

Food for Life in schools

The Soil Association's Food for Life Catering Mark recognises caterers who serve freshly prepared food that is free from controversial additives and is better for animal welfare and the environment. The Bronze Catering Mark ensures that the worst ingredients are off the menu. The Silver and Gold awards reward the use of organic, local and Fairtrade ingredients.

Nearly 650,000 meals are served to Catering Mark standards in UK schools every day - over 123 million each year. More than 30 million of these meals are served in London, where over two thirds of London Boroughs now have Food for Life Catering Mark menus in the majority of their schools. The standards are also being taken up by hospitals, universities, early-years and in business settings.

The Food for Life Partnership builds on this work, enabling children to eat fresh, healthy food, and inspiring learning about good food through practical growing and cooking skills. This whole-school, whole-community approach builds links with other local food and health initiatives to facilitate food-growing



and farming activities, and increase opportunities for children to cook and sell their produce. Food for Life Partnership programmes are being commissioned by local authorities across England to successfully tackle public health issues and transform school food culture.

Further information about the Food for Life Partnership's role in helping schools and caterers to increase meal take-up, improve the dining environment and meet other recommendations presented in the School Food Plan can be found on page 20.

Food for Life in Havering

Havering was the first London Borough to achieve the Gold Food for Life Catering Mark for serving fresh and healthy meals in primary schools. 16,000 Gold meals are served every day across 81 primary schools and 3 special schools. These meals are made with organic, Fairtrade and locally produced ingredients, including organic meat and dairy products produced to high animal welfare standards and sustainably sourced fish.

The borough has achieved these high standards within its catering service through its involvement in the London Contracts Supply Group. This public-sector grouping of in-house caterers, facilitated by Havering's Head of Catering Services Gerry Clinton, pools the individual purchasing powers of members to allow them to buy tasty, healthy, sustainable and local food at a fair price.

Read more on the London Contracts Supply Group on page 21.

"We are delighted that Havering's schools meals have been recognised as meeting the high standards of the Gold Food for Life Catering Mark. Recognition means Havering parents can know that their children are getting a choice of food from a wide range of healthy, fresh meals. Pooling our purchasing power with other London Boroughs, universities and care services through the London Contracts Supply Group, has enabled the service to achieve and maintain these aspirations at a time when council budgets are squeezed."



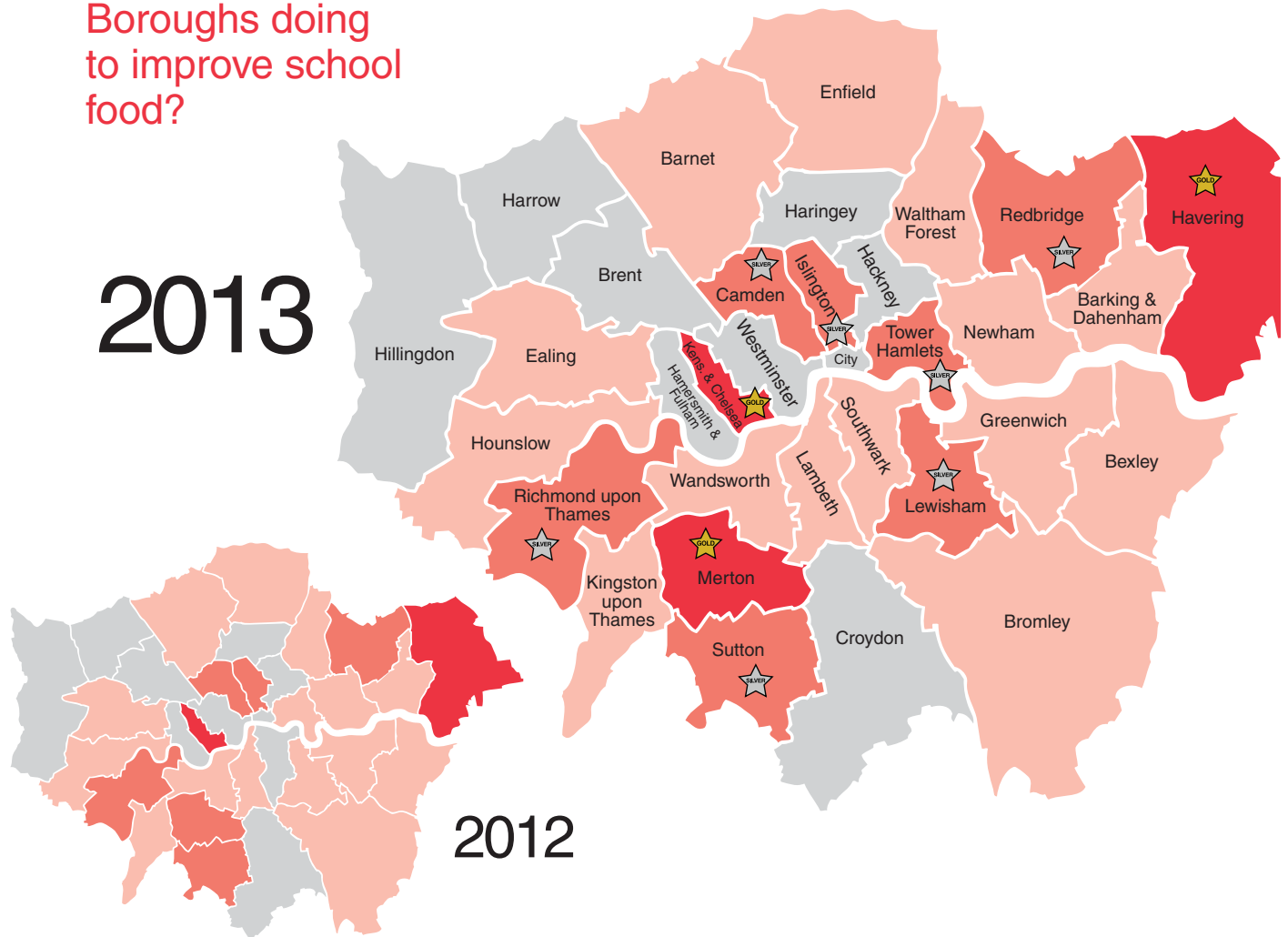
Gerry Clinton,
Head of Catering
Services,
Havering Council

Map key

- Borough (either the Local Education Authority providing school catering in-house, or private catering contractors) who have achieved Gold for all or the majority of schools
- Borough (either the Local Education Authority providing school catering in-house, or private catering contractors) who have achieved Silver for all or the majority of schools
- Borough (either the Local Education Authority providing school catering in-house, or private catering contractors) who have achieved Bronze for all or the majority of schools
- Borough (either the Local Education Authority providing school catering in-house, or private catering contractors) not yet achieving the Catering Mark or achieving it for just some schools*

** Let us know if you think things have improved in your borough. We will update the map as more action is taken.*

What are London Boroughs doing to improve school food?



Food for Life: tracking borough progress

In the 2011 edition of the Good Food for London report, we showed that 17 boroughs out of the 33 had by then achieved at least the Bronze Catering Mark. By 2012, six more boroughs were achieving a Catering Mark, and Havering and Kensington & Chelsea were the first to achieve Gold. In 2013 there are 24 boroughs achieving the Catering Mark and Merton is now the third London Borough to achieve Gold.

Notes

In some London Boroughs, responsibility for providing school meals does not lie with the Borough Council but with individual schools - for example, boroughs such as Brent, Hackney, Harrow, Hillingdon and Southwark. Lambeth is withdrawing council support for school meals, however with the support of the Lambeth Food Partnership, two thirds of the schools currently part of the council service have formed a consortium for negotiating a future contract. The consortium has indicated that the Food for Life Catering Mark will be a requirement for this new contract. Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster will be forming a joint school meals contract as part of the Tri-Borough partnership, the status of the meals services in these boroughs may therefore change. Haringey Council is also currently reviewing its school meals service.

What can London Boroughs do?

Achieve the Food for Life Catering Mark for the Borough's catering - contact:

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Commit to supporting the work of the Food for Life Partnership in schools - contact:

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