



FAIRER FOOD SOUTHWARK:

A borough-wide action plan to increase household food security

Partners

With thanks to the following organisations and individuals for their input:

Regional and National Supporting Organisations:

Garden Organic, Greater London Authority, Sustain.

Food Action Alliance members (*) and other local partners:

1st Place Children and Parents' Centre *	Faith and Health Network	Nika's Kitchen *
Age UK Lewisham and Southwark *	FareShare *	Notting Hill Housing Trust *
Albrighton Community Fridge *	Food Inequalities *	Parents and Communities Together (PACT) *
Alexandra Rose Charity *	Food Power	PECAN *
All Saints Church, Peckham *	Foodcycle, Peckham *	Rice Marketing
Alzheimer's Society Southwark Branch *	Friends and Neighbours Coffee Morning LBCC *	Salvation Army *
Bags of Taste *	Garden Organic *	SHIFT
Be Enriched *	Glengall Wharf Garden *	Soil Association *
Better Bankside *	Global Generation Printworks Garden *	Southwark Council *
British Land *	Good Gym *	Southwark Foodbank *
Central Southwark Community Hub *	Groundwork *	Southwark Group Tenant's Organisation *
Citizens Advice Bureau *	Grove Collective *	Southwark Grower's Network *
City Harvest *	Guys and St Thomas' Charity *	Southwark Home Schooling Network *
Cleaner Greener Safer (Southwark Council) *	Hourbank *	Southwark Wellbeing Hub
Collaboration For Healthier Lives	Housing Associations Charitable Trust HACT	Time and Talents *
Community Southwark *	Hubhub	Together Southwark *
Crystal Palace Community Development Trust *	IAPT	Trussell Trust *
Department of Work and Pensions *	Ileto CPN *	Umbrella for Women to Women *
Divine Rescue *	Kaizen Partnership *	University of the Arts, London *
Dragon Café *	Lendlease *	Walworth Community Garden Network *
Edible Rotherhithe *	Mercato Metropolitano *	Walworth Garden *
Engie *	Newington TRA *	Walworth Society *
Evelina London (Guy's and St Thomas') *	NHS Southwark CCG	Winners' Temple Foodbank *

Definition of food security:

“ Being food secure means being sure of your ability to secure enough food of sufficient quality and quantity to allow you to stay healthy and participate in society.

— **Food Foundation, 2016**



Referencing:

Unless otherwise stated, all references in this Action Plan are taken from Southwark's Household Food Insecurity JSNA – Southwark Council – July 2019.



Foreword from Councillor Evelyn Akoto



“ We will tackle food insecurity head on.

Over 2 million Londoners are living below the poverty line and Southwark, like many boroughs, is seeing that many residents are struggling to afford basic food items, especially people who rely on benefits and people in work who are struggling to make ends meet due to insufficient salaries. Food insecurity can also be an issue for people who have mobility problems, health concerns or lack of confidence to get to local shops and prepare food for themselves.

London's first ever measure of food insecurity which took place between 2018 and 2019 found that almost 1 in 4 Southwark residents over age 16 are likely to be food insecure. This means that 60,000 of our residents may be skipping meals due to lack of funds, are unable to afford balanced meals and those at the more extreme end will be experiencing real hunger.

As a responsible local authority we do not want to sweep this problem under

the carpet. While it is hard to accept that people in 21st century Britain are going hungry, we must use our resources and collective will to tackle the problem head on. As part of the Fairer Futures Commitment, we promised our residents a healthier life where health inequalities are reduced so whatever your background you can live a healthy life. Access to nutritious, affordable food is key to this.

Producing a Food Security Plan shows that we take this commitment seriously. We want our residents to do more than just survive, but to thrive. **We want to use policy to tackle the problems that make people food insecure in the first place and create a food-resilient borough with a strong community food network.** A network where surplus, unused food gets used wisely, and where we support people to develop their skills in healthy eating, cooking and food growing as well as doing what we

can to address barriers to employment, income maximisation and equality.

The Mayor of London recently published the Capital's first food strategy in 12 years, and reducing household food insecurity is one of the six key areas that he is committed to. With Southwark's first ever action plan, we can put creating food security onto our agenda, into our conversations and into our policies, creating a powerful and coordinated approach to ensure a fairer food future for all.

Cllr Evelyn Akoto – Cabinet member for Community Safety and Public Health

The Southwark Food Action Alliance (SFAA): 60 organisations unite locally to create better food security

The Southwark Food Action Alliance (SFAA) has worked with the Council on the preparation of this plan for over a year, providing input from a wide variety of organisations and community representatives interested in the food security agenda.

The SFAA officially formed in September 2017 from Garden Organic's Southwark Food Poverty Project,

funded by The Hirschmann Foundation. The SFAA's formation came about in response to nearly a decade of austerity, rising living costs, changes to benefits and funding cuts to local services that have resulted in a significant increase in foodbank use and overall food insecurity in Southwark. In November 2017, the SFAA became a member of Food Power, which is a national network connecting food

alliances which are working to tackle food insecurity.

Currently membership stands at 60 statutory, voluntary and community organisations meeting bi-monthly to explore cross-sector initiatives and new ways to work together. Community Southwark is now leading the co-ordination of the Alliance.

The SFAA provides a platform for members, residents and community partners to coordinate existing interventions, design new and innovative initiatives and adopt a joined-up approach to tackling food inequality and related issues.



The SFAA has three long-term aims:

- 1 Improved access for food insecure people to pathways of support.**
- 2 Improved education and learning about sustainable food.**
- 3 Improved access to healthy and affordable food for all.**

To achieve these aims the SFAA intends to:

- 1 Increase the number of community-led solutions to food insecurity.**
- 2 Increase residents' awareness of what support services are available and build a better understanding of the support that residents need.**
- 3 Increase people's confidence in managing their food security.**
- 4 Improve the ability of residents to get through periods of food crisis.**
- 5 Reduce the number and frequency of people relying on crisis support.**

The SFAA is committed to ensuring that the recommendations made in this action plan are implemented to widely benefit Southwark's residents, particularly to improve health outcomes for those on low incomes, and to support the borough's voluntary, community and statutory organisations to progress this agenda.

Why food security is an important issue for Southwark

The level of food insecurity (sometimes described as food poverty) has been steadily rising in the UK with an estimated 8.4 million people being food insecure⁽¹⁾ and 52% of households with children being unable to afford a socially acceptable diet⁽²⁾. One in ten UK pensioners are either malnourished or at risk of malnutrition. One in three children in London report having problems concentrating at school due to hunger.

Southwark has higher deprivation and destitution levels than the national average, meaning that our population runs a higher than average risk of experiencing food insecurity. We know that the number of people using Southwark foodbanks⁽³⁾ is rising.

Last year, the number of households asking for a referral to the borough's largest foodbank network (The Southwark Foodbank) grew by 31%. The top reasons given for referrals to the borough's two largest foodbank networks (the Southwark Foodbank and Central Southwark Community Hub) were:

- Delays in receiving benefits (41%)
- Not having a sufficient salary to cover living expenses (16%)
- Having no recourse to public funds⁽⁴⁾ (16%).

At the same time, we know that the numbers of people using foodbanks do not reflect true levels of food insecurity as only 20% of food insecure people will ever make it to a foodbank, for reasons such as stigma or being unable to access help.

“ [Food insecurity] varies from choosing to pay Council Tax rather than buying food, not taking necessary medication because it needs to be taken with food, feeding children chips instead of appropriate, nourishing food, paying debts leaving no money for food, staying in unsafe relationships to have food to eat.

— Felicia Boshirin,
Director of Central Southwark Community Hub Foodbank

Tackling household food insecurity is one of six areas that the Mayor of London has committed to address in London's recently published Food Strategy. To date, 13 boroughs have produced an action plan to increase food security, including our neighbours: Lambeth, Lewisham and Tower Hamlets.

¹ Food Foundation – Too Poor To Eat, 2016

² Food Foundation – Affordability of The Eatwell Guide, 2018

³ Foodbanks are charitable organisations that rely on food donations. Generally a referral is needed from a professional to access foodbank support. In the case of foodbanks run by the Trussell Trust, a referral entitles recipients to three weeks of food during a six month period.

⁴ NRPF is an immigration status which allows a person to work in the UK but restricts access to many mainstream benefits drawn from public funds, e.g. welfare and social housing.

Some facts and figures about food insecurity

1 in 3 London children have problems concentrating at school because of hunger

1 in 4 Southwark residents age 16+ are likely to be food insecure. That is 60,000 of our residents

4,674 Southwark households were referred for emergency food aid in 2017-18

1 in 4 children in Southwark live in low-income households

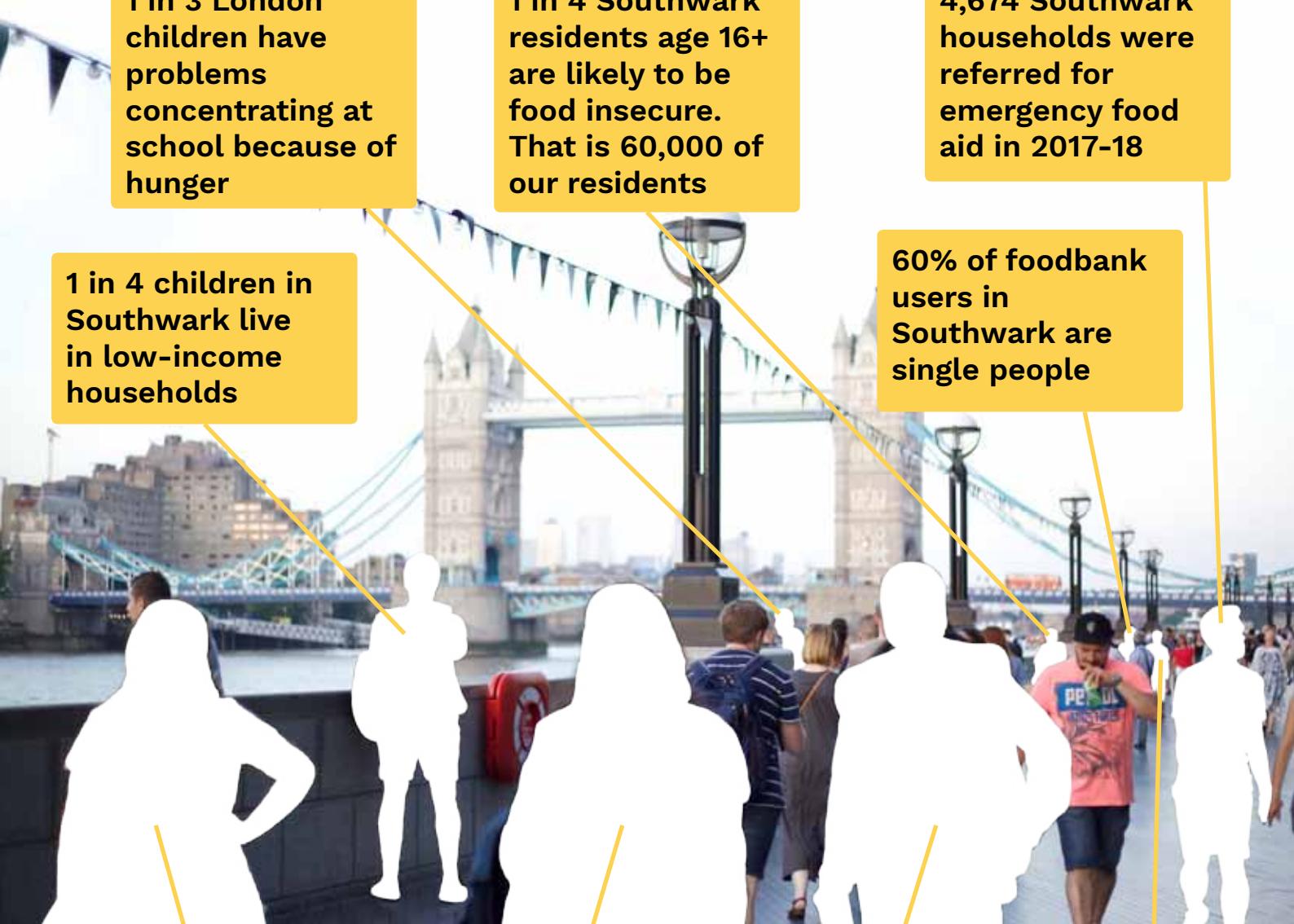
60% of foodbank users in Southwark are single people

42% of a low-income family's spend would need to go on food to meet government nutrition standards

Only 20% of food insecure people will ever make it to a foodbank

1 in 3 over 60s in Southwark are income deprived

1 in 7 foodbank users in Southwark are in work but have insufficient salaries to make ends meet



Improving food security improves our life chances

Our diet impacts our health, both mentally and physically. This in turn impacts our life chances, influencing how well we are likely to do at school, how much we can participate socially, how long we will take to recover from illnesses and surgery, plus whether we will develop health conditions that will stop us engaging fully in life or lead to us dying prematurely.

Without equal access to good nutrition, we cannot have equalities in health or life. Southwark Council's Fairer Future Commitment promises to 'reduce health inequalities so that whatever your background you can live a healthy life'. Creating household food security is key to this.

“ [Food insecurity] means people are too poor to choose diets that are healthy for them. They develop diseases. They have health problems.

— Olivier de Schutter,
UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food (2008-14)

“ The increase in food insecurity among low-income patients “has created high levels of psychological distress, anxiety and related mental health problems.”

— A Southwark GP interviewed for the
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Food Insecurity

How food insecurity affects us throughout the lifespan:

Infant and maternal health



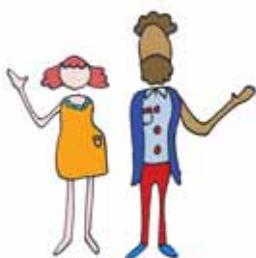
- Babies are more likely to be lower in birthweight. This can increase the risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and obesity later in life.
- Food insecure mothers are less likely to persevere with breastfeeding due to the stress and social isolation of their situation.
- Food insecure parents who rely on formula may resort to unsafe practices such as skipping feeds, watering down the formula, adding cereal or introducing unmodified cow's milk too early.
- The likelihood of post-natal depression is greater, affecting mother-infant bonding.
- Growth and development could be impaired with inadequate nutrition.

Children and young people



- Children in food insecure households are more likely to become obese and develop asthma, depression and other chronic conditions.
- Growth and development can be impaired.
- There is an increased likelihood of tooth decay and cavities.
- Learning is poorer, which can affect educational attainment and impact life chances.
- There can also be a social impact as the young person is often unable to invite friends over and participate in treats or social activities that involve spending money on food.

Adults



- Poor diet is related to 30% of life years lost to early death and disability.
- One in three cancer deaths and one in two heart disease deaths are caused by poor diet.
- A severely food insecure person is five times more likely to experience anxiety disorders and major depressive episodes than someone who has access to adequate food.

Older adults (65+)



- A poorly nourished older adult is less able to fend off infection and ill health. Wounds will take longer to heal.
- Recovery from illness and surgery is impaired. Clinical outcomes are poorer.
- Hospital stays are longer and more frequent.
- Muscle strength is reduced.
- Increased frailty. Greater risk of falls and fractures.
- It is three times more costly to treat a malnourished older person than an adequately nourished one.

Examples of Southwark's food security achievements



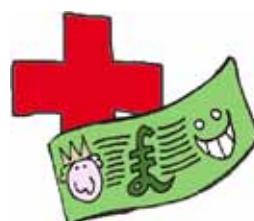
Delivery of universal free, healthy school meals for Southwark's primary school students

Becoming a London Living Wage borough



60 member organisations have joined the Southwark Food Action Alliance to tackle food insecurity

£6.2m of unclaimed benefits were accessed via the Local Support Team for our residents during 2017-18



23 tonnes of surplus food are used each month by Southwark organisations who work with the food insecure

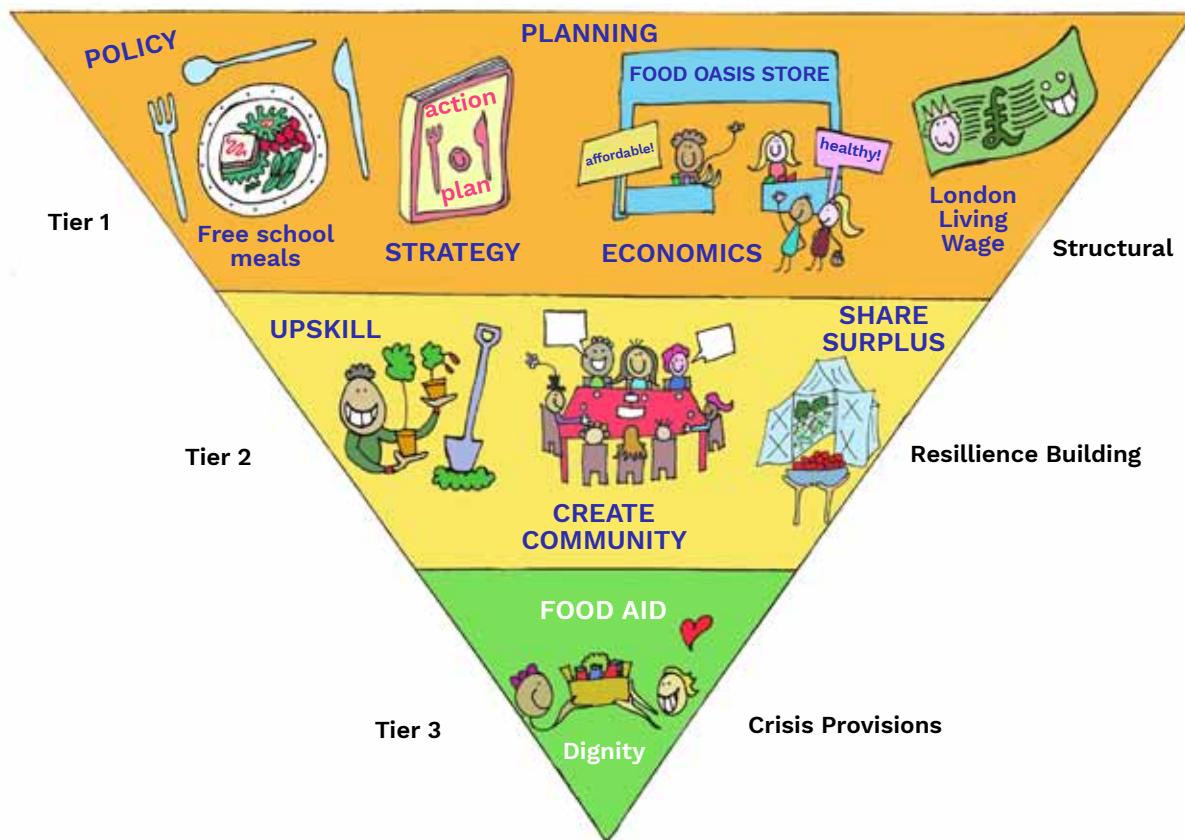
1,617 Alexandra Rose vouchers were redeemed in February 2019 at East Street Market. These vouchers entitle low-income pregnant women and families with young children to £3-worth of free fruit and vegetables each week⁽¹⁾



24 Master Gardener food growing projects have run on Southwark estates

The Southwark approach to creating food security

Building food security happens on many levels and everyone has a part to play. The three-tier model that we have developed below shows the importance of having a borough-wide approach and gives examples of how organisations and communities are working together as part of a wider system. There is a part for everyone to play whether you are an individual, a faith group, a charity, a community organisation, a locally based business or a statutory organisation. For ideas of how you can contribute as an individual or organisation, please see page 23.



Tier 1: The structural (wider determinants) level prevents the factors which cause food insecurity in the first place by creating local policies that will increase food security and also by designing a built environment and infrastructure to improve access to affordable, healthy food. An example of an approach on this level is Southwark Council providing all primary-aged children with a free, healthy school meal, regardless of need. This differs from national policy which only provides universal free meals for students in reception, year 1 and year 2.

Tier 2: Resilience building is also a preventive tier. It is about making better use out of what we already have and strengthening individuals, communities and systems:

- **Personal resilience** gives residents access to cooking and growing skills, as well as opportunities to increase their household income.
- **Community resilience** creates a strong Southwark food network with vibrant communities where people can come together to grow, cook and share food.
- **Systems resilience** makes better use out of good-quality, surplus food by redistributing it to those in need.

Tier 3: Crisis provision ensures that people always have a safety net. An example of this tier is Southwark's Emergency Support Scheme which supports households in crisis with emergency food packages.

The creation of this action plan

The development of this plan has involved conversations, meetings and workshops with a wide range of people who live and work in Southwark. This has included foodbank users and frontline workers from both the statutory and community/voluntary sectors. We have engaged with the Department of Work and Pensions, Children's Centres and teams from multiple Council departments, as well as experts in the field including

academics, health professionals and staff from national food organisations, such as Sustain, The Trussell Trust and FareShare, as well as the Southwark Food Action Alliance's member organisations. We have also talked to other local authorities in London and beyond to learn about best practice. Thank you to everyone who has given so generously in sharing their time and expertise.

“Developing the action plan for Southwark has been a great vehicle for working across sectors to develop a shared understanding and vision for tackling food insecurity. There are some fantastic programmes going on in Southwark and many passionate, dedicated individuals. This is coupled with a great deal of need. The action plan has provided a way to gather the pieces together, create momentum around food insecurity and identify ways forward.

— Professor Kevin Fenton,
Strategic Director of Health and Wellbeing, Southwark Council

The plan is based on a detailed strategic needs assessment on household food insecurity conducted by the Public Health team at Southwark Council which can be read online at southwark.gov.uk/jspa. It has been overseen by steering group meetings attended by key professionals drawn from the Southwark Food Action Alliance and has involved consultation with over 50 stakeholders.

The funding for this work was made possible by the Mayor of London and Southwark Public Health. The work is being co-ordinated through the Southwark Food Action Alliance and overseen by the Public Health division of Southwark Council.

As this is Southwark's first Food Security Action Plan, the plan will be reviewed after a year and refreshed for 2021 and beyond.

Introducing the five baskets

Our approach for the plan's actions falls into five 'baskets'. These are:



Basket 1: Wellbeing

Take a person-centred, holistic approach to food security, to support emotional, social and physical wellbeing.



Basket 2: Resilience

Adopt a long-term, preventive approach to strengthen people, communities and food systems.



Basket 3: Access

Design services and information that make it easy for people to access the support they need. Ensure that people have good physical access to nearby sources of affordable, healthy food.



Basket 4: Join the dots

Adopt a strategic, collaborative, coordinated and streamlined approach. Encourage partnerships, cross-organisational working and the creation of networks.



Basket 5: Bigger picture

Use infrastructure, policy and advocacy to address the wider issues that affect food security.

Southwark Food Security Action Plan for 2019-2021

Summary

Over the next two pages is a summary of key actions for each of the five baskets.

1

Wellbeing: Take a person-centred, holistic approach to food security, to support emotional, social and physical wellbeing.

1.1 Put respect and empowerment of individuals at the heart of what we do.

1.2 Provide nourishing food at foodbanks and community cafes/ meals.

1.3 Move away from traditional foodbank models, encouraging dignified solutions that enable people to contribute towards their food costs when possible, and that promote mental wellbeing and positive engagement in the community.

2

Resilience: Adopt a long-term, preventive approach which strengthens people, communities and food systems.

2.1 Build a strong, local food network and develop a co-ordinated plan for the use of surplus food.

2.2 Use food growing, cooking, sharing and education opportunities, including estate-based approaches, to support community cohesion.

2.3 Develop food support provision to better link with associated services such as income maximisation, money management and skills/ employment services.

3

Access: Design services and information that make it easy for people to access the support they need. Ensure that people have good physical access to nearby sources of affordable, healthy food.

3.1 Develop an accessible referral pathway for food support services.

3.2 Raise awareness about local food initiatives and services for the general public.

3.3 Promote food security at key points in the life course when people may be more vulnerable, including: pregnancy and early years; children, young people and care leavers, the middle-age and pre-retirement years (50-65), older adults and people affected by ill health.

3.4 Acknowledge the barriers to access facing other vulnerable groups.

3.5 Address geographical gaps in access. Encourage food businesses to create a more affordable, healthy food offer.

4

Joining the dots: Adopt a more strategic, collaborative, coordinated and streamlined approach. Encourage partnerships, cross-organisational working and the creation of networks.

4.1 Strengthen the range of partners involved in the food security agenda.

4.2 Have a coordinated approach to key schemes that improve food security.

4.3 Encourage key stakeholders to share information and intelligence to ensure that services and pathways are sensitive to future needs.

5

The bigger picture: Use infrastructure, policy and advocacy to address the wider issues that affect food insecurity.

5.1 Plan healthy places using regeneration, promotion of economic wellbeing and working with housing providers to improve food security.

5.2 Advocate on wider issues that affect food security.

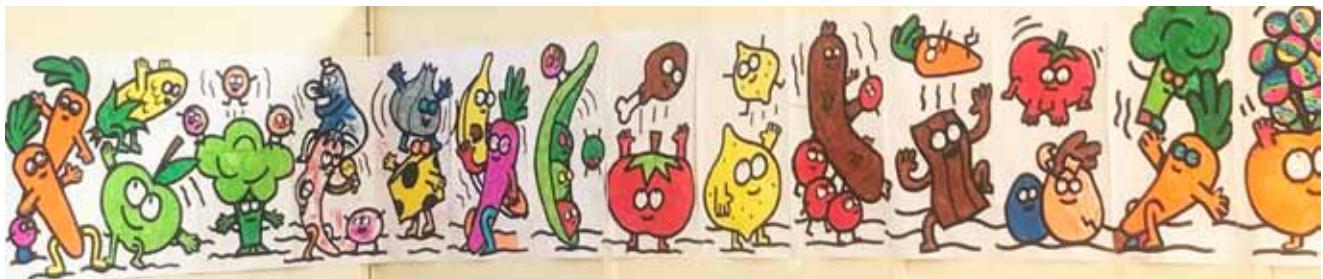
5.3 Provide input to planning for the Brexit transition period on food security.



Basket 1: Wellbeing

Case study: More than just food.

Holiday provision for food insecure families over the school holidays.



The art above was created by primary-school-aged Southwark children who attended a targeted holiday club run in summer 2018 for food insecure families. Without free school lunches, many low-income families struggle financially over the long summer break. Mercato Metropolitano and the Central Southwark Community Hub who ran this pilot (with funding from Guys and St Thomas' Charity) put on a very holistic programme offering cooking classes, yoga lessons, time for parent-child bonding and day trips to the seaside and Parliament.

The evaluations conducted both during and after the programme by Southwark Public Health showed how the benefits of the programme went far beyond receiving a healthy lunch every day. Both the carers and children blossomed and benefited from being part of a supportive community. All of the carers interviewed said that the children would stay at home if they were not on the programme. All of the children interviewed said that they had made new friends.

The programme particularly helped tackle social isolation. One programme director reflected on an attendee who is unable to socialise outside of school because she is the registered carer for a family member. The family support worker (who attended with her) said that the programme "had enabled her to be a child again and make friends with other children". The other programme director spoke of how her volunteers worked to meet the needs of an autistic boy. "He felt a part of all that was going on. The mum said it was the first time they've been able to use a facility like our club as she can't afford to pay for activities for her children."



Basket 2: Resilience

Case study: Creating affordable, tasty meals.

Community food workers run cooking courses for young families.

Evelina London's Community Children's Nutrition and Dietetics Service runs six-week Cook and Eat Well courses with families in Southwark's Children's Centres.

"We use inexpensive, basic ingredients to make tasty, nutritious meals. The photo on the left shows examples of typical recipes we make during a course, a homemade pizza and rainbow salad. The photo on the right shows a recipe we were testing for the course: a vegetable pasta soup. We made 80 portions of this to donate to the Albrighton Community Fridge.

One of the aims of the course is to increase the participants' knowledge and confidence in preparing healthy family meals on a budget. Discussing the cost of food and the use of budgeting underpins each week of the course. Families who attend a course are often living on a low income and may receive food from foodbanks or community fridges. These families benefit from the course as we are able to teach them how to use the foods they may often receive."





Basket 3: Access

Case study: Groceries and company for older adults.

A volunteer service helps those who struggle to do food shopping.



Food2You is an exciting, new grocery delivery service, run by Age UK Lewisham & Southwark with volunteers at the heart of it. Food2You calls customers every Monday to take their order and then delivers the groceries three days a week. Michelle is a Food2You Delivery Volunteer. She takes the food into the customer's home, unpacks it, puts it away and collects payment for the groceries. Michelle will chat with the customer, helping to combat social isolation and check in on their wellbeing. Michelle told us: "I have met and worked with great people, and have enjoyed the opportunity to meet the clients we support first-hand."



Basket 4: Joining the dots

Case Study: Growing Partnerships.

Social housing residents learn home-growing skills



The photo above is taken on a sunny autumn day at Gibbings House, SE1, where residents learnt about winter growing and composting thanks to a pop-up initiative run jointly by Garden Organic and the Walworth Community Garden Network (WCGN). The collaboration planted the seeds for more joint working. In 2019, the Gibbings House residents will develop their own communal garden.

Food growing in spaces linked to social housing sites allows residents on lower incomes to access sustainable, affordable and completely fresh produce all year round. Funding for the communal garden is from the Council's Cleaner, Greener, Safer team. Garden Organic is providing volunteer Master Gardeners to mentor the residents in growing skills, while WCGN will use the site to pilot a Sustainable Watering Initiative. Growing groups in the borough have expressed a desire for more joined-up approaches to working in the areas of training, funding and sharing resources.



Basket 5: The bigger picture

Case Study: A market response to bolster food security. **A win-win: local sellers boost trade, families receive free produce.**



The Alexandra Rose Charity's voucher scheme uses the local economy to improve food security for low-income pregnant women and young families. The scheme launched as a pilot in East Street Market in May 2018. It works with 1st Place Children's Centre to distribute free vouchers to local families on low incomes to be spent on fresh fruit and vegetables. The scheme supports the local economy as the vouchers can only be redeemed with traders at the market. To date, the scheme is supporting over 135 local families each week to access a healthier diet. In February, 2019, 1,617 vouchers were redeemed at the market, resulting in £4,800 extra income for local traders signed up to the scheme.

Alexandra Rose Charity CEO Jonathan Pauling says: "There needs to be a response from the wider food system, including retail and manufacturers, to food insecurity. You can't leave the voluntary sector to solve it. We need to make the retail of healthy, affordable food profitable in low-income areas."

How to get involved in the plan

Everyone who works in, lives in or cares about Southwark can get involved.

For individuals:

- Help isolated and less mobile neighbours with shopping or by cooking an extra portion of a tasty, home-cooked meal for them.
- Invite people over for dinner who may be a little isolated or cash strapped.
- Start a local 'Casserole Club' to connect people who like to cook, with elderly neighbours who may not be able to cook for themselves.
www.casseroleclub.com
- Bake cakes for families who are unable to provide birthday cakes for their children.
www.freecakesforkids.org.uk
- Donate unwanted food via Olio www.olioex.com or sign up to claim someone else's unwanted food and stop surplus from going to waste.
- Sign up to purchase high quality surplus from food stores and restaurants at a fraction of the cost.
www.toogoodtogo.co.uk
- Donate your home grown fruit and vegetables to a food aid organisation in the borough (see p2) or via Olio.
- Volunteer with a food project. Contact Community Southwark to be matched.
www.communitysouthwark.org
- Join the End Hunger UK campaign and other campaigns addressing the root causes of food insecurity.
www.endhungeruk.org

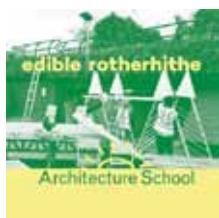
For organisations, businesses, faith and voluntary groups:

- **Join the SFAA! If your organisation, business, community group or faith group wants to become part of the Southwark Food Action Alliance, please contact sfaa@communitysouthwark.org**
Membership is free. Bi-monthly meetings include guest speakers and promote network collaboration to create a more food secure Southwark.
- Make food security part of your CSR programme e.g. with a financial donation or releasing staff time/ skills to help community food projects build capacity.
- Become a London Living Wage employer and only use other contractors who pay the London Living Wage.
- Help your lower-paid staff. Create a food sharing table or fridge shelf where people can bring in their surplus food. Offer free meals at work as a perk.
- Use an app or food rescue organisation, such as Olio, Food Cloud, Too Good To Go or Plan Zheroes, to stop your food surplus from going to waste.
- Many of our food organisations struggle with getting surplus delivered to them as they lack drivers and vehicles. Can you supply free driving or van hire?
- Do you have space that a food organisation can use for free for meetings, food storage or cooking sessions?
- Use food surplus redistribution organisations, such as, FareShare, FareShare Go, City Harvest and Plan Zheroes, to deliver food to you if you are an organisation who works with people at risk of food insecurity.





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A JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN THE
DIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK & CUF



Walworth Community
Gardening Network



HIRSCHMANN STIFTUNG



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