

£16 million for food charities to provide meals for those in need

The government has today announced up to £16 million to provide food for those who are struggling as a result of coronavirus.

The programme will provide millions of meals over the next 12 weeks and be delivered through charities including [FareShare](#) and [WRAP \(Waste and Resources Action Programme\)](#).

At least 5,000 frontline charities and community groups in England will benefit, including refuges, homeless shelters and rehabilitation services. It will cover rural areas as well as cities, targeting those who are struggling to get food.

Both WRAP and FareShare have well-established networks for funding local charities and delivering food, ensuring support can get to where it is needed as quickly as possible. Part of the fund will also be available for smaller food distribution charities.

These supplies will be in addition to those already donated by supermarkets, hospitality businesses, wholesalers, smaller retailers, suppliers and manufacturers who have been working collectively, co-ordinated by the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD).

The funding is part of the [£750 million pot announced by the Chancellor for frontline charities across the UK](#) during the coronavirus outbreak. This is a further step in work to allocate that funding package, with Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport leading on the allocation of funding. It builds on [existing government support](#) for those struggling as a result of COVID-19.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

During this difficult time our frontline food charities are doing brilliant work amid a significant increase in demand – working in refuges, drop-in services, homeless centres and other places.

It is absolutely vital they have the resources they need and this funding will help the most vulnerable in our society get the food they need at this enormously challenging time.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

We're doing all we can to support vulnerable people through this crisis and this vital initiative will help provide meals for those who need them.

It is part of the unprecedented £750 million of government funding to provide support for our brilliant charities and volunteers that are so vital to the national effort.

Lindsay Boswell, CEO of Fareshare said:

We welcome this support from Defra to obtain vital food supplies, on top of the generosity already shown by the UK food industry. This will enable us to continue to supply much-needed food and drink to the many thousands of frontline charities and community groups across England that are doing the humbling work of getting meals to very vulnerable people during this crisis.

We want to make clear that this funding will only be used for the procurement of food and drink and that our own running costs are funded through other gratefully received charitable donations. We have seen the generosity of the food industry who have stepped up to donate food and logistical support to help us do this, and government has now come in to play its part alongside . If businesses or local authorities wish to join our efforts in the fight against hunger and food waste, be they in food, logistics or have fleets, we urge them to get in touch with us today.

Marcus Gover, Chief Executive of WRAP, said:

We've worked with Defra to create a grant scheme of support for the many organisations across England who are feeding the most vulnerable among us. In only two weeks we've received a huge response and are finalising the first batch of applications. This additional funding will be used to expand that essential work with support for the very smallest, to the largest charities and enable them to support many more people at this difficult time.

The government continues to urge people to support family, friends and neighbours by helping with shopping for food and other supplies. Information on how to help safely can be found on [gov.uk/safehelp](https://www.gov.uk/safehelp). Those who meet the criteria for support from the NHS Volunteer Responders programme can refer themselves or a family member by calling 08081963646.

Local councils may also be able to offer support and give advice to those who do not have friends and family nearby to help. You can find your local authority [online here](#).

Those who are well and able to get to the shops are also encouraged to do so, leaving online delivery slots for those who need them most.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The role of FareShare and WRAP is as follows:

- FareShare – the largest not-for-profit organisation that redistributes food in England and nationwide – will buy food from manufacturers to provide at least 5,000 frontline charities with food.
- WRAP – specialists in sustainability and reducing food waste – will use the extra funding to boost existing work redistributing surplus food in the supply chain. WRAP is already managing the government's £3.25 million fund to redistribute up to 14,000 tonnes of surplus stock during the coronavirus outbreak.

We will also be setting up a Covid-19 Food Charity Grant Scheme, which will enable other charities that provide food to apply online for funding. More details on how to apply for this funding will be available on Monday at [this link](#).

Grocery food retailers, suppliers and manufacturers, coordinated by IGD, are also making significant donations to local communities and charities in response to the outbreak. For example:

- Tesco is providing a £30 million package of support for local communities tackling COVID-19, including a £25 million food donations programme.
- Sainsbury's has donated £3 million to FareShare and Asda donated £5m to community charities to help people through COVID-19.
- Morrison's has promised £10 million of dedicated stock to be set aside in Morrison's supermarkets to be donated.
- Coop has donated £1.5 million of food to FareShare.
- Suppliers and manufacturers have also donated thousands of pallets of food to FareShare across a range of fresh and ambient food types.
- To see the full list of actions that the supermarkets are taking to support the public please visit the [Defra in the media blog](#).

Further guidance on how to access food and other essential supplies during the coronavirus pandemic is on [gov.uk](#).