



EXPLORING BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN FOOD POVERTY

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INTRODUCTION

Food poverty is an increasing problem nationally with rising numbers of individuals accessing food banks. Lambeth like many inner London boroughs has relatively high levels of deprivation and with residents vulnerable to food poverty. Holiday hunger occurs where families struggle to feed children over the school holidays resulting in either absolute hunger and / or children eating unhealthy and unbalanced diets. Holiday hunger is one manifestation of food poverty.

Compared to London and nationally, Lambeth children have higher eligibility for free school meals. Research shows that school holidays are more challenging for families struggling economically, and affects not just families eligible for free school meals.

AIM

To understand how holiday hunger affects children and families living in Lambeth and provide recommendations on how to address this locally

OBJECTIVES

- Understand **who** holiday hunger affects in Lambeth
- Describe **how** children and families are affected by holiday hunger
- Identify the strategies families use to feed children during the school holidays
- Obtain suggestions from residents and local organisations of possible strategies to help combat holiday hunger

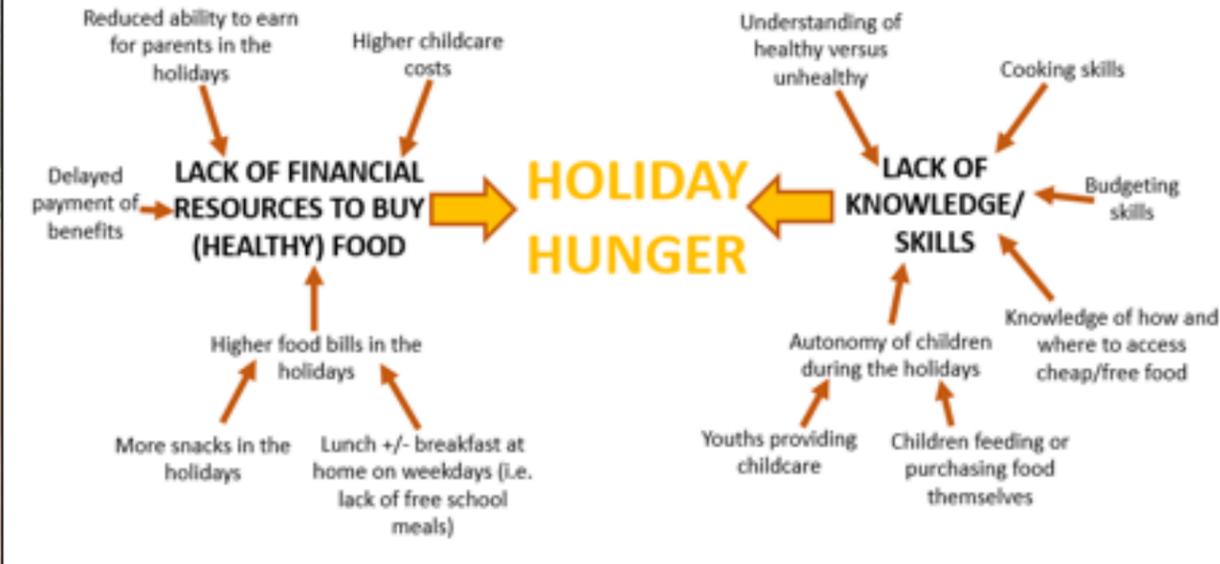
METHODS

Two focus groups were held for Lambeth Residents in August 2018 to discuss the issues of feeding children during the summer holidays. They were held at different venues and times (day and evening) in order to try and accommodate as many different needs as possible.

Additionally, Food Bank discussions were held with providers and interviews carried out with employees of three local voluntary sector organisations.

RESULTS

The results from the focus groups and interviews showed that holiday hunger is an issue in Lambeth. The reasons are multi-factorial and can be manifested in eating cheaper but less healthy foods or a reliance on food banks. The graph below describes some of the reason for holiday hunger in the borough.



SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

Holiday hunger is considered a direct result of low income. Examples were given of children eating food off shelves in the supermarkets and parents bringing their children to summer activities specifically to take advantage of the free food rather than necessarily the activity.

For some families, time was a factor for example when both parents were working out of the home, convenience food was seen as an easy alternative to cooking.

Supporting families during holiday time is crucial. In the absence of national policy, councils working with local organisations should develop initiatives that provide vulnerable children with at least one nutritious meal a day. These should be non-stigmatising and include opportunities for social and physical development.

