

Brent Food Strategy

for a healthier, fairer, and more sustainable local food system.

2026-2029

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Glossary

Best Start Family Hubs

New name for Family Wellbeing Centres.

Cash-first approaches

Direct cash or voucher assistance provided to residents in financial crisis, rather than other aid like food parcels, to maximise income, promote dignity, and offer choice.

CYP

Children and Young People

Early Years

Early years settings include nurseries, preschools, childminders, and school reception classes.

Food-based approaches

Strategies that promote healthy and balanced eating habits to support health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

Food Partnership

A collaborative, cross-sector coalition bringing together local councils, businesses, charities, and community groups, to transform local food systems.

Food System

The complex, interconnected network of people, processes, and infrastructure involved in taking food from farm to fork.

Free School Meals

available to children from families receiving specific benefits, including Universal Credit, income support, and child tax credit.

FWC

Brent Family Wellbeing Centres offer a wide range of free health, education and welfare services to families.

Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB)

A statutory committee established within local authorities in England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Health Visiting

A free, universal NHS service providing specialized support to families with children aged 0–5 years.

Healthy Start Scheme

A UK government program (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland) providing financial assistance to low-income pregnant women and families with children under 4.

HFSS

Foods that are high in fat, salt, and sugar.

IMD

Index of multiple deprivation.

Licence to Grow

LFPC

London Food Purchasing Commitment.

MECC

Making Every Contact Count.

Right to Grow

Social prescribing

Town Centre Management

VCS

Voluntary and Community Sector

Introduction: A Food Strategy for Brent Council

Introduction

Food is central to our lives. It shapes our health, culture, and environment. Brent's Food Strategy sets out a shared vision for creating a healthier, fairer, and more sustainable local food system that benefits everyone in our borough.

It recognises that food is not just about what we eat, but how it is produced, accessed, and shared. This strategy aims to tackle health inequalities, improve wellbeing, and strengthen resilience by ensuring that good food is available, affordable, and culturally appropriate for all.

Why We Need a Food Strategy

Brent faces significant challenges: rising food insecurity, diet-related ill health, and environmental pressures.

Poor diets contribute to obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, placing strain on health services and reducing quality of life ^(1,2).

At the same time, the cost-of-living crisis and unequal access to healthy food deepen health inequalities. A coordinated approach is essential to address these issues and create a food system that works for everyone.

What Is a Food Strategy?

A food strategy is a long-term plan that brings together local government, the NHS, businesses, schools, and community organisations to improve how food is produced, distributed, and consumed. It sets priorities for action across health, sustainability, and equity, ensuring that food policies and programmes are aligned and impactful.

Who Is It For?

This strategy is for everyone in Brent - residents, community groups, schools, businesses, and public services. It provides a framework for collaboration, enabling partners to work together to deliver meaningful change.

Our Approach

The strategy is built around six key Food Missions which address the most pressing food-related challenges in Brent.

While each Food Mission explores a distinct area of action, the Food Strategy highlights a deeply interconnected food system with a number of common threads and shared values:

- **Food is foundational.** It impacts every aspect of life.
- **Equity is central.** We must level the field so that everyone in Brent can eat well.
- **Dignity matters.** We must develop approaches that centre agency and compassion.
- **Partnership is powerful.** Joining up work across sectors leads to lasting change.
- **Environments shape our choices.** The structural context dictates our connection to food.
- **Food builds community.** It acts as a tool for social connection, learning and wellbeing.

Food Strategy Outline: Food Missions and Objectives

Mission 1: We will improve access to healthy and affordable food, and tackle diet-related health inequalities.

- **Objective 1:** Improve **access to healthier food options** across all communities, particularly in areas with higher levels of health inequalities and deprivation.
- **Objective 2:** Support **food-focused health promotion** initiatives across school, healthcare, and community settings.
- **Objective 3:** Shape **healthier local food environments** through planning, policy, and public procurement.

Mission 2: We will help reduce food insecurity and ensure everyone can access affordable and healthy food with dignity.

- **Objective 1:** Tackle the **systemic and structural drivers** of food insecurity — such as poverty, unemployment, housing instability, and limited access to culturally appropriate food.
- **Objective 2:** Establish a consistent approach to provide **minimum levels of professional advice and support** to residents accessing food aid.
- **Objective 3:** Ensure that all residents experiencing financial hardship can **access high quality, nutritious food** in their local community **with dignity**.

Mission 3: We will support the development of food literacy and skills in schools and in communities.

- **Objective 1:** Embed **food education** and **practical food skills** in community learning settings (across all ages).
- **Objective 2:** Improve the **quality, healthiness, and sustainability of food** served and sold in and around schools.
- **Objective 3:** Support school staff in **developing whole-school approaches to food** that link curriculum and culture.

Mission 4: We will promote good food jobs, skills training, and opportunities within the local food economy.

- **Objective 1:** Promote **pathways into good food jobs** through training, apprenticeships, and enterprise support.
- **Objective 2:** Champion **fair pay, decent working conditions, and inclusion** across the local food sector.
- **Objective 3:** Support **local, independent food businesses and enterprises to thrive** and contribute to community wellbeing.

Mission 5: We will encourage growing food in the community and at home, and support access to resources.

- **Objective 1:** Increase **access to land and spaces for food growing** across communities, schools, and housing estates.
- **Objective 2:** Support **food growing as a tool for education, wellbeing, and engagement** with the environment.
- **Objective 3:** Promote community growing initiatives that **build local food knowledge, resilience, and more connected growing networks**.

Mission 6: We will empower residents and institutions to reduce food waste, cut carbon emissions, and support more sustainable food choices.

- **Objective 1:** **Reduce food waste across** households, schools, and businesses.
- **Objective 2:** **Promote sustainable, climate-friendly diets** and public **food procurement**.
- **Objective 3:** Support **environmentally responsible food production and distribution** locally.

Governance and the Delivery of the Food Strategy and Food Action Plan

The Food Strategy is accompanied by a detailed Food Action Plan, and underpinned by a clear and transparent governance framework to ensure strong leadership, accountability and effective delivery across the borough.

Both the Strategy and Action Plan have been reviewed and approved by the **Health and Wellbeing Board**, which retains strategic oversight, recognising the central role of food in improving population health, reducing health inequalities, and supporting overall wellbeing.

- The Health and Wellbeing Board will provide high-level leadership, ensure alignment with wider Council and system priorities, and receive regular updates on the delivery of the Food Action Plan.

A borough-wide **Food Partnership** will act as the central collaborative body for the delivery and ongoing development of the Food Action Plan.

- A Food Partnership's role is to coordinate activity across the local food system, share knowledge and expertise, and provide a mechanism for constructive engagement across sectors ⁽³⁾.
- It also acts as a space for joint problem-solving, enabling partners to identify challenges early and collectively shape solutions that reflect the lived experience of Brent's communities.
- Brent's Food Partnership will thus bring together the Council, the NHS, voluntary sector organisations and community groups, schools, local businesses, and residents.

Governance of the Food Partnership will be delivered through the **Food Partnership Steering Group**, convened by Brent Council Public Health and made up of key stakeholders from across the local authority and the wider food system.

- It will provide strategic direction, agree priorities, identify risks, co-develop solutions, and oversee performance against the Action Plan across all Food Missions.
- It will ensure that the Food Partnership operates effectively and transparently, it remains aligned with the objectives of the Food Strategy, and regularly reports into the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- It will also play a critical role in fostering collaboration between relevant working groups and in supporting the development of shared approaches across the food system.

Delivery of the Food Action Plan will be supported by mission-specific **Food Action Working Groups** (FAWGs), each focusing on one Food Mission.

- These groups will bring together a range of stakeholders, including cross-sector partners and community representatives, to drive forward practical action.
- They will be responsible for delivering mission-specific actions, monitoring progress against agreed outcomes, and escalating key issues or risks to the Steering Group.
- They will draw on the expertise of local organisations and people with lived experience to ensure that actions are meaningful, inclusive and responsive to local needs.

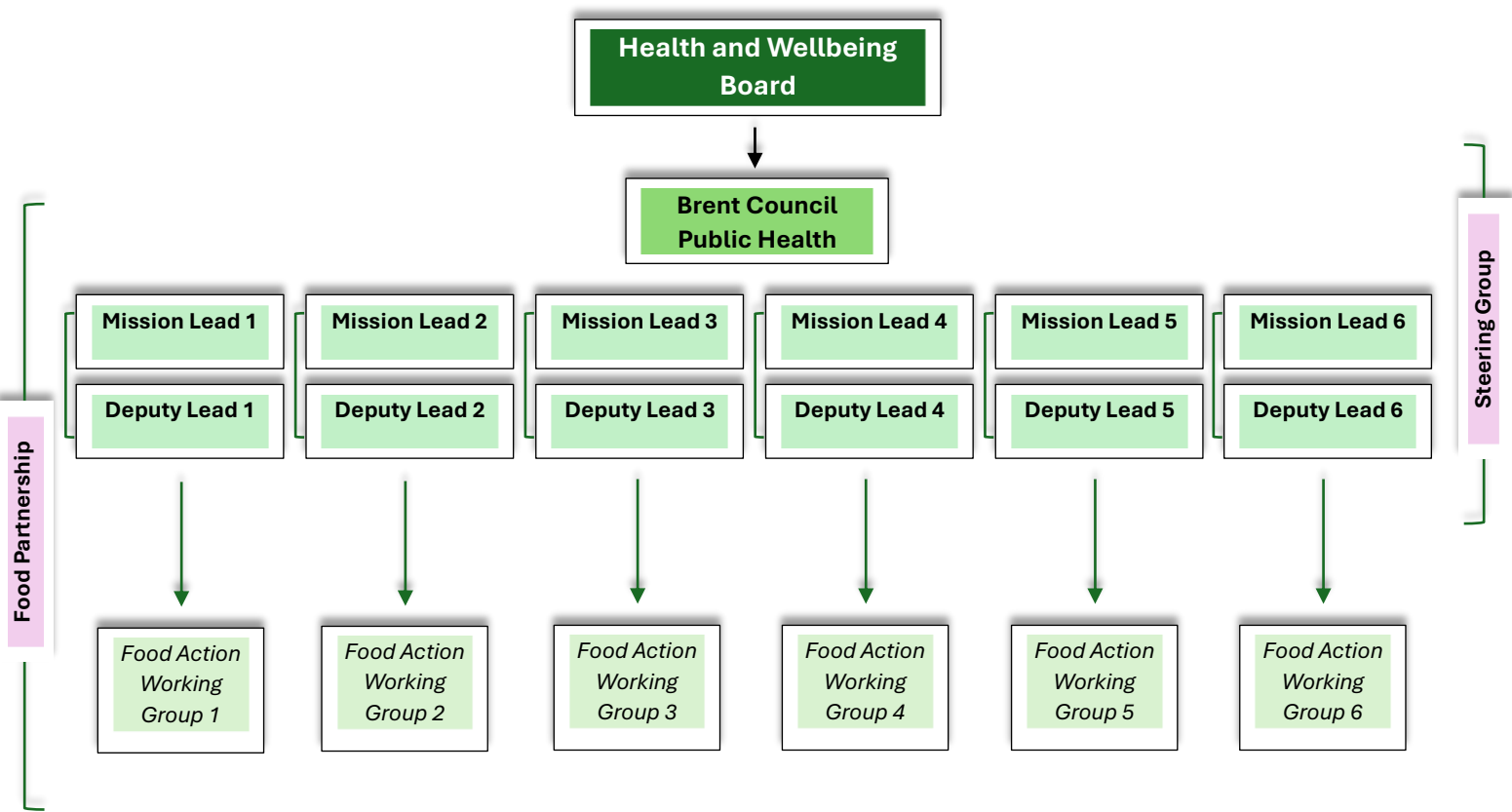
This layered governance and delivery framework will ensure that the Food Strategy continues to have strong political backing and strategic leadership, inclusive partnership working, and clear lines of accountability from strategic oversight through to delivery.

Regular reporting, review, and partner engagement will support continuous learning and adaptation, allowing the Strategy to respond to emerging needs, external pressures, as well as new opportunities over time.

Together with the Food Action Plan, this framework will provide a strong foundation for implementing the Food Strategy, enabling a healthier, more equitable, and more sustainable local food system in Brent.

In summary:

- The **Health and Wellbeing Board**, as the borough’s principal health and wellbeing leadership forum, will provide strategic oversight and ensure that the commitments within this Strategy remain anchored to Brent’s broader ambitions around health equity, climate action, community cohesion, and economic resilience.
- The **Steering Group** will offer strategic direction for delivery, coordinate work across Food Missions, oversee performance, assess risks, and share learnings while maintaining strong links with the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- The **Food Action Working Groups** will lead the operational delivery for each Food Mission and deliver mission-specific interventions by ensuring practical, inclusive and community-led implementation, monitoring progress and escalating issues where appropriate.
- The **Food Partnership** will act as the borough-wide convening body that will work to strengthen the local food system through collective action, fostering collaboration and engagement, shared leadership, joint problem-solving.



Mission 1: We will improve access to healthy and affordable food, and tackle diet-related health inequalities.

Food shapes our lives, cultures, and identities. It influences health outcomes and wellbeing, yet access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food remains a challenge.

Poor diets are a leading cause of preventable non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers ⁽⁴⁾.

While guidance like the Eatwell Guide promotes balanced diets rich in fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes, most UK residents fail to meet these recommendations ⁽⁴⁾.

National data shows high intake of saturated fats, sugar, and salt, alongside insufficient fibre, fruit, and oily fish consumption ⁽⁴⁾.

Adults and children often exceed daily calorie recommendations, contributing to obesity and related health issues ⁽⁴⁾.

This mission aims to create conditions where healthy choices are easy, affordable, and accessible, while addressing structural barriers and shaping healthier food environments through planning and policy.

Working with schools, businesses, and community partners, we will build a food system that supports healthier lifestyles and tackles diet-related illness.

Type 2 Diabetes

In 2024/25, Brent recorded **8.1%** type 2 diabetes prevalence, higher than the London average of 7.2%

Hypertension

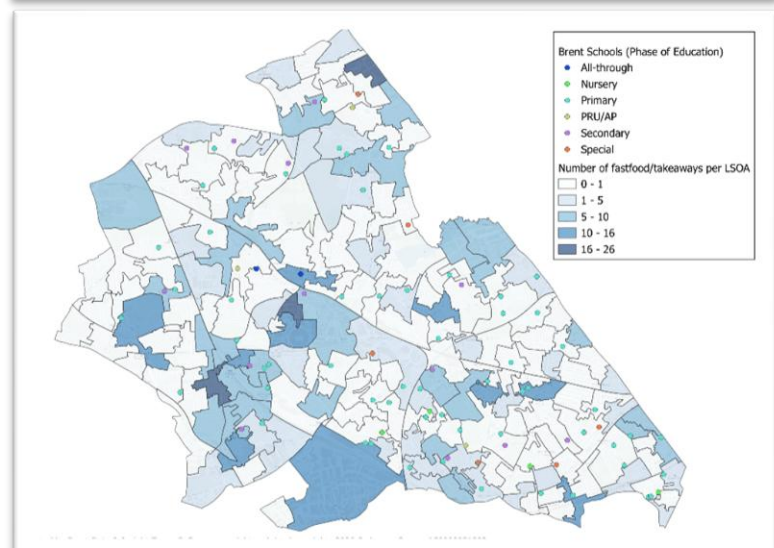
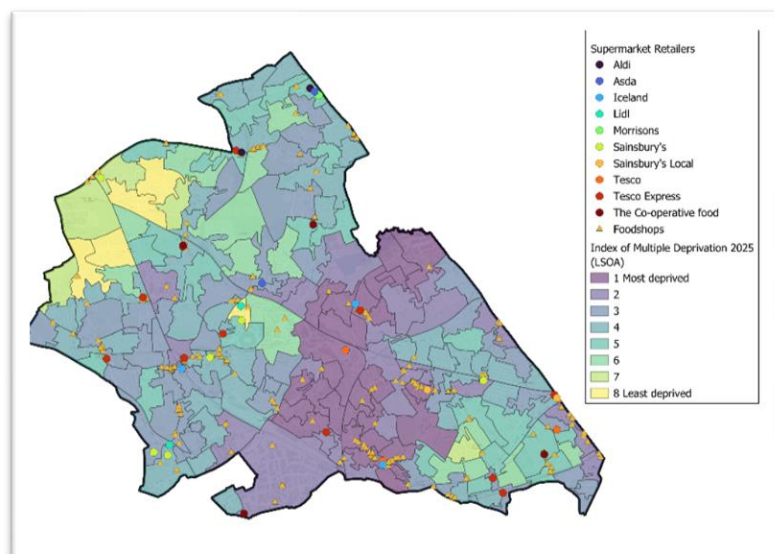
In 2026 Brent's hypertension rate is **13.3%**, higher than the London average of 10.6%

Weight in Adults

In 2023/24, **61.3%** of Brent adults were overweight, which was higher than the London average of 57.8%

Weight in Children

As of 2024/25, **38.1%** of Year 6 Brent pupils were overweight or obese, which is higher than the London average of 24.8%



Objective 1.1: Improve access to healthier food options across all communities, particularly in areas with higher levels of health inequalities and deprivation.

Access to affordable, nutritious food is one of the most effective ways to reduce health inequalities and improve outcomes across all ages ⁽⁵⁾. In Brent, access to healthy food varies significantly between communities. In more deprived neighbourhoods, healthy options are scarce, while unhealthy outlets dominate. This imbalance worsens health inequalities and limits residents’ ability to make healthy choices.

Objective 1.2: Support food-focused health promotion initiatives across healthcare and community settings.

Food literacy, the knowledge and skills to make informed food choices, is essential for health and wellbeing. Poor diets and reliance on ultra-processed foods contribute to obesity, diabetes, and hypertension, placing enormous strain on the NHS. Food-focused health promotion integrates food into prevention and care pathways, empowering residents to make healthier choices.

Objective 1.3: Shape healthier local food environments through planning, policy, and public procurement.

Food environments, the contexts in which people access and consume food, strongly influence dietary choices. In Brent, deprived areas often have high concentrations of fast-food outlets and limited healthy options. Planning, licensing, and procurement policies can help create environments that make healthy choices easier.

	Desired Outcomes	Solutions
Objective 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Greater equity in food access, ensuring vulnerable and low-income groups can consistently obtain affordable, healthy options. Reduced prevalence of diet-related illnesses such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease through improved access to nutritious food. Improved overall health and wellbeing across Brent communities, driven by increased consumption of balanced, culturally appropriate meals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Scale cash-first and food-based models linked to fresh produce access. Build a dignified, inclusive food support network that respects culture and lived experience. Use data and place-based planning to target provision where the need is greatest.
Objective 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger integration between health, food, and community services, creating a joined-up approach to prevention and wellbeing. Improved food literacy and awareness of the links between diet and health, enabling residents of all ages to make informed choices. Positive shifts in attitudes and behaviours toward healthy eating, particularly among children and families, leading to long-term dietary improvements. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate food into prevention, treatment, and recovery pathways. Scale food education and cooking confidence across life stages. Run relatable, community-led campaigns that make healthy eating actionable.
Objective 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Healthier food environments in and around homes, schools, and workplaces, reducing exposure to unhealthy options and promoting nutritious choices. Increased equity in access to good food through planning and procurement policies that prioritise affordability and cultural relevance. More resilient and connected local food systems capable of adapting to future challenges, supporting sustainability and community wellbeing. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use planning, licensing, and town centre management to rebalance local food offers. Embed nutrition and sustainability standards in public procurement and school food culture Build resilience through connected local food systems and data-led improvement

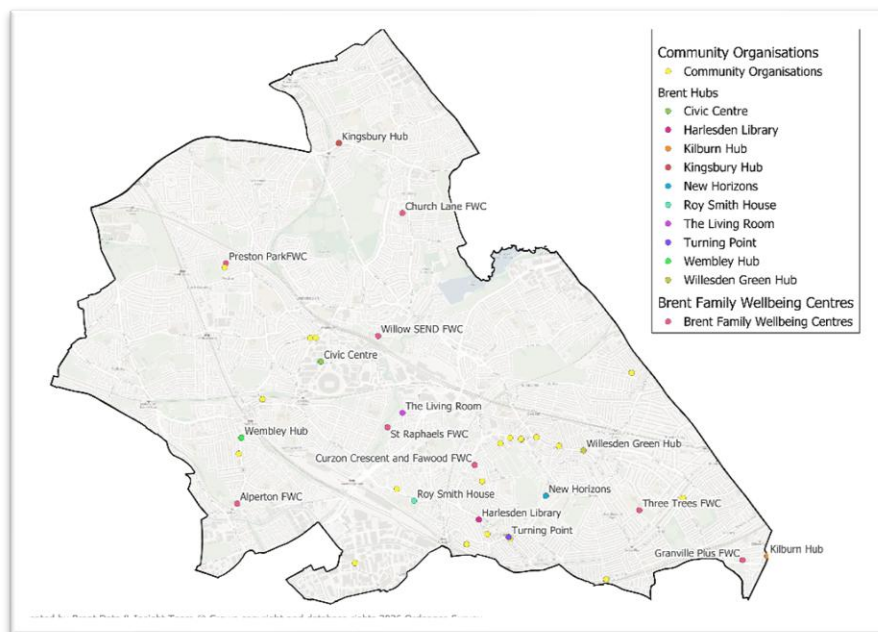
Mission 2: We will help reduce food insecurity and ensure everyone can access affordable and healthy food with dignity.

Food insecurity is a pressing challenge that affects health, wellbeing, and overall opportunity in life. Access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food is not guaranteed for all, with the reality in the UK, as well as in Brent, reflecting deep inequalities ⁽⁶⁾.

Food insecurity is defined as the limited or uncertain access to adequate food due to financial or other constraints. In Brent, rates of food poverty mirror national trends but are concentrated in areas of highest deprivation, where systemic factors such as rising living costs, unemployment, and insecure housing exacerbate vulnerability. While Local Authorities can influence some drivers through policy and partnerships, many determinants sit with central government, requiring strong advocacy and collective local action.

Emergency food aid has become a lifeline for many residents, yet provision varies across the borough and often requires referrals, creating barriers for those in crisis. Ensuring dignified approaches, where choice, quality, and respect are central, is critical to reducing stigma and supporting health. Beyond food parcels, wrap-around services offering advice on benefits, housing, and debt are essential to tackling root causes of food insecurity and building food resilience.

This mission aims to support the efforts to tackle some of the systemic and structural drivers of food insecurity, such as poverty, unemployment, housing instability, and limited access to culturally appropriate food. We will establish a consistent approach to provide minimum levels of professional advice and support to residents accessing food aid. The goal is to ensure that all residents experiencing financial hardship can access high-quality, nutritious food in their local community with dignity.



Map of Brent's Community Food Infrastructure

Universal Credit

As of May 2025, over 60,000 people claimed Universal credit in Brent (17% of Brent residents)

Free School Meals

Of the 48,780 Brent pupils, 21.8% received FSM in 2025

Poverty

33% of people in Brent live in poverty, (roughly 116,483 residents)

Healthy Start

In 2025, 57% of eligible Brent families received cash support through the Healthy Start scheme to help them purchase fresh fruit and vegetables

Food Aid (Brent Hubs)

From Jan 2025 to Jan 2026, there were 1,866 visits to Brent Hubs for food related support

Objective 2.1: Tackle the systemic and structural drivers of food insecurity — such as poverty, unemployment, housing instability, and limited access to culturally appropriate food.

Food insecurity does not occur in isolation, but it's rather the result of deep-rooted structural inequalities. By working with schools, health services, voluntary organisations, and residents, we will champion measures and solutions that reduce poverty, improve housing security, and protect families from financial hardship.

Objective 2.2: Establish a consistent approach to provide minimum levels of professional advice and support to residents accessing food aid.

Food aid alone cannot resolve the underlying causes of food insecurity. By embedding advice provision within food aid services, we can transform emergency food support into a gateway for long-term resilience. This approach will require collaboration between the local authority, voluntary sector partners, and specialist advice providers.

Objective 2.3: Ensure that all residents experiencing financial hardship can access high quality, nutritious food in their local community with dignity.

Traditional food aid models often limit choice and fail to provide culturally and faith appropriate or nutritionally balanced options. By expanding dignified food access points and integrating them with advice and skills programmes, we can create a system that not only meets immediate needs but empowers residents to thrive.

	Desired Outcomes	Solutions
Objective 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger multi-agency collaboration and governance, aligning the Council, health services, schools, advice services, and VCS partners behind a shared plan to address food poverty. Improved access to essential services for vulnerable families, with joined-up pathways to welfare advice, housing support, employment programmes, and culturally appropriate food provision. Enhanced service coordination across food aid, financial support, housing, and employment, creating a seamless system that tackles root causes and reduces repeat crises. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop integrated, place-based community hubs and shared governance Strengthen “cash-first” pathways, housing stability, and employer participation Advocate and plan for affordable, culturally appropriate food access
Objective 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A reliable safety net for residents, with a defined minimum standard ensuring access to welfare, debt, housing, and health advice in all food aid settings. Improved health outcomes and reduced diet-related illness, by integrating nutrition education, social prescribing, and prevention support alongside food aid. Reduced hunger and food insecurity among vulnerable groups, with increased food literacy and better-informed choices across all ages enabled by consistent advice and signposting. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Define, fund, and assure a Minimum Advice & Support Standard Embed advice where people already go Integrate prevention, food education, and crisis resilience
Objective 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Greater equity of access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food, delivered through dignified, choice-based models in accessible community locations. Stronger social cohesion and community participation, fostered by welcoming food spaces, shared activities, and resident-led design that reduces stigma. Sustained reductions in hunger and food insecurity, as adults and families are empowered to make better-informed choices at home, in schools, and in local shops thus shifting towards healthier, balanced meals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expand dignified, choice-based food models and infrastructure Centre dignity, inclusion, and resident voice Improve navigation, coordination, and communication

Mission 3: We will support the development of food literacy and skills in schools and in communities.

Our choices in food, such as what we decide to cook for dinner and the way we prepare it, as well as our preference for a homecooked meal or a meal deal for lunch at work, reflect a key part of our daily lives.

A factor which may influence these choices and practices is food literacy. This refers to the set of knowledge, skills, and behaviours that enable individuals to plan, select, prepare, and eat foods that meet their nutritional needs and support their health ⁽⁷⁾. Food literacy encompasses a range of competencies and skills, including:

- Understanding basic concepts of nutrition and being able to make food choices that support wellbeing
- Possessing cooking skills that enable people to make nutritious meals for themselves and their families
- Being aware of what shapes our food system and knowing where our food comes from
- Understanding how we produce, access, consume and dispose of food impacts on our environment

Despite the known benefits of cooking meals from scratch with whole ingredients, research carried out by the Food Foundation highlights an increasing over-reliance on takeaways and convenience foods, particularly amongst young people.

This type of diet is linked to an increased risk of developing several illnesses including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and many different types of cancers.

This mission seeks to improve food literacy across the borough and empower all residents to eat more balanced, nutritious diets. We will advise and collaborate with schools, community organisations, and other local partners towards achieving this goal.

By improving food literacy and skills across the borough, we hope to see a reduction in the diseases associated with poor nutrition and unhealthy diets.

Case Study: Sudbury Primary School

Sudbury Primary School is leading the way in its approach to providing lunch time dining that is nutritious, creative and culturally appropriate. The head chef, Sinoj Sadanandan, has worked hard to integrate fruit and vegetables into all aspects of the menu, and ensures that all food served is baked rather than fried. In particular, he has re-imagined the chocolate brownie, swapping out sugar and cheap chocolate for beetroot and cocoa to create a healthier alternative.

The school also one dedicated meat free day a week, as well as a vegetarian dish on offer for pupils every day.



Case Study: Brent Goes Foody

Start Easy LTD is an organisation which seeks to promote human rights, sustainable development and gender equality. In 2025, they worked with several children and young people from across the borough to increase confidence in the kitchen. Sessions included cooking skills, hygiene and food safety, and nutritional education. Across the course of the programme, participants were found to have increased skills in the kitchen, as well as improved food knowledge.

Objective 3.1: Embed food education and practical food skills in community learning settings (across all ages).

Food education equips people with lifelong skills useful in and outside the home, and it increasingly offers enhanced understanding of the links between food systems, health, sustainability and climate change. With the foodscape in Brent flooded with takeaways and convenient food options, food education offers an opportunity to encourage residents to improve and rely on their cooking skills to make healthy, balanced meals instead.

Objective 3.2: Improve the quality, healthiness, and sustainability of food served and sold in and around schools.

The quality and healthiness of the food served in school canteens has a large impact on pupils' health, wellbeing, and their ability to concentrate in lessons. Disparities in school budgets and funding for free school meals can make it difficult for some schools to provide nutritious meals, thus exacerbating existing inequalities ⁽⁸⁾. By working with school staff and chefs in Brent to improve lunch menus, we can make a positive impact on both the nutritional value and the climate impact of the food served in the canteen.

Objective 3.3: Support school staff in developing whole-school approaches to food that link curriculum and culture.

Taking a whole-school approach to food requires a strong commitment from all relevant stakeholders to share responsibility in embedding food into the curriculum. This is to be done in a way that facilitates learning by integrating and celebrating the diverse food culture of Brent, highlighting recipes from around the world.

	Desired Outcomes	Solutions
Objective 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved food literacy and practical skills across all age groups, enabling healthier, more balanced eating habits at home and in the community. 2. Stronger integration between health, food, and community services, reducing diet-related illness and promoting lifelong wellbeing. 3. Greater community engagement in sustainability through food growing, recycling, and climate-conscious eating practices. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand community-based food education and skills programmes 2. Integrate food education into health and wellbeing pathways 3. Promote sustainability through food growing and waste reduction initiatives
Objective 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Healthier food environments in and around schools, with increased access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally and faith appropriate options. 2. A shift toward sustainable food offers, including plant-rich menus and locally sourced ingredients across school and community settings. 3. Clear standards and accountability for food providers, ensuring consistent quality and alignment with health and climate goals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen food standards and accountability in school settings 2. Promote sustainable and plant-rich menus 3. Shape healthier food environments beyond the school gates
Objective 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular and equitable access to food growing spaces and opportunities for all pupils, fostering practical skills and environmental awareness. 2. Stronger school culture around food, connecting curriculum, catering, and community engagement to promote healthy, sustainable choices. 3. Increased equity of access to good food for vulnerable groups, ensuring no child is left behind in nutrition and wellbeing. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embed food growing and sustainability into the curriculum 2. Build a strong food culture within schools 3. Ensure equity and inclusion in school food provision

Mission 4: We will promote good food jobs, skills training, and opportunities within the local food economy.

Brent faces several labour-market challenges, including higher unemployment (5.7%) and higher levels of economic inactivity (21.9%) than the national average, much of it driven by long-term illness and caring responsibilities. Universal Credit claimant rates (6.2%) are also significantly higher than nationally, particularly among residents aged 25–49 and over 50 ⁽⁹⁾.

These trends are underscored by skills gaps, barriers to workforce participation, and mismatches between jobseekers and available opportunities. All these challenges can impact social mobility or result in in-work poverty, highlighting the need for targeted skills development and tailored employment support.

The food and catering sectors offer an important opportunity for residents in Brent through a range of professional opportunities and careers that span professional kitchens, hospitality, catering, food manufacturing and more. But these sectors though are not without challenges, with many residents still being offered zero-hour contracts, low wages and hazardous working environments.

This mission aims to expand access to high quality training, apprenticeships, and enterprise opportunities in the local food economy, while championing fair pay and decent working conditions across the sector.

By working with employers, training providers, industry partners, and local institutions, we will support residents to build confidence, gain practical skills, and progress into secure, dignified employment. Through this mission, we will help create a thriving, inclusive food sector that supports community wellbeing, celebrates Brent’s cultural diversity, and drives local economic resilience.

Through this mission, we will help create a thriving, inclusive food sector that supports community wellbeing, celebrates Brent’s cultural diversity, and drives local economic resilience.

Case Study: Recipes for Resilience

Community Interest Company, We-Ignite, commissioned by Public Health, delivered a 10-week pathway to employment programme designed to support refugees and asylum seekers into hospitality and catering. The course focused on developing practical kitchen skills while also building confidence, teamwork and English language ability to improve employability.

Each week, up to 10 students took part in hands-on sessions, offering men aged 18–29 a valuable opportunity to step away from the isolation of hotel accommodation and connect with others who had experienced challenging journeys in search of safety in the UK. Participants came from Afghanistan, Iran, Eritrea, Somalia and Egypt.

Alongside learning, they shared culinary traditions from their home countries, creating a rich cultural exchange that helped break down social barriers and build strong connections through a shared love of food. The course concluded with a final showcase evening, where students cooked for members of the Public Health team and invited guests. Working to strict deadlines under real kitchen pressure, the group demonstrated excellent teamwork and professionalism, producing five delicious, healthy dishes that were enthusiastically enjoyed by all.



Objective 4.1: Promote pathways into good food jobs through training, apprenticeships, and enterprise support.

Good food jobs can provide individuals with secure employment and a fair and decent wage. Local businesses across Brent’s diverse high streets should work to create new opportunities for residents to upskill, gain confidence, and progress into rewarding roles in a sector central to community life. Through investing in training, apprenticeships, and business support, we can foster an environment where people can gain the confidence they need to thrive in their chosen career.

Objective 4.2: Champion fair pay, decent working conditions, and inclusion across the local food sector.

Good food jobs must also be good quality jobs. Fair pay, safe working environments, reasonable hours, and inclusive practices are essential to ensuring workers feel valued and protected. By promoting these standards and adopting fair and accessible practices, the food sector can help build an environment where every worker has the opportunity to thrive with dignity, regardless of background or ability.

Objective 4.3: Support local, independent food businesses and enterprises to thrive and contribute to community wellbeing.

Local food businesses are the backbone of Brent’s local economy and cultural identity. Supporting these enterprises to grow, innovate, and create good employment opportunities benefits the whole community. By strengthening local supply chains, celebrating diversity, and helping businesses meet the needs of Brent’s residents, we can foster a vibrant, resilient food economy that enhances health, culture, and community wellbeing.

	Desired Outcomes	Solutions
Objective 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A higher-skilled local workforce equipped to contribute to a socially responsible and sustainable food economy. 2. Increased participation in food sector careers, with a focus on sustainable and socially responsible roles. 3. Expanded access to food-related skills development in schools, colleges, and community learning settings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand training and apprenticeship opportunities 2. Promote food careers and enterprise development 3. Embed food skills into education and lifelong learning
Objective 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved health and wellbeing for food sector workers through fair pay, secure contracts, and supportive working environments. 2. Greater inclusion and diversity across the food workforce, ensuring equitable opportunities for progression and representation. 3. Stronger alignment between employment standards and community wellbeing, creating workplaces that value dignity and social responsibility. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish and promote a Good Food Employer Charter 2. Drive inclusion and workforce diversity 3. Align employment with wellbeing and social value
Objective 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greater economic resilience for individuals and communities, with more revenue reinvested locally through thriving independent businesses. 2. Development of culturally relevant food enterprises that reflect Brent’s diversity and strengthen local identity. 3. Enhanced collaboration between local businesses and community initiatives to promote health, sustainability, and shared prosperity. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide tailored business support and resources 2. Strengthen local supply chains and cultural relevance 3. Foster collaboration and community engagement

Mission 5: We will encourage growing food in the community and at home, and support access to resources.

Food growing plays an important role in strengthening health, wellbeing, and environmental sustainability. It offers residents opportunities to cultivate their own fruits and vegetables from home gardens, community plots, or one of the borough's 20 allotments.

These growing spaces provide accessible ways for people to connect with nature, reduce their reliance on commercially produced food, and participate in community life.

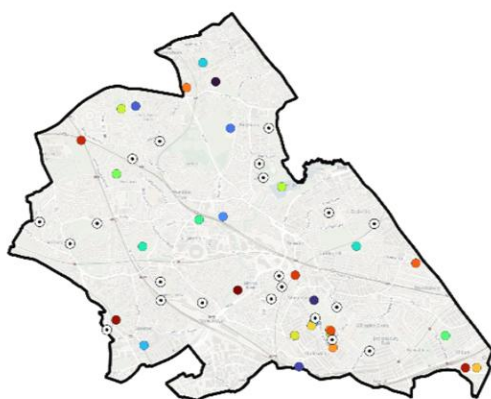
Across Brent, a wide range of food growing opportunities already exist, but access remains uneven and many residents face barriers related to space, knowledge, or confidence, especially in areas of higher deprivation.

Gardening and nature-based activities have been shown to reduce stress, improve mood, and support mental and physical health. Community gardens, allotments, and gardening clubs also offer spaces for social connection, reducing isolation and helping people build meaningful relationships.

At the same time, growing food locally helps cut carbon emissions associated with long supply chains and packaging, and supports biodiversity by creating habitats for pollinators, birds, and insects. When residents grow food, they are also more likely to eat plant-rich diets, supporting healthier eating patterns.

This mission aims to expand access to food growing opportunities for residents of all ages, while strengthening local networks, improving use of public land, and embedding food growing within schools, housing estates, and community settings.

By working with local growers, community organisations, housing associations, and Council colleagues, we hope to increase access to land and reduce the practical barriers residents face. In doing so, we will help build a healthier, more resilient borough where food growing supports wellbeing, environmental stewardship, and community cohesion.



Map of Community Growing Spaces and Allotments in Brent

Case Study: North Brent Community Garden

North Brent Community Garden opened its doors for the first time in August 2025, and since then it has gone from strength to strength. Starting off as a small patch of unused land a few minutes' walk from Neasden, it has now been transformed into a beautiful garden space for residents to enjoy. Thanks to initial funding from Peabody and Brent Council, Christopher Cowell, the lead volunteer gardener, has been able to create a serene space where several plants, fruits and vegetables that are being grown (including garlic, strawberries, rhubarb and lettuce).

The garden hopes to get more volunteers involved, including school students and residents, so that even more people can enjoy this wonderful space.



Objective 5.1: Increase access to land and spaces for food growing across communities, schools, and housing estates.

Access to growing spaces can transform neighbourhoods by giving residents the opportunity to grow their own food, share skills, and build community connections. By working with housing associations, schools, community groups, and voluntary sector partners, we will increase the number of accessible, well managed growing sites and ensure equitable opportunities across the borough.

Objective 5.2: Support food growing as a tool for education, wellbeing, and engagement with the environment.

Food growing is a powerful educational tool that helps people understand where food comes from, develop practical skills, and foster healthier relationships with the environment. By embedding growing into community programmes, youth services, and school activities, we can promote mental wellbeing, environmental awareness, and lifelong healthy eating habits

Objective 5.3: Promote community growing initiatives that build local food knowledge, resilience, and more connected growing networks.

Community growing initiatives serve as hubs for learning, volunteering, and social connection, whether through allotments, shared gardens, or food growing workshops. Supporting these initiatives will help strengthen local food knowledge, build resilience through local production, and create stronger, more connected networks of growers across Brent.

	Desired Outcomes	Solutions
Objective 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regular and equitable access to food growing spaces and opportunities across the borough, integrated into housing estates, schools, and community sites. Clear visibility and awareness of available growing spaces and volunteer opportunities, supported by accessible information and sign-up systems. A sustainable model for embedding food growing into urban planning and regeneration, creating healthier food environments in and around homes, schools, and workplaces. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Secure and activate growing spaces Improve visibility and participation Embed food growing into planning and regeneration
Objective 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced mental and physical wellbeing through increased participation in outdoor food-growing activities and nature-based learning. Greater awareness of the links between food, health, and sustainability, fostering positive attitudes toward fruit, vegetables, and healthy eating across all ages. Stronger community confidence and capacity to lead local action, building trust and social cohesion through shared growing initiatives. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Embed food growing into education and health programmes Create inclusive, community-led growing initiatives Promote wellbeing and environmental awareness through engagement
Objective 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increased food growing knowledge and confidence among all communities, enabling more residents to grow and share food locally. Expanded local food production and reduced reliance on external sources, contributing to food security and resilience. Strengthened local networks, partnerships, and volunteering engagement, creating connected growing communities and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Build capacity and skills for community-led growing Strengthen local networks and partnerships Link growing initiatives to local food systems and resilience

Mission 6: We will empower residents and institutions to reduce food waste, cut carbon emissions, and support more sustainable food choices.

Food systems have a profound impact on health, sustainability, and the environment. How we produce, consume, and dispose of food shapes climate outcomes and future resource use. Yet food waste remains a significant challenge across households, schools, and businesses, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and lost economic value.

In Brent, household food waste is collected for recycling, but participation and quality vary. Schools and businesses also face barriers to effective disposal, with mixed practices and limited composting. Large retailers and manufacturers have greater capacity for waste reduction, but opportunities for improvement remain.

Sustainable and climate-friendly diets are another critical area for action. These diets emphasise plant-rich meals, reduced meat and dairy intake, and minimal ultra-processed foods, aligning health and environmental goals. While national guidance promotes balanced, sustainable eating, uptake is slow, and misconceptions persist around plant-rich diets.

Finally, public food procurement offers a powerful lever for change, enabling local authorities to influence menus in schools, care settings, and community programmes. By embedding sustainability standards in procurement, Brent can lead by example and influence and support climate action.

This mission aims to reduce food waste, promote sustainable diets, and leverage public procurement to create a food system that supports health and environmental goals. Working with schools, businesses, and community partners, we will improve waste management practices, encourage climate-friendly eating, and use targeted policies to shape greener, healthier food environments.

Food Waste

In Q3 of 2025, Brent produced
1,494.12 tonnes of food waste



Surplus Food Redistribution

In 2025, The Felix Project redistributed
over 990 tonnes of food waste in
Brent, much of which through Brent
Health Matters and Public Health
events

Case Study: Our Schools Our World Programme

Across Brent, 20 primary schools have been involved in the Our Schools, Our World programme, an education initiative to integrate climate change, sustainability into the curriculum. Headteachers, governors, programme leads, and business managers took part in a three-day training on Our School, Our World.

Aside from learning green skills one of the key themes of the initiative is learning about diets, food and the way what we eat has an impact on the world around us. As a part of the program several schools have expanded food growing spaces and internal food waste processes have been audited and improved. Helping schools improve their environmental impact whilst inspiring young people to make more informed choices for the environment.



Objective 6.1: Reduce food waste across households, schools, and businesses.

Food waste is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and resource loss, yet it remains a persistent challenge across Brent. This objective will focus on building a borough-wide system that minimises food waste at every stage. By improving recycling infrastructure, promoting composting, and fostering collaboration between households, schools, and businesses, we can cut emissions, save resources, and create a more sustainable food system for Brent.

Objective 6.2: Promote sustainable, climate-friendly diets and public food procurement.

Dietary choices have a profound impact on both health and the environment. This objective will drive systemic change by combining education with policy action. By influencing what is taught, what is served, and what is purchased, Brent can support creating a food environment that supports healthier, climate-friendly choices for all residents.

Objective 6.3: Support environmentally responsible food production and distribution locally.

The way food is produced and distributed has significant implications for sustainability, equity, and resilience. Local food producers and distributors play a vital role in reducing food miles, supporting the local economy, and ensuring access to fresh, culturally appropriate food. This objective will focus on building a local food system that is resilient, inclusive, and climate conscious. By supporting producers, improving logistics, and embedding sustainability into procurement and planning, Brent can create a food economy that benefits people and the planet.

	Desired Outcomes	Solutions
Objective 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An effective and accessible infrastructure for food waste collection and recycling, ensuring consistent participation across households, schools, and businesses. 2. Stronger community ownership of food waste reduction, fostering a culture of sustainability and shared responsibility. 3. Significant reductions in food waste sent to landfill, contributing to lower carbon emissions and improved environmental outcomes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build and standardise food waste infrastructure across all settings 2. Drive behaviour change and community ownership 3. Coordinate and share best practice across sectors
Objective 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Widespread awareness and adoption of climate-conscious, healthy eating habits, embedded across schools, workplaces, and community settings. 2. Clear sustainability standards in public food procurement, ensuring menus reflect health and climate goals while supporting local supply chains. 3. Enhanced knowledge-sharing and replication of best practices, enabling schools, businesses, and institutions to implement sustainable food models effectively. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embed plant-rich, culturally inclusive food education and promotion 2. Set and enforce climate-friendly public procurement standards 3. Create a learning network and replicate best practices
Objective 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved collaboration between producers, distributors, and community partners, creating shorter, fairer, and more sustainable supply chains. 2. Stronger networks and partnerships for local food initiatives, increasing volunteer engagement and community-led action. 3. Expanded local food production and reduced reliance on external sources, lowering food miles and supporting Brent’s climate and resilience goals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grow local capacity and shorten supply chains 2. Strengthen networks, partnerships, and volunteer engagement 3. Link growing initiatives to local food systems and resilience

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Feedback

If you have any feedback to share or general questions about Brent's Food Strategy, please email Shadi Ambrosini at shadi.ambrosini@brent.gov.uk



Get Involved

Please email FoodPartnership@brent.gov.uk if you are interested in joining our network.

If you are working on any food-related projects or initiatives, please share your activities with us through our survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/8HasJ0jXcA>

This will support our efforts to map and highlight food-related work across the borough and help us better inform the Food Strategy going forward.