

FOOD POVERTY ACTION PLAN

Consultees strongly identified the key theme of ensuring that food poverty issues are integrated into a broader poverty strategy. Consequently, the Food Poverty Action Plan sits within a broader Poverty Plan currently being developed.



FIVE WORKSTRANDS

1. Local Healthy Food
2. Buying, cooking, and eating healthy food
3. Holiday Hunger
4. Food growing
5. Generic actions to support the Action Plan



1. LOCAL HEALTHY FOOD

Tower Hamlets becomes the place where residents facing or at risk of food poverty have easy and affordable access to healthy food within walking distance of their home (or delivered locally)

1. School catering

Maximise the potential of school catering contractual arrangements to improve child health and educational attainment

- Ensure the provision of healthy food at lunchtime in term times that enhances attendance and attainment levels
- Establish a working group of nutritionists, school cooks, teachers, parents and children to ensure the provision of healthy food
- Provide free school lunches for teachers to raise food standards and enhance children's lunch experience
- Continue to discourage the eating of 'packed lunches'
- Amend the structure of the school catering contract delivery by giving schools joint management responsibilities of Lunch Time Supervisors
- Encourage the practice of Assistant Teachers becoming Lunch Time Supervisors
- Expand the provision for vulnerable children and young people by providing breakfast and after school food
- Deploy catering staff to teach food purchasing, preparation, hygiene, and cooking skills to parents and guardians
- Support 'Holiday Hunger' actions to create a sustainable plan to establish a network of community kitchens

**MAIN
PRIORITY**

2. Food Co-ops

Establish a network of food cooperatives located within walking distance of all residents

- Support the growth of food cooperatives, and provide organisations and individuals with a toolkit of set up guidance
 - Support food cooperatives to provide a range of activities including healthy cooking, healthy lifestyle advice and signposting, and delivery of healthy food to the most vulnerable people
 - Encourage partnerships between the cooperatives and local suppliers of fruit and vegetables
 - Identify disused retail spaces for priority use for food cooperatives
-

3. Markets

Ensure all six recognised local markets offer affordable fruit and vegetables

- Increase footfall to borough's local markets
- Increase the number of fruit and vegetable traders
- Review the impact of interventions, and implement the most impactful - incentivise fruit and vegetable traders in markets to accept Healthy Start food vouchers, for example
- Encourage Children's Centres to connect local families with affordable healthy food in the community

4. Redistribution of food

Address food waste and help alleviate food poverty by working with supermarkets, convenience stores, and food redistribution organisations to provide affordable healthy food to community groups

- Identify food redistribution organisations and support them to expand their operation within the borough
- Support community groups to access the services of food redistribution organisations
- Work with partners to develop low-cost social supermarkets in areas of highest deprivation
- Work with supermarkets and convenience stores to increase healthy food sales as a percentage of total food sales

5. Communicating

Implement a communications plan to inform residents where they access healthy food

- A campaign to tell residents what's available
- Focus a social marketing approach on residents most likely to use fast food outlets on a regular basis
- Support vulnerable residents to utilise resources such as Healthy Start food vouchers to buy healthy food

6. Future gazing

Ensure that easy and affordable access to fresh food is everybody's business and is future proofed

- Stage an annual conference that encourages collaboration amongst all stakeholders, to provide residents with easy and affordable access to healthy food



Tower Hamlets becomes the place where partnerships with food suppliers produce 'win win' outcomes of sustainable businesses and the provision of healthy food

1. Innovations

Set up a food supply innovations team that reviews how healthy food is supplied to residents today, and helps shape food supply, cooking and eating habits in the future (possibly including)

**MAIN
PRIORITY**

- Ensure regulatory incentives such as Food Hygiene Rating Schemes become public facing and link with interventions such as Food for Health Awards
- Reviewing and utilising planning regulation
- Make the connection between local food growing and the buying and cooking habits of residents
- Encourage the establishment of small locally grown businesses ('developmental kitchens') to supply fresh food packaged as ready meals - possibly sold in 2 ways - significant margins to high end purchasers and lower cost products to residents facing or at risk of food poverty (A made in Tower Hamlets brand?)
- Popularise to sellers the trading benefits of offering a service that promotes the eating and cooking of fresh fruit and vegetables
- Support sellers of healthy food to inspire residents to buy, eat and cook their produce such as 'Pop up buy and cook shops'
- Identify, train and incentivise a range of existing and new sellers to offer these types of services
- Encourage holistic approaches to food growing sites and food cooperatives, that also promote healthy cooking and eating
- Influence the markets environment by supplying locally grown food
- Identify the 5% of Fast food 'innovator business owners' to set new trends for fast food outlets to provide healthier food and grow their businesses - ensuring a 'win-win' for sellers and buyers
- Keep pace with the growth of online fast food supply and rethink the nature and deployment of traditional regulatory levers



2. Food hygiene

Encourage food outlets to participate in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

- Ensure that all food outlets are a 3 or above on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Encourage food outlets to join the Food for Health Awards scheme and be further supported in increasing their Food Hygiene Rating Scheme score to 5

3. Awards

Build on the Food for Health Awards to create a network of quality branded sellers of food who display a quality kitemark

- Utilise the work being undertaken by the GLA to reward healthy food businesses
- Offer a quality kitemark for sellers of food, with criteria that will range from regulatory levers concerning food hygiene, to incentivising and rewarding innovation and enterprise
- Reward kitemark holders with evidence and recommendations on how to provide healthy food and grow their businesses
- Implement a communications plan to empower sellers to publicise the kitemark to residents



2. BUYING, COOKING AND EATING HEALTHY FOOD

Tower Hamlets becomes the place where residents facing or at risk of food poverty can gain skills for buying and cooking healthy food within walking distance of their home

1. Practical skills

Empower residents to gain practical skills of buying and cooking healthy food, food safety, and avoiding food waste (possibly including)

- Create a movement of 'cook and eat champions' that empowers residents to buy healthy food, cook, eat well, and socialise
- Support the evolution of holistic food cooperative models that empower residents to grow, buy, cook, eat well, and socialise
- Encourage the borough's schools to participate in award and accreditation schemes, and celebrate achievements, such as the Healthy Schools London Rating or Food for Life Partnership
- Build on the example of Healthy School Cooking Clubs and explore how cooking skills can become a part of everyday community activities
- Build on and scale current examples of after school food provision in schools (such as the After School Tuck Shop at St Paul's School)
- Ensure links are developed to Children's Centres to emphasise the normalising of food growing from a young age
- Where possible, ensure that healthy growing and eating projects at schools have a year round impact, and are not limited to term times
- Support third sector organisations to offer social prescription opportunities
- Ensure new or refurbished places such as schools, nurseries, community centres and leisure centres have kitchens that enable healthy food to be prepared on site, and to enable cooking skills development, educational activities and celebratory events
- Utilise 'MECC' (Making Every Contact Count) to support front line professional to talk about food poverty, and signpost residents to possible solutions



- Ensure financial capability training sessions reference food budgeting
- Unlock the range of settings where the skills can be taught including universities, colleges who run catering courses, Ideas Stores, and Restaurants
- Build the catering and cooking skills workforce by working with high end restaurants to provide apprenticeship opportunities
- Consider the viability of creating and deploying advice to support the healthy food needs of low paid workers working unsociable hours

2. Celebrating success

- Encourage and support a range of events, and piggy back onto festivals to celebrate the borough's food cultures, innovations, diversity and food entrepreneurs, especially those promoting healthy food values



3. FOOD GROWING

Tower Hamlets becomes the place where residents facing or at risk of food poverty can grow their own food within walking distance of their home

1. Leadership

- Support a lead organisation to ensure food growing becomes part of everyday life in Tower Hamlets

2. Growing spaces

Identify and deploy additional food growing land, by encouraging land holders to free up spaces, and supporting local communities to make food growing part of everyday life

- The Council will proactively identify and deploy permanent and temporary land areas for food growing, including identifying space for food growing activities within the S106 infrastructure delivery framework, and encouraging park land to be designated for community food growing
- Create a food growing 'planning toolkit' for landholders, which describes the benefits of freeing up spaces, the support available, and illustrates potential use of spaces
- Consider incentivising property developers to integrate gardens and community food growing spaces into their plans
- Match any current and newly available food growing space to communities and individuals taking part
- Link with Growing Clubs in schools for community members to work alongside children in term time, and look after growing areas in holidays
- Protect existing food growing spaces as community assets.

3. Growing your own food

Create and implement a toolkit that empowers community groups and individuals to make food growing part of everyday life

- Signpost community groups and individuals to resources, enabling them to maintain and evolve food growing spaces, and provide long term support to sustain and enhance activity
- Provide advice and support regarding construction, equipment, and seeds
- Publicise these opportunities, and showcase the online Capital Growth garden map (showing local gardens and volunteering opportunities), to empower communities and local stakeholders to discover and access food growing opportunities.

4. Green health

Build on 'green health' and social prescription approaches to promote the connection between food growing, being outdoors in a green space, and improved health

- Support stakeholders working at the poverty front line, and in health to understand and advocate for the benefits of food growing to residents and patients
- Support food growing spaces to host those referred by social prescribing at their sites



4. HOLIDAY HUNGER

Tower Hamlets becomes the place where school holidays have a positive impact on the lives of residents facing or at risk of food poverty

1. Healthy holidays

End the negative impact of school holidays on the most vulnerable families with young children

- Build on good practice provided by schools and leisure services to make local 'holiday plans' with vulnerable families for the 170 days per year when school is out
- The 'holiday plans' may provide a mix of positive activities for children, including educational support, healthy food provision, and skills development for parents, such as improving healthy cooking skills, and activities for holiday periods
- Identify capital assets that can be used to accommodate holiday plans including the possibility of classrooms, kitchens and play facilities provided by Primary Schools
- Signpost to positive activities taking place in local communities

**MAIN
PRIORITY**

2. Young people

Make plans to address Holiday Hunger for 11 to 18 year olds and their families

- Collate the experiences and expertise of the council, and stakeholders such as schools, and residents to devise plans for tackling Holiday Hunger in vulnerable families of 11 to 18 year olds, who are currently harder to reach



3. Community kitchens

Establish a network of community kitchens to empower vulnerable families to source, cook, and eat healthy food

- Review existing school catering contractual arrangements, and partner with food waste distribution services

4. Supporting parents/carers

Use Holiday Hunger activities as a touch point to engage vulnerable parents, and provide advice, information and support to help address the impact of poverty

- Use Holiday Hunger interventions to provide a mix of information, Benefit Health Checks, and financial planning advice to vulnerable parents



5. GENERAL

1. Sugar

Tower Hamlets Declaration
on Sugar Reduction and
Healthier Food

- Ensure that actions supporting the Declaration link with the Food Poverty Action plan

2. Food Poverty Action Plan

Communication and
celebration of the Food
Poverty Action Plan

- Ensure that the implementation of actions are appropriately communicated to stakeholders and residents
- Celebrate the achievements of the Food Poverty Action Plan

