

# Lambeth Food Insecurity Report 2017

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## 1. Background

Lambeth Food Insecurity Project was a 2-year pilot project begun in March 2015. Lambeth Council commissioned West London Mission's St. Luke's Hub in Kennington to deliver the project. Its two main objectives were:

- To coordinate practical and strategic responses to food insecurity across Lambeth.
- To deliver the Healthy Holidays Community Fund.

The coordination element of the project involved working with local stakeholders, including emergency food aid providers and community groups, to determine the nature of the issues and to develop strategies to tackle them. The delivery of the Healthy Holidays Community Fund resulted in the borough's first grant scheme addressing problematic child hunger during the school breaks. The report addresses both areas of work.

This report gives an overview of the project's achievements over its two years duration and gives a qualitative and quantitative account. It makes recommendations as appropriate. An appendix of quantitative statistics and outputs accompanies this document. The report will use the term 'food insecurity' rather than 'food poverty'. Food insecurity better suggests the precarious situation in which many individuals and families find themselves; and that this situation is in a constant state of flux rather than a static state. The factors contributing to food insecurity have been well documented and include low and insecure pay, redundancy, benefit delays and sanctions, rising rents and food costs, illness or unexpected bills. Food insecurity can be defined in many ways. This report will use the following definition from Sustain: The Alliance for Better Food and Farming, and The Food Foundation:

*"Food insecurity is when an individual or household has insufficient or insecure access to food due to resource constraints"<sup>1</sup>*

This report recognises food insecurity as a symptom of broader financial insecurity. The strategies the project

<sup>1</sup> Measuring Household Food Insecurity in the UK Factsheet, Oxford University, The Food Foundation, Sustain, 2016

employed to address food insecurity take this assumption as a starting point. Working at a practical level, an aim was to signpost people to initiatives that may help them to access support beyond the immediate issue of food; specifically to benefits advice, financial and employment support. At a strategic level, a goal was to create resilience by building stronger links between local community groups and networks.

## 2. The Issues for Lambeth

Lambeth is a borough of many contrasting factors. It is one of London's most densely populated boroughs. Lambeth has one of the largest geographic areas of any inner London borough. It is a borough celebrated for its arts and culture, and its rich traditions of social and political activism. At the same time, many people in Lambeth experience significant financial hardship, as the following data outlines:

- The 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks Lambeth as the 8<sup>th</sup> most deprived London borough and the 22<sup>nd</sup> most deprived district in the UK.<sup>2</sup>
- Lambeth is "among the 10% most deprived authorities in England (out of 326 districts) on three deprivation scores: the headline figure of average rank, the scale of income, and exclusion from the labour market".<sup>3</sup>
- In Lambeth 49,000 people are in poverty before housing costs and 87,000 are poverty after housing costs.<sup>4</sup>
- Approximately 20% of employed residents are paid below the London Living Wage.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2015, the four Trussell Trust food banks in Lambeth provided 12,275 three-day emergency food parcels.<sup>6</sup>

Within this context, Lambeth is increasingly becoming a destination for food tourism, particularly the areas of the South Bank and Brixton. The theme of food as a leisure activity is familiar across the capital. However, the presence of new restaurants, cafés and street food outlets can mask the prevalence of chronic financial and food insecurity with which many people live. For example, Brixton is the location of many new food enterprises. It also forms part of Coldharbour ward, areas of which are amongst the most deprived in Lambeth. Many residents cannot afford to buy food from these new establishments. Equally, most people are unaware that there are currently four food banks (Trussell Trust and independent) and at least two other emergency food

<sup>2</sup> State of the Borough Report 2016, Lambeth Council, p.36

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> State of the Borough Report 2016, Lambeth Council, p.34

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> trusselltrust.org, accessed 29.03.17. This figure does not include independent food banks and other local emergency food outlets.

providers operating in the area.<sup>7</sup> Food insecurity remains a resolutely hidden issue.

In contrast, Lambeth benefits from a rich tradition of activity in grassroots food production and innovation. It is known across the capital for initiatives like Open Orchard, Incredible Edible Lambeth and Lambeth GP Food Co-op. There are also numerous, less well-known networks and projects. For example, Edible Living Community Food Gardens promote food growing on Lambeth Council housing estates.

The networks tackling food insecurity are equally diverse and noteworthy. As part of this project, The Lambeth Larder Community Map has mapped for the first time, at least 40 community organisations, including 4 Trussell Trust food Banks, 10 other emergency food outlets, 12 organisations offering free or low cost food and 5 surplus food initiatives. This mapping work indicates the scale and range of activity. For example, The Community Shop in West Norwood is London's first social supermarket, where members benefit from a package of support and they can purchase reduced-cost quality food.

### 3. Local Authority Response to Food Insecurity

It is worth outlining Lambeth's achievements in addressing food insecurity. As a local authority, Lambeth compares impressively to the other 32 London boroughs for its response to this issue.

According to Sustain's *Beyond the Food Bank 2016* report, Lambeth scores highest in the capital against measures that include supporting the Healthy Start Voucher and Rose Voucher schemes; ensuring physical access to good food; promoting breast-feeding; offering a subsidised meals on wheels service; ensuring children's access to food 365 days a year and being an accredited London Living Wage employer and promoting the scheme.<sup>8</sup>

Evidence of how Lambeth has met these measures is demonstrated in the following projects. As part of Lambeth's Food Flagship initiative, and in partnership with children's centres, 150 families in need received Rose Vouchers that enabled them to buy fruit and vegetables at local street markets. Lambeth scores highly on rates of breast-feeding initiation, which at 91% is higher than the England average of 74.3%.<sup>9</sup> Lambeth Council funded the Healthy Holidays Community Fund, a pilot grant scheme, which provided food and activities for over 1500 young people during the school breaks. Beyond the Sustain framework, Lambeth Council has

supported food insecurity work in other ways; it funded a Brixton Advice Centre worker to offer debt support at Norwood & Brixton food bank, for example. An appendix giving an overview of community activity addressing food insecurity accompanies this report.

Lambeth is one of a few London boroughs to have a food partnership. Lambeth Food Partnership is a charity comprising of local authority, business, NHS and community representatives working to improve the food system across the borough. It is currently undertaking research into food insecurity as part of its Sustainable Food Cities programme of work.

As a local authority, Lambeth's lead position in the Sustain report is impressive, especially within a backdrop of sustained public funding cuts. The accolade has been a source of pride for the borough, with Council Leader Lib Peck contributing to the report and announcing the achievement in the local press. However, with proposed budgetary savings of £20 million for 2017/18, it will be a challenge for Lambeth to maintain its position at the forefront of addressing food insecurity in London.

## Part 1: Coordinating Community Responses to Food Insecurity

### 1. Introduction

The primary aim of Lambeth Food Insecurity Project was to coordinate practical and strategic responses to food insecurity across the borough. This work has taken several strands. Based at St. Luke's Hub, Lambeth's pilot financial resilience hub, a Community Food Coordinator was employed to deliver the project and provide direct support to local people in need, issuing food bank vouchers and sign posting to them services including other emergency food providers.



*Father Nature, community garden building at St. Luke's Hub, 2016*

The majority of work has been more outward facing. A goal has been to create better links between community groups to help establish more resilient networks. Some of this work has centred on St. Luke's Hub. For example, Waterloo Food Bank delivered a pilot *Eat Well Spend Less* course at the hub, teaching new

<sup>7</sup> Norwood & Brixton Food Bank, Brixton Soup Kitchen, Naybur's Pantry, Family Food Bank, Ruach City Church at Vida Walsh Centre, Teen Challenge.

<sup>8</sup> Beyond the Food Bank 2016: London Food Poverty Profile, Sustain

<sup>9</sup> Public Health England, Health Profile Lambeth 2016, Revised version 9<sup>th</sup> September 2016

cooking skills and healthy eating on a budget. Father Nature is an environmental social enterprise that employs and trains local people. They built the new community garden at St. Luke's Hub. Crops grown on site have been distributed to centre users and were used in the *Eat Well Spend Less* course.

The Community Food Coordinator also connected some of the newer, independent food banks to Trussell Trust food banks and local businesses, with the aim of them sharing resources and redistributing surplus stock. The emphasis has been on partnership working.

The main focus of the coordination work has been to engage with groups and individuals providing emergency food, low-cost and free healthy food, or redistributing surplus food. This has provided a means to learn the nature, location and scale of community activity working to reduce food insecurity.

A further project aim has been to engage with organisations whose work addresses general financial insecurity, e.g. advice centres, debt support, etc. In the process, it has been possible to learn how the work of community food initiatives connects with wider financial resilience work. In March 2017, the Community Food Coordinator conducted a survey of 27 local food initiatives including those involved in reducing food insecurity. The survey shows that as well as offering food, 63% of the groups sign-post people to other services, 29% offer debt advice and 37% offer employment support. This demonstrates that many local food initiatives are aware that tackling food insecurity relies on more than food distribution and are connect to wider services.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. The Lambeth Larder Community Food Resource

Lambeth Council funded West London Mission to deliver the Lambeth Food Insecurity Project. One of the core aims was to coordinate practical and strategic responses to food insecurity across the borough. One of the key outputs was the Lambeth Larder Community Food Resource.

As outlined above, Lambeth is a large, densely populated borough with many sources of support and information available to people in need. It is not always possible for groups to promote their services widely, often due to a lack of resources. This can make it difficult for people in need to know where to find support. It can be equally hard for groups to develop potential partnerships. The challenge for this project has been to create mechanisms to capture this data and make it accessible to the wider community.

The response to these issues has been to create the Lambeth Larder Community Food Resource. The resource

provides information about local food projects, particularly emergency food, plus money saving ideas, promoting healthy eating on a budget, and listing other sources of advice and help in the borough. Lambeth Larder Community Food Resource comprises of a booklet, website, online interactive map and information sheets. Local community groups and individuals have contributed to the Lambeth Larder Community Food Resource, providing essential local knowledge. The resource also promoted the financial resilience services available at St. Luke's Hub.

- Website: The website regularly receives over 300 unique views and 800 page views per week. The emergency food pages are the most popular.
- Interactive Map: Lambeth Larder Community Map was produced with Mapping for Change at University College London. The online interactive map plots over 120 organizations and groups that offer support. The map is the first of its kind in the borough, if not the capital.
- Booklet: 2000 copies of the Lambeth Larder booklet were published. These were distributed via outlets such as libraries, shops, Healthy Holidays groups, plus to St. Luke's Hub centre users.
- Information Sheets: 3 information sheets have been produced addressing emergency food, mental health services and homelessness. The information sheets are downloadable from the website.

The Lambeth Larder Community Food Resource has become a real community asset. It provides a valuable mechanism to gather and share data to help local people in need and the groups that support them. Individuals in need, as well as service providers use the various resources.



*St. Luke's Hub staff and volunteer promoting Lambeth Larder at Lambeth Country Show, 2015. Photo: Saira Niazi*

## 3. Learnings

The Lambeth Food Insecurity Project has provided an excellent opportunity to gather data on the impacts of food insecurity the borough. The Lambeth Larder Community Food Resource has created an innovative means to map community responses to food insecurity in the borough for the first time.

<sup>10</sup> A summary of the survey accompanies this report.

- A. The Community Food Coordinator role is the first of its kind in the borough, if not the capital, with the sole aim of focusing on food insecurity. The role has been important in galvanising attention around a key issue that impacts on many different parts of the community. The Community Food Coordinator has been a point of contact for individuals in need as well as local groups working to address food insecurity. This pilot project has proven that, given the scale of community activity around reducing food insecurity in Lambeth, there is value in a role that can coordinate that activity.
- B. The Lambeth Food Insecurity Project has made it possible to explore the potential for partnership working e.g. FareShare London, Mapping for Change, Trussell Trust and independent food banks, etc. There is scope to develop longer term, more sustainable partnerships with other organisations and networks through submitting joint funding bids, for example.
- C. The Lambeth Larder Community Food Resource is an accessible, relatively cheap, mechanism for sharing information to the whole community, including people experiencing food insecurity and those working to support them. With minimal promotion, the website and online map continue to gain use. With greater promotion, more local people will be able to access help and support. There is scope to expand both analogue and digital strands of the Lambeth Larder, including resources aimed at young people.
- D. The Lambeth Larder is a unique repository of local information. As a social document, also records the scale and nature of community activity addressing food insecurity. The community's contribution to producing resources shows a willingness to share information and work collaboratively. It will be essential to ensure that the information continues to be promoted and updated regularly beyond the pilot phase.
- E. The Community Food Coordinator has learnt that there is a lot of misinformation about how to access emergency food. This applies to people in need, plus the professionals and community groups helping them. The research gathered in this project, shows a variety of emergency food aid outlets, including Trussell Trust and independent food banks, which operate in Lambeth, and work in different ways.

The existing situation requires better information sharing amongst community networks, which can be a challenge on limited resources. If the number of food banks continues to rise, this will become an even more pressing issue. The continuation of a Community Food Coordinator role and development of Lambeth Larder resources will provide a valuable

mechanism for promoting and sharing accurate information on emergency food provision in future.

- F. As outlined above, Lambeth has a rich history of community action that is evident in its response to addressing local food insecurity. The majority of projects in these networks focus on the distribution of food. There is scope, however, for more food related social enterprises, including food buying co-operatives and other ways to maximise income. There is scope for co-produced ventures where the local community has a say in what is developed. Interesting business models include Mazi-Mas, the migrant women's catering business that completed a residency at Oval House in 2015. Stockwell Community Trust is currently working on ideas for a low sugar café for young people. Lambeth College runs a catering course and commercial kitchen that could provide the basis for a social enterprise focused on young people.

#### 4. Opportunities<sup>11</sup>

- **Local Authority Support**<sup>12</sup>: Whilst it is clear that the local authority may not be an option for funding food insecurity work in the near future, consideration must be given to other ways in which it might support such work. Given the proportion of new building developments in Lambeth, the use of funds secured via Section 106 Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy may be an option.<sup>13</sup> These charges are often used to fund projects like open space improvements and children's play areas to mitigate the impacts of new building developments. A proposal is that a proportion of Section 106 funding is designated to building an infrastructure specifically that helps address food insecurity. For example, funding could be used for creating spaces for food buying co-operatives or additional social supermarkets.
- **Feeding Lambeth**: Feeding Britain, Lambeth Food Partnership and the Lambeth GP Food Cooperative are currently developing a pilot project that will address hunger and food poverty in the borough. It will include a specific project on Health and Hunger, looking at how food organisations can better engage with GPs and other health professionals.
- **Measuring Food Insecurity Project**: Sustain, The Alliance for Better Food and Farming, is currently approaching local authorities to determine those who

<sup>11</sup> Added 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Added 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

<sup>13</sup> "A Section 106 Agreement is a type of planning obligation authorised by Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Planning Obligations are usually completed following a resolution to grant planning permission to mitigate the impact of new developments." <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications> (Accessed 10.05.17)

are actively interested in measuring or monitoring levels of household food insecurity. This initiative follows on from a meeting held at Parliament in November 2016.

- **The Lambeth Larder Community Food Resources:** The Community Food Coordinator is currently exploring options for taking the Lambeth Larder forward as an independent social enterprise beyond the pilot project.<sup>14</sup>

## Part 2: Food Insecurity & Young People

The second objective of the Lambeth Food Insecurity Project was to look at the impacts of problematic hunger on young people. As a means of achieving this aim, Lambeth Council funded West London Mission to deliver Healthy Holidays Community Fund. This section outlines the issue and reports on the achievements of the pilot grant scheme.

### 1. The Issues for Lambeth

The effects of food insecurity on young people impact on their mental well-being, physical health, developmental potential and educational attainment; creating problems that may continue well into adulthood. Whilst food insecurity remains a hidden problem, the following data has been gathered relating to young people living in Lambeth:

- 27.6% (15,190) of Lambeth children are 'aged under 16 and living in a low income household', which is higher than the England average of 18.6%.<sup>15</sup>
- 26.6% (687) of Year 6 children (10 year olds) are classified as obese, worse than the average for England of 19.1%.<sup>16</sup>
- 25.6% of all pupils are eligible for free school meals.<sup>17</sup> The figures are much higher in Pupil Referral Units (41%) and Special schools (70.3%).<sup>18</sup>
- Lambeth children eligible for free school meals consistently attain lower results than other children at KS1 and KS2, and do not achieve target standards at age 16.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Added 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017

<sup>15</sup> Public Health England, Health Profile Lambeth 2016, Revised version 9<sup>th</sup> September 2016

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Lambeth Council provides free school meals are provided to all Reception, Yr. 1 and Yr. 2 pupils. Free school meals are also available to children whose parents or carers receive certain benefits. Lambeth Education Statistics (2015-2016)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

### 2. Problematic Hunger

Kate Harvey's report from 2015 involved speaking to 81 Lambeth children and parents about their experiences of food insecurity.<sup>20</sup> She describes the prevalent issue of 'problematic hunger', as specifically: "*frequent hunger, hunger when no food is available, and hunger at bedtime*". When asked what it felt like when there was not much food around at home, a 9 year-old Lambeth girl responded:

*"I feel hungry. I just want to sleep 'cos when you sleep... when I [go] to bed hungry and sleep. I'm not hungry."*

When asked to describe what feeling hungry feels like, a 10 year-old Lambeth girl replied:

*"Your belly hurts, and sometimes you'll feel like you'll vomit."*

The children contributing to Harvey's report describe severe and problematic hunger. Harvey concludes that the children's experiences of living with problematic hunger indicate that, "*parents are not always able to shield them from the impact of food insecurity*." In the report, 76% of parents described going without food, or having smaller portions, to make family meals go further. The report also notes that amongst families experiencing food insecurity, there can be "*a reliance on low-cost takeaway food, likely to be nutritionally poor*". Harvey highlights that it is normal for some Lambeth children to receive their main source of food via breakfast clubs, free school meals, at after school clubs and similar centres. She also identifies weekends as time when many young people do not eat sufficient food, as these centres are closed.

Kate Harvey's report is one of the few that speaks directly to young people and their families living with food insecurity. The statistics above make clear the developmental and physiological effects of food insecurity of those young people. Harvey's report gives an insight into the day-to-day realities with which many young people in Lambeth live; of not know when or from where the next meal is coming; of masking signs of severe hunger and normalising problematic hunger.

Over the course of the Lambeth Food Insecurity Project, the Community Food Coordinator has spoken to groups working directly with young people. Some accounts echo those in Harvey's report. Youth workers have reported young people bringing unhealthy, insufficient or no food to eat to sessions. However, one group reported a more sinister issue, with local gangs grooming teenage boys by providing food, clothing and other essential items for their families.

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<sup>20</sup> "When I go to bed hungry and sleep, I'm not hungry": Children and parents' experiences of food insecurity, K. Harvey (University of Reading), *Appetite*, Issue 99, 2015. Original report commissioned by Kids Company. Thanks to Edwina Prayogo, PhD researcher at UCL, for bringing this research to the Community Food Coordinator's attention.

Food insecurity, therefore, has a wide impact that may touch on educational and physical development, mental health and wellbeing through to potential criminality.



Oasis Children's Venture, Healthy Holidays event, 2015.  
Photo: Amelia King

### 3. Healthy Holidays Community Fund

A key aim of the Lambeth Food Insecurity Project was to address the effects food insecurity on young people. The focus was on so-called 'holiday hunger'; specifically, the hunger that young people experience in the school breaks, who would normally rely on a free school meal or after school club as their main meal of the day. It was beyond the scope of this project to attempt to provide food for Lambeth's young people in need of food at evenings and weekends, despite this being a known issue. It is well known that many families eligible for free school meals struggle to pay for additional food in the school holiday periods.

It has been well reported that a 'learning slump' occurs, particularly during the summer holiday, amongst young people not receiving adequate food, putting them at a disadvantage to their more affluent peers.<sup>21</sup> In Lambeth, the total number of school days in a year is 195, which leaves 170 days where families experiencing food insecurity have to make alternative arrangements to free school meals.

The Lambeth Food Insecurity Project response to this issue was to establish Healthy Holidays Community Fund, a pilot grant scheme for community groups to design and run food projects for young people aged 6-18 in the school breaks. The scheme funded groups already working with young people (e.g. adventure playgrounds, sports groups, etc.) and their food projects ran alongside existing activities. The aim was that young people in need would attend projects alongside their more financially secure peers, avoiding the stigma of attending a project specifically for poorer children.

The main criteria of the grant scheme were for groups to operate in areas of need; provide school standard meals; offer at least Living Wage to additional project staff; plus have valid Enhanced Disclosure checks and Food

Hygiene certificates. Healthy Holidays also encouraged projects that promoted healthy eating; involved young people in cooking and eating together; and engaged parents and carers in project delivery.

When recruiting for the Healthy Holidays pilot, the Community Food Coordinator spoke to youth workers about young people experiencing problematic hunger. One project manager reported young people attending his group, who may not have eaten for two days. Lee Dema runs St. Matthew's Project, its activities are largely sports based. He reported that:

*"Sometimes our young people arrive hungry to the sessions. They can find it hard to concentrate and this also causes problems with them getting angry and easily tired."*

### 4. Healthy Holidays: Impacts

Between May 2015 and August 2016, the grant scheme ran 4 rounds of Healthy Holidays, plus a one day pilot, supporting 7 groups across the borough, these were; Beth Centre, Brixton People's Kitchen, Lollard Adventure Playground, Oasis Children's Venture, Oasis Playspace, St. Matthew's Project and Streatham Youth Centre.

Healthy Holidays established a valuable partnership with Fareshare London, the food surplus charity; Healthy Holidays was their first holiday food project in the capital. The Community Food Coordinator worked closely with Rachel Ledwith, their London Development Manager, to develop a unique Healthy Holidays food profile of healthy food and drink as part of the grant offer. The Fareshare London food greatly enhanced the grants worth, since the food provided is of significantly higher financial value than that of the annual subscription.

The input from the Healthy Holidays groups was significant. Most groups' added value to their projects well above the monetary value of the grants received. It must be noted that the groups completed their Healthy Holidays projects in addition to their regular holiday activities. Whilst the fund paid for some additional sessional staff, the groups carried the bulk of the extra workload. The groups also recruited parents, carers and volunteers to help run the projects, who contributed in many ways to the projects. Mark Wood, Senior Youth Worker at Streatham Youth Centre, explained:

*"Feedback from parents has been very positive, not only have they been getting involved, volunteering to help prepare and cook meals for the group, but several have donated things like cases of bottled water."*

Some groups used their Healthy Holidays projects to creatively address broader issues. Streatham Youth Centre used a grant to engage hard-to-reach parents from a local Traveller community, whose children used their centre. The Beth Centre works with vulnerable women and ran peer-led sessions for mothers to cook and bond with their children. St. Matthew's Project raised awareness of the importance of healthy eating in relation to sports excellence.

<sup>21</sup> Beyond the Food Bank 2016, Sustain: The Alliance for Better Food & Farming

## KEY IMPACTS: HEALTHY HOLIDAYS

- With an average award of £1800, the 7 community groups provided 11,153 meals and 1513 young people benefited from the projects.
- 274 parents and carers, and 101 volunteers helped deliver Healthy Holidays projects.
- Healthy Holidays/FareShare London partnership enabled 4.5 tonnes of healthy, surplus food and drink to be diverted from landfill, with a retail value of over £22,000.

There was a strong educational element to the Healthy Holidays projects. As well as receiving healthy meals, many young people learnt valuable cooking and social skills. Lollard Adventure Playground created a healthy snack blog where they share and store recipes online. Some groups organised visits to local farms, Borough Market and grew food as part of their projects, enabling the young people to understand of the provenance of the food they eat. David Ogwe, Project Coordinator at Oasis Children's Venture stated:

*"We have started to make real progress in educating and sharing ideas around healthy eating with young people. All the skills they developed from the Healthy Holidays Programme are transferable to their homes and beneficial to their families."*

Several groups have reported improved behaviour and social skills among the young people, as a result of their Healthy Holidays projects. Lee Dema reported that:

*"We noticed a real social aspect to mealtimes, with many of the young people sitting down together, chatting and laughing. This is in stark contrast to our usual summer holiday sessions, when we would expect to see several arguments and fights relating to the day's football activities spilling over into home time."*

Healthy Holidays Community Fund was a valuable means to engage with families experiencing financial hardship. It became a useful mechanism through which to distribute Lambeth Larder literature. The literature signposts people to local activities and services offering help and support. The Healthy Holidays groups distributed booklets to parents and carers of young people attending sessions.

## 5. Learnings

The Lambeth Food Insecurity Project has provided an important opportunity to gather data on the impacts of problematic hunger on young people in the borough. The Healthy Holidays pilot has been a unique chance to learn from groups working directly with young people in Lambeth about how food insecurity affects them.

- A. Healthy Holidays has established a socially cohesive model for addressing the problematic hunger

experienced many young people during the school breaks. The scheme created valuable partnerships between community groups, parents, carers and other family members; plus local businesses and volunteers. All have been working towards a common goal.

- B. The Healthy Holidays pilot has been extremely successful in terms of its outputs and outcomes. It shows that the model works and is potentially scalable to support more groups locally. It also proves that with relatively small sums of money, Lambeth's community groups can deliver high quality, fun, educational and creative projects.
- C. Despite its success, Healthy Holidays can only partially address the urgent issue of young people facing unacceptable levels of hunger during the school breaks. It is clear that such projects are not a solution to food insecurity in general.
- D. Given the learning gained in delivering the pilot, it would be worth exploring whether the Healthy Holidays model could become a standard for delivering holiday food projects in Lambeth.
- E. As with public debate over the growth in food banks, it is a concern of this research project that with an increase in holiday food projects, after school club meals, etc., young people experiencing problematic hunger may become accustomed to seeking food outside of the home. The situation does not help family cohesion, nor does it address the overall causes of poverty.
- F. To be effective in addressing the causes of food insecurity, Healthy Holidays and similar programmes need to work in conjunction with local support agencies (e.g. One Lambeth Advice, Money Champions, food banks, etc.) to help families on low incomes find help, reduce money issues and create financial resilience.

## 7. Opportunities

Several opportunities have emerged in recent months and are worth noting for future exploration:

- West London Mission explored alternative methods of funding the school holiday provision work. Most funders are reluctant to fund grant schemes. Whilst it was not possible for this project, the Childhood Trust does support projects by matching donations as well as crowd funding and will fund grant schemes.
- Ernest (the online platform that collects donations from restaurants and food businesses for community projects) is interested in developing a new strand in Lambeth.
- Kitchen Social is a three-year programme from Mayor's Fund for London/Innocent Trust. They want "to identify and help 330 community organisations

across London develop a healthy food and social development offer during the school holidays.” It will be worth promoting this initiative to groups through local networks.

- Brixton & Norwood Food Bank is planning a school holiday project for summer 2017, in partnership with the Mothers Union.
- Street Games is a charity working in disadvantaged areas. It is currently working with several groups in Lambeth through its Fit & Fed programme. It will be worth promoting this initiative to groups through local networks.

## Part 3: Going Forward

The Lambeth Food Insecurity Project was made possible with initial funding from The Mayor’s Fund for London and The Innocent Foundation, and then continuation funding from Lambeth Council’s Department for Welfare, Employment and Skills, Neighbourhoods and Growth. Due to budgetary cuts, that department will no longer fund West London Mission’s work addressing food insecurity.

As outlined at the start of this report, in Sustain’s report *Beyond the Food Bank 2016*, Lambeth scores highest in London, compared to other local authorities, for its overall response to food insecurity. The Lambeth community’s response to alleviating food insecurity is significant and provides a crucial safety net for thousands of individuals and families in crisis.

The majority of the services provided rely on volunteer labour, part-time staff, grant funding and donations. In terms of the food they give to people in need, the majority of it the local community donates. The food comes from supermarket collections, donations from local businesses, faith groups and other community networks. It is not a secure source of food.

Given the number of groups working to address food insecurity across Lambeth, it would be impossible to calculate the monetary value of the labour provided in supporting people in need, particularly the volunteer hours. It would be equally challenging to put a value to the quantity of food donated as not all groups have the resources, need or desire to record the amount of food they collect or distribute.

The overriding sense from compiling this report is of a community that is committed, creative and skilful in responding to the impacts of food insecurity, but that is under immense pressure. The implementation of Universal Credit across the borough is likely to increase the amount of people seeking help with food. It is already proving a challenge for new benefit claimants and those supporting them, with claims taking up to eight weeks to process. Many of the community groups, faith groups and charities working within the food insecurity sector are

themselves vulnerable to funding cuts, and potentially to closure, despite the crucial service they provide for the borough.

As noted above, compared to other local authorities, Lambeth’s response to food insecurity is impressive. The commissioning of the Lambeth Food Insecurity Project is further evidence of a serious commitment to addressing the issue. However, there is more to work to be done to not lose the good ground that has been gained so far.

Lambeth Council’s planned budgetary savings of £20 million for 2017/18 will impact on all but core services. However, this does not mean that the local authority does not have a role to play in supporting the community and voluntary sector initiatives that address food insecurity, specifically around the shaping of policy and services and brokering beneficial relationships with business and other potential funders. There is scope for more social enterprise, like West Norwood’s Community Shop, in the mix of responses to this issue. There may be scope for Lambeth Council’s Department for Welfare, Employment and Skills, Neighbourhoods and Growth to support the creation of food related social enterprise or training, for example.

As this document highlights, food insecurity is a symptom of general financial insecurity. Both impact on public services from education and public health to social services and young people’s services. As such, it will already be an issue, albeit a hidden one, for each of these local authority departments. For example, the second part of this report highlights lower education attainment amongst young people receiving free school meals using figures from Lambeth’s education department. There is scope for local stakeholders to identify other departments in Lambeth Council that may be able to contribute funding to its food insecurity work, such as Lambeth Education Department, Social Services and Young Lambeth Co-operative.

The Lambeth Food Insecurity Project has provided a unique chance to learn about, record and celebrate the community action around tackling food insecurity in the borough. It has also provided an invaluable opportunity to contribute to the alleviation of food insecurity at a local level. It is intended that this report will be shared with the wider community, particularly those engaged in food insecurity work to focus and strengthen future activity.

This document is in part a call to community networks to work together better to share information and resources and to encourage more partnership working. But it does so in the knowledge that the community and voluntary sectors already bear a huge responsibility in supporting individuals and families that experience food insecurity. It will be crucial going forward for local authority departments (Public Health, Social Services, Education, etc.,) to recognise the impact of food insecurity on the services they deliver and work with stakeholders to find innovative and lasting solutions. Great gains have been



made in the commissioning of the Lambeth Food Insecurity Project; the issue will now be how to the community can move forward in partnership with the local authority.

*Virginia Nimarkoh, Community Food Coordinator,  
St. Luke's Hub, West London Mission, April 2017*

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Key Texts**

- *Lambeth State of the Borough Report 2016*, London Borough of Lambeth
- *Beyond the Brood Bank: 2016: London Food Poverty Profile*, Sustain: Alliance for Better Food & Farming
- *Lambeth Education Statistics 2015-16*, London Borough of Lambeth
- *Health Profile for Lambeth 2016*, Public Health England
- *When I go to bed hungry and sleep, I'm not hungry*, Kate Harvey (University of Reading), *Appetite*, Issue 99, 2015

## Appendix 1

### Lambeth Food Insecurity Project: Outputs Mar 2015-Mar 2017

#### Healthy Holidays Community Fund

#### Total Outputs

21

1513

208

11153

72

3886

274

101

15

Holiday/Year	Groups Funded	Project Description	Wards	Age range	No. of Projects Completed	No. of young people benefitting per session	Number of sessions	Total number of meals provided	No. of deliveries from FareShare	No. kgs surplus food diverted from landfill	No. parents or carers took part	No. of volunteers	No. Food Safety Training
Summer Half Term Trial 2015	St. Matthew's Project	One-off food event to celebrate football tournament in Brockwell Park. Surplus food provided by FareShare London	Coldharbour/Tulse Hill	5 to 18	1	74	1	80	1	50	2	1	0
Summer 2015	Lollard St. Adventure Playground, Oasis Playspace, Oasis Children's Venture, St. Matthew's Project, Streatham Youth Centre, Beth Centre, Brixton People's Kitchen	Healthy food projects for young people during school break. Projects designed and run by groups, parents and volunteers. Surplus food provided by FareShare London	Prince's, Bishop's, Coldharbour/Tulse Hill, Stockwell, St. Leonard's/Streatham Wells, Oval, Vassall/Coldharbour	5 to 16	7	442	93	6583	31	1395	35	30	8
Christmas 2015	Lollard St. Adventure Playground, Oasis Children's Venture, St. Matthew's Project, Streatham Youth Centre, Beth Centre	Healthy food projects for young people during school break. Projects designed and run by groups, parents and volunteers. Surplus food provided by FareShare London	Prince's, Coldharbour/Tulse Hill, Stockwell, St. Leonard's/Streatham Wells, Oval	5 to 16	5	505	18	1430	12	720	200	40	3
Easter 2016	Lollard St. Adventure Playground, Oasis Children's Venture, St. Matthew's Project, Streatham Youth Centre	Healthy food projects for young people during school break. Projects designed and run by groups, parents and volunteers. Surplus food provided by FareShare London	Prince's, Coldharbour/Tulse Hill, Stockwell, St. Leonard's/Streatham Wells, Oval	5 to 18	4	202	28	1460	7	386	25	18	2
Summer 2016	Lollard St. Adventure Playground, Oasis Children's Venture, St. Matthew's Project, Streatham Youth Centre	Healthy food projects for young people during school break. Projects designed and run by groups, parents and volunteers. Surplus food provided by FareShare London	Prince's, Coldharbour/Tulse Hill, Stockwell, St. Leonard's/Streatham Wells, Oval	5 to 16	4	290	68	1600	21	1335	12	12	2

#### Financial Resilience Outputs

Output	Qty	Description
Lambeth Larder booklet	2000 copies published	A5 colour booklet with healthy food tips, budget recipe, emergency food, and information about where to get support in Lambeth for getting online, money advice etc.
Lambeth Larder website	Average 300 unique views per week/Over 600 page views per week.	Online resource with additional information to the Lambeth Larder booklet.
Lambeth Larder Community Map	1	Interactive online resource
Lambeth Larder Food List	Downloadable from website	Emergency food information sheet for Lambeth
Lambeth Larder Wellbeing	Downloadable from website	Info sheet sign-posting to mental health services in the borough.
Housing & Homelessness Support List	Downloadable from website	Local Housing & Homelessness advice list
Eat Well Spend Less Course	6 week course run at St. Luke's Hub	Partnership with Oasis Waterloo/Trussell Trust

## Appendix 2

# Lambeth Food Insecurity Report 2017

## Community Responses to Food Insecurity: A Brief Overview

The Lambeth Food Insecurity Project has provided a unique opportunity to find out more about community activity addressing this issue. What follows is a brief overview of just some of the activity taking place.

### 1. FOOD BANKS

Food banks are probably the most familiar example of how communities respond to food insecurity. Lambeth currently has approximately seven food banks providing emergency food for people in crisis. There are four Trussell Trust food banks: Norwood & Brixton, Clapham Park, Vauxhall and Waterloo.<sup>1</sup> There are also at least three independent food banks; these include Brixton Soup Kitchen, Family Food Bank and newcomer Naybur's Pantry, of which all operate in the central Lambeth area.

Norwood & Brixton Food Bank is the busiest of the Trussell Trust food banks and works in partnership with Christians Against Poverty and Brixton Advice Centre. It has also formed links with Local Greens veg box social enterprise, and receives their surplus fruit and veg. Waterloo Food Bank is part of the Oasis Hub in Lambeth North which links into their debt service and other facilities including Waterloo Library, which they house.

There are at least 3 independent food banks in Lambeth. Brixton Soup Kitchen runs a food bank and provides support for homeless people. It has gained national recognition and formed links with businesses including Marks & Spencer, Citibank and Brixton Pound. Family Food Bank primarily supports families and young people affected by the closure of Kids Company. Naybur's Pantry is a new service that runs from Myatt's Fields North. It offers surplus food parcels working in partnership with FareShare London and Tesco.

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<sup>1</sup> Both Norwood & Brixton and Waterloo food banks operate from 3 sites respectively.

Most Lambeth food banks (Trussell Trust and independent) offer services beyond issuing emergency food parcels. Additional help may include benefit and debt advice, legal advice, mental health support, clothing, fuel vouchers and employment support. The Lambeth food insecurity survey shows that local food banks work in partnership with agencies such as One Lambeth Advice, Single Homeless Project, St. Luke's Hub, Advising London and Centre 70.

Lambeth has more food banks compared to neighbouring boroughs. Southwark and Wandsworth each have one Trussell Trust food bank, with Wandsworth's food bank operating from five sites. This is not necessarily an indication of greater need in Lambeth. The borough's Trussell Trust food banks were set up independently of each other, and have grown organically in response to local need. Lambeth is a borough with a strong tradition in community action, and the growth of food banks reflects a collective response to food insecurity.

### 2. OTHER EMERGENCY FOOD PROVIDERS

There are four homeless day centres operating in the area. Spires, Ace of Clubs, The Manna Society, and Webber St day centre all offer emergency support such as food, mental and physical health practitioners, clothing and employment support, plus they sign post to other services.

Faith groups such as RUACH City Church and Teen Challenge offer emergency food on a weekly basis.

### 3. COMMUNITY MEALS

There are various community meals taking place offering cheap, free or by donation food. Initiatives such as these groups often form relationships with local businesses.

During 2015-16, Oasis Hub Waterloo ran weekly 'pay-as-you-feel' community banquets from its farm and play space sites. The meals were provided with support from a Borough Market trader and ran on the same day as their food bank, but were also open to the wider community.

Stockwell Park Community Centre runs a regular 'Friday Night Supper', a free, weekly community meal. The meal has been run with support from local branches of Nando's and KFC, plus Best Before Project, the Norwood based food surplus initiative.

#### 4. LIMITED ACCESS COMMUNITY FOOD

Some community food projects have more limited access in that they work on a referral basis or are designed for a specific user group. The following are examples activity across different networks:

Brixton Housing Co-op runs a monthly lunch club for its members, their families and friends. The club was set up partly as a means of keeping in contact with older co-op members, as well as providing a cheap, healthy meal. They also run Joe's Café several times a year, which is open to the wider community where they raise money for charity.

The Robes Project runs a winter night shelter for homeless people in South London churches, from October to March each year. The network of 20 churches includes 7 in Lambeth. It also offers a weekly lunch club for their current and former shelter guests, plus volunteers. Both the night shelter and lunch club operate on at referral basis.

#### 5. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES

There have been some generous and creative responses to local food insecurity. Artist Amanda Holliday produced a series of artworks about food, austerity and scarcity that she exhibited part of Camberwell Arts Week in summer 2015. She donated a percentage of the profits from sales to Brixton Soup Kitchen.

Roy Moody a retired pastor and food grower at Rosendale Allotments has for many years grown fruit and vegetables for his parishioners in need. He has been the subject of numerous articles.



*Amanda Holliday, Din-Din art installation, 2015.  
Image: Kelly O'Reilly*

#### 6. FOOD SURPLUS INITIATIVES

Best Before Project collects surplus food from local businesses and redistributes it to local groups from its base in West Norwood.

Brixton People's Kitchen have been holding regular community meals for some years now, addressing food waste at the same time. They operate on a by donation or free to volunteers basis.

A recent addition to network is The People's Fridge Brixton, which launched in February 2017. The community fridge stores food donated from local businesses. It is accessible to anyone who wants to use it. The aims of the project are to cut food waste, encourage food sharing and help tackle food poverty.

Community Shop was London's first social supermarket. It sells low-cost, high quality surplus food to people receiving benefits in the West Norwood area. To use the shop, people need to become a member.

This brief overview gives a sense of the range of work, the diversity of approach, plus the levels of commitment involved in the community efforts to address food insecurity. Remarkably, much of this work remains a largely hidden area of activity, despite its vital role. Full and live listings of the community activity is available from the Lambeth Larder website.

# Appendix 3

## Lambeth Food Insecurity Report 2017

### Summary Survey Results

#### Methodology

In February 2017, an online survey was sent to representatives of thirty five groups involved in Lambeth's community food networks. Twenty seven completed the online survey. This is a 77% response rate. Respondents represented a range of stakeholders, including groups and networks.

All the groups and networks taking part in the survey are listed in the Lambeth Larder resources and are actively working in the borough. They include food banks, homeless day centres, faith groups, food growing sites, community cafés, community groups, plus other social enterprises and organisations.

The survey was conducted as part of Lambeth Food Insecurity Project to find out more about the degree to which, and how, local groups and networks are involved in addressing food insecurity.

Lambeth's community response to food insecurity has been assessed by evaluating a range of issues, these include:

- the type of food provision the groups offered
- the range of services, if any, groups offer in addition to food
- which, if any, financial resilience or advice centres the groups work with
- what kind of data groups collect and how they use it

The survey also asked if the groups had additional information to share about their work in the borough.

#### Key findings

1. The range in the kinds of food provision the groups provided is varied:

40% offered community food growing

18% offered emergency food (e.g. food bank, soup kitchen, soup run, etc.)

18.5% offered a regular community meal (free, low cost or by donation)

7% provided community cafés

Other responses included a low cost social supermarket and surplus food distribution.

2. When asked what services the groups offer in addition to food, 82% said they offered a service in addition to food. The majority offer more than one other service:

63% sign-post people to other services

44% run healthy cooking on a budget courses

37% offer employment support

33% use Lambeth Larder resources

30% offer debt advice and support

29% offer clothing

7% offer fuel vouchers.

Concerning health and wellbeing, 29.3% offer mental health support (mental health worker, counsellor, etc.) and 22.2% offer general health support (e.g. health worker, nurse etc.)

Other responses included intergenerational debating; hosting other organisations that support specific groups; showers, access to computers and second-hand furniture.

3. 66% of the respondents said they work with other financial resilience or advice centres. Of those respondents most work with more than one other organisation:

26% St. Luke's Hub/Money Champions

22% Centre 70

19% Christians Against Poverty

15% Lambeth & Merton Citizens Advice

11% Brixton Advice Centre

15% Advising London

7.5% Waterloo Action Centre

7.5% Oasis Debt Centre

Other responses included St. Michael's Fellowship, Ace of Clubs, GP practices and hospitals, Mosaic Clubhouse and Harbour Recovery Service.

4. 26% of respondents issued food bank vouchers for Trussell Trust food banks. Some groups may sign-post people to other emergency food providers that do not require formal referral.
5. 86% of respondents said people did not need to be referred to use their service.
6. When asked what data groups collect, 78% of respondents said they collect data on more than one area of the service they provide, these were:  
63% measure the number of service users.  
45% measure demographic information.  
40% measure increased skills or knowledge (e.g. healthy eating courses, food growing activities, etc.)  
33% measure the number of visits per service user.  
33% measure reasons for using the service.  
30% measure the quantity of food provided.

7. Of those collecting data, all use it for multiple purposes:
  - 70% use it to improve their service.
  - 52% use it to raise more funds.
  - 3% shared it with other agencies.Other responses include using it to lobby local government and to their monitor work with volunteers.
8. When asked if they had addition information to share, many respondents expressed a desire to be more connected with local initiatives working to address food insecurity. Some spoke of how their projects provide social cohesion and help maintain mental health and wellbeing through food-growing activities. Some encouraged more a more integrated approach to food resilience. Others spoke of their plans for new projects such as a low sugar café staffed by local people on probation, volunteers and young people.

## **Conclusion**

Responses to this short survey give an indication of the range of work currently undertaken in the borough to address food insecurity. The results show that the majority of groups offer additional services to food provision. There is also evidence that most the groups offering emergency support also work in partnership with other agencies that can help people with issues including financial and legal advice. This indicates awareness amongst the groups that that people experiencing food insecurity need support to improve their economic situation in the longer term. Most groups did not require formal referral to use their services. The questions on data collection were asked to find out whether current figures on local food insecurity adequately capture the scale of the issue. The survey shows how well groups offering food provision in various ways are connected to other services. The results can be used to indicate where new partnerships can be formed and resources targeted going forward.

The aim is that local groups and networks will use the information gathered here to improve their services, create new connections, in support of funding bids and as the basis of further research.