A tale of two localities: Healthy Eating on a restricted income. A tale of two localities: Healthy Eating on a restricted income. *Health Education Journal*, DOI: 10.1177/0017896910364837.

⁶ Caraher, M. Lloyd S, Lawton J, Singh G, Horsley K, and Mussa F. (2010) A tale of two cities: A study of access to food, lessons for public health practice. *Health Education Journal*, 69, 200 - 210.



availability of healthy options as well as there being an over abundance of fast food outlets.

Some key facts on food poverty are:

- One in five families live below the poverty line putting them at risk of food poverty; over 4 million children are at risk and 4 million suffer from serious nutrient related health problems.
- There are no links with the minimum amount necessary to maintain a healthy diet.
- People still go hungry but the outcomes of food poverty are as likely to be overweight and obesity as hunger. But hunger is still with us.....⁷
- Also it is the same groups that are hungry that are obese.

FOOD PRICES

A recent Mintel report found that food prices have risen by 26% between June 2007 and June 2011 (equating to 12% in real terms, taking inflation into account). In addition, while between 1998 and 2009, the average wage growth of low-income households rose by 22%, over the same period food prices rose by 33%. The following are from the DEFRA statistics handbook unless otherwise indicated.

General

Recent research showed that 9 out of 10 consumers worry about the cost of their food bill.
(various sources)

When food prices rose in real terms in 2007 and 2008 food became relatively more expensive. Low income households were affected disproportionately with a rise of 1.6 percentage points to 16.8% of all spend.

The share of spend on food by all households rose more gradually from 10.5% in 2007 to 11.2% in 2010, suggesting they are less reactive to food price changes

Food prices have risen in real terms by 12% over the last 4-6 years, following a long period in which they fell.

The last five years has taken us back to 1997 in terms of the cost of food relative to other goods.

⁷ CPAG (2012) *Going Hungry? Young people's experience of free school meals* A joint report by CPAG and the British Youth Council

Three successive spikes in the price of agricultural commodities (for the reasons given above climate, food crops failure, speculation etc) since 2007 have led to higher retail food prices. They have not returned to low price levels of pre-2007.

Oil prices also rose over this period, and inflation was higher than historically, but food prices have risen above inflation.

Processed foods have risen the most since June 2007, with a 15% rise in the year to June 2012.

Low-income households

Households saved an average of 4% between 2007 and 2010 by trading down to cheaper products.

While trading down to cheaper products has helped many people offset some of the food price rises, low income households have not managed to trade down, possibly as they were already buying cheaper products.

The lowest income decile (bottom 10%) on average bought less food rather than trading down. Energy content of their household food fell 8.7% between 2007 and 2010, as they cut back on bread, cereals, biscuits, cake, beef, fruit and vegetables.

Median income after housing costs fell 12% between 2002-03 and 2010-11 for low income decile households while rising in all other income groups.

Falling income (after housing costs) and rising food prices produced a double effect, reducing food affordability by over 20% for lowest income decile households.

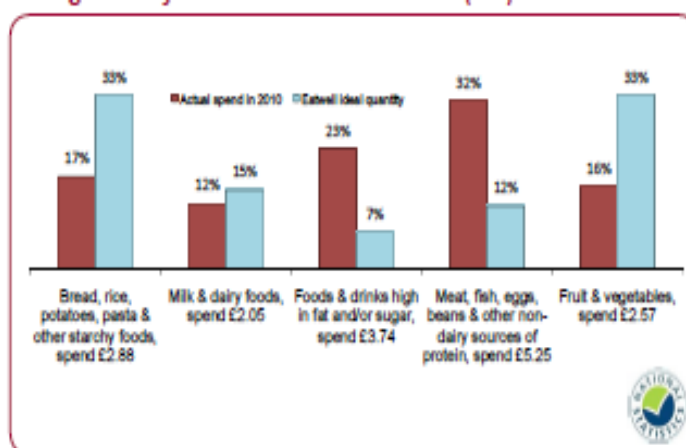
The most commonly used threshold of poverty in the UK is having an income which is less than 60% of the median. In 2010-11 poverty levels measured this way

fell by 1%. The reduction was driven primarily by incomes at the lower end of the income distribution falling less than incomes around the median.

Food price rises had a strong effect on food shopping habits for low income households: with them

becoming sensitive to price rises in alcoholic drinks, becoming sensitive to price rises in meat, cutting back on fruit and vegetables (less so if they traded down to cheaper foods).

Low-income households bought more alcoholic drinks despite food price rises, possibly



Source: Family Food In 2010, Defra.

because prices for alcoholic drinks rose less than prices of food.

Between 2007 and 2010 low-income households bought:

- 26% less carcass meat,
- 25% less fruit and
- 15% less vegetables.

Total spend per person/week is £16.49.

So low-income households are spending the bulk of their income on meat, fish eggs etc



They also spend 16% or £2.57 per person/week on fruit and veg and this to meet healthy eating guidelines should be 33%. According to DEFRA by shifting spend on Eatwell plate categories they could eat a healthy diet by spending only 21 pence more ie £16.70. This could be achieved by spending:

- £2.77 less on foods high in fat and sugar
- £1.88 more on bread rice, pasta etc
- £2.22 more on fruit and veg
- A little less on meat and dairy.

However, some industry reports show that the price of eating out has not increased in inflation terms. While eating out declined between 2007 and 2009, the figures for 2010 and 2011 have not shown any further decline. As well there is a targeting of low-income households for reasons that are complex as well as what the ‘*informal eating out sector*’ calls price conscious lunch man. There is a deliberate targeting of low-income groups by the informal eating out sector.⁸

RISING NEED

The Guardian newspaper recently did a series called Breadline Britain in

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/series/breadline-britain>) which tracked the impact and consequences of the recession on families and individuals across the UK.

⁸ McDonalds and Allegra Strategies. Eating out in the UK 2009: *A Comprehensive Market*. London: Allegra; 2009.





Some of the points made as part of this blog include the following:

- Falling incomes and welfare spending cuts have triggered an explosion in demand for emergency food parcels as Britain's poorest families struggle to put a meal on the table. Fareshare, a charity that supplies millions of free meals to charities, food banks and breakfast clubs using food donated by supermarkets, said it could not keep pace with demand, which it expected to continue growing for at least five years.
- The Guardian's Breadline Britain investigation revealed that up to 3.6m UK households were at risk of slipping into poverty as a result of spiraling living costs, shrinking incomes and welfare benefit reforms. Britain's biggest food-bank network, the Trussell Trust charity, reported in April it had doubled the number of emergency food parcels issued over the past year and was opening food banks at the rate of two a week.

The formal government endorsement of the food bank/pantry link as an on-going source of food aid is questionable from the point of view of the greater good.^{9 10} This is not to call into question the role of ER food agencies but to question the social appropriateness of food aid as a long-term contribution addressing food poverty/insecurity. The American Dietetic Association,¹¹ extended its definition of food insecurity to include “the ability acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways”, and “a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice without resorting to emergency food sources”. One commentator says that school food is a measure of how we value our kids and on food banks ‘*In the same vein we must seriously examine the role of food banking, which requires that we no longer praise its growth as a sign of our generosity and charity, but instead recognize it as a symbol of our society’s failure to hold government accountable for hunger, food insecurity and poverty*’.¹²

THE THREE QUESTIONS

Q 1. How can we determine the number of Londoners that are in food poverty?

Collect data on numbers in poverty and extrapolate from this to those in food poverty.

⁹ See the following for a discussion on this:

Poppendieck, J. (1999). *Sweet Charity?: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*. New York: Viking.

Poppendieck, J. (2010). *Free for All: Fixing School Food in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Riches, G. (2002). Food Banks and Food Security: Welfare Reform, Human Rights and Social Policy. *Social Policy and Administration*, 36, (6), 648-663.

¹⁰ Titmuss, R. (1970) *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy*. Reprinted by the New Press.

¹¹ American Dietetic Association. (2010). Position of the American Dietetic Association: Food insecurity in the United States. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 110, 1368-1377.

¹² Mark Winne (2009) *Closing the Food Gap: resetting the Table in the land Of Plenty*, Beacon Press, Boston.



Work out those who are receiving ER food and not on welfare.

Use data from ER food services, map food areas with food access problems and the ER food services.

Don't get bogged down in measuring what is an obvious and apparent problem but seek to measure solutions.

Monitor impact of changes in Universal Credit on FSMs and those seeking ER food.

Q 2. Does London have food deserts, and what is the impact of these?

There are problems with access to healthy and affordable food for some groups –probably best to think in these terms

Poor health, cultural exclusion etc.

Q 3. How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address food poverty?

Combine his powers in the area of planning and public health.

Actively support the living wage to be implemented by all London employers.

Co-ordinate a London as opposed to a borough-by-borough response.

Lobby national government.

Hello Simon

This response is principally from an officer we have working on money and debt advice. Referrals to her come from neighbourhood services officers (housing officers) revenue officers and support workers providing out reach support to vulnerable residents. In our community investment strategy we have committed to developing more hardship projects around food poverty; this is in response to falling household incomes. These projects will include increasing residents skills in effective food preparation.

- Is your organisation coming into contact with an increasing number of people facing food poverty?

We became an authorised distributor for several food banks in London and the South East towards the end of last year. Since that time the amount of people that we have supported has increased significantly. This of course can be attributed to the fact that we became a voucher holder; but anecdotally we feel that it wasn't until we were able to provide a solution that the scale of the demand became apparent. Our use of food banks is reactive, and based on demand, we searched the internet looking for food banks in response to a growing number of residents saying they did not have enough money to buy food.

- What are the major risk factors for food poverty?

The major risk factors are all the health risks associated with a poor diet and nutrition. Another problem is that people in these circumstances often do not have cookers and or fridge freezers to cook the food that has been provided. Food poverty does not exist in isolation. In addition to this our residents would typically be in rent arrears with other priority and non priority debts. Traditionally food banks were established to provide emergency food to cover a short term crisis or situation. Today some residents rely on this as another form of income. During winter the risk increases because when combined with fuel poverty it means those living in unheated homes with poor diet are at the greatest risk of all.

- How can we determine the number of Londoners that are in food poverty?

Based on the figures that our financial inclusion advisors collate at the end of each month from residents who have been referred to her in rent arrears or financial difficulties just over half have been supported since January 2012 and have been issued with food vouchers.

- What initiatives exist to ensure affordable, healthy food is available in London?

The majority of foodbanks are operated through Christian church networks. Vouchers are also available from GP, CAB and other welfare

advice centres. We have recently been approached by an organisation to support the development of a food-bank in Elephant and Castle in Lambeth.

- How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address food poverty?

By encouraging companies to sponsor their local food bank. This will involve helping with donations of food and also seconding staff to work in the food bank sorting and distributing food. Some food banks have been forced to reduce their opening days or temporarily suspend the service as the demand has exceed food supplies.

If would like anymore information please let me know.

Thanks Matt

Matt Corbett | Head of Community Investment

Cray House | 3 Maidstone Road | Sidcup Kent | DA14 5HU

Plan Zheroes submission to the investigation on food poverty in London

There is no single solution to the complex problem of food poverty and hunger in London. **Plan Zheroes is a unique London-wide initiative that focuses on connecting food outlets that have surplus perishable food to nearby charities that feed hungry people.**

Unlike most food banks, Plan Zheroes focuses mainly on perishable food that is perfectly good but would otherwise be binned. Our food outlet donors include restaurants, hotels, small supermarkets and corner shops. Our food recipients include centres for the homeless, churches, soup kitchens, drop in centres for the elderly, school breakfast clubs and after school clubs.

Perishable food makes up a very large proportion of the good food that is wasted every year. Most food outlets hate binning good food and are keen to find a solution, provided it is not expensive or complicated. They need help to identify local charities and to find an easy way to get their surplus food to them.

Charities that feed the hungry are increasingly short of funds. They need help in finding local donors that can help to fill the gap, and in working out how to integrate often unpredictable donations of food into their existing systems and provision.

Our interactive map (go to www.planzheroes.org), generously developed for us by Mapping for Change, helps food outlets with spare food to find suitable recipients close by, and vice versa. We are developing case studies demonstrating different ways in which donors and recipients can work together.

We still face a number of challenges:

- Although there are a large number of donors ready and willing to donate their surplus perishable food, it has been surprisingly difficult to find recipients.
- Donations of perishable food are, by their nature, unpredictable. For example, supermarkets and restaurants have to stock more food than they need so that they don't run out of anything and lose future custom. They cannot predict what will be available to donate at the end of the day.
- We need, therefore, to find recipients that are able to deal with unpredictable amounts of food. This rules out many "traditional food providers" such as luncheon clubs and soup runs, which generally rely on regular, predictable supplies of food so that they can plan ahead and be sure to have enough feed their clients.
- Many of our potential recipients are informal groups and individuals working through churches and other organisations, or doing things on their own initiative. They are not on official council or other lists and it is hard to find and contact them. The people running them are also often under great pressure and can find it hard to step back and think about how they could use the food that is offered to them.
- In some cases it seems impossible to move food from donors to recipients even though it is badly needed. For example, we have a large department store offering six crates of food

at 8 pm every day to a nearby local centre for the homeless, but the store's transport department closes at 5 pm and there is no way to transport the food.

Our next step is to try to get funding for a small number of local pilot projects in different London boroughs using part-time workers. Their task will be to identify and encourage suitable donors and recipients, work locally to solve practical problems, and support donor-recipient pairs where necessary until the relationship is bedded in. The practical knowledge and experience gained by these pilot projects can then be pulled together and shared with people in other areas of London. In the meantime, we will continue to publicise our initiative and try to link donors and recipients via meetings and word of mouth and via our interactive map.

Lotti Henley
Plan Zheroes

<http://www.planzheroes.org/>

4.11.12

FOOD POVERTY IN LONDON

Consultation response from **Elizabeth Dowler**, Professor in Food & Social Policy, Department of Sociology, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL

I welcome the chance to contribute to this investigation. I have researched and written on food and poverty/inequalities and household food security failure, and on potential policy response, in the global South and (more recently) the global North. It is a critical contemporary issue, as the problematics of the global food system are compounded by the imposition of measures of economic austerity and rising food prices.

Clearly, it is essential to understand the nature and causes of food poverty, and to be able to characterise people or households experiencing, or likely to experience, it. The combination of anecdotal evidence of increasing numbers of children arriving at school seriously hungry/teachers having to provide food for pupils, and growing numbers of charitable food distribution through Fare Share and Trussell Trust food banks, and other less systematic methods, as well as reports from (eg) the *Family Food Survey* by Defra, and accounts from professionals dealing with families in crisis, provides strong grounds for analysis and response.

To address the specific questions:

1) **How to determine the numbers of Londoners in food poverty**

- a) Unlike the definition of fuel poverty, there is, as yet, no official definition of 'food poverty' – for example, an agreed % of income spent on food, above which people could be deemed as food poor, parallel to the fuel poverty definition. This is partly because food expenditure is more complicated than fuel expenditure: the latter usually relates to a dwelling, whereas individuals eat food, and can both share common purchases (and equipment, cooking fuel etc) as well as buying their own food as appropriate. Secondly, people can satisfy energy and nutrient needs by consumption of different foods with different costs: thus taste, cultural demands, age etc, affect which foods they buy, and how they prepare and consume them, and further, food costs vary a little by geography but a lot by shop (major retailers are, by and large, much cheaper than small local shops) - so food expenditure will depend not only on what commodities people choose to buy, but also where they are able to shop (and perhaps at what cost, if they have to pay for transport). Thirdly, the reality is often that people cannot afford to buy the food they want and need, because other essential demands take precedence (fuel, rent, children's shoes, debts etc), so it is hard to interpret what people on low incomes actually spend on food, in relation to other purchases.
- b) Nevertheless, UK and other governments have tried to estimate both the costs of a 'minimal healthy diet' and to see what proportion of expenditure enables people to meet health dietary guidelines. The results are seldom published because it is hard to interpret the findings.
- c) Food poverty thus has no precise definition. It is usually taken to mean the inability to consume an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so¹. This definition is often seen as synonymous with food insecurity at the household level. The converse, 'food security', is broadly recognised as the situation where 'all people, at all times, have physical, economic and social access to

¹ Dowler, E., Turner, S. with Dobson, B. (2001) *Poverty bites: food, health and poor families*. London: Child Poverty Action Group, p 12; Dowler, E. & O'Connor, D. (2012) 'Rights-based approaches to addressing food poverty and food insecurity in Ireland and UK' *Social Science and Medicine*, 74, 44-51 .

sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.² In a country such as the UK this implies people have sufficient money to purchase the food they want to eat, to meet social as well as health and nutritional norms; that this money is not absorbed in other expenditure demands (rent, fuel, debt repayment, etc); that people can reach shops or markets which stock appropriate food at affordable prices, or they can grow or otherwise obtain food in ways which are dignified and in keeping with social norms. Thus, food poverty can be said to occur where these conditions are not systematically fulfilled.

- d) One approach to constructing indicators of households likely to be experiencing food poverty is to employ consensual budget standards, such as the Minimum Income Standard produced by the Centre for Research in Social Policy (CRSP), Loughborough (work funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation)³ which provides budgetary estimates of weekly income needed to meet essential expenditure for 11 different household types. The budget, uprated annually, was re-examined in 2012 to establish what people saw as 'essential', including the food budget, in recessionary times; each component budget list is checked by relevant experts that it meets any statutory recommendations. (Note that the food costs applied are those of a typical major retailer, which not all households can access). The latest *Findings* (on the website below) show clearly that state benefits and the National Minimum Wage are both insufficient to enable households of different sizes and compositions to meet the costs of a consensual minimum acceptable standard of living, except perhaps average pensioner households (and of course there is variation between pensioner incomes). While people might quibble with some of the components of 'acceptable' (although they are fairly parsimonious) they cannot truly argue with the food budget, which matches consumption patterns of the lowest decile in the UK national annual Family Food Survey adjusted to meet nutrient requirements and healthy dietary guidelines (such as 5 daily portions of fruit and veg). The almost certain likelihood is then that people do not have enough money to buy the minimum diet required for health; people usually prioritise expenditure which has significant consequences for default (such as rent, local taxes, fuel etc) over food, consequence for whose lack or inadequacy is borne in the body and personal condition.
- e) These findings echo those of many small-scale surveys as well as anecdotal accounts from health, social care or education professionals, that those on lowest incomes, and long term state benefits, and/or living in areas of multiple deprivation (poverty is not only about income, as is widely acknowledged), are considerably less likely to meet dietary guidelines and nutrient reference values in their regular diets. Again, this is because people living in such circumstances usually reduce their food budget, or try to manage on a very low budget for food (if 'cutting back' can no longer be achieved. Current rising indebtedness to loan firms as well as utilities contributes to inadequacy of incomes for food. These results are also reflected in the quality of diets and patterns of expenditure of those in the lowest income decile or quintiles in the Defra Family Food Survey.
- f) It might also be noted that CRSP above has recently worked with the Sustainable Living group at the University of Surrey to establish the principles and preliminary costings of a 'Sustainable' Minimum Income Standard. This is also a critical issue, under discussion elsewhere in government and civil society, of how to ensure that demands for more sustainable living practices among the whole population do not further jeopardise the

² Riches, G. (2002). 'Food Banks and Food Security: Welfare Reform, Human Rights and Social Policy. Lessons from Canada?' *Social Policy and Administration*, 36, 648-663. [note Riches is drawing on FAO's definition]

³ http://www.minimumincomestandard.org/2012_update.htm

wellbeing of those on low incomes. The report is on the website below; it includes some discussion of the implications of meeting GHG standards on low incomes, particularly for food.

A] Thus it would be reasonable to use numbers in London claiming state benefits or working for the National Minimum Wage as indicators of those likely to be in food poverty. Such data should be presented by different household types, matching those used in the Minimum Income Standards work.

B] It would be appropriate to analyse data from the Family Food Survey, specifically for the London region:

- to examine both dietary quality and nutrient intake in the lowest income decile and quintile;
- to look at the distribution of, say, four key nutritional and food indicators (saturated fat, refined sugar, vitamin C, iron, quantity of vegetables [excluding potatoes], fruit, fruit juices) by income and by household circumstance (which might include job/job security, size, housing tenure)
- to establish which income level or socio-economic indicator corresponds to significantly worse diets.

2) Existence of 'food deserts' in London and any potential impact

- a) The idea of a 'food desert' has been salient over the last two decades, in the UK, N America and Australia, as well as attracting considerable debate and dispute in academic and policy circles. Summary of these debates is available elsewhere. Essentially the term refers to areas where food needed for a healthy life is hard to find in reasonable quantities at reasonable, affordable prices, or where reaching shops & markets selling 'healthy' food requires a car since public transport is either too costly or unreliable; it can also refer to the unpleasant or inadequate nature of local shops (since food shopping can be a social pleasure). There is a cultural element here; interviewing lone parents in S London some years ago who lived very near a large new early 'superstore' of a major retailer, I recall that none used it. When asked why, they said it 'wasn't for the likes of them'; they 'didn't dress in the right clothes or spend enough money' to be welcome. Indeed, one said she had been followed by a store detective the only time she entered, since she was dressed so shabbily, and could only afford a basket of food, not the trolley-loads other customers were buying. It is also well attested that those who live for any length of time on low incomes know the price of all basic goods in most of the shops within a reasonable radius of where they live; this is a survival strategy. They also know which bargains are to be had where, and when, and often share their knowledge through networks.
- b) Thus surveys which use Geographical Information System software simply to map routes to shops of the majority miss the cultural realities of those managing on low incomes, including the need, sometimes, to cross major main roads or into places where they feel deeply unwelcome. (In the lone parent work referred to above, I interviewed many who lived south of the river, some 10 minutes from the House of Commons 'as the crow flies' where one small discount store served a dense, largely low income, population. Many spoke of better food stores which had closed in recent years. On any map, the superstore mentioned previously would have seemed within easy access; in practice it was not for any without a car – buses did not, at that time, easily reach it.) 'Food deserts' are not just geographical.
- c) Some carrying out research on this issue have had good experience using local authority databases of shops, their size and food retailing capacities, in GIS work. Others (including my

own experience in London in 1996 and Sandwell in 2000) have found LA databases to be insufficiently up to date, particularly in capturing the rapid turnover of food shops which are not part of the major retail system.

Notwithstanding comments above, there is a strong geographical component, which can only be captured by GIS work which includes mapping of shop access by direct routes and roads, public transport, and which matches this to household and area deprivation indices.

Rapid qualitative interviews, to capture people's experience of living in areas which seem to be 'deserts' from quantitative work, should always be used to supplement GIS maps etc.

3. Role for London mayor's office

I see a number of potential roles, which are crucial in addressing this challenging issue appropriately. These are very briefly outlined here:

- a) in retaining the analytical skills and creative thinking capacity of a small group to continue work on food poverty in London: the problems need rapid, full characterisation, and potential responses need to be discussed not only with relevant London and other authorities but also with people living in the circumstances concerned.
- b) further to the last point; many initiatives in the past which have tried to address 'food poverty' have failed where they do not ground work in the realities of people's real needs, circumstances and 'ownership' of intervention. Thus it is essential rapid mechanisms for giving those living in food poverty 'voice' are derived and implemented (there is literature/experience to draw on).
- c) another essential for success is consistency, time and on-going funding; much of the considerable amount of innovative work in recent years, amounting to a social movement in good food, even for poorer people, has been funded through the BIG lottery⁴, and this stream is ending. Some elements will continue, but my own experience of evaluating local level food initiatives is that having continually to reinvent/redirect initiatives to match different, new sources of financial and other support is draining and detracting for often over-stretched staff and volunteers (this is true of many community initiatives of course – but it is certainly true in all food projects).
- d) The Mayor's office, in retaining a small group dedicated to this issue, can effect the necessary linkages to other key streams of government activity, whether or not they fall under the Mayor's remit. This includes:
 - planning permission for/citing of different kinds of food shops (not just the major retailers; also markets and smaller food shops);
 - ensuring all those working in the public sector, and all working for bodies which tender for and subcontract work for the public sector in London, pay at least the Living Wage (which is closer to the Minimum Income Standard). This does not guarantee people have enough money for food, but contributes to the likelihood.
 - ensuring those living on state welfare benefits of income support, old-age pensions only, etc, do not lose proportions of these benefits systematically to private utility or Council Tax arrears, fines, etc (there is precedence for this in other European countries).
 - safeguarding the existence and possibly finding funding & other support for, and monitoring the quality of, food provided to children and young people through nurseries, kindergartens, schools (breakfast, lunch, after school clubs).

⁴ <http://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/>; <http://www.localfoodgrants.org/>; <http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/>

The Mayor's office should NOT be drawn into funding or other support for charitable food distribution: this can never solve food poverty.

Dear Simon

I have received your email through our website and wanted to respond.

There are organisations better placed to respond to your questions regarding food poverty in London but I would stress the importance of prioritising school meals at a time when local authorities are devolving responsibility for school meals back to schools.

We have seen many London schools suffer in the wake of LA spending cuts and some excellent services becoming at risk from fragmentation (eg Croydon and Brent).

Likewise, many authorities have had to lose their nutritionists, healthy schools co-ordinators and monitoring services so often there is nobody left to champion school meals. At a national level, the Coalition is non-committal about the importance of school food standards and has already made free school and academies exempt from the standards that have safeguarded children by keeping junk food out of schools.

Five organisations have joined forces to form www.sosfood.org.uk to lobby the government to make standards mandatory in all schools. We are collectively preparing a submission to the School Food Review and we would, of course, love to see the Mayor back our campaign.

We know that food poverty amongst children is a real issue in London so we must all do what we can to protect every child's right to a nutritionally balanced meal at lunchtime.

I hope this is helpful.

Stephanie Wood

www.schoolfoodmatters.com

Charity Number 1134094

151 Sheen Lane

London SW14 8LR

Sign up to our brand new [Membership for Schools](#)

EXPERIENCES OF THE RECESSION: PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN LONDON

September 2012

Graham Whitham, UK Poverty Advisor | 0161 249 5135 | g.whitham@savethechildren.org.uk

BACKGROUND

Save the Children recently commissioned two large scale surveys of parents and children across the UK.ⁱ We asked parents how they were fairing during the current recession and whether they were making cut backs. We asked children about whether they knew if their parents were finding things hard and whether they were missing out on things. The results from London are set out in this summary.

INTRODUCTION AND KEY RESULTS

London has the highest rate of child poverty of any region in the UK with 37% of children living in poverty. Concentrations of deprivation and high levels of inequality have been exacerbated by the recent financial crisis. The survey results show that parents and children in London are experiencing all too readily the impact of years of stagnating wages, inflation and cuts to welfare spending. Parents are cutting back on essentials like food to protect their children from the squeeze on family finances and children are also missing out on essentials and the things needed to have a happy and fulfilled childhood. Amongst London's poorest parents:

- Almost one in five (19.1%) say their children have to go without new shoes when their children need them.
- Over one in five (23.1%) say their children have to go without a winter coat.
- A third (32.4%) say their children are missing out on having friends rounds for tea because money is tight.

The most striking findings from the surveys are the extent to which parents are having to cut back to protect their children from the full impact of poverty and the awareness amongst children of the financial pressures facing their parents. Amongst children in London:

- Four in ten (40%) agree or strongly agree that their parents are cutting back on things for themselves like food and new clothes.
- More than three in five (62%) say they think it's getting harder for their family to pay for everything.
- Four in ten (41%) agree or strongly agree that not having enough money makes their parents unhappy/ stressed.

FEELING THE PINCH

Hard choices

According to the survey results, parents in London across all income groups are having to make increasingly hard choices about how they manage their budget and cope with the financial squeeze and that parents on the lowest incomes are most likely to be feeling the pinch.

- One in five parents in London (21.9%) say that they are short of money every week (rising to 49.7% amongst parents in poverty) and a similar proportion (21.6%) say they have nothing left to cut back on (rising to 38.7% amongst parents in poverty).
- 34.1% of parents in poverty in London say they have not paid bills in the last year compared to 9.1% of more affluent parents.
- Around three in ten (29.4%) of all parents in London say they have had to go into debt in the last year because of a lack of money.

Cutting back on essentials

Increasingly families are struggling to afford the essentials needed to live a decent and healthy life.

- Four in ten parents in London (40.3%) have a budget of less than £50 for food each week, rising to four in five (79.8%) parents in poverty.
- Almost half of parents in London (44.6%) say they've cut back on the amount they spend on food in the last year with over a quarter (26.2%) saying they've spent less on fruit and veg.

MONEY WORRIES AND FAMILY STRESS

Awareness of financial stress among children

Poverty takes its toll on the emotional well-being of children, not only because they're missing out on things that their peers might take for granted but also, as our survey results show, because they are often aware of the financial pressure their family is under.

Although parents try to protect their children from harm and worry, our survey shows that many children are well aware of their parent's daily struggles and money worries, and children worry about money too. In London:

- More than one in five (22%) children say they only ask their parents for the things they need like new school shoes because they know their parents don't have much money.
- Over half (56%) of children say they sometimes worry about their family not having enough money.
- More than six in ten (63%) of children say their family has to think carefully about what they spend their money on.

Parents under pressure

Poverty exacts a toll on the physical and mental well-being of parents, especially when relying on a low-income persists for a long period of time. The survey results suggest that money worries are more likely to be affecting the emotional well-being of parents in poverty

than parents on modest and more affluent incomes. In London:

- Almost a quarter (23.7%) of parents in poverty say they are arguing more with their partner than they used to because of money worries (compared to 12.1% of more affluent parents).
- Around one in five (19.1%) parents in poverty say they are snapping more at their children (compared to 8.3% of more affluent parents).
- Four in ten (39.9%) parents in poverty say they are stressed because they are constantly worrying about money (compared to 16.4% of those on more affluent incomes).

GOING WITHOUT

Children missing out

Children in poverty are much more likely to be materially deprived and therefore lack the things needed to have a happy childhood. Low income parents in London are more likely to say their children are missing out on things than parents on modest and better off incomes. For example:

- More than one in three (34.1%) say their children miss out on going on school trips compared to 18% of those on modest incomes and 11.5% of more affluent parents.

Children in London are also likely to say they are missing out on certain items and experiences because of a lack of money.

- 1 in 10 children (10%) say they have to go without having friends round for tea because their family can't afford it and a third say they have to go without holidays (33%).
- Almost a third (31%) say their family struggles to pay for bills and one in six (17%) say their family struggles to pay for birthday parties.
- One in ten (11%) say their family struggle to pay for new shoes when they need them.
- A quarter of children (25%) in London say they don't have access to the internet at home

Parents protecting their children from poverty

From Save the Children's experience of working with low-income families, we know that parents try hard to protect their children from the impact of poverty by missing out on things themselves, and in some instances this means missing out on essentials.

- Over a quarter of parents in London living in poverty (26.6%) say they have missed meals (as did 23.2% of those on modest incomes and 10.5% of more affluent parents).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

London has amongst the highest rates of child poverty and deprivation in the UK. A weak labour market, stagnating wages, rising living costs and public spending cuts have placed enormous financial pressure on parents. Despite the best efforts of parents to shield their children from these stresses, the survey results suggest that children are aware of the pressure their parents are under. Whilst these recent pressures have been felt by families

across a range of income groups, the results of the survey of parents suggests that those in poverty are being hardest hit.

About the surveys

A total of 839 parents in London completed the survey. For the purposes of this summary respondents were broken down into three income groups. Those on incomes below £17,000 per annum are classed as being in poverty. Those with incomes between £17,000 and £30,000 per annum are considered to be on modest incomes. Those with incomes of £30,000 and above are considered to be 'more affluent' or 'better off' households. Results for the parents survey have not been weighted so care should be taken when comparing the results between London of England and the UK as a whole.

The results of the survey of children and young people are based on a sample of 159 children in London. These results have been weighted so more accurate comparisons can be made between the results presented here and the results for the UK as a whole. However, the margin of error is such that only significant differences between the figures suggest major differences between the experiences of children in London and children across the UK as a whole. The sample of children and young people in London was not large enough to make break downs by 'in poverty' and 'not in poverty' as we have done in the UK wide report.

ⁱ Full UK results are set out in: Whitham, G. September 2012, *Child poverty in 2012: It shouldn't happen here*. Save the Children.

Food Poverty in London
A response by Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming to the
London Assembly's Health and Environment Committee investigation

Sustain advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture and promote equity. We represent around 100 national public interest organisations, and are independent of the agri-food industry. More information about our work is available on our website www.sustainweb.org.

This submission does not represent the detailed views of all our member organisations. However, it is based on extensive work we have done with them in the past, for example through our (now ended) Food Poverty project and Food Access Network <http://www.sustainweb.org/foodaccess/>, so the general principles outlined are widely supported.

- **Is your organisation experiencing an increase in demand for your services?**

Sustain is not a service-providing organisation, but we are aware that our members and others who do provide emergency food for people in need are experiencing an increase in demand. This is entirely predictable, given static or falling incomes for many in low-wage employment, rising unemployment (due to the recession), and the squeeze on benefits (due to government policy).

In terms of assessing the level of food poverty, we would draw the Committee's attention to the work of the Minimum Income Standards group at the Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University, which is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation: http://www.minimumincomestandard.org/2012_update.htm These minimum income standards are updated annually and in 2012 the group re-examined what people thought was 'essential' (including the food budget). You will see from the site and the latest *Findings* that neither state benefits nor the National Minimum Wage, are sufficient to enable households of varying sizes and compositions to meet the costs of a consensus minimum acceptable standard of living. The food budget element matches the consumption patterns of the lowest decile in the UK national annual Family Food Survey, but has been slightly amended to meet nutrient requirements and healthy dietary guidelines (such as five daily portions of fruit and vegetables).

The Centre for Research in Social Policy has also worked with the Sustainable Living group at Surrey University to look at a Sustainable Minimum Income Standards. The report is on the same website <http://www.minimumincomestandard.org/downloads/Reports/sustainable-living-standards-summary.pdf>, and discusses the implications of meeting greenhouse gas targets on low incomes, particularly for food.

- **Are food banks a sustainable response to food poverty?**

No. The cause of food poverty is poverty in general, so it follows that the sustainable response is to tackle the causes of poverty, specifically low wages, inadequate benefits, and the lack of education, training and confidence that leads people to accept low paid work or be unable to find a job.

Clearly, however, tackling these issues will be neither easy nor quick so, in the meantime, society has a moral duty to ensure that its citizens can eat a healthy, sustainable and culturally acceptable diet. Experience in the UK (for example, FareShare <http://www.fareshare.org.uk/>) and elsewhere (for example The Stop Community Food Centre in Toronto, Canada <http://www.thestop.org/>) demonstrates that it is both possible and

desirable to provide food for people on low incomes while at the same time providing knowledge, skills and self-belief so that people can reduce their own dependence on such projects in the longer term. Initiatives like these also often campaign for their own redundancy by working to reduce the inequalities that generate the need for food banks and other emergency projects in the first place.

The experience of food banks in the USA is salutary, where such schemes have, arguably, stopped providing “emergency” food and have become an integral and permanent part of a system which allows governments to avoid tackling low wages, unemployment and benefit levels. Concerns that this situation might develop in the UK led Sustain to produce, in 2000, *Too much and too little? Debates on surplus food redistribution* <http://www.sustainweb.org/publications/?id=127>. Twelve years on, the debates do not appear to have moved forward at all, as the report noted:

“Surplus food redistribution is seen as a stop-gap “band-aid” solution by most of those who work in the schemes. But does it undermine its own emergency element by deflecting public and political attention from the need for long-term reform of the structural causes of deprivation? Or does it in fact highlight the problem, and so kick-start governments into action?”

- **Does London need more food banks, and if so how can we increase the available resources?**
- **Should all schools be providing breakfast, and if so how can this be delivered?**

In the immediate future, and given the economic and political situation, more ways of providing good food for people on low incomes will almost certainly be needed. However, it is vital that the food is accompanied by a range of other appropriate services, such as education, training and advice, to empower people to take greater control of their lives and find better paid work (or obtain their full entitlement to out of work benefits). It is also important that food and services are provided in a way that protects individuals’ dignity.

For school breakfasts, for example, we believe it may be damaging if this service becomes stigmatised by association with poverty. We acknowledge the importance of all children starting their school day well nourished, but consider that providing this service for all children may be the best way to approach this problem. As the Committee’s own briefing paper noted, there is evidence that some children who are entitled to free school meals fail to claim them due to the stigma attached to the service, so it seems likely that the same problem will affect free or low cost school breakfasts. Certainly, the experience of providing free lunches for all primary school children (including, for example, by local authorities in Islington, Newham and Wolverhampton) indicates that, although those on the lowest incomes benefit most, it is the shared experience of all the children eating meals together that not only enhances the service but also helps to provide the economies of scale that make the service viable.

In the current economic and political situation it is not at all clear where the money could come from to provide more food banks, breakfast clubs and other emergency schemes. Government has already announced that further budget cuts must be found before the general election in 2015, and charitable trusts and foundations are already heavily oversubscribed with requests for grants. It is possible that the private sector may increase the sponsorship it currently provides for some projects and we have two concerns about this.

First, as noted in *Too much and too little?*, private sector funding may constrain the campaigning activities of recipient organisations. While businesses may be happy to be associated with projects that provide food for vulnerable families (particularly if this reduces the amount of food going to waste), they may be less keen to be linked to the same projects if they are also campaigning for adequate benefits and a higher minimum wage. Second, some food businesses may seek a public relations advantage from sponsoring, for example, breakfast clubs as a way of mitigating the bad publicity they attract for making “junk” food products and/or marketing these to children.

We recommend, therefore, that if the private sector does fund food banks and similar initiatives, there are legally binding rules on the kinds of companies permitted to do this. For example, it would be counterproductive if companies associated with products that undermine healthy diets, for example food and drink products high in fat, sugar and salt, were allowed to use their involvement in food banks and school breakfast clubs to promote their products or brands.

- **How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address food poverty?**

It is essential that the Mayor continues to ensure that the London Living Wage is paid to all those employed directly or indirectly by the Greater London Authority and the family of agencies associated with it, including London Transport, the Metropolitan Police and the Fire and Emergency Authority. More could also be done to ensure that all other employers in the capital also pay the London Living Wage. Although benefit levels are set nationally, and so are beyond the Mayor’s remit, his office could protect funding for those organisations that provide help and advice for people to ensure that they are able to claim all the benefits they are entitled to.

The Mayor could also encourage local authorities to establish, promote and maintain street markets, which can be vibrant and attractive sources of affordable fresh produce. In addition, training and small grants could be made available to build on the success of the Buywell Project http://www.sustainweb.org/buywell/buywell_shops/ in helping small shops in low income areas to stock and sell more fresh produce. Continued investment would also be helpful for projects promoting food-related employability as described in the report *Roots to work: Developing employability through community food growing and urban agriculture* <http://www.sustainweb.org/publications/?id=246>

Finally, we are concerned that local authorities are no longer legally required to complete the School Food Trust’s annual survey on the take-up of school meals. We are very grateful that, thanks - in part - to a letter from Rosie Boycott, the Mayor’s food advisor, 20 London boroughs completed the survey this year, but this leaves 13 boroughs not providing essential data. As well as continuing to encourage participation in future years, the Mayor’s office could also encourage all London schools to become part of the Food for Life Partnership <http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/>, which has been so successful in improving not only the quality of food in schools but also food education and skills in participating schools.

2 November 2012

Please contact:

Jeanette Longfield

Hi,

My name is Tee Fabikun and we have been running a feeding and support programme for the Homeless and vulnerable people since 2007.

Carpenters Cafe opens every Tuesday, feeding and supporting about 60 - 70 people on a weekly basis. We have had babies/toddlers that we had to support almost from birth.

Please let me know what you really wish to know or if you wish to visit us for a cup of tea and sandwiches, you will be most welcomed.

TUESDAYS 10AM - 12.00PM

**Carpenters Cafe
Carpenters Community Hall
Carpenters Estate
17, Doran Walk
Stratford.
E15 2JL**

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Cheers.

Tee Fabikun.

Tower Hamlets Co-operative Development Agency
submission to Fiona Twycross's investigation
into food poverty.

Tower Hamlets CDA Promoting Food Co-ops in Schools

Introduction

Tower Hamlets Co-operative Development Agency has for 28 years been worked with and for the local community to enhance the quality of economic life, health and wellbeing. For over 18 years we have supported the establishment of food co-ops located in a range of community venues and also school fruit tuck shops. We are writing to advocate the provision of food co-ops in primary schools which enable parents to purchase at low cost Grade 1 very fresh fruit and vegetables as they collect their children. The food co-ops also promote healthy eating via leaflets, posters and workshops and they also run cook and eat sessions to impart healthy cooking methods.

What are Food Co-ops ?

Food Co-ops, by pooling buying power, purchase the best quality Grade 1 fresh locally sourced food at more affordable prices.

Tower Hamlets is a borough with poor access to fresh food and also has the highest number of fast food outlets in the UK. Thus, it is very impractical to carry heavy fresh food home from supermarkets which are located far from housing estates. Also, the higher cost of healthy food makes it difficult for many to afford.

So, many local residents consume a very poor diet and as a result the local Bangladeshi community (33% of the population) have some of the highest UK rates of Cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, childhood and adult obesity.

In 2008 there were 11,140 people with diabetes, and residents were 15% more likely to be diabetic compared to the rest of the UK.

Food Co-ops bring good quality, affordable food closer to the community and provide information sessions to raise healthy eating and cooking awareness. Food Co-ops bring communities together by working in the co-op to address local community issues.

School based Food Co-ops sell to at least 35 families each week and so providing healthy fresh and usually locally sourced food for 200 + people. The co-ops are run by a pool of around 10 volunteers who are trained and supported by the Tower Hamlets CDA team.

Food Co-op users directly benefit from greater access to healthy affordable food, information and advice. Many Food Co-ops also run healthy cooking workshops, healthy eating advice sessions run by dietitians, Bollywood dance classes, smoothie bars and also escorted walks in the local parks to encourage people to get out and walk more.

Food Co-ops are a friendly social food outlet providing a very personalized service by the community for the community, thus making it accessible and approachable for all local people. The Food Co-op is designed to be welcoming especially for those people who are socially excluded and lack confidence.

Food Co-ops encourage and support local unemployed residents to be volunteers, who have the opportunity to develop essential transferable employment skills and be involved in the community.

Food Co-ops are promoted through word of mouth, leaflets, flyers, poster, social media and working with other organisations.

Food Co-ops: -

- Are run by the community for the community.
- Supply produce at affordable prices.
- Access to food locally whenever practicable.
- Re-invest any profit into the co-op.
- Operate with the support of volunteers, in terms of the day-to-day running and the management.

However, that is where the similarity ends, as every food co-op is unique, and the way it runs will depend on the community it serves and the people who run it. Food co-ops can differ in almost every way including:

What they sell

In Tower Hamlets the Food Co-ops only sell high quality Grade 1 very fresh fruit and vegetables.

When they sell it

Usually one day a week for 2 or 3 hours.

How they sell it

Most sell their produce loose on stall, or others pre-packed in bags or boxes.

Where they sell it

Food Co-ops are run in schools, community centres, church halls, etc.

Food Co-ops are established to make it easier and cheaper to buy good fresh food. Large swathes of Tower Hamlets are Food Deserts with no or very limited availability of fresh fruit and vegetables or exotic ingredients.

The lack of fresh food stems from a range of reasons, including the following: -

- Lack of estate based food retailers.
- Local convenience stores often stock a limited choice of expensive low grade food.
- To access a good retailer often requires use of a bus, taxi, or car drive, which makes shopping more expensive and difficult.
- Cultural foods, often categorised as exotic, are not stocked by local retailers.
- Local community based convenience stores are forced to close given the competition from large national retailers.

Food Co-ops provide healthy food at an affordable price, opportunities for volunteers and a sociable place to shop and meet local people.

The benefits

Food Co-ops provide health benefits -

- Increase access to affordable fruit and vegetables and other healthy foods.
- Help to raise awareness of the benefits of eating a healthy diet.
- Food co-op volunteers gain increased self-esteem, confidence and a sense of purpose.

Food co-ops provide environmental benefits –

- Increase the supply of locally grown produce.
- Make it easier for people to shop by foot or by bike.
- Food with less packaging and thus less waste.
- Reduced Food Miles.

Food co-op social benefits can include -

- Engage local people in their community – often leading to other activities.
- Focal point for local people to meet up and make new friends.
- Revitalise community facilities.
- A more sociable place to shop.

Food co-ops provide economic benefits -

- Support local producers and growers by providing a local retail outlet.
- Ensure that the money spent stays in the local economy.
- Volunteers gain new skills enhancing prospects of training, work experience or employment.

Home Delivery Service

Once the co-op is established the members may consider launching a home delivery service for people who have mobility & other issues and this could include the supply of bread and milk, etc.

Tower Hamlets CDA support to establish & run a co-op ?

Tower Hamlets CDA supported a group to establish a Food Co-op on the Ocean Estate 18 years ago and since then the CDA has assisted 26 groups. All the Food Co-ops have been successful, with non closing due to lack of demand. Weekly sales, usually with just 2 – 3 hours opening, have ranged from just £80 to over £900 per co-op. Tower Hamlets CDA can provide the following: -

1. Presentations on the idea to your committee or members of the community.
2. Train and support local people to conduct market research to determine (a) interest or demand, (b) evaluate current fresh food purchase patterns, (c) assess the level of poor diet related ill health and (d) to recruit potential volunteers.
3. Train the volunteers, prior to launch the co-op, and this would include health and safety, customer care, pricing, using the electric scales & till, cashing up, ordering and an awareness and understanding of the importance of healthy eating & cooking using healthier methods.
4. Advise on the development and implementation of the marketing and promotion strategy.
5. Assist in planning, organising and marketing a high profile Launch Event.
6. Advise on the location of the co-op within the site with regard to safety and operational issues.
7. Initially order the weekly stock, handing this task over to the volunteers as soon as practical.
8. Unloading and storing the stock when it is delivered by the supplier on the day of the sale.
9. Unpacking, displaying and pricing the stock.
10. Recycling the packing.
11. Serving, advising customers and as necessary and practical providing advice and information.
12. Maintaining the accounts, banking and paying the supplier/s.
13. Organising marketing, e.g. teams handing out leaflets & talking to parents at local schools.
14. Issuing press releases and ongoing use of social media.
15. Organising events where dieticians present information on healthy eating, holding smooth bars, providing cook and eat workshops, etc.

Food Co-op Stock

The precise stock will be decided by the volunteers, based on what sells well, and also taking into account requests from the food co-op member customers. Local farmers have been contracted to supply fruit and root vegetables.

The following produce is available to order, subject to seasonal fluctuations.

Apple-Cooking	Mandarin
Apple-Cox	Mango
Apple-Golden Delicious	Mango Ghana
Apple-Granny Smith	Melon-Galia
Apple-Royal Gala	Melon-Yellow
Aubergine	Melon-Green (watermelon)
Bair (Kul Boroi)	Methi
Banana	Mooli-Baby
Beans- lubia	Mooli
Bichi (Pre Pack Papri seeds)	Mushrooms
Broccoli	Nali-Saag (Moliha)
Cabbage-Green	Nectarine
Cabbage-White	Okra
Carrots-Sack	Onion 5kg
Cauliflower	Orange-Jaffa
Cherries	Orange-Naval
Chow Chow	Papaya - Green (Kofol)
Chilli (Birds Eye/Hot)	Papaya – Ripe
Clementine	Papri (Bangladeshi)
Coconut	Papri (Pakistani)
Coriander	Peaches
Corn	Pears-Conference
Corn-Pre Packed	Pear-Packham
Courgette	Pear-William
Cucumber	Pepper-Green
Dates	Pepper-Mixed
Dates-Raw	Pineapple
Dudi	Plantain
Eddoe (Mukhi)	Plum-Red
Garlic	Pomegranate
Ginger	Potato-New
Grape-Red	Potato-Pre Pack
Grape-White	Potato-Cyprus
Grapefruit	Potato-Sweet
Guava	Pumpkin
Jali-Pumpkin	Satsuma
Karela	Spinach
Kiwi	Squash
Kolorabi	Strawberries
Lebu	Tangerine
Leek	Tomatoes-Cherry
Lemon	Tomatoes-Ordinary
Lettuce-Iceberg	Tomatoes-Vine
Lotha	Turia (Zinga)
Lychees	Yam-Coco

Budget

A typical food co-op budget to establish and operate for one year is £6,500.

£600	Electric scales, till, shopping baskets and display grass.
50	Paper bags, carriers, etc.
60	Provision of a cash till float.
110	2 all-weather promotion banners 3 x 1 metre for use of the external site boundaries.
80	5,000 A5 single sided colour print flyers for distribution at schools & on local estates.
250	Volunteer refreshments (£5 per session x 50 weeks).
750	Delivery charges (£15 per week x 50 weeks).
600	Pre-start volunteer training.
3,900	Volunteer support & training at each co-op over the first six trading months.
100	Miscellaneous - e.g. stationery

£6,500	Total
--------	-------

Trees for Cities' Position on Food Poverty

For the London Assembly Consultation on Food Poverty in London

TREES FOR CITIES: TREES FOR FOOD AND EDIBLE PLAYGROUNDS INITIATIVES

Trees for Cities has a number of initiatives which increase the availability of affordable healthy food in London. Our **'Trees for Food' programme**, re-introduces trees that grow fruit or nuts within its projects. These projects are typically in estates, community spaces, urban parks, and schools. Trees for Food encourages the culture of growing food within urban communities, and this is supported through the provision of workshops on seeding, care and maintenance, and harvesting.

The fact that the community is involved in the project also results in benefits for those that would otherwise not necessarily be able to get hands-on with the initiative, eg the sharing of the food amongst the community. There is no reason our Trees for Food projects could not lead to community greenhouses/further community plots, resulting in healthy food which is prepared and sold to the community, thereby helping to relieve food poverty.

Trees for Cities' **Edible Playgrounds initiative** really addresses the problem at its roots, by educating school children and the community on growing their own food and healthy eating. This can have significant impact on whole families, either through children effectively educating their families or through the involvement of families and the community in the edible playground projects. This involvement and awareness raising has positive consequences on food poverty: families learn the necessary skills to plant and grow their own fruit and vegetables so that their own food costs can effectively be decreased.

We have successfully completed Edible Playgrounds at a number of schools in London including Rotherfield Primary School, Featherstone High School, Havelock Primary School and Manorfield Primary School. We are now planning a number of other Edible Playground projects in London and other cities in the UK. A video on our landmark Edible Playground project at Rotherfield school can be found here <http://www.treesforcities.org/>. This really helps children with food education and understanding where food comes from, whilst it also provides an outdoor space for other educational activities and for children to play. The Edible Playground also incorporates other members of the community through weekly gardening clubs, and the community is engaged in caring for the Edible Playground over holiday periods.

Trees for Cities is also in the process of signing a joint initiative with the Jamie Oliver Foundation called **'Kitchen Garden'**. This goes one step further than the Edible Playground initiative in teaching schools not only how to plant, grow and harvest their food (Trees for Cities), but also how to prepare and cook healthy food (Jamie Oliver Foundation).

Is your organisation coming into contact with an increasing number of people facing food poverty?

Yes, Trees for Cities regularly comes into contact with increasing numbers of people facing food poverty through our various projects. A strategic decision was taken to develop our Trees for Food and Edible Playgrounds initiatives to tackle the issue of food poverty for communities and children in estates, and deprived areas and schools.

Does London have food deserts, and what is the impact of these?

There are certainly food deserts within London. This has an impact on the diets of communities and on their economic resources (poverty). Firstly, poor diets mean that communities are likely to have worse health. Individuals will, therefore, be ill more often, affecting one's ability to be productive. Deprived children, for example, are less likely to perform well at school as a result of an unhealthy diet, preventing them from being successful and achieving decent exam results. Secondly, food deserts mean that the cost of purchasing food is greater due to the need to either travel further to buy your food, or to pay a premium on buying what local healthy food is available. These issues are a limiting factor on the deprived communities which are often living within food deserts.

Does London need more food banks, and if so how can we increase the available resources?

Perhaps there is an argument for more foodbanks in London. Foodbanks are an essential solution to food poverty and there will always be a need for foodbanks for the most needy – however it is a short term and unsustainable solution. We need to look at long term solutions which will prevent increasing numbers facing food poverty, also therefore preventing increased stress on the current emergency systems in place.

There is a need to encourage self reliance whereby individuals are able to afford, prepare and grow healthy food. This can be done by increasing wages, making healthy food more available or teaching people how to grow, prepare and understand healthy food. A long term solution needs to facilitate a real change in mentality and understanding for what it means to be and eat healthy. This explains the need to focus more on education and awareness.

Through our Trees for Food and Edible Playground initiatives, Trees for Cities focusses largely on a long-term and therefore more sustainable approach. We provide the knowledge and skills in order to plant, grow and harvest your own food as well as facilitating the education and awareness which enable people to have a healthy diet.

What are the major risk factors for food poverty?

There are a number of key major risk factors for food poverty which include (i) the economy, the current economic climate and unemployment, (ii) population growth and life expectancy, (iii) urbanisation, (iv) urban sprawl and reduced (urban) spaces for growing food.

How can we determine the number of Londoners that are in food poverty?

Although there is a definition for food poverty, there is also a need for quantitative figures, taking into account that many people choose not to eat a healthy diet. Save The Children defines living in poverty as having a family income of less than £17,000 a year.¹

- How much of this will need to be spent on food in order to be able to afford a healthy diet?
- Within what proximity of your home would the food need to be in order to have access to the necessary food? What are any other indicators for having access to food (eg lack of awareness for what constitutes a healthy diet)?

These factors could be used to establish the Baselines (actual levels of food poverty within London) and targets from which to improve the situation going forward.

Should all schools be providing breakfasts, and if so how can this be delivered? What else can schools do to ensure children have access to healthy food?

It is a positive thing to provide breakfasts and therefore a healthy diet for children who would otherwise not have had a decent and healthy breakfast, but as previously outlined, there is a need to focus more on long-term and cost effective solutions. One of the most important things schools could do is to teach children to grow their own food, helping children to understand where food comes from and how to produce it. They need to learn how to plant, grow and harvest healthy food. The Trees for Cities 'Edible Playgrounds' initiative looks at all these issues. It also has wider implications on the surrounding community who are encouraged to get involved in the projects where they can receive training so that they then have the skills to produce their own food on estates and other derelict and deprived urban locations.

Schools can also do a lot more on food education. It is all very well providing food to children, especially for children who do not have the financial resources to purchase enough healthy food, but they also need to be given the information which enables them to make decisions on what is healthy to eat and why. In addition to the ability to pay for or access healthy food, a healthy diet also requires a conscious decision to eat more healthily.

What skills and information do people need to maintain a healthy diet?

- Skills/knowledge to produce your own healthy food: how to plant it, grow it and harvest it.
- Nutritional awareness and the implications this can have on health, education, and lifestyle.
- Understanding the implications/benefits of seasonal and locally produced food on health, as well as on the environment and cost of food.
- Literacy and numeracy skills (to read packaging and calculate food costs).
- Ability to prepare food in a cost-effective and nutritional way.

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-19478083>

How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address food poverty?

Solutions to food poverty in the UK tend to be more downstream, dealing directly with the people who are affected. The Mayor needs to be more involved in making strategic decisions and creating policy that deals with the problems (upstream) linked to food poverty with a long term perspective. Some ideas include:

- Build upon Trees for Cities' 10 years of knowledge and experience of undertaking Edible Playgrounds in schools, with a particular focus on 'food deserts'. Ensure that growing food and food health/diet is incorporated as part of the school curriculum. This should include using the playgrounds as outdoor classrooms for the children in order to get them more engaged and in touch with the food they consume.
- Attempt to bring in more high profile figures (such as Jamie Oliver through the proposed joint initiative between Trees for Cities and the Jamie Oliver Foundation) to raise the issue among government and society; food banks and preparing healthy food so you achieve both short term objectives and bring about longer term change.
- We would be keen to see the Mayor take the lead in coordinating a more cohesive and structured approach to solving the problem with food poverty. He is well placed to provide direction and targets to bring together the actions of those already engaged and taking action to help relieve food poverty including the GLA's (already successful) Capital Growth Programme; Trees for Cities Edible Playground and Trees for Food programme; other NGOs focussing on food banks as well as the business community who may bring much needed funding for this area.

Investigation into food poverty in London - The Trussell Trust's response

- **Is your organisation experiencing an increase in demand for your services?**

Yes - we have seen a steady increase in demand for our services over the past few years both in terms of the growth of new foodbanks and the increase in the number of people our foodbanks have fed. Furthermore, we anticipate demand for our services will increase significantly with the forthcoming changes to the Social Fund in April 2013.

Here are some figures demonstrating this growth:

Total number of foodbanks in London at the end of:

2009 - 6
2010 - 16
2011 - 30
2012 - 38

Total number of people fed by London foodbanks:

	Adults	Children	Total
FY 2009/2010	238	170	408
FY 2010/2011	3070	2380	6379
FY 2011/2012	8056	6513	14,569
1st April 2012 - 2nd November 2012	9988	7296	17,284

We've seen a phenomenal increase in the number of people coming to foodbanks this year, feeding more people in the first 6 months of this financial year (15,536 people) than the total number of people we fed in the whole of the last financial year (2011-12).

The top three reasons why people are using foodbanks in London are as follows:

1. Benefit delay - 23.55%
2. Low income - 20.72%
3. Unemployed - 10.23%

- **Does London need more food banks, and if so how can we increase the available resources?**

Yes - our vision is for every London Borough to have at least one foodbank so that no one needs to go hungry.

Available resources can be increased by encouraging Local Authorities and local businesses to provide the financial support needed to open new foodbanks and maintain their services and to provide premises for storage and distribution. One of our key priorities at the moment is to develop more client centres within each borough, so that foodbanks are accessible to local people within each borough.

- **Are food banks a sustainable response to food poverty?**

No - foodbanks are not a sustainable response to food poverty because their purpose is to provide short term support to people in a crisis situation; they cannot provide long term support to low income families living in poverty.

However, we do believe that foodbanks are a sustainable response within the context of providing short term crisis support for the following reasons:

1. They engage the whole community in providing food, time and funds to support the on-going service of providing help to people in short-term crisis.
2. They operate on a referral basis where care professionals such as doctors, health visitors, social workers, and police identify people in crisis and issue them with a foodbank voucher which they can exchange for 3 days' worth of food at the foodbank. This ensures that foodbanks are providing help to those who genuinely need it.
3. Foodbank clients can receive a maximum of three foodbank vouchers in a row, although longer term support is available at the discretion of the foodbank manager having discussed the situation with the referral agency. This ensures that people do not become dependent on the foodbank service.
4. Foodbanks also signpost people on to other agencies that are able to work alongside them to help solve the longer-term problem.

- **How can the Mayor use his strategic powers to help address food poverty?**

1. By influencing Local Authorities and local businesses to support community initiatives (like foodbanks) with the necessary funds and resources to enable them to provide vital emergency services which will help deal with the immediate effects of food poverty.
2. By facilitating a coordinated approach between Local Authorities' and the Third Sector in their response to the effects of food poverty.
3. By continuing to influence government (local and national) to tackle the issue of low income (though the living wage) and to improve the response times of welfare support (benefit delays and related issues) through investment in better processes and more staff.
4. By campaigning for better education on healthy eating on a low budget.

Food Poverty

Submission to London Assembly Health and Environment Committee

5 November 2012

from

Gary Herman

Urbanag CIC

317 Brantingham Road

Manchester

M21 0GU

Definition

We have not been able to discover a precise definition of the term 'food poverty'. The best we can find is the familiar statement by Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at City University:

'Food poverty is worse diet, worse access, worse health, higher percentage of income on food and less choice from a restricted range of foods. Above all food poverty is about less or almost no consumption of fruit & vegetables.' (http://www.sustainweb.org/foodaccess/what_is_food_poverty/).

These are qualitative statements and, as such, represent a potential source of confusion for policy makers wishing to determine a strategic approach to the issue.

While there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence suggesting that access to nutritious food at affordable prices is declining for many people in the developed, as well as developing world, there are a few if any clear statements of the extent to which this is happening, in which locations it is happening, and to what precise causes it can be ascribed.

Gauging the problem

A recent press release from the Trussell Trust, which runs the UK's only network of foodbanks distributing emergency supplies of food to the urban poor, claims to have fed almost 110,000 people across the UK in the six months between April and October 2012, "compared to 128,697 people in total during the 2011-12 financial year." The numbers of people receiving assistance from the Trust more than doubled between 2010-11 and 2011-12, and the Trust now runs 270 foodbanks in the UK, 38 of which are in London alone. Three new foodbanks are opening every week.

The demand from foodbanks is the tip of the iceberg. People go to foodbanks *in extremis*, when they have no other means of feeding themselves and their families, but food poverty is ongoing and endemic in many communities. It disproportionately affects the poor (the poorest quartile of society in the UK spends around 15% of its weekly household budget on food – about double the percentage for the richest quartile) and reveals itself not just in hunger but in poor diet, which historically has been promoted by a combination of the big food manufacturers, the big food retailers and government policy. Together, these three interest groups have seen the UK food industry dominated by a philosophy which combines dependence on imported supplies with artificially low prices for basic foods and standardised health objectives based largely on calorific value. The results have been to impoverish our food culture, to over-emphasise the role of meat in our diet, and to encourage over-consumption of cheap carbohydrates and sugars. Poor nutrition leads to an increased incidence of obesity, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, depression and various forms of cancer. It can affect mental ability, behaviour and alertness. It costs the UK "up to £7.4 billion a year" or roughly 7% of total NHS spending. (<http://www.european-nutrition.org/index.php/malnutrition>).

Solutions

Of course, one solution to this problem is to eliminate poverty. Even if that were possible, however, we would still need to challenge the prevailing food culture and the context in which food policy is made. This is an enormous task that will take a long time - notwithstanding the good work of organisations like Making Local Food Work/the Plunkett Foundation, Sustain, the Soil Association and the Sustainable Food Trust, and individuals like Jamie Oliver, Rosie Boycott and Tim Lang.

Local initiatives (like Incredible Edibles and Capital Growth) can help, but they are typically small-scale and limited in impact. More to the point, perhaps, they are not organised in *an economically sustainable manner*. Although there appears to be a healthy demand for local food, the market share is low ("one to two percent" of the total according to the Food Ethics Council), with a reach of 30% according to the same source (<http://www.foodethicscouncil.org/node/611>). One problem is that there is no agreed definition of "local" - it could mean anything from 'grown and processed in a well-defined area' to 'bought in a nearby shop'. A report from 2005 suggests that the popular view is that "local" should mean "from with my county" or "from within a 20 to 30 mile radius of where I live or shop". (The Local and Regional Food Opportunity, The Institute of Grocery Distribution, 2005). This does not address the problem of what, in this context, the word "from" means - a complication that is evidenced every month in so-called "Farmers' Markets" up and down the country. In practice, "local" has become a marketing hook.

We believe that urban agriculture can contribute to the alleviation of food poverty, if it is rooted in the idea of growing or rearing food in a well-defined urban area or within the agricultural land contiguous with that area ("peri-urban") and if it organised as an economically viable activity. This means that suitable urban and peri-urban land *must* be made available for food growing, and that the activity *must* be used to create jobs - in food production, processing and/or distribution - paying at least a living wage. Urban agriculture must be based on a rationalised supply chain in order to avoid, say, a glut of one type of product which cannot therefore be traded. Successful urban agriculture is a unitary project and requires a critical mass in the market and the scheduling and coordination of production and distribution to minimise costs and wastage. In itself, urban agriculture is unlikely to satisfy more than 50% of the demand in a market for food (which is the Cuban experience), and will have to co-exist with other sources of supply through *incorporation* into significant outlets such as large shops or chains of shops, or networks of canteens, cafeterias or restaurants. Urban agriculture does not replace other avenues of supply, and requires larger urban areas with the appropriate infrastructure and sympathetic local authorities. Among these, London is clearly paramount.

ends

Hi,

My name is Vicki Barker, I am Project Coordinator for A.P.P.L.E., a registered charity working with children and young people. (1076880) We have been running 2 projects, (Food for Thought and From Seed to Plate) addressing healthy eating /living for the past 4 years. The nature of the project has changed considerable over the past 2 years as the economic situation has got harder for many families. Originally the project was about healthy eating, where our food comes from, how to grow, harvest and cook our own produce, cooking skills and eating together- (this is massive enough). It is changing subtly; to ensuring children are having enough to eat, have access to healthy food and concerns for individual children who clearly have very poor diets. One thing we are noticing is that children are coming out of school very hungry, (they have always been hungry after school but this is a bit more insistant) it begs the question are the school dinner portions getting smaller? I am keen to get involved with this project and would appreciate being kept in touch.

Regards

Vicki Barker
Project Coordinator
A.P.P.L.E.