

Household Food Insecurity

Full version

Southwark's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Place & Health Improvement

Southwark Public Health Division

July 2019

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GATEWAY INFORMATION

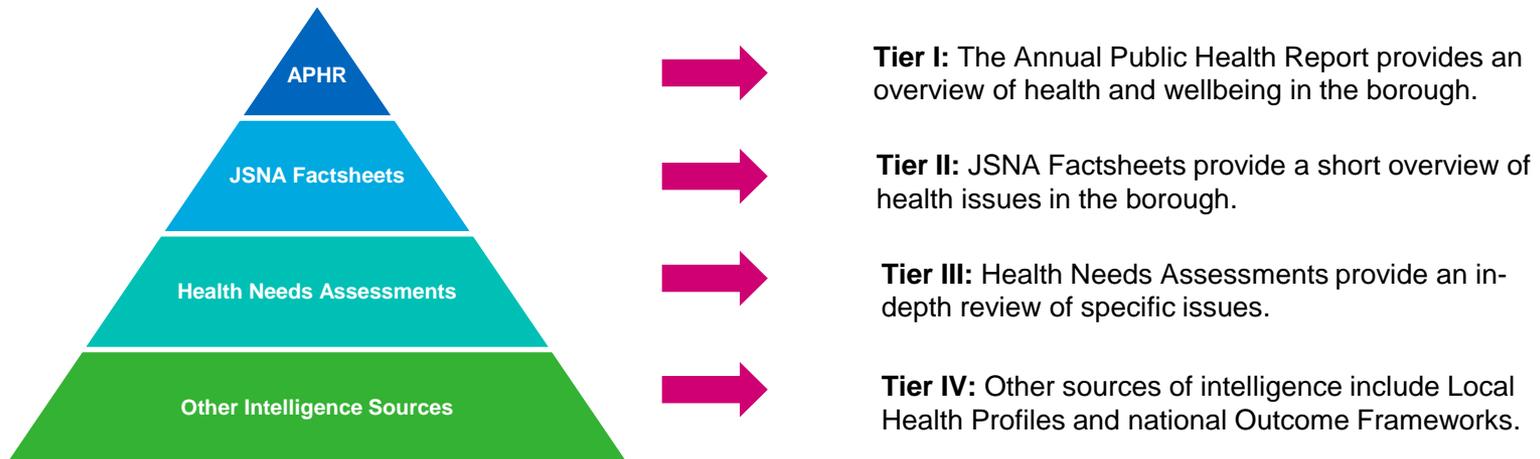
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Health Needs Assessments form part of Southwark's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment process

BACKGROUND

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is the ongoing process through which we seek to identify the current and future health and wellbeing needs of our local population.

- The purpose of the JSNA is to inform and underpin the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and other local plans that seek to improve the health of our residents.
- The JSNA is built from a range of resources that contribute to our understanding of need. In Southwark we have structured these resources around 4 tiers:



- This document forms part of those resources.
- All our resources are available via: www.southwark.gov.uk/JSNA

This needs assessment examines the extent of food insecurity in Southwark and gaps which exist in tackling it

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Food security is essential for physical and mental health. The inability to ensure access to healthy and nutritious food has the potential to impact every stage of the life spectrum, affecting development, wellbeing and life chances.

This assessment will provide an overview of household food insecurity among Southwark's residents. Its findings will inform the borough's upcoming Food Security Action Plan. This will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Outlining how food insecurity impacts future health and life chances for our residents
- Estimating the possible extent of food insecurity in the borough
- Highlighting the population groups and geographical areas most at risk of food insecurity
- Mapping the current resources available to help those who are at risk of food insecurity
- Identifying gaps in provision, policy and services
- Recommending how to become a borough that increases its provision of affordable, healthy food.

Terminology:

Although 'food poverty' and 'food insecurity' are sometimes used as interchangeable terms, we have chosen food insecurity. Consultation with food insecurity groups in Southwark found that they perceived the term 'food poverty' to be stigmatising. 'Food poverty' also fails to take into account those who can afford food, but may be unable to access or prepare it - for example, the elderly, the housebound or those with disabilities. The term 'food insecurity' allows for a broader definition.

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Food insecurity is about the inability to afford or access adequate nutrition and is experienced on a scale

DEFINITION: WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY?

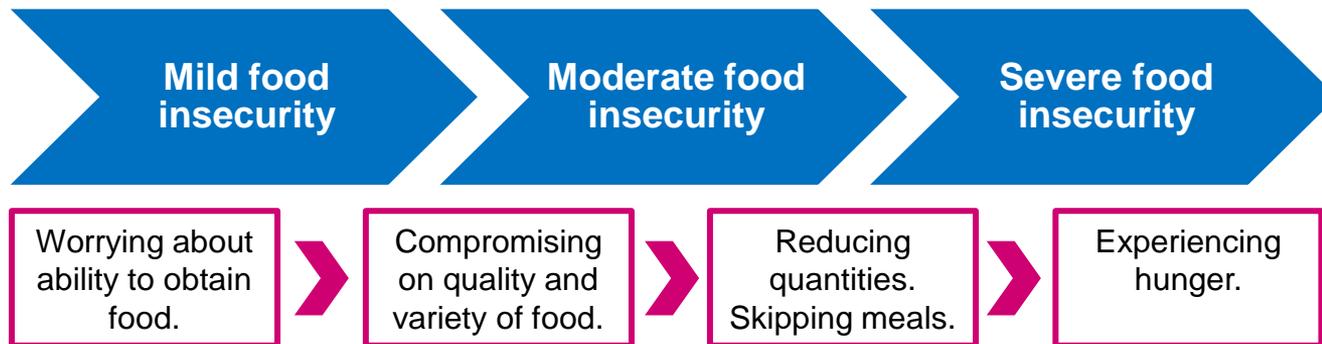
The Food Standards Agency (FSA) defines food insecurity as:

- “Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable food in socially acceptable ways [e.g. without resorting to emergency supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies].”

Access to adequate food is internationally recognised as a basic human right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

- “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care.”

The United Nation’s Food and Agricultural Organisation created the Food Insecurity Experience Scale to show that food insecurity falls on a continuum:



References

1. Food Standard’s Agency – Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey (2007)
2. UN Declaration Of Human Rights – Article 25 (1948)
3. Food and Agriculture Organisation Of The United Nations - (2015)

Inequalities in diet result in inequalities in health, adding to the disease burden and increasing health costs

THE EFFECTS OF FOOD INSECURITY ON HEALTH

People experiencing food insecurity are likely to have diet-related health problems due to poor nutrition. Stress caused by food insecurity can also adversely affect mental wellbeing.

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.

Children in food insecure households are more likely to develop asthma, depression and other chronic conditions. Their growth and development are impaired. Learning is poorer, and can affect life chances.

Paradoxically, food insecurity is often associated with overweight and obesity. Explanations include the higher cost of nutritious foods, the stress of living with food insecurity, and physiological adaptations to food restriction. Poor food access increases the risk of low birthweight and stunting in children, which are associated with higher risk of overweight and obesity later in life.

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.

There are financial as well as health costs. It is 2-3 times more expensive to treat someone who is malnourished in the UK, compared to someone who is properly nourished.

References

1. Press – Nutrition and food poverty: a toolkit for those involved in developing or implementing a local nutrition and food poverty strategy. National Heart Forum. London (2004)
2. Food Poverty and Health - Faculty of Public Health (2005)
3. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World – WHO (2018)
4. Jessiman-Perreault & McIntyre - The household food insecurity gradient and potential reductions in adverse population mental health outcomes in Canadian adults - SSM Population Health (2017)
5. PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research – Presented by Professor Valerie Tarasuk at the ENUF Conference, Kings College, London (2018).
6. Elia – The Cost of Malnutrition In England and Potential Cost Savings From Nutritional Interventions. BAPEN/NIHR (2015)

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Food welfare for children is in place nationally, however, the UK currently lacks a broader food insecurity policy

NATIONAL POLICY

The UK does not currently have an overarching policy to tackle food insecurity. UNESCO's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights reported in 2016:

'The Committee is concerned about the lack of adequate measures adopted by the State party [UK] to address the increasing levels of food insecurity, malnutrition, including obesity, and the lack of adequate measures to reduce the reliance on foodbanks.'

UK policy is primarily concerned with food welfare for children.

- Healthy Start is the UK's main food welfare scheme which exists to improve inequalities in diet. It has been running since 2006 and its weekly vouchers entitle low-income families to vouchers for free milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamins. Pregnant women and children under 4 are eligible. The voucher allowance is £3.10 per week for pregnant women and 1-4 year olds; £6.20 for infants in their first year of life.
- All children in reception and years 1 and 2 in state-funded schools receive a free, hot meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meals policy (2014).
- For older children, all schools, academies and free schools have a duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 512) to provide free school meals to children whose parents receive certain benefits.



References

1. UNESCO's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 6th periodic report on the UK (2016)
2. Image: www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Two possible impacts of Brexit: A national food strategy and an increase in food prices

NATIONAL POLICY

Post-Brexit the government has proposed to create a National Food Strategy - the first since World War II. DEFRA will be leading on this task. One of the strategy's aims would be to ensure that the food system delivers healthy and affordable food for all. The strategy would build on the work already underway in the Agriculture Bill, the Environment Bill, the Fisheries Bill, and the Childhood Obesity Plan.

Former Environmental Secretary, Michael Gove commented on his ambitions for this work: *“A proper food strategy must look more widely at the socio-economic factors and trends relating to diet and health problems such as obesity, diabetes and other diet-related illnesses. The fact that these problems disproportionately affect more disadvantaged sectors of society should offend our sense of social justice”*.

Brexit could radically change food availability and prices. A 2019 UN report reads: *“If Brexit proceeds it is likely to have a major impact on the most vulnerable”*. Food prices will be affected by fluctuations in sterling as the UK imports 41% of its food. Thirty per cent of it comes from the EU and 11% is imported from outside of the EU but is negotiated in EU trade deals. Anticipated rising costs of seasonal labour, increased transport and logistics expenses and alterations to free movements of goods and services are also likely to raise prices. The Food Research Collaboration recommends that local authorities create Brexit food resilience teams to mitigate the effects of reduced supply, lower standards and higher prices.

References

1. www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/environment-food-rural-affairs/correspondence/181030-Secretary-of-State-toChair-Food-strategy.pdf
2. Oxford farming Conference 2019 Address By The Environment Secretary – January 2019
3. <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/39/Add.1> UN General Assembly Human Rights Council 41st session – June-July 2019
4. DEFRA food statistics pocketbook 2017 London
5. Food Research Collaboration Food Brexit Briefing 2018 Lang et al.
5. State of The Nation Report Into Children's Food in England 2018 – Food For Life and The Soil Association

London's first Food Strategy since 2006 makes tackling household food insecurity a priority

REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

London's new Food Strategy (2018) demonstrates a commitment to improve the capital's food environment and implement strategies to tackle food insecurity. Since 2017, ten boroughs (including Southwark in 2018) have received Greater London Authority (GLA) funding to develop food insecurity action plans.

- Objective 5.2 of the Mayor's 2018 Health Inequalities Strategy is for 'All Londoners to have access to healthy food'. This will be achieved via the Mayor's Food Strategy. The Health Inequalities Strategy recognises that the diets of those on lower incomes tend to be nutritionally poorer and that those in insecure housing, with mental health problems and low incomes are less likely to be able to afford or access good food.
- The Mayor of London's Food Strategy published at the end of 2018 has 'Good Food At Home and Reducing Food Insecurity' as one of its six target areas. It commits to: provide school holiday meals for low-income families, research long-term solutions to food insecurity, promote the London Living Wage to increase household incomes and measure the prevalence of food insecurity in London. A Food Poverty Profile for each borough has been published annually since 2016. See slides 40-49 for information on Southwark's profile.
- The draft New London Plan 2018 includes a number of policies which prompt local planning authorities to consider the health of Londoners, including access to healthy food. One such policy is concerned with the proliferation of hot food takeaways and states that 'development proposals containing A5 hot food takeaway uses should not be permitted where these are within 400m walking distance of an existing or proposed primary or secondary school'.

References

1. The London Health Inequalities Strategy – GLA 2018
2. London Food Strategy - GLA 2018

3. Draft New London Plan – GLA 2018

Slide 11

Southwark has a range of policies and strategies which are helpful in tackling local food insecurity

SOUTHWARK POLICY CONTEXT

Southwark has developed a Food Security Action Plan which builds on the vision of the 2018-2022 Council Plan of reducing health inequalities, and our Health In All Policies approach. Additional local strategies and policies which are helpful for tackling food insecurity, include:

Southwark's Health and Wellbeing Strategy

- The strategy sets out a vision to address the wider socio-economic and environmental determinants of health, give children and young people the best start in life, improve wellbeing and resilience, and support older people to live independently.

Access to free food and water

- Free school meals are available for all primary-school children aged 4-11 and free fruit is given to children age 7-11. This differs from national policy which only provides universal free meals for reception, year 1 and year 2.
- The 2018 Council manifesto pledged to extend free, healthy meals to all nursery schools.
- The 2018 manifesto pledged to increase free drinking options with new water fountains for the borough.

Healthy Weight Strategy (2016-2021)

- The Southwark Healthy Weight Strategy sets a framework for taking a whole-systems approach to tackling obesity. This is relevant to food insecurity as levels of obesity are generally higher in areas of deprivation.
- The Healthy Weight Action Plan takes an approach to obesity and good nutrition which considers both the life course and the role of the built environment in Southwark.

Southwark has a range of policies which have a role in tackling food insecurity in the borough

SOUTHWARK POLICY CONTEXT

Improving economic conditions

Boosting financial wellbeing gives households more disposable income for food and other basic necessities.

- Southwark is a London Living Wage borough. All Council staff are paid at least £10.55 per hour. All contractors hired by the Council need to pay their staff this minimum, too.
- The Economic Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2022 calls for the following:
 - To prioritise residents furthest from the labour market
 - To support residents to manage welfare reform and benefit caps
 - To promote the London Living Wage to employers across the borough.

The Place Approach

The draft New Southwark Plan (NSP), Southwark's spatial planning policy, provides a strong framework to support the delivery of health and wellbeing in Southwark. Once formally adopted, the NSP will introduce a series of Development Management policies aimed at building spaces and places that encourage healthy behaviours. These include:

- An overarching strategic policy recognising the importance of improving health and tackling health inequalities
- A takeaway exclusion policy around secondary schools to tackle the overconcentration of these types of food outlets
- Public space design policies that may help to promote food growing activities in residential communal spaces and/or public open green spaces, including parks.
- A policy that stipulates development must encourage healthy eating choices by limiting the availability of unhealthy food and increasing the availability of healthy food.

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75,000 of our residents could be food insecure. This equates to almost one in four people in Southwark.

ESTIMATING PREVALENCE

In June 2019 results were published from the first London-based survey on food insecurity, which included data for Southwark. The survey, which collected data from 6,601 Londoners, age 16+ showed that 23.5% of the sample (n680) who lived in Southwark were food insecure. This would equate to approximately 75,000 of our residents aged 16+.

The definition of food insecurity used in this survey covers running out of money to buy food, skipping meals or cutting down on quantities eaten due to lack of money and not being able to afford balanced meals.

The survey asked parents additional questions to assess whether their children were food insecure. Findings showed that 25.8% of 0-16 year olds in the borough were food insecure. This equates to over 15,000 Southwark children.

The Southwark food insecurity figures are higher than the London average of 21% for adults and 17.5% for children.

Up until 2019, there had been no local, regional or national measurements of food insecurity. Central government agreed in 2019 to conducting a national survey of food insecurity and results will be published in 2021.

References

1. Food Security In London, City Intelligence – Greater London Authority – June 2019
2. City Intelligence Unit data shared with Southwark Council
3. ONS population figures mid 2018

The Survey of Londoners highlights the large inequalities that exist in food security

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR SOUTHWARK RESPONDENTS

Almost a quarter (23%) of Southwark respondents had low or very low food security, though some groups are much more at risk.

- More Southwark black respondents had low or very low food security (46%), compared with white respondents (9%).
- In Southwark, worse food security was linked to social-renting tenancy and deprivation (44% social renters vs 14% private renters and 8% owner-occupiers).
- In Southwark, being 'often lonely' was linked to worse food security (52%).
- Southwark respondents with dependent children had higher levels of poor food security (44%), compared with respondents without dependents (18%).
- Over half of Southwark unemployed and long-term sick/disabled non-workers had poor food security.
- Southwark workers earning less than £24,300/yr had significantly worse food security than those earning more than £37,900.
- Southwark respondents with burdensome debt had over four-fold food insecurity levels compared with comfortable re-payers.

See Appendix 1 for further analysis.

Reference

1. Greater London Authority 2019. Survey of Londoners

Southwark's high destitution levels mean that food insecurity levels will be greater than average

DESTITUTION AND FOOD INSECURITY

Nationally, 1.5 million people were destitute in 2017. Southwark's destitution levels are the 6th highest in London and the 22nd highest nationally.

Destitution differs from poverty in that it is more severe and means that people cannot afford the bare minimum needed to eat, stay warm and dry and keep themselves clean.

People are classed as destitute if they have lacked two or more of the essentials listed below in the last month because they have been unable to afford them, or if their income was so low that they could not pay for these things themselves and needed to rely on charity.

Food	Clothes	Toiletries
Heating	Lighting	Shelter

The figures in the Destitution In The UK 2018 report are pertinent to food insecurity as the most common essential item lacking was food, with 62% of destitute people having eaten fewer than two meals a day for at least two days in a row. Just under half of those living in destitution lacked three or more of the essential listed items in the previous month. Those who are at the more severe end of the food insecurity scale are likely to be struggling with other essentials, such as fuel payments and basic toiletries. 36% of food insecure Londoners struggle to keep their homes warm in winter.

References

1. Destitution In The UK 2018 – Joseph Rowntree Foundation – 2018
2. Food Security In London, City Intelligence – Greater London Authority – June 2019

Proxy measures suggest that many Southwark residents are at risk of being food insecure

PROXY MEASURES

Proxy measures are another way to assess the scale of food insecurity risk in Southwark. These stand-in measures include: deprivation, fuel poverty, benefit recipients and obesity.

- **Poverty and deprivation**
 - 4 in 10 Southwark residents live in areas considered the most deprived nationally
 - 1 in 4 children live in low-income families
 - 1 in 3 people over the age of 60 are income deprived
 - 1 in 12 people live in 'fuel poverty', being unable to afford to heat their homes.

- **Unemployment, benefits and low income**
 - 5.8% of adults of working age are unemployed. This is the 5th highest rate in London
 - 1 in 10 residents of working age are receiving benefits
 - 1 in 7 employees in Southwark are paid below the London Living Wage (£10.55 per hour).

- **Obesity**
 - There is a well-researched link between obesity and deprivation. People on a very low income may rely on cheap, calorie dense foods to fill them up. In Camberwell Green ward, 67% of the population are in the most deprived quintile nationally. The ward also had the highest prevalence of obesity in London and the 2nd highest in England for those in Year 6 (2015-16).

References

1. Southwark Public Health – Protected Characteristics in Southwark – JSNA Factsheet – Nov 2017
2. Public Health England Fingertips Report Health Profiles 2015
3. NOMIS Labour Market Profile – Labour Supply – March 2018
4. NOMIS Labour Market Profile – Out of Work Benefits 2016
5. Trust For London – 2017/18
6. National Child Measurement Programme - England, 2015-16

Levels of food insecurity are estimated to be highest within our most deprived communities

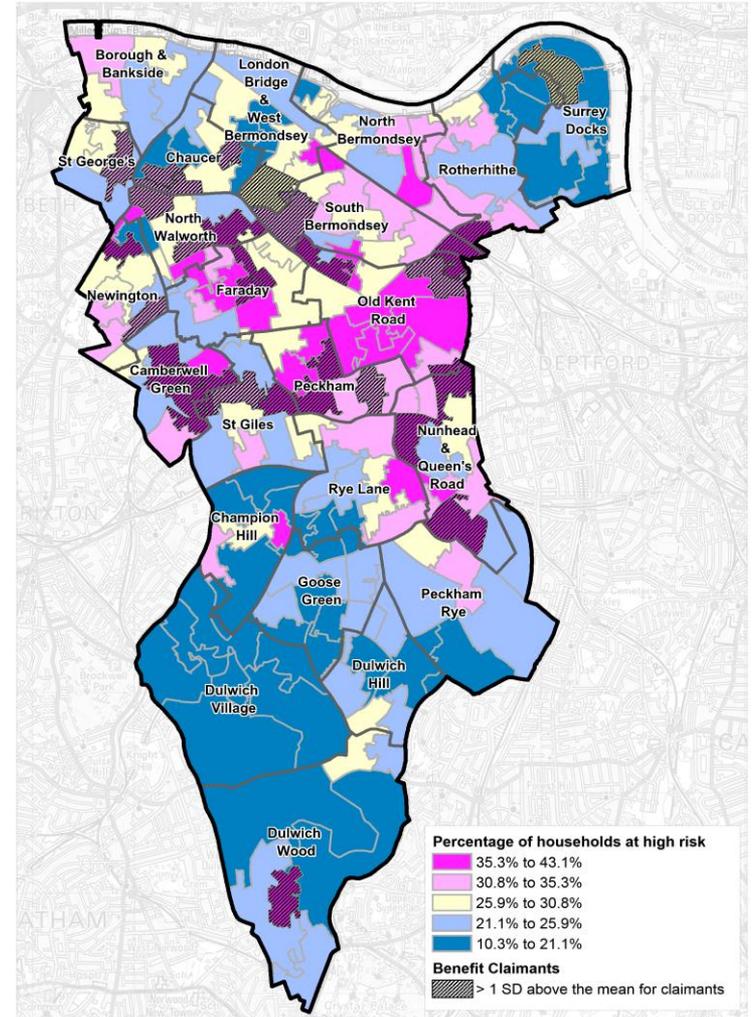
MAPPING HIGH RISK AREAS

The map uses two risk factors to assess where food insecurity levels are likely to be highest in the borough. These factors are:

- A high concentration of benefit claimants (shown on the map with diagonal black stripes).
- A high percentage of the most at risk household types which are single person households and low-income households with dependent children (shown on the map in dark pink).

By combining both risk factors, the dark pink areas with black stripes show that the areas where residents are likely to be at most risk are mostly in the centre/north of the borough (the outlier in the south is Kingswood Estate). These are areas where levels of deprivation are generally higher.

Identifying these high-risk areas can help to ensure that there is adequate provision in the areas of greatest need.



References

1. Smith, Thompson et al 2018
2. © OS Crown copyright and database rights 2019. Ordnance Survey (0)100019252

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Marginalised and vulnerable groups in Southwark are at higher risk of becoming food insecure

VULNERABLE GROUPS

Income

- Those on benefits (particularly transitioning to Universal Credit)
- Low income workers (part-time, zero hours, seasonal)
- Those in debt and/or with little savings

Household Type

- Single people (particularly men)
- Single parents
- Large families

Ethnicity & Legal Status

- Ethnic minorities
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- No Recourse to Public Funds
- Those without English as a first language

Age

- Low-income school-age children and their families during school holidays
- Children of parents age 16-24
- Young people leaving care
- The 50-65 age group
- The elderly

Lifestyle Factors

- Isolation
- Chaotic lifestyles
- Those in poor housing

Health Factors

- Those with disabilities
- Those with mental health conditions
- Those with chronic health conditions

References

1. Left Behind – Is Universal Credit Truly Universal? Trussell Trust 2018
2. Destitution In The UK 2018 – Joseph Rowntree Foundation – 2018
3. Faculty of Public Health – Food Poverty and Health – 2005
4. Financial Insecurity, Food Insecurity and Disability – Loopstra and Lalor – 2017
5. Food Security In London, City Intelligence – Greater London Authority – 2019

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

Benefit problems were the reason for 4 out of 10 referrals to Southwark's two main foodbanks in 2017-2018

REFERRAL REASONS FOR FOOD AID 2017/18

Research has shown that only 20% of food insecure people will use a foodbank. Reasons for this include: stigma, lack of awareness and problems accessing referrals. This means that foodbank data does not give an accurate picture of the overall extent of food insecurity in Southwark. However, it can tell us more about those in most acute need who have been referred for help.

- Professionals referred 3,379 households to foodbanks in Southwark during 2017-18. The data comes from three sources: Southwark Foodbank and Oasis Hub Waterloo Foodbank (both part of the national Trussell Trust network) and the Central Southwark Community Hub (CSCH), which is an independent foodbank.
- The Southwark Foodbank saw a 31% increase in referrals in 2017-18 from the previous year and the Oasis Hub Waterloo Foodbank saw a 45% increase for this period at its Southwark branch on Borough High Street. CSCH is a new foodbank, so there was no comparative data for 2016-2017.
- CSCH and the Southwark Foodbank record data on the reason for referral (n. 3, 204). Problems with benefits, due to delays or changes in the system, was the reason given in 41 % of cases (n.1,320). Low income was cited as a reason in 506 cases. This applies to those who are in work, but whose salaries are insufficient. The third highest reason for referral was having no recourse to public funds* (n.498), followed by debt (n.343).

* No Recourse To Public Funds (NRPF) is an immigration status which allows a person to work in the UK but restricts their access to many mainstream benefits drawn from public funds, such as welfare and social housing.

References

1. Loopstra and Tarasuk, 2015
2. Smith et al – Identifying Population Areas At Greatest Risk of Household Food Insecurity in England – Applied Geography, vol 91 – 2018
3. Data from Southwark Foodbank, CSCH Foodbank and Oasis Foodbank

High living costs and low salaries put those in low-paid, insecure and part-time jobs at risk of food insecurity

VULNERABLE GROUPS - INCOME: LOW-PAID WORKERS

Declining or stagnant incomes combined with rising living costs mean that many households are struggling to get by. In Southwark, households are likely to be extra squeezed by high London housing costs. Southwark residents in the lower quartile for income will spend 67% of their median monthly income on rent (compared to a national average of 29%).

- Households earning below £15,860 per annum after housing costs need to spend 42% of their household income on food to meet the government's nutritional guidelines, as set out in the Eatwell Plate. A four-person family needs to spend £103.17 per week to meet the Eatwell guidelines, making a healthy diet unaffordable for many.
- 52% of households with children are unable to afford a 'socially acceptable diet' as defined by the Minimum Income Standard. This applies to a diet which is both healthy and allows social participation (e.g. inviting guests for dinner or going out occasionally to a restaurant for a celebration).
- Insufficient salaries were given as the reason for almost 1 in 6 referrals to the borough's two largest foodbanks in 2017-18 (The Southwark Foodbank and Central Southwark Community Hub).
- Those with insecure, variable or lower incomes are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. This includes freelancers, seasonal workers, those on zero-hours contracts and part-time workers. 60% of food insecure Londoners are either in part-time or full-time work.

References

1. Trust For London 2015/16
2. Food Foundation – Affordability of The Eatwell Guide – September 2018
3. O'Connell et al – Which Types Of Family Are At Risk Of Food Poverty In The UK? A Relative Deprivation Approach – Social Policy and Society February 2018
4. Food Security In London, City Intelligence – Greater London Authority – June 2019

Welfare reforms have left benefit claimants vulnerable to food insecurity, debt and health problems

VULNERABLE GROUPS - INCOME: THE UNIVERSAL CREDIT SWITCH

Wide sweeping welfare reforms have led to the introduction of Universal Credit (UC). This is a new way of paying benefits which is yet to be rolled out nationally. Southwark is particularly affected as it was one of the first places in Great Britain to have full service rollout, with the first Universal Credit claims made in 2015. Universal Credit differs to the old system in the following ways:

- 1) UC is paid monthly, rather than weekly. This can be problematic for those who are used to budgeting weekly and who may find themselves short of money at the end of the month.
- 2) All benefits are paid together as one lump sum – with the recipient being responsible for paying rent from their monthly payment, if they are in receipt of housing benefit. This means that after rent is paid there may be little money left for living expenses.
- 3) There is a 5-week period without benefit income after applying for UC as it is paid in arrears. Many of those receiving benefits will not have savings to tide them over during this transition period.

In March 2018, the Trussell Trust surveyed 284 users from 30 foodbanks in Great Britain (including Southwark) to look at the effects of Universal Credit rollout.

- 70% said that the transition to Universal Credit had put them in debt.
- 63% of the sample said that they were offered no statutory support during this wait.
- 57% of respondents said that they had experienced mental or physical health issues as a result of the wait for their first payment.
- 35% of the sample waited more than 6 weeks for their first UC payment.

References

1. Left Behind – Is Universal Credit Truly Universal? Trussell Trust 2018

The Universal Credit switch has left single person households particularly vulnerable to food insecurity

VULNERABLE GROUPS – HOUSEHOLD TYPE: SINGLE PEOPLE

Single people on benefits without children are particularly vulnerable during the migration to Universal Credit, as they do not have a partner's income or child benefit to sustain them during the transitional period. Single person households were also the first group to experience full rollout to Universal Credit.

Data from the Southwark Foodbank (n. 2,495) showed that single people now make up the largest household type using the foodbank, accounting for 60% of referrals in 2017-18. Historically, single parents were the largest user group. Yet, in 2017-18 they only accounted for 26% of referrals.

It appears all over the UK, that full Universal Credit rollout has led to a rise in people seeking emergency food aid. The Trussell Trust reported a 30% increase in food parcels needed in areas of full Universal Credit rollout, six months after the benefit went live. This compared to a 12% increase in demand over this time in equivalent areas that are yet to experience the full rollout.

As of February 2019, almost 17,000 Southwark households were claiming Universal Credit. By the time the rollout is complete in early 2024 (at its earliest), Southwark Council's Exchequer Team project that 40,000 households will be claiming Universal Credit.

This means that some 23,000 households are yet to be transitioned . Without improvements to how Universal Credit is administered, residents in some 23,000 Southwark households could be exposed to a higher risk of debt, food insecurity and stress-induced physical and mental health problems between 2019 and 2024.

References

1. Left Behind – Is Universal Credit Truly Universal? Trussell Trust 2018
2. DWP Stat Explore 2019

Those with no home or who living in inadequate housing are at higher risk of being food insecure

VULNERABLE GROUPS – LIFESTYLE FACTORS: POOR HOUSING

Rough sleepers, the homeless, vulnerable people in the private rented sector (particularly those in houses in multiple occupation) and those in temporary accommodation and are at higher risk of food insecurity. As well as financial circumstances putting these groups at risk, there may also be a lack of safe, adequate space for storing and cooking food.

Rough sleepers: 309 rough sleepers were identified in the borough in 2017/18. 46% had been evicted or asked to leave their previous accommodation. 35% had previously been in the private rented sector. The Southwark Homeless Needs audit interviewed 53 homeless people. 21% said they only ate one meal a day. 45% of the sample said they had used foodbanks.

Private rented sector: Only half of all privately owned or rented properties in Southwark were estimated to be of decent standard (2006 survey). Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) have among the poorest quality standards, posing a risk to physical and mental health. This can include overcrowded conditions, poor quality kitchens (often shared) and little storage space for food. Additional problems can exist for vulnerable tenants and families using shared kitchens in terms of safety and food security.

References

1. CHAIN report 2017/18
2. Southwark Homeless Health Needs Audit 2016
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

Those with no home or who living in inadequate housing are at higher risk of being food insecure

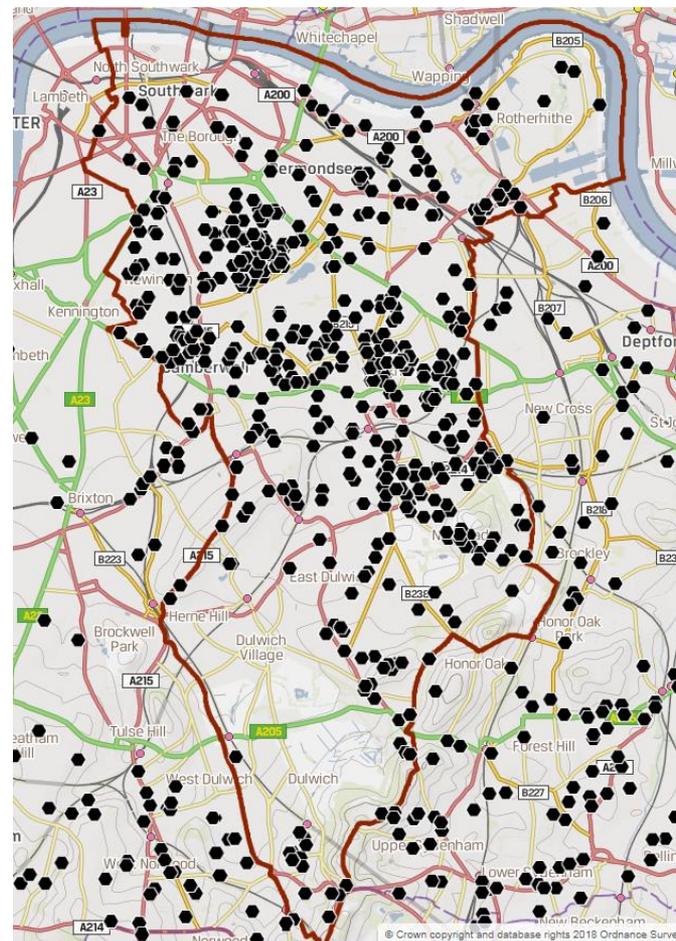
VULNERABLE GROUPS – LIFESTYLE FACTORS: POOR HOUSING

Temporary accommodation: The areas where residents are in temporary accommodation are shown with a black dot on the map.

Those in temporary accommodation, such as hostels, may not have adequate facilities for storing or preparing food, increasing their risk of being food insecure.

The majority of these residents would be owed a rehousing duty as they would be in priority need (with dependent children, pregnant or vulnerable due to a physical or mental impairment).

In April-June 2018, 1,032 households in Southwark were without settled accommodation. In Oct-Dec 2018, 2,488 households were in temporary accommodation.



References

1. www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness

Migrants are particularly vulnerable as they may be receiving either low levels of benefits or no benefits at all

VULNERABLE GROUPS – ETHNICITY AND LEGAL STATUS: NRPF

Those with leave to remain in the UK but with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) have an immigration status which allows them to live and work in the UK, but without access to most benefits paid by the state. This means that there is no safety net if they lose their job, are unable to work or become homeless. In these circumstances, it falls on local authorities to assess whether they are eligible for support under the Children Act 1989 or Care Act 2014.

As of May 2019, the Council was supporting 281 households with NRPF who were assessed as eligible for this support: 159 families and 122 single adults. The main nationalities being supported were Nigerian nationals (51%) , Jamaican nationals (11%) and Ghanaian nationals (7%).

NRPF also applies to people who are unlawfully in the UK (either through overstaying a visa or entering the country illegally) and to people from the European Economic Area who are unable to demonstrate that they are habitually resident in the UK and have worker or self-employed status. The overall number of people with NRPF in the borough is unknown.

People with NRPF are vulnerable to food insecurity. They are also limited in what help is available to them through statutory routes:

- Free childcare is not available. This takes many women with NRPF out of the workforce – impacting family income and leaving single parents with NRPF without income and at high risk of food insecurity.
- Pregnant women with NRPF and their children are not entitled to Healthy Start vouchers.
- Secondary school students with NRPF are ineligible for free school meals and would only receive a free meal at the discretion and expense of individual schools.

One in three children in London have problems concentrating at school due to hunger

VULNERABLE GROUPS - AGE: CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Food insecurity impacts children's future health. It increases the risk of developing asthma, depression and suicidal tendencies. 80% of paediatricians surveyed in London said that food insecurity contributed 'very much' to the ill health of the children they work with.

A third of London children have problems concentrating at school due to hunger.

- This equates to over **9,600** Southwark children.

Locally, a high percentage of foodbank recipients are children

- 46% of those fed by the CSCH Foodbank in 2017/18 were children.
- 38% of those fed by the Southwark Foodbank in 2017/18 were children.

London children who are food insecure are more likely to have parents who are:

- In the lowest income quartile (41%)
- Disabled (39%)
- Socially isolated (49%)
- Single parents (36%)
- Age 16-24 (70%)

References

1. Kirkpatrick et al. Child hunger and long-term adverse consequences for health. Archives of Paediatric and Adolescent Medicine 2010;164(8):754-62.
2. McIntyre et al. Depression and suicide ideation in late adolescence and early adulthood are an outcome of child hunger. Journal of Affective Disorders 2012;150(1):123-9.
3. McIntyre et al. The pervasive effect of youth self-report of hunger on depression over 6 years of follow up. Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology. 2017;52:537-47.2
4. Royal College of Paediatricians and Child Health: Views From The Frontline 2017
5. GLA/ IPSOS MORI – Child Hunger in London - 2013
6. Office for National Statistics population data mid-year 2017
7. Food Security In London, City Intelligence – Greater London Authority – 2019

Low-income families are at greater risk of food insecurity during the school holidays

VULNERABLE GROUPS - AGE: FAMILIES DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

School holidays are hard for low-income families whose children are reliant on their free school meal.

- A UK report found that in households which cannot afford an adequate diet, 93% have at least one adult who 'skimps' on their own food to try and protect the children. If a child is going hungry, the whole family is likely to be food insecure as parents are likely to feed their children first.
- For parents earning under £25,000, one third skip meals during the holidays so that their children can eat. Half of parents earning below £15,000, skip meals to feed their children in the holidays.

Foodbanks can experience a spike in users during the summer months

- The Central Southwark Community Hub Foodbank saw 128 users in July 2017 and 198 in August 2017. This compared to a mean of 40 users during the months of April, May and June 2017.

The Department for Education are funding a programme of research and pilot schemes in 2018 and 2019 to evaluate the effectiveness of free school holiday food schemes around the country.

References

1. Feeding Britain – APPG on Hunger – 2014
2. Poverty and Social Exclusion UK – The Impoverishment of the UK - 2017
3. Ensuring Children's Access To Food 365 Days A Year – Sustain – March 2018
4. Counting The Costs 2018 UK Report – Contact (For Families With Disabled Children) - 2018

1 in 10 over 65s are at risk of malnutrition nationally. That equates to 2,560 of Southwark's older residents

VULNERABLE GROUPS - AGE: THE ELDERLY

10% of over 65 year olds in the UK are either malnourished or at risk of malnutrition. This compares to a prevalence of 1.8% for malnutrition in the general population.

Although food insecurity is only one factor that can contribute to malnutrition in older adults, it is an important driver. Bereavement, ill health and social isolation can lead to older people losing interest in food, while increasing frailty can make it harder for older people to access and prepare food.

An Age UK report found that 11% of over 65s find it difficult to get to a corner shop and 12% find it difficult to get to their local supermarket. BAPEN surveys found that 32% of over 65s are at risk of malnutrition when admitted to hospital. Need in this population can be hidden as due to mobility issues, pride and not wishing to be a burden, older adults are under-represented at foodbanks.

If the national malnutrition rate for older adults, of 1 in 10, is applied to Southwark, where 25,600 adults are aged 65 and above, 2,560 older adults may be malnourished or at risk of malnutrition in the borough.

Due to reduced central government funding combined with the increased demands of a growing older population, Southwark Council decommissioned the wider Meals on Wheels service in 2018 and now targets its assistance to older people in the greatest need. The 65+ population is set to grow in the borough by 13,700 by 2030 – an increase of 54%.

References

1. Malnutrition Task Force. State Of The Nation – Older people and Malnutrition In the UK Today (2017)
2. British Association For Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition
3. Hidden Hunger And Malnutrition In The Elderly – APPG on Hunger – 2018
4. AGE UK Agenda For Later Life Survey
5. TNS for Age UK 2013
6. Office for National Statistics population data mid-year 2017

Those with mental health conditions, disabilities and illnesses are highly represented at foodbanks

VULNERABLE GROUPS - HEALTH FACTORS

Those with mental health conditions, long-term health problems and disabilities may have reduced ability to work, which will affect household income, putting these residents and their families at greater risk of becoming food insecure.

People with mental health problems: A national study (n. 413) showed that 1 in 3 households using foodbanks had a member with a mental health condition. The Dragon Cafe is the only community cafe in Southwark catering to those with mental health needs who are food insecure. It is only open one day a week and is closed during August. In 2014, mental health charity CoolTan Arts did research to assess the feasibility of setting up a community kitchen in Southwark. Of the 48 Southwark residents with mental health problems that were surveyed, only 12 had working cookers.

People with disabilities and people experiencing ill health: A national study (n.413) showed that 50% of households using foodbanks had a disabled member and 75% had a member experiencing ill health. A 2018 survey revealed that 33% of families with disabled children had taken out a loan to buy food. As there does not appear to be any pattern as to who is contacted and when about having Disability Living Allowance (DLA) migrated over to Personal Independence Payments (PIP), the Southwark Local Support Team have expressed concern that many vulnerable people will lose income.

14% of people living in inner London have a disability, equating to 43,988 people in Southwark who could be left very vulnerable when this benefit change occurs. There is no provision for delivering foodbank parcels to the homes of those who are disabled or in poor health.

References

1. Financial insecurity, food insecurity and disability – Loopstra and Lalor 2017
2. Counting The Costs 2018 UK Report – Contact (For Families With Disabled Children) - 2018
3. DWP Family Resources Survey, 2016-2017

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Lack of access to affordable, nutritious food is an important factor in food insecurity

FOOD DESERTS AND THE POVERTY PREMIUM

A ‘food desert’ is a geographical area where there is a lack of accessible options for buying fresh, nutritious, affordable food. Residents at risk of food insecurity are normally disproportionately hit by the effects of food deserts as they lack the funds for bus fares or cars to travel to competitively priced supermarkets further afield. 85% of those earning under £150 per week in the UK do not have access to a car. Residents at risk of food insecurity may also have disabilities or health problems which prevent them from walking far to go shopping.

The poverty premium

Generally, people in ‘food deserts’ rely on convenience stores and corner shops where prices are higher than in competitively priced supermarket chains and the range of fresh, healthy foods is less. Typically, BAME residents and low-income families are more likely to live in areas with fewer supermarkets and more convenience stores. In nearby Greenwich, a basket of 15 healthy food items which cost £12.50 in LIDL, cost between £18.40 and £34.50 at a sample of 18 shops in deprived areas. The average price for the basket was £24.40. This is known as the ‘poverty premium’ where the most socio-economically disadvantaged end up paying more for goods.



15 items cost
£12.50 in
LIDL



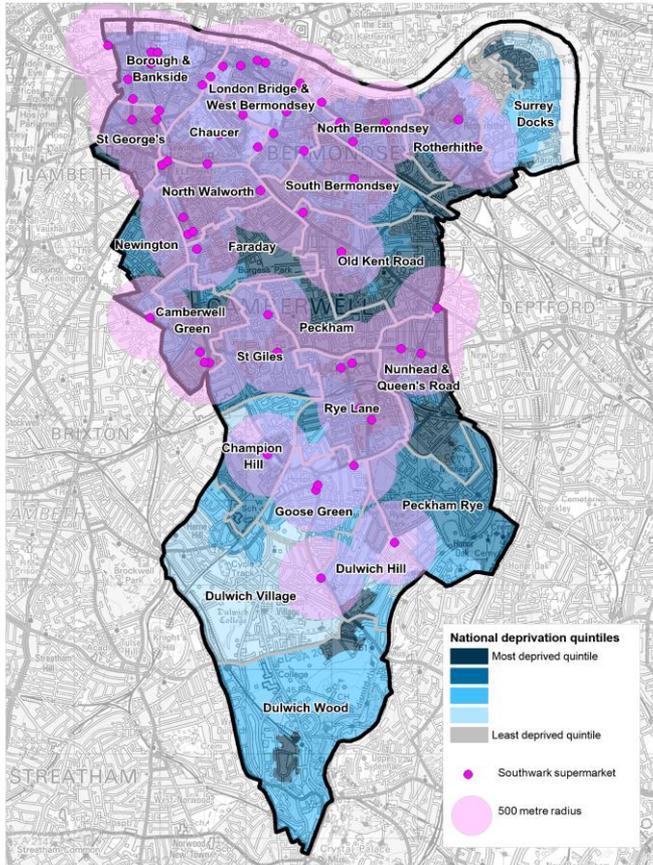
The same items cost £18.40-
£34.50 at shops in deprived
areas (average cost: £24.40).

References

1. Walking The Breadline: The Scandal of Food Poverty in 21st Century Britain. Oxfam. Church Action on Poverty. 2013.
2. Royal Borough of Greenwich Food Poverty Needs Assessment 2016
3. Gustafson et al. – Measures of the consumer food store environment: a systematic review of the evidence – Journal of Community Health - 2012

Pockets of food deserts appear to exist in Southwark, including in some of the borough's most deprived areas

MAPPING SOUTHWARK'S POTENTIAL FOOD DESERTS



Southwark mainstream supermarkets with Indices of Deprivation

Data source: Department for Communities & Local Government 2015, Southwark Regulatory Services
Southwark Public Health Department | People & Health Intelligence | publichealth@southwark.gov.uk
August 2018.
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The dark blue areas on the map show where there are deprived parts of the borough which are potential food deserts. The most deprived areas are situated in Peckham through to Elephant and Castle in the north-west. However, there are pockets of deprivation across the borough. 88 council estates fall inside these areas.

- **Method:** Food deserts were mapped according to proximity to small and large branches of supermarket chains. The rationale being that national supermarket chains are where fresh, healthy food is most competitively priced. A radius of 500m was drawn around each supermarket branch.
- **Limitations:**
 - This is a preliminary desktop exercise, fieldwork identification could reduce size of 'potential deserts'.
 - There may be competitively-priced independent fruit and vegetable sellers in some of the food desert areas.
 - The 500m radius is 'as-the-crow-flies', so walking distances will be lengthier in reality. The map does not show barriers such as hills, steps and roads that are difficult to cross.

References

1. © OS Crown copyright and database rights 2019. Ordnance Survey (0)100019252

Small, retail interventions with food education and healthy food subsidies may be more effective than supermarkets

INCREASING ACCESS IN FOOD DESERTS

Although supermarket chains are used as a proxy for the availability of healthy, affordable food, creating more supermarkets is not necessarily the best solution for encouraging food desert residents to buy more fresh fruit and vegetables.

American studies have shown that opening large supermarkets in food desert areas did not change the fruit and vegetable intake or quality of the diet of local people. Evidence suggests that small, local interventions run in partnership with food education projects, along with means-tested subsidies for healthy food provide a more effective way to both tackle food insecurity and improve health outcomes. Several models exist for this kind of intervention:

- **Community markets** which target vulnerable populations either through location (e.g. on a housing estate) or through accepting vouchers, such as Healthy Start, aimed at low-income households.
- **Mobile shops or stalls.** This solution works well where shop rent is expensive. It also gives local authorities a low-cost way to bring fresh produce into food desert areas. The mobile shop drives its affordable, fresh food to set locations during the week, with its visits coinciding with nutrition or cooking classes.
- **Online shopping** can overcome transport barriers, however it is unsuitable for many low-income groups due to delivery fees, access to digital payment methods and lack of internet access or literacy.
- **Encourage corner shops** to stock more affordably priced, good quality fruit and vegetables. This will need to be coupled with community engagement to ensure that there is demand.

References

1. Food Deserts: Increasing Access To Healthy and Affordable Food – Local Government Information Unit – 2019
2. Fast Food Restaurants and Food Stores – Longitudinal Young To Middle-Aged Adults: The CARDIA Study – JAMA Internal Medicine – Boone Heinonen et al 2011
3. Food Deserts and The Causes of Nutritional Inequality – National Bureau of Economic Research – Alcott et al 2018

'Food swamps' are areas with a high density of takeaway outlets selling high-calorie, low-nutrient food

MAPPING TAKEAWAYS

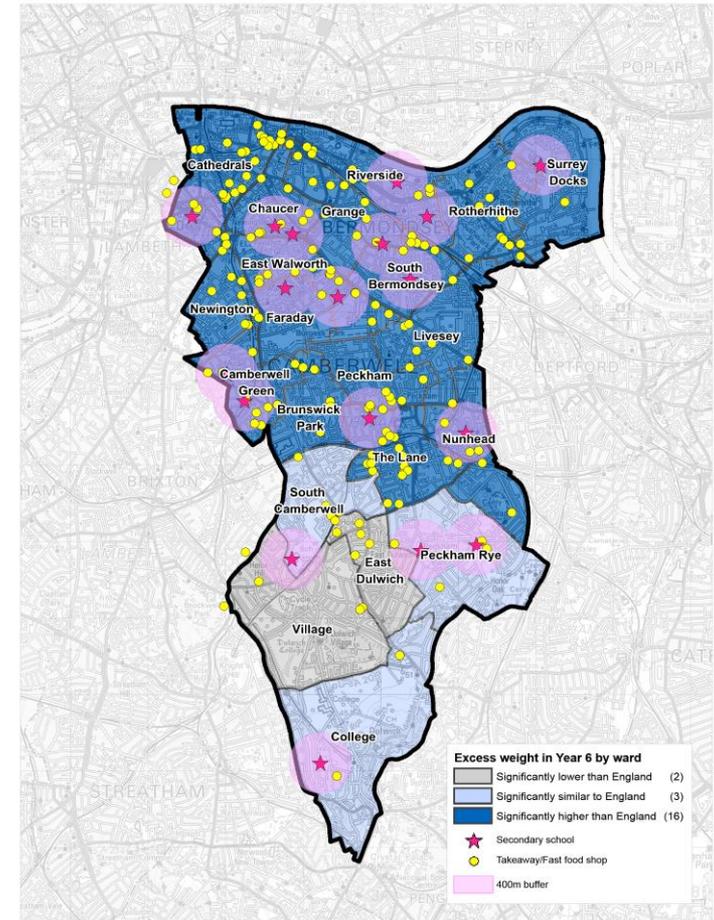
'Food swamps' are areas where there is a high density of establishments selling fast and junk food in relation to healthy options.

BAME and low-income residents are more likely to live near unhealthy food retailers. American evidence has linked food swamps to an increased risk of obesity, particularly when residents are less mobile and there is greater income inequality. This puts those groups who are vulnerable to food insecurity at greater risk of obesity and diet-related disease.

The map shows the relationship in Southwark between obesity levels in year six students and concentration of fast-food takeaway outlets. The map shows a clear north-south divide in the borough in terms of both obesity levels and numbers of fast food outlets, with the north having high levels of both.

When there is a lack of good access to affordable, healthy food (such as in food desert areas) and residents are living in a 'food swamp', they may become reliant on takeaway meals.

For those without access to good kitchen facilities, such as those in temporary accommodation, takeaway food is sometimes the only option, making the healthy choice a harder one.



Proximity of takeaways to secondary schools with excess weight in Year 6

Data source: Food Standards Agency, Public Health England
Southwark Public Health Department | People & Health Intelligence | publichealth@southwark.gov.uk
September 2018.
© Crown copyright and database rights 2018. Ordnance Survey (0)100019252

References

1. Cooksey-Stowers et. al – Food Swamps Predict Obesity Better Than Food Deserts In The United States – International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health - 2017

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Southwark organisations recognise that food insecurity needs to be addressed at multiple levels

LOCAL RESPONSE: THE THREE-TIER MODEL

Local food insecurity organisations created the following model to explain how responses are needed at different levels in Southwark to tackle food insecurity. The rest of this section will highlight examples of how food insecurity is being tackled locally in each of the tiers.

Wider determinants: Solving structural and policy issues that cause food insecurity, such as poor access to affordable, healthy food and insufficient income (e.g. poor wages, benefit cuts and zero hours contracts). This can be done through local authority policy in areas such as planning, regeneration, local economy and public health – and through using evidence at the local level to advocate for national policy change.

Building resilience: Empowering and upskilling people through teaching cooking, nutrition and growing skills. Getting people into work. Creating food co-ops and community cafes. Redistributing surplus food, building a local, food economy.

Crisis provision:
Emergency food aid.

Example intervention: Southwark Council introduced universal free school meals for all primary school children in 2013.

Example intervention: Garden Organic has taught growing skills to residents on 24 estates.

Example intervention: A referral to the Southwark Foodbank provides vouchers for three food packages in a six-month period.

References

1. Southwark Food Action Alliance steering group - 2018

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Local authority policy can influence the wider determinants that lead to food insecurity

THE LONDON FOOD POVERTY PROFILE

The London Food Poverty Profile (a joint initiative of the Greater London Authority and Sustain) is a regional measure for tracking efforts made by London's councils to tackle food insecurity and its wider determinants.

Local authorities submit data on 10 policy areas under council control which can improve equality and food security if acted on. These measures span many different sectors, showing that food insecurity is a multifaceted problem requiring collaboration from a broad range of partners.

The 2018 results ranked Southwark joint 5th in London with a score of 60% (the highest score of 76% went to Tower Hamlets). Year on year, Southwark has improved since 2016 when we scored 40% (coming in 19th). Southwark won an award for improvement in 2017 with a score of 57% (7th overall). The chart below shows performance alongside neighbouring boroughs. The darker the shading is under each heading, the greater the progress is in this area.



A summary of progress against each of these 10 areas is available on the following pages.

References

- Beyond The Foodbank – London Food Poverty Profile 2018 – Sustain/ GLA/ Trust For London/London Food Link

Food Poverty Action Plan: Southwark Council and partners seeking a food secure future for all

THE LONDON FOOD POVERTY PROFILE

Policy area and progress to date	Gaps and opportunities
<p>Develop and Implement a Food Poverty Action Plan: The borough appointed a public health officer in 2018 to co-ordinate the research and production of an action plan. This JSNA forms part of the groundwork for the plan. Several stakeholder events have been held to inform potential actions. The plan will provide a strategic and coordinated way forward, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders.</p> <p>The Council has been working closely with the Southwark Food Action Alliance (SFAA) to prepare the shared action plan for a two-year period initially. This will allow for the establishment of relationships, embedding of priorities and a better understanding of how existing resources can best be used to support this work.</p>	<p>Strengthening the core SFAA membership, alongside providing longer-term sustainability and co-ordination for the partnership will be vital to maintain momentum with the action plan.</p> <p>As a living document, the plan needs to be regularly monitored, with new actions being added, as appropriate.</p> <p>There will be further opportunities to align efforts and resources over time as new partners come on board with the agenda.</p>

Healthy Start: Low income families failed to access £134,650 of free food-aid vouchers during 2017-2018

THE LONDON FOOD POVERTY PROFILE

Policy area and progress to date	Gaps and opportunities
<p>Increase the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers: The Southwark take-up rate for this national food welfare scheme for low-income pregnant women and young children is 71% (Aug 2018). This compares to a national average of 66% and the nationally recommended 80%+. This translated into £134,650 of unclaimed vouchers for the borough in 2017-18.</p> <p>1,658 mothers and children under 4 in Southwark are entitled to the voucher as of August, 2018. This does not include asylum seekers or those without recourse to public funds, who are ineligible for the voucher but are groups at high risk of food insecurity. The markets team will do a small-scale pilot with one stall holder at East Street Market accepting the vouchers in 2019.</p>	<p>The lack of co-ordination of the Healthy Start scheme in the borough led to the formation of a cross-sector, multi-agency Healthy Start task and finish group which formed in March 2019.</p> <p>More education and training is needed for maternity and early years staff across sectors to raise awareness of the vouchers and how to administer them and signpost to them.</p> <p>Joint promotion of Healthy Start with Alexandra Rose vouchers could double the weekly food allowance for up to 1,000 low-income families.</p>

Up to 1,000 low-income families in Faraday Ward, Camberwell Green and North Walworth can double their food aid with the Rose Vouchers on a pilot scheme, currently funded until May 2022.

In 2018, Guys and St Thomas' Charity began piloting an additional voucher scheme for low-income families in Faraday ward as part of its research into a whole-systems approach to tackling childhood obesity. The pilot has now been extended to two other areas in the borough and includes families with NRPF and those seeking asylum. The Rose vouchers, worth £3 per child or pregnant woman and £6 for an infant in its first year, are exchanged for free fruit and vegetables at East Street Market.

References

1. Internal document. Sustain. 2019.
2. Beyond The Foodbank – London Food Poverty Profile 2018 – Sustain/ GLA/ Trust For London/London Food Link
3. Department of Health – Healthy Start Issuing Unit Cycle 199 – August 2018

Baby Friendly Initiative: Southwark is working towards level 2 of this UNICEF initiative to support breastfeeding

THE LONDON FOOD POVERTY PROFILE

Policy area and progress to date	Gaps and opportunities
<p>Promote breastfeeding to boost health of infants and mothers: Southwark has currently achieved level 1 accreditation of the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative and is working towards level 2. This internationally recognised standard enables public health services to better support families with feeding and bonding.</p> <p>Breast milk provides an infant with food security as it contains the essential nutrients and energy needed for the best start in life. It protects against infection and breastfed babies are less likely to be obese in later life. It is free and no access is needed to sterilising equipment. However, food insecure mothers are less likely to persevere with breastfeeding due to the stress and social isolation of their situation. Many will have to return to work early for financial reasons. With formula costing up to £32 per week, ‘formula poverty’ has been identified. To cope, food insecure parents may resort to unsafe practices such as skipping feeds, watering down the formula, adding cereal or introducing cow’s milk too early.</p> <p>The borough is promoting breastfeeding by inviting local venues to participate in the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme which welcomes breastfeeding on the premises. This is in addition to Breastfeeding Cafes where mothers can feed in a supportive environment.</p>	<p>It takes several years to work through all three levels of the accreditation process. The borough has a breastfeeding steering group and achieving full accreditation is part of the borough’s Healthy Weight Action Plan.</p> <p>Make food aid providers aware of the First Steps Nutrition guidance around formula milk and foodbanks.</p>

References

1. Beyond The Foodbank – London Food Poverty Profile 2018 – Sustain/ GLA/ Trust For London/London Food Link
2. Orr et al – Relation Between Household Food Insecurity and Breastfeeding in Canada – Canadian Medical Association Journal – March 2018
3. Cost of Infant Formula Negatively Impacting Family Budgets – SUSTAIN – www.sustainweb.org Nov 2018

Children's Services: Children's Centres and childcare are important assets for tackling food insecurity

THE LONDON FOOD POVERTY PROFILE

Policy area and progress to date	Gaps and opportunities
<p>Provide high quality affordable childcare and maximise the value of children's centres: Adequate provision of statutory childcare helps parents to work, improving family incomes. Following a pledge in the 2018 manifesto, the Council is committed to extend healthy, free school meals to school nurseries. A gold standard will be established for nursery meals that considers the nutritional content of the meals and the eating environment.</p> <p>Local Children's Centres have a wide reach with 21,900 individual children and adults in Southwark having had at least one contact with a Children's Centre in 2016-17. Children's Centres help with food insecurity by offering early years cooking and nutrition classes taught by the local Dietetics team (e.g. Cook & Taste classes, targeted six-week Cook and Eat Well classes). Additionally, there are sessions with snacks, breastfeeding support and family workers who can pick up on food insecurity and signpost/ refer to foodbanks. Peckham, Peckham Rye and Nunhead Children's Centres reported growing needs around foodbanks, benefit/financial issues and no recourse to public funds in their 2017 report.</p>	<p>Providing free, healthy meals at nurseries could have health benefits, including reducing food insecurity and tackling childhood obesity.</p> <p>Ensure professionals are referring families to Children's Centres, so that they can access support and services. There are opportunities to increase partnership working with Children's Centres in areas such as: promoting Healthy Start vouchers, referring families to holiday provision schemes and teaching skills, such as how to shop and cook on a budget.</p>

References

1. Beyond The Foodbank – London Food Poverty Profile 2018 – Sustain/ GLA/ Trust For London/London Food Link
2. Annual Review For Southwark Children's Centres Report 2017 – C. Rhodes
3. Southwark Locality Children's Centre Annual Review 2017 – Peckham, Peckham Rye and Nunhead

Holiday Provision: Southwark needs a more systematic approach to providing free meals during school holidays

THE LONDON FOOD POVERTY PROFILE

Policy area and progress to date	Gaps and opportunities
<p>Secure children’s access to food during the holidays: The Council’s public health team co-ordinated a pilot school holiday meal provision project in 2018, with Mercato Metropolitano, Central Southwark Community Hub and Guys and St Thomas’ Charity.</p> <p>A network of holiday food providers in the borough has been established over 2018/19 and has been working towards a more coordinated approach across providers, supporting shared interests around improved evaluation, funding support, sharing best practice, volunteer management and stakeholder engagement.</p>	<p>A pilot scheme, which was run with support from the Council across two sites in the borough in 2018, showed the need to work with schools, social services and other partners to strengthen the referral system.</p> <p>Local providers have spoken of the need for provision in half terms and the Easter holidays, not just during the long summer break.</p>

References

- 1. Beyond The Foodbank – London Food Poverty Profile 2018 – Sustain/ GLA/ Trust For London/London Food Link
- 2. School Holiday Meal Provision Project - Cabinet Member Briefing (Unpublished) – Southwark Council – Nov 2018

Free School Meals: All primary school children in Southwark receive a free meal at school

THE LONDON FOOD POVERTY PROFILE

Policy area and progress to date	Gaps and opportunities
<p>Improve the implementation and uptake of free school meals: Overall, 9,517 Southwark schoolchildren are eligible for free school meals (Jan 2018). This is 23.6% of all school-aged children living in Southwark (n. 40,388).</p> <p>Primary school: Due to these high percentages, Southwark provides free school meals to all primary school children, regardless of need. This goes beyond the government's offer of universal free school meals only to those in reception, year 1 and year 2. Over 92% of Southwark primary school pupils take up this offer.</p> <p>Secondary school: 25.1% of secondary school children in Southwark meet the eligibility criteria for free school meals – which is double the English average of 12.4%. This figure excludes students whose families have no recourse to public funds.</p> <p>Nurseries: The Council Plan 2018-2022 commits to extending free, healthy meals to school nurseries. 62 nurseries will be part of the Free Healthy Nursery Meals (FHNM) programme.</p>	<p>There is interest in whether a more coordinated procurement and commissioning approach could be taken across schools to achieve better value for money and drive up the quality of meals.</p> <p>There is an interest to explore water only and dessert-free menus to support the Council's Sugar Smart pledge and healthy weight strategy.</p> <p>There is interest to better understand how school meals are working in secondary schools and to audit provision with support from Guys and St Thomas' Charity.</p> <p>More understanding is needed about secondary school students whose families have no recourse to public funds, the impact of not being entitled to free school meals, and how they are best supported.</p>

References

1. The implementation of Free Healthy Nursery Meals - Cabinet paper – Southwark Council – Jul 2019
2. Beyond The Foodbank – London Food Poverty Profile 2018 – Sustain/ GLA/ Trust For London/London Food Link
3. Schools, Pupils and Their Characteristics – Local Authority Tables Department for Education (Jan 2018)
4. ONS Population Figures (mid 2017)

Meals on Wheels: Gaps may exist in protecting older and less mobile adults against food insecurity

THE LONDON FOOD POVERTY PROFILE

Policy area and progress to date	Gaps and opportunities
<p>Support and enhance Meals on Wheels provision: The borough decommissioned its Meals on Wheels service in 2018 due to cuts from Central government and does not directly fund any lunch clubs.</p>	<p>The withdrawal of Meals on Wheels means that potential is lost for add-on services, such as nutritional advice, befriending and signposting. This may leave a gap in protecting older and less mobile adults against food insecurity.</p> <p>There is an opportunity for social enterprises and commercial solutions to fill this gap.</p> <p>Offering befriending and social activities alongside food provides a way to tackle loneliness as well as food insecurity/ malnutrition.</p>

References

1. Beyond The Foodbank – London Food Poverty Profile 2018 – Sustain/ GLA/ Trust For London/London Food Link

Physical access: easy access to good food is about shops, homes, transport and food growing opportunities

THE LONDON FOOD POVERTY PROFILE

Policy area and progress to date	Gaps and opportunities
<p>Ensure residents have physical access to good food:</p> <p>Planning and regeneration: The draft New Southwark Plan looks to restrict takeaways from opening within 400m of secondary schools. Both planning and regeneration policies advocate healthy food environments.</p> <p>Retail: Southwark are working with Tesco and the Consumer Goods Forum to drive an improved offer of affordable, healthy food in supermarkets, and with convenience stores to look at how this can be made viable for small local stores. The markets team are currently supporting roll out of the Healthy Start and Alexandra Rose Vouchers in some markets.</p> <p>Housing: As landlord to 55,000 households, the Council is refurbishing all kitchens which are over 20 years old and has been trialling a 3-week cooking course to tenants to enhance cooking skills. The Council does not supply white goods for its tenants, so if a tenant has a broken fridge or cooker which they can not afford to replace, this will impact a tenant's ability to prepare food for themselves. Some social landlords including the Council can offer grants to support white goods.</p>	<p>The regeneration efforts planned for the borough offer tremendous potential to ensure good access to healthy food. The Place Plans for each of these areas should consider their potential to support food security.</p> <p>A more coordinated approach is needed to support Southwark's edible landscape (e.g. community growing spaces and orchards) and how this can be better planned for and utilised to support those in need.</p> <p>Potential food deserts have been located in the borough where it is harder to access affordable, healthy food. Many are in the more deprived parts of Southwark and residents with mobility problems, such as the frail, ill and disabled require good transport to access affordable food. How we harness business and enterprise solutions to improve access is worth exploring further.</p> <p>Providing basic cooking facilities, including cookers and fridges, could be an area for social landlords to consider as an offer for low-income tenants.</p>

References

1. Beyond The Foodbank – London Food Poverty Profile 2018 – Sustain/ GLA/ Trust For London/London Food Link

Promote the London Living Wage (and Fuel Poverty Relief)

THE LONDON FOOD POVERTY PROFILE

Policy area and progress to date	Gaps and opportunities
<p>Become a London Living Wage employer and promote the London Living Wage: Southwark has been a London Living Wage employer since 2011. Currently, 137 employers in the borough, including the Council, offer the London Living Wage. The borough is working as a pilot location with the Living Wage Foundation to become a 'Living Wage Place'. This is a geographical zone where communities and businesses are working in partnership to tackle low pay.</p>	<p>It can sometimes be difficult for smaller employers to commit to paying the Living Wage and there may be ways of helping them along this journey, such as offering business rate incentives.</p>
<p>A cross sector approach is required to tackling fuel poverty in Southwark: the proportion of households suffering from fuel poverty has increased from 5% (5,500 households) in 2011 to 8.8% (just over 11,000 households) in 2016. This often leaves people with the 'heat or eat' dilemma, as they are unable to afford both. An inability to afford fuel will impact on people's abilities to use cookers and kettles for warm food, along with fridges and freezers for storage. Older adults are particularly vulnerable.</p>	<p>This is not a heading in the Food Poverty Profile but is seen as another key wider determinant of food insecurity.</p> <p>The South East London Fuel Poverty project is an example of an outreach service working in the borough to help vulnerable residents access energy advice, Warmer Homes funding and to stay warm over the winter. However, there is potential to significantly improve participation and service uptake in Southwark.</p>

References

1. Beyond The Foodbank – London Food Poverty Profile 2018 – Sustain/ GLA/ Trust For London/London Food Link
2. Public Health Outcomes Framework – Wider Determinants – Fuel Poverty - 2016

Council Tax Reduction: Keep minimum payment rates low and protect existing statutory support for those in need

THE LONDON FOOD POVERTY PROFILE

Policy area and progress to date	Gaps and opportunities
<p>Set low minimum payments for residents qualifying for Council Tax Reduction: Southwark’s local scheme set a minimum Council Tax payment for 2018-19 of 15%. This minimum contribution has not changed since 2013 and will remain the same for 2019/20.</p> <p>Since April 2018, 19-24 year olds who had been in Southwark Council care have been exempt from paying Council Tax. The borough does not use bailiffs to recover Council Tax debt.</p> <p>Additionally, in 2012, the Council created a discretionary hardship fund for vulnerable residents who might suffer hardship if required to meet the 15% minimum Council Tax contribution, in full. That scheme will continue to be funded until 2022 at the earliest.</p>	<p>It is important to protect the minimum payment rate at 15%,if it can not be lowered further, alongside the exemption for young people who have left care.</p> <p>The hardship fund also needs to remain protected as it provides a valuable safety net for residents. Demand on the fund may increase due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The possibility of Brexit affecting food prices and the economy ▪ A projected further 25,000 households who are yet to transition to Universal Credit.

References

1. Beyond The Foodbank – London Food Poverty Profile 2018 – Sustain/ GLA/ Trust For London/London Food Link

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Resilience works at a personal, community and systems level to improve food security

LOCAL RESPONSE: BUILDING PERSONAL RESILIENCE

Resilience building, along with tackling wider determinants, provides a preventive approach to creating greater food security. It works at a personal, community and systems level.

Personal resilience is the upskilling of individuals. This can include improving people's life circumstances through boosting their income and employment prospects. It also includes enhancing food-related skills, such as how to shop on a budget, cook healthily and grow vegetables. There are numerous agencies and organisations in Southwark undertaking this work:

- Citizens' Advice Bureau gives support with Universal Credit claims.
- The Council's Local Support Team's income maximisation service helped individuals access just over £5m of unclaimed benefits in 2018-19.
- Across the borough there are a range of programmes that teach basic cooking skills, including: Bags of Taste, Be Enriched and Guys and St Thomas' Early Years Dieticians Team.
- Food growing partnerships operate in the borough, including Glengall Wharf who supply fresh produce to the Southwark Foodbank and Garden Organic who have taught growing skills on 24 estates.
- A more networked, scaled-up, coordinated and sustained approach to food growing would benefit the sector, including access to training, volunteers and funding opportunities.

Southwark has an active community sector with many organisations working intersectorally on food insecurity

LOCAL RESPONSE: COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Community resilience involves empowering communities to form strong alliances and networks around food to increase voluntary sector capacity.

There are a range of organisations in Southwark that are working to build community resilience:

- In an initial scoping exercise on food insecurity in Southwark, a PhD student mapped approximately 50 voluntary, faith and grassroots organisations in the borough that are running services to help those who are food insecure.
- The Southwark Food Action Alliance (SFAA) is an independent, borough-wide, cross-sector partnership of 60 organisations working together to tackle food insecurity. Its membership includes the Council, health practitioners, voluntary and community organisations. The SFAA was established in September 2017 and it aims to get 'beyond the foodbank' by creating a more holistic, long-term, co-ordinated response to food insecurity. The SFAA has meetings every other month for networking, learning and sharing best practice and is a member of Sustain's Food Power network.
- A longer-term vision of the alliance is for Southwark to gain accreditation as a Sustainable Food City. Here, tackling food insecurity will form part of a much broader food vision for the borough, which also encompasses health, sustainability, food systems and food culture.

References

(1) Wolf Ellis (King's College London and Evidence for Development) wolf.ellis@kcl.ac.uk

Systems resilience: Each month 23 tons of surplus food are reused by organisations that help the food insecure

LOCAL RESPONSE: SYSTEMS RESILIENCE - USE OF SURPLUS FOOD

Systems resilience looks at how to create a more resilient local food system, for example, by encouraging a vibrant, local food economy and making better use of surplus food.

For every two tonnes of food eaten in the UK, one tonne is wasted. From an environmental perspective, this is not sustainable and the Courtauld Commitment calls on the food industry to reduce food waste by at least 20% by 2025. Until the food industry becomes more efficient at minimising waste, a co-ordinated redistribution of food surplus can offer a short to medium-term solution to food insecurity. The table shows the extent to which Southwark uses surplus food.

Surplus food organisation	Number of meals provided per month from surplus (2018)	Tonnes of surplus food reused per month (2018)	Estimated retail value (provided by org)	Number of local organisations benefitting
Foodcycle	400	0.45	-	n/a
City Harvest	16,000	6.75	£19,950	9
Fareshare*	-	8.2	£13,740	22
Fareshare Go* (1)	8,272	3.5	-	20
Albrighton Fridge**	-	2.3	£6,260	4
Plan Zheroes	4,464	1.9	-	21
Total:	29,136	23.1	£39,950	76 (may include overlap)

References

- (1) London Environmental Strategy 2018 (2) The Courtauld Commitment 2025

Notes

* These figures are an average taken over a six-month period during April-October 2018. Source: Food Delivery Report for Southwark

** These figures are an average taken over a three-month period during Aug-Oct 2018.

- (1) Fareshare GO involves charities collecting food themselves from supermarkets free of charge. Its sister organisation, Fareshare delivers surplus food from a central warehouse to the recipient organisation for a membership fee.

There is potential for an increased and more co-ordinated use of surplus food in the borough

LOCAL RESPONSE: USE OF SURPLUS FOOD

There is potential for more local organisations to both donate and use surplus food. For example, only nine organisations in Southwark are receiving food from City Harvest, compared to 27 in neighbouring Lambeth. City Harvest only has one food business donating in Southwark.

During April-Oct 2018, Southwark was the London Borough to receive the most surplus from Fareshare, with neighbouring Lambeth being 2nd. However, its sister project, Fareshare GO* only redistributed 24 tons of surplus food in Southwark from participating supermarkets during April-Oct 2018. This compared to 50 tons of food in Ealing and 46 tons in Tower Hamlets.

To increase the use of surplus, infrastructure needs to be in place at the local level with organisations having storage, refrigeration and transport facilities for the food. The quality and choice of food also needs to be acceptable to the organisation. Several local organisations have cited these as barriers that prevent them from using surplus, along with the inability to plan menus in advance due to the uncertainty of what the delivery could include.

The table shows the top five kinds of food redistributed by Fareshare in Southwark according to volume (Apr-Oct 2018). Healthy food types, such as vegetables and protein are well represented here. This covers a key gap, as typically fresh foods are harder to access at foodbanks. The soft drinks category includes water, as well as less healthy drinks.

Food type	Volume redistributed in Southwark
Dairy	10 tons
Vegetables	7 tons
Fruit	6 tons
Meat	5 tons
Soft drinks	5 tons

References

- (1) Data from City Harvest – 2018
- (2) Data from Fareshare GO – April-October 2018
- (3) Fareshare Food Delivery Report for Southwark April-October 2018

* Fareshare GO involves charities collecting food themselves from supermarkets free of charge. Its sister organisation, Fareshare delivers surplus food from a central warehouse to the recipient organisation for a membership fee.

A resilience project with surplus food uncovers high levels of chronic food insecurity among its users

CASE STUDY: THE ALBRIGHTON COMMUNITY FRIDGE

The Albrighton Centre Community Fridge is a surplus food redistribution project in South Camberwell on the Dog Kennel Hill Estate. It aims to share good quality, unwanted food that would otherwise go to waste. The Fridge is open three times a week.

Neighbours and local retailers donate surplus food to the Fridge that anyone can pick up for free. The Fridge was established through a Waste Less, Save More project together with Sainsbury's and Hubbub. Although not designed as a food crisis intervention, survey data has shown high levels of chronic food insecurity among users (n. 60) who visit from around the borough.

- 70% of the sample only go to The Fridge for support with food. 63% visit more than twice a week.
- More than half of the sample said they rely heavily on food aid.
- Almost 3 out of 10 users felt totally unable to plan where their next meal was coming from.
- 93% of the sample said they were encountering moderate to high stress and anxiety over their food situation. Almost 1 in 2 respondents placed their stress and anxiety at a '5' on a 1-5 scale of severity.

The demographics show that a high percentage of users fall into vulnerable categories such as the disabled, older adults who are not yet drawing a pension and those on, or waiting for, Universal Credit. This matches findings from academic research about which groups are at higher risk of food insecurity.

- 68% of the sample are council or housing association tenants. 11% rent privately
- 40% are disabled
- 42% have applied or are waiting for Universal Credit
- 45% are aged 45-64.

References

1. Data from the Albrighton Community Fridge - 2018

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Professional and statutory services referred 6,181 households for emergency food provision in 2019-20

LOCAL RESPONSE: CRISIS PROVISION

Professionals and statutory services referred 6,181 households for emergency food provision in 2019-20, this is an increase of over 1,500 referrals compared to 2017-18. This list is not extensive as there will be smaller, independent foodbanks that we will not have data for (e.g. initiatives run by faith groups).

Trussell Trust:

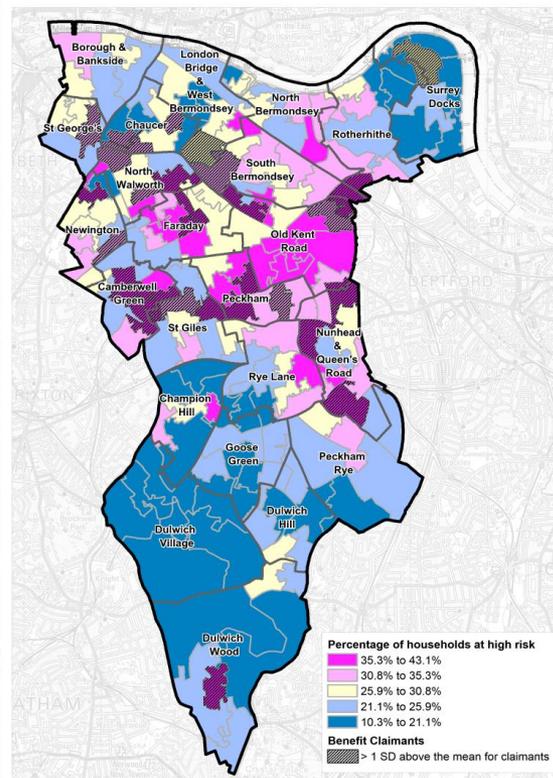
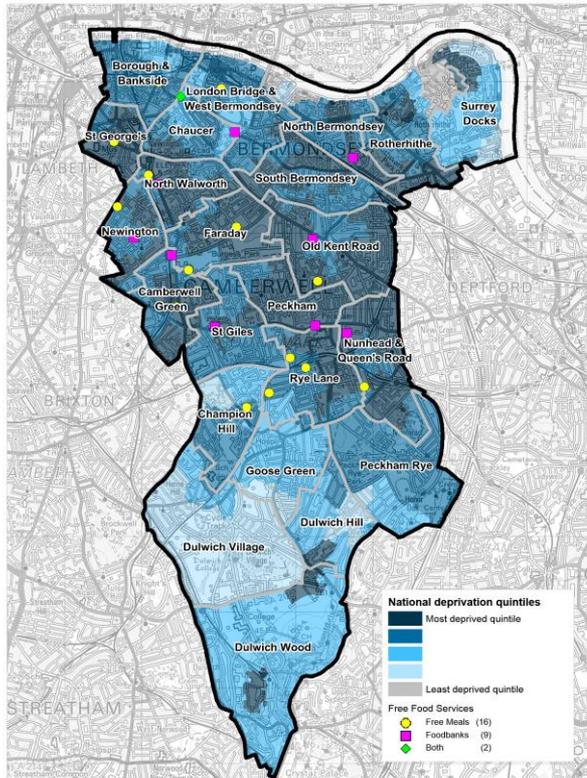
- **The Southwark Foodbank** is run by PECAN and operates out of five locations in the borough. It received referrals for 3,331 households in 2019-20, compared to 400 in 2009. 25% of referrals made during the year were due to benefit changes or delays. A referral from a community professional entitles the household to three foodbank packages during a six-month period and is designed for acute rather than long-term support. However, the foodbank have had to relax this restriction due to need. The foodbank will signpost to other relevant support agencies.
- **Waterloo Foodbank** received referrals for 172 households in 2019-20. Both foodbanks will signpost to other relevant support agencies.

Independent:

- **Central Southwark Community Hub (CSCH)** also requires a referral from a community professional. It was formed in December 2016 out of a recognition that the Trussell Trust model of three visits in a six-month period is not enough for the chronically food insecure or for those with more complex needs. Instead, it provides longer-term, client-centred, practical and emotional support. It received 2,506 referrals in 2019-20.

Some areas where food insecurity risk is potentially high lack easy access to foodbanks and free food provision

LOCAL RESPONSE: CRISIS PROVISION



Free Food Services 2018 with IMD 2015
 Data source: Department for Communities & Local Government
 Southwark Public Health Department | People & Health Intelligence | publichealth@southwark.gov.uk
 December 2018.
 © Crown copyright and database rights 2018. Ordnance Survey (0)100019252

As voluntary responses to food insecurity are likely to spring up in an ad-hoc fashion, based on where volunteers are enthusiastic to start projects, provision may not always geographically match the areas where need is greatest.

The map on the far left shows provision of foodbanks and free food, mapped against areas of deprivation. The map on the right (slide 18) shows areas where risk of food insecurity in the borough is likely to be highest.

The map shows no free meal provision in the north east of the borough. The Kingswood Estate in Dulwich Wood ward has no provision. Areas of Camberwell Green, Faraday and South Bermondsey wards appear underserved, given the potential high level of need there.

Note

1. The ward names and boundaries differ between maps as the wards changed in Southwark following the 2018 elections

References

1. Household Food Insecurity JSNA – Southwark Council - 2019

Although emergency food aid is essential, provision needs to look ‘beyond the foodbank’ to the longer term

LOCAL RESPONSE: CRISIS PROVISION

Emergency food aid should always be available to ensure that those in crisis have a safety net. However, national food campaigners take the view that food aid alone is not a sustainable, long-term solution, and this is also recognised by the Southwark Food Action Alliance.

Southwark’s main foodbanks favour moving to a model that is more preventive, sustainable, empowering and community based. This draws on work done by the Scottish Government who recommend applying four ‘Dignity Principles’ to the design and delivery of all responses to food insecurity:

- Involve people with direct experience in decision making
- Recognise the social value of food
- Provide opportunities to contribute
- Leave people with the power to choose

The Southwark Food Action Alliance supports this and recognises the need to go beyond a ‘sticking plaster fix’ to try and address the problem at source because:

- Wages and benefits are insufficient for many to live on.
- People who are chronically food insecure need help to maximise their incomes as well as to access affordable, healthy food.
- 80% of food insecure people do not use foodbanks for reasons such as unclear referral pathways and the perceived stigma of using a foodbank, so more accessible and acceptable help is needed.
- Food aid providers have little control over the quality and quantity of food offered when they rely on donations. They may stock minimal fresh food and be unable to cater for special diets.

References

1. UN Declaration of Human Rights – Article 25 (1948)
2. Loopstra and Tarasuk, 2015
3. Dignity in Practice – Nourish Scotland - 2018

'Beyond the foodbank' models include add-on services and encourage ownership, participation and community

LOCAL RESPONSE: CRISIS PROVISION

Other models of provision are being explored locally and across the country to bring those in food crisis to a greater place of resilience including:

- **A Pantry Model:** Members pay a small fee to access healthy, surplus foods and make decisions about what foods to buy as a community. In a small survey done with social pantry members in Stockport (n.37), 100% of members said the pantry had made them feel part of a community. 89% said they were better off financially for joining. PECAN began a pilot Pantry in Southwark during spring 2019 on the Peckham North Estate. Members pay £4.50 per week for £15 worth of food.
- **Community café:** Everyone is encouraged to prepare the food as well as to eat it. The café provides a place for social cohesion and can be used to promote mental wellbeing and tackle loneliness. In Southwark, the Dragon Café in Borough, which is run by Mental Fight Club offers such a service on a weekly basis. However, the café is closed throughout August.
- **Wraparound services:** Croydon has this in its New Addington Food Stop which combines a pantry with various council and health services. Members can access healthy cooking and stop smoking support at the Food Stop, alongside help with budgeting, benefits, a weekly job club and training courses to help with employment prospects.
- **Food hub:** In the Mayor's Food Strategy for London, he suggests that every key area of deprivation in a borough has a food hub at an existing centre (e.g. school/ community centre/ children's centre) where people can learn more about healthy food and cooking. With Southwark having the largest percentage of residents in social housing in the country (42%), estates and housing associations could also be good bases for hubs. The hub would encompass a community café, cookery classes, holiday provision, lunch clubs and pantries (using surplus from an organisation such as Fareshare).

References

1. The London Food Strategy – 2018 – Greater London Authority
2. Your Local Pantry – Social Impact Report 2017-18 – Church Action on Poverty/ Stockport Homes
3. Southwark Exchequer Services Stakeholder Conference – November 2018

Summary of provision in Southwark for key vulnerable groups and gaps to address

Vulnerable group	Existing provision	Gaps
<p>Those experiencing delays/ problems with Universal Credit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwark Emergency Support Scheme • Southwark Hardship Fund (for those in debt with housing/ fuel bills) • Local support team (for income maximisation) • Universal support (for help with claim forms and digital access) • Healthy Start and Alexandra Rose vouchers for pregnant women and young children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A systematic way to ensure that people do not go hungry during the 5 week-plus transition period to UC • Access to low-cost, healthy food options • Support for those whose food insecurity is chronic (including support around mental wellbeing, accessing food and improving life circumstances)
<p>Those in low-paid work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwark Emergency Support Scheme • Southwark Hardship Fund (for those in debt with housing/ fuel bills) • Local support team (for income maximisation) • Healthy Start and Alexandra Rose vouchers for pregnant women and young children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to low-cost, healthy food options • Support for those whose food insecurity is chronic (including support around mental wellbeing, accessing food and improving life circumstances)

Summary of provision in Southwark for key vulnerable groups and gaps to address

Vulnerable group	Existing provision	Gaps
<p>Those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexandra Rose vouchers for pregnant women and young children who live in Faraday, Camberwell Green and North Walworth wards Food vouchers for families with NRPF who due to their exceptional circumstances are being supported by the borough (see slide 27) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No free school meals for high school students whose families have NRPF An inability for mothers of young children to return to the workforce due to a lack of childcare No statutory support (apart from in exceptional circumstances)
<p>Low-income families with children (particularly during school holidays)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southwark Emergency Support Scheme Southwark Hardship Fund (for those in debt with housing/ fuel bills) Local support team (for income maximisation) Healthy Start and Alexandra Rose vouchers for pregnant women and young children Free school meals for all (age 4-11), with free nursery meals to soon be rolled out Some school holiday meal provision Some school breakfast provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A systematic programme for school holiday meal provision Support for those whose food insecurity is chronic (including support around mental health, accessing food and improving life circumstances) A lack of statutory support between a child's 4th birthday (when Healthy Start vouchers stop) and starting school where there will be access to free school meals.

Summary of provision in Southwark for key vulnerable groups and gaps to address

Vulnerable group	Existing provision	Gaps
<p>Older adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwark Emergency Support Scheme • Southwark Hardship Fund (for those in debt with housing/ fuel bills) • Local support team (for income maximisation) • Paid shopping scheme newly available from Age UK (Food2You) • Some community meals are available for older people via voluntary organisations (generally on a paid for basis) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Meals on Wheels (or equivalent) service which can also provide social contact and signposting • No guarantee that vulnerable, older people are getting a well-balanced hot meal every day or having any human contact to encourage or monitor their food intake • A lack of commercial food opportunities catering for older people's budgets and tastes • No facilities for delivering foodbank parcels to those who struggle with mobility • Paid carers may lack training in nutrition and have little time during a visit to provide a well-balanced, hot meal. • There are areas of the borough that have no lunch club provision. Some lunch clubs only meet weekly, fortnightly or monthly

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Professionals explain the impact that food insecurity can have on many aspects of people's lives

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: HOW FOOD INSECURITY MAY AFFECT RESIDENTS

The negative effects of food insecurity on people's lives are summarised by professionals, including frontline workers from Southwark:

- [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 off debts leaving no money for food, staying in unsafe relationships to have food to eat.
Director of Central Southwark Community Hub foodbank
- [A typical food insecure person that we see] will have no recourse to public funds and have 2 or 3 kids. They will be staying with a friend or in some form of insecure accommodation – not knowing from week to week where they are going to stay. The mother is likely to be depressed because of her situation and because of this she won't be coming forwards to the Children's Centres and other services that can help. Because of the lack of food, she will be lethargic and not have the energy needed to follow through with suggestions that will help her and her family.
Family Support Workers – First Place Southwark Children's Centre
- [Paediatricians] see parents in A & E who are limiting their eating to care for their children. Children are worried, scared and upset.
Royal College of Paediatricians and Child Health: Views From The Frontline 2017
- [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 (2008-2014)

Qualitative research was taken to include the views of frontline workers and those with lived experience

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS

To gain an informed and rounded picture of food insecurity in Southwark, local stakeholders were engaged from February 2018 to February 2019.

Stakeholder views taken into account range from Bermondsey and Old Southwark MP Neil Coyle, who heads the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Foodbanks, to academics and national lobby groups, to local foodbank users, frontline staff and Southwark Food Action Alliance members. The views were gathered through two stakeholder workshops (n.50), face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with those who are food insecure (n.9) and qualitative surveys of frontline workers (n.28). The composition of respondents for the surveys was, as follows:

▪ Children Centre staff	(6)	- Elderly workers	(4)
▪ Local support team	(2)	- Mental health workers	(2)
▪ Young adult workers	(1)	- Growing skills providers	(1)
▪ Cookery providers	(3)	- Food surplus redistributors	(1)
▪ Primary school staff	(1)	- Social work staff	(1)
▪ Foodbank staff	(2)	- Medical staff	(4)

Key themes summarised in the following slides include: the groups felt to be most affected, problems navigating the system, the need for wraparound services including mental health support, issues with food aid, a lack of affordable options on the high street, holiday hunger, issues affecting the 50+ age group and suggestions for improving the system.

References

1. Frontline worker survey - 2018

Frontline workers have observed a rise in food insecurity, citing NRPF and benefit problems as the main causes

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: GROUPS THAT ARE MOST AFFECTED

The qualitative work undertaken with the sample of 28 frontline workers revealed the following:

- Those with NRPF and Universal Credit problems were the largest groups that frontline workers were noticing who were presenting with food insecurity.
- Food insecurity seems to be increasing. It is affecting a wider range of groups and communities than before, including middle-class people and those in employment.
- Concerns were raised about:
 - The higher number of people being discharged from hospital without being able to feed themselves
 - A rise of people in temporary accommodation where cooking and food storage facilities may be inadequate
 - An increase in people being deemed fit to work despite health barriers
 - Benefit issues taking longer to resolve.

References

1. Frontline worker survey - 2018

Accessing support around food and referrals for food aid is inconsistent: 'It's a lottery who you get.'

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: REFERRAL

It is the responsibility of frontline teams to pick up on those in need and to refer them correctly

- The face-to-face interviews at foodbanks revealed that most had received their referral because someone had noticed they needed help. Testimonies from two foodbank users follow: “The drug support worker noticed I was eating lots of the biscuits they provide with the coffee and asked if I needed help with food.” (#1); “I wouldn't tell the job centre I needed food – I'd wait to be asked.” (#2) When foodbank users were asked what advice they would give to those in a similar situation, the consensus was to ask for help earlier. A Careers Coach from SLAM articulated: “Most people do not speak up about needing support for food so we have to be observant and pick up on how the client is presenting.”
- There were reports of frontline workers being either unobservant or unhelpful. At a women's refuge, one woman had not been referred for help with food despite presenting as very hungry, having not eaten in two days. One food insecure person commenting on the consistency of support from job centres said: “It's a lottery who you get”. The interviewees said they had been deterred from approaching services again after a bad encounter, be it with social workers, the Council or DWP.
- There were also reports of frontline staff referring away from statutory services. A volunteer with The Fridge said: “Social workers take people to us who have come straight out of care. Our type of provision should not be part of the welfare system. Statutory services should be where people are sent for help, rather than signposting straight to The Fridge.”

The stress of food insecurity creates anxiety, trauma and depression. Emotional support is essential.

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: MENTAL HEALTH

There is a high level of mental health need among the food insecure.

Mental health was mentioned by 7 of the 9 food insecure people interviewed, two of whom had a pre-existing condition. Others mentioned how the stress of the situation had brought on ill health and made them anxious and depressed. A first-time foodbank user commented: “I was so anxious that I couldn’t leave my home for the first month after my benefits stopped.” The support gained from having a listening ear, “a hug and cuppa” and sense of community at the foodbanks was of huge importance to those interviewed.

The CEO of PECAN (which hosts Southwark Foodbank) said at the 2018 Southwark Stakeholder Conference on Universal Credit: “Universal Credit has created a system of stress and depression. We feel that three out of four people we see have developed a mental health issue.” He also observed that when people are in trauma and crisis they need their basic survival needs met before they can respond to more holistic interventions. The foodbank now has counsellors working with its volunteers to reduce the risk of vicarious trauma (which can happen when helpers are exposed to difficult stories).

A Southwark GP noted in written evidence that the increase in food insecurity among low-income patients “has created high levels of psychological distress, anxiety and related mental health problems.” A community mental health professional added: “When you're food insecure, you don't have choice or control over food. Choice and control are two key things that are good for mental health.”

The Brighton and Hove Food Partnership (who are seen as leaders in food insecurity work in the UK) observed a high level of mental health problems among the city’s food insecure, concluding that “because of the level of undiagnosed mental health issues – people need 1:1 support – not factsheets.”

References

1. Frontline worker survey – 2018
2. Brighton and Hove Food Poverty Action Plan 2015-18 ‘One Year On’

Charity and NHS workers are reluctant to use food aid or attend communal meals due to a fear of being recognised

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: ACCESSING FOOD AID

A King's College PhD student has been interviewing people using Southwark foodbanks and community meals since 2016 as part of his research. This has involved in-depth interviews with 43 people so far. Preliminary findings show the following:

- People using food aid services have widely varying skills, knowledge and capabilities. Deficits in these areas may contribute to some people's food insecurity, but should not automatically be assumed.
- Charity and NHS staff who are struggling financially seem reluctant to go to food aid services for themselves and are often worried about being recognised. Open services, like community meals, are particularly difficult for this group, as well as others who feel vulnerable in more public environments.
- Community meals can be a source of enjoyable social contact and a place to share information about other services. However, social cohesion at meals can be limited when people sit alone, in groups of like-minded people or when clear distinctions are made between volunteers and service users.
- Most food-aid services in Southwark are only open during weekday working hours.
- Research suggests that the Latin American community is under-represented at Southwark foodbanks and community meals. More research is needed to understand if this is because the community has its own resources or whether it is unaware of the help available.
- While people are often grateful, there is frustration at having to rely on charity services for a wide range of support needs, particularly when the services have experienced cut-backs or are under-funded.

References

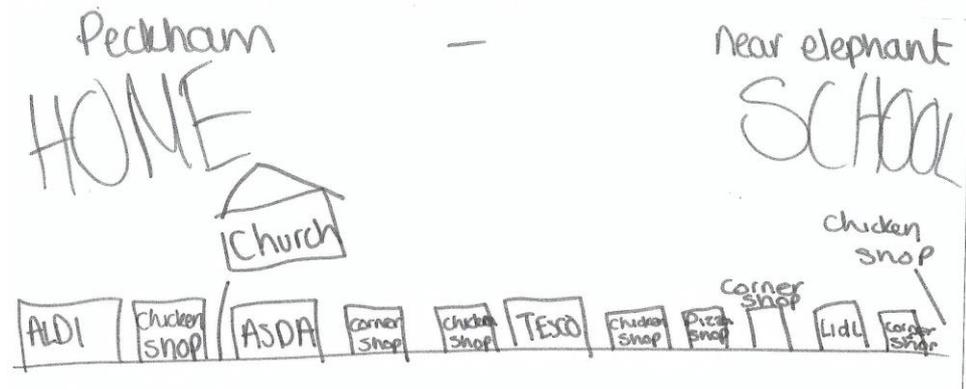
1. Wolf Ellis (King's College London and Evidence for Development) wolf.ellis@kcl.ac.uk

Regeneration and planning: 'There are too many bakeries selling loaves of bread for £3+'

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, HEALTHY FOOD

To combat food insecurity, access is needed to affordable and healthy options. The testimony below shows how both an abundance of fast-food outlets and expensive, up-market options can inhibit this. Planning, regeneration and local economy policies are needed to make healthy, affordable choices easy choices for Southwark residents.

The illustration is a mental map drawn by a Southwark teenager during their time on the National Citizen Service programme during summer 2018. It shows the food options they have on their walk from home to school. Takeaways, such as chicken and pizza shops feature largely in how they perceive their local food choices.



In written testimony, a staff member from Link Age Southwark commented that responsible regeneration is needed to protect affordable food choices: "Ensure regeneration does not drive out traditional food sellers and sensibly priced shops. The number of coffee shops and restaurants on Lordship Lane and the loss of Iceland is a case where ordinary people now find it challenging to buy affordable food. There are too many bakeries selling loaves of bread for £3+."

The CEO of the Alexandra Rose Charity said: "There needs to be a market response 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."

‘Withering away in their homes’: Hunger and malnutrition in the elderly is hidden and under-reported

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: OLDER ADULTS

The 2018 All Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger in the elderly, which collected evidence from many stakeholders around the country spoke of “older people spending two or three months withering away, starving [in their homes] before entering hospital weighing five and a half stone with a urine infection or pneumonia” and “older people living alone in high-rise flats that they are no longer able to leave ‘having services pulled from under their feet’ feeling angry, hungry and let down.” The stakeholders interviewed spoke of the hidden nature of the problem:

“Most older people become malnourished in their own homes and, in many cases, the problem is never acknowledged or addressed.” (Age UK)

“So many frail, older people are invisible in the community, so we’re not fully aware [of the extent of malnutrition]” (Food Train)

“There may be under-reporting of food insecurity amongst older people due to generational tendencies to ‘make do’ or ‘not make a fuss’ about difficulties... poor nutrition was often a problem for older people discharged from hospital with little support in place or limited social networks” (Church Urban Fund)

In written evidence for this JSNA, Age UK for Lewisham and Southwark commented: “People in their 80s and 90s are more likely to be malnourished, but it seems to go unnoticed.” A Southwark General Practice nurse wrote: “I have noticed malnutrition in the elderly and when I ask them if they have hot food, they rarely get it.”

References

1. Hidden Hunger and Malnutrition In The Elderly – APPG on Hunger – 2018
2. Frontline worker survey - 2018

Dementia, isolation, lack of statutory help and lack of support for the 50-65s all contribute to food insecurity

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: AGE 50+ AND OLDER ADULTS

Aside from those in their 80s and 90s, Southwark and Lewisham Age UK has identified other at risk groups in the 50+ age group it works with:

- Those in the pre-retirement years who do not yet have the stable income of a pension. “There’s not much support for the age 50-65 group if they are able-bodied.”
- People with dementia “who don’t feel like eating or forget to eat or go to the shops.”

Link Age Southwark which works with 600 isolated, over 60s in the borough said that the most at risk are “those who can’t easily get out to shop and are not supported by statutory services or family members.” Even those with friends and neighbours who help can find that the provision is ad-hoc, for example, “if they are away, it limits their choice of food.”

A Consultant Dietician at Guys’ and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust said: “It is difficult for me to understand how older people without a care package survive. I see a high reliance on ready meals.” However, a care package does not guarantee good nutrition as the package does not cover the purchase of food. She adds: “The carer’s focus is 80% on toileting, washing and dressing; 5-10% on administering medication and perhaps 5% on food.” This could be remedied with training on nutrition and malnutrition for all care workers. In written evidence for this JSNA, an AGE UK staff member commented: “As people aren’t eligible in care packages for things like shopping, people are spending more on getting people to shop for them, leaving less money for food.”

The Consultant Dietician from Guys’ and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust felt that health promotion was needed to encourage older people to eat. “There is a sense with eating that it’s not worth doing it ‘just for me’. Older people aren’t aware that not eating enough food is bad for them.”

A lack of appropriate, affordable eating places and nearby shops for older people impacts their food choices

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: AGE 50+ AND OLDER ADULTS

Older adults are affected by the choices they have for food within their price range and within easy reach of their homes:

“Living alone and social isolation lead to a loss of confidence in going to the best places to buy good food cheaply. There’s insecurity about going to Peckham as they used to do in the past to shop for food. The closure of useful small shops, like butchers and greengrocers impacts people”. (Link Age Southwark)

“I can’t go out on my own because of osteoarthritis. Now I know I have stuff in the cupboard, whereas before sometimes there was nothing to eat.” (Food2You service user - Southwark)

A Commissioning Manager for Older People’s services in Southwark Council said: “Most of the older people in Southwark are poor. The commercial market in Southwark doesn’t see opportunities in Southwark with the older population.”

Evidence in the APPG report on hunger in the elderly mentioned other barriers:

“It is expected that if you are not able to get out, that you have the option to shop online, but... there are many of the older generation that would not be in a position to use a computer and set up online shopping” (Ian Lucas MP).

“One hour is insufficient for many older people to get around a large supermarket” (Centre For Research In Primary and Community Care, University of Hertfordshire).

Free meal provision during the school holidays is a 'lifeline' for food insecure families

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: FOOD INSECURITY DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The Council partnered with Guys and St Thomas' Charity to support Mercato Metropolitano in SE1 and Central Southwark Community Hub in SE17 to deliver holiday meal provision for children during summer 2018. The 6-week, pilot programme involved providing a nutritious lunch for the participating families, along with activities to improve learning and increase social engagement. Participants were also given leftover food to take home. 79 individuals (31 parents and 48 children) participated in the evaluation. This included questions on food insecurity.

At the start of the programme only a few parents reported that their families had enough to eat all the time during the holidays. Half of the respondents had previously visited foodbanks. A quarter of children recorded 'sometimes' or 'always' having trouble paying attention at school due to feeling hungry. A quarter of parents reported worrying about the lack of food in the last year and their ability to provide healthy food, some parents reported skipping meals due to lack of money. At the end of the programme, all respondents reported having had enough to eat during that holiday either all or most of the time. All reported being 'very' or 'quite confident' to provide healthy food for their family during the next school term.

"The holiday club has been a life line as she didn't have to worry about feeding the children at lunchtime. This has helped prevent her going into debt this summer." [Interview with a mother of three who attended sessions at Mercato Metropolitano]

"The clubs ensured that their children were fed well. They [the families] didn't have to spend money that they don't have. One parent told me that she retained her sanity by attending the club as her son was calmer because he had somewhere to go and he would be fed." [Interview with the programme manager at Central Southwark Community Hub].

Reference

1. Report on Holiday Hunger Provision – Cabinet Health and Wellbeing Committee Sub Group - 2018

Stakeholders see the need for a multi-layered approach to food insecurity that addresses all tiers of the pyramid

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Stakeholders identified a range of opportunities for improvement in Southwark:

Opportunities relating to Tier 1 - Wider determinants

- To move beyond foodbanks, a strategic approach is needed to tackle the root causes of food insecurity such as poverty, inadequate housing and problems with benefits.
- Create incentives for social enterprises and businesses to make the retail of healthy, affordable food profitable in low-income areas.

Opportunities relating to Tier 2 - Resilience building

- Food growing projects need more coordinated support to access funding, volunteers and training to be sustainable over the longer term.
- Use housing staff and residents' organisations to reach out to the large number of Southwark residents living in social housing.
- Support social prescribing for cooking and growing programmes. Support needs to be given to the host organisation to ensure that they have the capability to deliver.

Opportunities relating to Tier 3 - Crisis provision

- Develop a communications strategy and referral pathway to counter the current lack of awareness about where food insecure people can go for help.
- Train frontline staff on how to identify food insecurity and how to refer and signpost appropriately.
- Provide support outside of typical Monday-Friday, 9-5pm times.
- Have welfare rights officers/ benefits advisors on site at places used by food insecure people.
- Create ways for the housebound and less mobile to access food aid.
- Ensure that food aid contains fresh fruit and vegetables and that it meets nutritional, cultural and religious needs.

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A preventive and coordinated approach is needed to stem the increase of food insecurity and its impacts

SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

Food insecurity is an important issue that affects the health and wellbeing of our residents

- Access to adequate food is recognised as a basic human right.
- Food insecurity is connected to poorer mental and physical health. It is costly to society and the health system. It disproportionately affects those who are most marginalised, adding to health and life inequalities in the borough.
- There are likely to be high levels of unmet mental health need among the food insecure, yet there is only one community café catering for this group in the borough.

Food insecurity affects a large and potentially growing number of residents.

- Approximately 1 in 4 Southwark residents are likely to be food insecure. This equates to 75,000 people who due to lack of money are skipping meals, cutting down on quantities eaten, are unable to afford balanced meals and at the most extreme end of the spectrum experiencing real hunger.
- If we apply national findings to Southwark's elderly population, 2,560 older adults in the borough could be malnourished.
- Food insecurity levels in Southwark are higher than the London and national average . This is because our destitution levels, free school meal eligibility, levels of child and pensioner poverty and obesity are all higher than average. Southwark is also one of the first local authorities to have been rolled out to Universal Credit.

A preventive and coordinated approach is needed to stem the increase of food insecurity and its impacts

SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

Food insecurity affects a large and potentially growing number of residents (ctd).

- Only 20% of people who are food insecure are likely to go for emergency food aid, due to stigma, lack of awareness of help available or gatekeepers in the referral process preventing access. In Southwark during 2017-18, 4,674 referrals were made for emergency food provision. Southwark Foodbank, which accepted 2,495 referrals in 2017-18, saw a 30% increase in referral numbers from 2016-17.
- Mapping work shows that the borough has potential food deserts along with under-served areas where the need for food aid does not match provision. Many of the food desert areas fall within council estates, where the borough's more deprived residents are likely to live.
- People living in food deserts often pay a poverty premium as they rely on convenience stores for their shopping. Here, prices are generally more expensive than at supermarkets. BAME and low-income families are more likely to live in areas with fewer supermarkets and more convenience stores.

A wide range of groups are vulnerable to food insecurity, and this may be broadening further.

- 40% of referrals to foodbanks in 2017-18 were due to benefit problems, mainly as a consequence of the switch to Universal Credit. 60% of the Southwark Foodbank's users in 2017-18 were single people. This may reflect that single people were the first household type to experience full rollout to Universal Credit. Previously, single parent families had been the largest household type using the foodbank.

A preventive and coordinated approach is needed to stem the increase of food insecurity and its impacts

SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

A wide range of groups are vulnerable to food insecurity, and this may be broadening further (ctd).

- 1 in 6 households referred to Southwark foodbanks in 2017-18 had a member in employment.
- 1 in 7 households referred to Southwark foodbanks in 2017-18 had no recourse to public funds.

There is a wide range of activity in the borough that seeks to address food insecurity, but this could be more co-ordinated.

- Southwark has various initiatives taking place in the voluntary, statutory and community sectors which are tackling food insecurity. There is strength to be drawn from bringing this together as a co-ordinated whole. This has started through the formation of the Southwark Food Action Alliance and the Food Security Action Plan will offer a further opportunity to create a coordinated, borough-wide approach and response.
- More systemisation and co-ordination is needed in the following areas: school holiday meal provision, growing schemes and surplus food redistribution.
- There is a need for a food insecurity referral pathway that will refer to statutory services first. Frontline workers across many sectors need to be trained in how to recognise food insecurity and who to refer to.

A preventive and coordinated approach is needed to stem the increase of food insecurity and its impacts

SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

Focusing on prevention and building resilience rather than on crisis management offers a more sustainable approach for the future.

- Southwark has developed a three-tier approach to tackle food insecurity, recognising that it needs addressing on multiple levels. The three areas of focus are: the wider determinants, building resilience and crisis provision.
- Stakeholders in Southwark are keen to move to a 'beyond the foodbank' model which is preventive and focuses on resilience and community building.
- An emphasis on foodbanks is not the right solution for those whose poverty or food insecurity is chronic.
- At least 23 tons of surplus food are used each month in Southwark by organisations serving the food insecure. There is potential for more surplus to be both collected and redistributed in the borough as a medium to short-term solution to food insecurity.

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Food insecurity needs a strategic, borough-wide approach with clear referral pathways

RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

- Ensure that Southwark tackles food insecurity at a strategic, community and individual level and that implementation of the action plan is done with key partners, including the Southwark Food Action Alliance and relevant Council departments.
- Whilst food aid is still a priority we must increase the focus on prevention and resilience building.
- Embed food security into a wide range of Council agendas (e.g. Healthy Schools/ planning/ housing/ regeneration).
- Design clear referral pathways and non-stigmatising communication strategies to help residents and professionals access the existing help available, including food aid provision, resilience-building programmes and statutory offerings. Join the dots to have clearer pathways between services.
- Review gaps in support, both geographically and for vulnerable groups. Explore options for change with relevant commissioners, partnerships and commercial interests including:
 - Good Food Retail Plans to promote access to healthy affordable food in potential 'food deserts'
 - Coordination of a holiday hunger offer for schools in Southwark.

Key recommendations include partnership working, well-trained frontline staff and access to wraparound services

RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

- Develop several 'food hubs' in deprived areas across the borough (as recommended in the Mayor's London Food Strategy) to promote local access to affordable, healthy food support. The hubs will include wraparound support and resilience building opportunities. They can house food growing and cooking programmes, be a drop-off point for redistributed surplus food, host community cafes and be a base for models such as Community Fridges and pantries.
- Work with frontline staff and services to identify signs of food insecurity. Support them to have the confidence to signpost accordingly when issues arise.
- Identify mechanisms via housing, regeneration and planning to build infrastructure to support communities to shop, cook, eat and come together in a healthy and affordable way.

Next steps:

- 1) Agree the action plan with key partners and deliver against the priorities set out.
- 2) Review the action plan annually for the next two years in light of a potential Brexit scenario.
- 3) Embed mechanisms and systems to support food security in a sustainable way.

Find out more at
southwark.gov.uk/JSNA

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