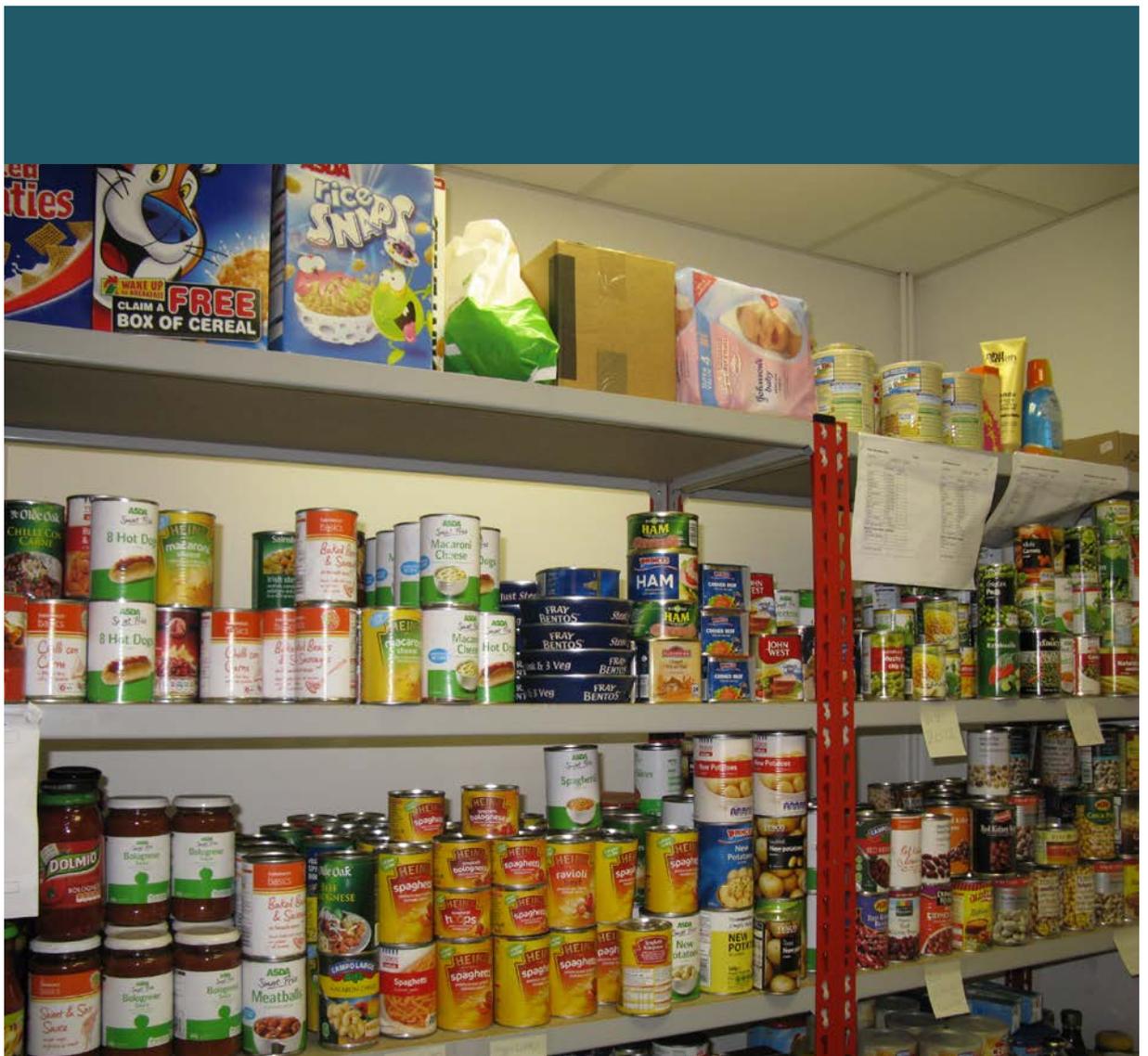


# A Zero Hunger City

## Tackling food poverty in London

March 2013



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The Health and Environment Committee agreed the following terms of reference for this report on 12 September 2012:

- to investigate the scale and causes of food poverty in London;
- to consider what the Mayor and partners can do to support people suffering food poverty in London; and
- to consider what the Mayor and partners can do to address the risk factors of food poverty.

The Committee would welcome feedback on this report.

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# Foreword



Food is the most basic of human requirements. Yet, in one of the richest cities in the world, increasing numbers of Londoners are struggling to afford sufficient healthy food for themselves and their families. Our aim should be to make London a Zero Hunger City.

Food banks are the most visible manifestation of the growing crisis of food poverty in London. Their volunteers do remarkable work providing emergency aid to increasing numbers of people, but food banks must be viewed as an emergency ‘sticking plaster’ response rather than a solution in themselves. More must be done to address the underlying reasons why people turn to food banks in the first place. This report highlights concerns that far from these issues being in the process of being resolved, food poverty is likely to increase in the coming months and years. This is an immediate problem and will not solve itself.

We are witnessing a rapid rise in people accessing food banks for emergency food provision. The number of food banks has increased to match this surge in demand. The Trussell Trust, which runs the largest chain of food banks in the country, had 6 food banks in London in 2009 and now has 40. Over 34,000 people were fed by Trussell Trust food banks in London from April 2012 to mid-February this year. Among those resorting to food banks are people in low paid work and all too many people in London who are in work are still earning below the London Living Wage. They are no longer able to juggle the pressures of rising debt, increasing rents and escalating fuel bills. At the same time welfare changes and effective cuts in pay are hitting people.

Large numbers of children are fed by food banks in London. Many children in our schools arrive hungry. The survey conducted for this report shows that over 95% of teachers who responded said children in their schools regularly went without breakfast. Over half said this was because families could not afford food. These children’s health, educational attainment and life chances are threatened by hunger. This is shameful and is completely unacceptable. Neither breakfast clubs nor free school meals reach all children living in poverty nor do they feed all children who are hungry. We present a number of ways to tackle children’s hunger, including expanded provision of healthy universal free school meals.

At the other end of the age spectrum, there are fewer ready-made solutions to the issue of malnutrition and food poverty among older people in London. However, pensioner hunger and malnutrition is a problem that requires urgent attention. Our investigation heard that a high proportion of people over the age of 65 admitted to hospital in Lewisham and Southwark were already suffering from malnutrition

Perhaps the most worrying aspect of the picture of food poverty we saw during the research is the element of chance involved in what help is available. Provision is ad hoc as a result and greater strategic oversight and co-ordination is needed to ensure all Londoners have access to decent good value food.

Throughout the investigation I have met remarkable people trying to overcome considerable barriers to address both the immediate and longer term needs faced by people of all ages in our city. We have met teachers who pay for food for pupils out of their pockets, business people who have made personal sacrifices to establish food banks, volunteers who themselves have faced poverty in the past and representatives of charities, government and local authorities who are determined to tackle hunger in London and across the UK. I would like to thank all of these people for contributing to this report and for the work they do on behalf of Londoners on a daily basis.

These people have all recognised that hunger is not acceptable in our city. The only acceptable – and urgent - overall objective for the Mayor, Government, local authorities and other partner organisations with a role in addressing food poverty (and poverty) is to work together towards a Zero Hunger City.

**Fiona Twycross AM**

# Executive summary

Food poverty is the inability to afford or access healthy food. Our investigation found that thousands of Londoners are at risk of food poverty. Food poverty affects children, people of working age and older people and those at risk or living in food poverty are both in and out of work.

Food poverty is a complex economic and social phenomenon and there are multiple drivers for it. Low income, welfare reform, rising prices and food deserts all play a part. Food poverty is likely to increase in London as the economic downturn persists and inflation continues to depress living standards.

A number of initiatives are being supported by statutory and non-statutory organisations. These include food banks, food kitchens, community food-buying schemes, school breakfast clubs and lunch clubs for older people. They represent a very powerful response to hunger in our communities.

Food banks and other forms of emergency food aid provision are increasingly necessary to address food poverty but should not allow policy-makers to avoid addressing the underlying causes of food poverty. Organisations should look to work more formally with government to help identify the causes behind the rise in demand and to provide signposts to other agencies, particularly statutory ones, to support those in or at risk of food poverty.

The scale of hunger among school children is of serious concern. Schools play a vital role in tackling hunger among children. It is essential to develop sustainable funding models for breakfast clubs across London – both in schools with higher and lower numbers of hungry children. Maximising uptake of free school meals, expanding eligibility where possible and exploring further introduction of healthy universal schools meals are also key elements of the response. However, the scale of the problem requires new thinking about extending support beyond the school gates, particularly during the school holidays.

There is a need for local authorities as part of their public health remit to more effectively assess the extent of food poverty among older people. Current initiatives to tackle malnutrition are welcome; these responses should be built on. Community meals should be reinvented for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, protecting this vital support.

In some areas of London, individuals on a low income, or facing disadvantage, find it particularly hard to buy affordable healthy food. Addressing areas where access to low-cost affordable healthy food is difficult for some groups should form a part of responses to food poverty.

Our findings lead us to the conclusion that there needs to be strategic oversight for monitoring both the prevalence of and the response to food poverty in London. This will require a coordinated approach by both statutory and non-statutory agencies. We therefore recommend that:

- The London Food Board should take on strategic responsibility for addressing food poverty in London – aiming for a Zero Hunger City.
- The Mayor of London should ensure that the London Food Board has the necessary capacity to fulfil this role. The Mayor should also take an active role in supporting healthy school meals across the capital.
- Health and Wellbeing Boards in all London boroughs should lead a food poverty action plan and designate a link worker for the multiple organisations responding to food poverty.
- Schools should identify and address hunger in schools throughout the school day and support families in food poverty.
- Emergency food aid organisations should proactively seek out groups that face barriers to accessing emergency food aid, including older people. They should also identify ways to systematically make sure service users access the advice and support to which they are entitled.

# 1. Introduction

Food poverty is on the rise in London. The economic downturn and recent increases in food prices and energy costs are placing renewed pressure on Londoners' incomes and reducing spending power. Many thousands of people both in work and out of work are living in, or at risk, of food poverty.

Food poverty is the inability to afford or access healthy food.<sup>1</sup> It causes poor physical and mental health and contributes to heart disease, diabetes and strokes. For children, food poverty can cause low birth-weight and poor child development. Food poverty can also lead to high malnutrition levels among older people. It can also be linked with obesity, where unhealthy foods are chosen as filling options for those on a limited budget. Inequalities in diet can lead to inequalities in health and life chances.<sup>2</sup>

*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, arthritis and mental health issues. Malnourishment is also a barrier for personal development, affecting education and future success. **FareShare***

*Previous research has already demonstrated that food insecurity correlates with lower IQ, behavioural problems and emotional problems. **Kids Company***

The impact of food poverty generates very significant costs to public services, especially health services. It has been estimated that malnutrition costs the UK's health services up to £7.4 billion a year, 50 per cent of which is spent in community settings.<sup>3</sup>

There is therefore a clear economic as well as a moral case for addressing food poverty. This would reduce the burden and costs to public services, as well as improving life chances.

This report makes a pan-London assessment of the extent of food poverty and its causes. It considers a number of the current responses to food poverty in London and identifies ways that these responses can be strengthened. The report also highlights where gaps or inconsistency in support put Londoners at a disadvantage. We recommend actions that contribute to a strategic and coordinated response to food poverty across the capital.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health, Choosing a better diet: a food and health action plan, 2005

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/bs\\_food\\_poverty.pdf](http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/bs_food_poverty.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Elia et al, The cost of disease-related malnutrition in the UK and economic considerations for the use of oral nutritional supplements (ONS) in adults. Health Economic Report on Malnutrition in the UK, 2005

## **How we conducted the investigation**

The investigation has gathered information and interviewed a large number of stakeholders and experts. We received forty written submissions from organisations including charities, faith groups, schools, London boroughs and the Greater London Authority, health services, academic experts, housing organisations and the food industry. Written information was also submitted by eleven members of the public.

The Committee also visited Southwark food bank, run by Pecan, where we met volunteers, referral agencies and a client. We spoke to children, breakfast club staff and teachers at Woodberry Down Primary School in Hackney. We also visited the Matthew Tree Project in Bristol and 'The Arches', a centre run by Kids Company in Lambeth.

Further details about this and the other evidence we have received are included in Appendix 3.

## 2. The extent of food poverty in London

Household spending has come under severe pressure in recent years. The Bank of England's recent Inflation Report highlights that weak wage growth, together with increases in VAT and import and energy prices, have borne down on real incomes.

Many low income households are vulnerable to a sudden loss of spending power if a bill is higher than anticipated or a benefit payment is delayed or changed. As a result, people can face tough decisions about how to feed their families. On a visit to a food bank, the Committee heard about this at first hand. One client explained that she faced two choices to get food that day – either to go to the food bank, or to visit a loan shop.

This chapter sets out the drivers of food poverty and assesses the number of Londoners at risk of food poverty.

### The drivers of food poverty in London

Food poverty is a complex economic and social phenomenon. It manifests itself in many different ways: from bare cupboards in the kitchen to the reliance on the cheapest, least healthy fast foods; from hungry children trying to learn with just cold chips in their lunchboxes, to frail older people admitted to hospital with malnutrition. There is a correlation between food poverty and income poverty, but it is not entirely caused by a low income; careful budgeting, cooking skills – and chance – can keep a low-income family from food poverty. One food bank client we met explained how she would find herself with £1.50 to spend – this would go on the option of a bag of frozen sausages that could provide three meals, rather than a bag of apples.

Our interviews indicate that food poverty in London is driven principally by reduced spending power. Problems with income – low income, benefit delays or changes, and unemployment – can combine with problems of expenditure: debt repayments and competing demands from bills and other necessary purchases.

*The top three reasons why people are using foodbanks in London are as follows:*

- 1. Benefit delay – 24%;*
- 2. Low income – 21%;*
- 3. Unemployment – 10%.*

### **Trussell Trust (Foodbanks)**

*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.*

**Professor Martin Caraher, City University**

Furthermore, research conducted by the London Borough of Lambeth found that 27 per cent of clients of food banks in the borough had ‘no recourse to public funds’; their immigration status disqualifies them from any support from public funds and they consequently fall outside the welfare safety net.<sup>4</sup> It is likely that this group with very weak spending power accounts for a significant proportion of food bank users in some other London boroughs, too.

### *Low income*

In London, low pay is a persistent problem for many. 112,000 people are paid at or below the National Minimum Wage and an estimated 465,000 people are living in London households where gross income does not exceed state benefit income levels.<sup>5</sup> Almost 700,000 people in work in London earn less than the London Living Wage, including ten per cent of full time workers and 44 per cent of part-time workers.<sup>6</sup> Low incomes, coupled with high housing costs, means that the poverty rate for children in London, after housing costs, at 37 per cent, remains higher than for any other region. The poverty rate for children in Inner London, at 44 per cent, is higher than in any other part of the country.

Low-income families will often have very limited or no resilience to increased or unexpected spending. Despite careful budgeting, families may simply not be able to afford to put money aside in savings. It is clear that for many on low incomes, the household budget is not sufficient for basic expenditure and simply won’t stretch to cover additional occasional requirements or unexpected bills.

The risk of food poverty is therefore particularly acute at crisis points: times of unexpected expenditure, and towards the end of the month when budgets are under pressure. People may have already ‘traded down’ to cheaper brands or foodstuffs; this leaves less scope to adapt to further declines in income or sudden additional expenditure.

### *Welfare reform*

Changes to welfare benefits, tax credits and income tax have a disproportionate impact on low-income families. These families use the welfare system more than others, and so lack savings to help them survive unexpected shortfalls. 665,140 Londoners were claiming out of work benefits in May 2012.<sup>7</sup>

Major recent reforms have brought added uncertainty to household budgets: the introduction of Universal Credit to replace the main in-work

<sup>4</sup> Unpublished research, Minahan, D. and Jameson, H (2013), An exploratory study into foodbanks in the London Borough of Lambeth

<sup>5</sup> GLA, Households below average income, 2008/09 – 2010/11

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/living-wage-2012.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Department of Work and Pensions, May 2012

and out-of-work benefits; the capping of the Local Housing Allowance; the reforms to Council Tax benefit; and the localisation of the social fund. While the stated aim of Universal Credit is to boost incentives to work, the Government has acknowledged that there will be households that are both better and worse off as a result of these reforms.<sup>8</sup>

From April Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans, previously delivered as part of the Social Fund, will be abolished. The Department for Work and Pensions will provide an advance of benefit facility and local authorities will decide how to use the remaining localised social fund as part of a combination of cash, goods and other local support for those in need.

Some of the charities and organisations we consulted told us that the transition from old to new systems puts more people at risk of food poverty. Errors and delays will inevitably occur during a period of such significant change; for people on low incomes, these problems already intensify pressure on food budgets and potentially lead to cycles of debt.

### *Rising prices*

Food prices have risen substantially in the past six months. This rise is largely the result of sharp increase in the prices of some grains following the adverse impact on crop yields of unusual worldwide weather patterns. Other food commodity prices are likely to be affected by the increases in grain prices in due course, and there is risk of further rises should crop yields be adversely affected again this year.<sup>9</sup>

Food, energy and rent spending have all grown at a greater pace than median hourly earnings; growth of energy costs has been particularly high. Food budgets are therefore particularly vulnerable as energy and rent expenditure grows. Graph 1 illustrates the historic growth of median hourly earnings, household electricity and gas bills, rent and food and non-alcoholic beverage prices since 2004.

*...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. **Citizens Advice***

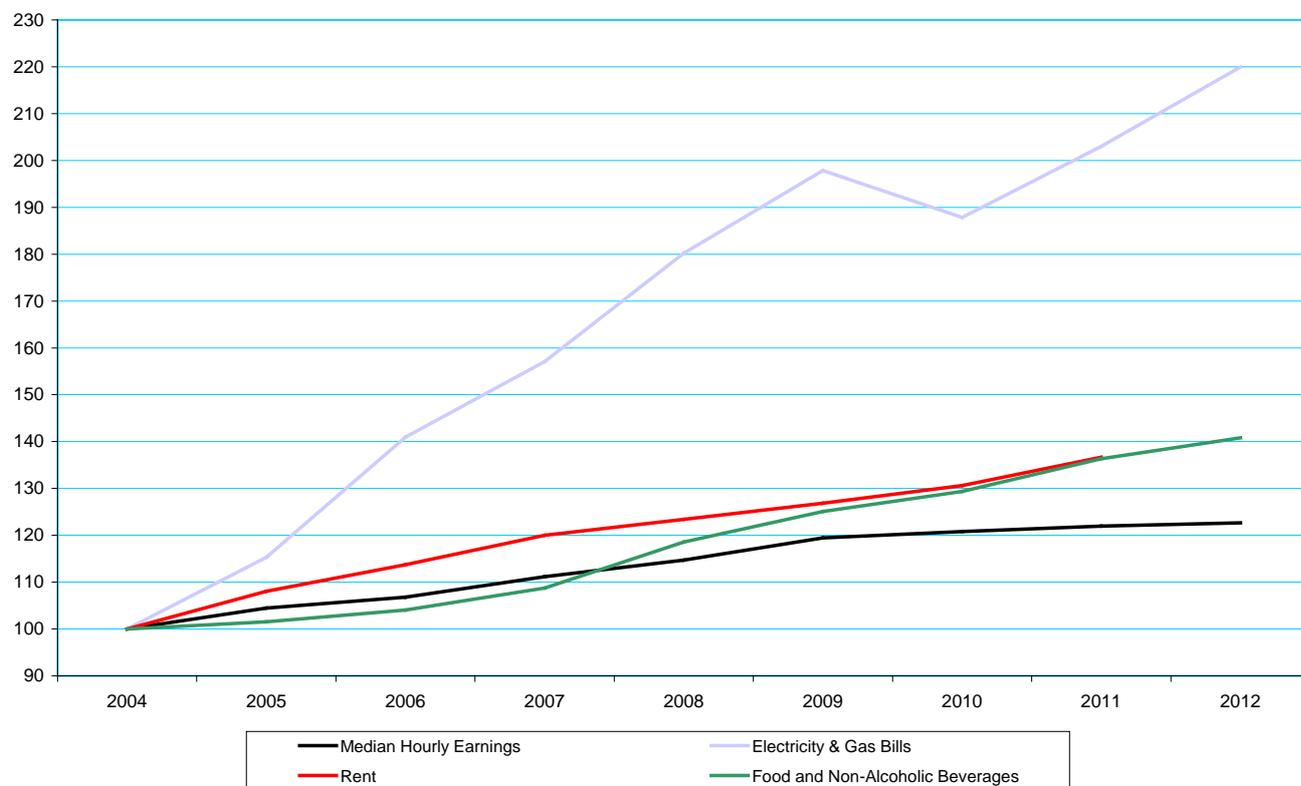
People on a low income already spend a greater proportion of their income on food and non-alcoholic drinks, and those in the lowest income deciles buy less fresh fruit and vegetables.<sup>10</sup> Further pressures on food budgets will exacerbate this situation.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/universal-credit-wr2011-ia.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/inflationreport/2013/ir13feb4.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/files/defra-stats-foodfarm-food-familyfood-2011-121217.pdf>

Graph 1: Nominal growth in median household earnings in London, average household electricity & gas bills in London, rental costs in London and food and non-alcoholic beverages costs in the UK over 2004-2012 (Index 2004=100)



### Food deserts

Food deserts are areas where affordable healthy food is scarce or difficult to access. Low consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables is an indicator of food poverty; although other factors contribute to people eating less healthy food, simply not having access to fruit and vegetables at reasonable prices is a problem for many. If these foods are hard to find in reasonable quantities at affordable prices, or if reaching outlets selling this food is costly or unreliable, a food desert exists.

In London, identification of areas that can be considered food deserts is not straightforward; not only are geographical factors important but also how people are prevented from finding healthy food by barriers such as cost, transport and disability.

However, a number of boroughs and academic studies have identified areas of London that could be considered food deserts. A 2009 study of food deserts in Hackney showed that, while affordable healthy food was generally available, there were problems of access as well as there being an overabundance of fast food outlets.<sup>11</sup> Islington Council has identified three pockets in the borough where people need to go more than 400m to access any food at all.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Bowyer S, Caraher M, Eilbert K. and Carr-Hill R., *Shopping for Food; Lessons from a London Borough*. British Food Journal, 2009, 111 (5): 452-474

<sup>12</sup> Informal meeting with London boroughs, 31 October 2012

The National Obesity Observatory (NOO) has identified a strong correlation between deprivation and density of fast food outlets. The NOO map of local authority areas demonstrates how these two are strongly correlated in London.<sup>13</sup>

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

**Community Food Enterprise and Greenwich Community Food Co-operative**

*Sadly, the housebound or those who cannot access the larger food stores are often disadvantaged by having to use the local shops where prices are higher. I also feel that cheaper foods are often higher in fat, sugar or salt which makes the older people's healthy shopping choices especially of prepared meals unhealthy by default - in short less money gives them less options. Disability compounds this because they are more reliant on pre-prepared foods.*

**Older people's organisations survey respondent**

### **The outlook for food poverty in London**

Food poverty is likely to increase in London as the economic downturn persists and inflation continues to depress living standards. The Bank of England's February 2013 Inflation Report highlights the risk of higher domestic energy prices and higher commodity prices over the medium term. The economic consequences of successive waves of welfare reforms are also hard to predict.

Every emergency food aid organisation we spoke to expects an increase in demand for foodstuffs and advice from April 2013. They are stockpiling provisions to be ready for this.<sup>14</sup>

*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. **LB Enfield***

*...we anticipate demand for our services will increase significantly with the forthcoming changes to the Social Fund in April 2013.*

**Trussell Trust**

*...given the increasing number of cases on JSA [Jobseeker's Allowance] sanctions and crisis loans we also expect a growing number of clients to claim food vouchers. **Hackney Citizens Advice Bureau***

*...the numbers that we serve at our centres increase every year if they are 'open' services to the public. **Kelvin Cheung, CEO FoodCycle (personal capacity)***

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.noo.org.uk/uploads/doc/vid\\_15683\\_FastFoodOutletMap2.pdf](http://www.noo.org.uk/uploads/doc/vid_15683_FastFoodOutletMap2.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Informal meeting with emergency food aid organisations, 16 November 2012

**This review has paid particular attention to hunger among children and older people.**

*The scale of hunger among children in London*

A number of surveys have found worrying levels of hunger among children, as reported by teachers and parents.

A London Assembly survey of teachers in late 2012 found that:

- over 95 per cent of teachers reported some children arrive at school hungry;
- over 77 per cent who answered a question on this had taken action to address hunger among pupils;
- over 60 per cent of teachers had given food to pupils at their own expense;
- more than 2 out of 5 of these teachers reported giving food to pupils up to once a month; and
- almost 1 in 5 reported giving food to pupils between one and four times a month.<sup>15</sup>

A survey of teachers commissioned by Kellogg’s, conducted in August 2012, likewise found that hunger levels were high and increasing in both London and the UK as a whole.

<b>Question</b>	<b>% of London teachers</b>	<b>% of UK teachers</b>
Don't have a breakfast club but used to.	17%	13%
Children coming to school hungry.	71%	79%
Why children are coming to school hungry? Lack of time at home.	81%	69%
Number of children coming to school hungry? Increased a lot.	15%	13%
Number of children coming to school hungry? Increased slightly.	44%	42%
Have you ever brought food into school? Every day.	5%	2%
Have you ever brought food into school? Every week.	8%	6%
Does your school ever use food banks etc.?	15% <sup>16</sup>	9%

Source: Kellogg’s, August 2012

These surveys combined with individual evidence from schools, London boroughs and charities, present a truly worrying picture of child hunger in London; this impacts on their health, wellbeing and attainment levels.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix 1 for further findings

<sup>16</sup> This is the highest level across all regions.

### *The scale of food poverty among older people*

Food poverty among older people is harder to identify than among children. Isolation and social attitudes (including attitudes among people themselves affected by food poverty) can make the issue harder to quantify. A number of factors contribute to poor nutrition among older people living in the community, including low income, poor health and social isolation. In response to a London Assembly survey:

- 64% of older people's organisations told us older people had found it harder to afford enough healthy food; and
- 58% of organisations stated that older people regularly struggled to buy affordable healthy food in local shops.<sup>17</sup>

Malnutrition levels among older people are an indicator of food poverty. It is estimated that, nationally, malnutrition affects over 10 per cent of older people aged 65 and over;<sup>18</sup> this represents an estimated 90,000 older people in Greater London.<sup>19</sup> Over half the costs of addressing malnutrition are spent on people in this age group. Furthermore, an estimated 25 per cent of older people aged 65 and over admitted to hospital in the UK and Republic of Ireland were found to be at risk of malnutrition (18% high risk, 7% medium risk).<sup>20</sup> Although food poverty is not the only driver of older people's malnutrition, these figures serve to highlight the need for greater attention on this group.

*As we are approaching 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. **Islington Foodbank***

### **Conclusion**

**Thousands of Londoners, both children and adults, are in food poverty. Falling spending power and competing financial demands are the key drivers behind the squeeze on household food spending. The number of London households at risk of food poverty is expected to rise this year.**

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix 2 for further findings

<sup>18</sup> BAPEN, Malnutrition among Older People in the Community: Policy Recommendations for Change, 2006

<sup>19</sup> Based on Census 2011 population data

<sup>20</sup> BAPEN, Nutrition Screening Survey in the UK and Republic of Ireland in 2011, 2012

### 3. The response to food poverty in London

In response to this challenging situation, a number of initiatives are being supported by statutory and non-statutory organisations. These include food banks, food kitchens, community food-buying schemes, school breakfast clubs and lunch clubs for older people. Many of these initiatives started off at a local level and remain largely volunteer led. They represent a very powerful response to hunger in our communities. A number of the key initiatives are considered in more detail below.

#### Food banks

Food banks are the most visible and high profile mechanism for responding to short-term food poverty. The Trussell Trust is the UK’s leading food bank organisation. Trussell Trust food banks are established by local church groups or other Christian organisations with support from the national organisation and a London co-ordinator post. A small number of independent food banks have also been established but the Trussell Trust model is dominant across London.

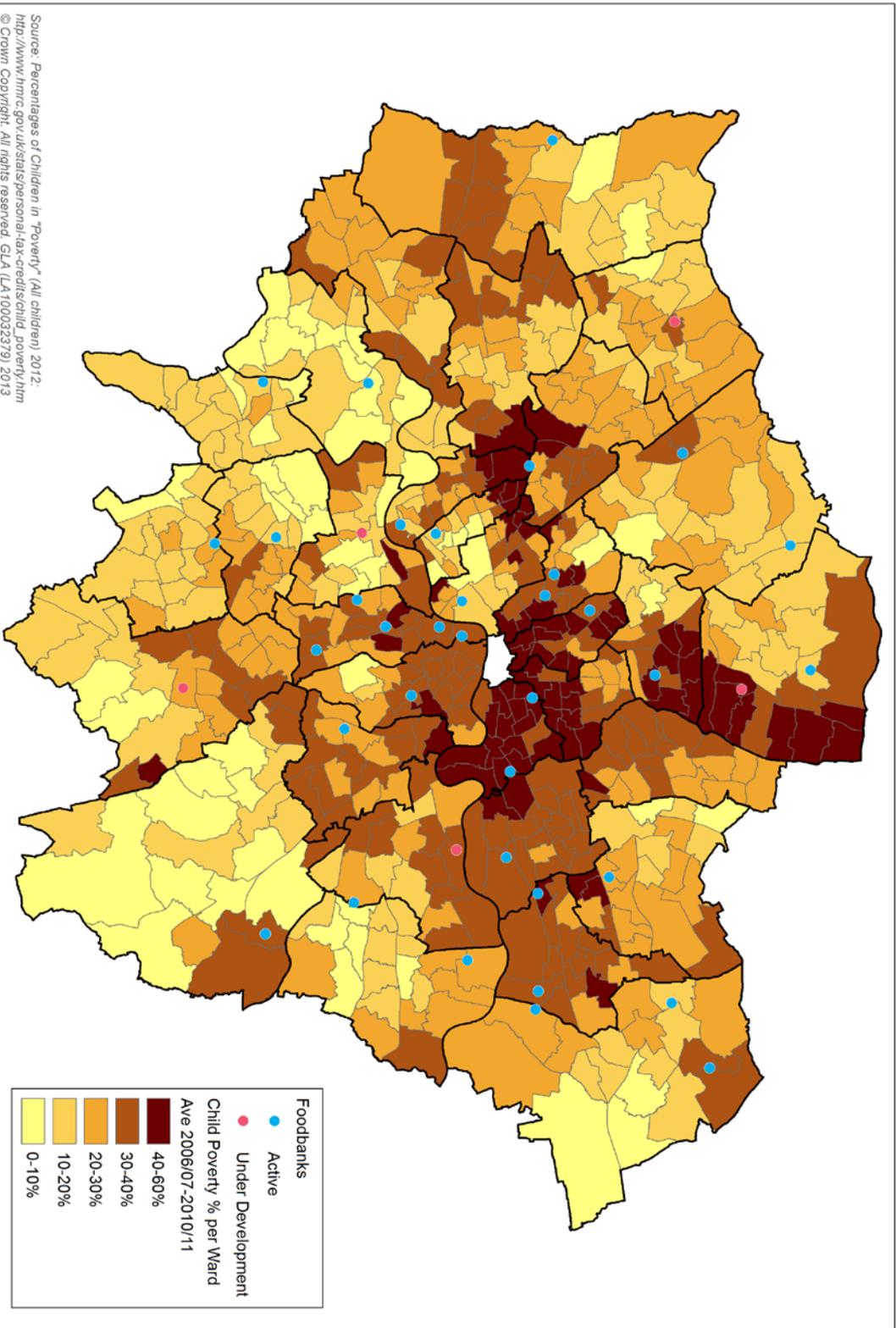
In recent years there has been a substantial increase in the number of food banks in London. In 2009, London had six food banks; now there are 40 (see map). In 2009, food banks supplied food to 400 people; in 2012-2013, they had over 34,000 clients. Some of this number will be repeat clients (each client is usually permitted three visits). The average number of people fed by each food bank has risen from 68 in 2009 to 850 in 2013.

Financial Year	Number of food banks	Number of children	Number of adults	Total	Average number of people per food bank per annum
2009/10	6	238 (58%)	170 (42%)	408	68
2010/11	16	2,689 (42%)	3,690 (58%)	6,379	399
2011/12	30	8,056 (55%)	6,513 (45%)	14,569	486
1 April 2012 – 15 Feb. 2013	40	14,286 (42%)	19,789 (58%)	34,004	850

Source: Food banks data for London, Trussell Trust, 2013

Demand is rising across this sector. FareShare, a charity that redistributes good food that would otherwise go to waste, recently undertook a survey of the charities and community organisations that it supplies. It found that, in the last 12 months, 59 per cent of charities and community organisations reported an increase in demand for food from their beneficiaries. Yet one third said that reductions in funding meant they found it harder to provide

# Children in Poverty and Food Bank Locations



Source: Percentages of Children in "Poverty" (All children) 2012:  
[http://www.lmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/child\\_poverty.htm](http://www.lmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/child_poverty.htm)  
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meals. One in ten said they may have to reduce their services or abandon providing food altogether.<sup>21</sup>

Individuals normally need to have a referral voucher in order to access three days' worth of ambient food (food that can be stored at room temperature) for themselves and their dependants. These referral vouchers are given to professionals and others, who allocate them to individuals in need of emergency food aid. Each food bank decides on which agencies can hand out referral vouchers; they are commonly social services, school liaison staff and Citizen Advice Bureaux. In some boroughs, police officers issue vouchers, mainly to vulnerable people, but sometimes also to those who may be at risk of offending due to hunger.

Trussell Trust-affiliated food banks focus on meeting short-term food shortages and in general limit individuals to three visits. However, it is clear that on occasion they do offer extra support on a discretionary basis in certain circumstances. Food banks may for example provide food for a longer period where individuals face a longer-term income shortfall; they might also offer food during the school holidays to families entitled to free school meals. The downside of this admirable response to individual situations is that levels of support may not be consistently clear, especially for people with on-going needs. Volunteers may also be unclear to what extent they can use their discretion.

Voluntary organisations are often limited by their capacity to help. While discretion is shown to those who need food beyond the standard three trips to a food bank, there is a gap in provision for those who face longer-term difficulties.

Food banks offer different levels of information and advice to their clients. Some provide written information: for example, on benefits or debt issues. Others partner with local advice organisations, giving clients the chance to speak to an adviser at the food bank.

Although these services show a welcome recognition of the need to address the long-term needs of clients living in, or at risk of, food poverty, food banks should not and cannot be expected to fill what appears to be a gap in state provision.

Many food banks now provide advice and support beyond food, for example in relation to welfare, debt and employment. In providing such additional advice and support to clients, food banks are going above and beyond their initial purpose. It is therefore inevitable that in some areas this support is not as universally developed as it could be.

As the Trussell Trust itself states, food banks are only a part of the response to food poverty, aiming to provide limited emergency support:

*...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*

<sup>21</sup> Written submission, FareShare, November 2012

*families living in poverty. However, we do believe that foodbanks are a sustainable response within the context of providing short-term crisis support...* **Trussell Trust**

The food bank model, which relies on voluntary donations, effectively imposes rationing on its client group in order to try to avoid building up a dependency. It is therefore vital that underlying causes of food poverty are addressed, not only to help people stabilise their economic position, but also to allow food banks to do their primary job, meeting emergency demand.

Short-term emergency food aid provision may allow policy-makers to assume that need is being met and that no further action is required. Submissions to our review highlight the situation in the United States where emergency food banks have become an established part of the welfare state. This has formalised the acceptability of food banks as a long-term support mechanism for those on low incomes. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food's recent report on food insecurity in Canada has highlighted concerns regarding the high numbers of low-income Canadians relying on food aid on a regular basis, comments that he reiterated on a recent visit to London.<sup>22</sup>

During the course of this review, food aid organisations identified the need for local authorities to take responsibility for liaising with and supporting their organisations. There was significant support for every borough providing a designated contact person. High storage costs for some food banks were also highlighted, as well as growing project management costs as demand increases.

## **Conclusion**

**There is a very wide range of responses to food poverty in the capital. Emergency food aid provision is increasingly necessary to address food poverty but should not allow policy-makers to avoid addressing the underlying causes of food poverty. The experiences of other developed Western economies has shown that once food banks have become a regular source of food for a significant proportion of low-income households, they often become entrenched as a formal part of the nation's welfare system.**

**Food banks illustrate how community-based responses can both target those living in food poverty and draw in the goodwill of the local community. The dedication of volunteers and staff is to be applauded. However, food banks in London should retain a role only as providers of emergency food aid; they must look to work more formally with government to help identify the causes behind the rise in demand and to provide signposts to other agencies, particularly statutory ones, to support those in or at risk of food poverty.**

<sup>22</sup>

[http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/20121224\\_canadafinal\\_en.pdf](http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/20121224_canadafinal_en.pdf)

**A strategic and coordinated response by the public, private and voluntary sector is fundamental to an effective and sustainable response. There should be a systematic approach to the provision of information, advice and signposting across all emergency food aid sites, including a clear ‘triage’ process for priority groups, including repeat users.**

**Providers should analyse their client groups regularly and work hard to reach groups that face barriers to accessing emergency food aid.**

## **Hunger among school age children**

### *Effectively tackling hunger and food poverty among school-age children in London...*

It is now widely accepted that a significant proportion of children in London are living in income poverty. London has the highest rate of child poverty after housing costs of all regions in the UK. According to GLA figures, on the after-housing cost (AHC) measure, almost 40 per cent of children in London are living in poverty (which equates to around 590,000 children)<sup>23</sup> putting them at risk of food poverty.

A particular focus for this review has been tackling food poverty among school-age children. The evidence received during this investigation has demonstrated that at this stage in their lives, hunger seriously affects children’s health, attainment and life chances.

There is a welcome number of statutory, charity and private sector organisations responding to hunger in schools. Some initiatives focus on mealtimes; others advocate a more holistic approach, looking not just at healthy school meals but also at what food is provided by families outside school hours.

### *...means establishing sustainable breakfast clubs...*

Breakfast clubs are part of the solution. Breakfast clubs in London schools often play a dual role, offering breakfast to children who for a number of reasons have not eaten at home, and early morning childcare, which is particularly helpful for working parents.

*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.*

#### **LB Lambeth and NHS Lambeth**

Breakfast clubs can cost between £2,000 and £10,000 a year to run, depending on the cost of food and staff time. As schools do not receive any

<sup>23</sup> [http://data.london.gov.uk/datastorefiles/documents/poverty\\_2012\\_update.pdf](http://data.london.gov.uk/datastorefiles/documents/poverty_2012_update.pdf)

specific funding to provide breakfast clubs (though they can use Pupil Premium monies if they wish), most will charge families for attendance, often 50p or £1. Some schools do not charge some families, according to their own discretion or criteria; some breakfast clubs are free to all.

The Pupil Premium is intended to provide additional funds for pupils who have been eligible for free school meals in the last six years. However, it is often split between multiple initiatives. Ofsted has reported that around one third of school leaders said that they had used some or all of the Pupil Premium to fund additional curriculum opportunities for pupils. In primary schools, the funding was often used to support extra-curricular clubs and/or out-of-school hours activities, including before- and after-school care, such as breakfast clubs.<sup>24</sup>

There are other sources of support for schools that want to establish breakfast clubs. We have identified three principal sources of frontline charitable support for breakfast clubs in London: Magic Breakfast;<sup>25</sup> the Greggs Foundation<sup>26</sup> and ContinYou.<sup>27</sup> Each organisation offers different levels of support and criteria to access that support (though important factors indicating deprivation and need are also considered when determining a school's eligibility). Charity support generally focuses on start-up costs, provision or funding for food, training and support; it may not help to cover the cost of staffing breakfast clubs, which can be significant, especially if staff are paid and not volunteering additional time. Importantly, school breakfast clubs supported by the Greggs Foundation and Kellogg's are not required to use the companies' branding or branded products.

In January 2013, the Mayor's Fund announced funding for Magic Breakfast to work in 50 primary schools across the seven poorest boroughs in London (Hackney, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark and Tower Hamlets) in which over 50 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals.<sup>28</sup> Magic Breakfast will work with schools for three years developing breakfast clubs. The aim is that, by the end of year three, the breakfast clubs will develop different models to achieve self-sustainability.

While this funding is of course welcome, the lack of a universal approach means that a significant number of schools with 50 per cent free school meal eligibility will not benefit from this funding - Magic Breakfast estimates that 400 London schools would qualify for their support. This is out of a total of more than 1,770 maintained primary schools in London. Additionally, schools with lower numbers of hungry children often have less access to additional support as they do not meet most thresholds for this. Yet the needs of individual hungry children in these schools remain.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/pupil-premium>

<sup>25</sup> Magic Breakfast delivers free, healthy breakfast foods to UK primary schools with more than 50% free school meals; [www.magicbreakfast.com](http://www.magicbreakfast.com)

<sup>26</sup> The Greggs Foundation provides free breakfasts in primary schools with over 40% free school meals; <http://www.greggsfoundation.org.uk/breakfast-clubs>

<sup>27</sup> ContinYou runs the Breakfast Club Plus programme in partnership with Kellogg's. The programme provides a start-up grant of £450 and free accredited training on setting up and sustaining breakfast clubs; [http://www.continyou.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/breakfast\\_clubs/](http://www.continyou.org.uk/what_we_do/breakfast_clubs/)

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.mayorsfundforlondon.org.uk/programme/magic-breakfast/>

Throughout the investigation, it has become clear that not all schools are aware of the different ways to establish and sustain breakfast clubs. The sustainable funding of breakfast clubs is a key issue and it will be vital to widely disseminate any learning from the Mayor's Fund/Magic Breakfast programme.

In 2007, the Welsh Government introduced the Primary School Free Breakfast initiative throughout the country, which schools can opt into.<sup>29</sup> Currently, more than three quarters of primary school pupils in Wales have access to a free breakfast every school day. This model works by providing national funding to buy food, but schools must provide the staff at their own cost; in some cases, teachers and kitchen staff volunteer in their own time. There was initially low take-up of breakfast clubs; but outreach work, including by health workers, helped to attract families by demonstrating the value of clubs and minimising any stigma attached to them.

## **Conclusion**

**The level of hunger among school children makes it essential to develop sustainable funding models for breakfast clubs across London – both in schools with higher and lower numbers of hungry children.**

*...and current provision of free school meals may not be doing enough to tackle hunger amongst children*

It is widely accepted that healthy school meals have multiple benefits. They can help to improve children's readiness to learn and improve their behaviour at school; they can also help to establish healthy eating habits for life. In England, children are eligible to receive free school meals (FSM) if their parents are in receipt of certain benefits. Crucially, for low-income families in work, FSM are not available to families where a parent works for 16 hours or more (24 hours for couples), regardless of their salary.<sup>30</sup> This situation needs to be revisited, particularly for London where the cost of living is generally higher than the rest of the country. With school lunches costing around £10 a week per child, having to suddenly find that money as a parent returns to work can be challenging. With the advent of Universal Credit, the different benefits that allow access to FSM will no longer exist. The Government is currently deciding on the gateway for FSM via Universal Credit and a number of charities are currently campaigning for any level of eligibility for Universal Credit to be made the threshold. This would ensure greater numbers of children were eligible for FSM.

Free school meals are provided to a higher proportion of low-income families in London than the national average. The national average for known eligibility for FSM is 18.2 per cent. For nursery and primary schools in London:

- almost a quarter of pupils are known to be eligible for FSM;
- 1 in 3 of pupils in inner London are eligible for and claiming FSM; and

<sup>29</sup><http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/schools/foodanddrink/breakfast/?lang=en>

<sup>30</sup><http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/pastoralcare/a00202841/fsmcriteria>

- almost 1 in 5 of pupils in outer London are eligible for and claiming FSM.<sup>31</sup>

These data illustrate the importance of free school meals in contributing to the wellbeing of London's children, particularly in boroughs with high levels of deprivation. However, under-registration for free school meals is high in the city - estimated at 9 per cent in inner London and 17 per cent for outer London<sup>32</sup> - which means that large numbers of children are unable to access free lunches, and that many schools cannot claim the Pupil Premium for them.

Local authorities can address food poverty among children in two ways: by extending free school meals; and by providing universal free school meals (USM).

The London Boroughs of Southwark, Newham and Islington are all introducing universal school meals for primary school children. Newham was initially match-funded as part of a national government pilot scheme and the borough has decided to continue funding the scheme. Islington is funding USM for all nursery and primary school pupils, Southwark is funding USM for all primary age pupils by autumn 2013 and Tower Hamlets recently approved funding for two years of USM for reception and Year 1 pupils.

The national evaluation of the USM pilot schemes found that offering free school meals to all primary school children improved take-up.<sup>33</sup> There was consequently an improvement in educational attainment. The evaluation identified a consistently positive impact at Key Stages 1 and 2; pupils made between four and eight weeks' additional progress, this particularly applied to children from less affluent families.

Conversely, widening eligibility to include additional children appeared to have very limited impact in improving take-up and attainment. This would suggest that universality of free school meals is the only significant and effective policy option available to local authorities when seeking to improve take-up and address hunger in children.

It is essential that children and parents view free school meals as a healthy quality option. Ofsted no longer has a role to inspect schools' compliance with government school food standards. Academies and free schools are also not required to follow these standards. Universally applicable standards and a clear quality assurance procedure are both key elements of further developing trust in and take-up of, school meals. The Food for Life quality standard is another welcome initiative.

*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 Research shows how this can help improve nutrition and educational progress for children from less affluent homes, and this is a policy already*

<sup>31</sup><http://www.education.gov.uk/researchandstatistics/statistics/allstatistics/a00209478/df-e-schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2012>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR235.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR227>

adopted by some London boroughs, such as Newham, Islington and Southwark. **Children's Food Trust**

## Conclusion

**Maximising uptake of free school meals is a vital part of tackling hunger and poor nutrition among school children. Addressing under-registration for free school meals should be a priority for governing bodies and local authorities.**

**More action is needed to explore the introduction of Universal School Meals across London and consider different funding models.**

**As a minimum, the advent of Universal Credit presents a timely opportunity to extend free school meal eligibility to low-income families both in and out of work.**

**Ofsted should be responsible for inspecting school food; academies and free schools should sign up to follow government school food standards. However, in the absence of this, there is a role for the Mayor to assess provision of healthy school meals in London.**

*But action is also needed outside the school gates...*

Action on school meals and breakfast clubs is unlikely to be a sufficient response to hunger among school children.

*...the real problem for children in my school is that a significant number of them sometimes go hungry in the holidays because they are not receiving free school meals (FSM), parents do not have enough food... maybe we could offer FSM during the holidays on a daily basis for those children at risk of going hungry. **Teacher survey respondent***

Meeting the needs of children in households at risk of food poverty requires multiple approaches, including initiatives that engage with parents and carers to promote healthy diets.

*Many families living in poverty in London just do not seem to understand how to spread the cost of buying food for their families (opting for junk food/take away food). Schools also need to monitor lunchboxes so that they are aware of the families that need advice with healthy eating. **Teacher survey respondent***

Magic Breakfast, with funding from Asda, piloted a programme to provide support during the school holidays. The *Magic Breakfast 365* programme can offer food, cookery skills and exercise classes to children and parents. We heard that the programme is ready to roll out into other schools; all it needs is the necessary funding.

**Kids Company** provides practical, emotional and educational support to vulnerable inner-city children. Kids Company provides meals for those accessing its services; 85% of the children and young people attending Kids Company centres rely on them for their main meal of the day. Kids Company also reported that they are making an increasing number of referrals to food banks.

## Conclusion

**Schools play a vital role in tackling hunger among children, but the scale of the problem requires new thinking about extending support beyond the school gates, particularly during the school holidays.**

**A renewed commitment is needed to tackle food poverty in older people**

It has proved significantly more difficult to assess how food poverty among older people is being tackled. Older people represent less than 1 per cent of food bank users in London. Cuts in building-based service provision (such as lunch clubs) in many areas have made it harder for older people to access affordable meals in the community. In response to our survey older people's organisations reported significant concerns regarding this group's ability to afford sufficient healthy food. The survey also identified the major barriers preventing older people accessing food banks:

- 79% of organisations identified older people not knowing about food banks as the biggest barrier to accessing them;
- 64% told us older people did not feel comfortable going to food banks;
- 43% thought that older people did not know how to be referred to a food bank; and
- 29% told us that the local food bank was hard to get to.

Given high levels of malnutrition reported in elderly people on hospital admission, the London Boroughs of Southwark, Lewisham and Lambeth have established a tri-borough task force to address the issue. Two key support mechanisms are the provision of ready-to-eat or ready-to-heat community meals and lunch clubs or other social events where food is part of provision.

*Pressure on community-based food provision is increasing the risk of food poverty among older people*

Community meals seem best focused on people facing significant difficulties in preparing food in the home. In London boroughs, these will predominantly be older people, but the group will include some disabled people. Community meals help older people to remain in their own homes, preventing escalation of needs.

However community meal provision is under significant pressure. Figures from a survey of councils in England by the charity Age UK, found that two-thirds of local authorities were increasing charges for services such as community meals – the average charge for a meal rose from £3.17 in 2010-11 to £3.44 in 2011-12.<sup>34</sup> Some are going further, putting up their community meals charges by as much as 75 per cent. In some areas they are scrapping their meals services altogether.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/elderhealth/8854308/Misery-for-millions-as-elderly-care-funds-cut.html>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.thenacc.co.uk/assets/downloads/144/Malnutrition%20-%20UKs%20silent%20killer.pdf>

The London Borough of Southwark has taken a different approach. Given the prevalence of malnutrition among older people in the borough, the council has decided to halve the price of community meals by 2014. This step aims to ensure older people are supported to remain independent and not have to go into residential or nursing care. The council expects community meals will remain a key component of future support for older people, particularly those over 85.

## Conclusion

**There is a need for local authorities as part of their public health remit to more effectively assess the extent of food poverty among older people. Current initiatives to tackle malnutrition are welcome; these responses should be built on.**

**Given their very limited use by older people, it is not currently possible to rely on food banks as a significant part of the solution in addressing food poverty among older people.**

**Community meals should be reinvented for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, protecting this vital support and preventing high costs to the health service when older people are malnourished.**

## Tackling food deserts

Our review heard of two particular policy responses to tackling food deserts. One approach is to avoid an over-dominance of unhealthy food outlets. Waltham Forest sets policy, both to limit the number of hot food takeaway outlets and to limit their proximity to schools, youth centres and parks. The GLA and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health *Takeaways Toolkit* aims to encourage further take-up of this policy.

The other policy response is to make affordable healthy food more available. Promoting access to low-cost healthy food is a key part of addressing the underlying causes of food poverty. Community food-buying schemes can be located in areas where access to affordable healthy food is problematic and target specific groups. For example, East London Food Access piloted a project offering low-cost fruit and vegetable deliveries and cooking sessions to older people. An evaluation of the pilot found that, by the end of the 12-week period, individuals consumed more fruit and vegetables. Another example is Community Food Enterprise, which partners with Suriya Foods, the largest distributor of ethnic food, to ensure its supply chain for local food banks meets the needs of BAME groups.

We have found that coverage across London for such food-buying schemes is patchy; the benefit for communities seems to warrant a greater Mayoral focus on these initiatives. More could and should be done to promote access to low-cost healthy food.

## Conclusion

**Addressing areas where access to low-cost affordable healthy food is difficult for some groups should form a part of responses to addressing the underlying causes of food poverty.**

### Strengthening the supply chain of low-cost healthy food

*FareShare are the largest food re-distribution organisation in the UK. FareShare has a very practical approach; rescuing good food that would otherwise go to waste from the food and catering industry. It is then redistributed to community charities such as hostels, food banks, day centres, breakfast clubs, and women's refuges. In London, FareShare serves 109 community charities and organisations, benefiting over 5,000 people a day.*

Fundamental to the delivery of emergency food aid and other initiatives such as breakfast clubs, is the supply chain of free or low-cost healthy food. This is supported by not-for-profit organisations such as FareShare and Best Before, as well as by the food industry. Free or low-cost food supplies help organisations to minimise their spending on food, protecting stretched budgets.

It can be challenging for smaller initiatives to engage with larger donations, due to capacity limitations and, particularly, a lack of storage. Yet organisations such as FareShare are proactively seeking a greater number of partners in London.

And these operations could be scaled up. Too much food still goes unnecessarily to waste.

*...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***

## Conclusion

**Given rising need, it is vital to ensure a sustainable supply chain for food aid initiatives. This should cover issues such quantity and quality, but also distribution and storage.**

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

There is substantial evidence to indicate that food poverty is a significant and growing problem in London. A large number of initiatives, driven predominantly by the third sector, are supporting households and individuals in need, but they are at risk of being overwhelmed. It is therefore vital that London has a unified response to providing both emergency food aid where necessary, and longer-term support for those at risk of food poverty. Efforts by the GLA, London Food Board and London boroughs will be crucial to provide a joined up and sustainable response to food poverty.

London needs a strategy for addressing food poverty that not only coordinates responses but minimises any threat to individuals' dignity and prevents stigmatisation. Individuals can have very different experiences, for example when accessing emergency food aid or applying for free school meals, depending on efforts to maintain dignity or prevent stigmatisation.

London's food poverty strategy needs to be led by the Mayor's London Food Board (LFB) chaired by Rosie Boycott, the Mayor's food advisor. The board now has a food poverty project group which should adopt our recommendations in its on-going work and strategy for a zero hunger London.

*The Mayor's office, in retaining a small group dedicated to this issue, can affect the necessary linkages to other key streams of government activity, whether or not they fall under the Mayor's remit.* **Professor Elizabeth Dowler, University of Warwick**

Particularly in the current economic climate, the local response to food poverty is inevitably spread across the statutory, third and private sectors. However, it is essential that statutory agencies, particularly local authority agencies or agencies acting on their behalf, take the lead in developing a local strategic response to food poverty and promoting access to statutory services wherever individuals are entitled. The new Health and Well Being Boards, which bring together professionals from across different sectors, are ideally placed to lead that response.

### Recommendation 1 – The London Food Board

**The London Food Board should take on strategic responsibility for addressing food poverty in London – aiming for a Zero Hunger City. This responsibility should be included in a new revised London Food Strategy<sup>36</sup> and implementation plan. This should be in place by September 2013.**

<sup>36</sup> The London Food Board published its first strategy in 2006 and implementation plan in 2007. The strategy was widely supported and highly influential.  
<http://www.london.gov.uk/london-food/general/strategy-implementation-plans>

This strategic oversight would require monitoring both the prevalence of, and the response to, food poverty in London. The Board should take the lead in bringing together the public, private and third sector organisations from across the capital.

The London Food Board's strategy should include:

- monitoring the risk factors for food poverty, including implementation of welfare reform and low income and regularly sharing this knowledge with local and national government;
- facilitating greater sharing of intelligence and good practice with a wide range of agencies – including boroughs, the education and health sectors and the police;
- ensuring the response to food poverty in London addresses the needs of all groups, including older people;
- working with partners, including the commercial sector, to establish sustainable funding models for free breakfast clubs in schools; and
- publishing a paper on the possible models for delivering universal healthy school meals in London.

Given the importance of access to healthy school meals for all, the Food Board should explore the different models for funding this. Sustain has recently proposed a model for funding universal school meals via a duty on sugary drinks.<sup>37</sup> Such proposals should be seriously considered by the London Food Board and government.

## **Recommendation 2 - The Mayor**

### **The Mayor should champion working towards a Zero Hunger City.**

The Mayor should review the resources available to the London Food Board's programme to ensure it has the capacity to take a strategic lead in working with partners to explore the extent of and address food poverty among older people.

The Mayor should, as a minimum, take an active role in calling on government to agree eligibility for free healthy school meals for all families in receipt of Universal Credit.

The Mayor should seek funding from government and other agencies to help boroughs fund Universal School Meals.

The Mayor's work in the education sector, including his championing of new free schools, should include a coordinated approach to promoting healthy school meals across the capital. This should be linked into the Healthy Schools London Programme.

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.sustainweb.org/resources/files/reports/A\\_Childrens\\_Future\\_Fund.pdf](http://www.sustainweb.org/resources/files/reports/A_Childrens_Future_Fund.pdf)

### Recommendation 3 – London boroughs

**There should be a food poverty action plan led by borough Health and Wellbeing Boards. A food poverty link worker should be designated in all London boroughs.**

The health conditions that food poverty contributes to, such as diabetes, malnutrition and obesity, will be priority issues for many of the new Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) in London. Therefore HWBs should provide the strategic leadership within borough areas, championing the need to take action to address food poverty.

A link worker would provide a practical day-to-day link for food aid organisations, coordinating the response to food poverty and brokering access to services and support, ensuring statutory support for all those who are entitled. The link worker should report back regularly to the HWB.

Boroughs' food poverty action plans should cover:

- how the particular characteristics of a borough should shape the drivers of, and response to, food poverty, for example if the risk is more widespread or focused on more specific pockets;
- the current response to food poverty and gaps in support;
- a systematic approach to provision of information, advice and signposting across all emergency food aid sites, including a clear 'triage' process for priority groups, including repeat users;
- brokering support for food aid projects in areas including project management, storage costs and training for volunteers in dealing with different client groups;
- assessing how community meals, dining clubs and other community-based projects can assist in addressing food poverty among older people in London;
- promoting, expanding and integrating community-based food buying schemes into the wider response to food poverty; and
- maximising registration and take-up among all children who are entitled to free school meals, as a minimum, and exploring ways to deliver universal school meals.

#### ***Good practice: Lambeth***

*Alongside developing a commissioning strategy to help build financial resilience and a wider food strategy, Lambeth Council has decided to develop a number of partnership activities with emergency food aid projects including commissioning a 6-month pilot of specialist advice services situated at food banks, offering space for regular link meetings with council staff invited as required, offering access to Lambeth training programmes to food bank volunteers and trying to identify storage space for food banks.*

### Recommendation 4 – Schools

**Every school governing body should have a plan to identify and address hunger in schools throughout the school day and to support families in food poverty. This plan should include:**

- engagement with the local borough's food poverty link worker;
- addressing hunger among children by ensuring availability of a free breakfast, using Pupil Premium monies if necessary, and maximising registration and take-up among all children who are entitled to free school meals.
- using Pupil Premium monies to provide after-school cooking activities;

- advocating for action to address the needs of hungry children during the school holidays.

### **Recommendation 5 – Emergency food aid organisations**

**Emergency food aid organisations should regularly analyse their client breakdown and proactively seek out groups that face barriers to accessing emergency food aid, including older people.**

**Food aid organisations should identify ways to systematically triage service users and liaise with statutory authorities to ensure people can access the support to which they are entitled.**

For example, data from food bank clients indicates that older people are not accessing food banks in the numbers that would be expected given the risk of food poverty among this group. There are certainly specific reasons why food banks are by their nature less accessible to older people; therefore models for reaching this group should be explored and successes shared.

#### ***Good practice: The Matthew Tree Project***

*The Matthew Tree Project (MTP) is a Bristol-based organisation that is taking a different approach to addressing emergency food needs that we see as a possible model for London. MTP provides a ‘food store’ and a service supporting people to move out of food poverty. Departing from the dominant food bank model, food provision is not limited to three trips; an agreement is reached with individuals about the programme of support that will be offered. This presents a different approach to avoiding dependency while also alleviating the pressure faced by their clients. By reducing concerns about food spending, individuals have more scope to address the underlying causes.*

*On first arrival, a service user will have a 10-15 minute conversation with a member of the team to gain an overview of their situation covering their employment status, benefits, debt, diet, health and housing. Service users always have this level of contact every time they visit the Foodstore. Individuals can also be referred to outreach care and support volunteers for additional face-to-face support.*

*Clients are provided with one week’s worth of ambient food. In another departure from the mainstream food bank model, clients are accompanied around the food store and invited to pick out items (in accordance with a list of allowed quantities of different foodstuffs). This appears to maintain some level of dignity and choice.*

*MTP have also piloted healthy cooking courses and are developing employment training provision. The MTP view is that their work complements that of statutory services, rather than replacing or duplicating it; giving clients additional support and in some cases access to someone with whom clients can form a different relationship than with statutory services.*

# Appendix 1 – Survey of teachers – key findings

## About the survey

The survey ran for one month from 7 November to 7 December 2012. There were 164 respondents, consisting of head teachers, deputy heads, teachers and a small number of teaching assistants, business managers and other school staff. Respondents were categorised by setting as follows: 9% infant schools, 46% primary schools, 47% secondary schools and 8% other. Respondents were working in schools from 21 different boroughs, with a good balance between inner and outer London boroughs. The boroughs of Lewisham, Lambeth, and Tower Hamlets had the highest response rates.

## The key findings

<b>How many pupils do you think regularly start the formal school day without breakfast?</b> (149 responses)	
None	3.4%
1- 5 pupils per class	36.9%
6 - 10 pupils per class	35.6%
11 - 15 pupils per class	18. 8%
16 – 20 pupils per class	4%
21 – 25 pupils per class	0.7%
26 – 30 pupils per class	1.3%

<b>Why do you think these pupils usually start the formal school day without breakfast?</b> (144 responses)	
Families do not take responsibility to provide this	63.9%
There's no time	60.4%
They eat a snack on the way to school	54.9%
Families cannot afford it	50.7%
Don't know	9.7%

<b>Have you ever taken action to address pupils coming to school hungry?</b> (144 responses)	
Yes	77.1%
No	18.8%
Don't remember	4.2%

<b>What action have you taken if pupils start the school day hungry?</b> (100 responses)	
Given food to pupils at my own expense	61%
Spoken to a parent or carer about their behaviour	55%
Alerted senior staff	53%
Spoken to a parent or carer about entitlement to free school meals	49%
Spoken to a parent or carer about entitlement to a breakfast club	44%
Contacted social services	20%

<b>If you have given food to pupils, roughly how frequently does this occur? (101 responses)</b>	
Occasionally (up to once a month)	43.8%
Regularly (1-4 times a month)	19.0%
Never	16.2%
Every day	8.6%
Very frequently (more than 8 times a month)	6.7%
Frequently (5-8 times a month)	4.8%

<b>If children start the school day hungry what impacts can this have? (141 responses)</b>	
Worse concentration	97.2%
Worse behaviour	83%
Worse attainment	75.2%
Less ability to take part in sport	50.2%
Fainting or other illness	41.1%

<b>What more do you think could be done to ensure pupils have access to enough healthy food before they start the formal school day? (144 responses)</b>	
Engage more with parents and carers on issues around healthy eating	70.8%
Provide a free breakfast for pupils registered for free school meals	47.9%
Encourage parents to take up a breakfast club	45.1%
Provide a free breakfast for all pupils	44.4%
Provide a means-tested breakfast for all pupils	16%

## Appendix 2 – Survey of older people’s organisations

In November 2012, a survey was circulated to the 32 local Age UK branches and 33 borough-based older people's forums in London. 25 organisations responded to the survey; organisations said they had some level of contact with at least 41,000 people.

Data from the survey does seem to indicate that a proportion of older people are finding it harder to afford healthy food. Some groups of older people (such as BME people who have not paid enough National Insurance contributions) seem to struggle because of lack of income, but barriers also include lack of access and information.

- 64% of respondents who answered the question said that older people had found it harder to afford enough healthy food.
- 58% of respondents who answered the question stated that older people regularly struggled to buy affordable healthy food in local shops.
- 21% of respondents who answered the questions said that more people are accessing food banks than a year ago.
- 83% of respondents who answered the question said that older people are accessing food banks because their pension or income is not sufficient; 58% said this was because they have to pay other bills; 41% said this was because their benefit payments were insufficient.
- 79% of respondents who answered the question identified older people not knowing about food banks as a barrier to accessing them; 64% said older people did not feel comfortable going to food banks; 43% thought that older people did not know how to be referred to a food bank; 29% said the food bank was hard to get to.

# Appendix 3 – How we conducted the investigation

## Written submissions

The investigation received 40 written submissions from these organisations and experts:

- 4in10
- A.P.P.L.E.
- Affinity Sutton
- Best Before
- Carpenter's Cafe
- Centre 70
- Child Poverty Action Group
- Children's Food Trust
- Church Army
- Citizens Advice
- Citizens Advice Bureau Hackney
- Community Food Enterprise and Greenwich Community Food Co-operative (joint response)
- Company Shop
- East London Food Access
- FareShare
- GLA Food Team
- GLA Health Team
- Greggs Foundation
- Hannah Lambie-Mumford, Department of Geography, University of Sheffield
- Islington Foodbank
- Kelvin Cheung, CEO FoodCycle (in personal capacity)
- Kids Company
- LB Enfield
- LB Islington
- LB Lambeth and NHS Lambeth (joint response)
- Lauriston School
- LQ Group
- Magic Breakfast
- Plan Zheroes
- Professor Elizabeth Dowler, Department of Sociology, University of Warwick
- Professor Martin Caraher, Centre for Food Policy, City University
- Sainsbury's
- Save the Children
- School Food Matters
- Sustain

- Sutton Foodbank
- Tower Hamlets Co-operative Development Agency
- Trees for Cities
- Trussell Trust
- Urbanag

### **Public comments**

The Committee received 11 submissions from members of the public.

### **Site visits**

On 19 October 2012 Fiona Twycross AM visited Woodberry Down Primary School breakfast club in Hackney accompanied by Mark Coussins, Project Manager at Magic Breakfast.

On 20 November 2012 Committee Members visited Pecan Food Bank in Peckham.

On 7 December 2012 Fiona Twycross AM visited the Matthew Tree Project's FoodStore in Bristol.

On 20 December 2012 Fiona Twycross AM visited the 'The Arches' Kids Company Centre.

### **Informal meetings**

Fiona Twycross and/or the Scrutiny Manager held informal meetings with:

- 4 in 10/Save the Children UK
- Barnardo's
- Baroness Parminter of Godalming
- Child Poverty Action Group
- Citizens Advice
- Dalgarno Trust/ Healthworks Project
- Defra
- Greggs Foundation
- FareShare
- FoodCycle
- Huw Irranca-Davies MP
- Kate Green MP
- Kids Company
- LB Islington
- LB Lambeth
- LB Newham
- LB Southwark
- LB Waltham Forest
- Magic Breakfast
- Rosie Boycott, Chair, London Food Board
- Sharon Hodgson MP
- Trussell Trust

# Appendix 4 – Orders and translations

## How to order

For further information on this report or to order a copy, please contact Simon Shaw on 020 7983 6542 or email: [simon.shaw@london.gov.uk](mailto:simon.shaw@london.gov.uk)

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### Chinese

如您需要这份文件的简介的翻译本，  
请电话联系或按上面所提供的邮寄地址或  
Email 与我们联系。

### Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

### Greek

*Εάν επιθυμείτε περίληψη αυτού του κειμένου στην γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ καλέστε τον αριθμό ή επικοινωνήστε μαζί μας στην ανωτέρω ταχυδρομική ή την ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση.*

### Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinize çevrilmiş bir özetini okumak isterseniz, lütfen yukarıdaki telefon numarasını arayın, veya posta ya da e-posta adresi aracılığıyla bizimle temasa geçin.

### Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਡਾਕ ਜਾਂ ਈਮੇਲ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

### Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज़ का सारांश अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

### Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটি সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে ফো করবেন অথবা উল্লিখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

### Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا خلاصہ اپنی زبان میں درکار ہو تو، براہ کرم نمبر پر فون کریں یا مذکورہ بالا ڈاک کے پتے یا ای میل پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

### Arabic

الحصول على ملخص لهذا المستند بلغتك،  
فارجاء الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الاتصال على  
العنوان البريدي أو عنوان البريد  
الإلكتروني أعلاه.

### Gujarati

જો તમારે આ દસ્તાવેજનો સાર તમારી ભાષામાં જોઈતો હોય તો ઉપર આપેલ નંબર પર ફોન કરો અથવા ઉપર આપેલ ટપાલ અથવા ઈ-મેઈલ સરનામા પર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

# Appendix 5 – Principles of Scrutiny

An Assembly scrutiny is not an end in itself. It aims for action to achieve improvement.

## **Independence**

An Assembly scrutiny is conducted with objectivity; nothing should be done that could impair the independence of the process.

## **Holding the Mayor to account**

The Assembly rigorously examines all aspects of the Mayor's strategies.

## **Inclusiveness**

An Assembly scrutiny consults widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost.

## **Constructiveness**

The Assembly conducts its scrutinies and investigations in a positive manner, recognising the need to work with stakeholders and the Mayor to achieve improvement.

## **Value for money**

When conducting a scrutiny the Assembly is conscious of the need to spend public money effectively.







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