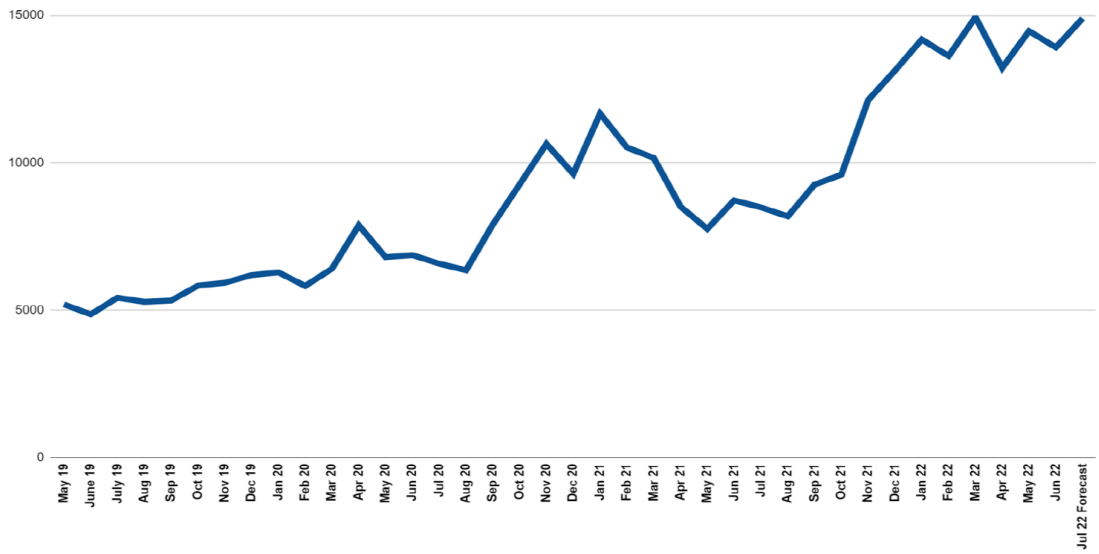
LEWISHAM'S FOOD JUSTICE ACTION PLAN 2023:

Vision and Priority Areas

Vision

Food injustice is one of the biggest challenges facing Lewisham. Local food banks and other crisis food provision groups are reporting a steep rise in demand post-COVID, combined with a decrease in food and financial contributions as the cost-of-living crisis intensifies.

Number of people coming to Citizens Advice Lewisham for food bank referrals (2019-2022)



Graph provided by Fiona Derbyshire, Citizens Advice Lewisham, June 2022

There is real concern that despite having an extensive network of emergency food providers, some organisations in Lewisham will not be able to meet demand and some of our most vulnerable residents will go hungry this winter. This is an unacceptable situation which requires urgent, co-ordinated and sustained action.

There is not one single factor that causes food injustice. It is the result of interactions between a complex range of factors including low income, rising food, housing and fuel costs, lack of time, skills and equipment to store and prepare food and decreased access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods. Those experiencing food injustice will also often be experiencing other forms of disadvantage including fuel poverty, social deprivation, discrimination, housing insecurity or poor physical or mental health.

Action to reduce food injustice must include advocacy for system-wide effort to address the root causes of food injustice as well as actions to promote food resilience and access to emergency food provision that reduces stigma and promotes dignity and choice. Given the ongoing cost of living crisis, it will be necessary to focus initial attention on ensuring sufficient capacity within the food giving system. Action will also be required to provide support and opportunities for individuals and communities to tackle the underlying factors which led them to require crisis food support e.g., low income, unemployment, debt, illness etc. These actions are likely to require a longer time horizon and action by stakeholders beyond the scope of our local system.

Our vision for Lewisham is that:

ALL Lewisham residents can enjoy reliable and fair access to food that is sufficiently nutritious, sustainable, culturally appropriate and affordable.

ALL Lewisham residents have the knowledge, skills, resources and opportunity to grow, prepare, cook, eat and share food with their families and communities.

ALL Lewisham stakeholders support collective action to end chronic hunger, promote food resilience and reduce the need for emergency food aid.

ALL members of the Lewisham Food Justice Alliance and other key stakeholders have access to data to monitor the scale of the issue of food injustice and to determine whether the actions taken are having a positive impact on lived experience, health and wellbeing.

We will achieve this vision through the implementation of a cross-organisational Food Justice Action Plan for Lewisham, developed and delivered in partnership with local communities, that acts across 4 key priority areas:

1. Take preventative action to reduce the risk of Lewisham residents experiencing food injustice

2. Ensure babies, children and young people have access to nutritious, sustainable and culturally appropriate sources of food throughout the year

3. Co-ordinate resources, capacity and expertise to maximise the support available to those in crisis

4. Promote and develop “Money First” approaches to crisis prevention and support

What is the “Money First” approach?

IFAN (the Independent Food Aid Network) have produced a series of infographics to explain how the “Cash First” * approach provides the framework for preventative action on food injustice with the objective of removing the need for crisis food provision over the long term.

*Term chosen by IFAN

As poverty levels increase, #CashFirst is common sense.

When it comes to getting food, most of us will choose and buy what we need.



If we can't afford to buy food, we're faced with a far more difficult journey.



First, many of us will put off trying to seek help

Stigma can mean people have not eaten for some time before they eventually find help.

you may need to get a referral from a local agency

Many food banks work on a referral only basis and it can be hard to get appointments.

and then there's the journey to the food bank

People may need to walk long distances or spend money to get to a food bank (if they don't deliver). Food banks are only open at specific times.

to receive a parcel of food chosen by someone else

Many food banks work hard to offer choices, but this depends on what food is available.

to repeat the cycle again

If household income is not increased, the cycle is likely to repeat. Sometimes there is also a limit on the number of food bank visits allowed.

For food bank teams, sourcing food is complex and challenging.

This parcel is made up of donated and surplus food

Food supply can be inconsistent and is dependent on donations and availability. Many food banks will also purchase food.

transported by volunteers

Food is often picked up by volunteers in their own vehicles. Surplus food may not be usable meaning food banks teams then have to dispose this waste.

sorted and packed in the food bank

Donated food is collected, checked for safety and quality, sorted, stored, packed and sometimes transported again before distribution.

to repeat the cycle again

Collectively, food bank teams are distributing food on an industrial scale. Unless lack of income is addressed, the cycle will repeat.

Food parcels can't solve poverty, but raising incomes can.

A #CashFirst approach would mean everyone could afford and choose their own food with dignity.



This infographic depicts the different stages at which money first opportunities can be offered. The preference is to provide money first opportunities that tackle the root cause of poverty through the provision of fair wages and adequate benefits, however this requires action predominantly at a national level. This infographic shows that there are opportunities to adopt money first approaches within the local system by offering statutory or charitable cash grants or vouchers for food:



Downloaded from www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk/cash-first

Action Plan

Partners have identified 4 priority areas that require the most urgent action in order to achieve our vision for Food Justice for Lewisham. These provide the initial areas of focus for this action plan:

1. Take preventative action to reduce the risk of Lewisham residents experiencing food injustice

2. Ensure babies, children and young people have access to nutritious, sustainable and culturally appropriate sources of food throughout the year

3. Co-ordinate resources, capacity and expertise to maximise the support available to those in crisis

4. Promote and develop “Money First” approaches to crisis prevention and support

In this first iteration of the plan all actions are focussed on achieving these aims but achieving these may not be sufficient to completely fulfil the vision we identified at the beginning of this plan.

Through the implementation of these initial actions and ongoing engagement with stakeholders, we may identify additional gaps or issues that require attention. We may therefore agree to additional focus areas and related actions that should be integrated into future iterations of this plan.

As such this plan is intended to be a live, continuously evolving document that will adapt and grow as the issues relating to food injustice that our population experience also change.

We have developed a plan that tackles the specific issues identified through the workshops but also considers evidence of the other issues relating to food injustice that our population may be experiencing and creates logical and feasible solutions to these issues.

For each focus area we have identified a set of aims underpinned by a series of specific tasks that will support the achievement of those aims.

These are summarised in the following series of tables.

Indicative implementation timescales have been proposed where:

“short” means within 1-3 months

“medium” means within 6-12 months

“long” means implementation within 1-2 years+

Details of existing strategies, policies or programmes of work that can support the implementation of tasks have also been identified.

Focus Area 1: Take preventative action to reduce the risk of Lewisham residents experiencing food injustice

AIM: Promote and develop opportunities for community food growing

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Map existing growing spaces, community food growing projects and foraging spaces and identify suitable, unused public spaces that could be utilised for food growing e.g., parks, green space, school gardens.	1a	Medium	Map of council-owned green spaces available in the Lewisham Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2020-2025
Ensure food growing activities provide opportunities for people of all ages to become involved	1b	Medium	
Provide support and advice on what and how to grow food at home and in the community	1c	Short	Support Good Food Lewisham's programme of work to achieve this
Increase the support available for existing community allotments (e.g., admin tasks, maintenance etc)	1d	Medium	
Further decrease the waiting time for council-owned allotments	1e	Medium	See actions for allotment development, p.32-33 of the Lewisham Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2020-25

Focus Area 1: Take preventative action to reduce the risk of Lewisham residents experiencing food injustice

AIM: Ensure residents have the skills, space, appliances, equipment and fuel to store and cook their own food

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Collaborate with the "Warm Spaces" initiative to include spaces with cooking facilities	1f	Short	Link up with council officers and partners who are developing the Lewisham Warm Welcome Scheme for Winter 2022
Map community cooking and kitchen projects to promote their availability to residents and identify gaps in availability. Identify and map Open College Network (OCN) trained cookery tutors and other cookery expertise in the community. See also Action 3e developing Community Food Hubs	1g	Short	
Ensure community cooking courses include how to cook well on a budget and cooking energy efficiently	1h	Medium	
Develop an "Appliance Repair or Replacement" service for residents who can't afford to replace broken kitchen appliances	1i	Medium	Liaise with the Lewisham Donation Hub to confirm what is already available and where there may be gaps
Encourage temporary housing providers to ensure kitchen facilities offer sufficient, clean and safe food storage and cooking facilities for all residents	1j	Long	Refer to Lewisham Housing Strategy 2020-2026 and Lewisham Homelessness Strategy 2020-2022

Focus Area 1: Take preventative action to reduce the risk of Lewisham residents experiencing food injustice

AIM: Ensure food growing, cooking or sharing programmes provide opportunities for skills sharing and promote community cohesion

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Audit food growing, cooking and sharing programmes to identify those that provide learning opportunities and identify gaps in availability	1k	Medium	

Focus Area 1: Take preventative action to reduce the risk of Lewisham residents experiencing food injustice

AIM: Create a strategic framework to oversee and promote preventative action that builds on existing structures and creates new structures where there are gaps

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Establish a Food Justice Alliance for Lewisham, to oversee the implementation of this action plan, ensuring it doesn't duplicate existing structures and that it has appropriate membership and reach	1l	Short	
Update the Food Strategy for Lewisham to include consideration of; food access, nutrition and health throughout the life course, food sustainability and the Lewisham food economy	1m	Long	
Develop a Good Food Retail plan for Lewisham to include action on food deserts, work with local markets, availability of culturally appropriate fresh food.	1n	Long	To be developed with reference to the Retail and Town Centres Core Strategy Plan, part of the Lewisham Local Development Framework
Maintain Lewisham's Status as a Sustainable Food City and work towards achieving silver status	1o	Medium	Support Good Food Lewisham's programme of work to achieve this

Focus Area 1: Take preventative action to reduce the risk of Lewisham residents experiencing food injustice

AIM: Taking action to confirm Lewisham's status as a "Right to Food Borough"

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Collate and submit local evidence of food injustice to regional and national policymakers	1p	Long	
Identify opportunities to work alongside organisations taking action on food injustice at a regional or national level e.g. London Borough Food Group, SUSTAIN, Food Foundation and IFAN. Work with IFAN commenced to design the 'Worrying About Money' leaflet.	1q	Short	
Promote Lewisham's status as a "Right to Food" borough, to residents, employees and partners.	1r	Short	Refer to the national Right To Food Camapign website for more details https://www.ianbyrne.org/righttofood

Focus Area 1: Take preventative action to reduce the risk of Lewisham residents experiencing food injustice

AIM: Action on the wider determinants of Food Injustice

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Encourage local employers to pay the London Living Wage and reduce zero hours contracts	1s	Long	Work alongside the Economy and Partnerships Team to support further promotion of the London Living Wage to Lewisham Empoyer's
Promote and monitor the use of social value procurement to employ and buy more locally, particularly within Lewisham's Anchor Institutions	1t	Long	To be implemented via the commitments in the Lewisham Deal and the individual social value policies of the Anchor Institutions and major employers in Lewisham
Improve access to money management and debt advice	1u	Medium	Work alongside existing providers of money and debt advice in Lewisham and any additional support provided as part of Lewisham Council's Cost of Living Response
Provide more stable, affordable and energy efficient housing opportunities	1v	Long	Refer to Lewisham Housing Strategy 2020-2026 and Lewisham Homelessness Strategy 2020-2022

Focus Area 1: Take preventative action to reduce the risk of Lewisham residents experiencing food injustice

AIM: Tackle inequalities in groups more vulnerable to Food Injustice in Lewisham

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Undertake further research to identify the issues and potential solutions to food injustice for more vulnerable groups such as those who are from a Black and Minority Ethnic group, have no recourse to public funds, are physically or mentally disabled, people in temporary accommodation or homeless, families with children <5 and pregnant women, the working poor, those on universal credit, older people and people who are housebound. **See also Action 3p in relation to barriers to access to crisis food provision**	1w	Medium	Refer to the opportunity for action in the BLACHIR report 2022 recommending more research to understand the impacts of the food environment and food poverty on health and wellbeing of Black African and Black Caribbean communities, and devise strategies to

Focus Area 2: Ensure babies, children and young people have access to nutritious and sustainable sources of food throughout the year

AIM: Increase access to support and resources for infant feeding including introducing solid foods

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Review and refine the Emergency Infant Formula Pathway	2a	Short	Allign this work with the Infant Feeding Workstream of the Start for Life Programme in Lewisham
Ensure that settings where those at risk of food injustice are likely to present have information and support available on infant feeding, including introducing to solid foods and a clear pathway for accessing emergency infant formula milk.	2b	Medium	
Review and reinvigorate the promotion and achievement of the Healthy Early Years award in Lewisham	2c	Short	Align this work with the Infant Feeding Workstream of the Start for Life Programme in Lewisham

Focus Area 2: Ensure babies, children and young people have access to nutritious and sustainable sources of food throughout the year

AIM: Increase access to free childcare for eligible populations

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Increase the availability, promotion and uptake of the 15 hours free childcare offer for 2-year-olds in the eligible population	2d	Medium	This action will be implemented through the work of the council's Early Years Quality and Sufficiency Team

Focus Area 2: Ensure babies, children and young people have access to nutritious and sustainable sources of food throughout the year

AIM: Increase the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers in the eligible population

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Establish a Healthy Start Working Group to oversee and co-ordinate action to increase the uptake of the Healthy Start scheme in Lewisham	2e	Medium	Align this work with the Infant Feeding Workstream of the Start for Life Programme in Lewisham and the delivery of the new 0-5 Health Visiting Service from 2023
Identify the eligible population groups with the lowest uptake of healthy start scheme	2f	Short	
Design and implement a programme of targeted engagement and action to increase uptake in those population groups with lowest uptake	2g	Medium	
Develop a training and awareness programme for professionals, voluntary sector staff and local businesses to promote the Healthy Start Scheme and encourage families to join the scheme	2h	Medium	

Focus Area 2: Ensure babies, children and young people have access to nutritious and sustainable sources of food throughout the year

AIM: Increase the sustainability, availability and uptake of free food for Children and Young People including; free school meals, free food at school breakfast clubs and sustainable provision of the Holiday Activity Scheme

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Identify the eligible population groups with the lowest uptake of free school meals, including families with no recourse to public funds	2i	Short	Work in collaboration with Lewisham Council Pupil Support Team who support the application process for Free School Meals
Design and implement a programme of targeted engagement and action to increase uptake of free school meals in those population groups with lowest uptake	2j	Medium	
Advocate for the provision of free food at school breakfast clubs	2k	Medium	Work alongside the Mayor's Fund for London Magic Breakfast Club Scheme to encourage more Lewisham schools to sign up for support
Action to improve the sustainable provision and uptake of the Lewisham Holiday Food and Fun Programme beyond the lifetime of the Holiday Activity Fund	2l	Short	Work alongside the commissioners and providers of the Holiday Food and Fun Programme for Lewisham.

Focus Area 3: Co-ordinate resources, capacity and expertise to maximise the support available to those in crisis

AIM: Increase effective collection and distribution of surplus food across the borough

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Organise a Sustainable Food Networking event to introduce local stakeholders to surplus food redistribution organisations including local market traders, shops, food waste distributors and food growers	3a	Medium	Allign actions with the pledges in the Good Food Lewisham Charter and the 6 key issues addressed in the Sustainable Food Cities programme
Audit local activity regarding the donation and distribution of surplus food across organisations and businesses in Lewisham to identify opportunities to improve links between supply and demand.	3b	medium	
Identify the food sharing apps most frequently used in Lewisham and promote the use of a single app across organisations, businesses, employees, students and residents	3c	Medium	
Identify opportunities to use the compost created as a by-product of anaerobic digestion of Lewisham's Food Waste for distribution to local community food growing projects, allotments or schools.	3d	Short	Liaise with Lewisham Council's Recycling Team to achieve this.

Focus Area 3: Co-ordinate resources, capacity and expertise to maximise the support available to those in crisis

AIM: Improve the identification and co-ordination of physical community assets to promote food justice and provide crisis support where needed

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Build on the existing Food Hubs established by Lewisham Homes, by identifying areas and assets that could be used to establish Community Food Hubs - buildings where a variety of food activities and training can take place including; growing, cooking, communal eating, collection and distribution of surplus food (including hot food) etc - Food Hubs could be established in school kitchens, vacant shops, communal space in social housing as well as in council owned buildings. **See also Action 1g mapping community cooking and kitchen projects**	3e	Long	

Focus Area 3: Co-ordinate resources, capacity and expertise to maximise the support available to those in crisis

AIM: Improve the co-location of holistic advice and support services at places where people in crisis present

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Map where crisis food provision is already co-located with other services such as employment support services, housing advice, Citizens Advice Lewisham, Benefits and Debt Advice, Immigration Advice, Mental Health & Wellbeing Support, Social Prescribing and CYP Early Help Facilities. Include the days and times each service is available at each location	3f	Medium	Build on the information collated and published by Lewisham Local
Identify geographical or temporal gaps in the provision of co-located support services and agree action to address those gaps, including exploration of how the development of Lewisham Family Hubs could facilitate this action	3g	Medium	
Provide a mechanism for key partners to share information on emerging issues to ensure services and pathways can remain responsive and capable of meeting future needs	3h	Medium	

Focus Area 3: Co-ordinate resources, capacity and expertise to maximise the support available to those in crisis

AIM: Streamline the referral pathways between services to support residents, approaching or in crisis, to access the range of support they may require in an integrated way

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Provide training and support to frontline workers and volunteers to confidently identify those who are at risk of food injustice and confidently and sensitvely initiate conversations about their needs and how to access the services available to support them - this could include matrix training/learning exchange between services to allow one sector to learn from another	3i	Medium	
Ensure frontline workers in the public and voluntary sectors, faith and community organisations are aware of the range of support and advice services that are available, including which services are co-located and how to refer to them.	3j	Medium	
Ensure information about food justice and support and advice is available to the public at key points in the lifecourse when people may be more vulnerable including; pregnant women and families with children under 5, school or care leavers, older adults and also at life events that may increase vulnerability such as diagnosis of serious ill health, hospital discharge, redundancy or exit from benefits, moving out of supported living, relationship breakdown and bereavement.	3k	Long	

Explore the benefits and feasibility of procuring an online platform such as Time to Spare to host real-time information on support services and facilitate referalls	3l	long	

Focus Area 3: Co-ordinate resources, capacity and expertise to maximise the support available to those in crisis

AIM: Improve the visibility and accessibility of crisis prevention and support services

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Explore how council owned advertising assets could be used to share information on crisis prevention and support services	3m	Short	Work with the Council's Communications Team to align with existing communications plans using these assets.
Explore opportunities to use local radio to promote crisis prevention and support services	3n	Short	
Undertake localised surveys of community advertising assets such as community noticeboards on streets and in shops and develop a communications plan for support services using these assets	3o	Medium	
Undertake further research to understand the barriers that different vulnerable groups face in accessing food crisis prevention and support services including; those from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, the physically disabled, those with learning difficulties, those with mental health conditions, those who are housebound, people in temporary accommodation or homeless, families with children aged under 5, pregnant women, older people, single parents and those with no recourse to public funds. **See also Action 1w in relation to tackling inequalities in vulnerability to food injustice**	3p	Medium	

Develop plans to address the barriers that vulnerable groups face in accessing crisis food provision and preventative support	3q	Medium	

Focus Area 4: Developing Money First approaches to crisis prevention and support

AIM: Support the successful and sustainable delivery of existing Community Food Retail projects in Lewisham

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Use SUSTAIN's "*10 Guidelines for developing community food retail projects*" & the findings of recent local evaluations of Community Food Retail projects including the Impact Evaluation of Lewisham Homes' Community Food Stores (January 2022) and the Evaluation of the Cash First Pilot at Lewisham Legendary Community Club (November 2021) to identify and agree a development plan for each existing Community Food Retail project in Lewisham	4a	Medium	Link to "Community Food Retail and Food Poverty" SUSTAIN (2020)
Undertake further evaluations of Lewisham's Community Food Retail projects to collate evidence of effectiveness and wider impacts on residents and communities	4b	Medium	Build on the methodology used for the "Impact Evaluation of Social Supermarkets in Lewisham" (Nov 2021)
Also see actions 2e - 2l to increase the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers and Free School Meals			

Focus Area 4: Developing Money First approaches to crisis prevention and support

AIM: Advocate for the adoption of money first approaches in other aspects of public and voluntary sector support for those experiencing poverty

Task	Task No.	Implementation Timescale	Link to existing policies, strategies or programmes
Develop links to the Council's Cost of Living Delivery Group and the Benefits Team to identify opportunities to further promote the cash first approach	4c	Medium	
Share evidence of the effectiveness and wider impacts of the money first approach to tackling food injustice in Lewisham to help advocate for change	4d	Long	Build on the finidings of *"Cash First the LCC Pilot"* at Lewisham Legendary Community Club

Areas for Early Action

There are several tasks that have been assigned a short timescale for implementation (1 – 3 months). These are areas where we can act rapidly and achieve early progress in the implementation of the action plan.

These short-term tasks are:

Take preventative action to reduce the risk of Lewisham residents experiencing food injustice:

- Provide support and advice on what and how to grow food at home and in the community (Task 1c)
- Collaborate with the "Warm Spaces" initiative to include spaces with cooking facilities (Task 1f)
- Establish a Food Justice Alliance for Lewisham, to oversee the implementation of this action plan, ensuring it doesn't duplicate existing structures and that it has appropriate membership and reach (Task 1l)
- Promote Lewisham's status as a "Right to Food" borough, to residents, employees and partners (Task 1r)

Ensure babies, children and young people have access to nutritious and sustainable sources of food throughout the year:

- Review and reinvigorate the promotion and achievement of the Healthy Early Years award in Lewisham (Task 2c)

- Identify the eligible population groups with the lowest uptake of Healthy Start vouchers (Task 2f)
- Identify the eligible population groups with the lowest uptake of free school meals, including families with no recourse to public funds (Task 2i)

Co-ordinate resources, capacity and expertise to maximise the support available to those in crisis:

- Identify opportunities to use the compost created as a by-product of anaerobic digestion of Lewisham's Food Waste for distribution to local community food growing projects, allotments or schools. (Task 3d)
- Explore how council owned advertising assets could be used to share information on crisis prevention and support services (Task 3m)
- Explore opportunities to use local radio to promote crisis prevention and support services (Task 3n)