

Mayor's Fund for London

Written evidence to the Agriculture Bill Committee
February 2020

Key message

Adding three words to the Agriculture Bill will help parliament to monitor household food insecurity.

Introduction

Recent research conducted by the Greater London Authority shows that 400,000 children, under the age of 16, struggle to afford or access food ([GLA, 2019](#)).

We welcome the inclusion of Clause 17 in the Agriculture Bill, which places a duty to report to Parliament on UK food security. However, food security at a national level does not ensure that UK *households* are able to afford *enough* food. Household expenditure on food does not capture this either. For Parliament to have a more well-rounded view of food security in the UK we recommend that household food insecurity is added to the list of metrics under Clause 17.

The UK government has recently begun measuring household food insecurity as part of the Family Resources Survey, and the first data will be available in 2021. The Food Standards Agency also collects data on household food insecurity as part of the Food and You Survey. Both surveys are using internationally recognised and validated metrics and could be used to fulfil the duty to report to Parliament on household food insecurity.

Amending Clause 17

Mayor's Fund for London are calling for the following amendment (highlighted in yellow) to Clause 17:

17 Duty to report to Parliament on UK Food Security

- (1) The Secretary of State must, at least once every five years, prepare and lay before Parliament a report containing an analysis of statistical data relating to food security in the United Kingdom.
- (2) The data analysed in the report may include (among other things) data about the following matters—
 - (a) global food availability;
 - (b) supply sources for food (including the range of supply sources and the availability to the public of food from domestic and other sources);
 - (c) the resilience of the supply chain for food (including in response to disruptions in, or significant price increases for, the supply of energy);
 - (d) household expenditure on food (including in comparison to expenditure on other items);
 - (e) food safety and consumer confidence in food
 - (f) household food insecurity**

Contact details

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About the Mayor's Fund for London

We are an independent charity, championing social mobility for young Londoners from low-income backgrounds. We have worked on developing mechanisms to reduce food vulnerability for children for many years. Since 2017, the Mayor's Fund for London has been developing its holiday food provision model, Kitchen Social. The programme gives children a safe place to go during the holidays where they can socialise and get a healthy meal. As a key part of the Mayor of London's Food Strategy, Kitchen Social has a vital role to play in protecting low income young people across London from summer learning loss and other negative impacts of holiday food insecurity.