



“The ‘Take & Make’ ingredients box has revealed hidden talents! Parents are so proud of their children.”

TOGETHER SOUTHWARK

Kitchen Social is London’s largest provider of food for children during the school holidays.

Founded by the Mayor’s Fund for London, an independent pan-London charity, Kitchen Social gives children and young people a safe place to socialise, learn and get a free, healthy meal. The programme helps to alleviate the financial strain on families that comes with accessing food and childcare activities during the school holidays.

Long school breaks, without the support that young people need to thrive, is considered to be one of the drivers of the educational attainment gap between young people from different socio-economic backgrounds. Food poverty over the school holidays can lead to learning loss, lower self esteem and weight gain. Poor nutrition and social isolation not only affects a child’s wellbeing, but also impacts their physical and mental development, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

Kitchen Social has operated across London since 2017, working with a diverse range of grass-roots organisations, including youth centres, schools, faith groups, libraries, theatres, urban farms, adventure playgrounds, sports clubs and special needs centres. Kitchen Social provides a package of support to suit each hub’s needs. This includes training and resources, quality assurance, supporting with safeguarding and networking events.

A two year independent evaluation by Northumbria University found that the programme contributes to positive community networks; improved diet and nutritional intake in young people; less weight gain; involvement in more activities than those who not attend holiday hubs; a readiness to learn; better employment opportunities for parents and a positive financial impact on families.

As one of the organisations chosen to deliver the Department for Education ‘Holiday Activities and Food programme’ in 2020, Kitchen Social teamed up with Lambeth and Southwark Councils to develop a fun and inclusive programme reaching over 5000 children through a network of 80 local hubs.

As part of the offer we developed high quality recipe-kit boxes, called ‘Take & Make’, designed to encourage and support children to cook at home.

We are proud to have brought together a coalition of food businesses, charities, funders and corporates to help tackle the issue of food insecurity. Kitchen Social is also a feature of the Mayor of London’s Food Strategy.

Our work is not yet done. Children’s food insecurity is now on the national agenda. However, Government funding will only fund part time provision for six of the 13 weeks of school holidays per year and only half the children at risk in the capital will benefit. In addition, some provision is not inclusive or high-quality. The Mayor’s Fund for London is committed to working with Local Authorities and partners across London make sure no young person suffers from a poor diet or hunger during the school holidays.



“I learned how to be creative with food and tried so many new dishes, like bean curry, which I would never have had before.”

YOUNG PERSON



Since 2017 we have:

- worked with over **200** community organisations in 24 London boroughs
- served children with **438,558** meals that meet school food standards

To get involved with Kitchen Social or to find out more, visit: mayorsfundforlondon.org.uk

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