

Sustainable Food Strategy 2023 - 26: Equality and Health analysis

May 2023

Section 1: Equality analysis details

Proposed policy/decision/business plan to which this equality analysis relates	Southwark Sustainable Food Strategy 2023-2026
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Equality analysis author	Rebecca Harkes – Policy Officer for Health Inequalities		
Strategic Director:	David Quirke-Thornton		
Department	Children and Adults	Division	Public Health
Period analysis undertaken	April to May 2023		
Date of review (if applicable)	October 2023		

Section 2: Brief description of policy/decision/business plan

1.1 Brief description of policy/decision/business plan

The Sustainable Food Strategy has been developed by Southwark Council in partnership with Southwark Food Action Alliance.

The strategy has been developed to shape and guide our work on sustainable food from 2023-26. The vision it sets out is a sustainable food system in Southwark to improve health and wellbeing for our population, reduce inequalities and protect the planet.

There are five priorities in the strategy:

- 1) **A good food partnership** – A good food partnership can help us to join up our efforts to improve the local food system.
- 2) **Strong and connected communities** – A sustainable food system should bring communities together, helping people to build connections through food.
- 3) **Food security and the Right to Food** – A sustainable food system should deliver food security and nutrition for all. The principle of Right to Food advocates access to food as a basic human right and a statutory obligation.
- 4) **Healthy people, healthy planet** – A sustainable food system should enable access to good nutrition for health and wellbeing and have a neutral or positive impact on the natural environment.
- 5) **A good food economy and affordable food offer** – A sustainable food system should benefit the local economy, through good jobs, affordable food, community-led enterprises and healthy businesses.

Underpinning each of these priorities is the ambition to reduce inequalities and close the gap in life chances in the borough.

The strategy will be delivered by Southwark Council and Southwark Food Action Alliance, our local food partnership. A partnership action plan will be developed following agreement of the strategy.

Section 3: Overview of service users and key stakeholders consulted

2. Service users and stakeholders	
<p>Key users of the department or service</p>	<p>Engagement with residents has taken place through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of the Household Food Insecurity JSNA and the Older Adults Food Insecurity Needs Assessment - Roundtables, workshops and surveys on food provision in the borough - Southwark Food Action Alliance, a network of local food providers, voluntary and community groups, residents, businesses and public sector representatives - A Food Summit in early 2022 - A project with 100 young people to design a preferred sustainable food future. <p>Further resident engagement will be required to shape an action plan. Recruitment of residents will take place through our community food organisations and faith groups, ensuring that this is shaped by a diversity of voices. There will also be opportunities to embed further resident engagement into the development of the action plan, such as emerging findings from Southwark 2030.</p> <p>The strategy also proposes the establishment of mechanisms to ensure local people with lived experience of food insecurity continue to shape the delivery of this work.</p>
<p>Key stakeholders were/are involved in this policy/decision/business plan</p>	<p>Southwark Food Action Alliance members shaped this strategy, particularly PECAN and Pembroke House who sat on the SFAA steering group and Food Matters who gave strategic advice.</p> <p>Within the council, this work has been led by the Public Health team with input from other council departments (including Climate Change, Local Economy and Communities).</p>

Section 4: Pre-implementation equality analysis

This section considers the potential impacts (positive and negative) on groups with ‘protected characteristics’, the equality information on which this analysis is based and any mitigating actions to be taken.

The first column on the left is for societal and economic issues (discrimination, higher poverty levels) and the second column on the right for health issues, physical and mental. As the two aspects are heavily interrelated it may not be practical to fill out both columns on all protected characteristics. The aim is, however, to ensure that health is given special consideration, as it is the council’s declared intention to reduce health inequalities in the borough. The Public Health Team can assist with research and data.

Age - Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
<p>Positive: The sustainable food strategy has a potential positive impact on all age groups. However, the Right to Food section targets three priority groups on the basis of age: children and young people, food insecure adults (including adults entitled to benefits and adults in working poverty and debt) and older adults. This reflects how food insecurity affects people differently over the life course, including the long-term impact that food insecurity can have on children’s life chances and the factors which influence food insecurity for older adults.</p> <p>Negative: There are no expected negative impacts on the basis of age.</p>	<p>Positive: Focusing on food insecurity for children and young people should have a positive health impact. Food insecurity has a detrimental impact on children’s health and disproportionately impacts those from low income backgrounds, contributing to health inequalities. Children in food insecure households are more likely to develop asthma, depression and other chronic conditions. Their growth and development are impaired. Learning is poorer, and can affect life chances.</p> <p>Although food insecurity is only one factor that can contribute to malnutrition in older adults, it is an important driver. Bereavement, ill health and social isolation can lead to older people losing interest in food, while increasing frailty can make it harder for older people to access and prepare food. Malnutrition screening in the community should help to identify older adults who are affected. The strategy highlights the importance of community approaches for meals, which should help to tackle social isolation.</p>
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
<p>Southwark Council. 2021. Tackling Household Food Insecurity. Southwark’s JSNA</p> <p>Greater London Authority. 2022. Survey of Londoners</p>	<p>Southwark Council. 2021. Tackling Household Food Insecurity. Southwark’s JSNA</p>

Mitigating actions to be taken	
The recommendations from the draft older adults food insecurity needs assessment are currently being explored within the council. This section of the equality impact analysis should be revisited as an implementation plan is developed.	

Disability - A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
<p>The sustainable food strategy has a potential positive impact on disabled people as a target group in the Right to Food plan.</p> <p>Positive: The strategy aims to address the link between food insecurity and low incomes. Disabled people are more likely to be unemployed and receive disproportionately lower incomes. The strategy takes a 'cash first' approach to food insecurity including championing the London Living Wage and signposting those accessing emergency food provision to cash first support.</p> <p>Rising costs of living can have a disproportionate impact on disabled people, who often have to spend more on essential goods such as heating and food. The strategy focuses on addressing the affordability of food.</p> <p>Negative: There are no expected negative impacts on the basis of disability.</p>	<p>Food insecurity is often associated with overweight and obesity. Explanations include the higher cost of nutritious foods, the stress of living with food insecurity, and physiological adaptations to food restriction.</p> <p>Food insecurity can also affect mental health and isolation. The experience of being unable to access healthy, nutritious food can lead to anxiety, depression and isolation.</p> <p>Actions to tackle food insecurity and affordability are expected to have a positive health impact.</p>
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
<p>Census 2021 Profile: Health, Disability and Unpaid Care</p> <p>Southwark Council. 2021. Tackling Household Food Insecurity. Southwark's JSNA</p> <p>GLA: Cost of living poll results</p>	<p>Southwark Council. 2021. Tackling Household Food Insecurity. Southwark's JSNA</p>

Mitigating actions to be taken
The draft local economic strategy commits to ensuring that people with disabilities and health conditions and individuals from Southwark's most disadvantaged communities will have more access to employment support designed around their circumstances and needs. Tracking progress of this will help to monitor the wider structural factors shaping food insecurity for disabled people.

Gender reassignment - The process of transitioning from one gender to another.	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
There are no expected impacts (positive or negative) of the strategy on Southwark residents on the basis of gender reassignment.	N/a
Equality information on which above analysis is based.	Health data on which above analysis is based
N/a	N/a
Mitigating actions to be taken	
N/a	

Marriage and civil partnership – In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples and must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. (Only to be considered in respect to the need to eliminate discrimination.)	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
There are no expected impacts (positive or negative) of the strategy on Southwark residents on the basis of marriage or civil partnership.	N/a
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based

N/a	N/a
Mitigating actions to be taken	
N/a	

Pregnancy and maternity - Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
<p>Positive: The Right to Food plan proposes increasing uptake of Healthy Start vouchers. Healthy Start is the UK's main food welfare scheme which exists to improve inequalities in diet. It has been running since 2006 and its weekly vouchers entitle low-income families to vouchers for free milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamins. Pregnant women and children under 4 are eligible. It is expected that this policy should improve access to healthy food for pregnant women.</p> <p>The Right to Food plan also proposes work to scope the long-term funding for existing programmes, including Alexandra Rose vouchers. Rose vouchers help families on low incomes, including pregnant women, to buy fresh fruit and vegetables. This action should help to determine the long-term financial sustainability of the programme in Southwark.</p> <p>Negative: There are no expected negative impacts on the basis of pregnancy and maternity.</p>	<p>There can be increased nutritional requirements during pregnancy and the post-partum periods, linked to the needs of the growing foetus and breastfeeding. Food insecurity during pregnancy is associated with increased risk of pregnancy complications such as gestational diabetes, anaemia and pregnancy-induced hypertension. Poor food access in pregnancy increases the risk of low birthweight and stunting in children, which are associated with higher risk of overweight and obesity later in life.</p>
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
N/a	McKay et al., 2022, Systematic Review of Interventions Addressing Food Insecurity in Pregnant Women and New Mothers
Mitigating actions to be taken	

N/a	
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<p>Race - Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. N.B. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller are recognised racial groups and their needs should be considered alongside all others</p>	
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan</p>	<p>Potential health impacts (positive and negative)</p>
<p>Positive: Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are identified as a target group in the Right to Food plan. Ethnic minorities are at higher risk of food insecurity. Factors influencing this include structural inequalities, including wage inequalities and overrepresentation of in zero-hours contracts. The strategy emphasises a cash first response to food insecurity, with a view to tackling the root causes. Work will take place to monitor how cash first approaches are reaching residents by ethnicity.</p> <p>The strategy's focus on affordable food retail as part of the council's planning and regeneration approach, and exploring further affordable food models, are also targeted at those on lower incomes.</p> <p>Availability of culturally appropriate food is also an issue for residents in Southwark. The Right to Food plan specifies an action to map availability of emergency food provision with culturally appropriate food in Southwark.</p> <p>Negative: There are no expected negative impacts on the basis of race.</p>	<p>Food insecurity is often associated with overweight and obesity. Explanations include the higher cost of nutritious foods, the stress of living with food insecurity, and physiological adaptations to food restriction.</p> <p>Food insecurity can also affect mental health and isolation. The experience of being unable to access healthy, nutritious food can lead to anxiety, depression and isolation.</p> <p>Actions to tackle food insecurity and increase availability of affordable, culturally appropriate foods are expected to have a positive health impact.</p>
<p>Equality information on which above analysis is based</p>	<p>Health data on which above analysis is based</p>
<p>Southwark Annual JSNA Report 2022</p> <p>Southwark Council. 2021. Tackling Household Food Insecurity. Southwark's JSNA</p>	<p>Southwark Council. 2021. Tackling Household Food Insecurity. Southwark's JSNA</p>
<p>Mitigating actions to be taken</p>	
<p>N/a</p>	

Religion and belief - Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
<p>Positive: The strategy promotes greater availability of affordable, culturally sensitive products for diverse communities, including religious diversity.</p> <p>The strategy outlines work to shape food provision in the borough, including free school meals and a longer-term procurement policy for sustainable food. Availability of healthy, nutritious food acceptable to different religious faiths will be incorporated in to relevant policies to prevent discrimination on the basis of religion.</p> <p>Negative: There are no expected negative impacts on the basis of religion and belief.</p>	<p>Food insecurity is often associated with overweight and obesity. Explanations include the higher cost of nutritious foods, the stress of living with food insecurity, and physiological adaptations to food restriction.</p> <p>Food insecurity can also affect mental health and isolation. The experience of being unable to access healthy, nutritious food can lead to anxiety, depression and isolation.</p> <p>Actions to tackle food insecurity and increase availability of affordable, culturally appropriate foods are expected to have a positive health impact.</p>
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
<p>Census 2021 Profile: Ethnicity, National Identity, Language and Religion</p>	<p>Southwark Council. 2021. Tackling Household Food Insecurity. Southwark's JSNA</p>
Mitigating actions to be taken	
N/a	

Sex - A man or a woman.

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
There are no expected impacts (positive or negative) of the strategy on the basis of sex.	N/a
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based

Southwark Council. 2021. Tackling Household Food Insecurity. Southwark's JSNA ONS (2019) Lone parent families	N/a
Mitigating actions to be taken	
Single men and single parents (disproportionately women) are at higher risk of being food insecure. The rising cost of living is likely to impact single parent households disproportionately, where children are already at higher risk of food insecurity. Work should take place with organisations in the borough that represent the voices of local families to understand how single parent households are impacted and how actions to tackle food insecurity are reaching this group.	

Sexual orientation - Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
There are no expected impacts (positive or negative) of the strategy on Southwark residents on the basis of sexual orientation.	N/a
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
N/a	N/a
Mitigating actions to be taken	
N/A	
Socio-economic disadvantage – although the Equality Act 2010 does not include socio-economic status as one of the protected characteristics, Southwark Council recognises that this continues to be a major cause of inequality in the borough. Socio economic status is the measure of an area's, an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, health, living conditions and occupation.	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
<p>Positive: Food insecurity is often driven by having insufficient income to access a healthy, nutritious diet. This can be caused by low wages, rising costs of living and debt. This strategy promotes affordable, nutritious food for all.</p> <p>It also proposes championing the London Living Wage across Southwark and signposting people to income maximisation services. This directly targets</p>	Actions to tackle food insecurity and affordability are expected to have a positive health impact.

socioeconomic disadvantage, with a view to addressing the root causes of food insecurity. <u>Negative:</u> There are no expected negative impacts on the basis of socio-economic disadvantage.	
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
Southwark Council. 2021. Tackling Household Food Insecurity. Southwark's JSNA Southwark Annual JSNA Report 2022	Southwark Council. 2021. Tackling Household Food Insecurity. Southwark's JSNA
Mitigating actions to be taken	
N/a	

Human Rights There are 18 rights in the European Convention on Human Rights ('ECHR'), and these are given domestic effect in the UK by the Human Rights Act 1998 ('HRA'). Each right in the ECHR is called an Article. The Articles in the ECHR given effect in the UK by the HRA are the right to life, freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, freedom from slavery and forced labour, the right to liberty and security, the right to a fair trial, the right not to be punished outside the law, including the freedom from the imposition of retrospective penalties, the right to respect for a private and family life, the freedom of conscience, thought and religion, the right to freedom of expression, assembly and association, the right to marry, a general freedom from discrimination and the rights in the 'First Protocol' of the ECHR.
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan
This strategy promotes a nutritious, affordable, diverse food offer to meet the needs of all cultures and religions. Foods suitable for different religions and faiths should be catered for in all of the council's work around food. The strategy also includes targeted work for people with no recourse to public funds and asylum seekers and refugees. This includes offering no wrong door to people from these communities experiencing food insecurity. The Right to Food plan includes an action focused on campaigning for Right to Food issues such as food standards for asylum seeker accommodation centres. This is focused on championing human rights and ensuring people can access nutritious, culturally appropriate food in a way that upholds dignity.
Information on which above analysis is based
N/a
Mitigating actions to be taken
N/a

Section 5: Further actions and objectives

5. Further actions			
Based on the initial analysis above, please detail the key mitigating actions or the areas identified as requiring more detailed analysis.			
Number	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
1	The older adults needs assessment is being finalised. Further work is required to address the recommendations.	The equality impact assessment should be revisited once an implementation plan is developed.	October 2023
2	The strategy is focused on addressing the wider structural inequalities which shape food insecurity. These factors have a disproportionate impact on some groups.	Identify measures to track the impact of cash first approaches and employment support across protected characteristics for the action plan.	End December 2023
3	The rising cost of living will have a disproportionate impact on some groups such as single parents (disproportionately women) and disabled people.	Engage further with groups representing the voices of local residents to understand how the rising cost of living continues to impact different groups and their access to a nutritious diet.	On-going

5. Equality objectives (for business plans)					
Based on the initial analysis above, please detail any equality objectives that you will set for your division/department/service. Under the objective and measure column please state whether this objective is an existing objective or a suggested addition to the Council Plan.					
Objective and measure	Lead officer	Current performance (baseline)	Targets		
			Easter	Summer	Winter
No further actions identified beyond what is outlined above.					