

A third of London councils unable to present coherent response to rising food poverty

- New reports show mixed progress of London's councils in improving local food and tackling food poverty
- But despite budget cuts, many councils applauded for their commitment to tackling poverty, with more paying the London Living Wage and improving food and care for children.

Two league tables published today by London Food Link, part of the charity Sustain [1], show that while councils are continuing work in some areas to ensure access to healthy and sustainable food, more commitment is needed to stop standards slipping.

Now in its seventh year of publication, the *Good Food for London* report found 18 boroughs have improved across 11 indicators of healthy and sustainable food over the last year. Leading the league table is the Royal Borough of Greenwich, closely followed by the London Boroughs of Islington and Tower Hamlets. Brent and Southwark are recognised for having improved the most since 2016.

In the third edition of the sister report, *Beyond the Food Bank*, which assesses how boroughs are tackling the complex issues behind food poverty, Islington reached the top of the table, followed by Lambeth and Greenwich. The London Boroughs of Merton and Southwark are also recognised for significant improvement since 2016. But worryingly a third of London boroughs were unable to provide information on how they are tackling food poverty, at a time when 37% of London children are living in poverty [2].

Maddie Guerlain, author of *Good Food for London* commented, "We're pleased that this year saw more councils taking steps to support school and community food growing, gain Unicef Baby Friendly accreditation, become London Living Wage employers and improve the food served in schools. There has also been a concerted effort by councils to protect children's centres during drastic budget cuts."

However, the surveys found a reduction in the number of councils providing a Meals on Wheels service with only 9 out of 33 councils reporting providing hot meals. Fewer councils are taking part in the Healthier Catering Commitment, a worrying sign given the continued obesity crisis and it's relation to the prevalence of food high in added sugar, fat and salt on our high streets. In addition, fewer boroughs have maintained their Fairtrade status over the last year.

The reports will be accompanied by the launch of a new website [3] that includes interactives maps and league tables for users to explore data from the reports. Data will be searchable by borough, measure and year so that residents can understand their borough's progress, and can see the evolution of performance against each measure over time.

The new website and reports will be launched at 2:00pm on Friday 13 October in London's Living Room at City Hall. Please get in touch for advance copies of the reports and to be added to the guest list. Unregistered attendees will not be admitted.

Contacts and spokespeople

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Notes for editors

1. London Food Link is the voice for good food in London and has been running since 2002 as part of the charity Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming. www.londofoodlink.org

Sustain advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture and promote equity. We represent around 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level, and work with hundreds more on local initiatives to improve the food system. www.sustainweb.org

2. Child Poverty Action Group www.cpag.org.uk/campaigns/child-poverty-london/keyfacts
3. The new interactive maps and league tables can be found here: [Good Food for London](#) and [Beyond the Food Bank](#).
4. 11 boroughs did not respond to the *Beyond the Food Bank* survey. These are the boroughs at the bottom of the table on page 5 of the *Beyond the Food Bank* report. Some boroughs cited limited officer capacity to respond to the survey, and our contacts at the tri-borough (Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster) explained that they were involved in the response to the Grenfell disaster.

About the Good Food for London report

Notable changes to this year's *Good Food for London* report includes the introduction of a measure on the new Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food into, launched in November 2016. Lambeth, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest have trail blazed this initiative, making a commitment to taking action across all six key themes. The Good Food for London report 2017 has been supported by a variety of partner organisations, as well as the Mayor of London.

About Beyond the Food Bank report

Beyond the Food Bank saw the addition of Council Tax Reduction – a measure that reviews councils' initiatives to minimise council tax for low income residents.

Camden, the City of London, Hounslow, Merton and Tower Hamlets all received top marks for their schemes to reduce council tax liability for those on low incomes. The *Beyond the Food Bank* report is funded by Trust for London, with additional support from the Mayor of London. For more information on our work on food poverty in London please see [here](#)