

Press release: Gove appoints Food Waste Champion

- Champion to set ambitious direction to help drive down unnecessary food waste in England.
- Appointment is key commitment in the government's recently-published Resources and Waste Strategy.

A new Food Surplus and Waste Champion to help drive forward the government's plans to cut food waste has been appointed today (Monday, 31 December) by Environment Secretary Michael Gove.

Philanthropist Ben Elliot, the co-founder of lifestyle group Quintessentially and chair of the Quintessentially Foundation, the business's philanthropic arm, has been tasked with setting an ambitious direction to cut food waste from all sources, to help drive down unnecessary food waste in the UK which totals 10.2 million tonnes per year.

The appointment is a key commitment of government's [Resources and Waste Strategy](#) launched earlier this month, and will support the commitment set out in the Strategy and 25 Year Environment Plan to work towards eliminating food waste to landfill by 2030.

Mr Elliot will work with businesses and other stakeholders from across retail, food manufacture, hospitality and food services, motivating businesses to tackle food waste from farm to fork.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Food waste is an economic, environmental and moral scandal. We must end it.

That's why I am delighted Ben Elliot is taking up this position and know he will bring the enthusiasm and skills this important role needs. His first task will be to help ensure our £15m food waste fund redistributes surplus food that would otherwise be wasted to those most in need.

Ben and the Quintessentially Foundation's most recent partnership has been with The Felix Project, the charity combatting the issue of food waste and food poverty in London. Together they have pioneered a government-backed initiative to divert up to £1 billion of surplus food to those in need.

Ben Elliot said:

Whilst families all over the country struggle to put food on the table and children still go to school each day with empty stomachs,

there continues to be an unforgivable amount of food waste which is both morally deplorable and largely avoidable.

As a nation, we need to stop this excessive waste and ensure that surplus food finds its way to people in our society who need it most, and not let it get thrown away and go to landfill. The progress that we have made at the Felix Project has had a positive impact on thousands of people's lives in London and I am extremely grateful to all of those involved in the food sector that have been so supportive.

My new appointment will allow me to work with DEFRA and food retailers all over the country to help build out a nationwide strategy that will ensure surplus food is not wasted at the expense of those in our society that truly need it.

The announcement builds on government's recently published [Resources and Waste Strategy](#) which sets out government plans to consult on introducing annual reporting of food surplus and waste by food businesses, and our intention to consult on seeking powers for setting mandatory targets for food waste prevention should progress be insufficient.

It also follows [a £15 million pilot scheme](#) to substantially reduce food waste from retailers and food manufacturers announced in October this year, and the £500,000 [Food Waste Reduction Fund](#) announced last year. In July this year it was announced that funds have been awarded to [eight charities](#) across the country. The grants will help provide the essential resources needed to expand their important work tackling food waste.

Ben Elliot will be appointed in the unpaid, voluntary role for one year, and his responsibilities will include:

- Supporting and championing the implementation of the food waste prevention policies outlined in the Resources and Waste Strategy.
- Encouraging actors in the food sector to work together to generate ideas and workable solutions on food surplus and waste issues.
- Advising Defra on proposals for the distribution of the £15 million food waste fund
- Motivating business leaders to tackle food waste from farm to fork, including through support for the delivery of the Courtauld Commitment 2025

Notes to editors

Terms of Reference

- The appointment of a Food Surplus and Waste Champion is a commitment in the Resources and Waste Strategy. The stated objective is to work with business leaders to ensure that food waste remains at the top of their agendas. He/she will vigorously support the commitments set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan and the policies laid out in the Resources and

Waste Strategy.

Objectives

- The Food Surplus and Waste Champion will support and champion the implementation of the food waste prevention policies outlined in the Resources and Waste Strategy and encourage actors in the food sector to work together to generate ideas and workable solutions on food surplus and waste issues.
- The Food Surplus and Waste Champion will liaise with WRAP, food redistribution organisations and food businesses and advise Defra officials and Ministers on proposals for the £15 million food waste fund. The champion will support the roll-out of resulting projects encouraging wide ranging engagement from the food sector.
- The Food Surplus and Waste Champion will motivate business leaders to tackle food waste from farm to fork, including through support for the delivery of the Courtauld Commitment 2025, including the WRAP / IGD Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, and through maximising their influence across supply chains to reduce food waste. This will include meetings with individual business leaders, participation in key WRAP led stakeholder meetings and speaking at conferences on behalf of Defra.
- The Food Surplus and Waste Champion will support forthcoming Government consultations on mandatory surplus and food waste reporting, and seeking powers for mandatory food waste reduction targets and surplus food redistribution obligations.
- The Food Surplus and Waste Champion will support the WRAP strategy to address citizen food waste by working with businesses to ensure participation in trialling new behavioural change interventions, adoption of best practice and to amplify campaign messages.
- The Food Surplus and Waste Champion will need to work with businesses and other stakeholders from across retail, food manufacture, hospitality and food service and producers and therefore will remain impartial and will not focus on the specific interests of any one sector.
- This role will report to Defra Ministers responsible for food surplus waste policies.

Outcomes

- The Food Surplus and Waste Champion will provide regular updates to Defra officials, WRAP and Ministers on progress being made by businesses to address food surplus and reduce food waste and on the implementation of the Resources and Waste Strategy.
- The Food Surplus and Waste Champion will work closely with Defra officials to oversee delivery of the £15m food waste fund to increase the redistribution of surplus food, in accordance with Government accounting rules.
- A further anticipated outcome of the Food Surplus and Waste Champion's work will be strengthened cooperation and partnership working between the Food Surplus and Waste Champion, Defra, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and key food industry stakeholders.
- The Food Surplus and Waste Champion will work closely Defra Food Waste Policy officials who will meet as required. This team will help the Food

Surplus and Waste Champion to develop any outputs or other reports for Ministers.

- The Food Surplus and Waste Champion will need to draw on expertise as required. To be effective the Food Surplus and Waste Champion they will need a clear mandate from Defra Ministers and to secure time and resource from across the Defra Group to contribute meaningfully and to engage constructively with this role.

Ben Elliot biography

Ben Elliot is the co-founder of lifestyle group and global concierge service Quintessentially. Founded in December 2000, Quintessentially now has 60 offices around the world with over 3,000 employees.

Ben is also the Chair of the Quintessentially Foundation, the business's philanthropic arm. It has partnered with more than 45 organisations, with the aim of improving education, health and welfare within disadvantaged communities, and has raised £13 million to date. Ben and the Foundation's most recent partnership has been with The Felix Project, the charity combatting the issue of food waste and food poverty in the capital. Together they have pioneered a government-backed initiative to divert up to £1 billion of surplus food to those in need. Quintessentially has organised several fundraising events this year to support The Felix Project, including a bike ride from Austria to Slovenia that raised £430,000.

Ben's charity partnerships include: RAPT (Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust), Room to Read, Greenhouse, Hope and Homes, Dimbleby Cancer Care, Duchenne Children's Trust, Rays of Sunshine, WellChild, Good Chance, Centre for Social Justice, Sentebale, the Miles Frost Fund and Elephant Family (for which Ben is a Patron, co-founded and chaired by his uncle Mark Shand until his death).

Alongside this work, Ben is also a trustee of the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Chairman of the Philanthropy Board of the Royal Albert Hall, the Honorary Treasurer of the Centre for Policy Studies, a Non-Executive Director of YouGov and a Partner at Hawthorn Advisors.