

Beyond the Food Bank

London Food Poverty Profile

2019





Foreword by Debbie Weekes-Bernard

Deputy Mayor for Social Integration,
Social Mobility and Community Engagement

London is home to a vast array of food businesses, community food projects, markets and street food traders that all offer a snapshot of our vibrant, multicultural communities. They also demonstrate the integral role food plays in creating sustainable jobs, addressing health inequalities, protecting the environment and supporting local economies and social integration.

However, against this backdrop, thousands of Londoners are having to rely on food banks to feed themselves and their families each year. Between April 2018 and March 2019 the Trussell Trust handed out 166,512 parcels in London. These figures only provide a partial and inadequate proxy for the full extent of food insecurity, though, which is why the Mayor committed to measure food insecurity for the first time in London. Our research, published in the Survey of Londoners this year, shows almost two million Londoners, of whom an estimated 400,000 are children under the age of 16, struggle to afford or access a sufficient diet.

The Mayor has always been clear that this is an unacceptable situation. It is compounded by the impact of welfare reforms, the freeze to working-age benefits and employers failing to pay their staff the London

Living Wage. Last year, he published his London Food Strategy, setting out his plans to help Londoners access healthy, affordable, sustainable and culturally appropriate food.

The Food Strategy's first chapter focuses on the ways in which the Mayor, local authorities and partners can help tackle rising levels of food insecurity. It includes a pledge from the Mayor to continue supporting the publication of *Beyond the Food Bank*, now in its fifth year, which plays such an important role in monitoring and publicising the progress boroughs are making in addressing this issue.

The measures in this report reflect many of the other Mayoral commitments and calls to action outlined in the Food Strategy, such as developing Food Poverty Action Plans and Good Food Retail Plans, promoting the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers, paying the London Living Wage, funding Universal Free School Meals and supporting holiday provision programmes such as Kitchen Social.

I welcome the increasingly coordinated approaches many boroughs are taking to improve physical and economic access to healthy, affordable and sustainable food for their residents by tackling

the underlying drivers of food insecurity highlighted in this report. Nineteen councils have either published or are developing food poverty action plans, 18 are London Living Wage accredited and more councils are actively promoting it to employers in their borough.

Yet this progress cannot and should not distract from the fact that 700,000 children in London are living in poverty, an increasing number of families are falling into outright destitution and 722,000 workers are earning less than the London Living Wage.

As Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement, I want to take this chance to thank and commend the local authorities and countless individuals, organisations and community and faith groups who are working tirelessly and doing everything within their power to tackle food insecurity - many of whom are volunteers. I also join the Mayor in calling upon the Government to start reinvesting in the welfare system and vital front-line services that support the most vulnerable people in our society.

Acknowledgements

Report written by Lailah Nesbitt-Ahmed, London Food Poverty Campaign Coordinator for Sustain.

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www.londonfoodlink.org

About the report

This is London Food Link's fifth annual Beyond the Food Bank: London Food Poverty Profile report. It tracks what London's 33 councils are doing to improve household food security, which according to accepted definitions means helping people 'feed themselves and their dependents adequately, healthily and without anxiety'.

Our report focuses on 10 measures that are within the influence and control of local councils, which if improved on will enhance health and reduce inequality across the capital. Data has been collected via a questionnaire that assesses the level of activity by boroughs on each of these measures. This year, 28 councils responded to our questionnaire.

There have been two significant changes to the methodology for this year's report. In some cases this has contributed to a decline in scores compared to last year. Firstly, ten questions have been added across a number of the measures in the questionnaire. These new questions help to ensure the data continues to reflect developments at the local and national level and accurately reflects how well councils are faring. Secondly, the scoring system has been revised to ensure councils receive more points for activity that most directly relates to the measure being advocated in the report.

More information about the scoring system can be made available on request.



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

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Notes

The London borough maps of actions shown in this report are correct to the best of the evidence available at the time of publication. Every effort has been made to ensure good practice is highlighted across London Boroughs. Councils can contact Sustain if there is any relevant data or information that has not been included.

Sustain's expertise is in food and farming, including food poverty. Where analysis and recommendations are included that touch on matters such as income, benefits, social services and local authority responsibilities, we have taken the expert advice of our partners and others.

The statements and opinions expressed in this report should not be attributed to any individual or organisation unless explicitly connected by quotation with that person or organisation.

Recommendations for action

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

1. Have a comprehensive plan to reduce food poverty which would include these subsequent recommendations.
2. Have a designated Healthy Start coordinator and an integrated programme of activities to increase local uptake rate.
3. Boost breastfeeding by working towards full Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation.
4. Provide high quality affordable childcare and maximise the value of children's centres.
5. Improve the implementation and increase uptake of free school meals and support breakfast clubs.
6. Ensure that all children have access to nutritious food during the school holidays.
7. Lead on activities to improve physical access to good food by working with planners, retailers and caterers.
8. Reinvigorate provision of meals on wheels, developing a 'more than the meal' approach.
9. Become an accredited London Living Wage employer and contractor, champion the London Living Wage with local employers and become a Friendly Funder.
10. Minimise the burden of Council Tax payments for residents on low income.

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

	Food Poverty Action Plan	Healthy Start	Breast-feeding	Children's Services	Holiday Hunger	Free School Meals	Physical Access	Meals on Wheels	Living Wage	Council Tax Reduction	Overall Score
Islington											69%
Croydon											68%
Southwark											67%
Tower Hamlets											67%
Lambeth											66%
Lewisham											65%
Merton											63%
Greenwich											62%
Waltham Forest											48%
Redbridge											45%
Hackney											44%
Brent											41%
Camden											38%
Kingston upon Thames											38%
City of London											36%
Enfield											34%
Hammersmith & Fulham											34%
Bexley											29%
Newham											28%
Hounslow											26%
Barnet											25%
Haringey											25%
Harrow											23%
Sutton											23%
Havering											20%
Barking & Dagenham											18%
Richmond upon Thames											18%
Wandsworth											16%
Bromley											*
Ealing											*
Hillingdon											*
Kensington & Chelsea											*
Westminster											*

* No survey response received and these councils have not been scored, but we have included the data received directly from the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative and the Living Wage Foundation for all councils.

London food poverty in numbers

 **1.5 million** adults in London have low or very low food security¹

 **400,000** of London's children under 16 - struggle to afford or access enough food²

 **722,000** London workers (around 20%) earn less than the London Living Wage³

 **166,512** emergency food parcels were given to Londoners by Trussell Trust food banks in 2018-19⁴

 **£4.5 million** of Healthy Start vouchers are missed out on by London households⁵

 **212,000** children projected to miss out on free school meals in London⁶

 **25%** of London's children are at risk of going hungry during the school holidays⁷

Why this matters

Food poverty action plans are coordinated strategies that map the current situation, identify gaps in provision and offer potential solutions. Thanks to this coordination and joint working, plans give clarity about the best ways to ensure all local residents have good access to affordable, nourishing food.

When developed collaboratively with key stakeholders working to reduce food and inequality within a borough, these plans can also play a role in addressing the structural issues that underlie food poverty. This means they can provide a solution to address both short and long-term food poverty.



-  Council has a food poverty action plan or equivalent
-  Council is developing a food poverty action plan or equivalent
-  Council does not have a food poverty action plan or no data provided

What can councils do?

1. Download Sustain's Guide to Developing Food Poverty Action Plans and review examples of other areas' plans.⁸
2. Establish a steering and/or working group and hold an initial workshop or summit bringing together a wide range of organisations addressing food poverty.
3. Carry out a needs analysis and map current activity across the borough.
4. Publish a plan agreed with a wide range of stakeholders committed to taking action, including consideration of the practical interventions set out in this report.
5. Monitor and report on progress over time.

Tracking progress

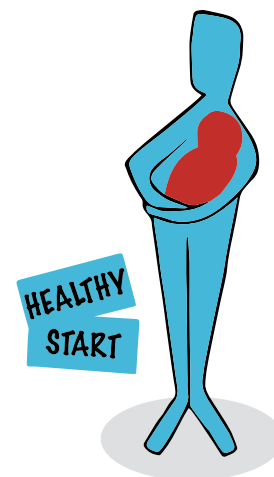
This year, 19 out of 33 councils stated that they had a plan in place or were in the process of developing one. Of these 19 councils, 11 were in the process of developing a plan and 8 already had one in place. Within these 19, 11 had given multi-sectoral groups responsibility for implementing the recommendations in the plan, 12 had a designated lead councillor and 13 had resources allocated to either the plan's creation or implementation, or both.

Why this matters

Healthy Start is a programme funded by central government that aims to provide a nutritional safety net to pregnant women and children under four in low-income families.

Through the programme eligible parents and children are given vouchers weekly worth £3.10 to spend on fresh and frozen

vegetables, fruit, milk and infant formula. Yet poor access, lack of promotion and low knowledge of the programme has contributed to variable uptake rates, with eligible women and children in London missing out on an estimated £4.5 million of healthy food a year.



- Council taking at least 5 significant actions to support Healthy Start vouchers
- Council taking at least 3 significant actions to support Healthy Start vouchers
- Council taking at least 1 significant action to support Healthy Start vouchers
- No reported action or no data provided

What can councils do?

1. Designate and support a council officer or health professional to have overall responsibility for promoting Healthy Start vouchers and vitamins.
2. Ensure that information on Healthy Start is available in all relevant settings and that workers and volunteers are sufficiently trained and have seen our Healthy Start toolkit.⁹

Tracking progress

This year, 27 councils out of 33 stated that they were undertaking a range of activities to increase uptake, up 7 from last year. Of these, 17 are taking more than 5 significant actions to support voucher uptake. 13 additional councils reported having a designated Healthy Start lead, which brings the total number to 21. Improvements in this measure show that councils are increasingly seeing the importance of pursuing activity tailored to local needs to increase uptake and having someone to monitor and coordinate efforts.

While these changes are encouraging it should not distract from the need to increase the breadth of activity undertaken. Only 2 additional councils reported having a strategy for coordinating and promoting the scheme (15 boroughs altogether), and only one more is offering training to either healthcare professionals or other organisations who come in contact with the target audience (12 boroughs altogether).

Enfield

Activities undertaken by Enfield to improve the uptake of Healthy Start include:

- Training Health Visitors, Early Years professionals, Change and Challenge Team and PVLs (private, voluntary and independent settings). The council is also creating keyrings with messages for Health Visitors to use, which will include Healthy Start.
- Including Healthy Start as an action in the local obesity strategy.
- Developing a Healthy Start action plan and designing an information campaign targeted at both eligible parents and retailers.
- Developing an action plan to train all housing officers and external partners such as food bank staff as part of Enfield's 'Making Every Contact Count' programme, including information signposting on Healthy Start.
- Working with faith and community groups to help promote the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers and vitamins.

Lambeth

Activities undertaken by Lambeth to improve the uptake of Healthy Start include:

- Providing Healthy Start information at antenatal bookings and new birth visits.
- Mainstreaming Healthy Start information into all multi-agency training and capacity building programmes.
- Working with local Business Improvement teams and liaising with and encouraging local fruit and vegetables market traders to sign up/register as retailers to accept vouchers. This approach is to increase availability and accessibility for the local population.
- Implementing a ten-year programme for children and focusing on the most deprived wards. A key component of the nutrition strand of this programme is to promote the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers.

Lewisham

Raising the profile and uptake of the Healthy Start scheme is a key priority within Lewisham's Whole Systems Approach to Tackling Obesity. Information on the scheme is featured in the obesity plan and in the Lewisham Obesity Alliance Newsletter, which is circulated to stakeholders in Lewisham quarterly.

Since January 2019, the council has partnered with colleagues at Lewisham Registry Office so that the Healthy Start scheme, as well as the Lewisham free vitamin D scheme, are promoted to families registering new births in the borough. The Healthy Start application and free vitamin D information are provided to families with their child's birth certificate.

The council also invites health care professionals to its 'Introducing Solid Food' training which includes a section on the Healthy Start scheme, how to use food vouchers and vitamin coupons as well as Lewisham's universal free vitamin D scheme. Midwives are also able to issue Healthy Start women's vitamins to all pregnant women in Lewisham at the point of registering a pregnancy. Midwives will also receive further training and information relating to the Healthy Start scheme, which will include information on how to spend the vouchers.

Finally, Lewisham have started to work with the Lewisham Job Centre's Borough Partnership Manager to identify how to work together and promote the Healthy Start scheme in order to increase uptake of vouchers.

Newham

The Early Start Nutrition Team currently deliver training called 'Vitamin D - A Healthy Start' and other micronutrients training for all early years settings, which covers information about Healthy Start, who is eligible, how to apply, what people receive, and information on both the supplements and food vouchers. The training discusses the importance of vitamin D for bone health for children

and families. Information on vitamin D and Healthy Start is covered in two other modules – Food and Nutrition for Infants and Food and Nutrition for Toddlers (classroom and online training is available for these modules). The training supports settings to consider families they are working with who are eligible for Healthy Start and to ensure they have discussions with families, while providing them with the application form and guidance on how to complete it. Settings are given examples of different ways to communicate with families via display boards, using newsletters or by having a more targeted approach. As part of the Early Start Health Award (aligned to the Healthy Early Years London Award), settings are required to showcase how they are taking these messages forward and what the impact is for families, i.e. accessing the Healthy Start vouchers will ensure children are meeting their vitamin D recommendation and increasing fruit and vegetable consumption.

Quick tip: Can you give an example of anything that you think has been particularly effective to promote Healthy Start vouchers?

Bexley

"Having a coordinated and multi-agency approach to Healthy Start. We will also specifically promote the benefit of vitamins. We have also produced local Healthy Start materials which will be shared to stakeholders to promote the scheme and will be holding a re-launch event for health professionals, retailers and community representatives in late 2019."

Newham

"We find that nursery and children's centre services play a positive role in communicating healthy eating messages and information on Healthy Start to families. As they are in contact with families on a regular basis there are ample opportunities to support parents in understanding the benefits of the Healthy Start scheme. Training has provided a positive means to ensure consistency in the messages we provide."

Why this matters

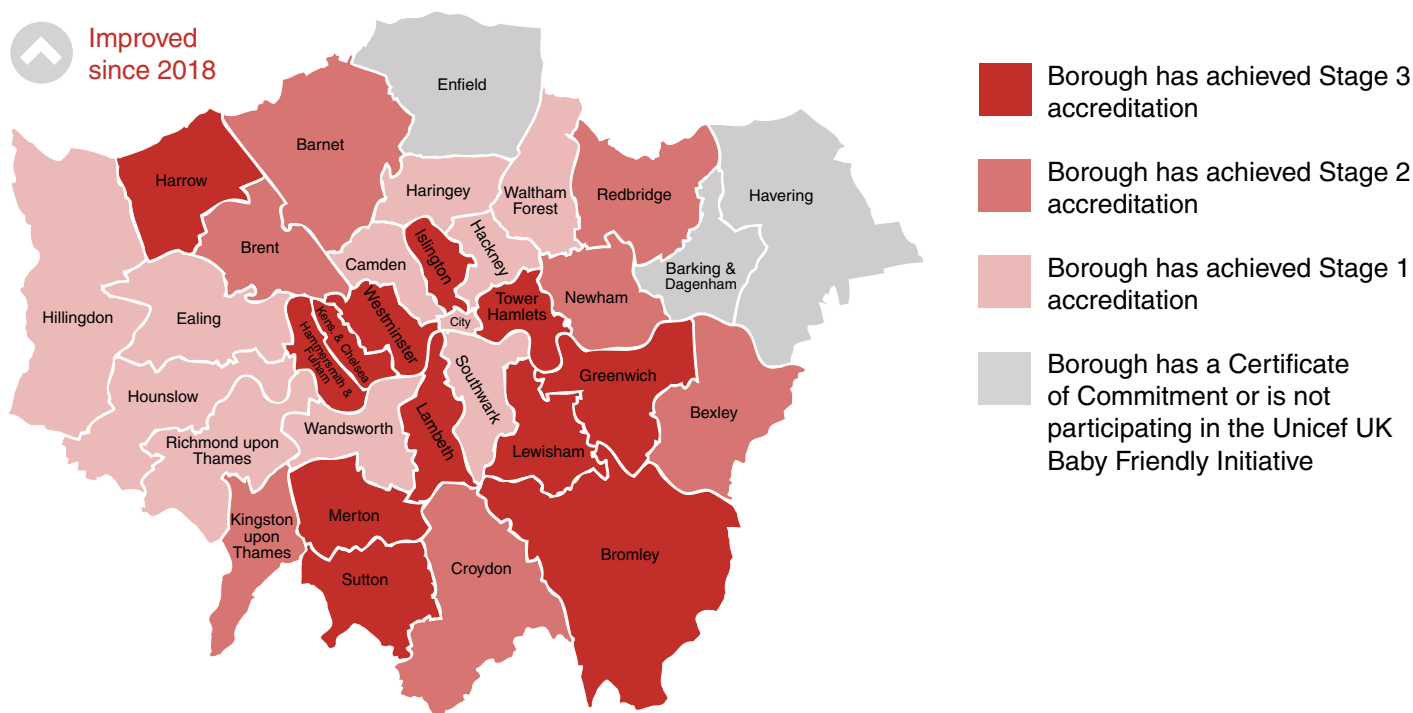
The World Health Organisation and UK governments all recommend that babies should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months, to boost child and maternal health and wellbeing. But in the UK only 34% of infants are still receiving any breast milk at six months. Importantly, women living on low incomes or in deprived areas are among those least likely to breastfeed. Social and cultural factors are held to be

the main obstacles, so promoting breastfeeding and supporting mothers is a shared responsibility. To ensure that new mothers have the knowledge and confidence to begin and continue breastfeeding, boroughs can become accredited with the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative.¹⁰

In March 2019, the Mayor refreshed his commitment to support an increase in breastfeeding rates in

London and encourages all boroughs to achieve full Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation in maternity, neonatal and community settings. Analysis has shown that the initiative is an effective strategy for increasing breastfeeding rates.

Local authorities can also play an important role by welcoming breastfeeding in all public spaces and council-run workplaces.



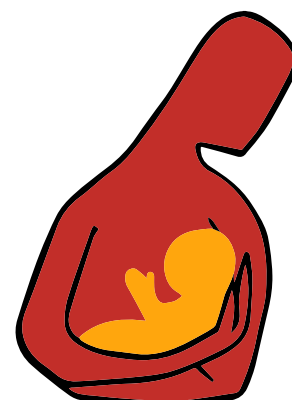
What can councils do?

1. Work towards full Unicef UK Baby Friendly accreditation in all eligible services, including ensuring access to the required training.
2. Join the National Infant Feeding Network for London.¹¹

Tracking progress

Almost all boroughs in London have Unicef UK Baby Friendly Accreditation with figures rising from 26 in 2018 to 30 in 2019. Four new boroughs achieved accreditation at Stage 1 bringing the number of London Boroughs with Stage 1 accreditation to 10.

Two new boroughs have achieved Stage 2 accreditation, bringing the number to 8. These figures are very encouraging and are indicative of increasing awareness of the importance of breastfeeding.



Bexley

A range of support is provided in Bexley to promote breastfeeding. This includes the antenatal, 'Birth, Baby and You' sessions that are provided in all Children's Centres (which include a session on breastfeeding), breastfeeding support groups, and information and support provided by health visitors. In addition to these services there are six 'breastfeeding key workers' in the 0 – 19 Children's Public Health Service as well as an Infant Feeding Lead.

Havering

Havering has a proactive Infant Feeding Steering Group that in the past six months has increased frequency of its meetings from 6-weekly to monthly, and added GP representation to existing regular attendance from public health, early help, health visiting, midwifery and voluntary sector peer supporters. The action plan aligns with the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) framework, but the council does not currently have budget to apply for formal accreditation. They recently launched procurement of a new Healthy Child Programme contract and included BFI requirements within this, so the new provider will need to commit to progressing towards BFI accreditation when the contract commences in April 2020.

Lambeth

Lambeth is implementing a ten year programme for children under four years of age. This programme targets the most deprived wards in the borough and one of the key outcomes around nutrition is the promotion and uptake of breastfeeding. The service is delivered by a team of Breastfeeding Network staff and volunteers and a Maternity Pathway has been developed to co-ordinate referrals and signpost women during their

pregnancies and into the early years. The Lambeth Breastfeeding service aims to:

- Proactively identify opportunities to promote the benefits of breastfeeding and the support available to women in Lambeth.
- Offer one-to-one breastfeeding peer support to women living in the deprived wards both at antenatal and at postnatal stage (at home or in community venues).
- Provide universal breastfeeding group support to women in the local area (adhering to the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative) through:
 - Delivering weekly peer-led breastfeeding support groups.
 - Co-delivering breastfeeding support groups alongside the Lambeth Health Visiting team.
- Offer one-to-one postnatal breastfeeding peer support to women not only in deprived wards but across the borough where there are identified barriers to accessing group based support.
- Provide telephone hotline support to all Lambeth women.
- Ensure all women with more complex breastfeeding needs are referred to the specialist midwives for support.
- Support specialist breastfeeding support groups led by Specialist Midwives.
- Arrange and deliver an annual Lambeth study day to support the ongoing learning and development of breastfeeding peer supporters, and share learning with wider stakeholders.

Merton

Merton Health Visiting is committed to the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative and is currently working towards Gold Accreditation. As a result, mothers are given support to continue their breastfeeding journey by a well-informed workforce.

Merton Health Visiting is developing a pathway to support mothers who,

for medical reasons, have been asked to supplement their baby's feeding with formula milk. These mothers are at high risk of stopping breastfeeding before they want to. However, a timely response and the right support allows breastfeeding to continue. The pathway joins up colleagues in maternity services, health visiting and the specialist breastfeeding service.

Quick tip: Can you give an example of anything that you think has been particularly effective in promoting breastfeeding?

Barnet

"Social media campaigns: details of the nine weekly Barnet Breastfeeding Support Services are posted together with daily reminders and posting resources that are shared across various Facebook pages to promote and support breastfeeding."

"We are continuing to fund the breastfeeding peer supporter service and have combined it structurally with the health visitors to ensure close working relationships. We are also working hard with the health visitor service regarding data quality."

Havering

"Infant Feeding Cafés, delivered by our Early Help team in Children's Centres, are timetabled to run in the room next door to Health Visiting clinics. This facilitates easy signposting of parents from the clinics and has removed any barriers previously associated with attending on a different day or at a different venue. Attendance at the Infant Feeding Cafés has increased as a result."

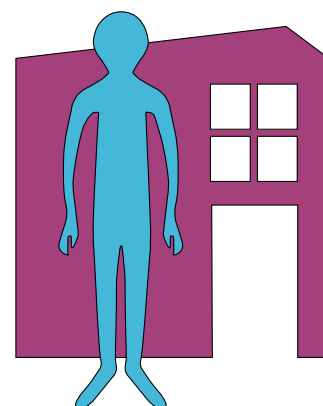
Why this matters

Statutory provisions such as access to high quality affordable childcare and children's centres, directly support families at risk of food poverty.

By providing a range of services centred on health and wellbeing, education and learning, and parenting support and development, children's centres are able to support

and promote better outcomes for the most vulnerable families with the greatest needs.¹²

Similarly, access to high-quality, affordable childcare is central to enabling parents to increase household income through work or by accessing education and training.



- Council taking at least 10 significant actions to address food poverty via children's centres and childcare provision
- Council taking at least 6 significant actions to address food poverty via children's centres and childcare provision
- Council taking at least 1 significant action to address food poverty via children's centres and childcare provision
- No reported action or no data provided

What can councils do?

1. Continue to protect funding for children's centres and the number of children's centres.
2. Make maximum use of children's centres to address food poverty, through Healthy Start promotion, income maximisation, holiday provision with food, and debt and employment advice.
3. Consider how children's centres can play a role in increasing access to fresh fruit and vegetables, for example through regular stalls or co-ops.
4. Ensure children cared for over a mealtime are provided with a healthy meal, and that healthy snacks and drinks are available at other times, and staff are given training to support healthy eating.
5. Keep childcare assessments up to date, and ensure provision is both adequate and appropriately distributed throughout the borough and draw up plans to remedy deficiencies in the quantity or spread of childcare available.

Tracking progress

Despite funding challenges, all 28 councils who responded to the report have continued to ensure that their children's centres support vulnerable families. With regards to childcare, 15 boroughs reported having childcare for working parents with children under five in all parts of the borough, 11 reported having childcare in most parts of the borough and 2 reported having childcare in parts of the borough. Of notable mention is Camden which is the only local authority that funds food as a part of its free childcare benefits for eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

Good practice

Is your children's centre doing anything else to address food poverty?

Barnet

"We have just engaged with Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) who will provide a nutritionist to deliver sessions within the Children's Centres. We also have a qualified chef who delivers workshops for parents and children around budgeting and low cost healthy food. All of our Children's Centres are taking part in the Healthy Early Years London awards."

Camden

"Camden funds an enhanced (additional 15 hours) Free Entitlement offer (30 hours in total) for 3-4 years olds. The criteria for these places is the same as Free Entitlement for 2 year olds. This supports families with young children to access volunteering, training or work. Food vouchers for the local food banks are available from the children's centres."

Croydon

"All centres have signed up to the Mayor of London's Healthy Early Years programme and work in collaboration with other providers where there are opportunities to do so."

Havering

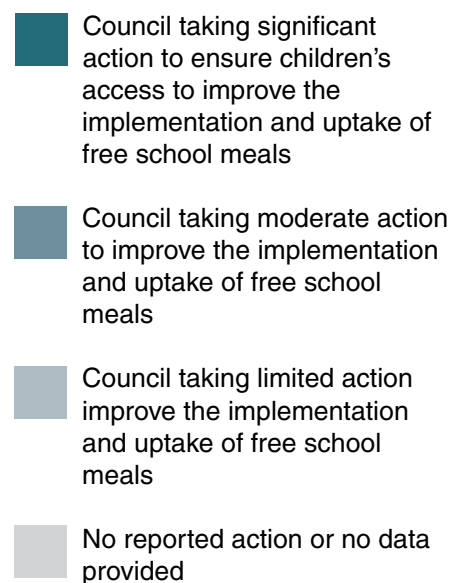
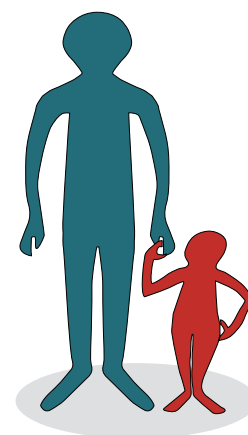
"Our children's centres are all registered distribution sites for the Trussell Trust Food Bank vouchers. We are also in the early stages of looking to train a cohort of Early Help Practitioners to deliver the HENRY Healthy Families Programme along with colleagues from our Health Visiting Service, with plans to then co-deliver the Healthy Families workshops and programme from children's centres and other community venues. We intend for this to promote support for cooking on a budget as well as healthy eating and parenting."



Why this matters

Free school meals provide vital support for low-income families and for almost a third of children, school lunch is their main meal of the day. Yet an estimated 212,000 children in poverty are expected to miss out on free school meals (FSM) in London under new eligibility criteria for Universal Credit, which will see eligibility limited to families earning less than £7,400 a year.¹³ Councils

can help in a variety of ways, which include ensuring all those entitled to free school meals claim them (as universal provision applies only to infant pupils). Breakfast clubs also play an important role in providing a decent meal to start the day and a reliable childcare solution for families where parents work or need to get other children to different schools or childcare settings.¹⁴



What can councils do?

1. Ensure that all eligible children are registered for free school meals.
2. Ensure that schools are maintaining the number of children registered for free school meals from year 4 upwards (when the national Universal Infant Free School Meals provision ends in most boroughs).
3. Provide free breakfasts to pupils in receipt of free school meals, and provide universal free school breakfasts in schools with greater than 35% free school meal eligibility.

Tracking progress

While councils were generally strong on measuring and reporting uptake of free school meals and offering training to schools to increase uptake, quite a few boroughs were taking less action than the year before. As a result councils have scored poorly on other crucial activities aimed at increasing free school meals uptake. The picture had not significantly changed from last year, with the same 4 providing free school meals to children of preschool age.

There is a similar picture for funding, with the same 5 councils provided funding for universal free school meals and 4 offer funding for breakfast clubs.

Council engagement with businesses and community partners was also relatively low, with only 6 asking these partners to provide support for breakfast clubs.

Redbridge

Redbridge has assigned a member of staff to map school food provision within the borough. Calls are made to schools from time to time to track what provision they have available, including breakfast and after-school clubs.

Part of the mapping was to track the location, cost and number of breakfast clubs provided in the Borough. Currently Redbridge has 51 schools that operate a breakfast club with a meal.

However, the majority of the breakfast clubs are hosted by external agencies such as Shine breakfast club, Young Aspirations and Barracudas. The prices for breakfast club differ in each school. Some schools charge £3-£6 where others charge from £2.50 to £5 per child even if receiving free school meals, which can be a barrier.

Hackney

Around 90% of Hackney primary schools provide breakfast clubs, including free breakfast for those on free school meals.

Other settings, activities and schemes that contribute towards securing children's access to food include The Hackney Learning Trust who promote free school meals by email and letter to all parents, outlining the online application and encouraging parents to apply. They also regularly share information with schools around sources of funding for free breakfast clubs.

Other examples include:

- Hackney Marsh Adventure Playground are currently involved in the Mayor's Fund for London Kitchen Social project. They receive funding to provide a hot meal two days a week during each week of the school

holidays. The staff and young people at the playground plan, prepare and cook the meals and serve to all young people in attendance that day (anything from 50 to 120 meals). The meals are cooked to school food standards and include a main and dessert. Although the target group is disadvantaged families, all young people at the playground can receive a meal.

- Through Young Hackney's Universal Youth offer, the council delivers a range of nutrition, food preparation and cooking skill activities as part of holiday programmes. These usually provide one hot, healthy meal per attendee on the day.
- The council works with the food charity FoodCycle to provide a free community meal every week at the new Kingshold Community Centre.



Why this matters

With almost 4 in 10 (37%) of the capital's children living in poverty,¹⁵ there is no doubt that many experience hunger. Research for the Greater London Authority (GLA) found that 9% of London children sometimes went to bed hungry,¹⁶ with these numbers increasing outside term time when children no longer have access to free school meals.

Holiday hunger pushes many families into food poverty and insecurity as many parents cannot afford the extra £30 - £40 per week per child it can cost to feed their children during the holidays. Councils can help tackle 'holiday hunger' by ensuring that children have access to nutritious food on the 170 days a year when they are not in school, particularly over long holiday periods.



- Council taking significant action to ensure children's access to food during the holidays
- Council taking moderate action to ensure children's access to food during the holidays
- Council taking limited action to ensure children's access to food during the holidays
- No reported action or no data provided

What can councils do?

1. Provide funding and other support for holiday provision with food.
2. Designate and support a council officer or health professional to have overall responsibility for holiday provision with food.
3. Collect and share information on local activities where food is available during the holidays and work with partners to refer children who may be at risk of holiday hunger.

Tracking progress

The overall number of boroughs taking action has declined since last year, and for some the level of action has also declined, which is concerning.

A significant number of councils continue to recognise the importance of having a holiday food provision coordinator with 14 out of 33 councils reporting a designated contact. More councils also reported engaging with

businesses to provide support for holiday schemes.

Despite these improvements, only 5 councils provided funding for holiday meal provision. Additionally, only 8 councils have reported raising awareness about holiday meal provision and only 6 reported coordinating referrals of children to holiday provision with food.

Greenwich

The Royal Borough of Greenwich currently commission the Greenwich Cooperative Development Agency (GCDA) to deliver meals during the school holidays. By summer 2019, there will be 23 lunch sessions per week in total, spread evenly around 13 venues in the Borough. Each centre can accommodate around 30 children a day, adding up to a maximum of 150 meals a day across centres and 690 per week across the Borough. This is a universal offer and any children attending can join in. The centres are currently being finalised.

The holiday meals scheme is advertised through a number of channels. This includes using Council media, such as the website, twitter feed and Greenwich Info (fortnightly free newspaper). They have also used targeted social media advertising to promote the scheme. GCDA also promote the scheme through their networks with community centres and more widely. In the future, they will be looking to improve this promotion through more targeted work with schools.

Lambeth

Lambeth is currently implementing a three-year Holiday Hunger project and funding is being provided by Kitchen Social to 17 organisations to run Holiday Hunger projects in Lambeth. This includes One O'clock Clubs, adventure playgrounds, local projects supporting vulnerable families on low income, youth and community trusts, after-school clubs, community centres and libraries.

Southwark

In London, around 500,000 children suffer from food-insecurity and during school holidays, the problem is exacerbated as children are unable to access regular and nutritious school meals.

Since 2018, Mercato Metropolitano has been committed to helping address the issue, by running a holiday club twice a week across the summer holidays. Mercato Metropolitano offers free places to families most in need and provides a programme of stimulating physical and educational activities, together with a nutritious two course meal.

Last year, over 350 meals were served across the 12-week session. This year, 10 sessions were held throughout the summer holidays, 2 days a week, and over 600 meals were served. On some days, over 60 children and their parents attended the holiday club. Activities ranged from martial arts to yoga, circus skills to planting workshops and the focus was on giving children a fun summer and making new friends.



Pictures: Mercato Metropolitano, 2019

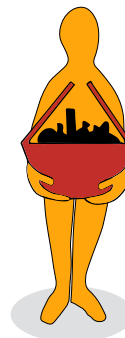
Why this matters

Physical access to food in London is a mixed picture; while there is no shortage of food outlets, there is not equal access to food, with some densely populated areas lacking access to shops selling fresh produce, and some high streets dominated by fast food, which can often undermine other efforts to improve healthy eating and tackle childhood obesity. These areas of low access are often referred to as

‘food deserts’, while areas of high saturation of junk food are sometimes described as ‘food swamps’.

Councils have a role to play in helping residents access healthy foods, starting with mapping food provision to understand which areas have limited access to certain types of shop; whether public transport routes link to food shops; and whether, for example, outlets

selling unhealthy snacks are congregating near school gates. They can also use planning powers to encourage a diversity of shops and markets, and can encourage local businesses to provide healthier options and get involved in other schemes such as Healthy Start.



- Council taking significant action to improve physical access to good food
- Council taking moderate action to improve physical access to good food
- Council taking limited action to improve physical access to good food
- No reported action or no data provided

What can councils do?

1. Map food access, checking how easy it is for lower income groups and those who face other barriers such as disabled people, older people or parents to get to local shops that sell varied, affordable and healthy foods.
2. Use planning processes and business rates to foster shops, shopping areas and markets selling healthy diverse foods, including healthy takeaways.
3. Encourage local businesses to participate in Healthy Start, Healthy Catering Commitment and where available the Alexandra Rose fruit and veg vouchers scheme.
4. Consult the Director of Public Health or other appropriate health bodies on planning applications.

Tracking progress

This year, all 28 councils who responded to our survey reported taking action to increase healthy food retail in close proximity to residents, up by 6 from last year. This shows that councils are placing greater priority on improving access to good food to improve health outcomes, social inclusion, community cohesion, and economic regeneration. 19 are participating in the Healthier Catering Commitment, 21 are mapping proximity to schools or other child-oriented uses such as parks, children’s centres etc. and 17 consulted their Director of Public Health or other appropriate health bodies on planning applications.

Bexley

There are two new community fridges in Belvedere Community Centre and Bostall Library which provide a variety of fresh produce including fruit, vegetables, dairy products and bakery products, provided from surplus food from supermarkets that would otherwise go to waste.

Croydon

Activities undertaken by Croydon to ensure all residents have physical access to good food include:

- **Good Food Retail Plan** - The Council has recently started working on its Good Food Retail Plan with the aim to improve residents' access to good healthy food. They are focusing on two key areas in Croydon and are working to provide healthy food at local markets, to increase local retailers' participation in Healthy Start and to develop a good food alliance.
- **School Superzone** - A pilot programme focused on improving the environment within a 400m radius of schools. A local action plan has been produced and the Council is working with colleagues across departments to implement these actions.
- **Holiday Food and Fun programme** - Working in partnership with Family Action in summer 2019, the Council provided holiday food provision targeting over 9,000 school-aged pupils who are entitled to free school meals, providing one free healthy meal alongside a nutritional, educational activity and at least one hour of physical activity.

Camden

Camden are supporting a range of actions to improve physical access to food under the 'Camden Can' initiative. Camden Can was set up in 2017 as a partnership to ensure that Camden is a place where everyone has the opportunity to eat well and be physically active. This partnership is made up of a range of Camden organisations including businesses, voluntary and community sector organisations, the NHS, schools, housing and many more. Activities include:

- **Camden Can Pledge** - This is a set of promises for any organisation, business or group in Camden to make some simple changes that will help people who live and work in in the borough to live healthier lives, including access to healthy affordable food.
- **Camden's Community Fridge** - The community fridge will improve access to good food and help people to eat healthily. It also helps reduce food waste by encouraging residents to drop off any unwanted fruit and vegetables, to be shared with residents from the community who are on low incomes and in need of fresh food.
- **Camden Can Innovation Fund** - This facilitates and supports the design, development and evaluation of innovative programmes that work with Camden organisations to help residents eat well and be more physically active. For example, the Innovation Fund supported the development of The People's Fruit and Veg Stall which is a community-led fruit and vegetable stall located on a Camden market in an area with an identified paucity of outlets providing healthy, affordable fresh produce.

Haringey

Activities undertaken by Haringey to ensure all residents have physical access to good food include:

- The creation of Haringey Obesity Alliance which is a group of local organisations committed to working together to reduce obesity.
- The adoption of the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction, which outlines Haringey's pledges to:
 - Develop a policy on food/drink advertising, sponsorship and corporate partnerships.
 - Improve the food controlled or influenced by the Council, through a Food Standards Policy, and reducing the sale of sugar-sweetened soft drinks from Council-owned or managed premises.
 - Reduce prominence of sugary drinks and promote free drinking water.
 - Support businesses and organisations to improve their food offer.
 - Increase the healthy food offer at Council-organised events.
 - Raise public awareness through signing up to the SUGAR SMART campaign.
- Haringey Council has signed up to the national campaign SUGAR SMART (run by Sustain) that encourages partners to develop pledges to take action on sugar reduction and healthier food and raise public awareness on this issue.
- As part of the Healthy Schools programme, schools work towards the School Food Standards and SUGAR SMART campaign targets.
- Refill Haringey is currently under development to improve access to free drinking water in the community.

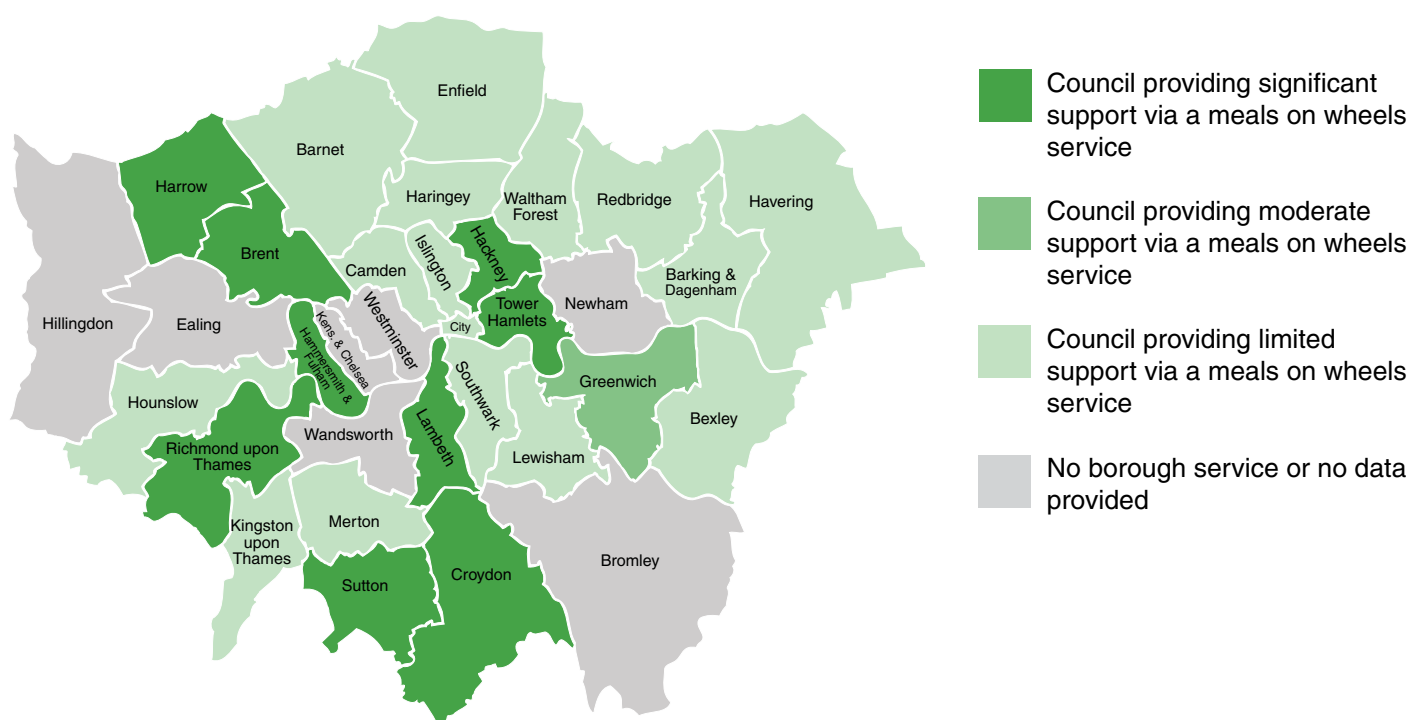
Why this matters

Poor nutrition among older people or others who face barriers to buying and/or preparing nutritious food, is part of a vicious circle: lack of nourishment makes them frailer, which in turn can make them less able to provide nourishing food for themselves. With an aging population and a well-publicised shortfall in social care budgets,¹⁷ meals on wheels services, which deliver some

sort of meal to people in need, have never seemed like a better idea.

However, they are in decline in London. Research last year found that fewer than half of councils across London were providing a service, whereas two years earlier, two-thirds had been supplying a daily hot meal.¹⁸ There is great scope for London councils and their partners

to use meals on wheels as a way to help people retain their health and independence and there are working examples of services doing this.¹⁹

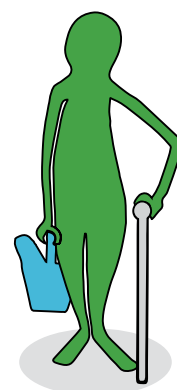


What can councils do?

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

Tracking progress

25 out of 33 councils are taking at least some action to ensure residents have access to meals on wheels. However, only 10 of these reported having a role in providing and/or funding services. Of the 25, only 2 prepare and distribute meals; 4 buy and distribute meals; and 4 put the service to tender and provide some level of funding. The remaining 15 councils signpost residents to other services or commercial providers.

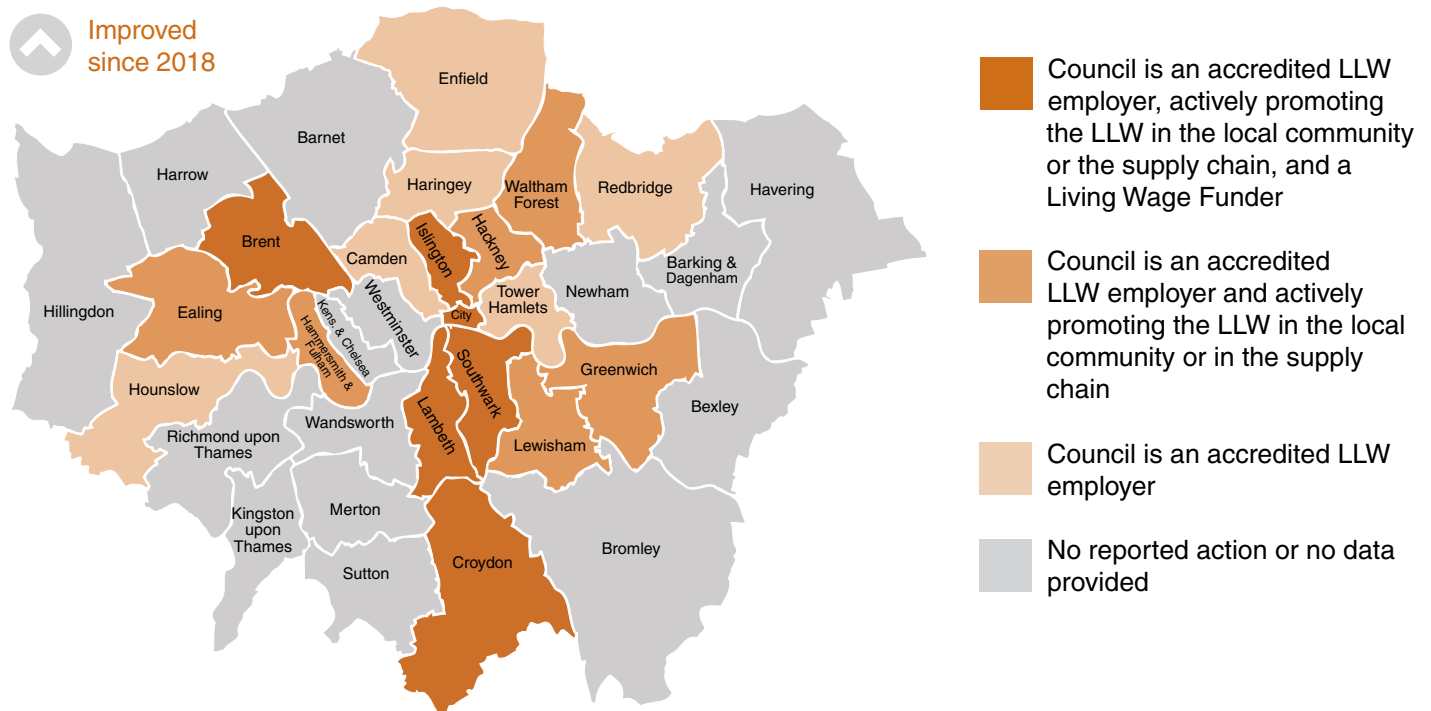


Why this matters

Raising incomes is the surest way to lift people out of poverty, and therefore food poverty. The London Living Wage (LLW) is set at £10.55 an hour, based on what people in the capital need to live on, and applies to all workers over 18. Being paid the LLW can mean the difference between 'just about managing' and earning enough for a decent life, including being able to afford adequate, good quality food.

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

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



What can councils do?

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

Tracking progress

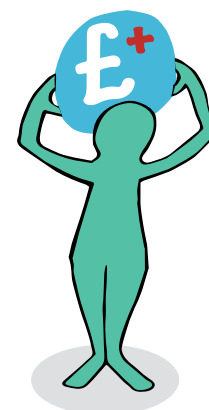
This year the number of accredited Living Wage Councils has increased from 16 to 18. Of these 18, 12 councils are taking additional steps through promoting LLW in the community or supply chain, which is an increase of 3 from last year. 6 councils are championing Living Wage by also being accredited as a Living Wage Funder, which has remained the same from last year.



Why this matters

The Council Tax Reduction scheme (also known as Council Tax Support) helps people on low incomes and/or certain welfare benefits to pay their Council Tax bill or have it reduced, sometimes to zero. This frees up more income for families to spend on necessities, including food. Councils administer their own, locally devised schemes, offering Council Tax discounts worked out as a

percentage of Council Tax bills. This increases the financial uncertainty that low-income Londoners face in boroughs with different schemes and different eligibility criteria. Councils can help ensure that Londoners with the same needs and income, regardless of location, are entitled to the same amounts of support, whilst also offering financial advice to those who need it.



- Council has minimum Council Tax payment of 0% of the Council Tax bill
- Council has minimum Council Tax payment of 10% or less
- Council has minimum Council Tax payment of 20% or less
- Council has minimum Council Tax payment of 21% or no data provided

What can councils do?

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

Tracking progress

Overall, there has been a slight drop in performance this year. Although one more borough has started to take action, two were less generous than previously. This year 17 councils reported allowing individuals on low incomes or collecting benefits to pay a minimum council tax payment of 20% or less. Of these 17 councils, 5 offer discounts between 11- 20%, and 4 offer discounts of 10% or less.

There are 8 councils commendably leading the way by providing 0% payments to all residents on a low income or collecting benefits - the same number as last year, though slightly different boroughs.

The remaining councils either provided no data or run a local scheme that reduces the Council Tax charge payable by people on low incomes/benefits to 21% or more.

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London Food Poverty Profile

A Sustain publication

October 2019

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Part of the food and farming charity Sustain, London Food Link is the voice of good food in London. Our network is made up of individuals, enterprises and organisations who are working for better food in the capital and represented on the London Food Board.

We lead and partner on policy initiatives, campaigns and practical projects to improve the food system. These include the Good Food for London report, the London Food Poverty Campaign, Capital Growth, Urban Food Fortnight and The Jellied Eel magazine.

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