

# Press release: Gove steps-up government action to cut food waste at landmark 'Step up to the plate' gathering

Environment Secretary Michael Gove has today invited organisations to [apply for the second round of more than £6 million funding](#) under government's game-changing scheme to slash food waste.

The fund will improve how charities and other organisations handle and distribute leftover food by investing in infrastructure such as weighing equipment, storage solutions, warehouses, industrial freezers and fridges, labelling equipment and vehicles.

This comes as Food Waste Champion Ben Elliot hosted more than 300 major players from the food industry today at London's prestigious Victoria and Albert Museum, where businesses including Nestlé, Tesco, Sainsbury's, and Waitrose signed a pledge to take tough action on food waste – including halving food waste by 2030.

The Environment Secretary also [unveiled new figures today](#) which show redistribution of surplus food in the UK has almost doubled in the last three years, with enough food saved to produce the equivalent of 133 million meals a year.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

I want to thank our Food Surplus and Waste Champion Ben Elliot for bringing together the biggest players from the world of food today to 'Step up to the Plate' and slash food waste.

Every year, millions of tonnes of good, nutritious food is thrown away.

Today I am opening the second round of funding to help organisations ensure that food is not thrown away, but goes to those most in need.

Together we can deliver real change to stop good food going to waste.

From today, redistribution organisations in England [will be able to bid into a £6 million pot](#) to help them overcome the financial barrier to redistributing surplus food which is currently going to waste but which could be redistributed.

It's the second round of a [£15 million scheme](#) announced last year by the Environment Secretary to specifically address surplus food from retail and manufacturing.

The food waste symposium runs alongside the [V&A's FOOD: Bigger than the Plate](#) exhibition, which will explore similar themes when it opens to the public on Saturday 18 May.

Currently around 55,000 tonnes of surplus food is redistributed from retailers and food manufacturers every year. It is estimated a further 100,000 tonnes of food – equating to 250 million meals a year – is edible and readily available but goes uneaten. Instead, this food is currently sent away for generating energy from waste, anaerobic digestion, or animal feed.

The government is committed to being a global leader in tackling food waste. The government's [£15 million scheme](#) to tackle food waste builds on its landmark [Resources and Waste Strategy](#), which sets out how the government will introduce annual reporting of food surplus and waste by food businesses. Should progress be insufficient, we will consult on seeking legal powers to introduce mandatory targets for food waste prevention.

The Resources and Waste Strategy also sets out how the government will ensure weekly collections of food waste, which is often smelly and unpleasant, for every household – restoring weekly collections in some local authorities, subject to consultation.

The government is committed to supporting the [United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 2 to end hunger by 2030](#).

The Secretary of State delivered a [speech on tackling food waste](#) at the V&A museum.

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## [Speech: Michael Gove on tackling food waste](#)

I told my wonderful private secretary Hannah that I was going to come on immediately after a rap video. I thought 'Ben, you have excelled yourself'.

You really do have the conveying power of a very special genius. But of course, the rap video that we have watched is not a pounding beat from the streets.

It's an emotional cry from the heart on behalf of WRAP, an magnificent charity who is run by Marcus Gover and others, which has done so much to compel government, businesses and individuals to recognise the role that they can play in making sure we have a more circular economy and more respectful

of the resources that the earth has given us.

It is particularly appropriate when we're thinking about food that we should be here in the V&A. It's not just the case that Tristram, under his leadership, has increased the number of people coming into the V&A, and his latest exhibition opening this evening, 'Bigger than the Plate', is set to be one of the most successful that the V&A has ever put on.

It's also the case that those of you who are as old as I am will remember from the early 1980s when the V&A was marketed to tourists.

The line behind that marketing slogan was a piece of history that I learned about just over lunch. Actually during that great period of Victorian Institute building, the V&A, the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum were being built.

There was actually a Food Museum here on the side. One of the reasons why there was a Food Museum because it's through food that we understand so much about ourselves.

The exhibition that is being put on here, 'Bigger than the Plate', reflects on how modern day designers are using food in order to send messages on who we are and our place in creation.

But all of us recognise that food influences and shapes, and is essential for our lives in so many ways. Of course we need food to literally stay alive, but food is also one of the ways in which our senses are delighted. It's one of the ways that the creative impulse within us is given expression.

Cooking is a form of magic. The application of heat, salt and fat can transform ingredients into something sublime. It is also the case that through food, our priorities as a society are reflected.

So at times of strength and times when we're tested, it is by sharing food and by making room for others around our table that we show our love and affection, our respect and care for others.

But also when we produce our food it says a great deal about us and what we value. And as Emily has reminded us in her remarks, the way in which we produce our food at the moment is preferred. We use water and irrigation in a way which is scornful of the limits that this earth has placed on all of us in order to grow our food.

Our food is transported in refrigerated lorries using chemicals which themselves have an impact on our environment.

Our food is also a growth for the application of fertilisers and other chemicals in a way that certainly improves yield, but also has an impact on the carbon content of the soil and the health of our rivers.

So everything about the way our food has been produced suggests a degree of extravagance, but perhaps even heedlessness about the consequences of our generation of abundance.

And it's not just the way which our food is produced. It's also the way in which our food is distributed. There are people in this room who have done wonders to bring delicious food at a competitive price onto the table of millions.

In so doing, you have reminded us that the market performs a million miracles every day. But it is also the case that there are millions in this country who go hungry. Whose diets are simply not good enough in order to give them the full physical health and the deep mental wellbeing that they need in order to live full lives.

So in reduction and distribution, the way in which we handle food reminds us of some of the flaws in our society and some of the challenges in our world.

And that is where food waste comes in, because food waste is the product of this. And food waste also symbolises the inequity in distribution.

And that is why I'm so delighted that Ben has taken on the role of Food Waste Champion – because in so doing he is helping all of us in this room and beyond, to play a critical part in a role which advances both economic justice and environmental justice.

Environmental justice in that if all of us are more careful in the food that we use, more thoughtful in the resources that we deploy, then we can ensure that we do tread more lightly on this planet. We use less water, less fluorinated gases, that we use less fuel and we deploy less energy in the generation of food.

But also, that there is less pollution, and land can be used in a way which is more sparing of all of our resources and therefore more effective in ensuring that we can win the fight against climate change.

So reducing our excessive demand on this earth's resources is a critical thing to do, and using food wisely and taking food waste seriously is part of that. But also distribution as well: this government has made available £15 million in order to ensure that we help the private sector to redistribute surplus food which is edible and nutritious and delicious to those most in need.

So cafes, retailers and other can ensure that at the end of the day that food can be collected by wonderful charities like the Felix Project and then taken to those who need it. And this practical redistribution of resource shows also that we value the food that we've produced – we don't regard it simply as something to be discarded at the end of the day. We regard it as something created with care that can bring happiness, support and necessary relief to others who are in need.

So food waste is both a way of showing that we respect the earth and its limits, and it is also, by taking it seriously, a way of showing that we respect our fellow human beings and their potential.

Of course there's a danger sometimes, when we talk about food waste, that it can seem as though we're being punitive, Calvinist even, that we're

determining in a joyless sense the man in Whitehall knows best exactly how you should eat and exactly what you should do with every last ingredient.

Well I don't believe, actually, that tackling food waste need be seen in that way at all. If you look back at the history of food – shepherd's pie, bubble and squeak, oxtail's soup – all of these are the consequences of past chefs, past cooks, taking food waste seriously and being determined to use every aspect of what the earth has created.

Nobody can say that Fergus Henderson, the Chef at St John responsible for nose to tail eating – nobody can say that he was a joyless individual, who didn't communicate the sheer savour and relish of someone who loves their food. To visit that restaurant, to hear him speak, is to know he is someone who is a natural communicator of the joy that food can bring.

So it's also the case that taking food seriously, and taking food waste seriously, is also a way of celebrating human ingenuity, of celebrating culinary originality, of celebrating the great chefs so many of whom played such a wonderful part earlier in showing what we can do with the ingredients that others would throw away.

So during the course of this afternoon, you have an opportunity to discuss the action that we can take and the example that we can set. And I do believe that Marcus and the team at WRAP, and Ben, and the work that he has done, remind us exactly what we should do.

We should make sure that we measure, as far as possible, the food waste that we generate. We should make sure that companies are accountable of the way in which they husband natural resources. We should seek to raise awareness at every point, and to educate every single one of our citizens about how we use food more responsibly.

But above all, what we should do is we should celebrate food and what it means in all our lives. Food is a source of joy to so many, something precious that we should hate to waste it, and also a way of showing as I underlined earlier, that we care for our planet, we care for our fellow citizens, and we care about the future.

Thank you all very much.

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## **Press release: Sellafield funding brings new business unit to life**

A £1.1 million business incubator will be created in west Cumbria to grow a new generation of entrepreneurs.

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# Press release: Sellafield funding brings new business unit to life

The [Watershed](#), in Whitehaven, will support aspiring business owners to get their ideas off the ground.

Sellafield Ltd and the [Nuclear Decommissioning Authority](#) are providing £996,000 for the project via Sellafield's social impact budget.

It will be part of the [Whitehaven Buzz Station scheme](#), which Sellafield Ltd is supporting with a £2.6 million investment.

Both projects are being led by developer [BEC](#) and are key to Whitehaven's North Shore regeneration programme.

Gary McKeating, head of community and development for Sellafield Ltd, said:

Our social impact strategy is designed to help our community overcome barriers to success.

One of those barriers is the low number of business start-ups.

Small businesses are the engine of the economy. And to be successful they need vital support in the early stages.

The Watershed is a state-of-the-art facility which will nurture the energy and creativity of our entrepreneurs and allow them to work together to bring ideas to life.

That's what our social impact strategy is about: providing opportunities that change lives.

The Watershed is scheduled to open at the same time as the Buzz Station.

It will support businesses in their very earliest stages while the Buzz Station will provide facilities for more established companies.

## **Facilities at the Watershed will include:**

- co-working space
- high-speed connectivity and communications
- digital manufacturing facility, including 3D printers and laser cutters
- business support and advice

Its design reflects the changing needs of smaller businesses and aims to

provide facilities usually only available in bigger cities.

Michael Pemberton, chief executive of BEC, said:

Co-working for small businesses is becoming the norm. The conditions they need to grow is changing from a four-walled office to a lively, shared space.

This allows people to bounce ideas off each other and support one another's growth.

The lead contractor for construction of the Buzz Station and the Watershed will be announced by BEC soon.

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## [News story: Re-appointment of Attorney General for Northern Ireland](#)

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley, today announced the reappointment of Mr John F Larkin QC to the position of Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

The reappointment is for a limited period of 13 months, commencing on 24 May 2019 until 30 June 2020.

The Secretary of State said:

My absolute priority is to see the restoration of the Executive at the earliest opportunity.

In the interim my responsibility is to ensure good governance and stable public services in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland.

The Attorney General for Northern Ireland is an independent law officer and the Chief legal adviser to the Northern Ireland Executive for both civil and criminal matters. In the absence of an Executive, it is vital that we ensure stability and continuity.

That is why I have extended Mr Larkin's appointment for a further

limited period of 13 months.

## **Mr Larkin's Biography**

Mr Larkin was educated at St Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School and at Queen's University Belfast. He was called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in Michaelmas Term 1986 and later to the Bar of Ireland. Between 1989 and 1991 he was Reid Professor of Criminal Law in Trinity College Dublin.

He took silk in Michaelmas term 2001. Following the transfer of policing and criminal justice powers to Northern Ireland, he was first appointed as Attorney General for Northern Ireland on 24 May 2010 a position he has held since then.

## **Notes to Editors**

The Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018 (as amended) provides that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland can make appointments to the position of Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

The person appointed to this position must be a member of the Bar of Northern Ireland of at least ten years standing or a solicitor of the Court of Judicature of at least ten years standing. There are no restrictions to the number of terms an individual may serve.

Prior to reappointing Mr Larkin, the Secretary of State consulted with the Advocate Media enquiries should be addressed to The Executive Office Press Office Telephone: 028 9037 8151 Email: [info@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:info@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk)