

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

10 SEPTEMBER 2019

FOOD JUSTICE

Report from: James Williams, Director of Public Health

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Summary

At a meeting of Medway Council on 25 April 2019, the Council requested a detailed report from Public Health team to the Medway Health and Wellbeing Board. This report determines the extent (if any) of food poverty within Medway and what action could be taken to facilitate the concept of food justice within Medway.

The following report sets out the related local data to indicate the levels of food poverty across Medway. It also highlights key elements of local action and possible options that could be progressed to address the issue of food poverty.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 In line with nationally agreed operating principles, the Health and Wellbeing Board will seek to:
- provide collective leadership to improve health and well-being across the local authority area, enable shared decision-making and ownership of decisions in an open and transparent way;
 - achieve democratic legitimacy and accountability, and empower local people to take part in decision-making;
 - address health inequalities by ensuring quality, consistency and comprehensive health and local government services are commissioned and delivered in the area;
 - identify key priorities for health and local government commissioning and develop clear plans for how commissioners can make best use of their combined resources to improve local health and well-being outcomes in the short, medium and long term.
- 1.2 Food poverty, or household food insecurity, can be triggered by a crisis in finances or change to personal circumstances. It may also be a consequence of not being able to access a healthy diet or afford to eat well over a longer time period. The Department of Health defines food poverty as 'The inability to afford, or to have access to, food to make up a healthy diet.'

- 1.3 Medway Council, local community groups and others are taking action to ensure people have access to appropriate diets, are able to eat and to address the root causes of people's difficulties.

2. Background

- 2.1 At a meeting of Medway Council on 25 April 2019, the Councillors present passed the following resolution:

"Council notes:

- There are 8 million people in the UK who have trouble putting food on the table according to the United Nations.
- Over 500,000 people used food banks in the UK last year; The Trussell Trust alone distributed over 1.3m three-day emergency food supplies to people in crisis in the financial year 2017-2018.
- 3m children are at risk of hunger during the school holidays.
- Around 10% of the NHS budget goes on treating diabetes and up to 1 million people live in food deserts in the UK.
- The Government's commitment to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals), which commits governments to ending hunger, nationally and internationally, by 2030.

In light of the above, this Council requests a detailed report from Public Health assessing the extent of this issue within Medway specifically, to be brought before the Medway Health and Wellbeing Board, as the most appropriate forum for any action as appropriate, for considering and recommending any further in depth discussion at the earliest opportunity."

- 2.2 At the pre-agenda meeting on 3 June 2019, it was recommended that this report be added to the Board's work programme with a date to be determined and pending further discussion with Board Members on the scope of the research.
- 2.3 Following the pre-agenda meeting, officers suggested the following scope for this report:
- establish the baseline utilising the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) and other relevant data, such as: children in low income families; fuel poverty data; food bank access data; and free school meals information, in order to set out the starting point compared to comparable areas.
 - establish specific local activity happening to tackle food poverty, such as mapping food banks and the Council's own projects e.g. holiday hunger clubs.
 - review wider determinants and health inequalities issues, and consider future action needed and make any recommendations.
- 2.4 At the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 2 July 2019, the Board agreed the scope of this report.

2.5 The government have recently announced that Henry Dimbleby, co-founder of restaurant chain Leon and of the Sustainable Restaurant Association, has been appointed to lead the first major review of the UK food system in nearly 75 years. He will investigate the entire food system, from field to fork, and consider what changes are needed to ensure that it:

- delivers safe, healthy, affordable food, regardless of where people live or how much they earn;
- is robust in the face of future shocks;
- restores and enhances the natural environment for the next generation;
- is built upon a resilient and sustainable agriculture sector;
- is a thriving contributor to our urban and rural economies, delivering well paid jobs and supporting innovative producers and manufacturers; and
- does all of this in an efficient and cost-effective way.

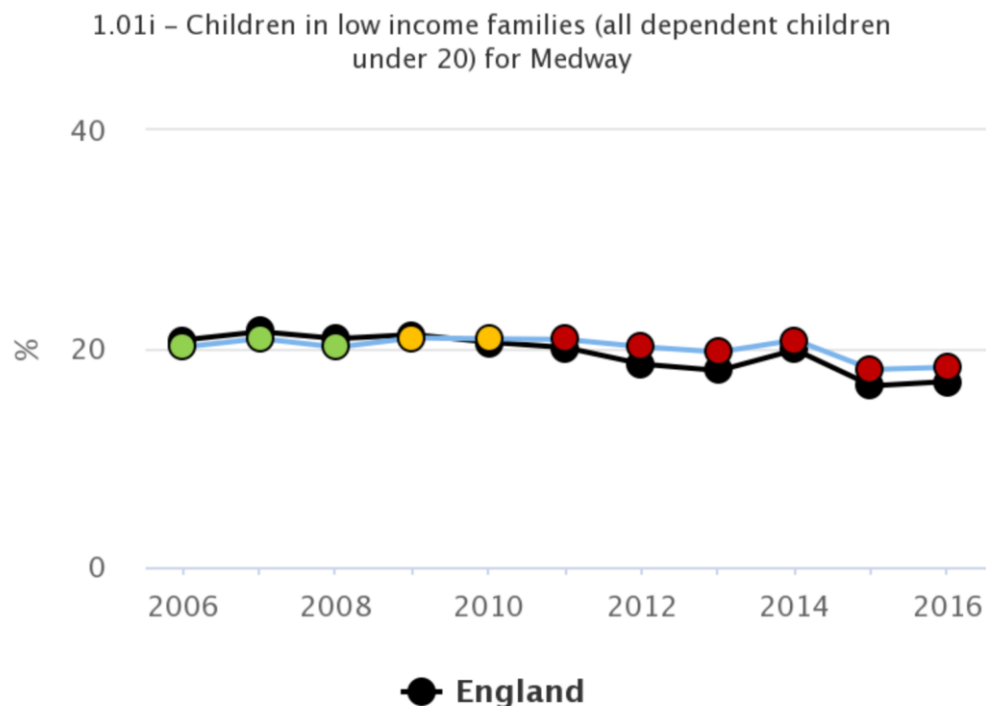
2.6 His recommendations will result in a new National Food Strategy, set to be published in 2020.

3. Baseline data

3.1 Public Health Outcomes Framework Indicators

Children in low income families

3.1.1 This indicator suggests that Medway has a slightly higher number of children in low income families compared to the national average. This trend has been consistent for the last six years.



Recent trend: ↓

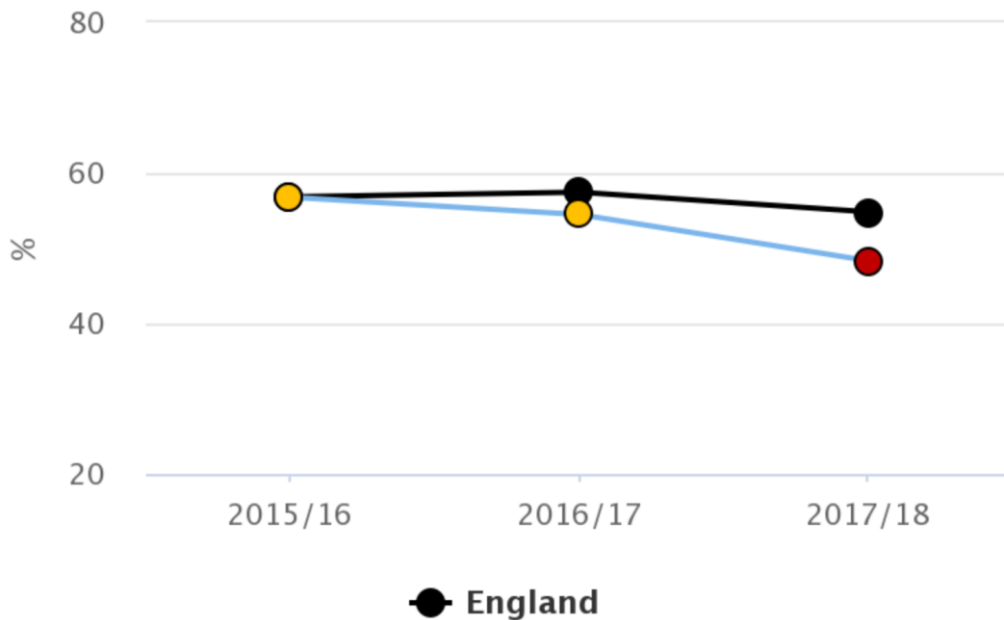
Period		Medway				South East region	England
		Count	Value	Lower CI	Upper CI		
2006	●	12,170	20.2%	19.8%	20.5%	14.4%	20.8%
2007	●	12,580	20.9%	20.6%	21.3%	14.9%	21.6%
2008	●	12,170	20.1%	19.8%	20.5%	14.5%	20.9%
2009	●	12,880	21.0%	20.7%	21.3%	15.4%	21.3%
2010	●	12,850	20.9%	20.6%	21.2%	15.0%	20.6%
2011	●	12,820	20.8%	20.5%	21.2%	14.6%	20.1%
2012	●	12,525	20.2%	19.9%	20.5%	13.6%	18.6%
2013	●	12,345	19.7%	19.4%	20.0%	13.2%	18.0%
2014	●	13,135	20.8%	20.5%	21.1%	14.4%	19.9%
2015	●	11,410	18.1%	17.8%	18.4%	12.3%	16.6%
2016	●	11,605	18.3%	18.0%	18.6%	12.7%	17.0%

Source: HM Revenue and Customs (Personal Tax Credits: Related Statistics - Child Poverty Statistics)

Five a day

3.1.2 This indicator suggests that adults in Medway consume less fruit and vegetables per day than the national average.

2.11i – Proportion of the population meeting the recommended '5-a-day' on a 'usual day' (adults) for Medway



3.1.3 This pattern is consistent with the nearest CIPFA areas.

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Area ▲▼	Recent Trend	Neighbour Rank ▲▼	Count ▲▼	Value ▲▼		95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	-	-	-	54.8		54.6	55.1
Neighbours average	-	-	-	-		-	-
Medway	-	-	-	48.3		43.9	52.7
Calderdale	-	1	-	52.7		48.3	57.0
Bury	-	2	-	46.4		43.3	49.5
Kirklees	-	3	-	52.3		47.8	56.7
Derby	-	4	-	47.3		42.9	51.7
Swindon	-	5	-	56.3		52.0	60.4
Bolton	-	6	-	50.4		47.2	53.6
Telford and Wrekin	-	7	-	53.0		48.5	57.3
Plymouth	-	8	-	57.2		52.9	61.5
Wigan	-	9	-	47.4		44.3	50.6
Stockton-on-Tees	-	10	-	49.9		45.4	54.3
Tameside	-	11	-	51.1		47.9	54.3
Dudley	-	12	-	51.9		47.4	56.3
Stockport	-	13	-	56.5		53.3	59.6
Rochdale	-	14	-	43.2		40.0	46.5
Bradford	-	15	-	47.4		44.2	50.5

Source: Public Health England (based on Active Lives, Sport England)

3.2 Food bank access

3.2.1 Medway Food Bank provided 5,835 clients with food packages in the period of April 2018-March 2019. From January 2019 to end of June 2019, compared to the same period as last year, the amount of client given packages has increased by 10%. Data provided by – Medway Food bank

3.3 State-funded nursery and primary schools - Number of pupils eligible for and claiming Free School Meals

	Number of children on school roll	Number of pupils taking a free school meal on census day	Number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals
Medway	25,858	2,433	3,300	12.8%
England	4,759,088	523,536	651,918	13.7%

Data source – “National Statistics: Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2018” <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2018>

3.4 Childhood obesity and underweight values

3.4.1 Medway’s National Child Measurement Programme data suggests that the predominant issue of concern is for obesity in children, rather than the volumes of those classified as underweight.

	Overweight and obese prevalence	Healthy weight prevalence	Underweight prevalence
10-11 year olds in Medway (2017/18)	34.3%	64%	1.7%
10-11 year olds in England (2017/18)	34.3%	64.3%	1.4%

4. Local activity

- 4.1 Medway Food Bank provide a nutritionally balanced package that lasts 3 days. This can be accessed in Medway at 8 locations. After getting a voucher, nationally families have 3 days to collect a package, however in Medway they allow up to 7 days to collect one. The Food Bank work closely with Tesco and Asda due to national agreements with the Trussell Trust. They have local agreements with some Morrisons and Co-ops. The Trussell Trust is supportive of breastfeeding and therefore do have some formula food for infants, but do not actively promote or discuss unless necessary.
- 4.2 Holiday Kitchen – Cook, Eat and Play in schools is a Medway Public Health project. The project aims are to: improve family's diets, health and wellbeing, increase confidence and cookery skills in the whole family and create an opportunity to work towards their 60 minutes of activity per day during the holidays and reduce isolation. The Public Health team worked in partnership with Fare Share Kent, Asda, Adult Education and local supermarkets who provided enrichment activities for families during the session. Last year, 15 sessions were delivered over 5 weeks in 5 venues across Medway. With the capacity of supporting 750 families, providing 520 meals with a 70% attendance rate. The project also created opportunities to sign post families to other Public Health services. Future plans for this project include supporting the Children and Family Hubs, using our partners in Adult Education and Supermarkets to provide a session from Tri Cookery to their target families. Due to vacant posts and maternity leave the team are unable to replicate the project from last year. Public Health aim to create a project plan for future work, in collaboration with Sports Development to provide the Model – Cook, Eat, Play across the schools again in all holidays to make it more sustainable and link with our colleagues in schools, social care and early help to work with target families.
- 4.3 From the last school visit data from 2016/2017, out of 74 Primary Schools contacted, 55 engaged. Seven of these did not have a breakfast club, 51 were paid breakfast clubs and 4 were free to pupils. More mapping of this is required in order to get a better picture of provision and access in Medway.
- 4.4 Fit and Fed Project is a project run by Medway's Sports Development team using the charity Fare Share Kent to provide cold food provision and physical activity sessions in targeted schools. This runs in the holidays currently in Kingfisher Primary School, Luton School and Strood Leisure Centre.
- 4.5 Tri Cookery is a 6-week cookery programme working with families and adults separately. Families can be referred to this programme or self-refer. Participants improve family's diets, create an opportunity to socialise and increase confidence in cookery skills. In the financial year 2018/2019, the Public Health team delivered 15 courses with 97 completers. The team would like to enhance this project in the future to deliver a target programme which provides the families with a 'Food Pack' of ingredients to go home and replicate from the skills gained in the session.
- 4.6 Little Food Explorers and Little Chefs are two Public Health offers provided to children and family hubs across Medway as a prevention service for the early

years. These programmes provide exposure to healthy foods, increased family bonding and tackle mild fussy eating issues. Little food explorers is based on the Start4life guidance on introducing solids, so builds confidence for parents as well as providing an opportunity to socialise and engage with other parents. Little Chefs builds basic cookery skills and exposure to healthy family recipes through cooking together.

- 4.7 Little Food Explorers in the period 2018/2019 saw 501 attendances at 80 sessions. Little Chefs, for the same period, saw 152 attendance from 39 courses. Target families can be referred to these programmes, however this referral pathway can really be improved to ensure those at risk of food insecurity are captured and referred to the programmes.

5. Advice and analysis

- 5.1 The data available, suggests that levels of food poverty in Medway are comparable to other areas with a similar profile. In order to fully quantify the issue of food poverty in Medway, it is recommended that the Director of Public Health be asked to develop an action plan to tackle food poverty which aims to ensure children in low income families (as defined by PHOF indicator 1.01i) have appropriate access to food 365 days per year and all Medway residents are able to gain physical access to foods that promote physical and emotional health and wellbeing.
- 5.2 The Board are asked to consider these steps and agree how the Board and individual organisations can support each other and identify any priority actions to be pursued.

6. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Lack of partner engagement	Food poverty is a wider determinant of health issues that is multi-faceted and complex. For this reason, it is essential that a wide range of public, voluntary and private sector partners support the action plan development	Broad engagement work required by all HWB Members in development of the project plan	D2
Insufficient data availability	In order to identify the key issues and most suitable priority actions, it is essential that we have sufficient data that is valid and reliable locally	Identification of available data sources and engagement with relevant intelligence teams at earliest opportunity	D3

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report. Recommendations arising from the review will need to be delivered from within existing budgets. In compiling the suggested action plan, any resource implications will be considered.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:
- 9.1.1 note the information included within this report and discuss how the Board and individual member organisations can continue to support the food justice agenda, identifying any priority actions.
- 9.1.2 request the Director of Public Health to develop an action plan to tackle food poverty which aims to ensure children in low income families have appropriate access to food 365 days per year and all Medway residents are able to gain physical access to foods that promote physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

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Appendices

None

Background papers

None