

**Consultation on
Draft Lambeth Food Poverty and Insecurity
Action Plan 2021-24**

Consultation Report

March 2021

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Food poverty remains a major problem in the UK, in London and in Lambeth. The COVID-19 pandemic with its far-reaching and dramatic consequences on our lives and livelihoods substantially worsened food poverty. Our response in the most acute stage of the pandemic in Lambeth was not short of extraordinary. Our council, voluntary organisations, community groups and members of the public joined their efforts to support the most vulnerable. At the peak of the pandemic, 300 food packages were delivered every day and about 100 continue to be delivered over 6 months later. Notwithstanding how laudable our crisis response was, we know that we need to do more to address long-term food poverty and the underlying causes impacting on food insecurity. We are aware of the challenges ahead of us. Food poverty thrives on socioeconomic inequalities and unfairness that are at the core of our social structure. This means that tackling food poverty requires a multisystem approach and concerted action of multiple stakeholders to address the factors in the wider environment that create and perpetuate food poverty. In addition, we are fully aware that ecological considerations should be at the heart of everything we do, and hence our commitment to ensure that all have access to healthy nutritious food, whilst promoting the sustainability of our planet for current and future generations.

On the other hand, food poverty affects people of all ages. However, its effects can be particularly detrimental for children, as it can compromise physical and intellectual development. We adopted a life-course approach to develop actions that address food poverty across the lifespan and specially during life transitions, as those are typically periods when the risk of food poverty is increased.

Lambeth has been comprehensively addressing food poverty over the years. This approach is supported by a range of programmes and policies across the borough both pre-COVID-19 as well as actions taken in response to the pandemic. Examples of these include:

- A comprehensive Lambeth Healthy weight programme recognising that food poverty is a risk factor for obesity
- Signing up as the first borough to the Local Authority Declaration on Healthier Food and Sugar Reduction. Through the Declaration, Lambeth has committed to pledges around advertising and sponsorship, improving the food influenced or controlled by the Council, actively promoting drinking water, healthy catering commitment awards to food businesses, healthier public events and raising public awareness

- Facilitating and securing additional resources for Lambeth schools as part of the proceeds of the national Sugar Levy to promote healthy eating and physical activity. Feedback from schools regarding the process and support has been extremely positive.
- Promoting the uptake of food schemes for vulnerable families such as the Healthy Start vouchers with a local supplement for additional fruit and vegetables (Rose vouchers) from Brixton market
- Working with local food businesses to commit to healthier catering through the provision of healthier food and drink options.
- Running practical cook and eat sessions for members of the community
- Working with local community organisations to promote food growing and access to other local food related activities
- Working across schools and community to encourage children and families to eat more vegetable by aligning with the national programme of Veg Cities.
- Lambeth's rapid response to the pandemic and setting up a food Hub to provide thousands of food packages to vulnerable tenants.

Implementing a 2020 summer holiday programme that provided healthy and nutritious food alongside a range of enrichment activities for children and young people ages 4-19 and their families.

1.2 Our proposals

The Food Poverty and Insecurity Action Plan describes how we plan to address food poverty in Lambeth over the next 3 years. Including highlighting the key priorities for the Year one (2021 – 2022).

The plan is organised into five sections: (1) what food poverty is and why adopting a multisystem and life-course approach; (2) the extent of food poverty in Lambeth; (3) actions to address food poverty at three levels – prevention, crisis management and wider factors; (4) the key priorities for Year One; and (5) monitoring indicators of success.

2 The consultation

2.1 Consultation objectives

The Lambeth Food Poverty and Insecurity Action for 2021 – 2024 builds on the work done by the council public health team and a large number of local voluntary and community organisations to tackle food poverty and insecurity in the borough over the years and more recently in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The council values the experiences, knowledge, and expertise of people in Lambeth in helping to create a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable food system. The purpose of the consultation was to obtain the views from people living and working in borough on the proposed plan and to have a shared understanding of the challenges faced in addressing food poverty and insecurity.

Key Priorities for Year One (2021 – 2022)

Indicator	Action
Healthy Start	Increase uptake of healthy start vouchers among eligible residents (from 44% to at least 70%)
Breastfeeding	Maintain the UNICEF accreditation of breastfeeding status in the borough
Living Wage	The council maintains its status as a Living Wage accredited employer, ensuring all council and contractor staff are paid at least the London Living Wage. (Pertaining to all new and future contracts) Apply for Lambeth to become an accredited Living Wage Place Recognise and celebrate local employers who pay the London Living Wage
Physical Access	Increase access to publicly owned land for community food growing
Meals for vulnerable residents	Continue monitoring nutritional status in users of social care services and signposting to relevant support
Action Plans	Consult and publish the Lambeth Food Poverty and Insecurity action plan Further understand the scale of the problem locally, identifying groups that are at higher risk of food poverty and insecurity working with stakeholders to inform Years 2 and 3 of the action plan

Council Tax Reduction	Make awards to residents that cannot afford to pay their council tax, for example via a discretionary scheme
Children's Services	Provide evidence based training of staff in children's centres to identify local children at risk of food poverty and signpost to appropriate support and services
Free school meals	Work with schools to promote the uptake of free school meals among eligible children
Holidays Activities and Food support	Providing enriching activities and nutritious food to eligible children during school holidays that includes the Easter break, Summer holiday and Christmas break
Access to emergency food	Coordinate distribution of surplus food across the borough through the implantation of food hubs Promote an evidence-based approach to the provision of emergency food
Sustainability	Trial the expansion of food waste collection services to council estates Develop a food compost service in the borough

2.2 Who were consulted?

Food insecurity disproportionately occurs among low socioeconomic and low-income families. In Lambeth certain sections of the population are significantly more at risk of food insecurity than others, such as:

- Low-income households
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- Men living alone
- People suffering from mental health issues
- Frail and poor older people
- People with disabilities.

The focus was on consulting local people including residents, community, statutory and non-statutory organisations, stakeholders and businesses.

2.3 When we consulted

The on-line consultation ran for four weeks, from 27th January to 24th February 2021. Additionally, a series of presentations, consultation roadshows, webinar and signposting to the draft plan were carried out via the different stakeholders' networks.

2.4 How we consulted

The draft Lambeth Food Poverty and Insecurity Plan proposals have been widely consulted using different methodologies.

The different methods consisted of:

- An on-line four weeks' consultation
- A webinar presentation
- Presentations at meetings and forums both with external and internal stakeholders

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2.4.1 Press activity

A Love Lambeth article was published on the [website](#) on the 27 January 2021.

2.4.2 Digital activity

A questionnaire was created via survey monkey and accessible on the Lambeth Council [consultation](#) website for participation.

An email containing supporting documents and the question was sent to approximately 1500 Lambeth stakeholders.

Links to the consultation were shared with key organisations for onward promotion and participation; these included:

- Integrate - Voluntary Sector Community
- Healthwatch Lambeth
- SEL CCG – Lambeth
- Regular tweets and emails

The CCG have been sighted on the proposals formally via the Lambeth Together Strategic board in February and individual programme leads from within the CCG and the local authority are working with public health specialists on understanding the specifics of the plans, providing critical feedback,

and ensuring that actions proposed will maximise the benefit and outcome for our Lambeth communities.

- Regular email updates to a service user, stakeholders, and provider distribution lists with relevant information on up-and-coming engagement opportunities.

2.4.3 Print activity

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, no printed materials were used during this consultation. All information was shared digitally.

2.4.4 Event activity

Below is a list of the activities carried out during the four-week period:

Event	Date and Time
Discussion of the plans at the Staying Healthy Partnership Board	19 th January
Discussion of the plans at Adults and Health CMB	21 st January
Discussion of the plans at the Scrutiny Chairs Briefing	27 th January
Discussion of the plans at Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) – Round Table Event	22 nd January
Discussion of the plans at Lambeth Living Well Collaborative Meeting	4 th February
Discussion of the plans at Lambeth Safeguarding Adults Board	9 th February
Discussion of the plans at Informal meeting of Lambeth Together Strategic Board	10 th February
Discussion of the plans at Management Team	11 th February
Discussion of the plans at Health and wellbeing board	11 th February
Discussion of the plans at Management Board – SD'	17 th February
Discussion of the plans at Lambeth Health Watch Public webinar	23 rd February

3 Responses to the consultation

Over 200 responses were received, 163 online and the rest through direct email communication and verbal feedback.

3.1 Summary of on-line consultation

Over 80% of the respondents to the online survey agreed or strongly agreed with the aims of the action plan (**Figure 1**).

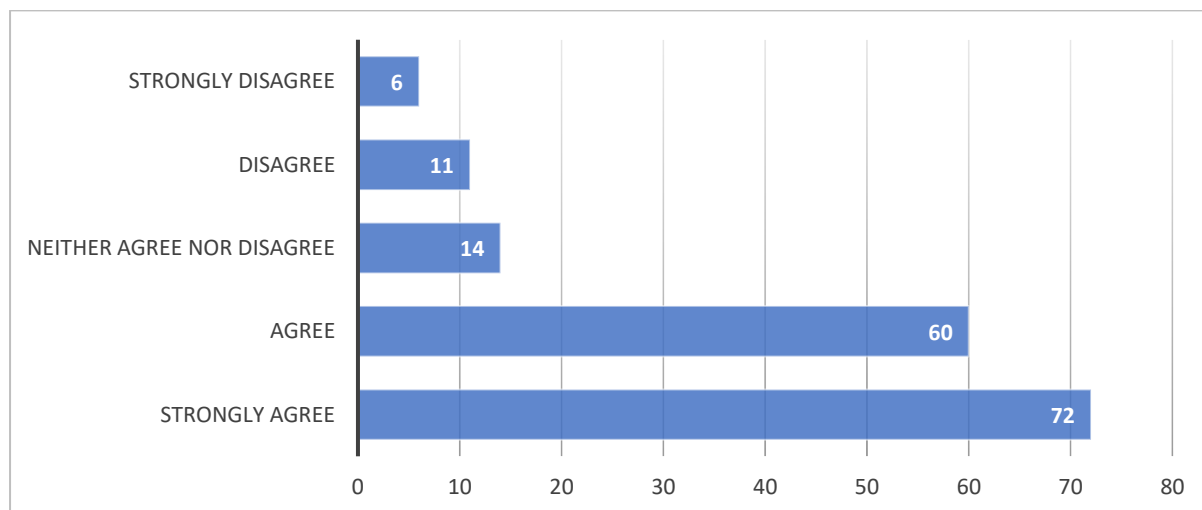


Figure 1: Answers to the question (number of responses): “To what extent do agree or disagree with the Action Plan’s overall aims?”

About 72% of respondents to the online survey agreed or strongly agreed the action plan covered the issues that should be addressed in Lambeth (**Figure 2**).

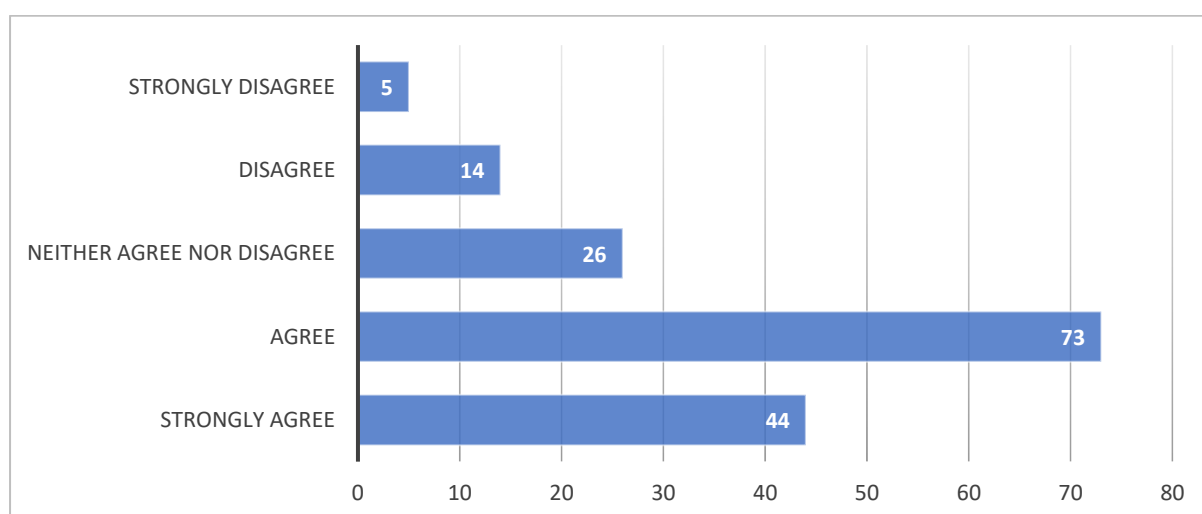


Figure 2: Answers to the question (number of responses): “To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Action Plan covers the issues that you think should be addressed?”

Respondents suggested several points to be added or emphasised in the action plan, as summarised in **Figure 3**. Besides those issues, respondents asked for specific targets to be identified for key actions, and for specific VCS organisations to be named for each action as it encapsulates a vast and varied range of organisations.

In terms of timelines, respondents highlighted the need to implement much-needed actions as soon as possible to tackle longstanding issues that underpin food poverty and insecurity in Lambeth.

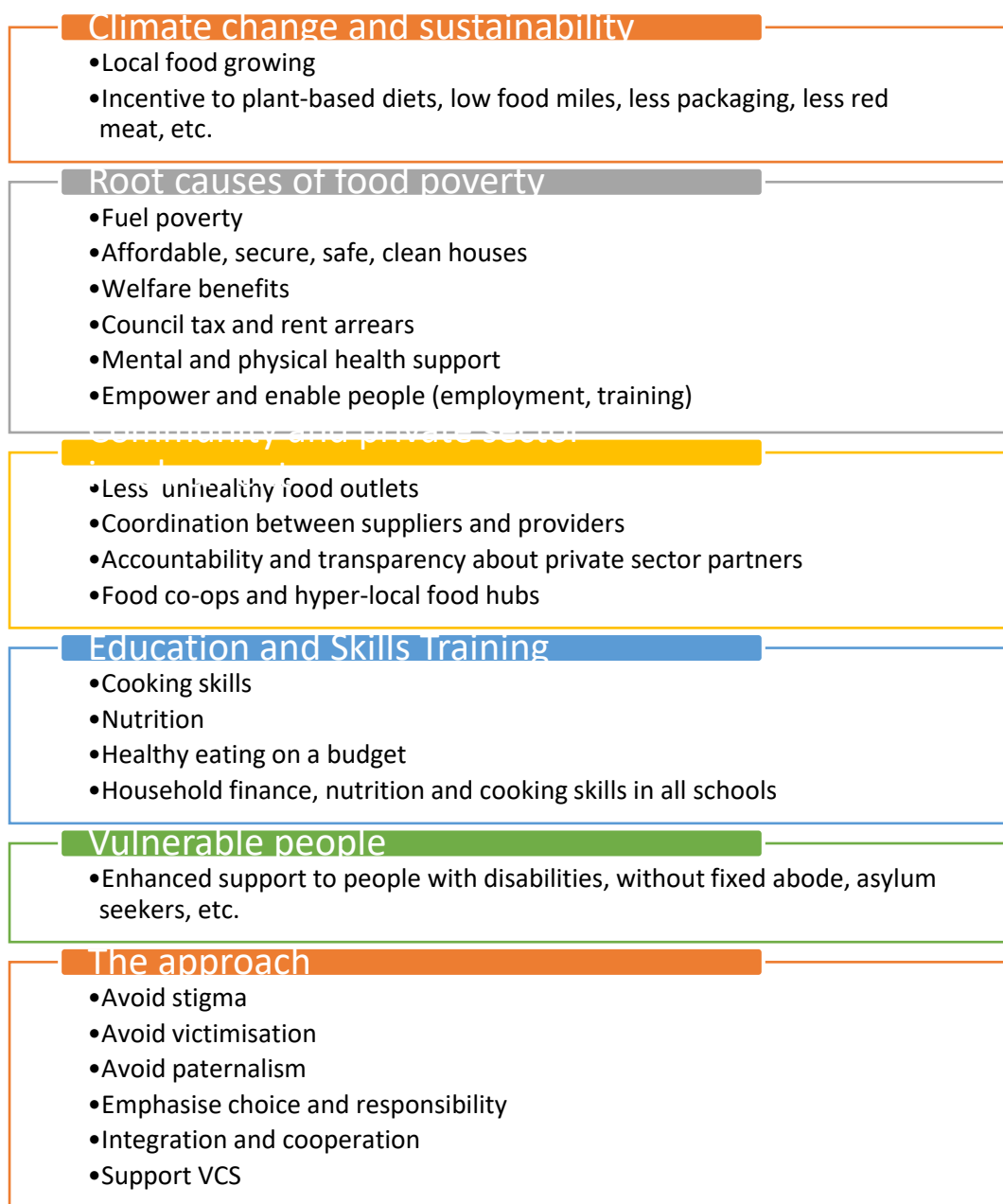


Figure 3: Key themes identified by respondents that should be added or strengthened in the action plan

3.2 Summary of post code analysis and demographics

A total of 163 people responded to the online survey, most of them representing their individual views (**Figure 4**).

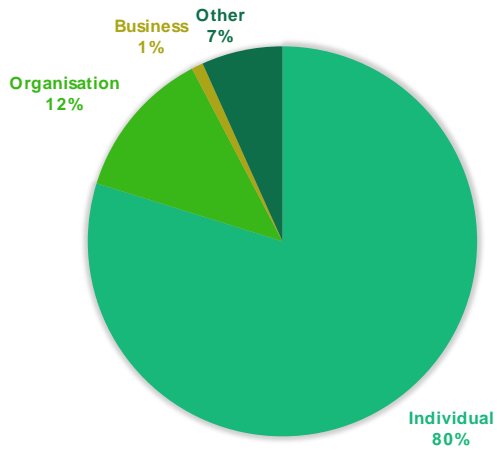


Figure 4: Representation of respondents to online survey

Most respondents to the online survey were aged between 35 to 65 years (**Figure 5**).

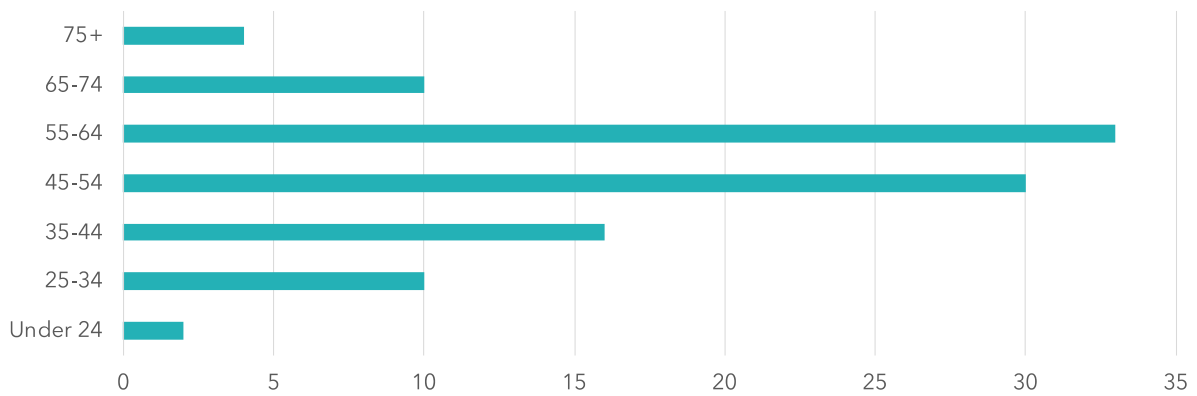


Figure 5: Age distribution of respondents to online survey

About 55% of the respondents were of White British ethnicity and 22% were of Black African/Caribbean ethnicity (**Figure 6**).

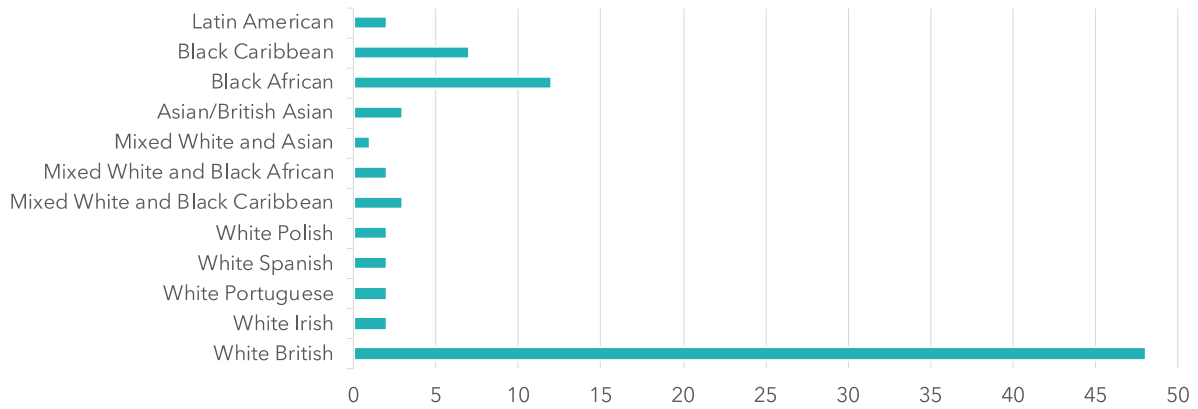


Figure 6: Ethnic distribution of respondents to online survey

Almost 3 in 4 respondents were female (**Figure 7**) and about 1 in 3 considered themselves to have a disability (**Figure 8**).

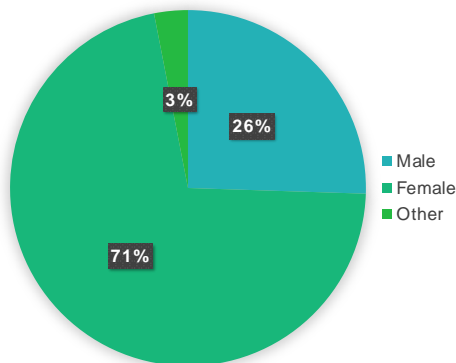


Figure 7: Gender distribution of respondents to online survey

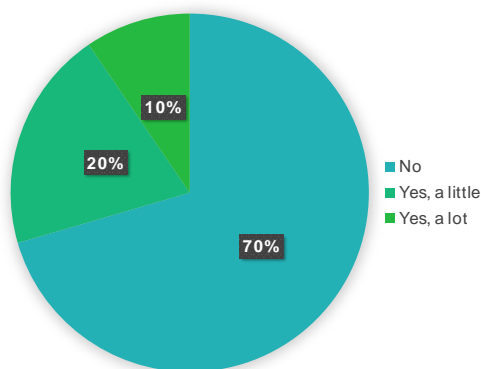


Figure 8: Percentage of respondents who considered their daily activities were limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months

Most of the respondents were residents in the postcodes SW2, SW9 and SW8 (**Figure 9**).

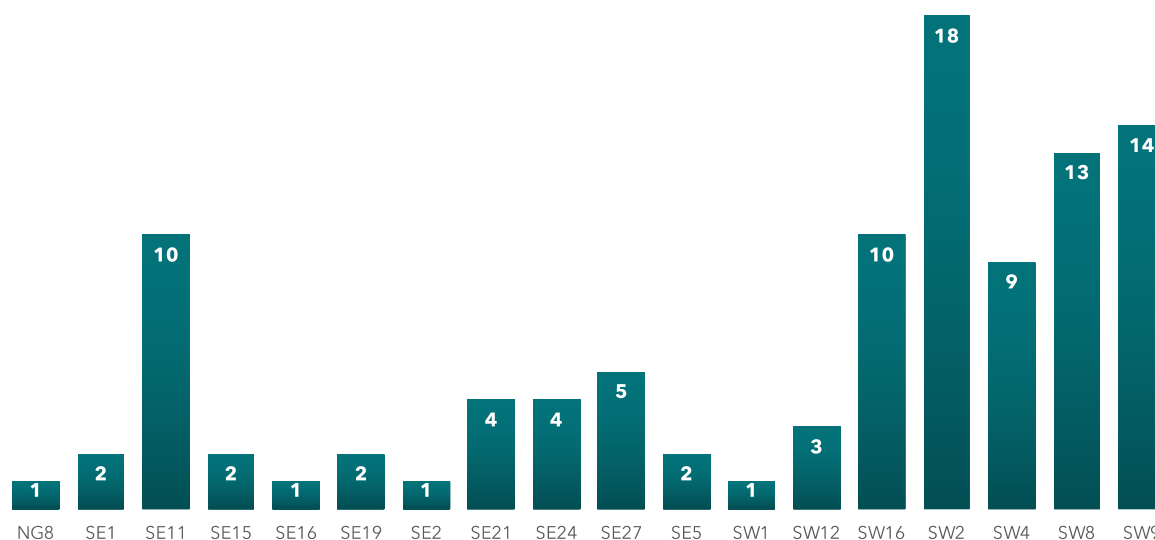


Figure 9: Postcodes of the respondents to the online survey

3.3 Additional comments

In addition to the issues mentioned for the action plan in general, the respondents emphasised the following actions to address child poverty:

- Provide money or vouchers to parents of children entitled to free school meals as well as those not eligible for free school meals but who still struggle (i.e., just over the poverty line)
- Promote food growing in all schools and teach children about food growing and cooking in schools
- Give children and their families access to spaces and information where they can grow and consume their own food
- Ensure all children live in safe, secure, clean, affordable accommodation that enables them to live healthily
- Ensure at least London Living Wage for employees
- Teach families how to shop wisely and eat well on a budget
- Strengthen family planning and reproductive health education to ensure that people have children when they can afford to do it
- Ensure good education to CYP in poor families to avoid them falling into the poverty trap and promote social mobility
- Increase awareness of Healthy Start and Rose vouchers, by publicising more widely
- Extend the Rose Voucher scheme (or similar) to families with children over 5 years old
- Strengthen youth clubs and activities for CYP, including in library and sports centres

3.4 Other written and verbal responses

In addition to the responses received through the online survey, the Public Health team received written and verbal feedback collected through a series of engagement meetings and webinars. The food poverty and insecurity action plan was presented at various statutory and non-statutory fora, where additional feedback was received (see section 2.4.4). The written and verbal responses further reinforced the key messages outlined in the online survey.

Overall, feedback was extremely positive. For example, a poll at the HealthWatch webinar showed that most attendees (89%) found the session extremely useful or useful, and all attendees said that the information received was helpful. The Council and Public Health team were also commended for putting in place a food poverty plan for the borough. There was a recognition that addressing food poverty is a long-term goal which needs to be tackled alongside structural causes of poverty in general. It was also emphasised the need to ensure universal access to healthy and affordable food in the borough. The following quotes illustrate the main points highlighted in the engagement sessions:

- Food poverty is almost always a symptom of other issues, critically, that of lack of money, and *“we will never solve food poverty in and of itself without looking at and trying to address the underlying causes which is move from just giving out food to those in crisis to signposting to advice and support to help with some of these root causes (benefit issues, debt, housing issues, inadequate wages, mental and physical health to name just a few)”*
- Some parts of the borough do not have sufficient access to healthy and affordable food: *“the wards with the poorest housing and with most food deserts are those with the highest foodbank usage. How about providing more Community shops around the borough, particularly in the deserts?”*
- *“What we need to be doing is getting more money into people’s pockets, so we give them the dignity to be able to manage their food, fuel and other household bills...”*.

4 Next steps

The action plan has been revised taking into account the feedback from the consultation.