Six London boroughs taking action
During 2019 six councils in London undertook projects to improve Good Food Retail in their boroughs, five with funding from the Mayor of London, one with funding from Guy’s and St Thomas’ Charity, and all supported by London Food Link as a partner.

The councils of Bexley, Camden, Croydon, Kensington and Chelsea, Newham and Southwark received £5,000 towards their projects within the overall remit of developing Good Food Retail projects and kick-starting actions. Each approach has been unique to the local context, with councils focusing on one or more of the following objectives:

- Improving access to healthy, affordable food in convenience stores;
- Increasing the take up of Healthy Start vouchers among local retailers and families;
- Increasing healthier food options available at markets;
- Developing a strategic plan to influence and lead the Good Food Retail agenda across a borough.

The funding covered a six month period, however many of the councils are still taking steps to deliver their overall aims as the projects have grown and evolved in ambition since the initial stages. This summary report captures what’s been achieved to date, the challenges and learnings from each approach, and the next steps for the councils involved – with a general overview followed by case studies of each borough’s work.

**WHY A FOCUS ON RETAIL?**

The need for Good Food Retail is highlighted in the *Mayor of London’s Food Strategy* (2019) as part of the wider aim to improve London’s food environment and make healthy, affordable options more available for Londoners. The focus on retail also recognises London’s membership to the international C40 Climate Cities initiative, in which the Mayor has joined 13 other international cities in declaring a commitment to working with citizens to achieve a ‘Planetary Health Diet’ for all.

**Contents**

Key themes and learning ..................... 3
What is Good Food Retail? ............... 5
Getting a Healthy Start in Bexley ........ 6
Healthier convenience stores in Camden ... 8
Good food in the marketplace and beyond in Croydon ......................... 10
Developing a Good Food Retail Plan for Newham ................................. 12
Change4Life training toolkit in Kensington and Chelsea ..................... 14
Addressing food insecurity in Southwark .. 16
KEY THEMES AND LEARNING

The initial brief for Good Food Retail covered a wide range of issue areas where councils could take action, from Healthy Start vouchers to business support through to food co-ops and healthy market stalls (read the full brief). As a result, the learning from this cohort of councils was spread over a few key themes, which are explored in this report.

Working with convenience stores

Camden, Kensington and Chelsea and Southwark Councils focused their work on improving healthy food options in convenience stores, partnering with independent retail experts who worked closely with a small number of convenience stores to trial different approaches to increasing the quality and diversity of healthier products. The changes made in-store were tailored, with some starting to stock fresh fruit at the counter as a to-go snack, while others changed the layout of cereals to move high sugar options away from eye level.

These projects demonstrated significant appetite among retailers to make changes that improve the health and affordability of food on offer. They also showed that these stores are run on very tight margins so a business case for change is key. Developing trusting relationships with shopkeepers is also important and requires significant time, and therefore these councils are now working to mainstream this approach into council teams, such as into Environmental Health Officers’ work. Additionally, Southwark Council developed a 3-tier segmentation model of stores in order to maximum impact with each shop, no matter their size.

Creating wider commitment

Newham Council took a broad approach and focused on developing a Good Food Retail plan for their borough, to galvanise action across many departments and secure high level commitments. In a similar vein, Croydon Council is using the Good Food Retail project to re-ignite their Good Food Alliance, a multi-sector food partnership involving businesses, charities and the local authority. Learning from these two pilots showed the importance of aligning retail with other agendas or initiatives in the boroughs, such as the Croydon’s Good Employment Charter and Newham’s initiatives on Climate Now and Community Wealth Building.

Working collaboratively across departments within the local authority, as well as engaging other stakeholders such as shopkeepers, voluntary sector organisations and residents, proved to be a challenge during the period of the funding. The projects were able to tap into significant enthusiasm and input from others keen to progress the agenda, but to build and meaningfully embed these commitments, a longer time frame is needed, particularly as food is rarely the remit for any one department.
Increasing the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers

Southwark, Croydon and Bexley’s projects focused on improving awareness and take up of the Healthy Start vouchers, which low-income families can use to buy milk, fruit, vegetables and infant formula. As take up of the scheme was only 64% in England in 2018, there is a clear need for councils to investigate which families are missing out, why and how this can be remedied.

Councils held focus groups and interviews with eligible parents to learn more about barriers of use, and also set-up multi-departmental ‘task and finish’ groups to better coordinate action and develop promotional plans. Bexley Council's public health team worked with Town Centres and two local Business Improvement Districts in order to reach food business owners, particularly large supermarkets like Asda and Sainsburys. In Southwark this complimented a wider project with Guy's and St Thomas' Charity on childhood obesity, as well as Croydon and Southwark’s involvement with Food Power on food poverty.

Councils found that knowledge and understanding of the voucher scheme varies significantly among health professionals, retailers and families. Many of the greatest challenges with the scheme are nationally controlled – such as a lengthy applications process, lack of clear communication after applying, and a cumbersome reimbursement system for retailers. However, councils were able to make a difference in improving coordination and awareness among teams so that the scheme is better promoted to families. Healthy Start also proved to be a useful platform for beginning to build relationships with local store owners.

Developing council capacity

These pilots were set up to test out approaches and interest from councils in influencing the retail environments. This means that while the direct impact on the retail environment will not be seen in six months, the work has enabled the council officers to try out new approaches and identify areas where there is demand for more action.

The projects have given council officers confidence and capacity to initiate work on these issues, which will be continued after the initial project ends. In all councils, the project has galvanised more joined-up approaches to improving the local food environment, with many extending beyond the initial funding period. In addition, the project learning group, facilitated by London Food Link, has provided space for joint learning and interesting discussions regarding the potential need for a quality assurance scheme for retailers in London that could help formalise some of this work with retailers and catalyse further action.

Want to do more?

Sustainable Food Cities supports urban areas to take a holistic approach to food by developing a cross-sector local food partnership. They help people and places share challenges, explore practical solutions and develop best practice on key food issues.

www.sustainablefoodcities.org

Food Power aims to strengthen the ability of local communities to reduce food poverty, through solutions developed in partnership and with the support of peers from across the UK. They offer peer mentoring, regional learning networks, webinars and toolkits.

www.foodpower.org.uk
WHAT IS GOOD FOOD RETAIL?

We use ‘retail’ to refer to grocers, shops, markets, box schemes, food co-ops and deliveries that sell food for consumption at home or on the go. ‘Good food’ refers both to the quality of the food and ideally to the wider activities of a values-driven enterprise. They may be non-profit, social enterprises or for-profit food retailers that play a part in their community beyond trading.

Broadly, we use the term Good Food Retail to refer to retailers doing at least some of the following:

• Focusing on selling foods that contribute to a healthier diet;
• Providing safe and nutritious food for diverse cultures and needs, which is available and affordable to people living on a lower income;
• Reducing environmental impact through the supply chain and aiming to reduce waste radically;
• Developing collaborative relationships with suppliers, including paying farmers and fishers a fair amount for their produce;
• Sourcing sustainably produced meat, dairy and fish, wholegrain foods and Real Bread;
• Treating employees and suppliers fairly, and championing the real Living Wage.

Councils have a key role to play in Good Food Retail, both by supporting smale-scale, values-driven and community-led food enterprises to thrive and by increasing access and affordability of healthy food. Actions that councils can take include developing a Good Food Retail Plan, encouraging the use of Healthy Start vouchers, supporting street markets or addressing access to junk food.

Find out more
Maddie Guerlain
maddie@sustainweb.org
www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/good_food_retail/
We wanted to start the conversations with food businesses about the local food and drink offer in Bexley in order to understand how we can support them to promote their business and improve or change the offer to their customers.

One way we did this was by relaunching the national Healthy Start scheme in Bexley. We requested local data from the Healthy Start team at the Department of Health who gave us monthly uptake figures for Bexley and calculated an underspend for 2018 from the number of people eligible for the scheme but who had not claimed.

We decided to develop local resources for the scheme and carried out briefings and awareness sessions with many different stakeholders, from Children’s Centres and community centres to childminders, health visitors and midwives and Business Improvement Districts. The aim of the sessions was to remind people about the scheme and inform them about how they can support pregnant women and families to apply.

We delivered a Healthy Start event in September to summarise the engagements we had made over the past few months, the learnings we made from talking with residents who were in receipt of Healthy Start vouchers and those who had not been aware of the scheme or that they could apply. We invited Asda to talk about their experience of participating in the scheme and how they have been supporting families in Bexley to eat healthily.

The re-launch of the scheme helped establish a suitable platform on which to build relationships with local retailers and food businesses and engage with residents about a profile of the food and drink offer in the borough. This has enabled us to move on to completing a food profile of Bexley, with a focus on the north of the borough where our most deprived communities live, to explore opportunities to increase access to good food.

“...and have never claimed Healthy Start before. Nobody advised me to. After speaking to Healthwatch I will now send off my claim form.”

Parent in Bexley

Promotional flyer for Healthy Start

Challenges and learning

In the beginning it was challenging trying to make contact with food businesses, both local convenience stores and large supermarkets. We overcame this by working jointly with the Town Centres team and engaging with the
two Business Improvement Districts as a way to talk to food business owners. This helped us to engage locally with Asda and Sainsburys.

It has still been a challenge to engage with the local convenience stores which is why we have enlisted the support of Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency to support us to deliver a food profile of Bexley. They have excellent experience of working with food businesses and have the skills and knowledge of how best to approach them. There is also a need to understand how businesses work and ways to successfully engage with them by looking at how we can support them to improve business profits and footfall whilst also promoting healthier options.

Persistence and flexibility are required as often food businesses will be available at different times of the day so you would need to work around their availability.

It has been useful to set up a working group of key stakeholders’ part of the Healthy Start work, this has included internal colleagues (Communications, Town Centres & Regeneration, Communities, Environmental Health) and external organisations (Peabody, BVSC and Business Improvement Districts). A separate retail task and finish group was also set up to discuss how to move forward the engagement with retailers.

With Healthy Start there is a need to engage with a wide range of stakeholders in order to spread the message and equip others with the resources to be able to support families and pregnant women to apply for the scheme.

**Next steps**

Our next steps will involve developing a Healthy Start sustainability plan where we will describe how we will continue to ensure the Healthy Start scheme is promoted around the Bexley and how families and pregnant women can be supported to apply. It will also involve reviewing how to continue monitoring uptake of the Healthy Start vitamins, so it becomes a seamless process.

The food profile of Bexley which is being completed by GCDA will be completed around January 2020. Recommendations will be made which will inform the development of a wider Good Food Retail Plan and we will envisage setting action plans to progress this work and increase the availability and improve accessibility to good food and drink.

**Key achievements and impact**

- Our aim is to increase uptake of the Healthy Start scheme to 75% by 2024
- For more residents to be made aware and be supported to apply for the Healthy Start scheme, and for health professionals and other stakeholders to be equipped with the resources to be able to do so
- To be able to offer Healthy Start vitamins to those eligible for Healthy Start through our health visiting clinics and midwifery service at Queen Mary’s Hospital
- To build strong relationships with local food businesses and support them to improve their food and drink offer
- To have a strong sustainable Healthy Start and Good Food Plan
This project aimed to engage convenience store owners in a deprived ward in Camden to increase their healthy food offer, with a particular focus on fresh fruit and vegetables. The ward is known to have a sparsity of affordable healthy food, and feedback from local residents highlighted a perception that healthy food items in convenience stores were both expensive and poor quality.

Stores were supported by a retail specialist throughout the project, Retail Revival, and received a tailored shop audit detailing suggested changes to improve footfall, revenue and provision of healthier foods. A number of actions were chosen by each store holder to implement, and a small amount of funding was available to support these changes. In particular, all stores increased their variety and/or quantity of fresh fruit and vegetables and improved how these items were displayed (e.g. improved shelving, display stands).

Alongside these changes, a number of communications materials were developed (e.g. posters, recipe cards) to highlight the stores’ participation in the project and ‘nudge’ customers towards making healthier in-store choices. These materials were designed with a superhero theme to align with the Veg Power Campaign, which aims to increase the consumption of vegetables.

We also had secondary school pupils visit two of the stores. This was a great opportunity for the pupils to learn about the marketing, availability and cost of healthy produce, and also provided us with feedback to give to the store holders.

**Challenges and learning**

The project highlighted the importance of taking an individualised approach with each convenience store – there is no ‘one size fits all approach’ as each store varied significantly (e.g. in terms of initial stock, store size, knowledge around healthier products).

“...the improved fruit and vegetable display really helps customers to see from a distance that we are offering lots of nice fruit and vegetables, and hopefully encourages them to come into the store to buy things.

*Mr. Singh*
Convenience store owner

---

*Mr Thayaparan, Convenience store manager*
Using a retail specialist was highly beneficial – this individual was able to ‘talk the same language’ as the store holders and provide advice based on real experience. They also spent considerable time with each store to build up a rapport and trust.

We found that keeping the actions simple was important, as was listening to what each store was interested in doing. This increased the likelihood of the changes being sustained in the longer term.

**Next Steps**

All three participating stores are now in the process of continuing their changes without support from the retail specialist or additional funding. A review will be conducted at the end of 2019 to gather feedback from the store holders and determine which changes have been maintained independently by each store. This information will feed into a final evaluation of the project.

"Building relationships and trust with each store took time, but was essential."

**Lana Simpson**  
*Project Lead, Camden and Islington Public Health*

---

**Key achievements and impact**

- A toolkit of learnings for engaging convenience stores elsewhere in the borough, to be published in early 2020
- Communications materials that can be used for wider good food retail work going forward
- We are hopeful that the stores will sustain some of the changes in the long term, and that this project has been successful in ‘lowering the barriers to entry’ to increasing provision of healthier foods in convenience stores
As part of our vision for good food in Croydon, we wanted to look at our local markets and see what opportunities we had to provide better, healthier food within our street food offer. We wanted to support healthy start-up businesses by offering free pitches to trade, not just including food but also for those wanting to sell their own produce.

As a starting point we chose two areas in Croydon: College Square in Central Croydon, just outside the college, and South Norwood market. We have had three new businesses start trading, one working with young people to deliver hot healthy meals, another offering vegan food and one selling fresh fruit and vegetables.

Whilst we wanted to see change on the ground, we have also wanted to try and influence at a wider level and amended Croydon’s Good Employment Charter criteria to include good food conditions for employees that sign up to the charter. We are yet to see the impact of this but this implementation does illustrate how important we are taking good food here in Croydon.

Another key action we wanted to deliver was to improve the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers here in Croydon. To do this we produced a survey for residents and retailers to complete, to gain an insight on the issues associated with Healthy Start and how we can improve uptake. This action supports additional work around Healthy Start and we have seen an increase in uptake.

In January 2020, we will hold a Good Food Retail Workshop with businesses from across Croydon. The aim of the event is to highlight the need for Good Food Retail and how we can all work together, across sectors to make a change. This workshop will also help us establish a Good Food Alliance which in turn will continue to progress the work around good food.

We are also offering three start-up workshops for any businesses who would like to learn how to set up a business or progress their current business, ensuring a focus on good, healthy food. The workshop aims to equip business owners with expertise knowledge to start and run a healthy food business; whilst also providing existing businesses with ways to improve their healthy food offers to their local customer base.

In addition the workshops will also assist participants with the tool to become more sustainable and partake in a local food ecosystem that provides healthier food options. For measurable outcomes, participants will have to agree to three attainable pledges within the line of their businesses in order to help provide better and healthier food offerings in Croydon.

Challenges and learning

A challenge of this project is ensuring all stakeholders across different departments are involved when there are competing priorities. Regular meetings have helped to overcome this but it has needed key staff members to drive this project as opposed to a collaborative

The funding has ensured that Good Food Retail is a priority and is being discussed amongst the wider food agenda. We’re running workshops to engage start-up and current businesses to help improve their food offer, and to incentivise new market traders to trade in Croydon.

Ashley Brown
Public Health Principal
group. The Good Food Retail Workshop was due to take place in November but due to low sign up, it was postponed until the New Year. The challenge when working with businesses is that time away from their business is limited or not cost effective, thus a workshop may not always be feasible to attend.

**Next Steps**

There is still lots of work to be done around this agenda and this is just the beginning. Work will continue into the New Year, alongside all the other fantastic work that Croydon is doing around the wider food agenda.

![Surrey Street market](image-url)

**Key achievements and impact**

- Cross sector working across the council has meant we have a greater joined up approach to tackling the wider food agenda
- The increase in Healthy Start uptake, allowing more families to have access to fruit and vegetables
- We hope that this work will continue to make progress and have a positive impact on the residents of Croydon
Developing a Good Food Retail Plan

One of our main goals in developing a Good Food Retail Plan for Newham was to ensure that it was based upon specific commitments with clearly identified targets. We wanted action that would make a difference for all those living and working in the borough, which needed buy-in from the highest levels.

An initial process of stakeholder and partner engagement was hugely successful, enabling the lead on the plan to reach across the borough very quickly and bring a broad range of challenges into the plan’s thinking.

A key focus has been outlining what practical change will look like on the ground, on a target by target basis. This approach is attractive to stakeholders, many with immediate needs, challenges and opportunities that can be addressed better with support. Through this work we want to build solutions that can be repeated and scaled, but that also encourage input. For example, with the right approach, finding a way to support one social entrepreneur or VCS partner seeking to activate an asset in a park or a library could work on multiple sites.

The support, network and expertise provided by Sustain helped us focus on what the best existing practice, alongside new innovation, can do to the food landscape in Newham. An early draft of the plan led to the creation of a Head of Food Strategy post, to build on the plans and drive forward the delivery of actions.

Alongside the primary goal of developing the plan was the intention to get some of the actions in the plan progressed, ensuring that at final sign off it will already be a ‘working document’. A number of approaches in the plan are underway including developing projects in parks and libraries, and exciting work to overhaul the council’s internal food retail and service provision at its +2,000 worker office.

We presented the plan to the Mayor of Newham and the CCG for feedback and to harness the energy of work already being delivered on Health & Well-being, Climate Now and Community Wealth Building. This has enabled us to produce a clear range of commitments on good food retail that can be embraced across the organisation. Accompanying each commitment is a list of specific targets where action could make a difference.

The finished plan – due to be launched at the start of 2020 – is focused on the council’s opportunities to have an impact on the food retail and service sites it directly controls, on the need to influence partners with whom it has a direct relationship, and on the portfolio of measures that will be needed to reshape the external landscape where council doesn’t have direct control.

Challenges and learning

There was a high volume of interest and engagement from stakeholders, which meant the capacity of those leading on the plan...
was stretched. Delivering on a piece of work funded by the Mayor of London and Sustain gave additional confidence and ambition to what could be achieved – a great challenge to work on!

Working at a time of other major policy and organisational change was an accelerator that the plan benefitted from, such as the council’s initiatives on Health and Well-being, Climate Now and Community Wealth Building.

Partners across the organisation and beyond were quick to identify opportunities that could be acted on immediately, which in some cases were time sensitive due to time limited contract windows or other interdependencies that we needed to capitalise on.

The creation of a Head of Food Strategy post and the support and resource provided by the public health team, and others across the organisation, has been essential in enabling us to capitalise on this opportunity.

**Next Steps**

We will continue to work on our targets in good food retail – building on the support we received from the Mayor, members and council leadership and the positive energy generated by this process.

Through the Newham Health & Well-being plan we are now outlining a broader transformational programme to create a healthy food and drink environment, utilising every asset at our disposal.

The goal is to create a model that shows how the good food agenda and Community Wealth Building can and should be intrinsically linked, and how in practice that work can shape better lives for our citizens.

**We came to the process to talk about what social enterprise start-ups like ours need in terms of community assets and support. The team introduced us to volunteers, local food entrepreneurs and third sector partners. We left plugged into a Newham network and better able to get more food bags packed and distributed to community hubs.**

*Tish*
*Feast in a Flash and Newham resident*

---

**Key achievements and impact**

- Plan with six clear commitments – each supporting a portfolio of targets for action in a format endorsed by the organisation’s leadership
- Embedding the capacity for delivering ongoing leadership on the good food agenda in the organisation going forwards
- Building a confident and connected group of social entrepreneurs, community organisations and other partners and increasing our ability to identify opportunities and minimise friction working together
Our Good Food Retail Plan builds upon the successful “Shop Healthy” pilot that the RBKC Public Health service developed with Rice Retail Marketing in 2018. Key outcomes from this work included business owners becoming more aware of healthier options, the introduction of 77 new product lines and an increase in overall store sales and profit.

The pilot delivered significant learning which we wanted to capture in order to equip local teams to implement the Shop Healthy methodology in partnership with convenience store owners. Initially we envisaged working with local volunteers. However our EHO team were keen to take on the role as it complemented their Healthier Catering Commitment work and allowed them to expand the remit of work with existing retailers.

In July, Rice Retail Marketing delivered a training workshop with senior members of the EHO team and nutritional team to share the methodology and to address specific needs and knowledge gaps. The output from this workshop led to the development of a training toolkit and action plan template.

In October, Rice Retail Marketing visited the original Shop Healthy pilot stores with the EHO team to test the training toolkit and to get feedback from retailers. We received positive feedback from retailers who have maintained the range of healthier options but, more importantly, have further increased both the ranges and profile of healthier options. One retailer reported a 5% overall shop increase due to the introduction of the new lines.

Challenges and learning

This work is a natural extension to our Healthier Catering Commitment work and allows us to include convenience stores for the first time. We now have a way of engaging positively with retailers to improve their stores and the action plan provides a clear measurable way of tracking improvements to the number of healthier options in-store. The

We were both so impressed with your work on the pilot. The shops we visited had made so many changes and I was impressed that one shop had seen a 5% rise in profits but was also providing more healthier food choices for the local community.

Tracey Muzyka
Senior Environmental Health Officer, RBKC

It’s been good for business, I feel more connected to the community.

Mr Sarna
Costcutter, Golborne Road W10

hardest part will be to ensure that EHO teams are equipped with the knowledge of what products sell well. We would look to work with Rice Retail Marketing to do more work in this area.

Next Steps

We will ensure the sustainability of our plan by integrating the Shop Healthy training and support package into our ongoing borough-wide Change4Life Bi-Borough programme. We will commit £5,000 from the Public Health budget to fund Rice Retail Marketing to deliver the Shop Healthy training and support package to the EHO team beyond the pilot stage in line with local need.
Healthy Shops is an important initiative which changes and challenges pre-conceptions that people won’t buy healthy food from convenience stores in traditionally deprived areas. This work demonstrates that if healthy options are presented to the customer, then they will buy. The shop owners, primarily driven by a profit incentive, are willing to continue with the scheme as there is an increase in profits. This is a very worthwhile scheme helping to combat obesity and unhealthy food choices at the shop level.

Sharon Caine
Senior Environmental Health Office, Food Safety Team

Key achievements and impact

- Retailers are continuing to focus on healthier products beyond the pilot project.
- Retailers are seeing that healthier options are good for business.
- The EHO team responded extremely positively to the advice and development of the training toolkit.
- This toolkit will enable every convenience store in the borough to improve the number of healthier options available to local customers.
Addressing food insecurity

Convenience stores play a vital role in their communities as many low-income customers use them on a daily basis to top up their food shopping. They are also an important channel in tackling food deserts.

For the pilot, we worked with community groups to identify five convenience stores who met our criteria and who would benefit from stocking a better range of healthier choices.

We worked with a partner, Rice Marketing, who has over 12 years of experience working with London boroughs to engage independent convenience stores and markets in London. This approach has been identified as key to successfully engaging hard to reach retailers.

They developed a 3-tier segmentation model of ambassador, high street and neighbourhood stores to ensure that they could make an impact for retailers regardless of the size of shop. They developed a 10 point action plan with each retailer to increase the number of healthier options in all major categories including fruit and veg.

We were able to show that Good Food can grow sales and profits as well as attract new customers to the store. Sales of healthy products increased in trial stores. Sales in key healthy categories have gone up over the trial period: wholemeal bread +15%, fruit +18%, natural nuts +11%, chilled foods +8%. The switch to a no sugar Slush Puppie recipe resulted in a saving of approximately 80,000 calories from sales between July and September, equivalent to over 8,000 sugar cubes. Following the introduction of three new lines, wholemeal bread now makes up 20 per cent of bakery sales at the same store. There has been a 5 percentage point shift to no sugar varieties within the Coke family. Overall sales increased by £250 per week in a second retailer.

The zero sugar cereals used to be mixed in, now they’re in one place – it’s going well. I want to keep introducing low sugar things, if I see something at the cash and carry I’ll pick up a case to try and if it sells I’ll keep buying.

Rajappa
Owner of Day One, Camberwell Church Street

Challenges and learning

Convenience stores stock a wider range than originally thought and are an important channel for local customers. They are grounded in their communities and are willing to make positive changes. They were motivated to become Good Food Retailers and see this as a competitive advantage.

We overcame the challenge of a lack of internal understanding of the role of convenience stores by holding wider stakeholder meetings and organising a local press launch with the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Councillor Akoto. She said, “It is fantastic to see the commitment for these five shop owners to making a difference in the health of our residents. These shops exemplify how small changes can have a big impact on the choices people make. The role that local shops play in the lives of our residents cannot be underestimated and it’s so important that as much as possible there are healthy options available. These shop owners have proven that our residents do want healthy options and I hope other store owners will follow their lead.”
Local retailers are willing to make healthier changes and that the best way to engage the owners is by providing business advice and supporting them to increase profits. The pilot shows that healthier items are popular with customers and this data can be used to incentivise more retailers to make changes.

**Next Steps**

Southwark Council and Guy’s and St Thomas’ Charity will explore how to continue this work and support more convenience stores to increase their healthier offer. From the five action plans developed in this pilot, we can establish a checklist of actions for convenience stores in the borough to take in order to become a Good Food Retailer. As part of the evaluation for this work, we want to identify if it is existing customers benefiting from the healthier options or a new customer base.

The pilot stores are keen to promote their work, including one store working with the local Business Improvement District to develop a social media campaign promoting their changes and another store designing their own Good Food logo and leaflet which was sent to over 1,500 homes. A next step is to develop a logo for all those who sign up to be a Good Food Retailer and to support them in promoting the changes they are making.

The retail pilot project has segwayed into a new pilot project titled “Good Food Wholesaler” where we intend to take the learnings from the retail project to inform wholesalers on how to better promote healthier options and to identify current gaps in the supply chain.

“A lot of kids come here after school so we put single pieces of fruit at the front that people can just take and go, non-salted nuts, sugar-free drinks, things like that. According to our sales data all these things that we’ve introduced into the store are selling, there’s a market for people that are more health conscious.”

Ali
Owner of Nisa Local Southwark Street

---

**Key achievements and impact**

- Sales of healthy products increased in the five trial stores
- The Good Food Retail project in Southwark has demonstrated that convenience stores do want to increase their offer of healthier and affordable food and that these items are popular and purchased by the local communities
- We hope to continue working with convenience stores in Southwark, making the healthier choice the easier choice particularly within food desserts
Good Food Retail: 
Six London boroughs taking action

A Sustain publication
December 2019

About Sustain
Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming, advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the living and working environment, enrich society and culture, and promote equity. It represents around 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level.

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming
sustain@sustainweb.org
www.sustainweb.org

Sustain, The Green House
244-254 Cambridge Heath Road
London E2 9DA
Tel: 0203 559 6777

Sustain is a Registered Charity No. 1018643