

EVERY CHILD A HEALTHY WEIGHT

STILL A CRITICAL PRIORITY FOR LONDON

September 2022



**LONDON'S
CHILD
OBESITY
TASKFORCE**

SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON

Impact
on **Urban
Health**


**Public Health
England**



ALDCS
Association of London
Directors of Children's
Services

In 2018, the Mayor brought us together as London's Child Obesity Taskforce. We are professionals with a diverse set of experiences and perspectives who come from many walks of life and gave our time freely for this exciting piece of work.

Our vision is that every child in London grows up in a community and an environment that supports their health and weight.

Our purpose is to unleash a transformation in London so that every child has every chance to grow up eating healthily, drinking plenty of water and being physically active.

Our commitment by 2030 is to halve the percentage of London's children who are affected by unhealthy weight at the start of primary school and by obesity at the end of primary school, and to reduce the gap in childhood obesity rates between the richest and poorest areas in London.



The London Child Obesity Taskforce was established in 2018 as part of the Mayor's commitment to address child obesity.

Find out more at www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/londons-child-obesity-taskforce or email childobesitytaskforce@london.gov.uk

Paul Lindley OBE

Chair

Entrepreneur and children's welfare campaigner

Professor Corinna Hawkes

Vice Chair

Director, Centre of Food Policy, City, University of London

Tim Baker

Headteacher, Charlton Manor School

Kieron Boyle

Chief Executive, Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation

Dr Mahamed Hashi

Co-Founder, Brixton Soup Kitchen and Founder, New Beginnings Youth Provision and Cabinet member at London Borough of Lambeth

Florence Kroll

Director of Children's Services, Royal Borough of Greenwich and representing the Association of London Directors of Children's Services

Yinka Makinde

Director of Digital Workforce Strategy - NHSX and pharmacist

Ellen O'Donoghue

Executive Director, James' Place suicide prevention charity

June O'Sullivan MBE

Chief Executive, London Early Years Foundation

Rachel Toms

Healthy urban design and planning specialist and Director of Urbanism at Sustrans

Phil Veasey

Community engagement consultant

Steve Whiteman

Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, Royal Borough of Greenwich and representing the Association of Directors of Public Health for London

Nick Lee

Managing Partner at Havas London

With thanks to past members for their contribution:

Christopher Eytayo

Talent Manager, Young Foodies

Professor Paul Plant

Former Interim Regional Director, Public Health England London

Professor Yvonne Doyle

Former London Director, Public Health England and Statutory Health Advisor to the Mayor of London

Danny Ruta

Former Director of Public Health, Lewisham and Child Obesity Lead, Association of Directors of Public Health for London

CONTENTS

LETTER TO THE MAYOR	6
 PART ONE: INTRODUCTION	 10
Background	12
A summary of where we are	14
Covid-19	18
Strategic landscape	18
 PART TWO: OUR CALLS TO ACTION	 20
1. End child poverty in London	22
2. Support women to breastfeed for longer	24
3. Skill up early years professionals	26
4. Use child measurement to better support parents	28
5. Ensure all nurseries and schools are enabling health for life	30
6. Make free ‘London water’ available everywhere	32
7. Create more active, playful streets and public spaces	34
8. Stop unhealthy marketing that influences what children eat	36
9. Transform fast-food businesses	38
10. Fund good-food innovation and harness the power of investment	40
 PART THREE: CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE	 42



LETTER TO THE MAYOR

Dear Sadiq Khan,

In 2018 you established London's Child Obesity Taskforce, with an open remit and a 2-year term. We have had the privilege of leading the taskforce, defining its remit with our colleagues and extending its term to January 2022. In September 2019 we published our recommended ideas and actions in *Every Child a Healthy Weight: 10 Ambitions for London*, containing 20 specific calls-to-action to the capital's leaders.

Since issuing *Every Child a Healthy Weight* the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted life for families and children in London in ways unimaginable back in 2018. As you are well aware, the pandemic has fundamentally changed lives and opportunities across public health, personal health and wellbeing, education, the economy and infrastructure across the city, both nationally and globally. It has also brought into sharp focus the direct link between poverty and health inequalities and between environment and public health. All Londoners have more to think

about in their daily lives because of the pandemic. The city's leaders have many more challenges and calls on priorities in their policy and action plans across every sector. It is self-evident that public health and personal wellbeing – be that related to COVID-19 or unhealthy weight (and there is correlation between the two) – are central to the solutions to a better life for all living in the city. The pandemic has tragically shown, in clear focus, yet another reason why it is critical to tackle the causes of unhealthy weight and of obesity in our city.

As you know, the aim of the taskforce, set from its earliest days, was to unleash a transformation so that every child has every chance to grow up eating healthily, drinking plenty of water and being physically active wherever they live in the city. This goal led us to deliver *Every Child a Healthy Weight* and the 20 specific actions we believe are necessary to begin that transformation. The 20 actions were based on the understanding that change will only

come when the whole system in which children live their lives is shifted in a healthier direction. To do so, we need to understand the realities of children's lives. So, drawing on the fantastic relationships between taskforce members and the communities they serve, we talked to young people and parents about their lives, setting out what we found in What makes it harder for London's children to be healthier?

Each of the 20 actions in *Every Child a Healthy Weight* was based on this understanding of these children's lives. In the almost 2.5 years since its publication we have shared these actions with every leader that would listen; and have listened equally to those that spoke with us. We have engaged leaders across government, business and civic society, helping put the healthy weight of our children centre stage. So many have listened and have shared the actions they are already taking at a local level and have offered the opportunity for these to be brought to a bigger audience.

Councils, businesses, charities, schools, nurseries, communities and parents have shared with us their thoughts on our proposals, and many have begun to take up the initial actions we'd targeted to start before our term ended.

This report sets out an update on the status of the city, and the actions we recommended with respect to unleashing that transformation to improve the health and weight of our

children. It shows progress has been made, that there is forward momentum – but still a long way to go. How will we get there? As a final personal sign off – we wanted to share our reflections on our learnings from leading the taskforce and serving the city on what practical actions everyone who wants to live in a healthier city can easily take. We have learned that if the city is to build back after the pandemic with healthier children, three things will really matter:

Relationships: London's Child Obesity Taskforce was constituted by a diverse range of people, many of whom had close relationships in the communities they serve. This proved critical in enabling us to understand those communities better. While these relationships already existed, we quickly realised we would need to build more relationships to encourage and inspire everyone who needed to act to do so. We began to connect people and show how they could contribute to whole systems change while also learning more about the constraints they faced. We did this as much as we could, but truly building a culture of dispersed leadership and aligned, trusted relationships takes time and, within our remit timeframe, has proved beyond our reach to fully achieve. We hope as part of our legacy that the process of building relationships across the diverse array of London's leaders need to truly deliver the whole system approach required will continue. It will be essential to enable the systems shift London's children deserve.

Resources: One of the first things we learned was just how much incredible work is already going on in London. It's frankly humbling and staggering just how hard professionals in local government public health and food teams, early years settings, schools, civil society, communities and businesses are working to help children have a healthy weight. But it's also clear that far more resource is needed to really leverage the potential of this committed workforce. The 20 actions we recommended were about step changing existing work – yet we could see that there is barely enough capacity and resource funding for what is being done already. Despite this, and the additional impact of COVID-19, great progress has been made, as this report shows what has been achieved in spades. However, the availability of more human and financial resources will be essential for comprehensive implementation of the changes we need to see in scaling actions that have begun with, for example, the initial city's water foundations and first champion schools to across the whole city. We ask those that follow us to make sure they focus on capacity and resources on the ground to get things done. Otherwise, action will remain on paper, not in children's lives.

Recognition: We found that people working against the odds to make things happen often didn't really recognise just how well they were doing. Often indeed, they were overwhelmed by what needed to be done. We have seen that small actions do build and their stories of change inspire. We can and should tell positive stories – as we try to do here. We wanted to share one experience from many that helped us to see this:

We developed profiles of the lives of children we met that showed it is hard for London's children to be healthier. But when we went back to one of the communities where we had built a profile to make a video, in partnership with UNICEF, we found they didn't want to talk about what these children couldn't do. They wanted to talk about what they could do! They wanted to show the agency, spirit and action they had in their schools, communities and families. They were so right, and their video is so powerful. Focusing on the positive can often be so much more powerful than dwelling on the negative. Creating opportunities to share such stories will inspire not just the rest of London to act, but the rest of the UK and indeed, given London's global status, the rest of the world. They show that much is possible, despite the odds and we call on our successors to find and constantly tell such stories.

As COVID-19 starts to move backstage in 2022 we believe that child obesity must now headline political, societal and civic programmes of the coming years, as the challenge to seriously tackle health inequalities takes centre stage in our collective, city wide psyche and culture.

Our calls to action still show that unleashing a transformation that supports London's children's health and weight is possible, probable and powerful. Looking at future work planned by partners across the city we are encouraged to see our calls to action reflected. We are hopeful that through the successful delivery of the London Vision and London Recovery Programme positive changes will continue to be seen across the city. Together, let's put children's health and weight centre stage going forward, and continue to deliver brave and bold action for London's families'.

Keep smiling.

Paul and Corinna



Paul

**Paul Lindley OBE
Chair**
Entrepreneur and
children's welfare
campaigner



Corinna

**Professor
Corinna Hawkes
Vice Chair**
Director, Centre
of Food Policy,
City, University
of London

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION



BACKGROUND

National Child weight measurement programme (NCMP) data from the 2020/21 school year shows that obesity rates increased in both reception-aged and year 6 school children.¹ This 4.5% rise is the biggest jump since the NCMP began in 2006/07 and the increase in London is larger than the national average. As before the pandemic, this burden is not felt equally. Children who live in the most deprived areas are over twice as likely to experience obesity as those in the least deprived areas. The link between child obesity and poverty is inescapable. Over 800,000 of London's children live in poverty and the number continues to increase.²

We often see terms put in front of poverty such as “fuel,” “food,” “digital,” and even “bed.” Whilst this may be useful way of indicating the need for short-term provision to address hardship, over the longer-term it segments the overall issue. The bottom line is poverty - which the pandemic has escalated for London's most vulnerable families.

In 2029, the Taskforce prepared some case studies looking at the daily realities of children living in or close to poverty.³ Through seeing the challenges through the eyes of children, we began to see how and why living life on a low-income is linked with obesity.

The case studies enabled us to reflect upon the environments that many of our children and young people grow up in. Only the cheapest and least optimal food

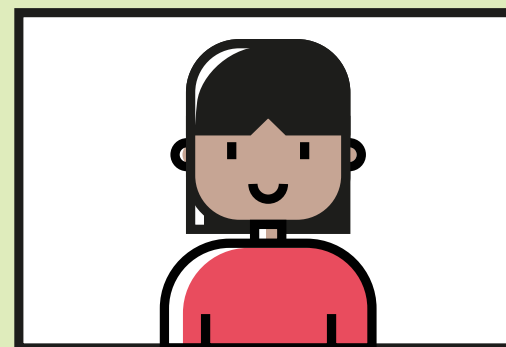
choices are available in spaces that are welcoming to young people. Too often our most vulnerable communities are places where safe play isn't easy, or it's perceived to be too dangerous a risk for children to play with their friends when out of sight of their busy parents.

We also need to recognise absolute hardship. In some London Boroughs, Newham for example, efforts to address child obesity include funding to supply families with cookers, dining tables and chairs to help make eating a healthy diet even a possibility. Any approach to reducing child obesity, therefore requires broader systemic change to address poverty. This is why our first ambition - Ambition 1 - is a call to 'End child poverty in London'.

Addressing and reducing poverty in London requires significant bold, progressive, and transformational change. The Good Work for Londoners⁴ and the Robust Safety Net⁵ Recovery Missions are good starting points. Further change will require the networks of London Boroughs, the voluntary and faith sector organisations, funders, and central government to work in partnership to find long term solutions for a more equitable society.

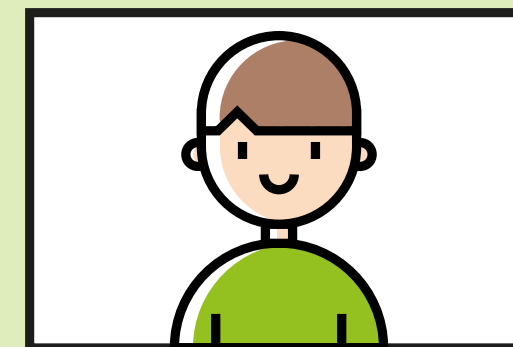
Any plan to address child obesity needs to sit within the broader context of an ambitious and dynamic change process. We have seen great leadership and action across the city to support children's health and weight, but we want to see more done, and with the urgency it deserves.

CASE STUDIES LOOKING AT THE DAILY REALITIES THROUGH THE EYES OF FOUR CHILDREN FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES



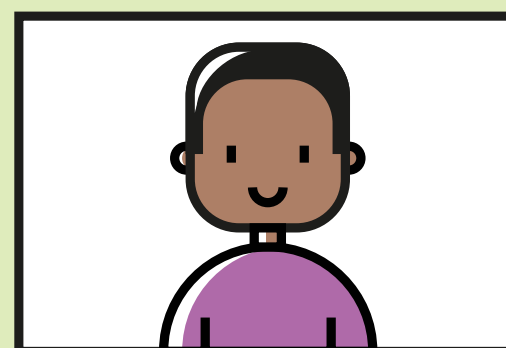
JODIE

- I'm Jodie. I am 15 years old.
- I live in inner South London in a two-bedroom council flat with my mum and 13-year-old nephew.
- My mum works as an office cleaner and is not home most nights so I look after my nephew.



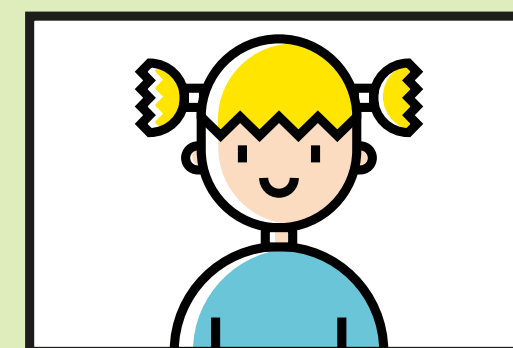
JUSTIN

- My name is Justin. I am two and a half years old.
- I live in outer East London with my mum. We have no close family nearby.
- We live in a one-bedroom high-rise flat on the sixth floor. The lift is often broken, so my mum has to carry me and the buggy to the top.
- Mum is currently out of work, so we have limited money for food and play.
- My mum didn't have much support when I was born and stopped breastfeeding as soon as she could.



ANIK

- My name is Anik. I just turned 10.
- I live in inner East London with my mum, dad and two younger sisters.
- I share a room with my sisters in our flat, which is on the third floor of our building. There isn't any outdoor space to play.
- My dad has a job and Mum stays home to look after us.



HANNAH

- I'm Hannah. I'm five and a half.
- I live with Mum and Dad in outer South East London.
- We live in a flat and have a small porch but no garden to play.
- My parents do long hours at work, so I spend a lot of time with my grandma, who lives 20 minutes away.
- My grandma has a health problem that affects her walking so she often drives, or I have to slow down and wait for her.

¹ National Child Measurement Programme, England 2020/21 School Year

² London Data Store: Poverty in London 2019/20

³ What makes it harder for London families to be healthier?

⁴ Talk London: Good Work for all Londoners

⁵ Talk London: A Robust Safety Net

A SUMMARY OF WHERE WE ARE

This report seeks to set out and showcase the great work that has happened across London; while recognising that the journey is far from over and we must not lose focus.

What has been achieved	What needs more attention
AMBITION 1	
The Mayor will lead the campaign to make London a Living Wage City by 2024. This will target the accreditation of an additional 1,600 employers, lifting at least 48,000 people onto the real Living Wage and putting £635m in Londoners' pay packets.	The National Food strategy calls for the expansion of free school meals to include all children aged 7-18 living in households earning £20,000 or less after benefits. This included support for undocumented children and those who live in households with the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) immigration condition.
The value of both Alexandra Rose and Healthy Start vouchers has increased. Work continues to ensure London's eligible families benefit from the schemes.	More must be done to make sure no child lives in a household that cannot afford healthy food and fun activities. We would like to see the UK devolve power to the Mayor to set a legal minimum wage for London.
AMBITION 2	
The 2021 Government budget included £50m support for breastfeeding support. Peer support networks remain key to increasing mothers' confidence to start and continue breastfeeding.	Data collection needs to be improved so London has a clear understanding of breastfeeding rates. This is important for rates of continued breastfeeding and initiation of breastfeeding following birth.

AMBITION 3	
LEYF commissioned research to inform a refresh of their Early Year Chef Academy programme which will be relaunched in the early 2022. This will support both LEYF and non-LEYF chefs and trainee chefs working in the Early Years.	Additional training needs need to be scoped for the early years workforce. Training should support staff to confidently engage with children and families around healthy weight, healthy eating and physical activity.
AMBITION 4	
OHID London worked with boroughs to map existing weight management services across London. This allows effective signposting for families who need to access services after receiving their NCMP letter.	Following NCMP letters, signposting is needed beyond weight management services. The London Child Obesity Delivery Board will work with London boroughs and integrated care systems to improve signposting for families to locally available offers linked to physical activity and support.
AMBITION 5	
School Food Matters, BiteBack2030 and Food Foundation are coordinating a School Food Review campaign supported by Impact on Urban Health. The campaign calls on the Government to review school food in England.	Establishing peer networks between headteachers, governors and school food providers has not progressed. Future opportunities should be explored so that schools are supported to take positive steps.
Inspectors from the Food Standards Agency will be making sure that school lunches in England meet national standards. This step was announced in the 2022 levelling up white paper.	

What has been achieved	What needs more attention
AMBITION 6	
Water only school toolkit's have been published for both Primary and Secondary schools. These toolkits support schools to implement water only policies.	Work to ensure free drinking water is available must continue. This includes the Mayor of London committed to continue expanding London's network of free drinking water fountains and to grow his Refill London scheme.
A Water only school design competition ran with over 200 young people entering. Designs championed the water only message from young people to young people.	
AMBITION 7	
TfL's Streetscape programme helped make walking and cycling easier during the pandemic, and 83 low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) across 18 boroughs and TfL's Streetscape programme.	Overall most streets and public spaces are not conducive enough to outdoor place or active travel, largely due to the dominance of traffic and car parking. Bolder, more comprehensive action is needed by decision-makers.
School Streets have multiple, with 322 now in existence across London. Where implemented, they have encouraged 27% more travel on foot, 8% more cycling and 2% more scooting.	
AMBITION 8	
Implementation of advertising restrictions on the TfL estate has resulted in London families buying 1000 fewer calories a week. The policy was externally evaluated by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Additional measures to reduce children exposure to less healthy food should be rolled out without delay. This includes plans outlined in the Government Obesity strategy to implement a 9pm watershed, restricting TV advertisements for HFSS products and a proposal to end advertising of these products online.

AMBITION 9	
<p>The 2021 London Plan stops new development proposals containing a hot food takeaway within 400m of a school. Boroughs should carefully manage the over concentration of hot food takeaways within town centres.</p>	<p>More food businesses should become Healthier Catering Commitment (HCC) accredited. Continued support is needed to increase healthier options available at takeaway outlets through the HCC scheme.</p>
<p>Launched in early 2021, SMASH is supporting young people to save money and stay healthy through its app. The SMASH app provides access to offers and discounts when buying healthier food options.</p>	
AMBITION 10	
<p>ShareAction’s ‘Healthy Markets Initiative’ campaign has resulted in commitment from and five retailers to work increase the sales of healthier foods. The campaign seeks to put companies at the forefront of change by working with investors.</p>	
<p>The Good Food Fund are supporting seven challenger brands following the first round of applications. The funds mission is to back healthier food and drink products and brands.</p>	
	<p>ShareAction and the Healthy Markets Investor coalition are looking for further investors to join forces on the topic of health. They will also continue to support retailers to make positive changes.</p>

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on Londoners' health and put extreme demand on London as a city. Many health issues we were already battling have worsened, including child obesity. Research has also shown the health risks of being an overweight adult, including an increased risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 and being admitted to hospital. Despite the level of disruption to Londoners, the action of London's partners and leaders has not stopped. Across the city, the pandemic has brought London boroughs, City Hall, community groups, voluntary organisations and businesses closer together. These new partnerships will continue to work for Londoners both now and into the future.

With this in the forefront of our minds we must look forward with urgency.

STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE

As the work of our taskforce concludes and our three year term ends, we look to pass the baton for action on to London's partners. We ask that these partners continue to deliver against our ten ambitions as outlined in Every Child a Healthy Weight. The landscape of strategic statutory bodies and partnerships responsible for London's Public Health post-pandemic has evolved from when our work began. This landscape now includes:

THE LONDON RECOVERY PROGRAMME - RECOVERY MISSIONS

The London Recovery programme was set up to restore confidence in London following the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim is to minimise the impact on communities and build back better our economy and society. There are nine Recovery Missions, which will support London's recovery by delivering partnership action. Action to support the health and weight of children is reflected across a number of the **Recovery Missions**⁶ which will be referenced throughout this report. Delivery of the nine Recovery Mission has begun and will continue until 2025. In particular the **Healthy Place, Healthy Weight Recovery Mission**⁷ seeks to take a whole systems approach to supporting healthy weight. This will require taking a place-based approach to improve the environment in which children grow up to support their health and weight. The mission delivery plan includes action against many of our calls to action including support for infant feeding, Water only Schools and expansion of healthy food advertising policies. Work will also support the rollout of Superzones, within the zones action is taken to create healthier places for children and young people to live, learn and play.

REFRESH OF THE LONDON HEALTH INEQUALITY STRATEGY

The Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy Implementation Plan was published in December 2021.⁸ It outlines actions that the Mayor and partners will take to reduce health inequalities in London over the next two years. The plan has been reviewed and prioritises health issues highlighted by the pandemic. This Implementation plan closely aligns with London's recovery plans and the London Health and Care Partnership's Vision to be the healthiest global city. Action to support child health is one of the six key commitments under which a goal of supporting up to 50 School Superzones by 2025 has been set. This will be delivered through the **Healthy Place, Healthy Weight Recovery Mission**.

REFRESH OF LONDON'S VISION FOR HEALTH

The London Vision for health and care is a partnership document published in 2019.⁹ The key focus of the Vision is on collaborative working- integrating services across local government, the NHS, and London's wider health and care partnership to achieve better outcomes for Londoners. The Vision outlines what steps are needed for London to become the healthiest global city. The Vision is being refreshed to bring together lessons learned from the pandemic and to reaffirm the ambition as set out in the original document. A key area of focus will remain on child healthy weight. To support this the London Child Obesity Delivery Board (LCODB) was established as part of the Vision partnership, the board oversees delivery of key aspects of Every Child a Healthy weight. LCODB works with London-level strategic boards to ensure this is done in a joined-up way, consistent with our calls to action.

Partner notes

Note that on 1 October 2021, Public Health England (PHE) transferred its health protection functions to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). Health improvement and healthcare public health functions transferred to the Office

for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), NHSE/I and NHS Digital. This was done before PHE's formal closure.

Impact on Urban Health are part of Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation taking forward child obesity programmes.

⁶ Recovery in Context

⁷ Talk London: Healthy place, Healthy weight recovery mission

⁸ Health Inequalities Strategy Implementation Plan 2021-24

⁹ Our Vision for London: The next steps on our journey to becoming the healthiest global city 2019

PART TWO

OUR CALLS TO ACTION



AMBITION 1

END CHILD POVERTY IN LONDON



We want to live in a city where all families can afford healthy food and fun activities.

OUR CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ We called on **the Mayor** to lead a drive to significantly increase the number of employers becoming London Living Wage accredited, and the **UK Treasury** to devolve power to the Mayor to set a legal minimum wage for London.
- ➔ We called on the **Department of Health and Social Care** and **Alexandra Rose Charity** to work with **Public Health England**, the **London boroughs** and **retailers** to review existing food voucher schemes and trial improved ways to design and deliver them so they work better for London's families.

CURRENT CONTEXT

In London 38% of children live in poverty.¹⁰ The pandemic pushed more Londoners into financial hardship and made life tougher for those who were already struggling. Food insecurity is increasing, between April and September 2020, Trussell Trust foodbank centres distributed 210,006 emergency food parcels to Londoners.¹¹

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

Of London families who struggle to afford food, 60% live in the most deprived neighbourhoods despite being in work.¹² In November 2021 the London Living Wage was increased to £11.05 per hour (up 20p from last year).⁴

Of the UK's 9,000 accredited Living Wage employers over 2,500 are headquartered in London.¹³ This figure

has doubled since our call to action was published in 2019.

The Mayor continues to call on all employers to pay the London Living Wage with London's Good Work Standard setting the benchmark for best employment practice. The Mayor will lead the campaign to make London a Living Wage City, targeting accreditation of an additional 1,600 employers, putting £635m in Londoners' pay packets by 2024.¹⁴

The **Helping Londoners into Good Work Recovery Mission** seeks to support Londoners to access education and training by creating skills pathways.

Alexandra Rose continue to support families in Southwark and Lambeth. More Rose vouchers were redeemed last year from the year before, partly due to an increase in eligibility for the scheme.¹⁵

The national Healthy Start schemes offers food vouchers to low-income families but around 44% of London's eligible families are missing out.¹⁶ This may be due to challenges in completing paperwork or being unclear about how and where to claim the vouchers. During lockdown boroughs worked to support uptake, Camden Council trained helpline call handlers to refer families and included registration forms at food banks.¹⁷

In autumn the scheme changed from paper vouchers to a pre-paid card to improve discretion and allow change to be kept. The voucher value increased in April 2021, from £3.10 to £4.25 a week.

The **Robust Safety Net Recovery Mission** aims to support Londoners to avoid, or be lifted out of, poverty. Work has been commissioned to understand what actions will be most effective in increasing the uptake of the Healthy Start scheme.

WHAT NEEDS MORE ATTENTION

More must be done to make sure no child lives in a household that cannot afford healthy food and fun activities. Momentum on living wage must continue to build while ensuring vouchers actually make a difference to Londoner's lives. The National Food strategy, published in 2021, recommends the expansion of free school meals to benefit more vulnerable children.¹⁸ This includes undocumented children and those living in households with the No Recourse to Public Funds immigration condition.

We would like to see our call to the UK Treasury realised, devolving power to the Mayor to set a legal minimum wage for London, lifting more families out of poverty.

BRIXTON - FIRST LIVING WAGE BUILDING¹⁹

In April 2019, Lambeth Council wrote a clause into building leases stating that all businesses renting space in a council owned commercial building paid the Living Wage. This was a big step to improve pay and in return renters qualified for affordable business rents. International House, an 11-storey block in Brixton, became the first Living Wage Building supporting 850 jobs once fully occupied.

¹⁰ London Data store 2021. Poverty in London 2019/20

¹¹ The Trussell Trust 2021. Mid-Year Stats

¹² London Assembly 2019. The Survey of Londoners. London, GLA

¹³ London Living Wage Foundation 2020. Employee jobs paid below the living wage: 2020

¹⁴ Greater London Authority 2021. Health Inequalities Strategy Implementation Plan 2021-24

¹⁵ Alexandra Rose Charity 2021. Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March

¹⁶ Department for Work and Pensions 2022. Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up

¹⁷ Response, Resilience and Recovery: London's Food Response to Covid-19 2020. Case study: Camden Council

¹⁸ The National Food Strategy 2021

¹⁹ Living Wage Foundation 2019. Living wage places: A toolkit on tackling low pay by celebrating local action

AMBITION 2

SUPPORT WOMEN TO
BREASTFEED FOR LONGER

*We want to live in a city where
it's easy for mums to breastfeed.*

OUR CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ We called on the **London boroughs** and **voluntary sector organisations** to start and scale up peer-to-peer support networks and trial incentives with **academic partners**. Mothers should feel more supported to breastfeed for longer, and in more places.
- ➔ We called on the **NHS**, **London boroughs** and **Public Health England** to collect and analyse breastfeeding data at ten days and six-to-eight weeks. The aim is to explore how mothers can be more supported to breastfeed for longer.

CURRENT CONTEXT

From 23 March to 4 July 2020, when lockdown was most restrictive, around 200,000 babies were born in the UK.²⁰ There appears to be huge disparities between different communities and families in terms of the early support they received following birth.

Like many health care and public health professionals, Health Visitors and maternity infant feeding teams were redeployed elsewhere during the pandemic. This inevitably created a gap in breastfeeding support. Of breastfeeding mothers who responded to the UK-wide Babies in Lockdown survey, only 28% felt they weren't given enough support. 53% of respondents using formula said they hadn't planned to do so.²⁰

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

Peer support networks remain key to increasing mothers' confidence to start and continue breastfeeding.¹⁴ In the 2021 Government budget, £50m was announced for breastfeeding support.²¹ This funding is set to build on best practice and provide one-to-one support and antenatal classes. In England, Tower Hamlets has the highest breastfeeding rates at 6 to 8 weeks following birth. This provides the London borough with an opportunity to share its learning.

WHAT NEEDS MORE
ATTENTION

We made our call for better collection and analysis of breastfeeding data because without this data it's impossible to know what breastfeeding rates actually are. The Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) will work to improve data collection by encouraging the Department of Health

and Social Care (DHSC) to review thresholds around breastfeeding status data. Support will be given to midwives, local authorities and their contracted health visiting services.

The London Obesity Leads network, alongside the Children and Young People's Network are ways local authorities can share best practice around supporting women to breastfeed. Councils are encouraged to support all eligible services to become UNICEF UK Baby Friendly accredited.

Under the **Healthy Place, Healthy Weight Recovery Mission** partners and stakeholders recognise the importance of supporting infant feeding, including breastfeeding. Work has been commissioned to gather insights into how more mothers across London can be supported to breastfeed and what challenges the pandemic has presented. Findings will be shared with the Local Authorities at an online workshop in March 2022.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK (BFN) PEER SUPPORT
SERVICES, WAYS THAT BOROUGHS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT
MOTHERS TO BREASTFEED²²

The BfN is a charity that aims to be an independent source of support and information for breastfeeding women. The BfN has been commissioned by Local Authorities across six London boroughs to run Peer Support Programmes empowering mothers to breastfeed. These services help raise awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding within the community, creating joint working between peer supporters and healthcare professionals. Breastfeeding support has had to adapt to meet the challenges of the pandemic. Many services had to change to become online and over the phone support with fewer in person appointments available.

²⁰ Babies in lockdown 2020

²¹ Autumn budget and spending review 2021

²² The Breastfeeding Network: Peer Support Services 2022

AMBITION 3

SKILL UP EARLY YEARS PROFESSIONALS



We want to live in a city where everyone helps us develop healthy habits, right from when we are really little.

OUR CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ We called on the **NHS, Health Education England, the Mayor and London boroughs** to provide a core training programme. This will help support those who engage with young children, including early years and NHS staff, and parents.
- ➔ We called on **the Mayor, Public Health England and London boroughs** to rollout food training. All **early years settings** should have qualifications with caterers and chefs.

CURRENT CONTEXT

The pandemic meant that many early years settings were closed from March to June 2020 or only open to key workers and the most vulnerable children. London boroughs have expressed concerns that children may be left behind by missing this provision.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

The Mayor's Early Years Hubs Programme ran from January 2018 to December 2020 and provided £175,000 of funding to three hubs.²³ These were based in Barnet, Newham and a joint site between Wandsworth and Merton. Hubs were tasked with bringing local early years providers together with partners to boost early education access

for London's less advantaged families. The programme engaged 501 early years providers leading to mutually beneficial relationships between staff and their respective local authorities.²⁴ Some 3,852 practitioners completed Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity. The team of independent consultants Diane Dixon Associates (DDA) produced a toolkit capturing learning and resources which is available on london.gov.uk.

it does provide learning for partners who plan to set up early years hubs in their localities. The GLA will work with partners to review and update the Healthy Early Years programme to align with needs in light of the pandemic's impact on young Londoners. This will provide an opportunity to include training as part of the imminent programme review. We would like to see a training offer that focuses on supporting parents around weight, healthy eating and physical activity.

WHAT NEEDS MORE ATTENTION

While training delivered through Early years hubs didn't focus on specific areas outlined in our call to action,

LONDON EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION CHEF ACADEMY²⁵

In 2019 London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) launched the Chef Academy and professional qualification. This was to help Early Years chefs play their part in providing the best, nutritious food for our children. This initiative was the first of its kind for the sector to transform how nutritional meals are provided across all nurseries by putting good healthy food high on menus.

Following this launch, LEYF commissioned CEEDA to explore opportunities and barriers to improving the diets and eating habits of children, staff, parents and the wider community.

The research was commissioned to understand what more Early Years settings could do to improve children's health and nutrition before they start school. The survey was conducted between May and June 2021, with a total of 382 provider (of which 30 were catering staff) and 415 parent respondents.

LEYF has used these insights in conjunction with other research to revamp its Early Year Chef Academy programme which will be relaunched in the early 2022 for both LEYF and non-LEYF chefs and trainee chefs working in the Early Years.

²³ Greater London Authority 2020. Early Years Hubs toolkit

²⁴ The London Mayor's Early Years Hubs Programme Evaluation 2021

²⁵ LEYF 2019 Early years chef academy

AMBITION 4

USE CHILD MEASUREMENT TO BETTER SUPPORT PARENTS



We want to live in a city where our parents feel confident we will get the support we need after we are weighed and measured at school.

OUR CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ We called on the **London boroughs** to work with the **NHS**, children, parents, and teachers to co-produce guidance on how to make the National Child Measurement Programme more supportive for London's families.
- ➔ We called on each **London borough** to work with **Public Health England**, the **NHS** and **community groups** to communicate the results of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) to parents in a way that makes them feel confident that their child will receive the support they need.

CURRENT CONTEXT

Measurements for the NCMP were stopped in March 2020 due to the pandemic and resulting school closures. The programme restarted in April 2021 but was disrupted. As a result, it was recommended that a nationally representative sample of 10% was collected.²⁶ Population level data indicates the detrimental impact COVID-19 has had on children's health. The programme offers local authorities an

opportunity to engage with parents and families who may require support.²⁷

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

Following receipt of their NCMP letter, it's vital that families can access support quickly and easily. To understand what child weight management support is available, PHE London (now OHID London) worked with boroughs to map existing weight management services

across London. Delivery of these services were also disrupted by the pandemic.

Based on feedback received from parents and Local Authorities nationally, NHS Digital have reviewed the overweight and very overweight NCMP parent result letters. This includes removing the statement comparing the child's weight to others in their age group.

WHAT NEEDS MORE ATTENTION

The Social Market Foundation (SMF) recommended that feedback letters to parents should be mandatory rather than encouraged. We agree that letters complemented with material supporting

families to take steps to access support and lead healthier lives would play a big part in supporting children and families affected by obesity.

The London Child Obesity Delivery Board will work with London boroughs and integrated care systems to improve signposting for support to families. Signposting will span beyond weight management services and include locally available offers linked to physical activity.

Social Prescribing for Children and Young People is an emerging area of focus in London.. Scoping opportunities to support children's weight through social prescribing should be a future priority of the Social Prescribing Network.

2019 WORKSHOP WITH CROYDON (9-11-YEAR OLDS & PARENTS) AND TOWER HAMLETS (11-13-YEAR OLDS AND PARENTS)

Children's knowledge of and attitudes towards NCMP

Some children remembered having their measurements taken at school but were not concerned. One boy remembered getting a letter saying he was overweight, but it didn't bother him.

Parents are aware of NCMP but are sceptical about its effectiveness

Parents found the process upsetting, not understanding why they got a letter saying their child was overweight but no follow-up or help. By pointing out something that parents already knew, the letter made them feel badly about their parenting.

Parents felt that their GP is the best source of information while welcoming the chance to speak to a nutritionist, especially where a concern has been raised.

How can the information best be shared with families?

Croydon parents felt that it was acceptable to send a letter, following up with support and communication for all parents. Tower Hamlets parents felt that letters were an impersonal method of communication and suggested extending the personal child health record ('Red Book') to include childhood.

Parents of older children suggested that support should take a more holistic view of health and wellbeing rather than just focus on weight.

²⁶ National Child Measurement Programme: Operational guidance 2022

²⁷ National Child Measurement Programme 2021: information for schools

AMBITION 5

ENSURE ALL NURSERIES AND SCHOOLS ARE ENABLING HEALTH FOR LIFE



We want to live in a city where our nurseries and schools give us the chance to be the best we can, by helping us be healthy.

OUR CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ We called on **'ambassador' nurseries and schools**, supported by the **Association of Directors of Public Health for London**, to build capacity for comprehensive and bold change across London by establishing peer networks with headteachers, governors and school food providers.
- ➔ We called on **Ofsted** to include in all its reports and its inspections framework a stronger emphasis on the provision of, and education about, healthy diets, water and activity when evaluating education, child development and overall effectiveness of early years settings and schools.

CURRENT CONTEXT

The day-to-day running of schools, early years settings and children's services were severely disrupted by the pandemic, and existing challenges were exacerbated.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

The National Food Strategy launched in 2021 and includes a list of recommendations to improve the food system. One recommendation is for Ofsted to inspect nutrition and cookery lessons. This echoes our call to action.

There is an additional ask that Ofsted publish a Food and Nutrition research review. This would help children to learn important cookery skills and develop an understanding of nutrition.

Sharon Hodgson MP asked Ofsted to respond to these recommendations. In a response, dated September 2021, Ofsted said they do not inspect subjects individually but are planning a research report in the coming academic year to understand the quality of school curricula in this area but will not look at cookery and nutrition specifically.

In a levelling up white paper, published February 2022,²⁸ an announcement was made around school food standards. Inspectors from the Food Standards Agency will be making sure that school lunches in England meet national standards. This builds on a call from Jamie Oliver and Bite Back 2030²⁹ for schools to publish annual food reports showing what progress it had made in meeting standards on health and nutrition. This policy will be adopted, initially on a voluntary basis with an intention for it become mandatory.

A School Food Review campaign calling on the Government to review school food in England is being coordinated by School Food Matters, BiteBack2030 and Food Foundation supported by Impact

on Urban Health. Their aim is for the Department for Education to ensure no child misses out on nutritious food at school by reviewing food policy.

Due to pressure put onto schools by the pandemic work to establish peer networks between headteachers, governors and school food providers has not progressed. School teachers and boroughs have continued to support one another and share best practice through the Healthy schools London network which continued to meet over the pandemic period.

WHAT NEEDS MORE ATTENTION

Partners across London will continue to support and engage with the Mayor's child health programmes, Healthy Schools London and Healthy Early Years. The Mayor of London has committed to work with partners to encourage all school and college governing bodies to include a health professional and to lobby the Government for universal free school meals for primary school pupils. The Mayor's 2021 manifesto also outlines an expanded role for School Superzones which will be delivered through the **Healthy Place, Healthy Weight Recovery Mission**.

SCHOOL FOOD MATTERS

School Food Matters has been working with schools across Southwark to create a good food culture. The programme aims to improve school food, including breakfast clubs and after-school clubs, by providing training for staff. Research by Impact on Urban Health shows that School Food Standards aren't being reached by many schools.³⁰

²⁸ Levelling Up the United Kingdom: executive summary 2022

²⁹ Biteback 2030: Spill The Beans campaign report

³⁰ <https://urbanhealth.org.uk/insights/reports/serving-up-childrens-health>

AMBITION 6

MAKE FREE 'LONDON WATER' AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE



We want to live in a city where we are always close to fresh, free water that we really want to drink.

OUR CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ We called on **the Mayor, water companies** and the **advertising industry** to incentivise children to drink water by reframing London's free drinking water as a 'London Water' brand, co-designed with London's children.
- ➔ We called on **the Mayor, the food service industry, schools** and **public institutions** to scale up and extend existing initiatives to make drinking water widely, freely and conspicuously available from public drinking fountains, all restaurants and public buildings, and in 'water only' schools.

CURRENT CONTEXT

Supporting schools to adopt 'water only' policies was a key area of focus for us as a Taskforce. We spoke with London families to understand what was needed to encourage and support them to drink more water.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

Our partners at Public Health England London (now OHID) developed a water only schools toolkit for primary schools.³¹ The first version of the toolkit was launched in March 2020. We marked the launch by visiting a primary school in Southwark, joined by the Mayor.

Led by OHID London, a second toolkit for secondary schools has been co-created with students and teachers and is joined by an evaluation framework. The toolkit was published in January 2022, ready to support schools as they return after the Christmas break.³²

We created the Water Action Group (WAG) to drive action. The first WAG was made up of members of the Taskforce, Refill London, advertising and marketing agencies and Healthy Schools London leads.

The group held a round table in August 2020, attended by Healthy Schools borough leads, headteachers and chaired by Dr Tom Coffey, the Mayor's Health Advisor. The session aimed to understand what barriers and opportunities schools were facing during the pandemic in terms of becoming water only. The WAG used insights from the session to inform several recommendations, these included; a review of the water only school's toolkit to include COVID safety guidance, and for the GLA to support Biteback 2030's water campaign, drawing on the views of young people.

Over summer 2021 the WAG launched a competition asking London's children to design an advert to promote the water only message. This was a chance for young Londoners to have a voice in encouraging more schools to become water only. Over 200 young people entered with winners announced in March. Winners will spend an afternoon with a top London advertising agency making their design a real ad to be shared across London's schools.

WHAT NEEDS MORE ATTENTION

Work must continue to ensure schools are able to utilise existing resources and successfully implement the water only schools policy. This work will be accompanied by an evaluation of the primary school toolkit.

Through the **Healthy Place, Healthy Weight Recovery Mission**, schools in London will continue to be supported to adopt water only policies. In his 2020 manifesto the Mayor of London committed to continue expanding London's network of free drinking water fountains and to grow his Refill London scheme beyond the existing 3,300 water refill points.

WATER ONLY AT GOSPEL OAK PRIMARY, CAMDEN

The school wanted to improve the overall health of packed lunches, reduce the number of sugary drinks and increase water consumption.

The school developed a packed lunch policy and trained a group of children, called mini health champions, to encourage others to eat and drink healthier options. A gradual, step by step approach, starting with education, was essential in acclimatising children and their families to the new policy.

³¹ [Water Only Schools Toolkit - Primary](#)

³² [Water Only Schools Toolkit - Secondary](#)

AMBITION 7

CREATE MORE ACTIVE, PLAYFUL STREETS AND PUBLIC SPACES



We want to live in a city where the routes we take are safe, fun, nice places to walk, cycle and play.

OUR CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ We called on **the Mayor**, the **London boroughs**, **housing associations**, **landowners** and **developers** to dramatically increase timed closures of streets to motor traffic and other public realm improvements that reduce traffic and support children's health, wellbeing and mobility.
- ➔ We called on **the Mayor** and the **London boroughs** to make children's health, wellbeing and mobility required criteria for public funding and authorisation of regeneration and transport schemes.

CURRENT CONTEXT

Back in 2018, the Mayor's Transport strategy set an ambitious goal - for 80% of all trips to be made on foot, by cycle or using public transport by 2041. The pandemic resulted in a substantial acceleration in changes to our streets demonstrating what is possible. However, a dramatic increase in politicians' and professionals' motivation to act is needed to make active journeys safer and easier.

The pandemic has led to a drop in TfL's revenue, impacting funding for changes to streets. While the last two years have seen positive action taking place, future funding for healthier streets and active travel is far from guaranteed.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

The most sustainable ways to deliver out of school physical activity are active travel and street play.³³ Lockdowns saw large rises in

park visits and significant reductions in trips by public transport and car.³⁴ Less traffic prompted a surge in cycling, which grew by up to 300% in some parts of London.³⁵ This was helped by funding for the rapid rollout of 83 low-traffic neighbourhoods and TfL's Streetscape programme which reallocated road space for walking and cycling.

Some of these temporary changes to streets have been made permanent and others removed. Changes to streets aiming to reduce motor traffic have been met with angry resistance from a vocal minority of adults. This resulted in some councils limiting such changes and abandoning plans across London. Despite this, School Streets - temporary street closures- have thrived. In July 2020 there were 81 School Streets in London; at the time of writing, 322 have been implemented across 23 boroughs.³⁶

Research shows that, independent of the impacts of Covid-19, School Streets have encouraged 27% more travel on foot, 8% more cycling and 2% more scooting. In those areas, car travel reduced by 18% alongside 14% less taxi travel.³⁷ Research included feedback from a mix of schools from inner and outer London.

In the context of the pandemic and London's recovery from it, the Taskforce worked to motivate decision-makers to go further in making changes to streets. We captured and amplified the voices

of children through a [video](#) and scoped out a campaign to give councillors and top officials who feel concerned about improving streets the confidence to do so. Funding is currently being sought to develop and rolled out the campaign.

In parallel, the **Green New Deal Recovery Mission** seeks to tackle the climate emergency and improve air quality, including by making walking and cycling more accessible.

WHAT NEEDS MORE ATTENTION

Action shaping the public realm to better serve children's health nudges forward, but too slowly. Organisations involved in the shaping and management of streets and public spaces now need to put their existing intentions to tackle climate change, improve health and serve children into action.

This means the Department of Transport, TfL and the boroughs to making healthier streets a top priority when allocating transport funding. There is an opportunity for boroughs and the GLA to use the spatial planning system to stop developers creating streets and spaces that harm children's health. Finally, boroughs, housing associations, landowners and developers should use their investment in streets and public spaces to 'design out' features that make active travel and outdoor play difficult, dangerous or off-putting.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY³⁸

In 2018, the Mayor of Hackney pledged that the borough would become child-friendly, piloting School Streets at five different schools. Over 15-months of road closures, traffic volumes on roads around one of those schools - Tyssen Primary - reduced by 32%. In 2019, Hackney published a detailed School Streets Toolkit which was shared nationally.

³³ Active People Survey data in Public Health Outcome Framework, Public Health England.

³⁴ London Sustainable Development Commission: The role of the UN SDGs in London's green and fair recovery

³⁵ Good Growth By Design Recovery Roundtable 2020

³⁶ Healthy streets Scorecard: Interim report

³⁷ School Streets Intervention Sites vs. Control Sites Full Report 2021

³⁸ Making London Child Friendly 2020

AMBITION 8

STOP UNHEALTHY MARKETING THAT INFLUENCES WHAT CHILDREN EAT



We want to live in a city where companies don't push us to eat and drink unhealthy stuff.

OUR CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ We called on **the Mayor, Transport for London, the London boroughs, sport clubs, stadia and leisure centres** to extend the advertising restrictions on the TfL estate. This should initially be to all outdoor public spaces in London, sports stadia and leisure facilities, and then beyond.
- ➔ We called on the **Consumer Goods Forum** and **shops and supermarkets** to extend industry trials on healthier retailing. We should stop displaying unhealthy foods where children can see them and work with **academic partners** to evaluate impact.

CURRENT CONTEXT

In December 2018, the Mayor announced a commitment to introduce a world-leading policy to tackle childhood obesity by restricting unhealthy food and drink advertising, across the entire TfL public transport system. A public consultation started in May 2018 which found

overwhelming support from Londoners and the policy was launched in February 2019.

There is growing evidence children exposed to unhealthy food advertising are more likely to eat more of those foods and become overweight or obese.³⁹ TfL has seen most major retailers continue to advertise by amending their advertising copy or switching to advertising healthier products.

³⁹ Sociodemographic differences in self-reported exposure to high fat, salt and sugar food and drink advertising: a cross-sectional analysis of 2019 UK panel data 2021

Pre-pandemic, the income that TfL received from its advertising estate has remained stable since restrictions were introduced.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine conducted an independent evaluation to understand how these advertising restrictions on the TfL estate have affected HFSS purchases.⁴⁰ The evaluation showed the positive impact the policy had, with Londoner's buying less high fat, salt and/or sugar foods and drinks (HFSS). The reduction equated to 1000 fewer calories or one big bar of chocolate a week. This research is funded by the National Institute for Health Research.

The Consumer Goods Forum's Collaboration for Healthier Lives in the UK (CHL UK) initiative was established in spring 2019. CHL UK aims to improve the healthiness of shopping baskets in partnership with Impact on Urban Health. The interventions focused on improving the health of families living on lower incomes and were tested in the London boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth.

The 'Can Supermarkets Help Turn the Tide on Obesity?' report, published in October 2020, reviewed the CHL UK's first year.⁴¹

Companies trialled a range of interventions including changes to shelf and nutritional labelling, promotions, pricing and choice architecture. The University of Oxford evaluated several trials, to inform wider rollout. The evaluation showed in-store changes could lead to healthier baskets. Some trials resulted in 22% fewer packets of confectionery sold and 13% more fruit and vegetables sold.⁴²

The Government Obesity strategy⁴³ is expected to come into effect by the end of 2022. It will include a 9pm watershed, restricting TV advertisements for HFSS products and a proposal to end advertising of these products online.

WHAT NEEDS MORE ATTENTION

The **Healthy Place, Healthy Weight Recovery mission**⁴¹ will focus on various place-based interventions. These interventions aim to make local environments healthier rather than focusing on changing the behaviour of individuals. Several London local authorities have already begun to put in place local Healthier Food Advertising Policies, building on the experience of TfL. More scoping will be done under the mission to test extending the policy to include private advertising spaces and sponsorship.

HEALTHIER FOOD ADVERTISING POLICY TOOLKIT⁴⁴

This toolkit, developed by the charity Sustain, provides practical guidance to local authorities wishing to rollout policies. It also provides an opportunity to share learning, including case studies from Haringey, Southwark, Merton, Greenwich and Bristol.

⁴⁰ Changes in household food and drink purchases following restrictions on the advertisement of high fat, salt, and sugar products across the Transport for London network: A controlled interrupted time series analysis 2022

⁴¹ Can supermarkets help turn the tide on obesity?

⁴² Is it working? A closer look at Collaboration for Healthier Lives UK

⁴³ Department of Health and Social Care. Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives 2020

⁴⁴ Healthier Food Advertising Policy Toolkit

AMBITION 9

TRANSFORM FAST-FOOD BUSINESSES



We want to live in a city where we can hang out with our friends without pressure to buy extra unhealthy food or drink.

OUR CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ We called on **takeaway and fast-food businesses** to restrict the sale of unhealthy items at times when unaccompanied young people are likely to visit.
- ➔ We called on the **London boroughs** and **the Mayor** to increase support to **small takeaway and fast-food businesses** so they become Healthier Catering Commitment accredited. They should also identify and trial tangible incentives to encourage them all to do so, with **academic partners** to evaluate impact.

CURRENT CONTEXT

The pandemic has changed the eating habits of many Londoners. Lockdown measures caused restaurants to close creating an increase in takeaway and food deliveries online. The average Londoner spent £690 a year on takeaways in 2019.⁴⁵ In 2021, this had jumped to £781.

Research by KPMG, which surveyed 2,000 British people found that the growth in takeaways is here to stay. Sixty per cent of respondents said they expect to order the same amount of takeaway over the next 12 months. This signals a change in consumer behaviour which has partly been driven by the pandemic.

There are lessons to be learned from this insight when thinking about ways to transform takeaway and fast-food businesses for the better.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

Currently in the UK, 25% of takeaway premises are within a 5-minute walk from a school. The 2021 London Plan states that boroughs should not permit new development proposals containing a hot food takeaway within 400m of a school.⁴⁶ Boroughs should also carefully manage the over-concentration of hot food takeaways within town centres. This move seeks to shift the food offer within 400m of schools by giving healthier food businesses a chance to compete for local space.

Of the 24 London boroughs who've adopted a Healthier Catering Commitment (HCC), 19 are actively participating or have developed schemes for businesses themselves.⁴⁷ The HCC provides an opportunity for

boroughs to go further in supporting local businesses and the community. 52 food businesses have achieved the HCC award in Lewisham. Many reported that they'd saved money by adopting the scheme and in becoming Sugar Smart.

WHAT NEEDS MORE ATTENTION

Through the **Healthy Place, Healthy Weight Recovery Mission**, continued support will be provided to the HCC scheme. The HCC team will continue its core work with food businesses to increase healthier options available at takeaway outlets. The recovery mission will explore how to encourage premises within Superzones and areas of deprivation to participate.

SMASH (SAVE MONEY AND STAY HEALTHY)

Launched in early 2021, SMASH is a start-up business born from the Taskforce call to action. SMASH supports young people to save money and stay healthy through its app, providing access to offers and discounts when buying healthier food options.

The SMASH manifesto details a series of action points supported by over 40 food businesses and campaigners, focused on making healthier food better business. SMASH aims to demonstrate how incentives, such as discounts, can help to shift demand when it comes to healthier food alternatives. SMASH wants to use its data and experience to advocate for VAT reforms and push for fast food chains to change their approach when it comes to discounting.

The SMASH team are also working with Enfield and Everyone Health to pilot the use of the app as a tool to support their adult healthy weight programme – making it easier and cheaper to identify and access healthier options locally.

⁴⁵ KPMG: Food for Thought 2021

⁴⁶ The London Plan 2021

⁴⁷ Good Food for All Londoners 2022

AMBITION 10

FUND GOOD-FOOD INNOVATION AND HARNESS THE POWER OF INVESTMENT



We want to live in a city where businesses are helped to make healthier food and drinks.

OUR CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ We called on **investment funders, the Mayor, the London boroughs, established businesses** and **Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation** to support the development of a 'good food' investment fund.
- ➔ We called on **the Mayor** to support the responsible investment case for solutions to unhealthy weight in childhood and encourage **institutional investors** to join the ShareAction Healthy Markets coalition.

CURRENT CONTEXT

All Londoners should have access to and enjoy a healthy balanced diet. To achieve this, the current food market must be disrupted, allowing room for brands that are not only healthier but more affordable. New brands require support to compete with existing brands and expertise to be able to offer products at a price that lower income families can afford.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

The Good Food Fund is a two-year partnership between Impact on Urban Health, Big Society Capital, Mission Ventures and Ascension Ventures. The new business accelerator and venture fund of £1.8m started its work in March 2020.⁴⁸ Its mission is to back healthier food and drink products and brands to help tackle childhood obesity and ultimately show

the financial and ethical incentive in supporting healthier products and brands.

Following an application process, the first round of seven challenger brands have been chosen by the Good Food Fund from over 120 applications received.⁵⁰ If this pilot succeeds, the aim is to establish a multi-million-pound fund to offer more brands advice and investment.

ShareAction's vision is a world where the financial system serves people and the planet. Since 2005, it has evolved and expanded to campaign on the most pressing issues facing the world by promoting responsible investment. ShareAction's Healthy Markets coalition recognises that factors such as unhealthy food options are shaped by companies and their investors

so work with investors to drive positive changes in the food and drinks industry. By identifying key health-related topics, investors are supported to integrate them into their decision-making process.

WHAT NEEDS MORE ATTENTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown the relationship between the profitability and sustainability of a business and public health. ShareAction and the Healthy Markets Investor coalition are looking for further investors to join forces on the topic of health. They will also continue to support retailers to make positive changes.

LONDON BUSINESS GROWTH HUBS⁴⁹

In September 2020, the Mayor of London launched a £1m fund to help London's firms. This support was announced in the wake of challenges caused by the dual impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit on London's struggling small businesses. The hub will provide funding opportunities and support to SMEs of all sectors who are facing uncertainty.

The fund has established five physical business hubs, with food and drink the largest sector receiving support. Hubs provide specialised advice and support to retail and manufacturing sectors, encouraging sales of healthy food and drink.

SHAREACTION - DEMONSTRATES THE POWER OF INVESTOR ENGAGEMENT⁵⁰

In May 2019, ShareAction launched a new campaign called 'Healthy Markets Initiative' in partnership with Impact on Urban Health. The campaign seeks to put companies at the forefront of change by working with investors to address growing consumer demand for healthier options. In 2020, just two retailers had commitments to increase the sales of healthier foods. Twelve months on and five retailers: ALDI UK, Lidl, M&S, Sainsbury's and Tesco have made this commitment, representing 60% of the UK grocery market.

⁴⁸ Creating a venture fund for healthy food start-ups

⁴⁹ London Business Hub 2020

⁵⁰ ShareAction: Tracking for Health, 2021 Update

PART THREE

CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE





While our term as London's Child Obesity taskforce has now come to an end, members will continue to support the work of the Mayor and key partners across London. From summer 2022 the taskforce will transition into the Mayor's Advisory Group on Child Healthy Weight. This group will exist to provide external advice to the Mayor and the GLA in their role in delivering against our calls to action.

To take learning from our term forward, we think there are three clear mindsets all of us in London can adopt to make effective action more likely:

1. It is possible: Child obesity is not inevitable. There is potential for change. Action is happening. More is possible. We can transform our city. We have changed before - as London's response to COVID-19 shows - and can do so for child obesity too.

2. It is probable: The possible becomes probable when people want to make change; when they care about the outcome; and when they can see the issue as 'ours' rather than for

'others' only. The positive stories show this. Our experience of COVID-19 has shown us that our city can't thrive unless we all have a chance to thrive; and that our lives and the consequences of our actions are all connected and drive us to act in the interest of our community.

3. It is powerful: So many leaders acting for the health of everyone has gifted us a unique moment in time. But the power is not in the moment, it's in the ongoing movement. A movement is powerful because of its followers, not its leaders. The power of political, business and community leaders to change the environment, allows us followers to take action together in large numbers. We have the power to demand healthier diets, water being available everywhere and access to safe, playful spaces for our children to be active.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported us in our work including Local Authorities, Public Health teams, academics, charities, businesses and London families.

FIND OUT MORE

Visit our website at
www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/londons-child-obesity-taskforce

