

FOOD SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN CONTINGENCY HOTELS

WE ARE NEWHAM.

- Our work on food is guided by the principle of dignity and the *capabilities approach* to improve the wellbeing of asylum seekers and refugees in Newham.
- For the catered hotels, breakfast, lunch and dinner is served within time slots
- There are communal spaces for people to sit and eat their food
- We know from residents and front line staff that there are lots of complaints about the quality of food and lack of autonomy over food

VISITS TO CONTINGENCY HOTELS

Newham's Public Health, Health Visitor, and Infant Feeding teams collaborated to produce a checklist to inspect and evaluate food provision in contingency hotels. The Checklist was categorised into 5 areas.

Facilities/space

- What facilities are in the rooms?
- Is the cutlery/bowls/plates/cups child friendly?
- Is the seating area at mealtimes suitable for babies and toddlers?

Food

- Can families with young children eat earlier?
- Can families access healthy snacks throughout the day?
- Can the food be easily adapted for the age of the children e.g. mashed, finger foods?

Food support for pregnant women

- Are the chefs aware of things that pregnant women cannot be offered?
- Is the food clearly labelled at meal times to support pregnant women?

Breastfeeding mothers and infant feeding

- What support is given to mothers?
- What formula are they being given?
- Are there breastfeeding pumps/storage of express breast milk
- Can families sterilise their infant formula?

Food for primary school aged children

- Are parents aware that children can get a free school meal?

KEY OUTCOMES OF VISITS TO HOTELS

- 1) We are stressing the importance of only using First Infant Formula if the mother is formula feeding and raising that hotels should not provide Follow on Formula and/or Cerelac (*brand of instant cereal*)
- 2) We are discouraging the use of squeezey 'baby likes brand' pouches, which can be high in sugar. We are providing resources for weaning support which promotes a healthy starting solid journey with unprocessed baby food
- 3) To help children's growth, we are advising the use of full fat yoghurt and milk, rather than fat-free and semi-skimmed
- 4) We have produced a resource for contingency hotels so LBN and hotel staff can better support pregnant women and mothers around food/nutrition. This includes links to free training for staff.

RESOURCE FOR CONTINGENCY HOTELS

SUPPORTING BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS/INFANT FEEDING/INFANT NUTRITION

- **Pregnant women**
 - We understand that a snack pack is provided to pregnant women. Please let the midwives know if any of the pregnant women in your hotel are struggling to eat.
 - There are various foods that pregnant women cannot eat, please ensure that any pregnant women in your hotel are supported at mealtimes
[Foods to avoid in pregnancy - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)
- **Breastfeeding mothers**
 - Breastfeeding mothers may need to be supported with a breastfeeding pump, bras and pads and have easy access to store their expressed breastmilk. Please notify us if you need support with this equipment.
- **Infant feeding (formula fed babies)**
 - The majority of infants who are formula fed or mixed fed should be given a **first infant milk (sometimes called first stage or stage 1 milk)** throughout the first year (unless advised by a professional, no other milk should be given as a drink in the first year of life).
 - **Good hygiene** is very important when making up a formula feed as baby's immune system is not as strong as an adults. That's why bottles, teats and any other feeding equipment need to be washed and sterilised before each feed to reduce the chance of baby getting an infection, in particular diarrhoea and vomiting.

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- There are lots of resources available to ensure formula milk is prepared safely including the following:
 - Newham Council Website: [Infant Feeding – Health Visiting Service – Newham Council](#)
 - A step-by-step guide to preparing a powdered formula feed <https://youtu.be/RH1KHiriN-Y>
 - Bottle-feeding advice is available from the NHS website: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/Pages/bottle-feeding-advice.aspx>
 - Unicef UK Baby Friendly <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/bottle-feeding-resources/guide-to-bottle-feeding/>
 - Unicef Bottle Feeding Guidance in other languages: [Foreign language resources - Baby Friendly Initiative \(unicef.org.uk\)](#)

PLACED BASED APPROACH

- We identified Newham Food Alliance (NFA)* partners close to the contingency hotels and encouraged them to apply for the hot meals in warm havens grant (funding up to £10k per organisation).
- The hot meals in warm havens grant was designed for rapid delivery as it was open to NFA partners who have already cleared key hurdles on governance, safeguarding, food safety and operations
- 5 organisations now providing free hot meals within 10 minutes walk of the contingency hotels
- Most organisations provide free hot meals once or twice a week, either at lunch or dinner time
- Some organisations request booking before attending whilst others are just turn up
- One organisation has evolved their delivery, providing 2 hour slots in their kitchen on Mondays and Wednesdays to allow people to cook their own meals. This is extremely popular and seems the 'gold standard'. 2 more organisations near hotels will be moving to this community kitchen model in order to give people in hotels more autonomy.

*The Newham Food Alliance is an open collaboration between partners to help reach thousands of residents each week with food parcels, meals and other support.

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Cont. PLACED BASED APPROACH

- Alongside providing meals, residents have received advice on a range of social activities, physical activity sessions and mental wellbeing support.
- Wrap around services across the providers include **Board Games, Arts and Crafts for Children, free WiFi, English language classes**, and more

FEEDBACK FROM ORGANISATIONS

*At our Tuesday Warm Haven we have **mostly seen refugees and asylum seekers** from local hotels. They have been so happy to have somewhere to go and meet people. They are hugely grateful for all we offer and **have started helping with the cooking** each week. We have had several Iranian dishes, and today had an Afghan dish. The community that is being built is amazing and people are saying **it feels like family.***

We have been allowing the asylum seekers to cook the meals each week. Each week we have a different group cooking and the asylum seekers have really enjoyed being able to cook and share tastes of home with us. It's a real highlight for everyone. We've eaten Persian, Syrian, Burmese, Afghan, Honduran, Guatemalan.