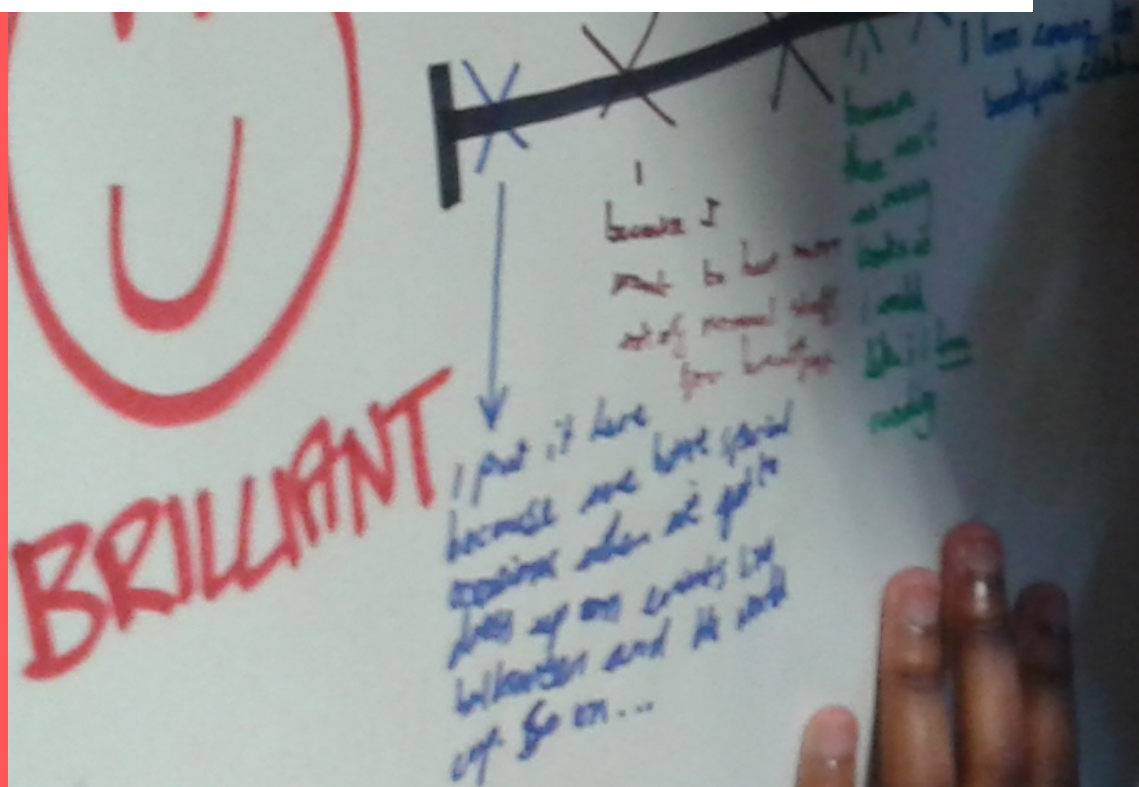


MAY 2015
FINAL REPORT

THE MAYOR'S FUND FOR LONDON BREAKFAST CLUBS

A review of current provision and
recommendations for future provision



**food
matters**

sustainable, fair food systems

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1. Introduction

The Mayor's Fund for London (MFL) was set up to support disadvantaged young Londoners to gain the skills, confidence and opportunities to find employment, escape the threat of poverty and to play a full and active part in their community.

The MFL does this by working in partnership with organisations delivering a range of projects and interventions which deliver positive outcomes for young people transitioning from education to work.

The MFL focuses on three areas:

1. Health and Well-being – helping young Londoners to be engaged, healthy and motivated to learn
2. Core skills – extra support for core skills which employers say are absolutely essential, particularly numeracy and literacy
3. Employment – supporting employers to create decent and sustainable career prospects for young Londoners

Some young people struggle to achieve basic skills targets and quickly fall behind resulting in greatly reduced life chances. Many factors can cause a young person to fall behind, from arriving at school hungry and not being able to concentrate, to struggling with English as a second language and not being able to make friends and develop communication skills.

MFL has been funding breakfast and holiday club food provision since 2012 as part of its aim to give disadvantaged young Londoners the skills and opportunities necessary to gain employment and improve their life chances.

Since 2012 the school food policy landscape has changed significantly, and MFL now seeks to understand the impact its involvement in this area has had in London and the broader landscape of breakfast provision in order to target its resources more effectively.

2. Brief and parameters of the Review

The aim of this review is:

- examine breakfast club provision in London as a whole;
- provide a more in depth assessment of Lambeth and Croydon (the two food flagship London boroughs)

to understand where breakfast club and holiday food club provision sits within existing strategies aimed at addressing health and wellbeing, and skills and employment, for London's poorest children and young people.

This review is not intended to be an evaluation of individual breakfast clubs, nor an evaluation of MFL's individual delivery partners. Rather the review looks at:

- The impact of MFL breakfast club provision in London overall, including the advantages and disadvantages of different delivery models (e.g. charging, the use of volunteers and/or paid staff);
- The landscape of current breakfast provision in London, with an emphasis on Lambeth and Croydon;
- Recommendations for what MFL should do next, in particular what provision should look like in Lambeth and Croydon.

3. Methodology

Desk-based research

The desk research reviewed the current evidence base, and provided an understanding of the national policy context and the historic school food agenda. A 'snapshot' of current provision in London as a whole, and Lambeth and Croydon in particular, was provided by online data and websites, research reports and papers.

The desk research also covered an initial examination of the current breakfast club providers supported by the Mayor's Fund for London funding. This provided an overview of the models they use and helped determine the detailed questions we would be asking during our consultation stage. From the desk research a list of organisations and experts was compiled for interviews. (A full list of interviewees can be found in Appendix C.) An on-line survey was sent to members of the Children and Young People's Nutrition Network in order to identify individuals in different boroughs whose work included a focus on the nutritional aspects of breakfast clubs. This provided an opportunity to understand different perspectives on breakfast club provision in different boroughs including their purpose, nutritional basis, models and approaches used and regulation. (See Appendix E for survey questions.)

Workshops with school staff and pupils

Qualitative research was undertaken to understand how breakfast clubs operate on the ground in practice and the experience of both children and staff who attend and deliver the clubs. Workshops were undertaken in two boroughs, having looked at a shortlist of 5 across the City.

The shortlisted were the flagship Boroughs of Lambeth and Croydon, and Hackney, Islington and Newham. The latter three were chosen based on their relative position in Sustain's Good Food for London¹ Food League Table: Islington (high), Hackney (moderately low) and Newham (low), in order to provide a useful comparison between provision in Boroughs with differing food environments.

In exploring provision in Islington the review contacted Marjon Willers, specialist dietitian for schools and children's centres in Islington Council's Health and Wellbeing Team, who was able to provide a thorough overview of provision with a particular focus on the nutritional aspects of breakfast clubs. Such a focus within a borough appears to be extremely rare. A survey of the Children and Young People's Nutrition Network aimed at identifying similar individuals working in other boroughs was unable to identify any similar knowledge or practical experience elsewhere.

Rather than randomly choosing breakfast clubs to focus on and visit the review has used the insight provided by Marjon Willers and focused on two primary school breakfast clubs in Islington: Laycock Primary School in Highbury, supported by Greggs Foundation; and Grafton Primary School in Holloway, supported by The Magic Breakfast. Though both are situated within a 'strong food leadership' borough (according to Sustain's league table), the different support provided by Greggs and Magic Breakfast make for an interesting comparison.

To gain a more rounded and complete understanding of the impact of current provision we felt it was fundamental to talk to the recipients of Breakfast Club provision i.e. the children themselves. Given the challenge of talking and eliciting useful information from children we suggested the best methodology would be to undertake a series of workshops with children in different Breakfast and Holiday Club settings.

The breakfast club workshops used an approach based on Participatory Appraisal. The workshops were designed to be as accessible, engaging and flexible as possible to encourage the participation of children attending the clubs. The tools used were visual and

¹ *Good Food for London Report: How London Boroughs can help secure a healthy and sustainable food future*, Sustain, 2014

employed active participatory exercises aimed at engaging children as they arrived at the club, as they ate breakfast and as they relaxed with each other. It was felt that this more participatory and informal group workshop style consultation would provide a better opportunity for children to engage than a one-to-one interview or questionnaire approach.

Both workshops were followed by semi-structured informal interviews with key breakfast club staff members and the Head Teachers of both schools. The interviews followed a structure aimed at assessing the perceived benefits of the breakfast clubs in relation to the key aims of the MFL support. Key questions were followed up by a series of more detailed prompt questions where necessary.

The findings from the workshops and interviews have informed our case studies and the report recommendations.

Report writing and recommendations

By examining and collating the evidence, considering the expert opinions and the findings from our workshops we have put together this report which outlines the current situation, how breakfast club and holiday club food provision supports the health and wellbeing agenda and the school food agenda and recommendations for how the Mayor's Fund for London might want to consider moving forward.

4. Context

4.1 School food policy – a brief history

Since the late 1980s, the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering requiring local authorities to tender out school food contracts resulted in contracts being awarded solely according to value for money, in turn leading to a severe drop in the quality of food in schools. As a result a growing number and diversity of campaigns emerged to draw attention to this unacceptable situation, including the Children's Food Campaign, Jamie Oliver's Feed Me Better campaign, Save our School Food Standards etc.

Practical interventions and programmes largely developed and delivered by NGOs such as Sustain: Grab 5!, Focus on Food: Cooking Bus, Health Education Trust: SNAGS, Children's Food Trust: Let's Get Cooking, Soil Association: Food for Life, led the way by demonstrating the long term benefits of increasing children's skills and knowledge of cooking and nutrition, improving the quality of school meals, increasing and improving the school food environment, through the implementation of a whole school approach to food. These and other organisations have worked to highlight the need to improve the nutritional quality of

school food, for example the 1992 nutrition guidelines developed by the Caroline Walker Trust influenced the statutory Nutritional Standards for school lunches introduced by National Government in April 2001, and statutory support mechanisms such as the national Healthy Schools programmes².

However the introduction of national nutrition standards did not guarantee compliance. A review³ carried out by the Food Standards Agency in 2006 revealed that the majority of primary schools were not meeting all of the National Nutritional Standards for School Lunches (2001) and less than half of the meals, as eaten by both infants and juniors, met the Caroline Walker Trust Guidelines (1992).

The quality of food in schools was still of great concern to many and by 2012 support at a national level had largely ceased: the National Healthy Schools Programme in England and the Childhood Obesity National Support Team, two programmes that looked carefully at food in schools were cut, alongside the newly introduced Ofsted framework which no longer covered pupil health and wellbeing. Previously, nine health areas had been monitored as part of the inspections process although none specifically took account of food or nutrition standards.

The continuing campaign work by the Save Our School Standards, the Food for Life Partnership, the Children's Food Trust, the Jamie Oliver Foundation and School Food Matters amongst other NGOs and charities, kept the issue of food in schools on the political agenda. In 2012 John Vincent and Henry Dimbleby were commissioned by the then Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove to undertake a review of food in schools in England and in July 2013, the Department for Education (DfE), published the results as the School Food Plan, which set out a programme of partnership work to improve food provision in schools across the country.

Campaigning organisations largely welcomed the School Food Plan for its scope, its partnership approach and the wide range of proposed initiatives. However issues remain, including the fact that schools monitoring and inspection process (Ofsted) currently does not include food or nutrition standards. There is no comprehensive process for ensuring that the newly introduced standards are adhered to or maintained. The number of children entitled to free school meals (eligibility criteria) has been tightened each time official child poverty figures are reconfigured and there is still no clarity as to what will happen with the introduction of Universal Credit. And, some 3,000 academies and free schools do not have

² The **National Healthy Schools Programme** (NHSP) was set up in 1999 and was a joint Department of Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families project intended to improve health, raise pupil achievement, improve social inclusion and encourage closer working between health and education providers in the United Kingdom.

³ <http://tna.europarchive.org/20110116113217/http://www.food.gov.uk/science/dietarysurveys/primaryschoolmeals>

to adhere to the newly introduced food standards. Organisations continue to press for Government to address these issues.

4.2 Child Poverty in London

London is one of the richest cities in the world and yet four in 10 (or 592,000 / 37%) London children live in poverty⁴, 12% above the national average. London has the highest proportion of children living in income poverty (after housing costs) of any region or country in Great Britain.

Diet related inequalities

The lower an individual's socio-economic position, the higher their risk of ill-health. And there are high levels of income inequality across London. Coronary Heart Disease and cancers are the major causes of early deaths and with obesity rapidly becoming epidemic across London⁵ and the rest of the UK, there are huge implications to the public purse. In terms of socio-economic groups, obesity is highest among the poorest households often living in those parts of London with multiple deprivation indicators. Poor diet is a major contributory risk factor for cancer, coronary heart disease (CHD) and diabetes.

Food Poverty in London

Many of those families and children living in poverty will be experiencing food poverty in one way or another. The scale of hunger in the capital is on the increase and the most visible sign of the re-emergence of food poverty in London, as with the rest of the UK, is the rapid growth of Food Banks – numbers have risen exponentially in London from six in 2009 to over 40 in 2013 feeding over 34,000, and that's just what's reported by the leading food bank organisation the Trussell Trust⁶ - there are countless other food banks, food pantries and other community food projects feeding vulnerable communities.

Another pertinent sign is highlighted in a recent survey by the London Assembly which found that 95% of teachers asked reported seeing increasing numbers of children arriving at school hungry. Malnutrition and hunger in children threatens not only their health and wellbeing but is likely to have consequences for the rest of a child's life. Children in low-income families are more likely to experience health problems, report lower levels of emotional well-being and demonstrate lower levels of cognitive development, and are less

⁴ <http://www.cpag.org.uk/campaigns/child-poverty-london/keyfacts>

⁵ In 2008, 23% of men and 23% of women (aged 16 and over) in London were classified as obese.
http://www.lho.org.uk/Download/Public/17381/1/Capital_health_gains_final.pdf

⁶ p 3. Health and Environment Committee London Assembly (2013) *A Zero Hunger City: Tackling food poverty in London*. Greater London Authority

likely to go on to achieve 5 A*–C grades at GCSE. That means less chance for a child to succeed in later life and more chance of creating a poverty cycle⁷.

4.3 Welfare safety net and gaps in provision

Currently families on certain benefits and living on very low incomes (below £16,190) are entitled to additional benefits often called passported benefits - including Healthy Start, Free School Meals, and Free Early Education and Childcare (15 hours each week for 38 weeks of the year) for 2-year-olds. Qualifying for any one of these benefits involves a fairly drawn out on-going assessment and often involves more than one agency / government department.

The welfare system is currently undergoing the biggest overhaul since the 1940s with potentially 8 million people affected. These changes may help resolved some of the difficulties experienced by claimants however it is unclear at this time what the new Universal Credit system will mean for families receiving passported benefits such as free school meals. And, although it is estimated that 3.1 million households will be entitled to more benefits 2.8 million households will be entitled to less.

There is much discussion and analysis of what these changes will mean to families living on very low incomes in terms of being able to afford a healthy balanced diet when their limited income has to spread across ever increasing expenditure such as rent, heating, council tax. Given that food is one of the flexible budget items, when times become unmanageable, it is usually the food budget that suffers.

‘The Working Poor’

As a result of the slow growth in real wages in the UK, the prevalence of low pay has increased. In 2013 the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported that just over half of the 13 million people in poverty in the UK- surviving on less than 60% of the national median (middle) income - were from working families.

These are often families where both parents are working part time jobs, often self-employed with little or no security, working for minimum wage on zero hours contracts, with no holiday or sick pay. They are experiencing falling living standards due to extremely low (stagnant wages) incomes, increasing fixed costs (rent, mortgages, utility bills, council tax etc) and expensive childcare costs. These families are often disproportionately affected as they are not eligible for welfare support such free school meals.

⁷ A Fair Start for Every Child, Save the Children, 2014

An analysis of the available data by the Children's Society shows that there are 700,000 in England children of school age who are not eligible for free school meals, but whose family income (after they have paid their rent) is less than £10 per head per day.⁸

4.4 The School Food Plan

The School Food Plan is an independent review of the culture of food in schools advocating a whole school approach to food. It acknowledges the essential requirement for success being the Head Teacher and governors understanding and commitment to a healthy food culture as fundamental part of the school ethos. Alongside this the School Food Plan addresses the quality of meals, the environment in which food is eaten, food as an education tool, amongst many other issues. The Plan also talks uncompromisingly about food as an essential part of the learning process and a lack of nutritious food or even lack of food full stop, is detrimental to children's life chances.

The School Food Plan is concerned with food in schools throughout the day and highlights the importance of breakfast.

In addition to the problem of children from more disadvantaged homes not getting a proper lunch there are children arriving at school without having eaten breakfast.

Scientific research (supported by masses of anecdotal evidence) shows that hunger impairs thinking, and that behavioural, emotional and academic problems are more prevalent among hungry children. [...] Children who can't concentrate can't learn, and are more likely to disrupt the class. A good breakfast sets them up for half the school day – often the half in which the most difficult lessons are scheduled. Without breakfast, the academic performance of already disadvantaged children suffers.

School Food Plan, 2013

This concern is reflected in the SFP through advocating the commissioning and funding (from the Department for Education) to set up Breakfast Clubs in schools.

The DfE will provide funds of £3.15 million over two years.....The funding will be directed to the poorest schools – those with 40% or more FSM entitlement. The cost of establishing a breakfast club in an average school is £6,000 per year, which covers both food (serving average of 50 children) and professional expertise. The £6 million would therefore allow the establishment of clubs in 500 schools over two years.

⁸ *A Fair Start for Every Child*, Children's Society, 2014

4.5 Flagship Boroughs

Aside from the comprehensive plan of initiatives to work in and with schools, the School Food Plan also includes a commitment from the Department for Education to work with the Greater London Authority (GLA), the Mayor and the London Food Board to jointly fund two flagship food boroughs in London. The aim of the flagships is to help head teachers across two London boroughs significantly improve health and attainment across the whole population by transforming the food environment, using schools as a means to drive this change.

Following a competitive application process, the London boroughs of Croydon (outer) and Lambeth (inner) were selected to become the pilot flagship boroughs. Both boroughs have a range of innovative projects working with schools, wrap-around programmes, community and voluntary sector organisations to deliver their programmes. The pilot is intended to last five years, to allow time for the whole system transformation needed and for this to make an impact on the chosen outcomes, although currently funding is secure for only 2 years.

Every school in the boroughs will receive co-ordinated support from expert organisations including the Food for Life Partnership and Children's Food Trust. They will be able to use this expertise to help them improve their food, set up breakfast clubs, devise inspiring cooking lessons and support vegetable growing on school grounds.

Lambeth

Flagship status for Lambeth means the implementation and continuation of a range of food and health interventions across schools and in the community during the flagship funding period. In exchange for the support and additional funding that the programme brings the flagship schools are expected to implement the list of recommendations in [the Head Teacher's checklist](#) in the School Food Plan. In addition Lambeth Council has agreed to support all Lambeth schools;

- to engage with Healthy Schools London (HSL) and to achieve Bronze HSL accreditation,
- to integrate Lambeth's Healthy Weight training programme more effectively into schools, and
- to engage their local communities in food growing through local organisations.

Croydon

Croydon Council has proposed to adopt a series of six local intermediate outcomes, and to design a portfolio of projects to make a difference over the initial two year period of funding in conjunction with other relevant activity already happening or planned in Croydon.

The six intermediate outcomes have been identified in the project plan that are complementary to the *Ambitious for Croydon* themes (Croydon Labour 2014 Manifesto, which includes establishing a 'free breakfast' scheme to meet the needs of all Croydon parents and children) and include:

- More children eat good quality food in schools at breakfast and lunch time
- More families eat good quality food in and out of home
- More children know how to cook real food and aspire to do so
- More families cook real meals
- More children and parents know how to grow their own food and aspire to do so
- More food eaten in Croydon has been grown in Croydon

These outcomes will be delivered through a range of projects including, School Food Projects; Community Food Learning; a Child Hunger Project; Developing Food Businesses; Community Grants; Community Gardening Projects; and the development of a Food Partnership Board.

Of particular interest to this review and MFL, is the inclusion in both flagship boroughs of innovative projects to address Holiday Hunger.

4.6 Universal Free School Meals

As part of the recommendations in the School Food Plan £1bn was committed by the Government for primary schools to deliver universal free school meals with funding allocated for the following two academic years, with an allocation of £2.30 per meal. In addition, the government provided £150m capital to help schools upgrade their kitchens and dining rooms to meet the expected increase in demand.

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a legal duty on all state-funded schools in England, including academies and free schools to offer a free school lunch to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 from September 2014.

5. Mayor's Fund for London Breakfast Clubs programme

The food in schools policy landscape in London (and across the UK) has seen huge changes in the last year notably the introduction of universal free school meals for key stage 1 pupils, the increased support and additional funding stream for Breakfast provision, and the comprehensive flagship programmes in Lambeth and Croydon. As a result, the MFL has been considering the impact of these changes on their existing Breakfast Clubs programme,

and whether or not they should further expand that provision in London or look to provide funding for other areas where provision is either lacking or in need of support.

5.1 Current provision – Breakfast Clubs

Since 2012 the Mayor's Fund Breakfast Clubs programme has been delivering breakfasts to London primary schools with more than 40% of pupils eligible to receive free school meals. Since the launch of this programme, 60 schools from 13 of the most disadvantaged boroughs in London have joined the scheme and over 2,500 children are receiving breakfast daily. The programme is currently supported by two delivery organisations: Magic Breakfast⁹ and the Greggs Foundation¹⁰.

Magic Breakfast

In 2012, the MFL funded Magic Breakfast to deliver breakfast to 50 schools with high levels of free school meals across London over a three year period. The agreement with Magic Breakfast covers three strands:

1. To set up and support 50 breakfast clubs aiming to feed, on average, up to 50 children per school per year (food provision).
2. To help those 50 schools establish self-sustaining breakfast clubs (Breakfast clubs sustainability).
3. To build Magic Breakfast's own capacity, in particular to establish a strong evidence base enabling Magic Breakfast to prove the impact of their programme, gain support by key parties, and expand their model on a national scale.

In terms of its offer to the schools, Magic Breakfast provides the following:

- Provision and delivery of free food to the school. The food package includes orange juice, porridge, bagels and cereals
- Provision of a freezer to store breakfast food, if required
- Additional support to the school to develop and implement a 3 years business plan for the breakfast club to become a self-funded

The Magic Breakfast club model aims to alleviate short term hunger alongside longer term support to integrate healthy food as a tool to aid learning and to reduce hunger as a barrier to learning. Support is also offered to help schools make their breakfast provision self-sustaining.

⁹ Magic Breakfast is a registered charity committed to delivering breakfast foods and support to schools where over 35% of pupils are eligible for free school meals with the aim of ending child hunger as a barrier to education by 2020.

¹⁰ The Greggs Foundation is a grant making charity. Its Breakfast Club programme provides start up and ongoing funding to schools in disadvantaged communities in England, Scotland and Wales in order to provide free (at the point of delivery) breakfast.

The only requirement to secure support from Magic Breakfast is that the school intake must be 35% + free school meal pupil entitlement. Magic Breakfast develop a partnership deal with every school which is based on ensuring the most needy children face no barriers to accessing the breakfast provision.

It's worth noting that schools may choose to add additional foods to those provided by Magic Breakfast (porridge, bagels, juice and cereal). Schools may also choose to charge a fee for children to attend the breakfast clubs. If schools are not offering breakfast free at the point of delivery Magic Breakfast works with those schools to ensure they are charging no more than 50p per day or encouraging them to opt for a two track model which would mean charging those parents that can afford to pay, i.e. those children that attend the breakfast club primarily for childcare. This income subsidises provision of free breakfasts.

Ultimately the choice of how the breakfast club is funded is made by the individual school. As such, some schools offer free breakfast to all children that want a breakfast, others run versions of a two track model and other schools charge a flat fee for any child using the breakfast club. How a school looks to fund / finance a breakfast club is often based on why they initially decided to set up the club and where else they can secure funding.

- **Reflections on the Magic Breakfast model**

The Magic Breakfast model does more than provide breakfast to hungry children. The primary practical support offered is based on alleviating immediate hunger as a barrier to learning however it is underpinned by the principle of a whole-school approach to food, promoting and integrating the fundamental importance of a healthy balanced diet in childhood. If run well a two track model is a potential solution to the funding dilemma that most school's face with regard to financing their breakfast clubs. Being part of a recognised, well regarded, national organisation which also advocates on the issues of child hunger and breakfast provision is beneficial to participating schools.

The Magic Breakfast motto: 'Fuel for Learning', reflects the strongly perceived notion that eating a nutritious breakfast leads to improved motivation and engagement in the classroom. Whilst this link is based mainly on anecdotal evidence it is clear that the breakfast clubs provide an excellent opportunity for learning support, the development of better relationships between children (and their parents) and schools, and a mechanism for addressing issues around punctuality. Magic Breakfast has piloted Breakfast Book Clubs through a partnership with the charity Give a Book as well as Breakfast PALS (Peer Assisted Learning Strategies) which utilizes the interesting age mix of children attending breakfast clubs. Breakfast PALS is a cross-age reading scheme, with older and younger children

working together to improve their reading, speaking, listening and emotional literacy skills. As Carmel McConnell, Magic Breakfast founder puts it:

"If we can help children develop a love of reading as well as giving them a healthy breakfast, we can hopefully give them an even better start in life"

Magic Breakfast aims to support schools to make their breakfast clubs self-funded within 3 years and this is laudable and important. Magic Breakfast encourage schools to opt for a funding model that best suits their needs, although they prefer a two track model whereby those parents of children that can afford to pay for breakfast club do and those that can't are offered free breakfast which is subsidised by the paying parents. However MB makes no stipulation in their partnership deal regarding how a school finances their breakfast club the only criteria to receive MB support is to be a school with +35% free school meals pupil entitlement. This means that even if a school has high levels of free school meal pupil entitlement it doesn't ensure that the most vulnerable children are accessing breakfast at the breakfast club if the school opts to blanket charge for breakfast club (which a good number of schools do). This is borne out in the case study of Grafton School in Islington (see Case-studies section 6).

The Greggs Foundation

In early 2014, alongside Magic Breakfast, another breakfast club delivery model was introduced in partnership with the Greggs Foundation, for up to 24 schools over a 2 year period.

The Greggs delivery model is more straightforward. They provide each school with a start-up grant of up to £500 to buy equipment (fridge, toasters, etc.) and then up to £10 per child per term to buy food from any store. All set up and daily provision costs are in the first instances met by the school and reimbursed by Greggs on evidenced receipts. So for example if a school has only spent £8 per pupil per term rather than the maximum £10 they will only receive funding for the actual amount they have spent. The Greggs model also provides as much free bread as required from the nearest Greggs bakery to the school.

The key requirements to secure support from the Greggs Foundation for funding a breakfast club is that the school should be near a local Greggs Bakery, the school intake must be 40% + free school meal pupil entitlement, the school should demonstrate a commitment to engaging parents or other volunteers, and the school must commit to providing breakfast free of charge to all children that want it.

The Greggs model offers limited advice concerning what makes up a healthy balanced breakfast in the form of guidance materials but makes no formal requirements in terms of

what the breakfast club can purchase on a week to week basis. Schools are free to shop where and how they chose basing their breakfast provision on the needs of the children attending the breakfast clubs.

- **Reflections on the Greggs Breakfast Club Model**

The Greggs breakfast clubs model is based on a simple premise: 'to help primary school children get a nutritious start to their school day' and consists of a one-off start up grant for capital costs and then termly food costs (capped). This is an uncomplicated offer for schools and the costs are based on the number of children using the BC which means the school will not have to subsidise if there are increases in numbers using the BC. It also means schools are fairly free to buy the types of breakfast food items they think are appropriate for the children using the BC.

The criteria for receiving a Greggs breakfast club grant is the school intake must be 40% + free school meal entitlement and that the school must offer the breakfast free to all pupils. This means that there is no financial barrier to using the breakfast club and this is especially important for children from families living on very low incomes.

There is no other support offered other than monitoring and potential publicity opportunities from the foundation staff.

Although the Greggs model offers advice concerning what makes up a healthy balanced breakfast in the form of guidance materials they make no actual stipulation in their funding offer as to what foods a school can or cannot offer at the breakfast club. This can mean breakfast clubs potentially offering less than healthy breakfasts (solely at the discretion of the staff that run the clubs on a day to day basis).

The stipulation that schools must offer breakfast free to all children can mean schools struggle to find the additional resources needed to run the breakfast club e.g. staffing costs to run the club – it is more likely that schools will be using lower paid / less skilled staff to run the clubs rather than more highly skilled staff that would be able to offer educational and other support activities as part of the breakfast club.

With no other on-going support offered as part of the Greggs Breakfast Club Model, integrated healthy food work across the school day will be dependent on whether the school takes a whole-school approach to food and this may therefore be a lost opportunity both in terms of influencing the breakfast club or the breakfast club supporting food work in the rest of the school day.

5.2 Food-based standards and breakfast clubs

It is important to point out that all school breakfast clubs¹¹, if operating on school premises¹² are required by law to adhere to the newly introduced [food-based standards](#) for school lunches. The legislation states *'the regulations also set out the requirements for food and drink other than lunch, provided to pupils on and off school premises up to 6pm, including breakfast clubs, tuck shops, mid-morning break, vending and after school clubs.'*¹³

It is also worth noting that at the time of writing the Department of Education has yet to confirm how they will undertake the measurement and evaluation of the school food standards but they have agreed to study and confirm that the new food based standards are meeting the nutritional framework set out in the pilot phase. The Food Standards [Panel](#) agreed this should be done at least a year after the new standards have come into force (January 2015). It is currently the responsibility of a school's governing body to confirm that the school is meeting school food standards. Some local authorities have checking services, often through their Environmental Health officers¹⁴.

Nutrition

Despite these newly introduced standards, the 'standards for meals other than lunch' (see appendix B) give no restrictions or guidelines for the quantity of sugary foods such as breakfast cereals or jams and other sweet spreads allowed. So breakfast clubs that offer (potentially on a daily basis) starchy foods with high sugar content, such as cereals, waffles, bagels and refined white bread with sugary spreads are effectively adhering to the food-based standards.

Based on these new food-based standards a child attending a breakfast club every day eating a single bowl of Shreddies (55g (1 cup) serving of cereal containing 9g sugar) will be eating at least 45g of sugar each week – that doesn't include the milk in the cereal or the fruit juice or smoothies they might be offered, or any other sugary foods on offer. Or a child eating two slices of white bread with 15g jam each morning will be consuming at least 85g of sugar each week. World Health Organisation guidelines currently suggest sugar should make up no more than 10% of our calorie intake (which works out at about 46g a day for a child between 11-14 years old or 39g for a child between 4-6 years old).¹⁵ There is an inconsistency in allowing sugary cereals and spreads to be consumed at breakfast clubs,

¹¹ There are still 3,000 (approx) academies and free schools that are not required to adhere to the food-based standards for school lunches. Interview with Stephanie Wood at School Food Matters for this research.

¹² www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1603/pdfs/uksi_20141603_en.pdf paragraph 4

¹³ School food in England Departmental advice for governing bodies, DoE, 2015

¹⁴ Conversation with Myles Bremner, School Food Plan Director for this research.

¹⁵ WHO's current recommendation, from 2002, is that sugars should make up less than 10% of total energy intake per day. However new draft guideline propose that sugars should be less than 10% of total energy intake per day, suggesting a reduction to below 5% of total energy intake per day. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-26449497>

which contain more sugar than many sweet snacks which are not allowed as part of the food-based standards.

'No snacks (except nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat) may be provided across the school day'

While it is widely argued that breakfast clubs have the potential to make a positive contribution to children's dietary habits, more work is needed to implement more detailed recommendations regarding the nutritional content and proportion of foods that should be made available to children through school breakfast clubs.¹⁶

6. Case studies

The following case studies describe: two examples of breakfast clubs supported by the MFL funding; an example of a potential extension of support beyond breakfast and into the homes of the most disadvantaged children; and examples of MFL extending their support for breakfast provision to fill the holiday hunger gap at holiday clubs.

List of case studies:

- **Laycock Primary School, Highbury.**
Breakfast club supported by Greggs Foundation with MFL funding
- **Grafton Primary School, Holloway.**
Breakfast club supported by Magic Breakfast with MFL funding
- **Family Kitchen programme, Islington.**
Healthy eating and cooking training for families supported by Islington Health and Wellbeing Team
- **Holiday Hunger in Hackney.**
MFL supported breakfast provision in holiday clubs (Apples and Pears Adventure Playground, Shoreditch Adventure Playground, and Hackney Learning Trust Play scheme).

6.1 Laycock Primary School, Highbury

Laycock Primary School in Highbury, Islington, runs a breakfast club every school day morning from 8.00 am until registration at 9.00 am. The club is run in the school's Play Centre by Joanne Halpin – a High Level Teaching Assistant – with three other members of staff. Children who attend the club can also use the school hall for activities supported by

¹⁶ Breakfast and Beyond: The Dietary, Social and Practical Impacts of a Universal Free School Breakfast Scheme in the North West of England, UK, Pamela Louise Graham, Riccardo Russo, John Blackledge and Margaret Anne Defeyter, [Paper first received, 7 May 2014; in final form, 28 October 2014]

three additional learning / activity mentors. The club can accommodate up to 50 children (on the day it was visited year 5 children were on a residential trip and only 35 children attended the club).

The club was started in 2008 with funding from the school budget and the attendance fee. Since 2014 the club has received support from Greggs Foundation and no longer charges any fee to any child who attends. The Head Teacher, Emmanuel Keteku says he would prefer to be able to charge those parents who could pay to help fund the club and extend the services that are offered. However he feels that a 2-tier- system (some pay, some don't) could lead to stigmatisation of more disadvantaged children. Whilst the funding provided by Greggs is not used directly to fund additional staff the support it gives to running the club allows the school to pay learning mentors to start an hour earlier and provide learning support including help with homework, reading journals and other school work. This is seen as an important benefit of the support from Greggs.

The club has tried to continue providing places for children who attended when the club charged a fee – this accounts on average for about 18 or 20 places. Of the remaining places 10 each day are kept open for children who arrive on the day ('walk-ins') or for children who have been specifically targeted by teachers and school welfare officers. This provides an opportunity to offer some places to children with issues around punctuality, homework or challenging classroom behaviour. The staff also keep a record of who attends that includes whether or not the child is eligible for free school meals. Whilst the club doesn't specifically focus on supporting disadvantaged families this approach means that where necessary particular children can be encouraged to attend the club and benefit from the support it can provide. This is a decision made by the school and not specifically required by either Greggs or MFL. The school has a higher than average free school meal entitlement percentage (approximately 63%) resulting from its specialist provision for hearing impaired children. It was suggested that the breakfast club was attended by up to 75% free school meals entitled children.

On the morning of the visit the club offered three cereals (cornflakes, rice krispies, shreddies) and toast with butter and jam. The funding from Greggs also allows the club to offer tasting sessions of, for instance, mixed fruit smoothies, as well as porridge on cold days and 'special treats' such as waffles and pancakes on Fridays. Decisions on the food offered, other than the bread collected from the local Greggs Bakery, are made by the club staff based on what they consider to be healthy breakfast food. According to the staff interviewed they received no training in nutrition and healthy eating and very little guidance other than guideline menus. Ultimately the healthy eating focus of the club is based on the discretion and interest of the staff.

The breakfast club staff and Head Teacher all agreed that the club was beneficial for the children who attended and that the funding from Greggs helped by providing an opportunity to try new food taster sessions and additional learning support opportunities. However, all agreed that a more effective way to support the health and nutrition of disadvantaged children would be to explore ways of working with the children's parents to influence eating habits in their homes. It was felt that the breakfast clubs would not be able to target disadvantaged children adequately and that any short term beneficial impact would be easily undermined by strongly defined and well-established attitudes to food at home. An example of how this could be achieved was provided on the day the club was visited when the breakfast club was followed by an informal parent coffee morning focused on food and healthy eating.

6.2 Grafton Primary School, Holloway

The breakfast club at Grafton Primary School in Holloway, was identified by Marjon Willers – specialist dietitian for schools and children's centres in Islington's Health and Wellbeing Team – as an example of good practice, particularly in terms of its focus on healthy eating. The club runs every morning in the hour before school registration at 9.00 am but is regarded as an integral part of the school day – not a separate add-on. The club is run by Teaching Assistant Gloria Tofi and 3 other paid helpers and on the day visited catered for 52 children.

The Grafton breakfast club is supported by Magic Breakfast which provides cereals, porridge, fruit juice and bagels. Children were also offered taster plates of smoked salmon and Leerdammer Dutch cheese (chopped into small pieces) as well as whole lychees. Tasters were a feature of the club that children said they enjoyed (even if they didn't particularly like the food they were trying). The club also tried to link foods with particular cultural festivals and holidays adding an extra cultural educational dimension to the taster.

Gloria received basic training in safety (knife skills) and food hygiene when she set up the club but says that she received no training from Magic Breakfast in healthy eating and food nutrition and very little additional advice or guidance. Fortunately she has been well supported by Islington Council's Public Health Team and in particular Islington NHS's Marjon Willers, the specialist dietitian for schools and children's centres in Islington's Health and Wellbeing Team. The Grafton School breakfast club therefore has a strong healthy eating focus, largely as a result of Gloria's commitment and the support and guidance she has received. The Head Teacher, Nitsa Sergides, also strongly supports and encourages a healthy eating ethos in the school and ensures that the breakfast club adheres to the School Food Plan food-based standards for school food other than lunch.

The breakfast club also encourages children to try new food and learn how to use eating utensils rather than providing hand-held food.

The club charges a fee of £5 per week for every child. When asked the staff said that they didn't feel this presented a barrier to attendance by children from less wealthy families. However, a record of children who attend, including eligibility for free school meals, indicates that on average only between 6 and 10 of the approximately 50 children (20% at most) who attend regularly are eligible for free school meals. This is a proportionally low attendance considering that 57% of children at the school were entitled to Free School Meals in 2013 (approximately 200 children). There is no direct evidence that this is the result of the club charging a fee but it must be considered as a possible factor. Gloria explained that rather than subsidising or otherwise supporting all children entitled to Free School Meals the club staff focus on specific children on a case-by-case basis when they are identified for additional support by teaching staff, learning mentors or welfare officers. In these cases the children are not charged to attend the breakfast club if it is felt they would benefit from attending.

Another way that the club supports disadvantaged children is the provision of what Gloria called 'universal breakfast' – taking left-over bagels from the breakfast club into the playground during mid-morning break time. She saw this as a way to ensure that any children who were hungry during the morning, possibly through not having had breakfast, would be able to have food before lunch time. She regarded it as a highly successful approach to reaching the most needy children without any singling out or stigmatisation of their situation. Against expectations there was very little waste (i.e. no bagels chucked on the ground) and no incidences of children over-eating. In some cases Gloria said she had also bagged up left-over breakfast food to give to particularly needy parents or carers to take home at the end of the school day.

The breakfast club organisers also incorporate activities and opportunities for children's learning to be supported. For example the club participates in the Magic Breakfast's 'Breakfast PALS' programme, a partnership with the charity Give a Book, that capitalises on the club's mixed age attendance and the potential for older children to support younger children. Breakfast PALS (Peer Assisted Learning Strategies) is a cross-age reading scheme, with older and younger children working together to improve their reading, speaking, listening and emotional literacy skills.

The breakfast club at Grafton is an excellent model of how a breakfast club can be run. The club receives support from the Magic Breakfast but this is augmented and reinforced through the school's food ethos and standards set by the school food plan and well-resourced support from the local authority Health and Wellbeing Team. Without such a

holistic approach there is no guarantee that the MFL support for breakfast clubs focuses on the provision of healthy and nutritious breakfasts.

6.3 Family Kitchen programme, Islington

Grafton School, Islington, also participates in a programme supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable children through enabling and building the capacity of their parents and carers to provide healthy and nutritious food at home. The Family Kitchen programme (based in primary and special schools and children's centres) is organised by the Health and Wellbeing team in Islington and focuses on children (aged 2-11 years) and their families enabling them to learn to cook and eat healthy meals together. The 6-week programme helps families to develop more favourable attitudes towards healthy eating by learning to prepare, cook and eat healthy meals together, understand how a balanced diet contributes to health and wellbeing, gain confidence and skills to cook healthy meals, and be able to choose and buy healthy food. Gloria was trained by staff from the Health and Wellbeing team to deliver the six sessions at Grafton thus building her capacity and embedding skills within the school community to deliver the programme again in the future.

Whilst Gloria acknowledges the value of breakfast clubs, particularly if they take steps to focus on healthy eating and disadvantaged children, she also feels that:

"The club only makes a difference on the day that the child has breakfast. Tomorrow the child is still hungry so there is no change to the situation, while something like Family Kitchen would make a difference to the families in the long term".

Gloria Tofi in conversation with
Marjon Willers, NHS Dietitian Islington

Marjon Willers goes further asking whether a focus on supporting breakfast clubs is counter-productive in the long run. By providing breakfast at school the clubs take the responsibility away from parents. Whilst not fully addressing the timing and logistical barriers to having breakfast at home (parents leaving home early to travel to work or places of study) she says that of the meals provided at home breakfast is the easiest and cheapest to get right as well as being an important part of the day for families to be together.

As she puts it:

"If you can't do that (breakfast) at home we have a problem".

Marjon Willers Specialist Dietitian for Schools and
Children's Centres, Islington Public Health

A focus on families is vital if any sustainable change to children's eating habits is to be achieved. The breakfast clubs effectively only deal with an immediate need on a day by day basis whilst the Family Kitchen approach addresses the underlying issues with a long term and sustainable focus. The responsibility for establishing healthy eating behaviour is placed within homes but supported by schools where capacity is built through training and support from the local authority.

Family Kitchen provides an extremely thorough resource pack to support the training for tutors such as Gloria Tofi as well as providing session guides, recipes and survey templates for monitoring and evaluating programme impact. Whilst well supported and resourced by Islington Public Health the programme has also been implemented in the London Borough of Havering.

6.4 Holiday Hunger, Hackney

There are approximately 170 non-school days in the year that Free School Meal (FSM) pupils cannot access their entitlement to a school lunch, which is often the only regular hot meal that is available to them during the week¹⁷. For some academics and campaign groups this is a serious gap in welfare provision.

In the school summer holiday and autumn half term holiday of 2014 MFL ran a pilot project supporting the provision of breakfasts in 5 holiday clubs in six target boroughs referred to as the Growth Boroughs. Through a process which highlighted high deprivation hotspots at a lower super output area level the pilot clubs were selected for participation over holiday clubs in areas where deprivation was very low/better than the London average. The aim of the pilot was to explore the potential for MFL to extend the provision of support for breakfast clubs helping to fill the holiday hunger gap and social isolation experienced by many disadvantaged children in London during school holidays.

As part of the review visits were organised for three of the pilot project holiday clubs during the 2015 spring half term school holiday (Apples and Pears Adventure Playground, Shoreditch Adventure Playground, and Hackney Learning Trust Play scheme). It was hoped that participatory workshops similar to those facilitated at breakfast clubs would be carried out with children at the holiday clubs. Poor weather and time constraints for both the club organisers and review team during the half term break unfortunately resulted in the visits being cancelled. However, 'phone interviews were carried out with club organisers at the

¹⁷ All Party Parliamentary Group report on food in schools: Filling the holiday hunger gap, 2014.

three clubs and these offer some insight into the club's motivation and organisation and their effectiveness in addressing the MFL key aims of supporting the health and wellbeing of London's most disadvantaged young people.

Many of the key issues associated with the breakfast clubs run at schools correlate with the issues at the holiday clubs. In general terms the club organisers felt that support for breakfast provision was very beneficial. Children who might otherwise be buying take-away food on the way to the club were able to eat at the club instead. However, decisions regarding the food being offered at the clubs are made by the club's organisers with little or no advice or guidance and no training from the MFL or elsewhere. There is some anecdotal evidence based on receipt information to suggest that some clubs are attempting to make nutritional information comparisons before purchasing breakfast foods. However as with the school breakfast clubs the provision of a healthy and nutritious breakfast is largely dependent on the knowledge, commitment and interest of the club's organisers and this varies from club to club.

Of the three clubs contacted only one charged a fee of between £9 and £16.50 a day (depending on age and borough residence) with lower rates for siblings and concessions (down to a minimum of £5 per day). The club also provided a small number of free places (approximately 2 per day) for children referred by social services. It is clear that for many families this fee would be prohibitive and would be a significant constraint for more disadvantaged families to use the holiday club unless they were specifically targeted for support and received a free place.

For those clubs charging no fee there is no such financial constraint and the likelihood of more disadvantaged children attending is greatly increased. However, even though the clubs keep basic records of the number of children who attend, currently the clubs keep no records of which children are entitled to free school meals during term time or any other broad indicators of need or deprivation. One of the clubs suggested that collecting this information could potentially be embarrassing or lead to stigmatisation. However, without such records it is difficult to determine whether or not the clubs support the most disadvantaged children. In fact it is possible that even the free clubs are attended by children from families where the main issue is childcare during the holidays rather than holiday hunger. At one club this issue is addressed in an unconventional and potentially risky way by closing the club at lunch time. The assumption is that children from families who can afford childcare in the holidays would pay for a play scheme that runs for the whole working day rather than use a free scheme where children are required to be home-alone or worse.

From these observations it is clear that MFL support for provision of breakfasts at holiday clubs could potentially meet the charity's aims. However, this would depend on much

stricter criteria and clearer guidance and advice on the food that is provided, the type of clubs that are supported (i.e. those charging no fees¹⁸) and the monitoring of which children actually attend the club – with a stronger focus on disadvantaged families.

7. Findings

7.1 General Breakfast Provision

According to a recent Kellogg's report¹⁹ the vast majority of schools now provide a breakfast club. The report extrapolates from the survey findings that 85% of schools currently have a breakfast club however despite this apparent high number of breakfast clubs, schools report that funding is still the biggest barrier to their continuation.

But what makes a breakfast club a breakfast club? There is a wide range of different set-ups and models for breakfast clubs, sometimes called breakfast provision. For the purpose of this review it was felt important to distinguish between before school childcare provision - those clubs that are primarily providing childcare that includes breakfast as part of the offer - and breakfast clubs that are set up with a focus on hunger alleviation and providing a healthy breakfast to aid learning.

Those breakfast clubs that are primarily set up to provide childcare are often run by outside (contracted / commercial service) providers. They have a direct relationship with the parents rather than through the school and consequently may have little to do with the school or the school ethos. Breakfast provision may well be an add-on, not necessarily a priority and not necessarily focused on providing a healthy breakfast. These clubs do not specifically target or support children from low income families who are unlikely to be able to afford the charges. They have a place in wrap-around care and some do have good food provision but this research did not focus on this type of provision and therefore does not give a precise picture.

This research is largely focused on breakfast clubs that have been set up and are run by the school or parents and other volunteers. These clubs are largely established as a result of perceived need – either children coming to school hungry, significant numbers of punctuality problems, food-related behaviour issues (children not able to concentrate in

¹⁸ One factor in determining a childcare holiday club from a free holiday club is opening and closing times. Childcare holiday clubs generally run across the working day (8am to 6pm), where as free holiday clubs tend to mirror the school day 9am to 3pm

¹⁹ An Audit of School Breakfast Club Provision in the UK, A Kelloggs report 2014

lessons, hyper-activity etc) and food-related learning deficits (poorer children not fulfilling their learning potential etc).

As described earlier some schools offer universal free provision, others make a daily / weekly charge per child (with some offering discounts for subsequent siblings), and others run a two-track model whereby they charge those parents that can afford to pay (for the before-school childcare) with places for less well off children subsidized by the paying places. These clubs are usually set up to run for approximately an hour before the school day starts but there are alternatives such as starting the school day 15 / 20 minutes earlier to allow toast or bagels to be distributed in the class room at registration to all students that want it.

The findings are derived from the models of breakfast provision that are seeking to support children that are not fulfilling their learning potential because they are hungry or not getting a healthy breakfast at home.

7.2 Overview of breakfast provision in London

The overview of breakfast club provision across London highlighted the lack of a coherent and systematic approach – the situation can best be described as ad hoc. There is no London-wide database, mapping or report describing different models, financial set-ups or attendance figures. The main resource is each separate borough's list of breakfast clubs, their addresses and very basic information (start times, fees etc.) produced by the Family Information Service. At a borough level it is also very difficult to gain an overview of provision unless there is a specific programme or team within the borough's public health department focused on breakfast clubs.

➤ Gaining a snap-shot of provision

There is a **lack of any coherent strategy with regards to breakfast provision** for children living in food poverty either London-wide or at borough level. It was difficult to find comprehensive information about breakfast clubs in schools in general and difficult to assess how local authority budget cuts are affecting this but as with much non-statutory data / information gathering, there is evidence that **information about breakfast clubs across boroughs is not being systematically collected or updated.**

It's worth noting that as part of the flagship borough bidding process some of the bidding boroughs undertook a very quick snap-shot of breakfast provision in their boroughs largely to determine the number of breakfast clubs in the borough – missing the opportunity to record more information about the provision.

Breakfast clubs are largely provided on an ad-hoc school-by-school basis with limited regulation, evaluation and monitoring. Some boroughs quality assess their breakfast clubs as part of their wraparound care provision but they are generally looking at more general quality of provision and not nutritional quality of the food specifically and as mentioned earlier Ofsted inspections no longer include food provision. However although not comprehensive, the **newly (January 2015) introduced food-based standards for school food provide concrete opportunities for better regulation of the foods offered at breakfast clubs.**

All boroughs have a directory provided by the Families Information Service – providing a range of information on local services available to parents and carers. Most of the FIS directories studied as part of this research had some basic information on timing, costs and contacts but the information is not comprehensive across all boroughs. **This directory is an existing resource / place which could be utilised more effectively, where more comprehensive breakfast club information could sit.**

There are **pockets of good practice** around the capital including examples of partnership working such as Public Health school teams and Health and Wellbeing teams that work closely with local authorities or borough councils to encourage holistic approaches to food provision in schools using varying mechanisms to support that work.

In **Newham** they are utilising the advice and guidance provided through **Healthy Schools London awards programme** to support food work in schools and specifically include breakfast food provision in their whole-school food approach. **In effect the awards programme is providing a useful mechanism for regulating and improving breakfast club food provision.**

In **Islington** the Health and Wellbeing Team works closely with schools to encourage a whole-school approach to food and to **extend their support beyond the school to engage with families of school children.** **Islington's Family Kitchen programme** is an excellent model of a long-term partnership approach that provides training to build capacity in schools to in turn provide training in cookery and healthy eating for disadvantaged families.

➤ **Regulation**

Until recently school food provision was only regulated if it was being provided under the school catering contract e.g. the lunch time meal. **If a school's catering contract is managed through a centralised local authority procurement contract the regulation of the contract sits with the local authority.** If the contract adheres to the Food for Life Catering Mark there will be additional regulation as part of the FFL process. However **if schools opt out of a centralised catering contract** or the local authority (e.g. Croydon) decentralises the

school catering procurement **the regulation of any catering contract rest with the school and the governing body.**

Since January 2015 **all food served throughout the school day is now regulated through the Food-based standards** set out in the School Food Plan, and this **includes breakfast served at school breakfast clubs.**

'regulations [] set out the requirements for food and drink other than lunch, provided to pupils on and off school premises up to 6pm, including breakfast clubs, tuck shops, mid-morning break, vending and after school clubs'

Currently there is a lack of enforcement and it is **still to be determined how these newly introduced food-based standards will be monitored and inspected.** At the time of writing the Department of Education has yet to confirm how they will undertake the measurement and evaluation of the school food standards but they have agreed to study and confirm that the new food based standards are meeting the nutritional framework they reached in the pilot phase. **Currently a school's governing body is the definitive body with the responsibility to ensure a school is meeting the food-based standards.**

Organisations campaigning on school food standards and healthy food in school argue that **Ofsted²⁰ is the most suitable of the existing options for regulation and inspection of healthy food in schools.** And, although Ofsted inspection currently doesn't monitor any school food provision and therefore doesn't inspect breakfast club provision - campaigners continue to lobby Ofsted to include school food standards in their inspections. A recent consultation on proposals for inspection reform from September 2015 suggests that healthy food may be included under the 'personal development, behaviour and welfare' judgement.

The **principle that the Food-based School Food Standards cover in-house school breakfast club provision is sound** but the standards require better enforcement and a better, joined-up approach to how food contracts are delivered across the school day. For example, if you have a school caterer delivering the mid-day meal, and another contractor delivering the food for the breakfast club, and another doing the after-school food it is highly unlikely that these providers will be co-ordinating their menus and **there is every chance that the food-based standards will be met at each individual meal but will not necessarily be met across the whole school day.**

²⁰ **Ofsted** is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Ofsted inspects and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

Schools that sign up to the voluntary **Healthy Schools London (HSL) awards scheme**²¹ **have to commit to delivering healthy food in their school** under several of the seven themed topics, including adhering to the food-based standards and cooking on the curriculum. However the **HSL award process is largely untaken by the individual school, there are no external visits, adherence to the HSL requirements is unregulated**. The available advice is too general, voluntary and breakfast clubs are only included as a minor add-on.

During the research it seemed clear that **commercial providers are increasingly expanding** from after school clubs and holiday clubs **into breakfast clubs**, essentially providing before childcare that also has a breakfast offer. This is potentially **problematic** for various reasons including, **continuity of food provision both quality and 'across the school day' adherence to the food-based standards**, lack of joined-up approach to food as a vehicle for learning, and lost opportunities for learning support and mentoring.

➤ **Financial models**

This **research is largely focused on breakfast clubs** that have been set up and are run by the school or parents and/or other volunteers. These clubs are largely **set up as a result of perceived need** – either children coming to school hungry, significant numbers of punctuality problems, food-related behaviour issues (children not able to concentrate in lessons, hyper-activity etc), food related learning deficits (poorer children not fulfilling their learning potential etc).

There is a mixture of funding models, some schools offer **universal free provision**, others make a **daily / weekly charge** per child (with some offering discounts for subsequent siblings), and others run a **two-track model** whereby they charge those parents that can afford to pay (for the before-school childcare) with places for less well off children subsidised by the paying places.

Prices vary according to the model adopted and the reasons for the club being set up in the first instance. During the research we found **breakfast clubs charged from as little as 50 pence per day up to £9.50 a day**, this was by far the upper end of the charging scale and was largely clubs run by commercial childcare / school club providers.

In general in-house breakfast provision by schools with paid school staff was either free or with a charge of up to £2.00 per child per day (some subsidies for siblings and reductions for full week). **Schools mainly develop their own financial model based on school food ethos, the attitude of the head teacher and governing body and interest of specific school staff** (teaching staff or assistants).

²¹ Healthy Schools London is an Awards Programme working with schools to improve children and young people's well-being.

Some schools feel that **a small charge was not a barrier for poorer children to using the club**. Other schools making a blanket charge expect **staff to use their discretion to encourage poorer children to use the breakfast club free of charge**. Other schools feel **universal free provision is crucial to getting breakfast to the most needy children** and worked to secure funding from other sources to pay for the club.

Schools make a variety of judgements on how to make the best use of their resources. **Schools do 'play the field' to secure funding** for a whole range of activities, resources and clubs, including charitable support from existing breakfast club providers e.g. Magic Breakfast and Greggs. Given the levels of budgetary cuts schools are facing it's in the schools interest to secure as much addition income / funding as possible. So we were not surprise to hear reports that sometimes **schools will be receiving funding from both and other 3rd sector funding**.

The **pupil premium²²** is a **potential source of income** to help fund breakfast club provision, whereby the pupil premium is used to pay for additional learning support mentors and other learning and homework activities. **If schools are to use the pupil premium as part of the breakfast club funding model it is vital that the school ensures the breakfast club is there to support disadvantaged children.**

7.3 Focus on the aims of the Mayors Fund for London support

➤ Target the most disadvantaged children

The **40% Free School Meals entitlement criteria** is in place with the expectation that breakfast provision will largely reach disadvantaged children. However, there is currently no evidence to support that this actually happens. Added to that as it stands this stipulation in the funding **potentially misses poor children in boroughs where there are no schools with this level of FSM entitlement** (Croydon).

The 40% + Free School Meals entitlement should in theory **increase the chances that disadvantaged children** are being supported to **access breakfast at school** however the current MFL contract requires providers to undertake limited monitoring of who actually attends the breakfast clubs and whether or not they are entitled to Free School Meals (one indicator of disadvantage). So **from the limited data available it's difficult to say whether breakfast clubs are being accessed by disadvantaged children.**

²² The [pupil premium](#) is additional funding for publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers. Schools have the discretion to spend the pupil premium in ways that they feel will most benefit the disadvantaged pupils in their school.

Breakfast clubs often meet the childcare requirements of families where one or more parents are working – the logistical issues faced by working families whereby they need to bridge the gap between dropping children off before the start of the school day in order to get to work on time - this is certainly an important role for breakfast clubs and could be **supporting the working poor but there is no evidence to support this and not the priority role if the intention of the breakfast club is to support disadvantaged families and their children to access breakfast.**

The **monitoring of school food through voluntary award schemes** such as Healthy Schools London and the Food for Life Catering Mark largely **focuses on nutritional quality**, food preparation, provenance and sourcing which is crucial in regard to understanding whether food offered within the school day is helping children to eat a healthy balanced diet but there is **little or no monitoring through these award schemes** as to **whether the food targets the most disadvantaged children** and has other socio-economic aims.

On a school-by-school basis, and based on the school food ethos and interest of the Head Teacher or other staff some **monitoring of attendance may be carried out – but the research suggests this monitoring is at best ad hoc.** Some schools and breakfast club providers argue that asking children or monitoring who is using the breakfast club is stigmatising, others comment that they don't have time within the busy breakfast club hour. Given this general lack of requirement to monitor the levels of FSM pupils using breakfast clubs **it is currently impossible to judge whether breakfast provision in schools is reaching the most disadvantaged children.**

It is not clear at a Borough level whether or not a link is made between Free School Meals entitlement and the use of the pupil premium to provide free breakfast or encourage uptake amongst those who receive Free School Meals. **Schools that potentially have high levels of FSM pupils** but where those children are not registered to receive FSM **are possibly missing out on substantial levels of funding available for some of their disadvantaged children.** In 2014/15, the Pupil Premium is worth £1,300 per eligible primary pupil.²³

➤ **Target improved health and wellbeing**

One of the key pillars of the Mayor's Fund for London's work to support disadvantaged young Londoners is focussed on health and wellbeing to help them to be engaged, healthy and motivated to learn. The projects that the MFL delivers under this pillar are Nutrition; Aspiration; and Citizenship. The **Breakfast clubs provision programme comes under nutrition project.** However our research suggests that at many of the breakfast clubs, as they are currently being delivered, **the focus is often more on alleviating hunger 'food in**

²³ <http://www.sec-ed.co.uk/files/2113/7969/1478/Supp-ASCLOfstedPP.pdf> www.ascl.org.uk

bellies' than offering healthy or nutritious options. This is truer of breakfast clubs supported by Greggs and to a lesser extent Magic Breakfast largely because of the how the funding offer works.

Neither providers ask schools to adhere to any nutrition regulations (other than the requirement to adhere to the newly introduced Food-based standards) within their contract guidelines as to what breakfast food items can and cannot be offered. **Equally the MFL makes no contractual stipulation about nutritional quality of the foods that can be offered at the breakfast clubs that they currently fund.**

The MFL's breakfast club programme funding does not specify adequate compliance details within the existing framework to ensure breakfast clubs are providing healthy balanced breakfast provision to disadvantaged young children.

Adhering to the food-based standards does not necessarily mean a child eating at a school breakfast club **is being offered a healthy breakfast.** For example cereals, waffles, spreads high with high sugar contents are still permissible within the standards and it would therefore be prudent that breakfast club providers follow WHO (World Health Organisation) guidance on sugar intake alongside adhering to the School Food Plan food-based standards.

There are very **many examples of good practice around healthy eating at breakfast clubs** including the MFL breakfast clubs but these are **usually in boroughs where there is a range of additional interventions encouraging healthy eating approaches at schools** through public health teams working with schools and the Health and Wellbeing boards that straddle the local authority and public health.

➤ **The Flagship Borough**

Croydon - Current Breakfast Club provision

- Out of a total of 83 primary schools and 21 secondary schools – 69 schools (83%) have breakfast provision but not necessarily a breakfast club.
- Croydon Council does not undertake any review of the quality of food provision at breakfast clubs currently.
- Approximately 50% of Croydon Schools are academies and free schools –there is a significant number of academies and free schools that, due to current legislation, are not obliged to adhere to school food-based standards.
- There is no centralised catering contract - during the previous administration all public sector catering contracts were de-regulated. This makes monitoring and regulating adherence to the school food-based standards the responsibility of

individual schools. With the council having no over-arching knowledge of the standard of school food provision across the borough.

- Budgets for the Healthy Schools team have been cut - a team of five reduced to one member of staff. This has and continues to have consequences on the quantity and quality of work that can be achieved.
- There are no schools in Croydon that fall under the 40% + FSM entitlement. This means no financial support to set up breakfast clubs within the existing Department of Education criteria.
- Within the flagship programme the only mention of Breakfast Club provision is that flagship schools (3-6 schools to be identified) would be expected to have a Breakfast Club.
- The Child Hunger Project – working with families with young children experiencing food poverty to access healthy meals and improve cooking skills – due to take place as part of the flagship programme has great potential to address the wider issues of food poverty but has been postponed for the foreseeable future.

Lambeth - Current Breakfast Club provision

- Out of a total of 85 schools in Lambeth (59 primary schools (including 1 infants and 1 junior); 15 secondary schools, the rest is made up of special schools, nurseries and 2 pupil referral units) – 68 schools (80%) have breakfast provision but not necessarily a breakfast club. Until two years ago this information was gathered annually. However funding cuts has meant this data collection has been reduced to an ad-hoc situation.
- The current Lambeth Council administration has committed to ensure that there is free breakfast available in all primary schools. Support for the introduction of free healthy school breakfasts on request will be integrated with the implementation of the School Food Plan element of the programme.
- The Healthy Schools team budget has experienced substantial cuts with subsequent reduced capacity. Quality assurance work on wrap-around care provision for children up to year 6 is undertaken by third sector organisation **4 children**.
- Nutrition and public health in schools is lead by a Healthy Schools Strategic Group which is working closely with the flagship team to implement the planned programme.
- There are 24 schools that have 35%+ Free school Meal entitlement. Nearly 80% of those entitled to FSM residing in the 20% most disadvantaged neighbourhoods²⁴
- Holiday Hunger project- This project aims to determine levels of food poverty in the borough, address the underlying causes of food poverty alongside alleviating acute holiday hunger – the delivery element of this project may well be delivered by a third sector organisation such as Magic Breakfast.

²⁴ *White Working Class Achievement: A Study of Barriers to Learning in Schools*, F Demie & K Lewis, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, 2010

8. Recommendations

Based on the review findings the following recommendations are made. They include suggestions for ways in which the support could be improved to more effectively deliver the aims of the MFL funding and areas which should be explored for extensions of the support.

They recommendations fall under three headings:

- **Recommendations for continued support of school breakfast clubs**
- **Recommendations for support to address gaps in provision – holiday hunger**
- **Recommendations for extension of support – new types of intervention**

8.1 Recommendations for continued support of school breakfast clubs

Summary and basis for the recommendations

The findings have shown that the MFL support for breakfast club provision through Greggs Foundation and Magic Breakfast is perceived as positive and beneficial by the participating school breakfast clubs. The two partner organisations offer a straightforward mechanism for the MFL funding support and the approach is easy to communicate creating a strong and positive public profile for everyone involved.

Many assumptions are made about the benefits of breakfast clubs and the review has been able to explore some of these. Perceived impacts on children's engagement, motivation and ultimately educational attainment are often impossible to directly attribute to eating a healthy and nutritious breakfast. From our evidence the benefits are more likely to be the result of the improved relationship developed between children (and their parents) and the school, the provision of learning mentors at the breakfast clubs offering help and support with homework and reading journals, peer learning between the children and improvements in children's punctuality.

The findings have also shown that whilst there is an assumption that the support focuses on providing healthy and nutritious breakfasts to London's most disadvantaged children this is not necessarily the case in reality. The criteria for participation in the scheme are too broad – whilst the schools have a free school meal entitlement of greater than 40% there is no

guarantee that these children actually attend the breakfast club. More often than not the families using the club are working families with childcare needs rather than the most disadvantaged families. The provision of healthy and nutritious breakfasts to the most disadvantaged children in the participating schools is more often than not determined solely by the staff running the clubs and at their discretion. In some cases the strong school food ethos, interest and commitment of the head teacher and capacity, skills and interest of staff running the club results in excellent breakfast clubs delivering on the MFL aims. However, this cannot be guaranteed.

A situation in a school where different caterers provide food at different parts of the school day allows the possibility for inconsistency in standards and even for some aspects of provision to 'slip under the radar'. This is particularly likely for food other than the main lunch-time meal. Ideally one provider, adhering to regularly assessed school food based standards, should provide all meals throughout the day.

Recommendations

If the MFL is to continue supporting breakfast clubs through funding Greggs Foundation and Magic Breakfast (or other providers) we recommend the following:

Focus on the most disadvantaged children

1. MFL should tighten its criteria for schools participating in the programme by setting targets for actual attendance at the clubs rather than assumptions based on the % free school meals entitlement level in the schools.
2. MFL should require stricter monitoring, provide clearer guidelines and offer stronger support for participating schools and breakfast club staff to ensure that disadvantaged children are more directly targeted.
3. To lift barriers for the most disadvantaged children the clubs funded by MFL should not require any children receiving free school meals to pay a fee, however small, to attend the breakfast club (in particular those supported by Magic Breakfast).
4. Within the targeted schools MFL should consider only providing funding for children entitled to free school meals to encourage the schools to increase attendance of these children.

Focus on providing a healthy and nutritious breakfast

5. MFL should ensure that food provided in the breakfast clubs it supports adheres to the School Food Based Standards for meals other than lunch.
6. MFL should make additional requirements within their breakfast club funding contracts that providers follow WHO recommendations on sugar consumption - sugars should make up less than 10% of total energy intake per day by stipulating for example 'no high sugar cereals (cereals with sugar levels 22.5g per 100g)'.
7. MFL should provide clearer guidelines and advice (breakfast club resource packs, nutrition guidelines) based on these standards and funding should be dependent on them and ensured through stricter monitoring either by MFL or their partners.
8. To avoid inconsistency in the standard of food being provided and the possibility of breakfast club food provision being determined by the commercial interests of the collaborating food providers MFL should support campaigns focused on providing breakfast provision through school or borough level existing catering contracts.

8.2 Recommendations for support to address gaps in provision – Holiday Hunger

Summary and basis for the recommendations

It is clear from the review that holiday hunger is an important and significant gap in provision particularly for more disadvantaged children. It is also clear that in exploring options for support MFL need to consider the mechanism for providing funding and the criteria they would use. Unlike school breakfast clubs there are no obvious collaborating organisations working London-wide who could offer a delivery route to holiday clubs. This may require MFL to take on a more direct delivery role or at least provide specific organisational and monitoring inputs to any more fragmented providers in different boroughs.

It is also important to recognise that the principles for determining support for breakfast clubs reflected in the recommendations given above should be equally strongly adhered to in the support provided for holiday club breakfast provision. Without this there is no guarantee that the MFL aims of supporting the health and wellbeing of London's most disadvantaged children will be delivered.

It should also be recognised that without being able to use the school breakfast clubs broad eligibility criteria of % free school meal entitlement the funding criteria for holiday clubs will need to explore alternative indices of deprivation to ensure a focus on holiday clubs offering support for more disadvantaged families.

Recommendations

If the MFL is to consider supporting provision of breakfasts at holiday clubs we recommend the following:

Focus on the most disadvantaged children

9. MFL should develop criteria for targeting support based on indicators of deprivation to ensure that disadvantaged families are targeted.
10. MFL should also set criteria based on attendance at the clubs by more disadvantaged children based on monitoring the number of children entitled to free school meals during term time.
11. MFL should require stricter monitoring, provide clearer guidelines and offer stronger support for participating holiday clubs to ensure that disadvantaged children are more directly targeted.
12. To lift barriers for the most disadvantaged children MFL should only support breakfast provision for free holiday clubs (i.e. no children pay to attend).
13. The level of funding to support breakfast provision at the holiday club should be linked to the number of children entitled to free school meals (during term time) who attend.

Focus on providing a healthy and nutritious breakfast

14. MFL should ensure (and regulate) that food provided in the holiday breakfast clubs it supports adheres to the same standards applied to schools i.e. School Food Based Standards for meals other than lunch.
15. MFL should make additional requirements within their holiday hunger funding contracts that providers follow WHO recommendations on sugar consumption - that sugars should make up less than 10% of total energy intake per day – by stipulating for example ‘no high sugar cereals (cereals with sugar levels 22.5g per 100g)’.

- 16.** MFL should provide clearer guidelines and advice (breakfast club resource packs, nutrition guidelines) based on these standards and funding should be dependent on them and ensured through stricter monitoring either by MFL or their partners.

Delivery mechanism

- 17.** MFL will need to explore the potential for delivering support to holiday clubs through the existing sub-regional partnerships (as it has in the pilot with the Growth Boroughs partnership) as these may have the necessary capacity, resources and specific local knowledge and experience.

8.3 Recommendations for extension of support – Beyond Breakfast: new types of intervention

Summary and basis for the recommendations

The Family Kitchen programme in Islington is an example of an intervention that addresses attitudes to health and nutrition that are often strongly defined and established in children's homes. A focus on supporting the provision of breakfast at school for disadvantaged children only addresses the immediate situation – a child's hunger or lack of a nutritious start to the day – without considering or acknowledging the role played by parents/carers and families in establishing and sustaining their families healthy eating attitudes and behaviour.

Whilst not suggesting the Family Kitchen approach is the only way forward it is an example of a type of approach that MFL could consider and explore further. Of particular interest is the use of professional dietitians at the borough level to train tutors in schools to deliver the programme thus building capacity and embedding the skills in the schools.

Recommendations

- 18.** MFL should explore the potential for supporting work with parents of disadvantaged children through initiatives at schools such as Family Kitchen in Islington (key contact Marjon Willers) or food and health focused parent 'coffee mornings' and meetings for specifically targeted families.

Appendix A – Workshop findings

Context

It is important to understand the perspective of children attending breakfast clubs as well as the staff involved in organising and running the clubs. This will provide an insight into the key benefits of the clubs and how it feels to those who attend them and run them. Specifically it will help to ascertain whether the clubs support the aims of the MFL funding.

Two primary school breakfast clubs in Islington were identified: Laycock Primary School in Highbury, supported by Greggs Foundation, and Grafton Primary School in Holloway, supported by The Magic Breakfast. Though both are situated within a 'strong food leadership' Borough (according to SUSTAIN's league table) the different support provided by Greggs and Magic Breakfast make for an interesting comparison. Marjon Willers, NHS Islington, also identified Grafton Primary School's club as an interesting case study where specific efforts were being made to support a healthy and nutritious offer and encourage children to try new food.

Workshop methodology

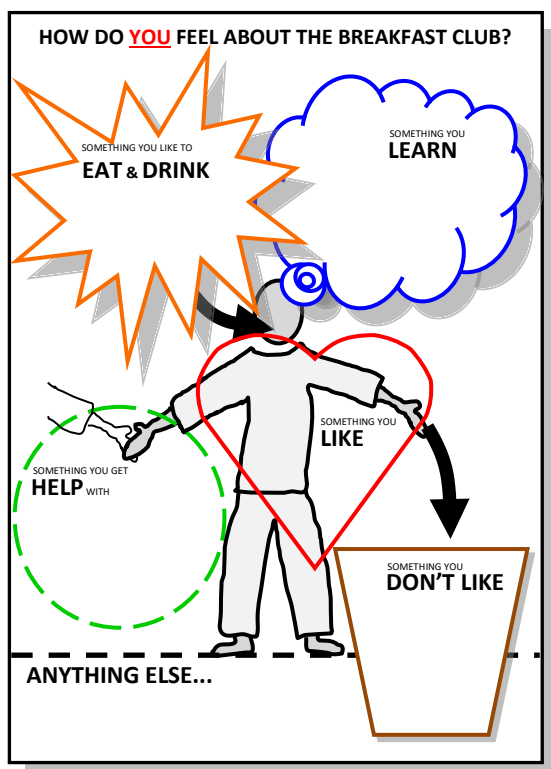
The breakfast club workshops used an approach based on Participatory Appraisal and were designed to be as accessible, engaging and flexible as possible to encourage the participation of children attending the clubs. The tools used were visual and employed active participatory exercises aimed at engaging children as they arrived at the club, as they ate breakfast and as they relaxed with each other. It was felt that this more participatory and informal group workshop style consultation would provide a better opportunity for children to engage than a one-to-one interview or questionnaire approach.

The nature of the clubs presented challenges: children arrived at different times during the one hour club duration, the groups comprised children aged between 5 and 11 years of age, and children were interested in eating breakfast and playing with friends. The distraction of an early morning snow-fall at Grafton School added to the challenge.

Three tools were used to surface information on children's interests and opinions. The three tools were presented both as charts stuck up on a wall and as charts that could be used on tables either by individuals or small groups. Children were encouraged to read and respond to the questions either by adding their own comments and dot votes to the charts by themselves or if required having their responses recorded on the chart by the workshop facilitator. The three charts were designed to be used either in sequence or separately depending on the amount of time available to the participating child. The role of the facilitator was to encourage voluntary engagement with the questions, explain how the charts worked, clarify the questions being asked and assist with responses to the questions

as and where necessary. Illustrations of the charts are shown below with images from the workshops showing the charts in action:

Chart 1



Add comments in the different areas of the chart.

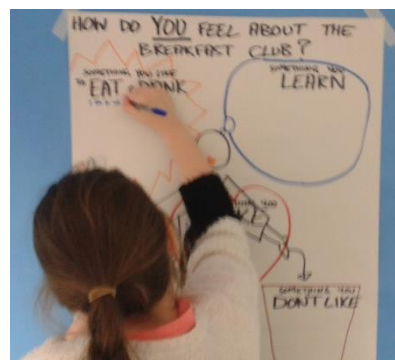
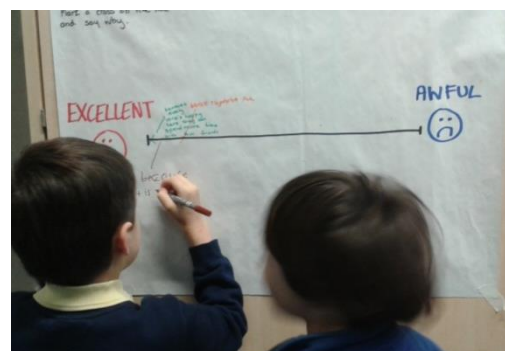
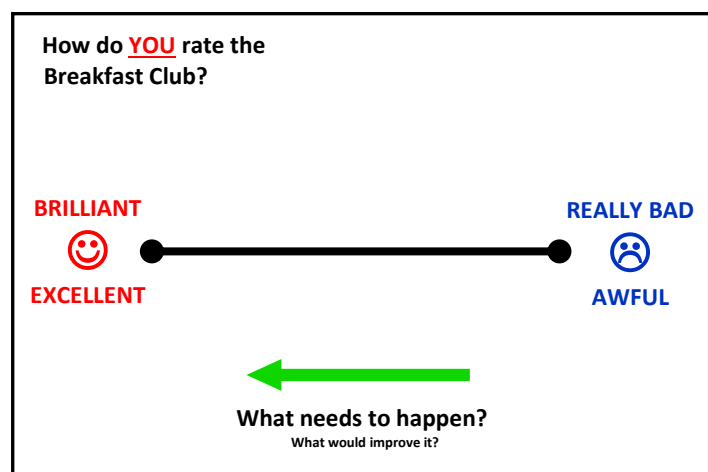


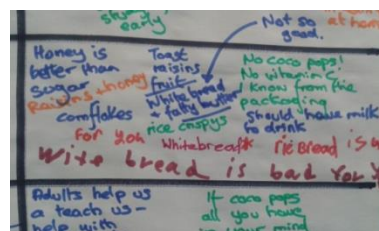
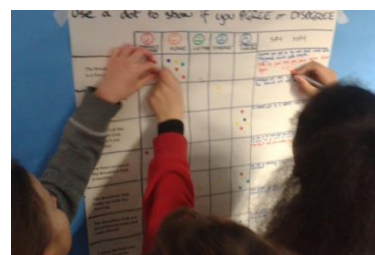
Chart 2



1. Mark a cross on the line to show how you feel.
2. Add a comment next to your cross to explain why you feel that way.
3. Next to the arrow say what you think would make the breakfast club better and move your cross towards the BRILLIANT end of the line.

Use sticky dots or a ü to show if you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with these statements and say **why**.

STATEMENT	 STRONGLY AGREE	 AGREE	 NEITHER	 DISAGREE	 STRONGLY DISAGREE	EXPLAIN WHY
The Breakfast Club is a fun place to come						
The Breakfast Club helps me get to school on time						
If I wasn't at the Breakfast Club I wouldn't eat breakfast						
The food served at the Breakfast Club is healthy						
The Breakfast Club helps me with my learning						
The Breakfast Club is a good time to meet & make friends						
The Breakfast Club is a good start to the school day						
I don't enjoy the Breakfast Club but have to come here						



The two workshops were:

Laycock Primary School

- 27th January 2015, 7.45 to 9.00 am
- Head Teacher: Emmanuel Keteku
- Breakfast Club organiser: Joanne Halpin
- Helper: Suzanne Bailey
- Approximately 35 children (50 places available) – Year 5 on a residential trip
- 3 members of staff at the play centre, 3 activity / learning mentors in the hall
- Supported by **Greggs**

Grafton Primary School

- 3rd February 2015, 7.45 to 9.00 am
- Head Teacher: Nitsa Sergides
- Breakfast Club organiser: Gloria Tofi
- 52 children
- 4 members of staff
- Supported by **Magic Breakfast**

Staff interviews

Both workshops were followed by semi-structured informal interviews with key breakfast club staff members and the Head Teachers of both schools. The interviews followed a structure aimed at assessing the perceived benefits of the breakfast clubs in relation to the key aims of the MFL support. Key questions were followed up by a series of more detailed prompt questions where necessary as outlined below:

AIMS: From your perspective what do you see as the purpose of the Breakfast Club?

What do you think it's trying to achieve?

What do you consider to be its key aims?

What do you think it means to the children who come?

DISADVANTAGE: Do you think that your Breakfast Club effectively targets disadvantaged children?

Is it focused on vulnerable families or is it just cheap/easy childcare for families who have to go to work/study early?

What do you do in particular to achieve this?

Do you keep a record of who comes?

What do you do to encourage the most disadvantaged children?

What could you do more of?

FOOD: Do you think that the children at your club can eat a nutritious and healthy breakfast?

Is the focus more on getting food into hungry bellies?

What do you do to encourage and support healthy eating?

What advice or guidance do you follow?

Are you involved in any school award schemes (Food for Life Partnership, Healthy Schools etc.)?

Is the food side of your club monitored or evaluated in any way? By who?

LEARNING: What impact do you think the club has on children's engagement and motivation to learn?

Does the club have an impact on what happens in class?

Do you think it affects children's punctuality? How?

Do you think it affects children's social skills? How?

Do you think it affects children's relationship with staff and teachers? How?

WHOLE SCHOOL FOOD: How does the Breakfast Club link with other food activities in the school?

How does it fit with other food focused activities and learning?

On its own can the club have any impact on health and nutrition or does it depend on the school's thinking/ethos/effort on food and healthy eating?

MAGIC BREAKFAST / GREGGS: What is your opinion of the support offered by Magic Breakfast/Greggs?

Do you think it helps support healthy eating?

How does it help you to run your club?

What more could it do to help meet the MFL aims?

OTHER OPTIONS: Do you think there are better ways for the MFL to support the health and wellbeing of London's most disadvantaged children?

Are there better ways to support Breakfast Clubs?

Should there be more advice and guidance on healthy eating?

Should there be better regulation, monitoring and evaluation of the clubs?

Do you think the MFL should fund other types of 'wrap-around care'?

Findings

The findings of the workshops and semi-structured interviews are presented together as key themes that emerged from the school visits illustrated where relevant by quotes and comments from children attending the clubs and from those members of staff interviewed following the workshops.

Social benefits

A key benefit for children attending the breakfast clubs was the opportunity to spend time with their friends before school. Both clubs visited had a very relaxed and welcoming atmosphere with children arriving at different times, picking up food and sitting together to chat or draw.

"There's lots of children showing kindness and unity – people help each other"

"Everyone's happy here"

"Some people who don't have many friends make friends here"

At Grafton School 12 children and at Laycock 7 children agreed or strongly agreed that the club was a fun place to come before school.

In a school children often establish rigid boundaries based on age and year groups. This is an important difference in breakfast clubs where children of different ages mix together much more easily providing opportunities for peer support and learning. At Grafton School

the potential of this peer learning is supported by the Magic Breakfast's 'Breakfast PALS' programme whereby older children read with and help younger children.

Transition

The staff running the clubs agreed that the children appreciated a 'soft start' to the school day based on the informal, sociable atmosphere at the clubs. This was seen as particularly important for children who might be coming from relatively chaotic home situations into a more controlled and calmer school environment. It is important that the club offers a gentle transition from one to the other and this could help children deal with the stress involved and engage better with school activities and learning.

A child at Laycock School described this by saying:

"I love breakfast club because it is a safe place"

For another child it was another transition issue that she had to deal with:

"I love coming to the breakfast club but I hate waking up in the morning"

Family logistics

Many parents with children attending the clubs benefitted from being able to leave home early and travel to work or to places of study. The club staff didn't regard this as the club catering for the childcare needs of more wealthy parents. In fact they felt the families involved were relatively low waged – the 'working poor' – and were often disadvantaged or needy even though they weren't necessarily receiving benefits and therefore targeted as disadvantaged. In effect the clubs support such families by overcoming logistical barriers to their continued employment or studying. In some cases the early start to the working day, often including considerable travel time, means that children from these families would not be receiving breakfast unless they attended the club, as reported by four children at Laycock School. At Grafton School 9 children said that they would get breakfast at home if it wasn't provided at the breakfast club – it was just more convenient to get it at school. At Laycock School 6 children said the club helped them get to school on time.

Relationship with the school

The breakfast clubs not only offer a 'soft start' to the school day but they represent a 'soft edge' to the school. The atmosphere in the clubs is informal and allows an opportunity for the children to interact with adult staff in a more relaxed way. There is less of a distinction between pupils and staff and between staff and parents and this is regarded as an important way for stronger relationships and better engagement with the school to develop.

"The club acts as a bridge between working parents and the school"

This more permeable school boundary is seen as an important benefit of the club. This also provides a strong indication that for both parents and staff the clubs are regarded as an integral part of the school day and not as a separate add-on.

As the Head Teacher at Laycock School put it:

"The breakfast club is seen as a productive start to the school day".

Learning benefits

Staff at the clubs and the schools' Head Teachers identified clear benefits in attitude and engagement for particular vulnerable children and for children with challenging behaviour resulting from their attendance at the breakfast clubs. Whilst anecdotal this evidence supports the way in which the clubs can support the learning of targeted children and often these children are encouraged and supported to attend the clubs for this reason.

It is less easy to draw conclusions about which aspect of the club is most important in providing learning benefits. In particular it is difficult to attribute any change in behaviour, motivation, engagement in class and attainment to the fact that the children eat breakfast. In fact the workshops and interviews highlighted that other factors had a greater impact. Improved punctuality and the calmer transition from home to school environment were identified as important as was the improved relationship between the children and school staff and the school environment in general resulting from the informal atmosphere of the club.

Another benefit highlighted by the workshops and resulting from the support from both Greggs Foundation and Magic Breakfast is the opportunity that the funding provides for learning support at the clubs. At Laycock School the funding from Greggs released funds that otherwise would have been spent on food for the club to be spent on paying for two additional learning mentors to attend the club. Children reported that the additional staff helped them with their homework and supported work on their reading journals.

"Adults help us and teach us – help with homework"

The Head Teacher at Laycock School said:

"Financial support for the breakfast club means that the start times for 2 additional learning mentors can be pushed forward to 8 am"

As already mentioned peer learning either informally where older children help younger children with reading or through Magic Breakfast PALS reading support programme was also seen as an important learning opportunity provided by the clubs.

Focus on the most disadvantaged children

A key aim of the MFL support of breakfast clubs is that it should focus on London's most disadvantaged children. By supporting clubs in schools where Free School Meals entitlement is greater than 35% (in the case of Greggs supported clubs) or 40% (Magic Breakfast clubs) the likelihood of more disadvantaged children being supported was thought to be increased. However, this broad-brush approach doesn't necessarily mean that the most disadvantaged children actually attend the breakfast clubs.

At Grafton School only between 6 and 10 out of the available 50 places at the club each morning are filled by children entitled to receive Free School Meals. The breakfast club charges a fee of £5 per week per child regardless of whether the child is entitled to free lunches or not. The staff running the club don't regard the fee as a barrier to attendance by disadvantaged children but this is not necessarily the case – particularly if a child attends the club every week. Rather than subsidising or otherwise supporting all children entitled to Free School Meals the club staff focus on specific children on a case-by-case basis when they are identified for additional support by teaching staff, learning mentors or welfare officers. In these cases the children are not charged to attend the breakfast club if it is felt they would benefit from attending.

At Laycock School the number of children attending the breakfast club who receive Free School Meals is much higher at about 50%. This is due to the higher percentage of Free School Meal entitlement in the school (63%) partly resulting from its specialist provision for hearing impaired children. At the breakfast club 40 of the available 50 places each day are registered and filled in advance with 10 spaces each day left open for specifically targeted children (with poor attendance and punctuality or issues around homework etc.) and 'walk-in' children who arrive at school early and/or hungry. The club doesn't charge a fee to attend the club and so there is no actual or perceived financial barrier to attendance at the club.

In both schools the focus on more disadvantaged children is largely determined by the staff running the club – their knowledge of the children's home situation and particular needs – and the identification of vulnerable children by other school staff. In the schools visited it is the commitment and capacity of the staff involved, using their experience and discretion, that ensures the more vulnerable and disadvantaged children are supported at the clubs. However, it should be acknowledged that this may not always be the case in all schools. A focus on the most disadvantaged children cannot always be left to the discretion of the

staff running breakfast clubs as they may not have the capacity, interest or commitment to do this.

To address this issue the MFL should seek to develop the use of more specific criteria that encourage attendance at the clubs by those children regarded as particularly disadvantaged. This would help to ensure that the clubs are attended by children who would benefit most from support offered by the club. In addition clubs supported by the MFL should develop a clearer attendance log and reporting framework so that attendance of the clubs by more vulnerable and disadvantaged children could be more closely monitored and the impact of their attendance more easily tracked.

Focus on providing a healthy and nutritious breakfast

At both workshops children showed good awareness of what is considered to be healthy and unhealthy breakfast food. This shows that the clubs reinforce and support awareness developed elsewhere in the schools by providing what could be considered to be relatively healthy food and delivering healthy eating messages.

One child simply said that he came to the club...

"...to eat healthy stuff"

Whilst another said:

"I don't think white bread and too much butter at the club is good"

Children who engaged with the workshop questions agreed or strongly agreed that the food provided was what they would consider to be healthy (16 at Grafton and 6 at Laycock). The lack of frosted or sweetened cereals was highlighted and the absence of sugar at both clubs (replaced by honey instead) was regarded as healthy (although honey is not necessarily any healthier than sugar). At Laycock School children enjoyed the fruit juice and toast and at Grafton fruit and bagels in particular were enjoyed (although again it is questionable how healthy bagels are as a breakfast food option for a child every morning).

"We get to eat fruit and brown toast"

Both clubs were able to introduce children to food they may not have tried before as a result of the support from Greggs Foundation and Magic Breakfast.

"I really enjoy breakfast club because it's fun doing the different things and trying the different food."

At Grafton School on the day of the workshop children were offered taster plates of smoked salmon and Leerdammer Dutch cheese (chopped into small pieces) as well as lychees. Such tasters were a feature of the club that children enjoyed even if they didn't particularly like the food they were trying (particularly true of kippers!). The club also tried to link foods with particular cultural festivals and holidays adding an extra cultural educational dimension to the taster. Similarly Laycock School encouraged children to try new foods and drinks such as fruit smoothies.

The two schools visited both exhibit a strong healthy eating focus. However, there is no guarantee that in general breakfast clubs supported by the MFL provide a healthy and nutritious breakfast because the provision of healthy food and healthy eating messages is largely dependent on the interest, commitment and capacity of the staff who run the clubs.

Whilst the food provided by Greggs Foundation (bread from local Greggs bakery outlets) can either be wholemeal or white the decision lies with the breakfast club staff. All other food is purchased by the staff who may or may not follow the Greggs Foundation guideline menus as they are voluntary and not closely monitored. The club at Laycock School is run by a highly committed team led by Joanne Halpin. Joanne received no training from Greggs Foundation and very little advice or guidance on what should and should not be provided. On her own initiative she developed a model of healthy breakfast provision by visiting other school breakfast clubs and by carrying out her own research. Whilst Joanne feels confident in her knowledge of healthy eating options and approaches this is by no means guaranteed in other schools. Often breakfast club staff work voluntarily or for relatively low wages and have been involved in running clubs for a number of years because of their personal interest in the work or possibly the extra wages they can earn. Whilst not always the case it is likely that staff at some clubs will have ingrained attitudes to the way the clubs are run and often healthy eating is not high on the agenda. Without specific guidance and support there is no guarantee that the breakfasts provided at the clubs are healthy or nutritious. Even at Laycock School – an otherwise excellent example of a breakfast club – Friday breakfasts include reheated, shop-bought pancakes and waffles – very popular but not a particularly healthy start to the children's day.

At Grafton School the club is expertly and efficiently run by Gloria Tofi. Gloria received basic training in safety (knife skills) and food hygiene when she set up the club but says that she received no training from Magic Breakfast in healthy eating and food nutrition and very little additional advice or guidance. Fortunately she has been well supported by Islington Council's Public Health Team and in particular Islington NHS's Marjon Willers, the specialist dietitian for schools and children's centres in Islington's Health and Wellbeing Team. The Grafton School breakfast club therefore has a strong healthy eating focus, largely as a result of Gloria's commitment and the support and guidance she has received. The Head Teacher, Nitsa Sergides, also strongly supports and encourages a healthy eating ethos in the school

and ensures that the breakfast club adheres to the School Food Plan food-based standards for school food other than lunch. The breakfast club also encourages children to try new food and learn how to use eating utensils rather than providing hand-held food.

The breakfast club at Grafton is an excellent model of how a breakfast club could be run. The club receives support from the Magic Breakfast but this is augmented and reinforced through the school's food ethos and standards set by the school food plan and well-resourced support from the local authority Health and Wellbeing Team. Without such a holistic approach there is no guarantee that the MFL support for breakfast clubs focuses on the provision of healthy and nutritious breakfasts. Without proper guidance, advice and monitoring in many cases the impact of a breakfast club may simply be to fill bellies.

Beyond breakfast

At both of the schools visited there were strong indications that staff running the clubs and Head Teachers were using the support provided for the breakfast clubs as a way to explore other ways of supporting vulnerable or disadvantaged children.

Universal breakfast

At Grafton School the breakfast club leader Gloria Tofi had initiated what she called 'universal breakfast' by taking left-over bagels from the breakfast club into the playground during mid-morning break time. She saw this as a way to ensure that any children who were hungry during the morning, possibly through neither having breakfast at home nor at the breakfast club, would be able to have food before lunch time. She regarded it as a highly successful approach to reaching the most needy children without any singling out or stigmatisation of their situation. Against expectations there was very little waste (bagels chucked on the ground) and no incidences of children over-eating. In extreme cases Gloria had also bagged up left-over breakfast food to give to particularly needy parents or carers to take home at the end of the school day. These examples show that the support provided through the MFL goes beyond breakfast clubs.

Parent focus

Both schools were also exploring ways in which the support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children could focus more on their families and their homes. Laycock School Head Teacher Emmanuel Keteku expressed his frustration that the focus of the healthy eating agenda was in schools when for many children the problems associated with unhealthy diet are established at home through strongly defined and reinforced unhealthy eating habits. Both he and the breakfast club staff thought that it would be more effective to provide support to targeted parents through school coffee mornings with a healthy eating focus. One such coffee morning attended by a group of 7 or 8 parents took place immediately following the breakfast club.

Family Kitchen

At Grafton School the breakfast club leader, Gloria Tofi, drew attention to a programme run at Grafton School that she had participated in as a tutor. She saw the programme as an excellent approach to supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable children through enabling and building the capacity of their parents and carers to provide healthy and nutritious food at home. The Family Kitchen programme (based in primary and special schools and children's centres) is organised by the Health and Wellbeing team in Islington and focuses on children (aged 2-11yrs) and their families enabling them to learn to cook and eat healthy meals together. The 6-week programme helps participants to develop more favourable attitudes towards healthy eating by learning to prepare, cook and eat healthy meals together, understand how a balanced diet contributes to health and wellbeing, gain confidence and skills to cook healthy meals, and be able to choose and buy healthy food. Gloria was trained by staff from the Health and Wellbeing team to deliver the six sessions at Grafton thus building her capacity and embedding skills within the school community to deliver the programme again in the future.

Whilst Gloria acknowledges the value of breakfast clubs, particularly if they take steps to focus on healthy eating and disadvantaged children, she also feels that:

"the club only makes a difference on the day that the child has breakfast, tomorrow the child is still hungry so there is no change to the situation, while something like Family Kitchen would make a difference to the families in the long term".

Gloria Tofi in conversation with Marjon Willers, NHS Dietitian Islington

This longer term impact is vital if any sustainable change to children's eating habits is to be achieved. The breakfast clubs effectively only deal with an immediate need on a day by day basis whilst the Family Kitchen approach addresses the underlying issues with a long term and sustainable focus. The responsibility for establishing healthy eating behaviour is placed within homes but supported by schools where capacity is built through training and support from the local authority.

Conclusions

The workshops and interviews have highlighted the broad benefits associated with breakfast clubs. These include the establishment of a 'soft start' to the school day and improved punctuality for some children where this is an issue. The soft edge to the school makes it easier for children and parents to engage with the school and staff. Support from the MFL has made it possible for schools to bring learning mentors into the clubs to support children with their homework, reading and learning.

However, it is unclear whether or not the support provided by the MFL adequately supports the clubs in delivering the key aims of the fund. The key focus on disadvantaged children and healthy and nutritious food is not strongly embedded in the mechanisms or systems used by the MFL or their partners, Greggs Foundation and Magic Breakfast. The responsibility lies with the staff who run the clubs and to some extent the ethos of the school as set by the Head Teacher. There are no strict criteria, regulations or systems of monitoring to ensure the aims are delivered – only voluntary guidelines – and this leads to the possibility of clubs largely catering for children from wealthier families and addressing issues of logistics rather than disadvantage. The two schools visited were examples of best practice but the workshops and interviews helped to highlight the fact that decisions around who attends the clubs and what they eat are taken by school staff and not guaranteed by the MFL criteria or those of their two partners.

The schools also highlighted examples of possible ways forward – 'beyond breakfast'. In particular this includes support for programmes that support children at home through initiatives focused on their parents. The Family Kitchen programme run by Islington's Health and Wellbeing team provides an excellent example of an approach that could be explored further.

Appendix B – School Food-based standards for food other than lunch

- Fruit and/or vegetables must be available in all school food outlets
- Starchy food cooked in fat or oil must not be provided more than two days each week across the school day
- Meat or poultry products (manufactured or homemade and meeting the legal requirements) can be provided no more than once each week in primary schools and twice each week in secondary schools across the school day
- Lower fat milk must be available for drinking every day during school hours (e.g. mid-morning break, lunchtime) This requirement cannot be met by providing milk at breakfast or after school clubs
- No more than two portions of food that has been deep-fried, batter-coated, breadcrumb-coated may be provided each week, across the school day
- No more than two portions of food which includes pastry may be provided each week, across the school day
- Cakes and biscuits must not be provided
- Desserts must not be provided , except for yoghurt or fruit-based desserts with a content of at least 50% fruit, across the school day
- No snacks (except nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat) may be provided across the school day
- No savoury crackers or breadsticks
- No confectionery
- Salt must not be available to add to food after the cooking process is complete
- Condiments may only be available in sachets or individual portion of more than 10 grams or one teaspoon
- Only healthier drinks can be provided
- Free, fresh drinking water should be provided at all times
- The only drinks permitted during the school day are:
 - Plain water (still or carbonated);
 - Lower fat milk or lactose-reduced milk;
 - Fruit or vegetable juice (max 150mls)
 - Plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium; plain fermented milk (e.g. yoghurt) drinks;
 - Combinations of fruit or vegetable juice with plain water (still or carbonated, with no added sugars or honey);
 - Combinations of fruit juice and lower fat milk or plain low-fat yoghurt, plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium; cocoa and lower fat milk; flavoured lower fat milk all with less than 5% added sugars or honey;
 - Tea, coffee, hot chocolate

Appendix C – List of research interviewees

Liz Prosser	Healthy Schools London
Marjon Willers	NHS Islington
Edwina Revel	Newham Borough Council
Carole Avery	Barking and Dagenham Borough Council
Zainab Jalil	Hackney Borough Council
Tom Dunn	Hillingdon Borough Council
Jonathan Pauling	London Food Board
Myles Bremner	School Food Plan / Alexandra Rose Charities
Kim Chaplain	MFL
Linda Cregan	Children's Food Trust
Fiona Tywcross	Zero Hunger City report author and London Assembly Member
Carmel McConnell	Magic Breakfast
Kate Woods	Magic Breakfast
Jackie Crombie	Greggs Foundation
Oliur Rahman	Holiday Breakfast Club Project Manager, Growth Boroughs
John Currie	Food Flagship Lead for Croydon
Daniel Davies	Healthy Schools lead Croydon
Tina ?	Croydon Schools
Nathan Pierce	Lead Commissioner Lambeth
Greta Defeyter	Healthy Living, Northumbria Uni professor
Angela Coleman	4 Children
Dr Patricia Mucavele	Children's Food Trust
Judith Hare	Lambeth Council
Stephanie Wood	School Food Matters
	Croydon Free Schools Meals team
James Dartnell	
Malcolm Clark	Co-ordinator, Children's Food Campaign
Professor Greta Defeyter	Northumbria University
Kate Prince	Kellogg's
Breakfast club staff Streatham	
Breakfast club staff Hackney	
Breakfast club staff Newham	
Patroklos Sesis	Food Flagship Programme Manager Lambeth

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Appendix E – On-line survey questions

Dear CYPN Network member

Food Matters is carrying out a review of breakfast club provision in London.

This is part of a review of the Mayor's Fund for London support for Magic Breakfast and Greggs.

We are trying to capture a snap-shot of what is happening in different London Boroughs.

Marjon Willers was able to provide me with an overview of the situation in Islington and suggested other members of the CYPN network may be able to help me with something similar for other London Boroughs.

If you have a particular interest, experience or perspective on breakfast clubs in your Borough I would be very interested in having a quick chat with you.

I am particularly interested in understanding:

- Are the clubs following any specific nutritional guidance or advice?
- Do the clubs attempt to target particularly vulnerable or needy children?
- What different financial mechanisms or approaches are adopted to fund the clubs?
- Who regulates and/or monitors breakfast club provision?
- Your perspective on the support from Greggs and Magic Breakfast and any interesting clubs you know of locally.
- Your thoughts and suggestions on how the provision of breakfast clubs could be improved.