

**Dietitians
challenging Food
Insecurity in
healthcare, public
health policy and
sustainability**

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15.3% of UK households with children experienced food insecurity in Jan 26

[The Food Foundation](#) 2026

UK Food Insecurity

- 3.5% adults ate nothing for a whole day due to lack of income
- 2.1 million children are food insecure
- Half of food insecure households cut back on fruit
- 2.6 million emergency food parcels from Trussell food banks
- Much higher among disabled people, minority ethnic groups and those in receipt of UC

Health inequalities in the UK

The **most deprived fifth** of the population would need to **spend 45% of their disposable income** on food to eat healthily

Healthier foods are **more than twice as expensive** per calorie than less healthy food

Children in the **most deprived fifth** of the population are **nearly twice as likely** to be living with obesity and **more than twice as likely** to have tooth decay as those in the least deprived fifth by their first year of school

The number of **diabetes-related lower-limb amputations** increased by **68%** since 2009

On average, children consume **less than half** the recommended amount of fruit and veg but **twice the** recommended amount of sugar.

A quarter (26%) of places to buy food in England are fast-food outlets, remaining unchanged for six years.



Importance of dietitians

- The HCPs trained to support around food and diet
- MECC – coming into contact and well placed to identify
- Screening as part of nutritional assessment - E
- Signposting, referring, advising
- Tailoring advice
- Training other HCPs
- Working in public health and food policy
- Expert voice in campaigning
- Huge volunteer force propping up faulty system – need more RDs and nutritionist working in this area – lack of funding!
- Issue of lack of training and confidence



Sustain alliance

- National policy, campaigns and public affairs
- Local action– huge impact possible at the local and regional level



**School Food
For All**

**SUGAR
SMART**



**Children's Food
Campaign**

Food poverty work



Children's Food Campaign



Bridging the Gap







Whole systems approach to food

Diversity and inclusion is integral to all of these themes



Food Governance and Strategy

Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action.



Good Food Movement

Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement.



Healthy Food for All

Tackling food poverty, diet related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food.



Sustainable Food Economy

Creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy.



Catering and Procurement

Transforming catering and procurement and revitalizing local and sustainable food supply chains.



Food for the Planet

Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food and farming and an end to food waste.

The role of Local Authorities

UK councils have an important role to play in creating healthier and more sustainable communities and reducing food insecurity.

Local Authorities are well placed to drive change by taking a systemic, cross-sectoral approach to food work, especially on issues such as food poverty.

Good Food Local



Good Food Local: the London report

We continue to work closely with London councils, to track their action on food and share examples of good practice from across the capital.

2026 league tables and maps

The national benchmarking platform

Good Food Local is a national benchmarking platform to help local authorities drive change. Through Good Food Local, local authorities can track and drive meaningful action in their area while learning from others nationwide to help build healthy, sustainable communities.

Find out more

Good Food Local: the North East report

We are working closely with the Association of Directors of Public Health North East and food partnerships from the region to benchmark local authority action on good food and share examples of good practice.

2024 league tables and maps

Take a regional approach to Good Food Local

As well as supporting individual councils to improve their local food system, Good Food Local can support a region to come together, share opportunities and challenges and build a sense of collective direction.

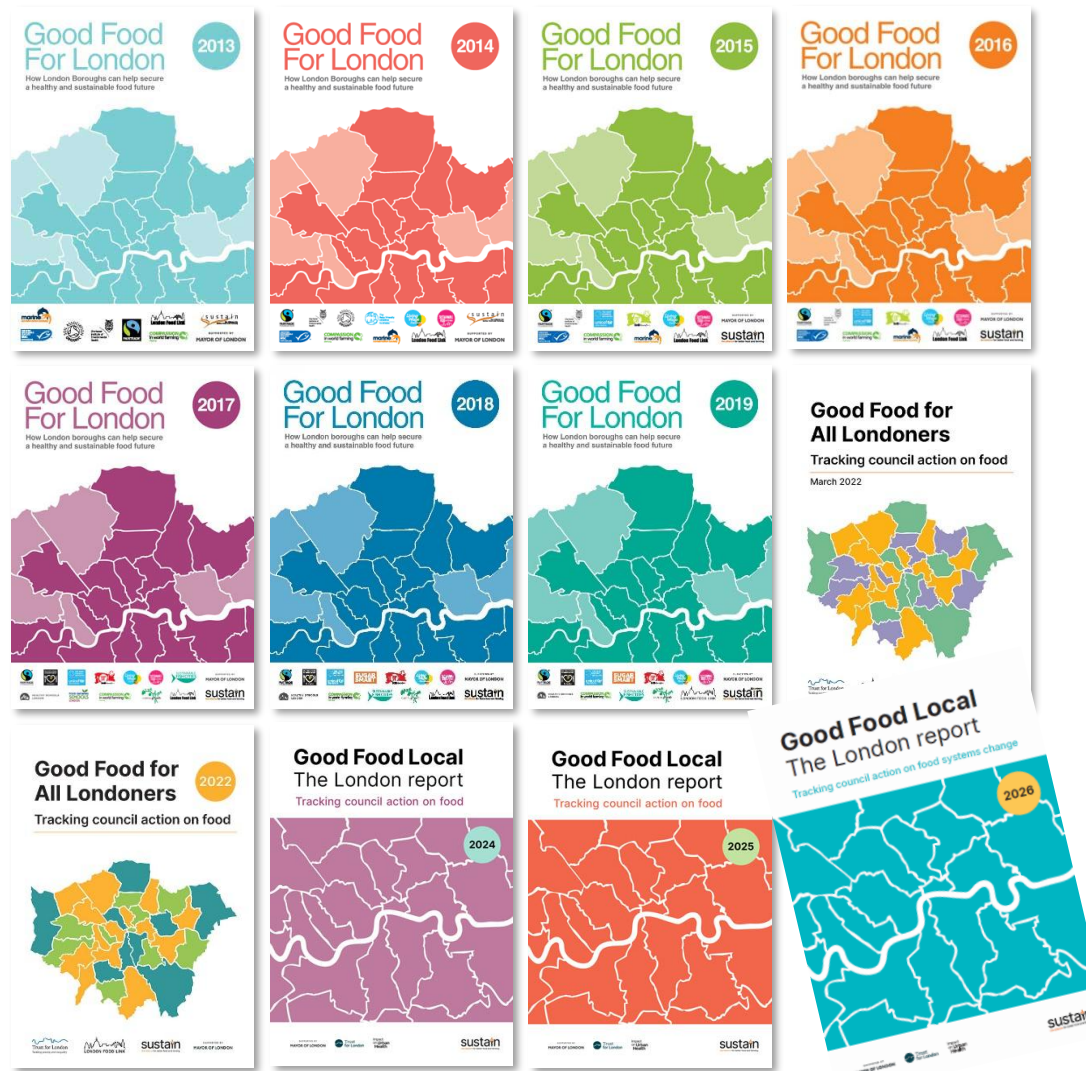
Could your region be next?

Beyond the Food Bank framework

Goal: address root causes of food poverty through policy and practice.

Beyond the Food Bank approach

- Food poverty alliances and action plans
- Cash-first approaches
- Children's food (Healthy Start, nurseries, schools, young people)
- Food access for:
 - Older and disabled people
 - Diverse ethnic groups
 - Refugees and those with NRPf status
- Engaging people with lived experience of poverty in decision making
- Supporting sustainable community food infrastructure
- Building civil food resilience – report coming!





FOOD
ACTIVE

SUGAR
SMART

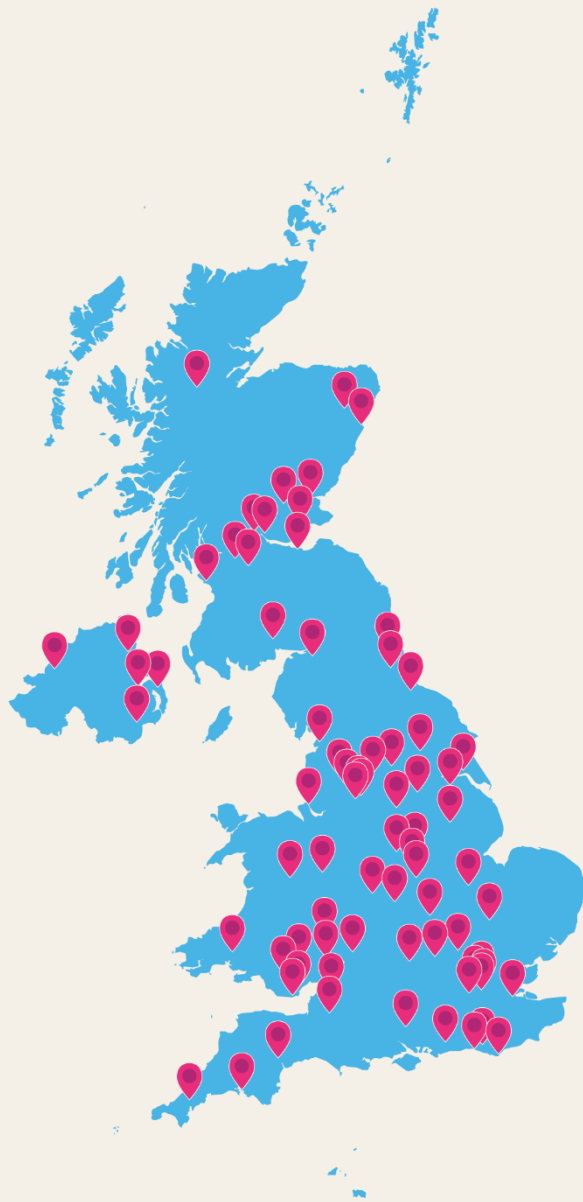


sustain
the alliance for better food and farming

Healthy Food Environments

Our environment greatly affects our health and what we eat including:

- Local Healthier Food Advertising Policies, first launched by the Mayor of London on TFL in 2019
- Using planning to control hot food takeaways and improve access to healthy food and food growing spaces
- Soft Drinks Industry Levy 2018, reduction of sugar in soft drinks by 44% between 2015 and 2019
- Schemes to improve access to fruit and veg
- Convenience store work to increase healthy food availability at affordable prices



The power of local action

- 100+ Sustainable Food Places (SFP) food partnerships
- Bring together public, private and voluntary sector local food actors
- Hosted by the council, VCS or separate entity
- Collaborate to understand and address local food system issues
- SFP provides network, support, resources, convening, lobbying
- Regional networks e.g. London
- Lots of impact evaluation evidence
- We need one in every local area!

National framework

At local and regional levels there is a lot of food systems innovation. There is need for 'two-way flows' of policy, guidance, resources and best-practice intelligence between local authorities and national government.

The national policy framework helps support local action and relieve burdens, e.g.

- Defra's **Food Strategy**, **Child Poverty Strategy** and **10-Year Health Plan** all provide important frameworks and give status to local action.
- DWP's **Crisis and Resilience Fund** (£840m over 3 years) for local authorities and the **DWP Food Poverty team** support local action on crisis and solutions to food poverty.
- DHSC, DfE and HM Treasury have increased **Healthy Start payments**; secured **higher living wages**; extended **Free School Meals** to all households with children on universal credit; and removed the **2-child welfare benefits cap**.

National roundtable – four pillars

Four pillars of dignified access to food:

- 1. Prioritise a cash-first or income-focused approach to food insecurity**
- 2. Provide nutrition security and address diet-related health inequalities**
- 3. Support community food assets and infrastructure while working to end the need for charitable food aid**
- 4. Implement good food governance**

Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF)

- Three-year funding from April 2026 allows for planning and strategic work vs Household Support Fund (HSF) six months (emergency food provision and holiday voucher spend)
- Manifesto commitment to *'end mass dependence on emergency food parcels'*
- Important opportunity to transform local crisis support and prevent crisis through financial resilience building
- Local authorities are 'encouraged to think creatively about new approaches to building sustainable food landscapes, which draw on established best practice and support people to transition away from crisis support to building their financial resilience'
- Doesn't replace need for adequate social security and incomes



Healthy Start Scheme

- Weekly payments for milk, infant formula, fruit, vegetables and pulses, vitamins for pregnancy and infancy
- National uptake low (no recent data)
- £53M shortfall in England, Wales and NI
- Nationally: expand eligibility to UC and NRPF, increase value with inflation, auto-enrolment
- Locally: promotion and training to increase uptake, local campaigns and champions, contact eligible families, work collaboratively with local organisations

Case studies

"The case studies have been immensely helpful in which direction we should move and what partnerships we need to form to take actions

"London council participant



New co-designed community kitchen opens in Camden

An exciting inclusive community kitchen has opened in Camden, following co-design workshops with people seeking asylum alongside long-term local residents.



<https://www.sustainweb.org/good-food-enterprise/case-studies/>

<https://www.sustainweb.org/good-food-local/case-studies-london/>

<https://www.sustainweb.org/good-food-local/case-studies-north-east/>

Council and local foodbank team up to address food insecurity in Newcastle

Sustain takes a closer look at project SNAP, a strong example of embedding wrap around support alongside food aid to address symptoms of food insecurity, run by Newcastle City Council in partnership with Newcastle Foodbank.



Beyond the food bank model: spotlight on Hollingdean Food Bank and St Richard's Café

Hollingdean Food Bank has closed its doors after shifting to provision of holistic wraparound support that reduced need for food parcels. We spoke to Laurel Nathan, Manager and Lead Support Worker at St Richard's Community Support Café to understand why and how.





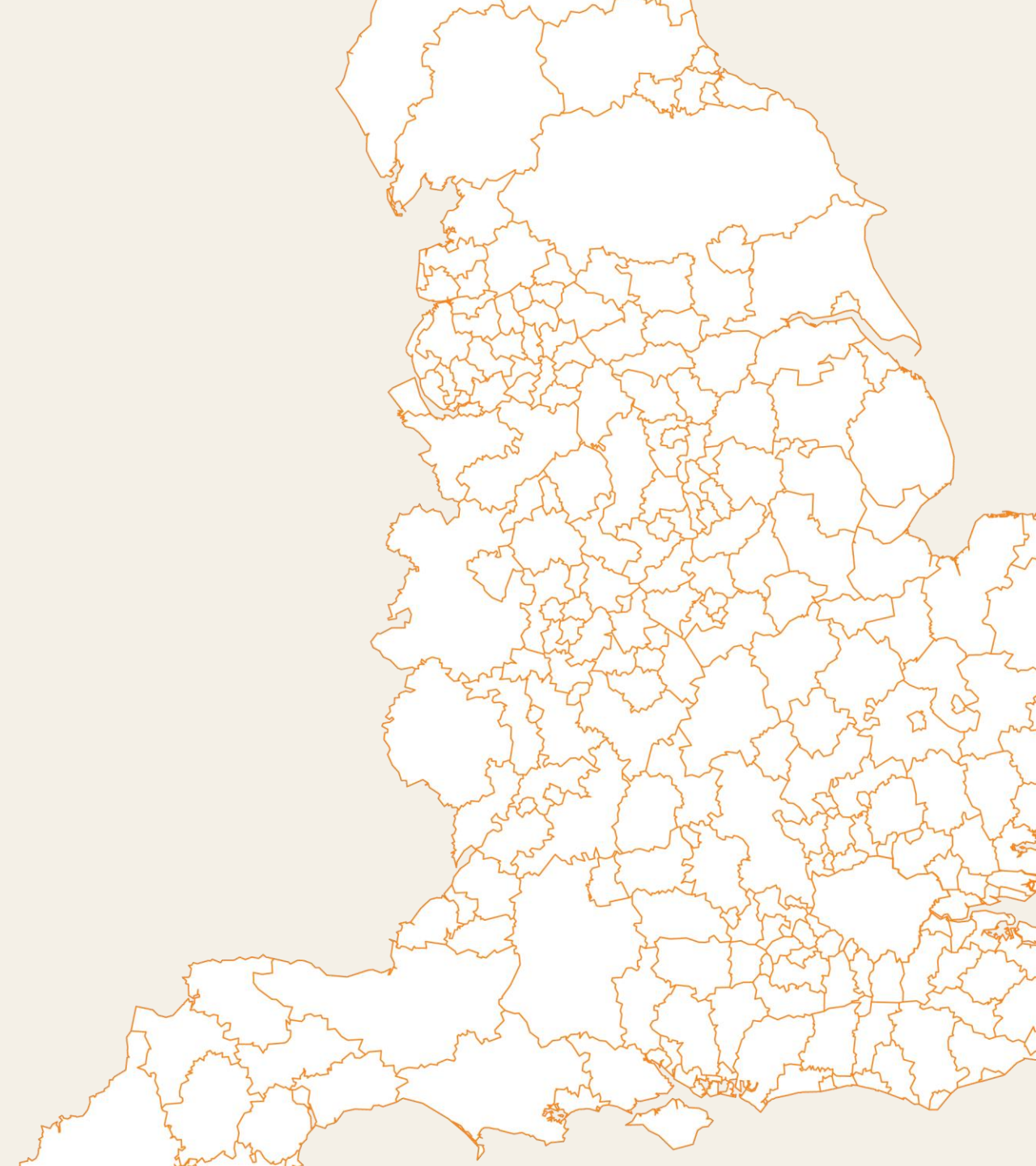
Summary:

- Huge prevalence of food insecurity in the UK and ongoing cost of living pressures
- Dietitians are well placed to support and train others due to skills and contact
- Not mandatory in training – ask for this!
- Screening optional - can include this!
- Create signposting resources
- Need for involvement in national and local policy, public health response, VCS, curriculum
- Champion in BDA/ SG/ workplace/ MP etc
- Right to Food evidence submission
- Add voice to campaigns
- Research

Get involved

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- Sign up to our [Newsletters](#)
- Webinars and [events](#)

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**Thank You for
listening**

Any Questions?